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**Narrator**

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**University of Minnesota Morris**  
**Interviewer**

**March 27, 2023**

**Interview done for Retired Faculty/Staff Oral History Project**

CD: 00:01 Okay. My name's Christian Diederich, and I am here with Roland Guyotte in his office in Camden Hall. It is March 27, 2023, at about 10:00 AM. So, Roland, what initially brought you to Morris?

RG: 00:20 Well, I won't say that I had burned out on graduate school, but I was interested in taking some time off. I had been—I had done three years of graduate work at Northwestern University, and I had also come from the East Coast. I'm a first-generation college student who grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, not Minnesota, and I went to Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

00:59 And I thought that it would be a good thing for me to try, and I went to a conference of the Organization of American Historians, and I met Wilbert Ahern, also a Northwestern PhD who was teaching at the University of Minnesota Morris. And he suggested that I come up there for a year because he was going to go on a special leave so that he could develop some competence in what was called the TTT, Training Teacher Trainers. So I showed up in the fall of 1969, and I never went away.

CD: 01:48 Awesome. So what has then kept you at Morris over the years since it was only supposed to be that one-year stint?

RG: 01:54 Right. Well, I enjoyed the setting, except for the winters. I became very good friends with Bert Ahern after he came back from his one-year leave. I was mentored by Truman Driggs, a truly remarkable fellow who had taught—from Arkansas who had taught from here and there, in Pennsylvania and Utah, among other places, and had settled

in at Morris in 1963 not long after the school was opened in 1960.

02:41 And most of the professors were relatively young. Some of them, they came and went. And, of course, there were the students, remarkable students. And, indeed, in those early years, I wasn't that much older than they were since I started out at 23, age 23. And I am still in touch with some of them.

03:12 Morris did not have graduate program, but it did have large classes and introductory courses mostly. And they had bright undergraduate students, juniors and seniors usually, serve as discussion leaders or teaching assistants. And I am still in touch with—at least by Facebook with several of the people that I worked with between 1970 and 1974.

CD: 03:49 Awesome. So being a history professor here, has it always been history? Did you start with history in school? Or were there any other kind of disciplines or academics that you thought about going into before?

RG: 04:01 Well, I was always interested in history and in general the social sciences. I, for example, as an undergraduate had a young sociologist that I—I enjoyed working with him, and he's now a very elderly sociologist at the University of Chicago, having left Brown long ago.

04:29 There were political science courses that I took, and some of them were with a very young political scientist, Peter Magrath, M-A-G-R-A-T-H, who wound up being president at the University of Minnesota. And there's a Magrath Library on the Twin Cities campus and along with the Wilson Library.

04:49 And I was a student—active on the student newspaper. That was something of a thrill, but I don't think I ever really wanted to be a journalist. I tell people sometimes that if my father hadn't wanted me to, I might have gone to law school. Being a first-generation student that—the folks were eager to make sure that I would be able to do reasonably well in life, and law or medicine or engineering or those sorts of—business, those sorts of things were on

their minds more than on mine. I was enjoying being an undergraduate.

05:32 But I wound up going to Northwestern in history and in the fall of 1967 and I—there were a couple of professors that I had known about because I'd read their books, and so I took classes. But, of course, the late '60s were a turbulent time. There were people who burned their draft—males who burned their draft cards. There were people who demonstrated. During my first year at Morris in '69, '70, in May of '70, there was a terrible shooting of students by National Guardsmen at Kent State in Ohio.

06:18 And actually—although Morris had versions of all of these things in those years, and I helped out and advised some. And it was nonetheless a relatively safe and sober place where one could be. And I remember—I'm trying to remember what year it was, but there was a march on Washington in the early '70s. My sister was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, and she came down from there to stay with my folks and go to this march. And there were 44 people from UMN, including the bus and some people who drove, and probably a couple actually hitchhiked all the way. And they stayed with my parents and slept on the floor in the basement, sleeping bags and all. And all of these things had something to do with connecting me to this place.

07:37 And again, I still keep up with some of them. I looked at a—people a little later. I looked at some photos in my study at home that were from 1984. And I said, “Oh, yes, I know what that person's doing now. Oh, yes, I know what that person's doing now.” And they're--it's a picnic and out at the Pomme de Terre Park.

08:05 And there's one photograph where four people at a table with spoons are reaching over and putting something in the other student's mouth. And one of those students is a UNESCO endowed professor of environmental history at the University of Arizona now. And another of those students became the owner of a small-town newspaper in Wisconsin, owner and editor. Interesting things, interesting things. And there's a young woman who—in the picture who lives in Morris at this point and—though she didn't

grow up here, but her husband was from Sauk Centre, and they stayed here.

CD: 08:58 Okay. So kind of talking on that a little bit more, what other noteworthy students or I guess just students have come through Morris, have come through your classes?

RG: 09:09 Well I taught an introductory class, which—at least one time, Introductory US. It had 210 students in it. And the old Cow Palace that people from the '70s remember, which much larger and it was ultimately rotated 90 degrees, and the high risers held a lot more students than the lower risers do now.

09:52 But in courses in what is now Imholte Hall, I had Lorie Skjerven, who came from a town of 400, in Plummer, Minnesota, who grew up to come to UMN and was a good student, political science. And she's now chief justice to the Minnesota Supreme Court. She graduated about 1982, I think, and—or '83.

10:24 There was Randy Pearson, who came from Red Lake Falls, a small town, again, in northwest Minnesota. Red Lake Falls, another one about 400 people. And he grew up to be not only a physician but a professor of gastroenterology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and I keep up with him. And I don't keep up with Lorie Skjerven Gildea—that's her married name—but I am certainly aware of her.

11:00 Later on in the '90s we had another law student, Lois Regnier, and she is now the president of the Association of Minnesota District Judges. And she works—Lorie Gildea is a solid Republican appointed by Tim Pawlenty. Lois Regnier is a solid Democrat, but they seem to get along dealing with justice issues.

11:29 Tim Droske, who grew up in Wisconsin, came to us. Was a very good student. Went to Northwestern law school, and he is now the commissioner of the Minnesota Supreme Court. I'm saying some of these because I—for a time, I was the pre-law advisor, and so I know some of those. But lots of interesting things that historians have done, and

some of them have gone sort of into politics or worked for legislatures.

12:04 From Donnelly, Bennett Smith became an aide to Senator Amy Klobuchar in Washington, DC, but then wanted to come back to Minnesota, so he became the chief researcher on one of the legislative committees in the Minnesota legislature. And so we had quite a quite a few. And they—and really, really done quite well.

12:35 Mark Hendrickson, who came from somewhere around Anoka, is a professor of history at the University of California, San Diego. And Connie Lewis, who came from Luverne area in southwest Minnesota, was the Minnesota chief of staff of the late Senator Paul Wellstone. And her husband, who was from Fergus Falls, was the commissioner of commerce and industry in Mark Dayton's administration. So really quite an array of things that people did.

13:27 Rick Jauert, who unfortunately died in his 50s, was a superb, lively student. Came from a very, again, far southwest Minnesota—very small town. And he worked for several Minnesota Congress people and also for a leading congressman from New York. And so I saw a news clipping from him in my files that indicated that he had served with more different Minnesota Congressman than anybody else.

CD: 14:07 Awesome. So kind of moving more into the history discipline, how has the history discipline changed over the years that you've been here?

RG: 14:17 Sure. When I came, there were three historians, and Truman Driggs did all of modern Europe. Bert Ahern did all of the US, and Ted Underwood did all of classical, ancient, medieval, early modern Europe. And we gradually expanded, and some of the historians themselves did different things over time. Bert Ahern had started out as a civil war historian, but because he was the grandson of a clergyman who had been a missionary to Native Americans, he began taking up an interest in Native American history, something that UMN paid more attention to in the years after the '60s than it had before. As you

know, it was a Native American boarding school. Well Bert wrote on the history of that boarding school and—but he also created what was called for a time the American Indian Studies major, so that was something entirely new.

15:36 In 1971, we hired Harold Hinds, who was a Latin Americanist from the Pacific Northwest who went on to not just teach Latin American for us, but he was very interested in popular culture. And this was an emerging field. And so he became one of the editors of its publication, the *Journal of Popular Culture*.

16:04 And the following year, we went, as it were, into Asia, hiring Mimi Frenier, who did both—she had written a PhD on women in the communist Chinese army, and she—but she was also—gave us a passionate interest in women's studies. She taught the history of US women and ultimately founded a major which was called Women's Studies but now is called GWSS and—Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies.

16:51 And so those were ultimately—that crew were the key faculty in the discipline. None of them left. We periodically would have somebody who would come in and replace a professor who was on leave for a year, a research leave or a sabbatical leave. And some of these were really fine people, particularly [unintelligible 00:17:23] little, short lively man named Joe Tripp, who of all things wound up—after he left Morris—was with us for a couple years. After he left Morris, he went off to The Citadel, a military college in South Carolina, where he wore a uniform to teach. And he was referred to by students as Captain Tripp. And we had some other ones as well, but the core faculty were those folks, and basically, they taught at Morris between the years '73, '74, '11, 2011-12, and so it was really pretty stable.

18:14 I had written a dissertation, which had took me a long time to finish for various reasons. But I had written a dissertation on—entitled *Liberal Education and the American Dream*. And I was tracing ideas about who should go to college and what kind of college it should be in the 1920s, '30s, '40s, and early '50s, which was a time

that was kind of a prelude to when the boomers started going to college, like me in the '60s.

18:49 But I dated and then married Barbara Posadas, daughter of a Philippine immigrant who went to go to Purdue but wound up never going back to the Philippines, and a Polish American mother. And we worked out a career on writing the history of immigration to the United States. And Barbara was one of the leading scholars of her generation in that field. And I was a co-author on a lot of—some of that work. So that was a different area for us, for me.

19:25 And so we wound up with quite a bit of versatility in—I'd like to add Barbara had started up by writing a history of a neighborhood in Chicago, so she started out as an urban historian before she moved on to immigration. That really describes some of the historians.

19:49 In the old days, we either—we followed in some extent the rules that are external to us. For example, if we were teaching a student who was going to be a high school teacher, that meant they had to have a US intro history course. And so that meant that that course was always offered. We tended to use the older idea like it was when I was an undergraduate of European history. And then there might be a separate Asian history or a separate Latin American history.

20:31 But in the late—in the mid to late '80s, one of our visiting professors helped us develop—we've used it ever since, and we make it a requirement in our major, a course in world history. As it exists now, world history is often done topically. People don't try to do every country. And indeed for a time we were on a quarter system—fall, winter, spring—before the year 2000.

21:06 And so we would teach world to the Middle Ages, the Middle Ages to 1750 and 1750 to last week. And so it was a—and I might add that everybody in the discipline taught one of the world histories. I somehow landed with 1500 to 1750 and found it interesting. Taught books about certain dynasties in China, which I had known nothing before about and the like.

- CD: 21:47 So you've been a professor, but you also were a part of the administration here in Morris. How was being a part of that and just working with the chancellors that we've had over the years?
- RG: 21:55 Oh, well, let me say Morris—I'll get into it in a way. One of the things that I liked about Morris is that its leaders were good people. And we probably only had in all of my 54 years here one genuinely bad chancellor, and I won't identify that person. But initially, just before I—but the people who were here were able.
- 22:47 Rodney Briggs was the first chancellor, and he had actually left the chancellorship just before they hired me. And he was an able fellow who was an expert on agronomy, and indeed that sort of in a way fit into something of the world, of the school that preceded us, the West Central School of Agriculture, WCSA. But Briggs was a was a lively man who—what did he leave Morris for? To go to upper Nigeria to help them develop an agricultural college there. And a lot of the people had that kind of level of curiosity.
- 23:42 Jack Imholte was a super sharp fellow in many ways. He had gotten bored with college and enlisted in the Korean War and almost was killed by friendly fire. The person next to him in the Jeep was. So he had a view of the universe that reflected the fragility of everything, and so he was a careful fellow. He also was deeply embedded in the state of Minnesota, and so he knew what he was talking about, and he helped politic us well with the administrators on the Twin Cities.
- 24:26 But our college was largely run by committees that included faculty, staff, and students, all of them. There was a little bit of a scrap in '70 or '71 about whether students should be on committees, but we went for it. And the committees did things like if a discipline—we call them that rather than a department. If a discipline like history or political science was to offer a new course, it has to go through a curriculum committee that includes all of those kinds of people. And it's chaired by the dean, who is the—or provost, number two person at the campus.



25:21 And we have a scholastic committee, which deals with transfer students and trying to help them adjust, particularly because sometimes a transfer student has already tried out two or three college or some other reason they've moved here, because their spouse is from the area or something and—but they need some help. So the scholastic committee does that.

25:50 It also handles petitions from students to possibly exempt them from a class that otherwise they might be required to take. Obviously, we don't do it all the time, and it sometimes oversees what happens to students when they flunk out and tries to figure out ways of helping them not flunk out but also to bring them back. And we now have a—it's now called Student Success Center, which is a new name, but it used to be called Academic Advising. But that group works with the scholastic committee. I could go on with several other—several of these other committees. But we've had by and large an exceptional staff, and that's important.

26:49 So I chaired the scholastic committee for three-year terms on three different occasions, so that—which one of the areas that I kind of specialized in. But we were sort of in a bind, in between chancellors. One of our chancellors, a very able man named Sam Schuman, decided to retire in 2006. And we weren't quite ready to pick a new chancellor at that point, so we had an interim chancellor. And then we had a new chancellor.

27:35 And I agreed to serve as the provost and dean for a year. It convinced me I don't want to be an administrator, but I came to understand it. And partly because the administrators deal with problems, and I'd much rather deal with students. I mean, there are problem students, of course, but I much prefer to deal with students and with my colleagues.

28:10 But there was somebody who was—what should we say?—a professor with a large ego. And he had—I don't like using the word they. He had done something. He was very eager to make a lot of money, which you don't do ordinarily as a college professor, unless you become a Nobel Prize winner or something or other, a Pulitzer Prize winner. And he

talked one of our administrators in paying him a nice batch. And let's say in the old days—let's say that the average salary was about \$45,000, and we might be doubling that today from inflation and the like.

29:12 But he had managed to get his salary up to, let's say, 65,000, because of doing these things through continuing education. But he was not a particularly good fit for Morris. He was arrogant. He insisted that his wife be called Mrs. Such and such. She was not allowed to have a first name, and this in a time when that was certainly going out of fashion.

29:46 And so he came to me. This is what professors sometimes do is they go out and get an offer that offers to pay them more. And then they go to their dean and ask the dean to raise their regular salary up to that, more, or even match it or even exceed that. And that person came to me and spelled it out, and they were offered a position on the West Coast, not at Berkeley or UCLA but at a private university and—or Stanford. And I said, “Oh, my goodness, blank,” to him, by his first name, “I'm so happy for you. You'll love it.” So he went up.

30:41 Somehow he's still a Facebook friend of mine. I never hear from him. But it was about a year ago, and he's showing that he was off swimming in something very, very lavish on the West Coast, where he still is, and with a woman who was not his wife. So poor old Mrs. Blank got dumped along the way, and I have no idea about the story of that. But anyhow.

31:21 And sometimes you find that you always have a few people who, for one reason or for another, don't—well, there are people who think that they could be at a better place than UMM, and we're happy to let them go. Mostly. There are some people we really wouldn't want to go, but they do get—one of our better people got a job running the assessment program. That's what you do to evaluate your program. That's pretty important job, and it can pay quite well. They got to do that at a Big 10 university, and that was a lot... And I might add it was in a town in the Midwest where our person's elderly parents were being elderly, so it allowed our person to help out. And we'll miss

him. We'll miss him. So we've been pretty fortunate by and large with what we do and the like.

32:48 As you know, we are interviewing four candidates for our new chancellor that—last week and this week. And we have meetings with them and sometimes by group, like a meeting just for faculty, but then there's a big public meeting. And then there's a committee chair meeting and that sort of thing.

33:14 And with one of the candidates, I brought up the notion that one of the reasons that I like it around here is that for Minnesota you have—it is a pretty diverse campus in terms of goes here, first-year students, faculty brats, people of color, Asians, Hmong, not so many, Chinese, Latin American increasing numbers, African American. And last fall we had a regent who denounced us for being too diverse, and I was infuriated. And so I asked this candidate, “Now, what would you do if a regent said something like that?” And the person said, “Well, I've heard about that.”

34:34 And by and large, we've done okay with regents. But we have suffered in recent years because of the pandemic and also because of our relationship with a Chinese university that was sending us 100 students a year. And when you drop 100 students a year and you don't have that many to begin with, instead of being—having 1,700 and you get a few years of dropping, then you're down to 1,000. And that's reasonable that the regent should be looking at that and the Twin Cities administrators, but—so—

CD: 35:25 Okay. So talking a little more on just Morris itself, how have you seen Morris grow, change, adapt throughout the years and even falter?

RG: 35:36 Sure. When I came, UMN was only about 9 or 10 years old. And there were lots of small towns in the area, and we tended to attract some of the top students from those small towns because it was within driving distance of their hometowns. And that was something that made Morris distinctive and for me attractive. Some of the people I told you about were—I mentioned that they came from small towns not all that far away.

- 36:28 And over time, the population of this area decreased. Some counties grew, like Stearns County, where St. Cloud is, or stayed pretty steady, like Otter Tail County, where Fergus Falls is. But out here several of these towns really, really shrunk, and that meant that the high schools were combined. And there just were fewer people who were likely to be able to come here.
- 37:08 And, of course, increasingly over the years, especially with the growth of the population of color in what we like to call Greater Minnesota—that is to say if you have a large African population in Willmar, Somalis or if you have a large Hmong population in St. Paul, refugees from Laos, or you had a large Hispanic population all over because, of course, that's happening everywhere and working in—sometimes working in agriculture, sometimes working in industry, light industry in these areas, a lot of the traditionalists have become somewhat dismayed.
- 38:16 And that's been true—it's always been true to some extent. The area is politically—has always been pretty conservative, but—and they didn't like the fact that the faculty were relatively liberal, and their kids, the faculty brats in high school, were relatively liberal and—or were to some extent kind of different. The faculty member at—the faculty members that I was at when I came—we had three Chinese faculty, almost a stereotype, who taught math because they had been trained. I think one was from the mainland, and two were from Taiwan.
- 39:14 We had Jewish faculty members in an area where if you study Minnesota history, you'll know that for all of the virtues and sometimes politically progressive elements in Minnesota, there's been a nagging bit of antisemitism in the state. And so, for example, one of our most notable professors was a refugee from the Holocaust as a child, and his family wasn't allowed to come to the United States. But they went to Australia instead, so he grew up in Australia. Then by the time he was a grown up or 18, he was able to go to Harvard and come to the United States and then PhD at University of Chicago and published book after book and articles after articles. He's still doing it.

40:16 He moved when he got—he retired in 2004, but this fellow was a faculty member from 1961 to 2004. And he had been good enough to have his first job at UW Madison, but his wife wanted to live in a small town, so he came here. He's still writing at age 90. And they live in Portland, Oregon, where one of their kids lives.

40:48 And there were those kind of changes that we had. But we were fortunate, I think, politically to have a conservative Democrat, Collin Peterson, be our Congressperson from I think it was 1986 to 2016 or something or other like that and—2018 maybe. But he aged, and that wasn't particularly good. But he was somebody who became the chair of the congressional committee on agriculture. And he worked well with a much more liberal Nancy Pelosi, who was the speaker. But then we got a very right-wing person who beat Collin Peterson, and will probably be in the post as long as she wants it, although even the Republicans took Michelle Fischbach off of the agriculture committee because she's from the East Coast and—

42:07 So the politics—and sometimes there is certain hostility toward LGBT people. And that's true in lots of places, but in a smaller community, if you're different—and that's how they used to say it. “That’s real different.” People stand out, and it can be difficult [inaudible 00:42:36]. So that's some of the things about the way the communities go.

42:41 I suppose I could say a little more. Morris has far more apartment buildings than it used to. One of the distinctive characteristics continues to be distinctive is that Morris has a population that's relatively unusual almost anywhere in the US of Apostolic Christians. And they tend to be—they tend to help each other out. That means they loan each other at low interest, and they own things, like Superior Industries and the GrandStay Hotel and Prime Steakhouse and things like that. And it is interesting because some of the locals don't particularly like them, but then again, what to say, depends on if you get a job at—in one of their companies. That may be a little different.

43:51 So the town has changed and in that way. And it's amusing. Some people will still say, I think, that if you weren't born here, you're a newcomer. So that would make me a

newcomer, even though I've lived here for 54 years, which is older than their children. But anyhow, that's some of that.

CD: 44:21 Awesome. So Morris being a liberal arts education, that is something that some people kind of look—sometimes look down upon. But what do you think is important in teaching a liberal arts education, keeping the college as a liberal arts education?

RG: 44:38 Oh, well, sure. I should hand you a copy of my PhD dissertation there. But it helps to know some history because that might help you avoiding mistakes that people did at an earlier time. It helps to learn to like classical music, jazz, even country western, which [inaudible 00:45:23]. It helps you to know something about the sciences, not least to them the health sciences.

45:35 And the liberal arts schema, which varies somewhat from place to place, nonetheless wants to make you a—well, frankly, a better person than you would be if you weren't. And sometimes—one of our candidates the other day is—has been at a lot of colleges. And, actually, he went to—he was the dean at a little college called Hawaii Pacific for three years.

46:18 And I'll just give you another UMN alum. Jon Thares Davidann is a full professor of history there, and he learned Asian history from one of the people who was here. And so he wrote a book about the YMCA in Japan, which was a way that—it was a place where the Japanese might not want American politics, but they were—certainly thought that what a YMCA did was something, so they accepted that even before World War II. What am I answering?

CD: 47:10 Just the importance of a liberal arts education.

RG: 47:11 Oh, sure. Oh, sure. Oh, sure. Yeah. And there are lots of studies that say that you may have to have an engineering degree or a law degree or a business management degree, but a lot of corporate and leaders in these areas like to have their people who grew up to be managers in those outfits as well, have a liberal arts background. And that was one of the things that this chancellor candidate was saying, that the idea of having his art majors also double major in business

because they could work in advertising that way and [inaudible 00:48:16] visuals. And the internet is full of visuals that are asking you to give them your money. Yeah, yeah.

48:29 And that's pretty widely held. I mean, the difference—wild thing is that it used to be that liberal arts colleges were only for rich kids or only for people whose parents and grandparents had gone to college. Might not be rich, but that was part of their lives, and they already knew what to expect and the like in a way that someone like me didn't. But as I indicated earlier, that by doing certain things, especially working on the student newspaper, I got to know professors in a slightly different setting and profit and to help myself along in that direction.

49:22 But one of the ambitious things that the United States did in the aftermath of World War II was to try to make it possible for far greater numbers of people to go to college. And this happened particularly with the baby boomers, who were one of the largest crops of children ever in part because their parents hadn't married during World War II, but they did immediately thereafter and started having kids. And the baby boomers often came from families of four or five children. I mean, this wasn't the old-fashioned farm family. My mother was number eight in her family. But nonetheless, these people went to college, and the growth in the number of people who went to college between 1960 and 1970 was astounding and all over the country. But a lot of the people—

CD: 50:21 Sorry. I don't mean to interrupt you, but could we wait one second for [inaudible 00:50:24]?

RG: 50:29 Maybe we should see what they're doing.

CD: 50:41 Sorry. Okay. Sorry. I hope I didn't—

RG: 50:59 No matter.

CD: 50:59 —get you off what you were talking about.

RG: 51:02 No matter, no matter. And so that was—but of course in the '60s, for a lot of baby boomers, going to college meant going away from home. It meant protest. Sometimes it

meant substances. And so there became—I think there was always a bit of an ambivalence about this among some people, although generally speaking parents of college kids were pretty happy with their kids for doing what they hadn't been able to do.

51:55 But again, over time—and then it was always true that there was a certain number of people who were resentful of all of that. This is a big book that I'm using in my course on the presidency. Rick Perlstein is an exceptionally able journalist/historian. There were a lot of people who were just resentful of universities, the educated, and particularly if the universities got into some kind of turmoil.

53:03 One of my fellow editors at the student newspaper—when I went off to Northwestern to study history, he went off to UC Berkeley to study philosophy. And as a result, he was there at a time when Berkeley was in turmoil, and sometimes—one of my college roommates used to refer to University of California as “Berserkly.” It was berserk there and indeed. But anyway, Dick was there during a riot, student riot, that sort of thing. And these things really offended a certain part of the population.

53:59 And so real questions. As we live in 2023—I do a lot of in the class, which is history of the presidency from 1900 to the present—I asked them some things about, well, is it different now? Some people say, “It's worse now. We're going to have a civil war.” And I say, “Well, that's the other class.” But yeah.

54:30 And so liberal education is highly valued by many people, but it is not valued by some people, or it is seen as threatening to some people. And liberal education is—the way it developed in the United States, particularly in the 20th century, was very much linked to the idea of democracy, equal opportunity. And a lot of people who were from liberal arts backgrounds wound up in the civil rights movement and in the '60s or the anti-war movement in the '70s and—because they felt comfortable, and they thought they knew what was going on and—but then, again, there were other people who didn't like that at all. So—



CD: 55:39 Yeah. And just because we're starting to get to the end of our time here, I have one last question, which is a little bit more fun than the rest of these, I guess. When starting to do this, I have to do a little bit of research on you. In the article in 1998—or I think was 1988. Sorry. Said you had not driven since 1972, that you walked everywhere. Does that still stand today, or did that change?

RG: 56:09 Oh, sure. Oh, sure. Yeah, yeah. I married someone who drove. No, no, it's always been a bit of my protest. Some people burn their draft cards. I can say that I burned my driver's license, but I just didn't renew it. And that was something that I could handle in Morris. And for years—all the way up to 1979, we had Rail Passenger Service here. And so it was sort of interesting because if you stayed up late, which I did in those days—I get up early now. But the train would come by 2:30 or 3:00 in the morning. And you'd wait for it, and you'd get on at the railroad station. You get into Minneapolis at 6:30, and so you could start your day.

57:11 And then on the train coming the other way—it was called the Empire Builder, which was originally part of the Great Northern Railroad System, but now they're part Amtrak, the federal railroad system. At 10:00 PM, you could get on the Empire Builder and go back to Morris. And that was an interesting thing.

57:33 I can't remember if I told this to you but—earlier. One of the most interesting people I ever met—and we became somewhat friends—was this sort of wild-eyed little guy who I talked with for about three hours on the train. Actually, the train, the Empire Builder, went all the way over to Chicago, and that was a way which I could commute because my wife taught at Northern Illinois University. She'd come into one of the towns north of Chicago, where it stopped, and pick me up on the weekend and go back on the train.

58:14 But this little guy who was going to something—and I gave a eulogy for him some time ago. He was going to something called the Socialist Scholars Conference. It was in Chicago. In the eulogy, I said an activist scholars conference. But that was Paul Wellstone, who got to be a

US senator. And for years, I taught a summer school course for two weeks for bright high school juniors that were going to wind up—and we would hope that they would come to UMN. We had Paul. He came out in person for a while, but then when he went to the Senate, he gave us a conference call and gave us 20 minutes.

59:10 And he was one of these people who was in a way a natural politician because he can always—he'd always ask the student, "What's your hometown?" And you'd say, and he, "Well, do you know X, Y, Z?" And you'd say, "Well, yes," because it was as if he was a card file of who lived where and—which made him a good politician. But of course he died in a plane crash on October 25, 2002. And my dear friend, Connie Lewis, who was his state director—they were just devastated. Devastated. My wife has said, "Well, I hope we go like Paul," because his wife was with him and one of his daughters. And it was a small plane and bad weather in northern Minnesota. Yeah.

CD: 01:00:16 Yeah. Well, that's all the questions I have for you. I want to thank you for giving me your time and doing this interview. And hope you have a good rest of your day.

RG: 01:00:26 Yeah, yeah. And if you get to that meeting tomorrow, this fellow, Matt Villeneuve is—maybe I told you this the other day, but he's a professor, a young professor, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and he's a great grandchild of somebody who was a Native American in the boarding school. Yeah. And the other fellow is from South Dakota, who's an expert on the American West. And there's a third one, who is a woman, and she talks about oral history as storytelling, which is—of course it is. [inaudible 01:01:10] oral history. [inaudible 01:01:13]

CD: 01:01:14 Yeah. Thank you.

RG: 01:01:15 Take care.