

Maddy Maxeiner Oral History Transcript

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Interviewer: Tom Harren

Tom: My name is Tom Harren. I'm here today June 7, 2017 in the McGinnis Room of the library here at UMM and I am interviewing Maddy Maxeiner who was both an alum, UMM alumni, and a retired staff here at UMM. Thank you Maddy for agreeing to this interview. I think what we'll do is we'll just, we'll start by having you tell us a little bit about your early background and how you ended up deciding to come to UMM as a student.

Maddy: I was born in, well I was not born in the Cities, I was raised in Minneapolis/St. Paul and I sort of came to Morris accidentally. I was not aware of western Minnesota or the University of Minnesota, Morris but serendipity led me here and it was a very good thing because I made a lot of progress as a person and as a student once I got here. And I finished here, that I got my degree here in philosophy.

Tom: So, so did you start your higher education here, or...?

Maddy: No, I started in Colorado, and then I came to Minnesota and went to the U of M for a while and then I went to St. Cloud for a while and I was just sort of in and out over the years. If I felt like reading, then I would find school got in the way and I would read. And then I would go back to school when I was ready. It was a different era. I graduated high school in 1969 to give you an idea of what the social climate was.

Tom: So as a transfer student, how would you describe the culture here at UMM compared to the other campuses that you were on when you came?

Maddy: Well, what was immediately noticeable and I think continues to this day is that you're not very anonymous when you are here. And so, right away I had people offering to hire me and I had faculty taking an interest and faculty offering me TA positions and faculty calling me in to go over a paper rather than just hand it back. And that was not any of the kind of personal attention that I had observed anywhere else.

Tom: This was the early 70s?

Maddy: Mhm.

Tom: So what about the students. Were they different here than they were on other campuses?

Maddy: You know, I didn't know very many people. I just, I just came and went to class and worked and went home. I really didn't, I'm not a good person to ask about that, because I didn't really know anybody other than the people I worked with and my faculty.

Tom: What made you decide to major in philosophy?

Maddy: I had always been a philosophy student wherever I went. It was so, sort of only subject that made any sense to me and I felt like it was an umbrella over every other subject. And plus I just really enjoyed it. And the faculty here were terrific. I studied with Peter French and Ted Uehling and Howard Wettstein and they were just terrific and I just, I loved the philosophy program here and then it was when I got here that I said "Yep, I'm going to make this my major."

Tom: So the faculty played a...

Maddy: Yes.

Tom: ...big part in influencing that.

Maddy: Indeed. Mhmm.

Tom: Ted Uehling in particular?

Maddy: Yes, yep. Ted Uehling, I've told this story many times. I was, I, I had the gift of gab and in a mediocre large program, large class, you could hand in your papers and get graded by the volume. And so I was a great writer and speaker and I was getting A's, A's, A's, A's, A's. But whether there was any actual content or discipline is pretty doubtful. But when I got here and I used that same approach and I wrote my first paper for Ted Uehling, he called me in to meet with him and he said, "Sit down, have a seat." And he put my paper between us and he said, "What is

this?" [laughter] And I was miffed, because I was used to being, I thought he was going to say, "Man you can really write well." And instead he was like, "This is just unknowable, what is it, what are you saying?" And he went at it very, what would be the word, empirically, really. He was like, "Well, you're saying this, is this what you mean?" And he said, "Go write it again." And he worked with me until I, I, I, I always say that Ted Uhling was the beginning of becoming a clear writer.

Tom: Okay, thank you. So after you graduated, what influenced your, made you want to stay here?

Maddy: Oh, by the time I really felt like I belonged here and like I lived here. I had by that time made friends and, let's see, my, my employment continued when I graduated. I had been working as a student on Eric Klinger's project on fantasy. And he had grant money from the National Institute of Mental Health to hire people and when I graduated he hired me full time. So that was probably the main...

Tom: Okay.

Maddy: ...reason is because I had a full time job right away.

Tom: So what were some of the other jobs that you had before you became involved in Alumni Relations? What else?

Maddy: I was a freelance writer for some newspapers. I was a publicity coordinator for some political campaigns. And I was a TA in philosophy. And I bartended and I laid sod. [laughter]

Tom: So, So you must have wanted to stay here?

Maddy: I was, I was not sorry to leave bartending or laying sod behind.

Tom: So, but you got to know the community?

Maddy: Mhmm.

Tom: You got to know Morris better than somewhere else?

Maddy: Yes. Mhmm.

Tom: What was it like working with Eric Klinger?

Maddy: You know he was brilliant and he was very generous to his students and employees. He always credited everybody with their ideas and their contributions. He was very hands-off. He would indicate, you know, you knew what he needed and wanted. But he didn't micromanage in any way. So, he was good to work for.

Tom: Were there other students that were not students, but other research staff that were working with him?

Maddy: Yes, yes, because I married one of them. Is that what you were getting at? [Laughter]

Tom: Well, I didn't notice that there was a...

Maddy: Yeah, there's a crossover there. Steve [Partay?], a UMM grad, and Tom Mahoney were the two coordinators for Eric. And, and I was simply a student hire at the beginning. But they were really the master, you know, Eric was the mastermind and Steve and Tom ran the experiment, they did all, you know, they crunched the data, they collected, oversaw the data collection. Tom Mahoney was a very early user of computer technology here on the Morris campus. Very early. One of the first. And of course Eric's work required a lot of evidence and collecting of data.

Tom: You were also, worked some for the Center for Continuing Education and Regional...?

Maddy: I was hired on a grant project called Project Enlist. And I, oh that was another thing I did, I forgot to mention, I did, I did an evaluation of the, of a grant, I did an evaluation of Rural

Women Mean Business which was a grant project and then helped present results about that. I forgot about that. And, yes, I was the phone, the switchboard person, for Project Enlist, which was educational networks linking institutions, students, and technology. And what it was, it was funded by FIPSE, Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education and it was, like, all of western Minnesota, from north to south. And the idea it was that we have all these potential adult learners and then we have these 13 institutions, or whatever the number was, but how were they supposed to find out where to go? And so, there was one number that was a toll free number, and they could call and say, "Yeah, I'm..." and describe their circumstances and their interests. And I was that first person to call and, and start to sort of sort out what they might need to know and who they might need to contact and that kind of thing.

Tom: And this was a new program or activity at the Continuing Education and Regional Programs. Was that, was that new at the time that you were there?

Maddy: No, I don't think so. I think it had been going for a while.

Tom: Okay. Okay. Now we're getting. What made you decide to take up the responsibility for Alumni Relations?

Maddy: Well, again, it was purely situational. Right place at the right time. I was, the grant funding ended that had employed me full time for Eric, and so I was kind of inbetween and I was doing little freelancey jobs. And, but looking for full employment. And, there was a employment program at that time, which was 1981, and they paid the first three months salary, or something like that. And UMM hired me to do Alumni Relations. And no one had ever done it before, it had been sort of an add-on for University Relations at one point, for the Career Center at another point. So I was the first person that that was my only job. And, I had never even been to a Homecoming game, I mean, I, I was not socially connected really at all. Maybe because I was an adult student, I don't know, but at any rate, it was kind of a mismatch in some ways. But in other ways, I just kind of took to it. And it required, you know, a lot of organizational skill, and I had that. And, yeah.

Tom: So, what was it like coming in and, and just creating something new and it sounds exciting and...?

Maddy: It was very fun. Very fun. The database was a box of index cards that Pearl Johnson in the Career Center would laboriously, like at Homecoming she'd be there to get your address update, then she'd update the cards in the shoebox. And there was a... So, one of the things that I

did right away with Andy Lopez who was at that time not only the computer, computing science, faculty but he was also the director of the computer center, computing center. He and I, well, we kind of stole the, the database and set up the first computerized database of all of those alumni records. There was, there was a lot of fun at the beginning. The first newsletter I interviewed... they said well do a newsletter... like, well okay, and that was about all the guidance I had, do a newsletter. So I started thinking about, well it would be fun to feature alums and so somehow I got onto Leonard Munstermann, do you know Leonard?

Tom: Yes.

Maddy: Class of '64. And he, I think somebody tipped me off that he was a very well respected, internationally known scientist and he was at Yale. So I contacted... but originally from Appleton... and the first class. So he made an ideal first feature article. And, so I contacted him out of the clear blue sky and he was so nice and so, I mean, I knew nothing about his science or his research and he was very well known. And he was, he was really humble about sharing it with me and the photo that I used on the front of the newsletter was Leonard, it was a little [laughter] I didn't know whether to do it or not but, it was a little mischevious but it was fun, it was a picture that Leonard had provided of him wearing nothing but a loincloth and squatting over a stream in Sardi... yeah, Sardinia I think it was, netting larvae out of a stream. With his hair down to his, below his shoulders. And I just couldn't resist that photo.

Tom: Can you describe the kind of evolution of the Alumni Relations to External Affairs to...?

Maddy: Mhmm. Well at first there was just Alumni Relations, and it was just a part time job. Chancellor Jack Imholte, well he was called provost at the time, before they changed the title, was the one who established the actual position but it was very part time. And it was clear that there, it was always clear that there was a fundraising side, but UMM didn't really go after that much. There were a few times that I believe Jack himself went out and asked people for President's Club memberships to establish the scholarship program. But it was just Jack doing it with Pat Tanner his secretary and there wasn't really a development program. And for the alumni side, it was locked into a membership drive, and so every year you had to repeat the membership drive and you had to renew your members and it kind of was hard to grow it. As far as, you know, should members be the only ones that get the benefits? Well, yes, because they're the only ones paying for it, but no, because then you have no way to grow your ranks, because you're not sending the newsletter to the people who aren't already members and so, for that reason we ultimately looked at the membership drive in, I think, the late 80s and, and consulted with Steve Rosell who was at that time the executive director of the Minnesota Alumni Association at the U of M, and he said, "If I had to do it over again, I would never have a membership drive." Which was my own gut feeling, it's like this is really self-limiting. And so we dropped it and went to an

annual fund drive. Right around 1989 or '90 or somewhere in there. So that put development into the alumni program. And then ultimately through the Title III grant that Tom Mahoney wrote, along with Jim Olson and Steve Granger, which was successfully funded in the end of the 1980s, for that reason alone we had money to establish an actual Office of Development. And we hired a full time development person and the development person and me as director of Alumni Relations we hired a support staff person that staffed both of us and shared an office. So we had this three person office and then when he left we hired that was Stan [Fusch?] and when he left we hired Vivian Heltemes who had just started out in development out in western Washington. And after a couple, after Vivian was here a couple of years, the University of Minnesota began the early stages of a capital campaign. And there was going to be a lot of gearing up for that. And Vivian said, "I don't know how to do it. And Alumni Relations has really always been my first love." While simultaneously I'd gone off to get my master's degree in development, philanthropy and development, from St. Mary's University of Minnesota. And so we traded jobs. Basically, with the blessing of Chancellor Dave Johnson. So this would have been about 1996 or 7. So then I was director of development and she was director of alumni relations. And we still had a very, at one point and time there were serious budget cuts and Chancellor Dave Johnson reduced the director of the university relations position to half time and he left and they did not refill that position. And so, our, the person who was the writer under the director just stayed and kind of became the office. But these were all separate enterprises, each reporting directly and separately to the chancellor. So when Sam Schuman came in in 1999 or 8 or someplace in there. Is that right? When Sam came?

Tom: It must have been 1999.

Maddy: Ok.

Tom: Or, or 2000.

Maddy: Yeah, I want to say his inauguration was 2000. But he'd been there for a little bit before then. Sam said write away, he said "I don't know that it's the very best idea to have all three of these areas reporting separately to me. I'm looking for someone that can coordinate the whole works." And he raised me up to do that. So then I oversaw, he created the Associate Vice Chancellor position, and then I oversaw Alumni Relations, Annual Giving, Development, University Relations, and then I also was responsible for working with Sam on legislative relations. So that was kind of really the genesis of the External Relations program at UMM. Obviously it grew significantly from there. But that was how it happened to crystallize and come together. It's the combination of the Title III funding to create an office and some staff positions and the change in leadership with Sam saying, you know, these shouldn't be separate reports.

Tom: So, what is Title III?

Maddy: Title III is the area of federal, of the federal budget that is aimed at strengthening education. And we qualify, or we wrote the grant, Tom Mahoney is the one who can talk about this in your next interview but, we submitted, UMM submitted, under the Strengthening Institutions, which had typically been little religious institutions and/or historically black colleges. But UMM was so new and so little and so unflush that we, our proposal was accepted under the Strengthening Institutions part of Title III and they funded it. So we were able to do a lot of things, I think, if I'm not mistaken that's when we developed Computer Science major. We were able to do that, and develop an External Relations program, and there was a couple of other things too.

Tom: Okay.

Maddy: Very pivotal.

Tom: One of the early, I refer to it as one of the early successes of your involvement in working the alumni list, the getting funding for the Student Center. Can you tell us a little bit about that experience, it seems like that was sort of early on in your role as coordinator of Alumni Relations.

Maddy: Right, because when was that, was that 1990 maybe?

Tom: Maybe 9 or 90...

Maddy: Yeah. Well that was loads of fun. And everybody that worked on that, it was just an ad hoc campus group, and everyone that worked on it was just doing it, I mean it was no one's job. But we all did it together. And Gary McGrath led the team, and he was the liaison to Provost Imholte. And it was just great fun, because UMM had really not done much of that and as you know it was a great opportunity to reach out to alumni and alumni were absolutely instrumental in the fact that we got the funding for this student center. Alumni were the, I mean, they really carried it. Not only contacting their legislators but showing up at the capitol and saying "Well you know somebody that I used to know, I think. is in the governor's office," and being willing to follow that lead, so we ended up with people right in Perpich's office and in the legislature,

legislative staff and so on, that we were able to get to through other alumni. And so people who hadn't been involved and who probably just ripped up whatever they got in the mail from the Alumni Association, because of those, it was either Homecoming or membership requests. Suddenly there was something really cool to do and to be part of and alumni really came through with that. And it was also the beginning of UMM's ability to work both sides of the aisle. We have been very, very careful, I mean every, you'd have to be, but we were even careful beyond that not to be partisan. And so we pride ourselves on working equally with the Republicans and the Democrats and not being associated with either party. And in every legislative success that we've had, that's essential. You really have to be well regarded by both sides.

Tom: Were you able to build on that new found interest from alumni and what was going on here following that experience?

Maddy: Absolutely. Following that, I think the next big one was the Science, the Science center. And that really was in two phases. There was the planning money and then two years later we went back for the construction funding and it was packaged with the Regional Fitness Center. And again alumni were instrumental in making our case and communicating why this was a worthwhile project for the limited funds that the legislature was going to be giving out. And also with the, this is an example of how we built on that legislative network, it, for the Science project we actually reconstructed WCEDA, and WCEDA stands for West Central Educational Development Association. And members of WCEDA in the 1950s were instrumental in the establishment of the Morris campus. And some of the names are very well known such as Morrisons and LaFaves and DeWalls and others less so, but they raised money and they funded trips to the legislature and they brought legislators out to Morris. They worked really hard to get the campus established. And so we reconstructed that and had a governing group that drove the legislative efforts for the Science project, and there were some fun crossovers because, for example, Ed Morrison was one of the real leaders of the WCEDA effort in the 19-, late 1950s. His daughter-in-law Liz Morrison was the chair of the recreated WCEDA. So that's a good example of how we built on the Student Center, but there's no question the Student Center was the first.

Tom: Do you feel that UMM has a good relationship with the city of Morris and business community in Morris?

Maddy: I do. I, I think it's good enough. A lot of people will tell you we don't. But, I guess, I take the position that you're always going to have misunderstandings and so there's a, there's a proportion of misunderstanding that I consider to be normal. There have certainly been times that we have had flashpoints and crisis moments in terms of our relationship with the community. You can't have a liberal arts, an independent liberal arts college, set down in the middle of this

community and not have differences in how different people understand the same situation. And so I, I think it's actually a good relationship because, oh my gosh, it could be so much worse. And when there have been terrible times, really, we've managed to get together and get through them. And I credit certain people for sure like Carol Wilcox, who was the mayor of Morris for many years, as being a very positive leadership influence on the campus and the community. Being different but yet working together.

Tom: Okay. Do you feel like the, do you feel like the student body has changed during the time that you've, you've been here in terms of sort of their culture on campus or the type of students that we've, we're getting here at UMM?

Maddy: I would say yes and no. When you speak to people from the 60s and 70s, you know like if you talk to a Leonard Munstermann who also was part of starting KUMM, and there were, there were some pretty independent and creative folks as students and I think we still have very creative and independent students. I think that it has remained relatively stable where we draw our students from, I know the percent from the Twin Cities/seven county metro area has of course increased. But at the same time we continue to draw from across the state of Minnesota and the students change in the obvious ways such as the cell phones, but I don't, I feel that the students that pick UMM are the right students to be here. There's no question it isn't for any, for everybody. I mean if you're really severely disappointed that the downtown is a drag, this is not your college and that's cool, that's fine. Because we can't take everybody. You know, but if what really captures you is the zest on campus and the energy between the students and the faculty and the kind of leading edge thoughts that are going on in this campus well then that's your place. So I don't know that I would say they've changed a lot.

Tom: What about faculty?

Maddy: Well of course we've lost the original faculty, not just the original 13 but also the people that came in the '60s like Fred Peterson and Bert Ahern and, so of course they have and I think that we have more, we have still the faculty that are here for the long haul. But I think we have more faculty that come in and out than we used to have.

Tom: Okay. Can you reflect a bit on the various chancellors that you've worked with, what is it, 4 or 5 chancellors since you've been here?

Maddy: I did not work with Rodney Briggs. But of course I knew him. But I worked with Jack Imholte, Dave Johnson, Sam Schuman, and Jacque Johnson. And I, you know it's just so cool

because really each one is credited in a whole different way than any of the other ones. It, it's really, UMM's been really lucky, we've had such outstanding chancellors and they've each done things differently but they've each done important long lasting innovative things while they were chancellor. So I credit Jack Imholte of course with really establishing the reputation, the academic reputation of UMM and building a very solid base. And I credit Dave Johnson with starting a lot of the international emphasis on international programs and study abroad and you know, I mean, I could do lists for each chancellor and that's probably not what we want to do but in terms of the External Relations program, Dave was supportive and some people might have blanched when Vivian said let's trade jobs, but he, he's like, "Why not? Let's try it." And Sam, Sam was extraordinary really in ways that I, I fear people don't fully understand. He was a shy person, he wasn't a glad hander by any means and people often misinterpreted that and thought he was stuck up and he was anything but. He was one of the most humble people I've ever known. But that said, he, he was fearless in what needed to be done with External Relations in terms of, now this was the second capital campaign that was shaping up, it went, it started in 197-, I mean, excuse me, July first 1996, and he was interim chancellor but he still went around and met with some of our very high caliber alumni and talked to them about this opportunity for UMM to raise significant funds to really bolster what we could do with scholarships and faculty recruiting. And he had a way, he, he was so honest and clear and firm, people just trusted that he would lead it well. And alumni that were like really tops in terms of their careers who weren't very involved said yes to him. Yes, I'll co-chair that campaign, yes, I'll be involved. So he was really extraordinary in bringing people on board and a very widespread representation. And he did it all as an interim chancellor which is extremely remarkable, in the world of fundraising you really need your leadership.

Tom: And when was that?

Maddy: That was, okay, the campaign started in 1996. And Dave Johnson was still the chancellor at the very beginning of it, so it must have been 1997 or 8 when Sam came, Sam came in as the Dean. And then when Dave Johnson retired...

Tom: Okay.

Maddy: Sam did not throw his hat in the ring for the first search, which didn't materialize with a final outcome. So they launched a second search and then Sam did go for the position. Meanwhile they named him interim chancellor.

Tom: So this was in 1999 the chancellor search committee that I think you served on that committee.

Maddy: I did, mhmmm.

Tom: Can you talk just a little bit about that, are you willing to talk a little bit about what went on with that search process?

Maddy: Well it was a really interesting process of course. And I think it's always really difficult to be the internal candidate, because people know you too well. These other people can always razzle dazzle on paper and over the phone and in a one day interview slot. But when someone, when you've been walking around doing things for a couple of years, it doesn't help you necessarily, no matter who you are. So it was interesting to see Sam up against, it was a large search committee, it was probably 18 people or something. And it was interesting to see our internal candidate up against all of these candidates from across the United States, but he just kept surviving the cuts. And really fair and square he was the choice and of course I was really happy that he was named chancellor since it meant that he could continue in his leadership role with respect to the capital campaign that we were by now several years into.

Tom: And there was, you said that there was a failed selection process...

Maddy: The first one.

Tom: ...that was prior to that and what was the time period between the two?

Maddy: I want to say, I don't really, I, don't quote me on this, I think Sam was interim chancellor for maybe 2 years.

Tom: Okay.

Maddy: Possibly more. Possibly 2 1/2. Because what happened with the first search was we learned we can't really do this without a professional search firm. So it took a while to reorganize and also you don't just, we, you know, we didn't just for whatever reason launch on top of a launch. I think maybe gave the campus a year or two to kind of stabilize. I, I don't know, my memory's a little fuzzy on that, what the time period, how long there was in between.

Tom: Okay. Just in a general sense, how would, how would you describe the major changes that have taken place on the campus since the time that you came as a student until you retired a few years ago.

Maddy: I just don't even know where to begin. There's been so much excellent progress. Not just, I mean, okay there's buildings, there's a welcome center that we, we never had any place that people could stop by or that admissions could use to welcome perspective students and their families. We've become I think quite up to date technologically. We have so many scholarships that we didn't used to have, oh my goodness, I think when I became director of development and we had like 15 scholarships and now there's, I think, almost 200 or maybe even more. So that's a huge change in terms of what we are able to do for supporting students. It, I, I, I just can't even, that's just such a huge question. I feel like it's the same place, but I'm really proud of the way that we've sort of kept up and stayed current.

Tom: Is there anything that you would just like to talk a little bit about that I haven't steered you towards?

Maddy: Well again, probably, my most unique perspective is that of External Relations under the different chancellors and over, over the years but maybe do you feel we've covered that?

Tom: No, if you had more to say, if you have more to say, because it, it, it appears to have grown a good deal and so it's obviously it's something that a lot can be said about.

Maddy: Mhmm. It has really grown a lot, and a lot could be said about it. I feel like it could be a whole separate interview. I, I give tremendous credit to the staff in External Relations, they are so good. It just, you can't say enough about, I mean I can go right down the line, and they are so good.

Tom: I agree, as an alumni, I agree with you.

Maddy: Fabulous. And when I think about being a one-person alumni office, 30% time or whatever it was at the beginning and what it is now, it's pretty neat. I guess I would wonder too who else are you talking to? Because I can think of lots of people that would be good to talk to.

Tom: Be interested in hearing that, if you've got some suggestions, as you know, we're talking to Tom in a few minutes.

Maddy: Yeah, well, are, is someone talking to Gary McGrath? Of course he's in Arizona, but I don't know, he comes up about once a year I think. He would be excellent to talk to.

Tom: Okay.

Maddy: You know Gary.

Tom: Yes

Maddy: Yes, and he was Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Wrote his PhD dissertation on the founding and origins of the Morris campus. He'd be really good to talk to. Another alum that Tom and I thought of that's right in the area is Jim Odden and he would be really good to talk to. He is a grad of 1971 maybe, 2, somewhere in there. But he's also come back to teach in the education program. And he's a history major so he's got a really good, he's stayed involved over all these years. He'd be good to talk to. Liz Morrison would be good to talk to. I don't know if she's on your list or not. She's 1974, 5, 6, somewhere in there grad, and of course the daughter in law of the Morrisons, but her family too was involved in WCEDA, the Martins, her father was an attorney in town, and Liz is super intelligent and she's done some writing work for us, freelance writing work, and was the chair of that WCEDA, that got 2 phases of the science, actually it was three phases wasn't it? It was the planning money, the building of the new building, and then the renovation of the old building. It was three phases. So she would be a really important person to talk to. Gosh, there's so many.

Tom: Well if you think of people let us know.

Maddy: Will you be doing this next summer too? Or are you going to wrap it up?

Tom: No, we're going to continue I think that we'll continue with these oral interviews.

Maddy: Okay, so if we think of people...

Tom: Yes.

Maddy: ...then you would have time to include them.

Tom: Okay. I think we're...