

Gwen Rudney
Narrator

Christian Diederich and Naomi Skulan
University of Minnesota Morris
Interviewers

April 22, 2023

Interview done for Retired Faculty/Staff Oral History Project

- CD: 00:00 So hi, I'm Christian Diederich. It is April 22, Saturday at about 1:00 at Gwen Rudney's house. And then I'm interviewing Gwen Rudney. First question. Just how did you get to Morris?
- GR: 00:19 So I grew up in Southern California, and that's where my husband and I met. We were teachers in Hemet, California, teaching. We taught at a big middle school there. And then when I got my doctorate, some different things happened. And we had a great life where we were, but we decided to do a bigger search that—where we lived in Hemet, there was no college there, so it was—it reminds me of Willmar in a way. You drove—California is big, so there's a lot that isn't LA, and Hemet is a good example, but—
- 00:55 So we decided to do this bigger job search. And I kind of did a backwards L through sort of—I didn't really like Arizona but kind of that way and up through Colorado because I've got family there and right up to Minnesota because that's where my parents were from, so I was very familiar with Minnesota. And so I came from my interview. I'm not bragging, but I had other offers. Just as a way of saying I chose Morris. I had other things available to me, but I just got the sense that people really mattered in Morris. It was the only place I went where the students were active in the interviews in challenging ways. The hardest questions I got were from students here, and I got the sense that I would matter right away. So that's why we—
- 01:54 And then I had a long conversation with my husband about what it was like. And our kids at the time were not—by the time we moved, they were three, six, and thirteen. But he

said, “No—” we were for it. We figured, well, it's an adventure, and if we don't like it, we'll go someplace else and—but we liked it. So that's why I chose it.

CD: 02:18 Yeah. And then you started in Morris in 1991. So what made you stay for that long until your retirement?

GR: 02:24 Well, first of all, that's kind of my nature is I'm a—I put roots down. And so this idea of moving to Minnesota was unusual for me, but we did it together. But I just liked it, and I felt—I was invested in the school. I was very proud of it. I was proud of my colleagues, and the kids had a lot of opportunities here. I know we talk about little towns, what they don't have, and it's true. But they also have the ability to be in anything they want to be in. There's no competing with the top athletes or the top actors or the top musicians. If they want to be in it, they could be in it. And so they—it was good, I thought. So we stayed because we just liked it, and we felt invested in the community. I guess I felt a lot of pride in Morris, the campus especially, but we had a lot of connections to the town as well, especially through my husband.

CD: 03:26 So just from the start—oh, sorry. You started working secondary ed before you went to college. Was that intentional, or did you start working secondary and then realized you wanted to go—

GR: 03:40 I really wasn't secondary. That's inaccurate. When I got my California—they call it a credential there in California about 1,000 years ago. My license was K-9 any subject. And so I wanted to teach fourth grade, but I got in—but the market was tight back then, and I got a job at a middle school teaching seventh grade language arts. In California, there's no EL ed major. My major was in linguistics, and so then you do another year to get your credential, and so—

04:21 And there too I just stumbled into it. It was all luck. I'd never heard of Hemet but never been there, and that worked out great. And I never imagined seventh grade, but as it turned out, it was—the sixth and seventh was perfect for me. So my school was 1,100 sixth and seventh graders. That's a lot of adolescents. And then I guess I felt—I had

always had an ambition to do more, and so after I taught about 10 years, I started my PhD program.

CD: 04:53 Yeah. And then talking on the education program in Morris, where have you seen the growth of the education discipline since you got there?

GR: 05:01 Well, now sadly it's a story of decline in growth just like Morris in general. When I got there, it was huge. We had a limit of 40 students per class. And twice in those first years we weren't able to admit—typically, we admitted every qualified person in EL ed, and the secondary was even bigger.

05:28 But then the same things that have caused a teacher shortage elsewhere made fewer people want to go into teaching. I have this—this is my own theory. And I was accused once at a meeting of that's a very self-serving theory, but I'm going to share it here. I think that putting all kinds of support into the secondary ed program and bolstering that and building up numbers in that program would increase enrollment in Morris because if you have successful, well prepared, secondary teachers that are good, they're going to draw people to their—

Naom Skulan: 06:19 Alma mater.

GR: 06:20 —alma mater. Thank you. I knew I wasn't there. Thank you. You can delete that part when I couldn't remember my nouns. But anyway—so the numbers have gone down, and they're down all over. There was a time when in the state they were mad because we were oversupplying elementary teachers. And I said at the time, “So you're for the market. Let the market decide. Who says whether they want to go into teaching or not?” I mean, you're not saying you're not allowed to go into English, so let them—if they want to be in EL ed, there's lots of things you can do with EL ed besides teaching. But our people were getting jobs and—

07:07 But what they did is—they meaning the state and the rule makers—they just made it harder and harder. And then you know what? We got in trouble because we weren't preparing enough. And so then they changed the rules, and so the licensure requirements are different for people out of

state than they are for in state. They're different for non-trad programs than the traditional programs. So it was made very complicated, I believe, so—but yeah. So I would say the growth is not in the direction we want.

CD: 07:48 Yeah. So—

GR: 07:50 I always said we're small and good.

CD: 07:52 Yeah. So Morris has kind of a reputation for teachers, that they have good teachers come out of their university. What makes our education discipline different than other universities that also hold teaching degrees?

GR: 08:12 Well, my first comment is that almost all our sister institutions that prepare teachers also meet the same high standards statewide, so I never slam another program because their—teachers deserve all the support, and I just want good teachers. And if we get them in Morris, that's great. But elsewhere they can also be pretty good.

08:37 I attended a lot of meetings of MACTE, Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. I was even president for—a while back. These conversations are held by everyone, so that's sort of the background information. But what makes Morris special is it—the program is much like Morris. It's small and good, and it's personalized and—there's a lot—because we have a lot of accreditation responsibilities, and there's the required state accreditations that we can legitimately prepare people to teach, but there's also the optional national standards organizations that we've met to meet the highest standards in the land.

09:24 So one of the things in that accreditation is they want to know where's your record keeping and where are people and how many—and I tried to explain. I said, “Here's our records, but you can ask us and we can tell you where these people are.” We can tell you, oh, one person didn't make it. We can tell you who that was and what happened and what we're doing. And so that—but it's that personalized focus on a student.

09:55 I think that the program worked hard to just be thorough and do a good job and have high standards, and I also think

a program's strength was the—there were concurrent courses and experiences in the field, so there—we used to say and I'm not sure—and I've been gone now, so—but we used to say that there was—you never took an education course without also being in the field. And so you talk about in class—you could apply it into the school, and also, importantly, you could bring what you saw in the school and apply it and share it in class. So I think that is a huge—that's a huge benefit to our program.

10:52 I know later you have a question about working with the schools, but we know our school partners. We tried to focus on a couple of different areas, so I think that's another strength. But I think that small personalized program—I think meeting high standards, and I think that concurrence of field experience and instruction.

CD: 11:20 Yeah. So just kind of talking about your own experience in the education discipline, how was it being a professor in our education discipline? Could you give me a summary of just kind of your experience?

GR: 11:37 I'm kind of long-winded for short summaries. So I love working with pre-service teachers. That's what we call our students. And I think that people who go into teaching are in general hardworking, smart, people people, and so it's kind of my happy spot. It's not all glorious. Sometimes students won't do what they're supposed to do, but that's because they're human.

12:08 So all of those things I've talked about are—shape that experience. I think I had a lot of opportunities from Morris to—because it was small, so we could go places and represent the university. What was your question again? I'm not sure. I think I veered.

CD: 12:25 Just a summary of your experience at Morris either education professor or just in general.

GR: 12:38 Have I summarized it already? I'm sorry.

CD: 12:40 I think so. I think we've gotten—

GR: 12:41 Is there something in particular that you would like me to talk about?

CD: 12:45 Not that I know of, but—

GR: 12:47 I mean, it's—

CD: 12:47 So we can just—

GR: 12:48 Is there—

CD: 12:49 We can just go to the next one, which is—

GR: 12:49 '91 was a long time ago. It's a long summary. It was good. It was good. And then I think one thing that was different is when I became EL ed coordinator. And again, that's an opportunity. So if you have an interest in leading or having more to do and be involved, then Morris allowed us that because we're small.

13:14 And then being division chair was really interesting too, and most people talked about how much they hated it, and I did not hate it. I didn't. I liked it. I got to learn more about the campus, and I just liked the tasks and—so that's part of my experience too.

CD: 13:37 Yeah. And then just last thing kind of about the education discipline is just noteworthy students and faculty that you've worked with.

GR: 13:44 I looked at that question, and I—all my colleagues have been good. I did research with Michelle, who's still there, and Carol. She was Marks, and now she's Carol Cook. [Craig Kissick 13:57] was a force. He's been retired a long time. [Judy Kickley 14:03], I'd recommend that you talk to her. Those are colleagues, but they're—and we had teachers who after they retired [inaudible 14:13] they were able to work with us too

14:18 In terms of the students, the students were good. And I would hesitate to say, “Oh, here, were the good ones.” I'm connected to some of them because of Facebook, and a lot of them have become principals. We have a superintendent. Two students I actually did research with after they had graduated. But I looked at that question. I don't have a very good answer there. There's just a lot of great ones. And anyone who writes to me I'm always so excited I could—it would be a sight to see that I feel like doing a cartwheel.

CD: 14:55 Yeah. And then—

GR: 15:00 [inaudible 15:00]

CD: 15:00 —just what are any changes of Morris, just the growth or, obviously, the—

GR: 15:06 The campus?

CD: 15:067 Yeah.

GR: 15:12 When I first came in '91, it was—there was some—I was new, and it was under construction. What was it that was under construction? I think it was the student center. And they kept saying, “Oh, well, this—no, this isn't happening. This isn't happening because—as soon as the student center is done, then we're going to be okay.” So I always thought that was—that always kind of cracked me up because you better be okay now because I'm here, students are here. But I think it was sort of true. That finished and it really was nice. So the facilities have just—are just beautiful. And they did the science, and then they did the—

15:55 And then there was a lot of drama over the LaFave House because people—what are we going to do with that? And it should be—the chancellor should live there. Sam Schuman was chancellor at the time. He said, “No, that's going to be the campus's living room.” And I think it was a wonderful call. I didn't totally agree with it at the time, but I think he's right. That is such a nice facility.

16:16 And then, personally, the—I've worked very hard to get better teaching facilities for the teacher ed program. And so the work in Blakely—but it wasn't exactly what I had in mind because I wanted the whole building. I wanted to have the first floor be our offices, and I thought the second floor—I thought that's where [RG 16:43] should be and all those kind of outreach places. I'm always willing to share my ideas, but we got that done, and it was finished and ready for students in February 2020. And then we closed and then—so I never really got the opportunity to teach there because then I was here and on phased retirement. So that was something that was really different.

- 17:17 But in terms of the structure, I think Morris is always forward looking and new majors and new connections and lots of—Morris is like our students who dabble in a lot of different things. I do think there's sort of a culture to Morris about action and dabbling and doing lots of things and—so—
- CD: 17:43 Yeah. So just kind of moving to more stuff you did and stuff you—the studies you did. So you did a multicultural case study in [1991 17:53] with UMN and UMD. Can you just explain what you did with that?
- GR: 17:57 Yes. Yes, I can because I said, “I remember that.” So it was my first year. And by the way, did—are either of you familiar with what they call the Halloween Blizzard? You weren't born.
- CD: 18:09 I've heard of it, but I wasn't born.
- GR: 18:11 You weren't born, of course, but you—so you've heard of it. So that was our first year here. Blizzard, blizzard, blizzard. It was so funny. Not George Bush, but the Bush group here in the area used to do grants, Bush grants. Do they still have that, or did it change its name?
- NS: 18:34 It did change its name. I don't know what it changed to, though.
- GR: 18:37 I can't remember if I applied or how it worked, but as a new faculty, I was given a mentor, someone to do some things with, and my mentor was Tom Johnson. And I remember [Edith Farrell 18:56]. She was in French. Her husband was the division chair for humanities, Fred. But she was somehow involved, and I don't remember why. I don't know if she was somehow involved in the Bush part or—I don't remember.
- 19:13 But anyway, we—as part of this, we were supposed to meet and talk, and then we were able to go to some conferences in the cities. And the reason I remember it is because—I think the one where I met this Glenn Olson was on November 2nd right after that blizzard. I mean really. I mean because I thought, “This is harrowing. I'm not sure I can do it.” You know? And so we got there, but it was fun.

- 19:47 And I met this guy, and he was just interested. I suppose we were about the same place in our career, and we started talking, and we hatched this idea of having our students write cases. And so I think it was supported—I think we did a Bush grant application, and so we had some students from Morris. And I remember two of them, and I don't remember—I think maybe the one who quit was from Morris, but then there were some were some from UMD.
- 20:22 And we got together here, and we got together there. And we worked on having them not do a case. So a case—you know what a case study is where you read something and then it presents a problem. And then it's not an easy problem, but you discuss it, and it's a way to—I always said it was a way to safely talk about problems in teaching without actually in the moment—because when you're in the middle of teaching, you can't just—do you know who Samantha is from *Bewitched*?
- NS: 20:51 Um-hum.
- GR: 20:51 No. Or how about *I Dream of Jeannie*? No. Okay. So this is why—it's a good thing I retired. But anyway. They were characters, and they were—one was a genie, and the other one was a witch. And they could just—they'd do something like twitch their nose or—and they could freeze everything else, and it would give them time to think. Really you can't do that if you're in the middle of the classroom, but in a case you can because it's—they're—but anyway.
- 21:18 So we weren't just using them, but we were having the students write them, and it was interesting. And so I liked doing that. And I still am connected, actually, with the two that I remember. Cindy, she's a principal. Mindy is a principal at Tiospa Zina where we do a lot of—we have a lot of connections to Tiospa Zina. So that was good. So that was one of them. What else you got there?
- CD: 21:45 Well, just could you talk about any other studies you've done if—
- GR: 21:49 Well, we had—my colleague, Carol, Carol Markson Cook, had—this really is ancient history because the same—there was money available to us. So I did some things with case

studies because I was really interested in that at first. And then she said, “We need to get our students out of Morris.” And they—so she established this Chicago field experience, which was famous. It was renowned. People looked forward to it for a long time. And so we did some work on that, interviewing the students and how it went and looking at—we used to do this thing required by the state. It was kind of a multicultural experience, human relations documentation, and we examined that. We looked at their work.

22:42 So that was really very interesting and to put our—that experience in the context of other multicultural work, so—because it's a one-week experience, and that—we never pretended, oh, now they've got it. Sometimes the students thought they had it because it was life changing. But that's another thing that—

23:03 The world changed. When we did that, some people had never left the state, and I think people are more worldly now. I think they've gone and they've done more things. And so that actually may be a—and they may have had to eliminate it already because they could do—they could learn—do a similar thing at Tiospa Zina, which would be incredibly meaningful for Morris and so—and similarly with the Twin Cities someplace, but—so we did that.

23:38 And then my—I did some work with my colleague, my friend from grad school. We did a lot of—so we wrote our book about working with cooperating teachers, and so that was fun to do. And then I wrote my own little book on working with parents, and I did a lot of work with that and preparing for that. But the funny thing with that is—and I have it here. I wrote—I felt like that was my largest area of expertise, and I had things to say. And it was this big, and I thought, “Man, you don't know that much.” Really. It was this big. It was good. I'm still proud of that little book, but—anyway. So those were some of the studies I did.

CD: 24:26 Yeah. And then you were part of the consultative committee. Can you explain what that did or was?

GR: 24:38 So it was elected, and just like—very Morris. It was people from different—so it was all balanced and different

divisions and different groups. And I believe it functioned somewhat in an ombudsman role. There was kind of a place for people to go with complaints, and so there was a chance for assistance in communicating or mediating or supporting or that kind of thing. And so we did—that's the kind of thing we did. We tried to look—I remember trying to look forward, look ahead to other things that we could do that were more proactive too. So that was kind of the role, but it was the—

25:32 I do remember—I cannot remember the student, but he was—I forget. I forget his name, but I liked him. And he—we were talking about what was supposed to happen with this one problem, this one big grievance, and he read that it came to the chair of the consultative committee at which—and that was—I was the chair at that time. And I remember—I was so shocked. It became the topic of the whole conversation about how shocked I was because I just wasn't prepared. Really I had to do that too, and so—but that was its role.

26:14 But I think it was an important committee because I think it is good to have a committee where there's a lot of thoughtful people who can discuss and have that as their job. So that was my recollection, the consultative committee. Sorry. That's the best I can do.

CD: 26:29 No worries.

GR: 26:30 Now I know what's coming. Go ahead.

CD: 26:31 And then can you explain the constitutional provision forum that you were in?

GR: 26:37 Um-hum. Well, the constitution that we had—do you have a year for that? I don't have my—

CD: 26:45 I do not—

GR: 26:46 So that—so the constitution was out of date, and I think there was a request to update it. And so I was—I don't know if we were forced or elected or—I know I didn't volunteer for that one. But anyway, true Morris, it had a lot of representation. And I remember Michael Korth was on it because he was a key person. And so we fixed some

language. We updated it so that it was correct. And I believe we tried to eliminate some committees.

27:32 I remember that one thread in the constitution was this—I'm not recalling the expression, but it was sort of the delineation of power. And I remember—I think Jackie Johnson must have been the chancellor at the time because she thought that this group was trying to take away all her power. I'm summarizing. She didn't say that, but—it was that one where—because people weren't coming to the campus assembly meetings. And so Michael Korth put it in there you are required to go. And if you miss one and don't want to get kicked out, go ahead and write that you want to. But it was hard to get a quorum because people just wouldn't go. And it was a way that somebody could remove themselves from it if they wanted to, so I thought that was interesting. It was very—I know the language is very legalese, but—

28:37 But the other thing that happened is on this committee there was some willingness to get rid of some committees, but there was zero willingness to have any representation on the committees removed. And they wanted lots. And so what happened is these committees on the new constitution were just huge, huge. There'd be three of you kind of—three of me plus maybe a couple more. So it was—people didn't necessarily like it, but it was interesting.

29:13 So then they did the second one, the revision revision committee, and they put me on that too. And the one I remember running that was Dave Roberts. And so he was on, I remember—well, anyway. So that one—but the main thing there was just slicing those committees down to a reasonable size, and I was all for that, but—so it was a hard committee to go on. How's that constitution going these days? Are they going after it again?

NS: 29:53 Well, they got rid of a bunch of committees maybe three years ago. Four or five committees got removed, so—and other than that, I don't know that much has changed since then. I think they had to add a requirement, like add a thing in the constitution saying that things could meet over Zoom because of the pandemic. That kind of changed things a little bit, but otherwise, it's been mostly the same. But even

with fewer committee—I'm on membership committee right now. Even fitting enough people into the slots for what we have for the number of committees we have is sometimes challenging, so—

GR: 30:30 And it's—and I understand about wanting representation because Division of Ed was—is different. It's little. And we always—everybody always feels that nobody else understands them, so I had to try to get rid of that. But I hope it keeps working, so—all right, what else you got?

CD: 30:55 So we're almost to the end of the questions that I have. But is there any just stories or interesting things that happened while you were at Morris that you would just—think would be important in the archive or think would be cool to just talk about?

GR: 31:15 I should have thought about that. Let me think about that for a minute. But I think you had a question about my house that I think—

CD: 31:19 Yeah.

GR: 31:19 —we should talk about because that—

CD: 31:20 I didn't know how to put that question together.

GR: 31:22 No, that's fine. When we came, there weren't any houses for sale. So we hadn't sold our house in California, which we had designed and built. That's how we roll. So it was new, and it was—I love that, but it's just a thing. So there weren't really houses. And there were five of us, three kids and the two of us. And we were looking at a couple, and really I didn't know what we were going to do. Houses weren't selling in California and—but anyway.

31:59 Then we saw this old frat house, and it had been owned for one year by somebody who was trying to make it into a rental. And they were living in it, and they cleaned out a lot of stuff, so we bought it. And we borrowed—because we were moving, and we didn't—we were selling something in California. We had enough money to buy it, but we borrowed \$30,000, from my father in law for one week because we had to give money to the house and—but we didn't get that money. So it came and then we paid off our

loan, so it was a one-week loan. He didn't charge us, so that was very nice.

32:42 But anyway. So we bought this house that needed a tremendous amount of work, and everybody thought we were crazy. And it might be true, but people were really invested in it. We washed the windows, and people were stopping and saying “Did you paint?” I said, “No, we just washed the windows.” And one time this old lady—she's probably my age, but she seemed old at the time. But she stopped, she rolled down her window, and my husband was doing something outside, and she said, “Keep up the good work.” And so we did, and we did keep up the good work. And so we really—it was a labor of love, but it involved—so my husband got involved with the historical society because of it.

33:29 And then the people who had lived in—especially in the early years when it was a fraternity in the '60s were—they are supporters of Morris, and so at least twice, maybe two or three times, we were asked can they come there, and we said yeah. And they walk around and they told stories. One story went—one guy said, “I think this is where the dog had puppies.” And I thought, “Oh, great.”

33:58 But anyway, they were—they loved that place, and I felt happy to have them see it. And then they could remember and—but it was a lot of work to fix it. And then they were—I remember the last time we did it, and I was there, and they were talking about him. And they said, “Well, what do your students need?” I said, “Our students need—our students are hardworking and they don't have a lot of money. They need money.” I said, “We can do some—” they're just great donors, so that was really—I liked being a part of that.

34:38 Then when we were transitioning here because our adult children are all here, we had to sell it. And knowing Morris and that big house, I thought, “Well—” I said, “It's going to take two years.” And then people kept saying, “How's it going?” You have this sad, “Oh, how are you doing?” I said, “I'm fine.” “Well, has it sold?” I said, “No, it hasn't sold. It hasn't even been a year. It's going to take two.” And guess how—we got the offer at—in May and April had

been two years. So I was right. And it was waiting for that same family. They were just like us, three kids, boy, girl, boy, interested in old houses. So that's [inaudible 35:20].

35:21 So I'm sure there are funny stories to tell, but I can't think of any. Do you know of any about my stories? Sometimes people say, "Well, remember—" you know? I don't know. I talked about the ed building. That was the—that new facility, that was—there used to be this person named Robert Thompson. Did you ever meet him?

NS: 35:46 Um-hum.

GR: 35:47 So he was sort of a facilities person. And he saw me coming, and he started trying to hide. He would hide—he'd hide behind—he was thin, but still—so he'd hide behind this tree. I said, "I see you." And then he said, "Go ahead." I said, "Well, we need an ed building. We need to get better facilities because—" but squeaky wheel. So I don't know. I'm sorry. I'm not coming up with funny stories, but I know I have a million of them.

CD: 36:18 No worries.

NS: 36:19 How long between when you started advocating for the Blakely remodel and when it actually happened? How long did that take?

GR: 36:32 That's an excellent question. And to be honest, I do not remember a day that I wasn't advocating for that, but I know that I wrote—I know it for sure was the entire time I was division chair, and so I was that for 11 years, and I've been gone for 2 or 3, so I'd say at least 10. But I think it might have been before that too because they were—it was just inadequate. We were going to schools, and the schools had better technology than we had.

37:05 We were teaching about working with students with physical disabilities, and we were in—we were teaching in a classroom that had—that didn't have appropriate access. It seemed wrong. I think it was selfish. And then they had these facilities all over. They did the lab, and they redid Imholte, and they redid—and they were—I remember they had one part—one time they were meeting and they were

talking about the new goals, and they said, “We've got all this technology right now.” I said, “We don't. It's not equitable. You all have it. We still have a large—” but we were little, right?

37:50 At one point, EL ed was the—it rivaled for first or second number of majors. I don't know how it stands now, but anyway. So it took a long time, but it was pretty great when we got it, even though I never got to teach in it. But we don't—teachers don't do things for themselves. They have an eye on the future. That's what I—I really believe it. I wish I had thought of some of my funny stories, but I can't remember any of them right at the moment.

CD: 38:23 Yeah, that's no worries. But thank you for—I don't think I missed anything on here, but I don't have anything else.

NS: 38:32 Can I ask a question?

GR: 38:33 You can ask anything you want.

CD: 38:33 Yeah. Absolutely. I'm—

GR: 38:36 Please. I love—I am so proud of Morris, and I love to talk about Morris.

NS: 38:41 Well, and this is more of a question about education just in general. I'm curious what you saw as—like changes because of technology for EL ed over the years because I'm thinking now they are going to be issuing Charlie tablet when he goes to kindergarten next year. And I would assume this has kind of changed quite a bit. Is there a lot of change in how you teach the teachers to work with elementary school kids because of this change in how we use technology?

GR: 39:08 I think there are changes, and partly it is they preceded us. The schools had it first, and so one thing we really had to do is learn programs. And so what—but that's where—I said to the students—I said, “That is why you're in the school.” So every time they were in the schools, one of their assignments either was or should have—was supposed to be what technology is available, what is your teacher using. If they're using a grade book, master that grade book.

If they are using this, master that. So that's one of the ways we did it and then—because it goes too fast.

39:55 And then I'm not trying to rationalize our own limits. We had to continue to do other kinds of instruction that was fundamental because it still is about people, not about things. But it's really funny because when I was a kid, they had chalkboards. That's what there were. And then when I first started teaching, that's what I had too. And then I got a newer classroom, and then we had whiteboards. And then we had this thing called an overhead projector. Have you ever heard of an overhead projector?

CD: 40:40 Um-hum.

GR: 40:40 And then we had everything on that, and then—so we moved to this other presentational style, but—and I was able to do that and teach too. But I still wonder sometimes if—I don't know. Sometimes they're hard to see and—I was in the schools again. I worked this spring supervising a student and—but they've got things all queued up. It's really kind of phenomenal that she kind of clicks. But I suppose it just took as long for us to thumb through our overhead slides than it does to find it. But I found it harder to see always.

NS: 41:23 Can I ask you another question [crosstalk 41:24]?

GR: 41:24 Sure. Yeah. I love it because I—

NS: 41:27 Yeah. So you were still division chair during the pandemic, right, like at the start of the pandemic?

GR: 41:33 I was division chair just at the start.

NS: 41:36 Okay. What did that do for student teaching? Because we moved everything online, but—

GR: 41:41 Correct. That's an excellent question, but it was—that question was held by all of these institutions. And so the state—I give the state the—PELSB they're called. That's the organization, Professional Educator Licensing—I forget. PELSB. But they knew they had to do something, and so there were rules that—for student teaching, for

example, that had to be this many weeks and had to be in person.

42:04 And so I had to do paperwork. How did they do it? They did some things where they just said, “Okay, here's—” they just made some pronouncements like, “Okay, if anybody has gotten to 10 weeks, they're good. They don't need to get to 12.” And so they did some things that helped everybody. And then there were—I had to fill out petitions student by student. So one person hadn't done her middle level yet, and she couldn't do it. So we had to figure out a way to do that by—remotely, so I had to explain how she was going to do it. So that's how they did it. But I give them a lot of credit. They worked very hard to make it doable and fair to the students, but it was tricky. That was an excellent question. I'd forgotten about that.

NS: 42:59 Right. Because it's like all the schools had gone—

GR: 43:02 Correct. Correct. And I—right. And we hadn't—and the schools—well, what happened is the schools, some of them were still going, but I had to pull the student teachers because the president said, “Nobody—our people can't—they can't do internships. They can't—”so they had—I had to pull them. And so then I was writing to all these—in my role then I was writing to all the principals and explaining what was going to happen and writing to the cooperating teachers. But because it was a statewide issue—

43:39 But a lot of people were dying. I'm glad they did it. We were so confused at the beginning. We didn't know what was going to happen. But then I—that was my last year as division chair, and I—it ended June 30th. And on July 1st, my email dropped from 200 a day to 10. It was so weird, but that's how—you can't have your ego wrapped up in, oh, how are they going to do without me? You can't do that. I learned that a long time ago. Institutions don't love you back, and they can't depend on you. They have to—it just doesn't work that way, so you just do your best and hope that you've set things in motion and then adios because—

44:32 But I just thought it was so funny because I was with—I called them my work daughters, Emma and Trisha. I met with them—even once we were separate, we were on

Zoom, I don't know, hours a week. It went to zero because they had a new boss, and they needed to have a new boss, so—but it was interesting.

- NS: 45:02 Little bit of a weird transition, though.
- GR: 45:04 It was—true.
- NS: 45:04 Like, so much of—
- GR: 45:05 And it was weird. And it was like— I said, “No, I don't feel bad. I don't because—” but it was just so odd. Really, really odd. And then we worked—but there were a lot of things about the transition. We were under construction. We were—it was interesting, so—
- NS: 45:29 And another question I have is for the Morris community were you active in not necessarily the campus community but the rest of the community? Did you have any connections or things that you were really a part of?
- GR: 45:43 Yes. But my husband was the one everybody tapped. I was busy. I was busy. I was doing that. So like I said, he was very involved with the historical society, and so therefore I was to. I went to First—for most of the time we lived there, I went to First Lutheran Church right across the street. I was busy there. They need you right away. I was on the church council my second year there, and I thought, “That's weird.” But they get fresh blood.
- 46:16 And then I just joined the council, and I got this call that said, “Can you bring a cake to this event?” A funeral or something. And I said, “Okay.” I said, “Do the council members have to supply food for—” also, I didn't like that. Well, two different lists. It just happened at the same time. And then with the kids in school, we were busy with that. That's all consuming, and it just—it just gets worse and worse and worse. But, I mean, it was wonderful, but—and our kids—the youngest, oldest are 10 years apart, so we were involved in things for a long time, so—
- NS: 47:01 That's just starting for us.
- GR: 47:03 Well, enjoy it.

- NS: 47:03 Just beginning.
- GR: 47:04 Enjoy it. Do you know who the teacher will be yet?
- NS: 47:07 Unh-uh. No. They haven't assigned yet, so—
- GR: 47:09 Well, our Caleb will be in kindergarten next year, and he just started preschool this year, but it's such a cute age. Well, here's one story. Ready? The first year I was here, I found out that I had to teach the kindergarten methods class, and I said, "I'm not qualified." And Mercedes Blue was the only person. She was the EL ed coordinator at the time, and she said, "You have to. You're the only one licensed to teach it," because I told you I licensed K-9. Well, I taught sixth and seventh. I didn't have any expertise.
- 47:51 And to give California credit, California said between the teacher and the schools they can select—I felt confident teaching language arts at the sixth and seventh grade level. I knew I could do that. I knew I could. I wouldn't have—I don't think I would have taken science because I—while I know science, it was just—I was in the humanities for all my schooling and languages.
- 48:15 But anyway. So I told Craig Kissick, who had hired me—I said, "Had I known this, I wouldn't have taken the job. So I'll do it this year, but you're going to have to—" really. And so I created this course, Kindergarten Methods, and I decided that we were going to learn together because I didn't—and so I created this—what's her name? Patricia Kirk. I made her up.
- 48:44 So I had this whole kind of simulation that I created for the students, and I said, "Oh, we've got this really interesting thing. Patricia Kirk is a superintendent from South Carolina, and she will be—I will be doing some parts, but they have contacted us because they heard we were teaching this class. And they are designing a kindergarten—state-of-the-art kindergarten school, and we are going to provide the information. So we're going to learn about what makes the best kindergarten school so that we can help inform them."

49:18 And the students—by the way, first year there they didn't know me. And I said, “So—anyway, so she'll be running this part of the class, and I'll be doing the other.” And I said, “But I have to go. Right now I've got a doctor's appointment, so Patricia Kirk will be right in.” So I went out, and I put on these fake glasses that didn't have any—it was before—so I came back in and I said, “Hi, I'm Patricia Kirk, and I'm so delighted that we're going to get a chance to work together.” And my students were like—they didn't laugh. They were like this. It was sad, and I couldn't—I wasn't going to stop and—but they just—

50:08 And so then class—and then they said, “I've got a question.” And I said, “I think that's a question for Professor Rudney. I don't really know the answer to that one.” And so then we laughed, and one of my students—in fact, it was one of these students, Cindy Maldonado. She said, “Can I talk to Gwen?” She did. And I said, “She's not here.” But anyway, they were so sad and discombobulated that I didn't—I couldn't keep doing it, so I had to abandon it. But anyway. So that was one of my—

50:41 So then I went—I had to supervise kindergarten too. And, again, I didn't feel like I—I got better at it, but I was the only one. So I had to only supervise kindergarten teachers in the student teachings. So I went and there was this really—I can't remember her name, but man, she was just an excellent student teacher. So poised and knowledgeable and so good with these little kindergarteners.

51:04 So I'm sitting there, and this is before all this. So I've got—I'm sitting in some little kindergarten chair and trying to watch. And she was so agitated, and I could see—what is bothering her? Because she was so poised. And all of a sudden, she turns to this little kindergarten boy and she said, “Stop that. Stop that, licking my leg.” And I thought to myself, “That is why I like teaching older kids.” Never did I have to tell a kid, “Don't lick my leg.” Can you believe it? But no wonder she was agitated. So anyway, I didn't have to keep teaching kindergarten. I love kindergarteners as a grandma and a parent.

NS: 51:44 It's a fun age.

- GR: 51:45 It is fun, but all—a bunch of kindergartners in a classroom, oh, goodness gracious. Okay, everybody, get in a line. Well, they didn't know what a line was. It was like feathers in the wind. It's just funny to me. But there are some excellent kindergarten teachers in Morris. You don't know who you have yet.
- NS: 52:04 No. We just had a—they don't assign it until the summer, so—um-hum.
- GR: 52:09 Well, Caleb is going to get—he got into his same school, so it's his neighborhood school. So that looks really—it seems like a really good school. But we were walking the other day. We had—I forget what—they said, “Can kids come?” We said, “Absolutely.” So we were walking. We were taking them up—because we're right off Grant. We just love this neighborhood. But we went up Grant, and we were looking at some things at Pottery Barn furniture.
- 52:37 And so Jack is two, and Steve's got him. And they are so slow because Jack, every bug he looks at. Meanwhile, Caleb and I were—it was slushy. And then we got to this big puddle, and he says, “Don't go through the puddle. Go around it. That's what my teacher says.” Isn't that cute?
- NS: 52:59 That is so cute.
- GR: 53:00 Teachers. Okay. All right. [crosstalk 53:03]
- NS: 53:03 One more question for you.
- GR: 53:04 Sure.
- NS: 53:05 So I know that we have a lot of collaborations between—I think it might be Argie's office, Community Engagement, and some of the schools. There was the Trek program, and they do some of the after-school stuff. I think it's our students, UMN students, in the local school. Was that more community ed with Argie, or was that also kind of the education division?
- GR: 53:32 I think—well, they're all—I think it—I don't remember how it started, but I think it was mostly community ed or that—

NS: 53:43 Or whoever was in—

GR: 53:44 Whatever it was called. But our students often populated the positions. And then when they were looking for people to coordinate, it often went to somebody—and I know—I think Pam Solvie did it for a while and different people. I think even Trisha did it for a while. But we're so busy that that was—it was hard to have that be another assignment. But it was good. Yeah. So I think it was housed there, but I wouldn't write this down and publish it. I think it was housed there but with a connection and, if nothing else, requests for help from—

NS: 54:29 Right. Trying to draw in those students—

GR: 54:31 Correct.

NS: 54:31 —and to take those positions.

GR: 54:32 And also some—and I think that maybe I—different times we did a training with the Trek students. And that was one of the times where they said, “How do you deal with these parents? Because people are always mad, the parents.” I go, “Well, stop. Even if you think they're wrong, what's your goal? Get them mad?” But anyway. So I did some work with them. That was fun. We did a lot with the schools and—I don't know. Schools are good. We work very hard.

55:12 That's what I always told my students. I said, “Well, you've signed up to do something really hard. It's important. It's doable, but you've signed up to do something hard because if you think it's easy, you're just not right, or you're going to be terrible.” So—

NS: 55:29 Yeah. I think that was it for my questions.

GR: 55:34 Really?

NS: 55:35 Do you have any questions?

CD: 55:36 No, I don't have any.

NS: 55:39 Anything else you want to share?

GR: 55:40 No, I think it's good. Was it helpful?

CD: 55:43 Absolutely.

NS: 55:43 Very.

CD: 55:44 Yeah. Yeah.

NS: 55:44 Very.

GR: 55:45 Okay. Even though I can't remember anything.

CD: 55:47 That's all right. As much as we can get. Anything is good. It's better than nothing.

GR: 55:51 Yeah. They talk about episodic memory. You remember an event, and that how you can remember it. So unless I could think of something about those committees we were—I was totally lost. But anyway. But it was nice for me to look at my tiny, little stack again.

NS: 56:08 Look through the stuff that you did and—

GR: 56:09 Well, especially this one because [inaudible 56:10] oh, my God. Oh, yeah, that's right. Anyway. It's funny. All right.

NS: 56:15 All right. Thank you.

GR: 56:15 You want—

CD: 56:15 Thank you.

GR: 56:15 —another cookie or—