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## Alida Westman, Oral History Interview, 2019

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MJ: Alright it's Tuesday, April 30, 2019. This is Historic Preservation graduate student Matt Jones and today I am in Halle Library talking with longtime professor in the Department of Psychology, Dr. Alida Westman. Since joining the faculty as an assistant professor in 1972, Westman has served on numerous committees, advised many students through the graduate thesis process and received many awards for exemplary teaching and mentoring abilities, including the first Distinguished Faculty Award in 1977.

AW: Junior Faculty Award- there was a junior and senior.

MJ: Oh OK. Alright. The first Junior Distinguished Faculty Award in 1977. Westman also served as departmental representative to the Faculty Senate from 2000-2010. She received Emeritus status in 2012 when she retired from EMU. I know there are a lot of things that I could have put in the introduction but we would be here all day. Let's start all the way back- could you tell me a little about your upbringing? Where and when you grew up, who your parents were, what they did for a living?

AW: I was born in the winter in World War Two. My parents worked in the underground. My dad had a fruit, vegetable and potato store, and my mother was a housewife but she helped with the underground printing. My dad's next door neighbor there was a shopkeeper with a double wall and so he hid Jews there and my dad would smuggle food- sometimes stealing it from the Germans and tried to keep people provided with food. Ultimately toward 1944, that became more and more difficult, and by 1944 then, we get a unique situation where a malnourished population is starving for a delineated period of time. It was the most studied cohort under the sun because of the effect of limited nutritional deprivation on development. In my case it meant that my mother could not lactate. My dad was able to buy rice from the black market. To the end of his days he almost broke down in tears every time he mentioned it. The last money he had, he would spend on rice and had the war lasted any longer, he too would not have been able to keep me alive. So that led to difficult mother-child interactions. My mother said that a child is very demanding, tries to suckle, cannot suckle, and so for me it led to severe calcium deprivation. That meant that by the age of 11, there was no way they could preserve my teeth and they began extracting. They discussed putting caps on the teeth but my mouth wasn't full-grown yet. So I had dentures from the age of 17. Immediately from the get go my dad would put special blocks on my shoes to try to force my legs straight. It was a difficult time for them. That also made it possible for us to come to the US because there was a program for people who had lost everything during WWII by helping the underground- they could get free passage to the U.S. We were sponsored by the Dean of Women Students at Washington State University who was willing to bring the family over. I wanted to go into psychology, experimental psychology, and my brother into physics, mathematics; he was interested in the space industry and these areas were better developed in the U.S. My parents decided that that is what they would do- move to the US, accept the program, and then do it soon while they were still young enough to make that move.

MJ: I haven't had an introductory answer like that yet. How difficult was it to prove that you had been with the resistance? To come to the US?

AW: Not at all. My dad was being pursued actively at the time I was born. I was born in a bunker because of the bombardments and my dad at that time was fleeing for his life.

MJ; What year were you born again?

AW: 1944- in the fall, October.

MJ: Do you have siblings?

AW: Yes. A five and half year older brother who lives in Grand Rapids.

MJ; Does he have any memory of that time as well?

AW: Sure.

MJ: During the war?

AW: Yes. And more than that, the kids were usually used to keep tensions under control. You may have noticed sometimes at soccer matches- they have kids walking in holding hands with the soccer players? They do that for a reason. It points out that you are the grown person, you are the parent and you should be showing your best behavior. They did the same thing during the war. My dad had to deliver goods to the Germans and he encountered those really tight situations. They would send my brother along sometimes. There were definite times where they would try to provoke my dad to do something like by leaving some butter at the end of the truck that could have been stolen if he had wanted to. But that would have been at the cost of his life. In one case he almost did, and his helper screamed his name at him. But he did get hit once by Germans- he had a scar on his upper lip from that.

MJ: Do you remember coming to the US at all?

AW: Yes. I was twelve and a half.

MJ: What were your first impression?

AW: I really liked the natural country side. That was very beautiful. The train- I was fascinated watching a mother read to her child. What caught me about that is how monotonous her reading was. I decided that if I ever had to speak and keep somebody awake, that is what I would NOT do. That is something I remembered later on when teaching here at EMU<sub>7</sub>; sometimes students would come in and say "Dr. Westman I may fall asleep and it's not you but I just came off the factory line and I'm so tired. I'm not sure I'll be able to stay awake." So what I would do is stand closer to them and produce a little but more of a sing-song that I hoped would maintain their attention better. I think that worked. The other things that I developed was over-articulation because what I did not want to have happen, is somebody poking somebody else saying "What did she say?" And over-articulation helped and the same thing helped with older adults. So my dad came to live with me after my mom died. He was 80. My mother-in-law died at the age of 102, and there was an aunt on my husband's side that I really liked a lot. She was in her 80s when I found the same over-articulation helped in communicating with them. And so the way I speak is actually based on habit of what seemed to work.

MJ: Do you remember the voyage over? By Boat?

AW: Nine days by boat- not a large boat. My dad's family had been a fishing family and so I was familiar with boats and herring fishing and all of that. That was fine, no problems. I knew how to walk on the boat.

MJ: I'm amazed at something that seems very simple through the process of doing these interviews and that is how much the faculty members' childhoods influenced what they went on to do. It seems like a no-brainer but I don't think that it is. For example, we talked to someone recently whose family moved constantly around the world and he ended up being a Geography professor. How did your specific childhood influence what you did?

AW: it made me a researcher and the area of my research, and when I turned in my dissertation I had a real eureka moment. When I was young I puzzled about the fact that in some specific areas adults would turn pale and absolutely could not talk, could not do much of anything. They were kind of frozen, kept walking- that's the best they could do. I found if you looked for someone who is less pale and you asked "what happened there?" They would tell you, it would be very brief, best not to ask too many questions, but then if you explored the area you found out that in fact what they were reporting was correct. For example- one place, people were really turning pale and I wondered, what in the world? So I found my grandmother who was walking past, turned pale but not too badly. I pointed to the area, and asked, "What happened here?" She said they decimated them to get information. They shot them to get information. That's as much as she could say. So I looked at the wall and there were all sorts of bullet markings. I didn't know if they ended up shooting everybody- decimate means "10<sup>th</sup>" so how literal were they in tenths, I have no idea. But I did know there were puzzling areas, if I looked for the least pale person and the question was calmly asked, then they could provide me with information that would further explain something about what happened there. And so I became a researcher I think based upon that experience. In the area of perception, why would one person turn pale beyond belief and at the very best be able to walk past? Why is it that another person could answer the question albeit briefly. The other thing was that everybody had PTSD. There were no exceptions. I think part of what makes PTSD in our culture here, so much more difficult to handle is that it is a minority thing. If everybody has PTSD, and I didn't know there were people without until I was 11 and a half, you learn to look for what triggers them. How do you get them past it? But they trigger based on different things. So, you learn to keep that in mind and then to interact in accordance and you move on but they also then get support to get past it. I had a student who had PTSD in my child class, and I talked with him and that helped but I also was a reminder of what he had gone through because I was the only one there. Yes I could help but it's an ambivalent help. I think that is more frequent in this country whereas if everybody knows about it and has it you learn to cope.

And so why do people see the world as they do? That became my other question. Then perception becomes a process in cognitive development.

MJ: Do you think that PTSD was passed down? Do you think it can be inherited?

AW: we know that it can be learned.

MJ: genetic memory?

AW: I'm not sure we know exactly how it is passed down but we know that it can be passed down.

MJ: Was it in your home country?

AW: For some people, not for everybody. More studies on this have been done with people in Auschwitz and their offspring.

MJ: Ok. Were your parents- did they have an education?

AW: My dad went to high school. My mother went to elementary school and that was quite common at that time. My dad was born in 1911 and mother 1915. That was not unusual.

MJ: Ok. For that first twelve and a half years, was it a frightening time?

AW: At times.

MJ: Even beyond World War Two? Because you came here in 1956-57?

AW: The ordinance does not disappear. One of my jobs being a bright little kid was to take care of the other little kids and keep them away from ordinance and report ordinance when we spotted it.

MJ: Just shells and mines and things?

AW: Exactly- and bombs that didn't explode. Also because there were too few teachers the classes went up to 49 because if they were 50 they had to be divided in two when there weren't teachers. So what was done was to divide the class based on abilities into three groups and the kids in the top group would help the bottom group. One of the things that is a difference in culture is that everyone was free to speak up if they could see how they could help someone learn. So what I frequently saw here in this culture is that the teacher has to present it and if somebody else speaks up that's not ok because that person is not the authorized, trained person. But if you learn that one and one is two long ago, you may not see where a kid who is only now learning it is getting stuck. Someone who has just gone through that process may realize where that person gets stuck. For example, when you look at the alphabet, M and W are basically the same except for orientation and if I take that bottle (water bottle on table) and turn it upside down, it's the same bottle. So we apply what we've learned from the real world and in the case of learning the alphabet that is the problem. And similarly, when you first learn algebra, you get letters that lo and behold are suddenly not letters but stand for numbers. Then we have X, Y and Z that are variable numbers and a, b and c that are usually scalars. If you don't immediately see that and the teacher doesn't realize that's where you're stuck, you're stuck. So it is always an opportunity for anyone who saw how to help someone learn to do that and you were trained to speak up and that's what made the system work.

MJ: Since we are talking about your childhood and you have such a singular story at least relative to a lot of the other interviewees, I have to ask you in reference to your later work; you authored an article where you did a study that showed that people remember things differently at different times. Does that ring a bell? I think it may have been a study you did, was it the same study as where you looked at the Briggs-Meyers personality test? And determined that it wasn't.

AW: That it is not stable. That it changes by time of day. One of the things when you see personality tests being used, they very frequently do not keep the time of day in mind and they're not aware of the fact frequently that it actually changes by time of day. So I did a number of studies with Frank Canter and students about that. What we found is that the personality indicator changed by time of day. Now if you talked to me in the morning I am very happy when I get bread in the toaster and I get people their breakfast and long intellectual discussion is probably not going to be had whereas in the afternoon I am much more intellectually able, and if you ask me to take out a splinter, I can. I'm not sure in the morning, first thing, I'm that coordinated. I'd say "Can you hold off just a moment here till I wake up?" So Frank Canter - this is the interesting thing, an introvert, very introvert, he would say "let's get together to talk about this at 8 o'clock." I would say, "Middle of the night? That's not going to work." Of course I was busy getting the kids to school too. I would say "How about 4 o'clock?" and he would say "I can't think anymore at that time" so we just met at noon. The reason I became aware of time of day is because once we had unionized, we had to have an input structure. So we met to organize an input structure but school was going on so we had meetings at 7 in the morning and then like, 7 at night, and the people who were active participants almost completely flip flopped depending on the time of day we were meeting. I thought, now something is happening- what is happening here? That's what led to my being more alert to myself by time of day and I realized yeah, I do change by time of day. What we also found is that some introverts become more extroverted around noon, later on in the day and the extroverts can become a bit more introverted.

MJ: That does echo what you said about your childhood and seeing the people turn pale and then examining the bullet holes because you knew something was going on here.

AW: So a fundamental question I carry around is, what is happening and why is it happening? What is making this stick?

MJ: And you have to keep your eyes open to notice even what is happening.

AW: Hence perception. Sure.

MJ: I have already learned a lot here. Did you expect from an early age to go to college?

AW: I always enjoyed learning. Like other people talk about how they looked and that sort of stuff. My brother was a very gentle, loving brother. We did a lot of stuff together and one of the things I missed when he left home for college ultimately, was that he would pull me out of bed to go look at some astronomical wonder. At any rate, he was always looking and studying and he would be ok having his sister along unless there were male friends and that began around the end of elementary school when he had male friends- little sisters shouldn't be poking around. But if they weren't around he was very willing to do stuff with me. So I learned a lot from him and exploring with him.

MJ: he went away to college- did he send back word of what it was like to you? Did he encourage you to also go?

AW: No because I lived on the outskirts of a college town. The town we went to was Pullman, Washington, which is home to Washington State University. So my Dad worked at the college and I just expected since I loved learning, to keep learning and lo and behold I had to take an

entrance exam Ok, so I took the entrance exam that went fine. So I enrolled. It was not something I gave a lot of thought to. In fact, I could see the university from my high school window. And so I looked out the high school window, I thought "Ok, I can go from learning here to learning there."

MJ: Were there any specific careers you expected to find after?

AW: I knew what I was interested in- I wanted to do research. I wanted to learn and I wanted to know why the world is interpreted, seen, reacted to differently by different people.

MJ: Did you find peers or instructors in college that shared that way of looking at things?

W; I went to Cornell because that's where the Gibsons were and their main area is perception and cognitive development. Ulrick (Dick) Neisser was there too. He started the area of cognition with a book defining the area of \_\_\_\_\_ cognition. That was a full ride, by the way, to Cornell.

MJ: With your interest in research were you interested in going into teaching at that point?

AW: I liked to share information and the jobs at the academic level are teaching and research so that was fine. I actually ended up at the University after a research position at the Central Institute for the Deaf. I got my PhD, I looked for jobs and I had a Bryn Mawr interview and that didn't really work. I didn't quite fit with the people there. They didn't seem to have the same exploratory orientation as I had. The Central Institute for the Deaf was extremely interesting and I was interested in them. I was there but as I turned in my dissertation to my prof, he was happy with it so he signed off on it and his brother-in-law was there to visit and I met him, we talked like for three hours straight first time on the telephone and just very intensely talk together. Enjoyed each other's company so by the time I ended up at the Central Institute for the Deaf, I was committed in a personal relationship. My husband-to-be at that point wanted to go back to school and get a PhD in Ecology. I promised him I'd look for a job in his area- the U of M, and if I found it, which I hoped to do, then I would work him through to the PhD. So he got an assistantship and I was his support person. That also was why I became a Union person. Because while I had a good reception here, Eastern I really liked because I had seen a lot of people at high level universities marry their jobs and that's not what I wanted to do. I really wanted to have a chance to have a full life, raise my own, be a spouse and so forth. Eastern seemed to fit that better than the research requirements at the U of M. So it was a deliberate choice on my part. I also interviewed at Wayne State, but chose to go for Eastern, not just because it's close to U of M but because it also had a balance of life that I really wanted to have.

So that's what I did. And then on the way here I had my last call with a job prospect, said that I was going to sign at EMU. I sat down and the department head looked at me- we had agreed on \$11,000 that was the going rate for beginning profs. There is nothing about it that's unusual. He put a line through it, wrote down \$10,600, looked at me and said, "You're a captive audience." At this point I was a captive audience. So when it became possible to go for a union, I was sold and I have been a part of the union ever since. I hope I've contributed; they say I have. I have been the chair of the retirement committee the last couple of rounds. I've been part of the bargaining council, the union steward and what have you. Every time when they did a year's in

rank salary adjustment, I was brought up more to where I should have been. Now beyond that, let me say that the Department Head was very good to me. He gave me wonderful advice, but still you know being docked in pay that much is something that got to me.

MJ: That's an interesting reason for coming, for two reasons- because you wanted to be able to live a fuller life. We hear a lot of people that came here not expecting to stay very long and then staying for 40 years. We hear people say that in their interviews with departments here, they were treated so much more fair and not intimidated like they were at other departments at other jobs. They also that- but it also reflects, we hear so much about EMU, you want to live a fuller life- the students here seem unique in that they have full lives already. They can't make school their entire lives because they have three other jobs.

AW: But that is more now than it used to be. For example- one of the things that attracted me to EMU was that it was known as the good liberal arts college east of the U of M. And so what I would find is that I would get a notice, a request: "can we come to your capstone course- can I come to your class and get your students interested in working for our corporation? Because if they are seniors and graduate from your university, we know they know how to learn we can teach them the specifics." And so it was the real aspect of companies investing in students for their own positions at their own corporations. That mutual investment was more common. It's one of the things I really appreciated about the 1970s- the administration and faculty were very close and worked together. We had a downturn and we could not afford to keep all of the faculty and staff year round. So people like Ira Wheatley, at that point he worked in the provost office and he was department head of History and Philosophy for a number of years, he helped write grant proposals. The administration and faculty were working actively together and then we developed "Plan C." So at that point- the spring and summer were two separate terms- they were combined so then there were three terms- the fall, winter, and spring-summer. We tried to make sure that everybody could teach two out of three. That led later on a couple of years ago- to the gradual retirement program where people would now teach less on their way out. That was the basis of what I really liked about it- EMU operated more like a family. That they were helping each other. It was not a cut throat sort of thing at that point. There weren't strikes yet.

MJ: What happened? That is prevalent in other interview we done- people talking about the tightly knit community that Eastern was in the 60s and 70s. What happened? Where did it start to fragment?

AW: I think what happened is that the regents and the culture itself changed to much more a Wall Street orientation of the bottom line. So we had cases where the head- the Vice President for Finance would look at the schedule and there might not be the money for particular courses that people needed to graduate from EMU and because the instructor's salary was not yet included in the budget, he would say the course could not be held, totally ignoring that as the students start paying tuition, that would more than pay for the instructor. So part of it from my perspective also was just administrative stupidity. Lack of understanding of how a university works and a lot of people came from corporate backgrounds. So their intentions were different and they looked more at the bottom line rather than how do we keep students here, how do we keep them graduating- what can we do to promote the university as a learning place?

MJ: Was retention starting to shrink? Why would they think that this corporate culture was better than what had been working so well already?

AW: It was a culture shift, right? And so in the 1980s I even remember billboards along Cross Street that said "The customer is King. Students are customers." To be honest about it, I was considered a very tough teacher. But meeting people halfway. So they were always welcome if they had questions- they could ask questions any time. If I had to explain 50 times, so be it. It was a difficult concept- I didn't care. I was not willing to downgrade what the students were learning. I was willing to put in the effort as long as they were willing to put in the effort to master the material. But once the customer became King, and student evaluations were put into a different framework: if the students aren't happy, then the teacher is a bad teacher. I think teachers started to downgrade the difficult material frequently.

MJ: Are those evaluations- are they essential at all to getting tenure here?

AW: They are more and more important to tenure. What happened is that when I got tenure trained teachers would come and observe your teaching and what they had to say was critically important and student evaluations were looked at but faculty were seen as if they were willing to improve- we'll help you improve. There was also talk of mentoring younger people. I know personally there was no mentoring when I came but there were some senior profs and it didn't matter what the question was they would answer it. So that obnoxious Department head that I mentioned- I went to him and I said "I want to cover abortion but that is a hot button issue- what do I do to be able to cover that? But in such a way that it works?" So what he said is "just make sure that you've got both sides fairly covered and perhaps make material available in the library for those further interested." So I took that advice to heart and that worked. I always kept covering it and similarly the other senior profs- If I had questions I was always welcome.

MJ: Who was that Department Head?

AW: Sam Karson.

MJ: Sam Karson?

AW: Yes. With a K.

MJ: Was he the one who was here- he helped you get hired?

AW: Yes.

MJ: What was that like? Do you remember coming here for the first time?

AW: I sat down for an interview with him and it became clear to him from the get go that I was pretty bright, and that I wanted to be in this area- that I was looking in this area, and so I gave a talk, a presentation, and then I was told they would offer me a job and the going rate was so and so and that made sense.

MJ: Was that standard procedure? Giving a presentation?

W: That is still standard practice.

MJ: Do you remember what you talked about?

AW: My research. My thesis.

MJ: What was your thesis?

AW; I was interested in what kids did with pictures and words. In particular, what I was doubting very strongly- old ideas about what kids understand as correct. For example- Piaget would have kids cover their eyes and you would say "Can I see you?" And they would say no. Why did we think kids in kindergarten were that stupid? So instead of just asking that, I would say "Ok so how about can I see your arms? Your Legs? Your feet?" Yeah, yeah, yeah, no problem. So the kids were eye-oriented; not being able to see their eyes meant that they were not visible. So that was something that I looked at with pictures and words as well. They talked about kids not being able to categorize pictures because they craved words and so on and so forth. So what I did was to create layouts and matrices of pictures and matrices of words, and then I asked them to organize them. Kids organized more slowly with words but they did just as fine- big improvement in second grade but they did just as fine. If they had just had alphabetization like looking stuff up in the dictionary in school, then words were sometimes alphabetized at least partially in blocks but not using all of the letters. So they seem to be able to handle words and pictures in terms of conceptual meaning equally well but with the words more slowly than pictures. A lot of my research rests on previous research.

MJ; It doesn't seem like your research slowed down even though you wanted to live a fuller life. I looked at your list of publications and it was REALLY long. So did the department- they must have really encouraged faculty to research, or did they want you to teach or find a balance?

AW: The main orientation was teaching and then research was secondary to that. I was just interested in research and also if you asked me what education is about at the base, it is about getting the skills to make sense of out of life. Being able to think things through. To give an example- when we look today at global temperature change, one of the things that you frequently hear from corporate types is, we don't know whether humans caused it, to which my question is- if you see a house on fire, do you stop to ask whether it was caused by a person or by lightning? If you know how to turn it off, you know to extinguish the fire, wouldn't you go ahead and extinguish the fire? We have clear ideas how we can help- compensate for the global temperature changes that are happening. We may not be able to stop it but at least we can ameliorate it. The ozone hole-around the south pole helped illustrate what we are doing made a difference. So from my perspective, really learning to think critically is the most important skill all education is about. Because that is what gives you a handle on life's situations. If you cannot think critically, good luck going for an insurance policy or deciding which fridge to buy. It's basically a thinking skill. And then being alert to how things are presented- the perceptual aspect.

MJ; That plays into that article that I read of yours about the Meyers-Briggs personality test and the way that we're still using that obviously- we used it in a lot of classes. But you determined that it wasn't ironclad and I wonder how important it was to you in your teaching to instill in students the need to challenge procedures and pronouncements that seem to be bulletproof?

W;q Well what I always did on the first day of class was to tell students that teaching was a two way process. As an end result, I will present stuff and they should ask questions. Sometimes I took

their questions and with that answered their questions and that became the lecture. This represented a little bit of a problem because they like to know what to know for the test and that didn't always work. I would have to indicate what I wanted them to know for the test. And I might have to wait for the next class session to have the material to know for the test organized. With the first Iraq war and after 9/11 I walked into a class full of questions, such as "how do kids see that? What's going to happen to the kids who see that? What's happening to adults who look at that? Can people get PTSD from over exposure to TV?" OK this is child psychology- those are your questions that I am going to pursue. What do you tell a child when there is an emergency? What is the child responding to? Never mind what I was planning to talk about. I hope I'm modeling but also by my introduction from the first class to indicate to them that questions are never dumb.

MJ: You're making me wish I would've studied psychology.

AW: It's still possible.

MJ: You came here in 72?

AW: Yes. Summer of 72.

MJ: Harold Sponberg was president still. Did you have any impressions of upper administration? Of Sponberg at all? He seems to be one anomaly of a president in that culture in the 60s changed so much. Here we had a university president that didn't seem like he could quite keep up with the changes. How prevalent was the culture shift on campus? There had just been racial demonstrations, racial issues rooted here, anti-war demonstrations, the National Guard was here. Was there any remnant of that when you arrived?

AW: Not when I came- that was history. I know senior colleagues that talked about that like Barry Fish, but I myself did not see that here. I saw that at Cornell. I also saw distinctive trends between Cornell and U of M- how they handled it. At Cornell, I did write an article at the time. What happens is that a group of Black students ran into the student union, called FIRE, everybody left, they closed the door and took the building over. It was totally nonviolent and part of the thing we **were** trying to promote at that point was getting classes that included some Black history, information about Blacks, I mean, what you got in education was very Caucasian oriented. It's also when I learned that it is a good idea not to have a gun. Because when you ask the Administration how we get a course on the books about Blacks, African American history etc., they'd say "Oh take your proposal to..." They would say I needed to go to "There," and then when you got there they would send you somewhere else. After about six places, I thought, you know, it's good I don't believe in guns. Because I was so frustrated. (Laughs) That was the real push at that point- get coverage, make it less European-centered etc., Lynn Nybell. She just retired like two weeks ago or something. So with this end of school year I think. She would have sit ins, teach ins, she brought forth great ideas. But at any rate, at Cornell, the Black students took over the student union without a shot fired, nothing violent, nothing. They just screamed Fire. Then things went desperately wrong. In comparison, the U of M, there was a takeover and at some point, the president of the U of M said "it's a public building- you're welcome here. Have a seat." The kids were seated in his office, down the hall, there was no big to-do about it. What they did at Cornell, was they surrounded the building after some fraternity kids tried to

break in but the Blacks got scared. They imported guns into the student union. There was a picture of the guns being passed through a window and that picture really did not tell the story but it was publicized a lot. So now people's scenario is, here are armed Blacks taking over the building, can't have anything good in mind, etc. etc. And the president just kept making it worse so then he surrounded the building with armed guards and loudspeakers, and we were beginning to have questions- is there going to be trouble? How does this get resolved? Then we had this big massive meeting in which the president spoke, in short- every time when he could've reduced conflict, he did the opposite. Compared to the U of M, I believe it was President Fleming at that point but I'm not completely sure. At any rate, the president says OK, takeover a public building, have a seat, you're welcome here it's a public building. The difference in orientation, and that's also something very concerning with the police today. So they had weapons, they have guns, but how much do they have by way of non-violent conflict resolution? How much do many people in this society have by way of non-violent conflict resolution? That's a real concern I have these days.

MJ: What was the state of the Psychology Department when you got here? How many faculty were there?

AW; About 19. Experimentalists and clinicians and the clinicians were divided between the Freudian type and the behaviorists. And they didn't always get along.

Mj: What kinds of things would they have tension over?

AW: How you do therapy. What's appropriate? That got resolved over the years through research. That's pretty long gone now.

MJ: What was enrollment like in the early to mid-70s?

AW: I was not that involved at higher levels. I was involved in developing my courses as best I could. I know we didn't at that point have a union yet but we did have a Faculty Senate and I was the representative for the Senate so I was beginning to learn about what was happening at the higher levels here but I can't really say I was informed.

MJ: Were there specialties in the department that were encouraged, research-wise?

AW: We always tried to make a very balanced presentation so that if anyone wanted to study psychology they could find somebody who could cover that area of interests. People were hired to make sure that coverage was complete. We also had the promise that any person who could not come during the day could graduate by taking evening courses. That was also important- getting that rotation. Certainly there were many more tenured faculty members, and far fewer instructors. In fact, instructors at that point couldn't stay for more than two years. There was turnover. And many of the instructors who were hired were like working in the mental health sector, in town or at the mental hospital south of town near Milan. Then they could bring expertise from their jobs to their work and so they were hired to teach where that was appropriate.

MJ; We know that you wrote one of EMU's first departmental honors programs and could you tell us about that? Was it your idea?

AW: Yes. Basically I was seeing some very bright students and there was nothing to give them this extra attention. Then I discovered that the university permitted a capstone course, or something capstone the senior year. So what I worked on at that point was to ask is it ok if we have them do research and then in the junior year, have the reading done . Because if they need to do the research and the reading and the write-up etc., one year is not going to cut it. So the Honors program then became reading in the junior year, research in the senior year, and what I was most interested in was that students would develop their own questions and would then find a person to develop research with, do the research, and if at all possible, get it published. That worked fine, got copied by many departments, and then there was an Honors Program that adapted honors to the first two years at college and that grew into the Honors College and that's why sometimes there's a bit of a hiccup between the basic studies program and the Departmental Studies- kids aren't always smoothly passed on from one to the other.

MJ: When the faculty unionized in 74, you had already been serving the Faculty Council?

AW: It was called Faculty Senate. After we became unionized it became Faculty Council and then it was renamed Faculty Senate because that communicated the role better with the outside world, what it was up to. Also with that development of the basic structure of the union, one of the prime things was faculty input. That evolved over the years- it was initially what we had done was for each college to have a college-level a personnel and finance committee, and an academic ones. The academic one survived but the personnel/finance presented a problem. We evaluated each person coming up for tenure and promotion and there sometimes was a long and elaborate discussion- many hours. In addition to not maintaining privacy, the recommendation was to the dean, so if for some reason the Dean said no, there would not be a separation between administration and faculty to be able to challenge that because there had already been faculty input. That was dropped.

MJ: Why haven't faculty unionized yet? Was that something that was happening across the country? Or had it been happening across the country and EMU jumped on board? Why did it happen when it happened?

AW: Because we were concerned with like what happened to me when I came here to sign and I got my salary docked. A friend of mine came and she already had teaching experience, and at this point in the culture in the 60s, a lot of things were done orally. Even contracts for working on your home- you talked about it, you decided what was going to happen, how to make it happen, you shook hands, and you said "we agree." She was told that the two years of college teaching she had already done would be credited as she applied for tenure. When she applied for tenure, the department head said "well you have to have it in writing." Of course she didn't so she wasn't given credit for her two years. So it was that there were a lot of these kind of problems. Things where there really needed to be protection for people. And as I've said, when I signed, yes I felt like a captive audience. There really was no one to turn to. We needed somebody to help and similarly she, when asked if she had it in writing, of course she didn't have it in writing. That really represented changing culture. In the 60s, if someone said something like, for example, one professional conference, a person's data were challenged, one man in linguistics said "sir you are challenging my integrity," that was the end of the discussion- you just didn't do that. That changed- when you have to have it in writing, it was a complete cultural change. And

similarly you're challenging my integrity by the late 1970s, people would have said, "yeah-right." This complete cultural shift to a much greater ego-centrism.

MJ: Do you remember the strike in 76?

AW: Oh yes.

MJ: What was that like?

AW: Terrifying. The administration always promised they would not...well, one of the benefits of EMU was that all health care was paid for and provided and it was illegal to strike for faculty as teachers within the state. The administration always said "and if you strike we'll cut off your health care." For some people, that is not a good thing to hear. And so it was scary, it was terrifying. They also ended up being relatively brief.

MJ: The actual march- there was marching, striking- the demonstration, that lasted a week?

WA: I would have to look at the data. I've seen a number of strikes and one of them went at midnight a strike was called. I called the team- "we're striking," so we blocked the folks who were going to deliver food and also people were picking up grease from the kitchens. A very effective strategy. By 7:30, the strike had been settled, I had an 8 o'clock class, I had clothes in my car, and I drove to Mark Jefferson, parked, ran into the bathroom to change and was teaching my 8 o'clock.

MJ: Was that the first day of the semester?

AW: yes. Usually it was the last day before the semester and into the evening into the night, that the negotiations were really the most intense because then you were up against it. There was one time and that became the longest strike, so much so we had to make up time for it. And the evening before class, at 6 o'clock, a regent walked the negotiating team away from the negotiating table and she said "we're done negotiating." And that made everybody's jaw drop because that was so counter to experience. And that was a really bad strike.

MJ: How did you feel about Sally McCracken's leadership?

AW: She was superb. She's now the head of the Emeritus Faculty and Staff Association. She's superb. Yes. Excellent skills. Very good at conflict resolution. What the AAUP did was to actually train negotiating people in negotiating skills. I may be wrong but my best recollection is that Sally became a trainer also. I'm not sure of that, but I'd have to ask her. At any rate I know that she has been trained in those skills to the hilt. She was the head of the union for a while, also the head of the Faculty Council and we had an informal rule that whoever was at the head of one was not at the head of the other, so that the executive boards were different and then that way there would be separate attention to issues and also the opportunity to look at things from different perspectives. To come to grips with what is happening.

MJ: We did an interview with her last semester. I have to say it was a little intimidating sitting across the table from her and asking her questions. I felt like it was a negotiation. She's been such a huge help to us as the leader of the Emeritus Association. But, I wanted to hear more about that input structure that you helped design following unionization. What does that mean?

AW: We developed having committees at the department level, the college level, and then the university level to provide input to the administration. That is where there was a flip flop as to who was most active in the morning and the evening and then we found that at the college level where the personnel decisions were taken faculty should not participate so it just academic now.

MJ: It was figuring out an effective way to convey information to the different levels?

AW: Right. So to the administration at the department head level to the administration at the Dean's level, to the administration at the Provost/President level. Yes.

MJ: Before that had there been any connection between faculty and the Dean? Was there any way-how did people become aware of the concerns of different levels?

AW: They weren't. Those lacks of connection were presenting a problem. Velma Clark was a person who almost ran the office of Arts and Sciences by herself. She was an excellent woman. At one point I was just- I had lots of questions about lots of things and I went to see her. I think we spent three hours talking. She really helped give me her perspective of campus.

MJ: What was her perspective?

AW: To look at the campus a little bit more from the perspective of people who were actually doing things. Slow down the interpretation a bit, for example, one of the comments she made is that she looked at the parking lot. She would look at the cars that people were driving because that told her a lot about what their interests might be, whether they had a family, whether they went to spend a lot of money on cars, and that also told her in that sense about the administration. You know, what the basic interests of people as they express it really is.

MJ: In a place like Southeast Michigan it seems like you could tell a lot about people from their cars.

AW: Oh yes.

Mj: That's really interesting. Speaking of parking, I saw that you've been on a few picket lines, and one of them was outside the governor's office. I don't have the year here, but you were concerned that campus was becoming less and less accessible. There was some kind of beautification project- supposed to happen on campus and would have eliminated a lot of the parking and you were concerned about the accessibility.

AW: yes.

MJ: Do you think that accessibility to this campus is more important here than it is other places?

AW: Well if you look at U of M they have places that people can park and they have transportation from there but they also have a standing policy that if anything happens you can call a taxi at their expense and you can get taken to your child's doctor's appointment, your child in school, your doctor's appointment or what have you. That's certainly missing here. Plus if say, I came to EMU (I bicycled for ten years) When I drove if I found out here on campus that there was no parking I would have to go out to Hewitt and then wait for the bus and then get back here and this usually took about an hour. The buses ended before the evening classes were done. So I would somehow have to pick up- I usually taught one evening class and so I would have to do

something on campus, then spend another hour or whatever picking up the car. Right now I have my neighbor's granddaughter who is going to EMU and her grandpa is dropping her off and there is a reason her grandpa is dropping her off. She comes to his house and then he drops her off at the EMU campus because of parking problems.

MJ: I'm a little outraged every day that the bus lines still don't have a deal with EMU to bring students here. I ride the bus every day.

AW; That is also why with the Ypsi Township 2040- why I say reducing the driving lanes on Washtenaw is not going to work because the busses don't necessarily run where people need them or when people need them. If you look at Michigan State, then they also have parking but it is not that far away and there is like, a bus every, I don't know the exact, but, about every 3 minutes? Very different from what we have here. -It is really a convenience to not have to worry about parking nearby. It's a very different scenario. My impression is that the current president is not happy with current parking situations and he is concerned about that. I don't know what the specifics are.

MJ: We talked about it a little before, that you received one of the first Distinguished Junior Faculty awards in 77, and I read that you said you weren't expecting the award because you are such a tough instructor. Do you think that harder instructors are less likely to be recognized?

AW: Let's put it this way- I taught stats and I cannot say that most students looked forward to the teachings, to learning stats. That was not a class that they cherished in the same way as I cherished it. To teach a class, I would think, "What gave me a hard time? What do I need to be alert to, what's something difficult?" For me, math was always like puzzling, so I really didn't understand where the problems would be happening. And so first thing I did when I walked into the first class was to tell them, I'm used to thinking about where I got stuck to help students and I have no idea where you're going to get stuck- you're going to have to tell me. I also learned students are very fair. At the end of that class, I was used to all the students names, I had weekly assignments they turned in, I knew all of them by name, but I had not attached their names to their physical presence so I tried to return their assignments as they were doing something or other. I missed a number of them. One student looked at me and said, "Well now we know the grading was fair- you still don't know us!" (Laughter) Thereafter I took care to hook names to faces.

MJ; How have you seen, in what ways have you seen the Psychology Department change? Do departments go through eras of change? Or is it just one long slope?

AW: Psychology, especially now because of the PhD program and the development of clinical psychology, thanks to a lot of data, we now no longer have this Freudian vs. Behaviorist orientation. People flexibly take from different perspectives and then with the PhD program, you know, it became a completely different school.

MJ; When did the PhD program start?

AW: About 15 years ago maybe, I'd have to look it up. But that's also when I started to get more PhD students- before I had honors students and masters students but now PhD students in the area of psychology of religion because that made more sense for their clinical orientation.

MJ: Do any of the classes in the department extend beyond the classroom? Do you do any sort of work in the community? Do you send students out?

AW: There is an undergraduate course that gives people credit for working in the community. Beyond that I am not aware of any courses. Once you get into clinical, there is applied work at the graduate level and in the PhD program. They run a clinic.

MJ: is that "CAPS?"

AW: I believe that is counselling.

MJ; I don't have very many more questions. Do you have something that you think is your greatest contribution to EMU?

AW; Well, I was at a movie the other day. Two people came to me and said, "You know, you are responsible for us getting hitched. Now we have kids!" Above all I hope I impressed people that there is a lot to be learned from being fair. One of the things in history and systems is that I always indicated that it is fine to have different perspectives, you can expect that other people don't quite see the world as you do but learn from them. I received this wonderful email from a person who was an atheist and said "in your class, the result of your teaching, I have had many discussion with people who are fundamentalists," and then named another person from the class. "If it hadn't been for you class, we never would have talked." At that point I hoped that maybe I was as successful with everybody but at minimum I hope people are more willing to talk with each other and think about different perspectives and where they come from and why they might have them. So even now I am definitely not a Trump supporter, and I run into Trump supporters, and I ask, "well why?" What about him or what he does makes you support him?" The learning process continues.

Mj; It sounds like if you made those two start talking together, chances are you made a lot of people start talking.

AW: I hope so!

MJ: What do you see as some of the greatest strengths of EMU?

AW: The fact that it is a college/university accessible to people who are not single, getting educated in the traditional mold. Because as I was coming through the University, you were expected to move after your bachelors. If you stayed till your masters, there was a penalty for having your masters. People were expected to be acclimated to poverty, so as an end result, the whole orientation to academics was toward a more monkish sort of style of living. As you indicated, most of our students don't fit that pattern. So as an end result, having a place where they can be at home, where they can learn, where they can benefit, and hopefully with that, build a better life. I'm concerned about retention issues and very frequently that's finance. When I came here in the late 70s, the Provost gave a presentation on finance. He indicated that seventy-some percent of EMU's finance came from the state and tuition was a small part of it. I think at this point it's the flip flop of that. Similarly health care for faculty used to be free of charge. Now people have to pay for some of it. I would like to add here that Medicare for all leaves me absolutely bewildered and the reason it leaves me bewildered is because as I check with myself-

my own financial records and other people, what I find is that most of us pay about \$500 a month on premiums before even seeing a doctor, getting medication. So what does medicare for all mean? You know, you look at the Affordable Care Act- then the payments there are complained about, but I think medicare matches them. So, where they're going with the health care comments and developments really bewilder me.

MJ: I've wondered sometimes, and I've been really grateful for the fact that so many professors here come from much higher academic backgrounds. You yourself went to Cornell on a full ride [*this is incorrect; Westman went to Washington State University for her BS and MS, and then moved to Cornell*] and I wonder sometimes, what make somebody with a higher institutional experience want to come here where there are so many nontraditional students? That seems like a culture shift for someone to make.

AW: Service. We are seeing it in the new people going into Congress- they actually talk about service again. Some are military people. So they have served. I think that would be a huge culture shift from what started to happen in the 1980s. We used to joke that in the 70s that the kids looked like shit but they behaved like gems. When you look at what they were wearing, you know it really did not look all that interesting or nice, and by the 1980s there was this visible shift where people looked like they could have come from a photo shoot and yet they were absolutely egocentric, didn't care about others, very different. In fact, through my teaching, I would say probably every four years, I had to rethink my teaching because of the cultural changes in the students I was seeing. I'd have to take a different approach to the students.

MJ: How would you shift it now? Especially since the current administration, I mean 2016- since 2016, how would you change your teaching? This seems like a different country.

AW: I'm not sure. Part of the beauty of having kids is that as they grow up, I was the hangout for my son. So I saw these kids from the get go until the time that they left for college and that kept me more in tune with what the college population was thinking about doing. I am still in touch with them but there's no group in between. So as an end result I don't quite feel as in touch with what today's generation is thinking. I hope that this greater service orientation spreads, that it becomes, you know, that there's a sort of anti-hate speech movement that looks at people more as worthy entities.

MJ: I hope so too. What do you think EMU has to improve on?

AW: Well, I don't know the Board of Regents very well at the moment but I would like to see more concern about the academic spirit and a little less about financial bottom lines. Talking about service, the Emeritus organization I helped work on this very diligently, is now not just Emeritus Faculty Association but Emeritus Faculty and Staff Association so hopefully we can serve more people but we are also trying to keep those who have retired more active. So for example, with the undergraduate symposium, I was an evaluator of the presentations and yet that is a very busy time for faculty, who are responsible to direct students with competent information. Similarly, staff can have really competent information to contribute. So we're hoping to get more of that service orientation here. I would like to see as far as I currently understand with the Regents, and I'm not involved so my knowledge is very imperfect, is more of that service type of orientation. One of the things I did on the Executive Board, people loved me as

secretary, they can say whatever and I'll write it down and in the report without mentioning names, I 'll say and this issue was brought up and that and that one, and so the comment is frequently is "When I read your notes I feel like I'm there." That's the intention, I don't care if I agree with what has been said. As the secretary of the Faculty Senate, it was my thought that the Regents come and they may not know our campus. Some of them may never have been on the campus because they're positions that are kind of payola positions. They're pay off positions. What if it is possible to meet the Regents and get communication going? To Francis Parker, who was a Regent at that point, and after a Regent meeting, I went up to her and I said "Would you be willing to have dinner with some senior faculty? Some women?" She said sure, and that's what we did for her whole tenure plus some, and we still communicate. You know, we got together and then she also realized there were many facets where the Regents really didn't know what it looked like from the perspective of campus. So at that point, the Board of Regents meetings, the faculty session became a presentation by Faculty Senate and the union on specific issues. Her feedback was that it was very helpful. We never had a strike as long as she was here. She also became the President of the Board of Regents. I think that influenced the get together and talk to look at each other's perspective is very helpful. As far as I know now, there is none of that getting together. People get elected to the Board, they disappear on the board, and all we get is feedback from the board. So how are they going to know, you know I would recommend they come into some classrooms, sit down in the back and watch, you know? This is one of the things I did by the way when I was first beginning to teach. I would ask an assistant or a student, would you please sit in the back and tell me peoples' reactions? What works? What does not work? Where do they seem troubled etc.? I learned an awful lot from that feedback also. Instead of the university feedback, with every test, I stuck in a sheet of paper that said 'Ok- any feedback on this section? Any feedback on the course? Anything that can be improved?' And then the following class I would actually say, "These are the comments and this is how I'm going to deal with that. If you have further feedback let me know." I think the same sort of thing needs to happen with whatever interested parties there are who should be interested- that there is that mutual exchange because one thing I have learned is that people have very different perspectives on things. It isn't necessary that A is right and B is wrong. They may come from a different background, notice different things, and so they can share more of that. Then it's possible to make decisions that are mutually beneficial.

MJ; Do you think that it's a problem, how the Regents are appointed? Aren't they state-appointed?

AW; Yes- by the governor. There is an assistant to the governor. One of their tasks is to appoint the Regents and that is true for Eastern, Western, Central, Northern, for all of those. I'm inclined to favor elections, on the other hand elections can be very unfair. Right now we are on the books for gerrymandering. I would like to see a fairer system but I'm not quite sure what that would be.

MJ: Ok. Is there anything else you'd like to say on the record?

AW: No, I don't think so.

MJ: Well thank you for coming in. I've had a great time.

AW: I have too.