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## TIMECODE

**Ed Morrison:** My name is Edward J. Morrison is the way that it usually appears. I was a former publisher of the Morrison Sun Tribune.

Q: I understand that you're the man that boondoggled the state into giving us UMM. Is that true?

**Ed Morrison:** I what now?

Q: You convinced, you boondoggled UMM for our town.

**Ed Morrison:** Well, let me say I had a prominent role in it. That's about all that I can say because nobody can do anything alone and it's difficult to do things with just a few people. But we had a few really outstanding helpers and we had thousands of people who became members of the West Central Educational Development Association. They were wonderful support. So, okay, go ahead what would you like?

Q: What I'd like to ask you to begin is did WCEDA exist before UMM arrived and what was the basis for its formation? Why was it formed?

**Ed Morrison:** WCEDA came into existence probably two or three years into the program. It was not here to begin with.

Q: What year was that in?

**Ed Morrison:** Well, I wish I could tell you for sure but I think that the real active work started in 1957. If I had all the minutes of various meetings of some kind or another [ph?] but at the time the spade [ph?] work was being done, why we really were the industrial development committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the city of Morris, Minnesota. That's who we were. I had been on the chamber board, of course. Now I was just on a committee and I probably was chairman of the committee. I don't remember now. But, anyway, it was a committee and that's how it all sort of started. Can I give you a little spiel on this?

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Q: Please do.

**Ed Morrison:** Maybe it will help you and it will help me. I jotted down that on October 3, 1959 I was privileged to appear before the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota as part of a group representing the West Central Educational Development Association. This was just one month before the regents announced the start of college classes at Morris in the fall of 1960 and just three weeks after President Morrow [ph?] had hinted in a speech at Winona that such a development was a distinct possibility. At this point in time, WCEDA had more than 4,000 and to them belongs the credit for the success of our mission. My involvement started about five and a half years before that shortly after the election, my election to the board of directors of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the death of my father. My lovely wife and I had been married in 1941 and I had gone to work for my father on the newspaper. Along came World War II and I got back from the navy in 1946. In the next eight years, Helen was president of the legion auxiliary, the Morris Study Club, the Morris Concert and Lecture Series and she became a mother. Ed went through the chairs and the Lion's club, Civic and Commerce Association, and served on several newspaper association committees. We had bought a lot and drawn plans for a new house next to the West Central School. At this point, our state senator walked into my office, announced he was retiring, and asked me to run. I doubt if I could have been elected but with what I had on my plate at that time I went to see Tom Staler [ph?] who also declined but helped me talk Dr. Fred Beemler [ph?] into running. He was elected. Meanwhile, Congressman H. Carl Anderson, whose committee I served on for years and years was quietly working with farm groups and the university on a federal soil and water research facility. It was authorized in 1955 by Congress and I was one of the people who testified at the congressional committee hearing at the West Central School. Dr. Beemler established a lot of friendships in the 1955 session and in 1956, Governor Freeman [ph?] appointed a committee on higher education and this exhaustive report came out in late 1956. There's the report by the way.

Q: And what's the title of that report?

**Ed Morrison:** It's Minnesota's Stake in the Future, Higher Education 1956 to 1970 and here is the picture of the college enrollments going up over the years ahead and I hadn't [ph?] find that Minnesota really had a problem as far as where they're going to take care of all these students. I don't want to bore you with a lot of the report but it talked about prospects of college enrollment doubling in about 15 years. It also talked

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about providing higher educational opportunities to youth of all parts of the state as well as pointing out the fact that substantially fewer high school graduates from rural areas went to college. The distance to college was recognized as a significant factor. On the final page of the university section report, excuse me if I turn to it, you might be interested if I can find it, it said "The university operates several secondary agricultural schools having dormitory space which are open for students about six months of the year. Agricultural training in public high schools has advanced greatly since most of these schools were established. And a question has been raised about the need for continuing university operation of such schools at the secondary level. It has been suggested that these facilities might be used to better advantage if fitted into the structure for higher education with positive emphasis on agriculture pursuits. Without taking a position on this question, the suggestion is made that this is another area for continued study by the university authorities and others." Well obviously that was a call to arms on our group and we did. We got a group together and we appeared before the Board of Regents. I might as well tell you in all honesty that Lou Morrow was originally opposed to any diversification of the university because he felt it would— they had already gone to Duluth and I think that bothered him a little bit. He really wanted it concentrated on a campus where he felt it was better to provide education. It's cheaper or less expensive if you had it all in one place and can do it. And, of course, he's probably correct. On the other side of the coin, for people who are great distances from there it makes it very difficult for them. They can't live at home and go to college. At any rate, we appeared and I could tell we had some supporters at the university right then and there. Some members of the Board of Regents were very, very, very supportive of the idea. I can't identify them anymore but I can just tell by the way they talked and they way they acted that they were supportive. So about that same time, I received a letter from Dr. Beemler and Dr. Beemler sent me a clipping that says, "Division will ruin or destroy the U. Moral". There are some things in here that you tried to identify early supporters. Well Faye Child [ph?] from Maynard [ph?], Senator Faye Child brought up the subject of university sponsored lower division college work on the Morris Agricultural School campus. I don't want to bore you with a lot of that.

Q: That's fine. You made the point. I heard another regent was quoted as saying, "Decentralizing the university would mean death."

**Ed Morrison:** What?

Q: Decentralizing the university would mean death.

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**Ed Morrison:** Yeah, uh huh.

Q: That seemed to be an attitude that some of the regents had.

**Ed Morrison:** Yeah, so at any rate, why we knew several things. We knew people were aware of us and people were thinking about it that what we had— I got a letter from Dr. Beemler on January 23, 1957 and this just said, “Dear Ed,” and gosh I don’t know. I really should quote some of this but he said, “Last Saturday PM the mayor of Montevideo [ph?],” This is on January 23, 1957. “Last Saturday the mayor of Montevideo came over to Morris to see me and his name was Dr. Robert Barr [ph?]. He was interested in getting grants to the U in our section of the state and, of course, I told him Morris was the spot and he agreed to go along with that thinking. His senator is Faye Child,” who I’ve already mentioned, “who also is a member of the Senate Finance Committee. We agreed the first step was to block the appropriations for the U for the purchase of land across the river. If they ever get that land our chance for a branch would be nil. So Monday when I got back, I contacted Faye Child and he was all for us and you will note that he spoke in the finance committee for Morris.” Please cut some of this out and you will. “I feel he should be complimented in a letter from Homer’s office.” Homer incidentally is Homer Carpenter. Homer Carpenter came to Morris as a J.C. Penney Company manager and the J.C. Penney store in Morris, Minnesota did more business than the J.C. Penney store in Alexandria and any other place around here. He was a fantastic manager. There had been a problem of some kind in his family and he had been running the store in Kansas City, Kansas. Now that’s not a big city but it’s a pretty big city nevertheless. He had to leave. Then he wanted to come back to work and they sent him to Morris, Minnesota. The guy was capable of running a store that was five times as big as the one that we had and, man, did he run that store and did they do business. But he retired and after he retired why he volunteered to be the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and he did that for two or three years. So he’s the Homer that’s referred to in here. You will also find a reference. “You’ll notice by the article that Ted Fensky [ph?] has been named to make a study, that’s Theodore Fensky, a study of the feasibility of converting Morris in Crookston to college levels. I have not seen Ted as yet to speak but I believe that Tom Staler [ph?] was going to get information to him. There comes the name Tom Staler again. Well anyway, I have spoken to Delbert Anderson of Starbuck who is a member of the House Appropriations Committee and he is all for us. These letters should be sent direct to the people at the state capital. I feel it’s time to strike and if we can block the appropriations we’ll have more time to develop the need and so forth for the branch at Morris and Crookston. I feel this is hot stuff requiring immediate action.” This is the

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kind of thing that led to it going. Oh, I was going to just read to you on the back he says, "Share this letter with Warren," that would be Warren Galoon [ph?] "and Arnold Thompson, Homer Carpenter, and Tom Staler." So you asked who was pretty directly involved to begin with, why I just named them. Now there are certainly other people who became involved. You asked me, you wanted to put these things away. I also brought along the committee report that Dr. Beemler chaired that was published in January of 1959 and this is the one that came out in '59, the higher education report, a few of my speeches, and so on but at any rate—

Q: Can I ask you a few questions?

**Ed Morrison:** Yeah.

Q: Tell me about the training. I understand you had some special training so tell me about that.

**Ed Morrison:** Well, this is always dangerous to try to pick some names out but you asked me for the names of people who were involved early in this thing. I've given you a few. Ed LaFave [ph?] of course, Ed LaFave he was a great letter writer and boy he wrote a letter about anything with any contact that he could do and he did a wonderful job. Superintendent Oscar Miller at the high school here was, you know, the research, he could get research from other schools and the kind of stuff that we couldn't, we'd have real difficulty getting. He was very valuable. A.I. Johnson, Delbert Anderson, Clayton Gay [ph?], Ted Fensky we've mentioned all those people. Other senators and Faye Child who's already been mentioned, Stan Holmquist [ph?], Stan Holmquist I think he was the vice chairman of the committee and he's the guy who was our lead author on the bill. Bob Dunlap, Cliff Benson, Senator Cliff Benson, of course, and Don Sinclair [ph?], Don Sinclair was from up around the Crookston area. You'll find he's even mentioned in this same article that here. As far as local people around here, and believe me I could name hundreds, but I think of Bill Sandberg [ph?] who was the superintendent from Appleton. He served as one of the first presidents of the West Central Educational Development Association. Les Simpson [ph?] from Graceville, Ed Wheating [ph?] from Chicail [ph?] Phyllis Gozman [ph?] from Alberta and I, of course, should mention all members of the house or the senate. They're from this part of the state because they were all very supportive.

Q: You've mentioned all those names, Ed. What's the most important reason? Why

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were they so concerned about bringing UMM to Morris?

**Ed Morrison:** Because they all recognized this need which had been pointed out that there were four colleges in the western half of Minnesota and all the rest of them were on the other part. Here in this part of the state, why we had 27 percent of the graduates and seven percent of the schools or something like that. I mean it was just perfectly obvious that, it had been established that people who were a great distance from school were less likely to go to college than people who were close to a college. Now, as a net result they just thought that here was a fine school, a fine facility that conceivably the need for what it had been doing had passed because all of these schools, even including the Morris High School, had established an agricultural program in the school. And so there really wasn't the crying need that there was at one time for people to be trained in agricultural pursuits.

Q: You mentioned that one of the things that WCEDA did you would go to the state capital and you would lobby but what were some of the other tactics that you used to sort of convince legislators to be supportive?

**Ed Morrison:** Well we did have meetings with them and we did mail, send them information. We had the train. You know 1957 was the year that I was president of the Minnesota Newspaper Association so I had a few other things to do at that time too but, boy, this was when the iron was hot and the time to get some things organized. Our main activity though was really during the 1959 session is when it really came to a head. I mean the '57 thing we just got the wheels turning, you know what I'm trying to say by that? There was Dr. Beemler's committee that was appointed and the Higher Education Committee was appointed and fortunately we had good friends on both of those. So you get the wheels in motion so you can begin to present a good case. Let's put it that way. At any rate, during the 1959 session why we did have— Mike Delvin [ph?] was a good friend of mine and he represented the American Railways. They always had an entertainment room at the newspaper conventions for years and years and years. I had written a few things favorable to the railroads about various things. Anyway we were good friends and so I went and talked with Mike and I said, "You know wouldn't it be kind of fun to take a bunch of legislators out to Morris and show them what's actually there instead of just talking about it?" He thought it was a great idea. Well let me just say that I think that he provided some things on the train car that we didn't have anything to do with but at any rate there were a number of legislators who came out here and they had a good time. We enjoyed having them. I think that they became sort of apostles for our cause and so I'm real glad that it all worked out. And, of course, Ed LaFave wrote a letter to everyone who came afterwards and thanked

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them for coming. That kind of thing is invaluable and so give him credit for some of that kind of thing.

Q: You pointed out the fact that there was a very large educational need to have the school in Morris but I'm imagining there was also a very large economic impact to having UMM in Morris.

**Ed Morrison:** Yes.

Q: Tell me about that.

**Ed Morrison:** Well, I suppose that that was an element. To be perfectly honest with you, I was carried away with the real need for it here and I guess I never really seriously thought about the economic impact. I'm sure that an economic impact was immense, still is, but I'm sorry I just never really got carried away with that. I was so determined that people in Minnesota would know that first this crush of students was coming; secondly, that it's clear as a bell that there's higher college attendance if you're somewhere near a college, the presence of a college. And I thought of the cultural advantages of being here too being perfectly honest with you. We talked about my wife was president of the Concert and Lecture Series and she worked with a guy from the university. It's horrible I can't remember his name anymore. But at any rate, he came out when we had our Concert and Lecture Series. But then when the university got established here why she immediately became the chairman of the group to organize the Concert and Lecture Series here at the university and worked with Dr. Briggs of course on it and the same gentleman came out from Minneapolis for the first one of those here and gave it a big welcome. We had culture that we had— see the Concert and Lecture Series as itself had died because we didn't get enough support for it until the university came along but when the university came along why that—

Q: Your memento [ph?].

**Ed Morrison:** Yeah.

Q: What were the other towns that were vying for this university?

**Ed Morrison:** Well, they were vying for college but Montevideo definitely was vying for

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a college and Alexandria of course but we got a lot of support from Alexandria right from the word go, even from their representatives and their senators and so on. We got a lot of support. Fergus Falls [ph?] ended up with a junior college. I think that there was some thought at one time that, no, forget about Morris, just establish one down at Redwood Falls or Marshall. The trouble was that that wasn't— and Marshall certainly was a-- we fully supported that but Marshall wasn't as critically bad off as we were for our distance to college. We were worse off than anybody, any other town you could identify really and it was just the right thing to do. We heard suggestions, well if it doesn't need to be an agricultural high school anymore, why make a prison out of it, all kinds of things. Eventually we kept on talking and kept on meeting and one of the things when you're doing something like this, well if I didn't know every one of the legislators by name I knew 90 percent of them by name and could call their name when I walked down the hall. I wasn't much of a drinker but we saw them at the bars at night and things like that. But the thing when we met with them lots of times we'd go and listen to presentations on some of their favorite topics and they enjoyed you sitting and talking with them about what they're interested in so we did that. We sat and talked with them about the things that they're interested in. Then finally they'd ask us a little well how's it coming? We'd say, "Well, it seems to be gaining ground all the time." So we just really— and, you know, I saw the legislators at the Minnesota newspaper meetings. Of course we always invited the legislators over for a big dinner and many, many of them came and so I got a chance to visit with them there. I don't know.

Q: It sounds like your position as a newspaper person was a real advantage to the campaign.

**Ed Morrison:** Well I think so. I think most legislators like to get along with newspaper people and I like to get along with legislators too. One of the philosophies that I've had all my life and I told this to the county board and I've told it to— that I am deeply appreciative of anybody who will spend their time in a public office. It's a lot of grief and it's a lot of work and I don't care if you're in the city council or if you're on the county board, it's a lot of work and the legislature is no different either. And I told them frequently that I appreciated the fact that they were there serving. Sure, I was a Republican and I told you I served underneath Carl Anderson's committee for years and years and years. It didn't really make much difference to me whether they were Republicans or Democrats or Farmer Laborites [ph?] or whatever they were. If they were working there why they were intending to serve the people and the public and I appreciated their doing so.

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