

Tom Mahoney Oral History Transcript

Date: June 7, 2017

Interview: Tom Herrin

Tom H.: My name is Tom Herrin. I'm here today June 7, 2017 in the McGinnis Room of the library here at UMM. I'm interviewing Tom Mahoney, who is both a UMM alumni and a former staff from UMM. Thank you Tom for agreeing to do this interview.

Tom M.: You're welcome.

Tom H.: I think we'll just start off with you giving us a bit of your early background and how you ended up here in Morris.

Tom M.: All right. I actually began my college career on the Twin Cities campus, and I was a rural kid who had way too much fun on the Twin Cities campus and after the first two quarters dropped out and came, transferred to Morris, actually did everything by phone and mail. I arrived on the campus the night before classes started without ever having seen the campus. And I was somewhat in shock. I grew up in the Minnesota River Valley and about probably 2 hours into the trip up here I said, "What have you done this time? You've got to start paying attention." But, I was in Gay Hall, and I didn't have a roommate for a few weeks, which was fine with me. And began classes, started meeting people, my intentions had been to stay here for 1 quarter and be back on the Twin Cities campus in the winter quarter and 50 years later I retired. [laughter] Or, actually more than that... 42 years later I retired, so, from being here.

Tom H.: How long were you on the Twin Cities campus?

Tom M.: I was just there really two quarters. And that was 1966. Fall '66 and Spring of '67. And it was a disaster. My advisor said he didn't have time to advise students because he was taking his oral exams. It was... and the difference between my experience there and the experience here, I mean, there just is no, no comparison whatsoever. So, I think my first advisor was Bernice Lund. And after our first meeting she agreed that she probably was not the correct advisor for me and I believe Joe Jessup became my advisor after that. Joe was both a psychology faculty member and he was the director of counseling for many years. And Joe was among those very important early experience people for me at UMM. And began the, me learning how to think, would be the answer to that.

Tom H.: So he would have been instrumental then in your deciding on a psychology major?

Tom M.: Probably not Joe as much as Cliff Gray, Ernie Kemble. Joe was probably just very instrumental in me deciding to stay at UMM.

Tom H.: Ok.

Tom M.: And getting me introduced to the... I was not a very outgoing person, so the first at least four weeks in my dorm room I did not meet anybody. I sneaked in and out the doors of Gay Hall and finally... I don't know if you want stories like this or not...

Tom H.: Yes, Yes.

Tom M.: Finally, a guy who became my good friend, but is just this big blond haired guy, knocked on my door and said, "We need a fourth for bridge." And I said, "Oh no, that's okay, that's okay." "We need a fourth for bridge." "Okay." And that's how I started to socialize and eventually Jim Odden, who I mentioned earlier, said he wanted to room with me and I said that was fine. And, that was the beginning of that experience I guess. Intellectually I started coming alive at UMM. Which didn't happen, in high school, it was real easy for me, and playing pool and being downtown Minneapolis was really easy for me, but it wasn't until I got here that I started to do stuff.

Tom H.: So when you came you still were a freshmen?

Tom M.: Correct, correct. Yes, I got a 1.1 GPA at my U of M Twin Cities experience. [laughter] Part of that was very bad advising, and part of it was just me.

Tom H.: So what was it like just being a student on this campus in the late 60s, early 70s? Which was an active time.

Tom M.: A very active time. I'm sure other people have done the settings of the dormitories. The women were locked in at night with the gates that rolled down in the dormitories. And the... I

wasn't politically active to begin with, but then the turmoil of the war, Kent State was a big turning point. I can just remember that the whole... you know the nice thing about the campus was that you knew 90% of the people, at least nodding acquaintances, and people listened to other people. You know, they went back and forth and that was very good for learning about stuff. Kent State was the first time that I saw the campus become absolutely divided, and very, very tense. I thought that the administration Jack and Steve handled it beautifully by mainly staying out of it. There was a confrontation at the flag, which I am sure has been mentioned by several people. And then they opened up the auditorium, they, if I remember correctly, they closed classes. I'm not sure, I just didn't go. [laughter] Which wasn't an unusual event for me either. There was just a lot of stuff going on and the faculty were just amazing at being involved in the students, being open with the students. We of course did lots of social activities, partying, at faculty houses. Ernie Kemble's famous farm that he planted thousands of thousands of trees, and had the annual smelt and rat fry. [laughter] And I can remember John Engle, who was the art faculty, he and Gigi hosting people. I used to watch football nearly every Sunday with John. So it was kind of a mixed bag of a very tumultuous world and a very warm center here at UMM.

Tom H.: What was the, what was it like with the community of Morris? Just living in Morris and going to school here? Did you interact with people in town?

Tom M.: Yes, it was kind of a, a hugely mixed bag. About that time, I started to let my hair grow very long and a long beard. And it went from being one of the people who went downtown, to being one of the people singled out when you went downtown. And real examples of the old Jergesen's grocery store, I had walked, I had been in there many times. But as my hair got longer, each time I came in after my hair was long, I noticed someone was walking with me to make sure that I was not shoplifting. People, this is of course, I wish I could remember, Louie was his name, there was a bartender at the municipal, and he did not card people. And he was very open and didn't care how people looked. But more and more some of the local people became uptight about the college kids and it completely, I should say about the hippies, more so than anything. And a few, I mean, there were almost no minorities here at that time, and the few that were here were I would guess treated more as a curiosity. But being a hippie, being anti-war, was probably the harshest part of the interaction. I also got to know townies later on, would probably be in the early 70s, I ended up doing a lot of work in the area. And got to know a lot more people that way, but had to really do some battles to not be in trouble. One of my first work experiences was with a, a friend of mine's father back went out, and among other things, he had as enterprises was a field crew who did spraying and so on and so forth. And the daughter brought me on the field crew, you know, I had a farm background, I knew tractors and all of that. And I walked up and she introduced me to the crew, and the first crew member, and I put out my hand, turned his head and spit. And so, that was kind of the way. By the end, we would go to the Lariat together and have a great time. But that took many months. So, that was kind of what the, the atmosphere was a mixed bag. Everything from discrimination to curiosity to genuine friendships.

Tom H.: What made you decide to stay here? After you graduated?

Tom M.: After I graduated?

Tom H.: Mhmm.

Tom M.: That's a good question.

Tom H.: Or before.

Tom M.: It was really, I probably had decided to stay here before I graduated because there was kind of a break between my end of my college career and my actual graduation. I had some incompletes that hung out there for a long time. And I liked the area. I did do a short stint back in the Twin Cities. Well, I should say, I'll go back a little. I worked in the Twin Cities most summers on construction.

Tom H.: Ok.

Tom M.: Then after I wasn't going to classes regularly any more would be, between the end of classes and graduating, I did do a stint in the Twin Cities and decided I did not want to be in the Twin Cities. I wanted to be back out here, I liked the area. I had gotten into fishing and hunting which I did very little of growing up. And I had a real wide range of friends, both from school and out of school by then, and just decided that that was what I wanted to do. I was working my last job off the campus, well, I shouldn't say that. I had, I was doing all sorts of building silos, my last full time job was tarring roofs and I got a call that Eric Klinger had gotten a grant and was wondering if I would be interested in interviewing. And that of course brought me back to the campus, and I think that was around 1973?

Tom H.: Ok.

Tom M.: And I finished out the grant projects with him. And then I did a stint as a organizer for senior citizens in the area, and then the Continuing Education was doing a film on farm

transitions between the generations. And my family farm had just gone through transitions and they asked me if I wanted to help out on that and be part of it. And then I started doing grants work for Roger McCannon and Tom McRoberts in Continuing Education, and that just kind of was the path that I went down.

Tom H.: Ok. What was it like working for Eric Klinger?

Tom M.: It was great actually. There was Steve [Bartay?] and myself were co-directors of the project in the years I was there. And Eric truly involved all the staff and other than Steve and I, I think, all the other staff were undergraduate students. And we had weekly meetings, at least weekly meetings, often at his house, often at the, what's now, what was called the Back Door, which doesn't exist, but is out there. I don't even know what they call it now, the Prairie Inn? I think it's got a new name, the North something? At any rate...

Tom H.: Oh, the motel?

Tom M.: The motel out there, yeah. And he incorporated students' ideas, he encouraged students to write up their own experiments and helped get those actually become part of the, part of the research. It was for I think all, anyone who was involved in it, it was really a great learning experience. It was rigorous, but we had an incredible amount of fun. Probably the most fun of any occupation, any job that I've had was the years in the fantasy project. There was...

Tom H.: How many years did you work on that?

Tom M.: I want to say, I brought my vita here just in case this would happen. I'm not good at, I don't think sequentially at all. So, let's see. I have that as being, I have 73-76. So approximately 3 years.

Tom H.: And it was during that period that you actually ended up graduating was during that period.

Tom M.: Yes, yes, yep. I finished my degree during that time, I think probably in 74. In a matter of fact, Eric was instrumental in saying, if you really want to keep this job, you've really got to get this done.

Tom H.: An incentive.

Tom M.: Yes, exactly [laughter].

Tom H.: Let's talk a little bit about, you were the founder and director of the Office of, Grants Management Office. Can you tell me just a little bit, or tell us just a little bit, about how that came about and what existed before that?

Tom M.: Kind of the... I was mentioning that the Continuing Education, we called the empire, or the Irish mafia, was McCannon and McRoberts, had most of their staff in one form or another being paid out of grants. And while I was working for them, we wrote a lot of grants. And I was pretty much into the style of finding the next grant to continue my salary and other peoples' salaries as well. And about that, this had been going on for quite a while, so there was also times of unemployment because the grant money didn't happen, and this and that, and then we got Bettina Blake as the dean. And at one point, Bettina said that she was done, she was sick of being embarrassed at the regents' meetings when they read off external funds, you know, awarded during the last period, and Morris was always 0. Part of that was that most of the faculty grants that were being got at that time were for work during the summer, and Continuing Education had an agreement that anything done during the summer had to go through them. But that meant that the awards were actually made to the Continuing Education on the Twin Cities campus, and did not show up as being reflecting anything from Morris. And we, Bettina said she wanted to have me start working on finding funding for things other than my own salary. And that she would support part of my salary to do that, well, I think, I started out at 25% or 35% time. We got I think \$500 from the Sponsored Projects Office on the Twin Cities campus. And of course my favorite story is, about this time, the Continuing Education got a brand new refrigerator. And when they delivered the refrigerator, there was a big box. So we took the box and we cut a window in it and put Grants Development Office over it and that was the first official Grants Development Office. And there was someplace a photo of Bettina standing next to her Grants Development Office. So we went along with that, that kind of a, I was still in, within Continuing Education, for, boy o boy o boy, back to the vita. Ok so that probably started, probably sometime around 1980, I started working with Continuing Education. And probably somewhere around 1990 maybe, 89, in there, I was finding it to be problematic that I wasn't employed by the campus, and that I wasn't negotiating... my salary was coming from, at that point, at least three places, and sometimes four. And so I wanted to make sure that the vision that Bettina had, that this office was about getting funding for opportunities for the faculty and staff and students at UMM first and foremost. And that there was always a conflict that Continuing Education had their needs, and that's who I reported to. And so there would be prioritizing was becoming a problem for me. And talked to Roger, talked to Bettina, talked to, you know, everybody at that

particular time, and everyone agreed let's go, let's make it an office that reports to UMM. And then what they indirect report to the Twin Cities Sponsored Projects Administration Office, and then we got them to increase their funding to have this as being the branch office out here. And to make sure that their priorities were taken care of, and their priorities were administrative, not necessarily on the side of getting the grants, but to make sure, as I always said, that people didn't go to jail after they got the grants.

Tom H.: So you had to work with ORTA and...

Tom M.: Mhmm.

Tom H.: other organizations on the Twin Cities campus.

Tom M.: Mhmm.

Tom H.: How did that work? I mean, how was that?

Tom M.: It worked very, very well.

Tom H.: Ok.

Tom M.: And it was somewhat of a unusual experience for some of the offices here. But ORTA, I mean they were, ORA, ORTA, and now SPA. And I was, you know, part of their, them through all the names and... they were extremely supportive of the efforts here. We had not only financial support but there was not a question about being able to call somebody down there and talk to them. There was not a competitive mode from their perspective, we were such, really such small potatoes, and yet it looked good to them to be able to, they could go to their meetings and say, we are supporting the Morris campus, you know, look at this, and as an example, last year when I got the award, one of the, the former associate vice presidents came up. And I just thought, that's the kind of thing, they came out here all the time, they gave seminars for the faculty. They provided for a time period when we had, now I'm forgetting his name at the moment, he was the vice president for research on the Twin Cities campus and he came out here and we had him and wined him and dined him and he loved the Morris campus and he created a fund specifically for Morris faculty to apply to that was coming out of his office. They eventually, I don't know if I

should say this on the tape or not, but Duluth had a much bigger operation, had tons more money coming through, and yet they allowed us, meaning me, to be the first non, the first coordinate campus to be able to submit grants directly to a funding agency. This did not please Duluth at all. But it was kind of a sign of how close they had become to the Morris operation and I think it was maybe even a little experimental on their part to see... Prior to that, when we wrote a grant proposal, we had to finish each year, we had to send it to Minneapolis, it had to be reviewed by someone else there. Then, from there, it was sent to the actual funding agency. So it added at least a week to the deadline for our faculty. When, when our award was made, the award was made to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus, and someone who had never met the faculty member who was involved in this negotiated the terms of the award. And so there was often some very bumpy parts about that. And they first allowed us to submit directly, and then probably maybe a year, two years, later to actually receive the awards here. And that truly upset one of the other campuses. [laughter]

Tom H.: I imagine. Two things. Can you talk a little bit about the success of the office, or the growth of, of your activities in the office?

Tom M.: Yeah, I'm going to do this in a couple of different ways. But I was never of the opinion that the amount of money, per se, brought in by the office was the correct measure, even though we did well. And it's still doing very, very well. The fact that this was an undergraduate only campus, and that faculty here have a responsibility to students that often is not the case on the other campuses, I mean they do advising, they have students standing outside of their doors, and then we are coming along asking them, or suggesting to them that they should be writing a grant at this point. And then you have to execute the grant. And my belief, and it was shared by Bettina and Steve Granger, which, you know, the character in his own world, that it was what impact projects had on the campus was the true measure. And one of the first early successes of the new Grants Office was the Title III grants from the Department of Education. And I think they, they did a whole bunch of things. The amounts of money were, were significant. But it was the campus discussions they brought about, the new General Education, adult advising changes, the starting of the development program came out, was begun through a grant, an external public grant. We, I was as pleased with getting a grant from the Lake Regions Art Council for \$500 as I was for \$100,000 from the Department of Education. You know, it was like, that was going to have a direct impact-- we were going to get a theater production, we were going to get this or that. And those were the things that were very important. As we went along, the dollars got, we got more dollars. Grants business, especially on this campus, is a feast and famine. Part of that is when you have your active grant writing faculty and staff, and staff did a lot of grants, a lot of grants. When you have them get a successful grant, they're not writing the next year. They're executing that. So you get this kind of a wave pattern. I just had lunch with the current director, and he was talking about this was, this year was one of those down ones. But, yeah, Roger Wareham has done a wonderful job. He's really taken the Grant Office to a new level. And I feel very, very good about that. He, he was, I did hire him, and then he was here for, I don't

remember how many years, and then he went off to be the director of a Grants Office in Eau Claire, and then came back to direct the office here. And so when I left, I felt the place was in very, very good hands.

Tom H.: Okay.

Tom M.: One of the other things, and I don't know if Maddie touched on this or not, that was unique about UMM was the Grants Office and the Development Office worked together. The, We weren't the... the Development Office on the Twin Cities referred to Sponsored Project Administration as the dark side. And we, a little bit between us, it was, it just made sense. If we were going to get an award that was really a gift, then we made sure it was a gift. If we could get it double counted for stats, we did that. There was no, oh, I'm going to take that one because I can, because it would look better. And that was more than just Maddie and I. It was kind of the sense of the campus cooperating. So that was a very, a very, that was pleasant because having strong relationships with the Twin Cities, I would hear people going, "Oh, that damn foundation, they're going to be in there and trying to steal that..." and I go, "uhhh, okay, that's not our problem. We don't have that as an issue out here."

Tom H.: Yep. Are there any other particular grants that you worked on that you are just really, were really pleased about getting. You mentioned the Title III, and that, that was... what was the size of that Title III, do you remember?

Tom M.: I don't. I really don't remember.

Tom H.: Ok.

Tom M.: Roger would be able to fill that in. We, I think received three Title III grants in decreasing amounts. It was in the 100,000s but....

Tom H.: Ok.

Tom M. I just... again, I really never did want that to be the top of my consciousness. It was like, okay, what's happening with this. And I would say, oh boy, there's a lot of them. Jim Cotter's geology National Science Foundation grants to encourage women in geology were really, really

a great thing. The biomass... getting the biomass grant was huge. We had, we had some huge, wonderful grants that didn't, that never had the impact that we wanted. But we did get a lot of things done towards increased participation in science and math by under... for underserved populations: women, minorities, things like that. I'm trying to think of the... our state arts' grants were always a big pleasure. It's interest... I haven't really thought about this in terms of what... there were... hmm. Part of what happened for me is that I went from spending most of my time working closely with faculty in finding the grant money, writing the proposal, getting it submitted to the agency. When the very famous transplant surgeon in the Twin Cities made a huge mistake and, I think we got a, the U of M got a \$26 million fine. And there was a period where no one at the University of Minnesota administration could speak to any of the granting agency unless there was an attorney present on both ends. And that came during my time and so my shifting of how I spent my time went from 90% doing the, the fun work, to 90% doing the administrative work. To, now we had a whole bunch of other steps that we had to go through and it didn't make a \$500 Lake Region Arts Council grant had the same requirements as a million dollar Department of Energy grant. Our Department of Justice grants with Sandy, those really were important. And very, very fun. I think they are still, I know that several of the programs started under those grants are still going. I think they might still even have some funding from DoJ. I've been retired 9 years, so a lot of this is, such, way past history, it's like oh, did I work here? [laughter]

Tom H.: Yeah, well we were interested in your experience so it's, that's what we're, the purpose of this interview is to talk about your experiences while you were here. And this is giving us this wonderful background. If you were, if you were to kind of look at the overall growth of this, of this Grants Development Office, is it reflective of sort of a trend on campus of this type of efforts to create these types of offices?

Tom M.: No, I don't think... so far as the Grants Office and, I think, to a large degree the development effort, when I started working on grants to the vast majority of the faculty, grant money was dirty. That the state had an obligation to support whatever they wanted to do. And there was some really great resistance, we almost were not allowed by our chancellor to submit the Department of Education grant. And so Jack thought that, how did he say it, "development is suspect, grants are bad", I think was one of his quotes to me. And so, that was a, that was a part of the culture, was that this outside money is bad for UMM. We, we have our thing, we don't want to have to answer to somebody else, because they are providing the funds. You know, the legislature should be providing it. That changed, and as that changed and that the faculty and staff were not able to serve the students, then finding the outside funds became more acceptable and actually desirable. And then I think we started getting a group of faculty here particularly that in their college career, they had experienced grants. Whereas the original 12, that was not something that had happened in their, in their experience.

Tom H.: Okay. And so, the need for the office reflects some changes that were taking place...

Tom M.: External changes. Completely external to UMM. But, if you wanted to provide certain things there was not going to be legislative funds. There was a time... when I was an undergraduate, you could come up with an idea, and somebody would get it to the Legislature, and you know, there was a really good chance that you would have the funding for it. Then all of a sudden, the funding went down and if you had a really good idea, that was it. I mean, and students continually had really good idea, ideas, that everybody wanted to go forward with. And I think of the biomass, that was really student motivated from day one.

Tom H.: Is that reflective of what was going on on other campuses around the state or the country or is it, was it unique to Morris?

Tom M.: It was reflective of what was happening to liberal arts campuses. The, the research intensive campuses like the Twin Cities had been doing their research funding, and they were in the external funding business, you know, from day one. The state universities at that time weren't really into the external funding, they were of the same culture that, you know, what we need, we go to the legislature, they provide it, and you know, this is what it should be. But that started to go away and then of, yeah, when I think about it, the MnSCU system started developing grants offices, I had all sorts of calls from the community colleges, and some of the other campuses of MnSCU saying "How does this work?" Do you want to come down and give a talk on how to develop, get a Grants Development Office going and things like that. So I think that was reflective of what was going on at the public institutions that were not research intensive but had service obligations, community obligations.

Tom H.: Okay. Is there anything that you would like to talk about that we haven't touched on...

Tom M.: Well one of the things that was in Steve's email was the Phi Mu Delta fraternity.

Tom H.: I was going to get to that.

Tom M.: Oh, you were going to get to that. Okay. [laughter]

Tom H.: Is there a story there?

Tom M.: There was, it was nothing but stories. Actually, the, you know, the downtown campus relations, I was remembering the Cougar cage that was in, that was in the Merchant's Hotel, and the LaGrande Hotel that had, you know, 90% students staying in it. But the, the fraternity thing was something that I had no clue about at all and never really thought I would, I didn't even really know what a fraternity was when I arrived at Morris. I had some image, it was something that, well wealthy people, wealthy people's kids got into, so it never occurred to me. Phi Mu Delta and I think probably almost everyone would say the movie Animal House and Phi Mu Delta were pretty, pretty similar with the exception that there was, the Phi Mu Delta people, guys were really good guys. 99%. I think 5 Distinguished Alumni Awards from Phi Mu Delta people. Some people who turned out really, really well, but you have people that were good people who knew how to have fun. And we, we had a lot of fun, there's no question. At any rate, what turned out for me was that most of the people that I liked to hang out with were either a member of this fraternity or were, were hanging with the same group and the other social, I mean there were a couple of other fraternities, and there was a couple other organizations that, none of that seemed to fit quite right. And, I'm trying to think of... so, the, it had begun before I got there and I was never a really active, active member. I, I did my part but I never lived at the house, so I don't have all of the great house stories or anything like that. But I did develop lifelong friends out of the fraternity and the fraternity as I understand it got kicked out of the national fraternity by admitting women. And the national said no, you cannot have women. And in the true Morris tradition of, you know, we include everybody, they went ahead and they pledged and accepted women as members and they lost their national affiliation, which made me very... I was not... Several years after I had been there. So I was really proud of 'em, I thought, good for you guys. And that's kind of the story I want to tell about Phi Mu Delta, it was very much fun. There were no, I don't think... there was no hazing that I know of. I remember I was, when they said to you, you have to pledge, and I said... and they said you have to do what everybody says, and I said well I'll never make it through it. And there was, it was never anything like that, that I was aware of. And they always had, when they had meetings, the end of the meetings was for the good and welfare of the fraternity, and that was anybody could say anything they wanted to as long as they started out for the good and welfare. And it really was a place where people communicated honestly, and it ranged to everything from we need to do better up on campus, people are really sick of us, why didn't someone find the tests for [laughter]... what's going on with that. So it was, it allowed, and everybody could say what they wanted to, and no one was allowed to yell at somebody else for doing that, that was a good lesson for everybody to learn. So that's kind of the Phi Mu Delta. I'm still in touch with an awful lot of the folks.

Tom H.: So what was the end result of the, of their admitting women, they were kicked out of the national...

Tom M.: Right, so part of the reason a lot of people had for joining a fraternity was for networking. And you, a lot of the national networking fraternity, and so Phi Mu Delta was a national fraternity, chapters primarily out east, and that was of interest to some people, and some people actually made very good use of that. But one of the rules was that it was male only. And because they admitted women, we lost the national charter, so there is no longer...

Tom H.: Some of the benefits. You lost the benefits.

Tom M.: Right, so I would think, if I tried to join the national, you know, as a national member, I probably would not be allowed now, I'm not sure, I might be grandfathered in, because I was a member before the change. Nor would I ever try to do that. But I think that was the upshot of it was that the national association, the networking with people from other chapters was severed.

Tom H.: Okay. So bear with me just a minute here, let's see if I've... I've missed any important things. You've covered most of this in your discussion so it's...

Tom M.: Louie's Lower Level. [laughter]

Tom H.: Yes, some of us who've come back to, that is not Louie's Lower Level.

Tom M.: No, not Louie's Lower Level. But the original Louie's Lower Level and the bridge games were, it was an incredible mixing place for faculty and students and of course the change in the time but I mean there was always a level of, a cloud of smoke...

Tom H.: Yes.

Tom M.: was about 5 feet. And that never ever ceased. The cards for playing bridge, Louie's Lower Level had sound panels that dropped down with lights in 'em. The cards were put up in the sound panel. And then the next group who wanted to play just reached up and brought the cards down. And so you'd be having... Mary Martell who was with Student Activities playing with Iftikar Khan, and you know faculty members, students, staff. And it was, it definitely, a unique place. And it never really got... Once it left, it left. I mean, yeah.

Tom H.: To try to recreate it...

Tom M.: It was a different time too. It was a different world.

Tom H.: Were they serving food in there at the time.

Tom M.: Yes.

Tom H.: That you were there. See that makes a difference too, is that it was... and they served it all day.

Tom M.: They served it all day. It was a lunch spot for people who didn't have a food contract at that time.

Tom H.: Right.

Tom M.: When I arrived the food service was in Behmler. It was on the main floor of Behmler, right. And I don't remember when it moved it moved out of there. Yeah, I was really only on campus I think two quarters, and then the spring quarter of my first year here, three of us rented a house downtown, actually from the Dennis Sager's, who was the chief of the, what was it titled, sergeant for UMM. So that was, that was a fun experience as well.

Tom H.: I was going to ask you that, so you were only on campus for a couple of quarters...

Tom M.: Right.

Tom H.: And then, your first year after here you... after your first year, you lived off campus.

Tom M.: I lived off campus. Rented that place is where, right, where the law offices are next to the post office downtown, it was a long time ago. ... And then we, the four of us lived over on Green River in one of the basements over there. I started renting farm places so that we probably

69 or 70, my first farm place was by Chokio, my second farm place was by Donnelly, my third was by Hancock, my fourth was by Cyrus. And now, looking... I can remember that sequentially [laughter] If you, do you want anecdotal stuff as...

Tom H.: Sure, absolutely.

Tom M.: I had this very fun little farm in Chokio. Great relationship with the landlord. And I'm sure the name John John has come up in the, in the oral histories sometime, but John Johnson was just this very, still is a very unique man. At any rate, I was, I had a party at the farm and I invited the landlord. And he was there. And the next thing I knew, someone yelled "Open the doors." And John John had just bought an Indian motorcycle that afternoon and drove it up the stairs into the living room, that was my landlord. [laughter] And needless to say, we had one other party after that and then the landlord said, "You know, the neighbors are just all over me. You gotta, I've got to actually, I've got to kick you out. I can't just say nothing, I have to kick you out or the neighbors are going to never let me live it down." So that was, that was kind of the beginning of the farm experience. But I had lived on a farm, grew up on a farm. I missed, I have never liked any of my stays in cities, so to get back out to farms was very nice...

Tom H.: Do you currently live on a farm?

Tom M.: I do, yes. We have a farm outside of Hancock and we've been there 33 or 34 years. I met Maddie my wife at UMM.

Tom H.: Yes.

Tom M.: And, did she tell you the story of us meeting?

Tom H.: No she didn't.

Tom M.: Oh, she didn't. Okay.

Tom H.: She didn't volunteer that.

Tom M.: Oh, okay. Well, we met through the project on fantasy basically. And the reason that we met was Maddie had transferred here, she was living outside of Cyrus and she had a, a friend on campus who kept saying you gotta interview this woman for a job at the Fantasy project. And she kept not showing up for her interviews. And it turned out that she didn't know that she had an on-campus mailbox, no one had told her that. So we'd put the notice in her mailbox... and we interviewed and she did well in the interview, there's no question about that. So Steve said " I think we should hire her," and I said, "No way, this woman's a flake." [laughter] She didn't even know she had a mailbox. So we went back and forth, so I said okay, we can hire her, but she reports to you. Me, I have nothing to do with her. And that's, so we've been married 34 years or 33 years, we got married the year after we bought the farm. We decided that was... we had enough contracts going that, that would be a lot easier. So that's how I met, that's how I met my wife.

Tom H.: Got any more stories?

Tom M.: Oh, I could do stories for almost forever, but I don't think we... [laughter] I don't think that's the object of this. I'd name names, but... Anything else that you can think of?

Tom H.: No, you've, you really covered the things that I was interested in hearing about. Sort of like your experience in particular, very good.

Tom M.: Yeah, again, just, looking at the kind of... the Cliff Gray, Joe Jessup, Ernie, Ted Uehling, Eric, Bert Ahern, Truman Driggs. I mean, my god, these are very, very significant people to UMM. Tom McRoberts and Don Spring and Jim Olsen and Jack Imholte and Steve Granger and Bettina. Until this new, until Michelle, I had worked, I had been either a student or had worked at UMM for every provost and chancellor, because Rodney Briggs was here when I arrived as a student. And then I worked for years with Jack and Dave Johnson and Sam Schuman. So, and then...

Tom H.: They were all very different people. How was it working for, and with, this whole group?

Tom M.: They were all very, very different. And I never had a direct report to a chancellor. I worked with a lot of deans and I suppose I should have thought about that a little bit more. Bettina Blake was just a wonderful person. Okay, one more story. Maddie and I often played tricks on each other and so I didn't know any French and Bettina Blake, the professor of French, was coming and I was going to be reporting to her, indirectly to begin with. And so I said to

Maddie, I would really like to say, "Welcome to the prairie" in French and without batting an eye, she gave me a French phrase. So I practiced it and practiced it and practiced it. Bettina arrives and I said, I am Tom Mahoney, non j'en ai sois le poulet. And she said, you don't eat chicken? You don't like chicken? [laughter] And I went, she got me. Bettina was a very strong, she really did, she had an impact on the culture of this campus in a positive way. And for someone who had never been in a rural area it was just good. Are we running...?

Tom H.: No, we can go as long as we want.

Tom M.: And, there were some other deans that I just won't go into. Bettina was the most significant dean and I had been with the Drug Information Center with the dean prior to that, actually, three of us students founded the Drug Information Center. Which, if you want another interesting story. We, you know, it was time when drugs were pretty free, and so on and so forth, and the Hancock School called us and they wanted us to give an informational lecture to their students. So we prepared all of this information on marijuana and amphetamines and acid and all of this stuff. And we got there, and what they wanted us to talk about was coffee. [laughter] Which we were totally unprepared to do. And it was not good, they, they got back to Dean Bopp was his name that we were really the wrong people to be in this business. [laughter] Every chancellor had their own style, some better and worse. I don't really want to get into that, each dean had their own style. Every dean supported my grants office. Strongly and well. Including Bart, and so I never complained about a dean who was trying to undercut my office. And that was good. And in the true UMM tradition when Bettina set this up, the grants office was going to report to the academic side, they were not going to report to the administrative side. And she said that was important, that would keep the faculty academic mission as the core as opposed to simply bringing in funds or having it be better for administrative purposes rather than academic purposes. And that has continued with the support of the campus ever since then. And that, that was another fact of the SPA in the Twin Cities. They got that. That this was reported to the academic side, and they liked it. I think that... unless you have questions, I think I probably...

Tom H.: Okay. Well thank you very much.

Tom M.: Your welcome.

Tom H.: This has been a very good... thank you.

Tom M.: Alright.