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## Patrick Barry, September 9, 2019

Matt Jones  
*Eastern Michigan University*

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Eastern Michigan University, Oral Histories

Oral History interview with Patrick J Barry Jr (PB)

Interview conducted by Historic Preservation Graduate Student Matt Jones (MJ) on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 in Halle Library.

Transcribed by Matt Jones

MJ: It is Tuesday, September 10, 2019. This is EMU Historic Preservation Graduate student Matt Jones. Today we are in Halle Library speaking with longtime communications instructor and former President of the EMU Alumni Association, Patrick Barry. We like to start all the way back at the beginning. Could you tell us a little about your upbringing? Where and when you were born, who your parents were?

PB: I grew up in Redford Township, which is immediately adjacent to Detroit. It was five houses out of Detroit. A lot of my good friends went to school in Detroit. Others went to Redford Union schools. Well, actually, that's not accurate- My whole family went to Redford Union schools except me. My dad had gone to Detroit Catholic Central. My grandmother wanted me to have that kind of education so actually when I got out of 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Our Lady of Loretto Elementary School, 6 Mile and Beech Rd, Redford Township, she paid for me to go to Catholic Central, which, even in today's dollars, was not very much. I went to Catholic Central for four years. My senior year, I met this young woman who went to Redford Union High School as did my whole family except for me and my dad, started dating and ended up marrying her three years later. 'Just had our 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary. That's that. I was the oldest of five children: sister Cindy, sister Cheryl, sister Libby, and brother Tim- almost exactly two years apart. Good planning. Everybody in my family is still alive except my mom. She died 22 years ago as a consequence of diabetes. My dad is 90; he is in failing health. My wife is actually downriver where he is at right now trying to get him some help today. That's kind of sad, but he had a great life and, unfortunately, we don't get out alive.

I grew up in a time when everybody knew everybody in their neighborhood. I could have gone around the entire block- all four streets- and I could have told you every person in every house. That was just what people did. It was, in a lot of ways, a great time to grow up. There were always people to play with and. of course, this was the early stages of the baby boom; there were kids everywhere. It was just easy, and it was a time when people were, I think, a little more trusting. There was a little bit less of the violence that we sadly see now. The rule when school was out: just be home by the time the streetlights go on. We would go off the entire day and whoever's house we were at- if we were at Peggy's house for example- her mom would feed us. If we were at John's house, his mom would feed us. My mom would feed us at my house. There was a connection between parents and the children, which clearly does not exist today. That is really sad. It was a good time to grow up. It really was.

MJ: You must have taken some of that into teaching too, with you. That kind of tightly-knit community.

PB: Well, yeah. I think so. Being the oldest child, I have done a lot of research on birth order; oldest children end up in positions like politics, police, fire, and teaching. Big areas for all those children who are the oldest. They have a lot of responsibility thrust on them too early, like my case. But ultimately it served as a really good thing for me.

MJ: Were your parents educated?

PB: My dad took a couple classes in college; that was all. He started working for Detroit Edison (which is now DTE). He started at 18 because he got married at 18. He had me at 19. He started just in a grunt job there and finally worked up to being a construction supervisor for Detroit Edison. Kind of a gray-collar job. 'Wasn't working in the field, did some administrative stuff but wasn't college-educated. My mom was a high school graduate and mostly raised the kids. That's what she did. They were smart people but not educated in the way that you and I would refer to it now. That wasn't uncommon back then. I mean, there were hardly any people in my neighborhood that went to college. I don't think very many people at all went to college.

MJ: What year were you born again?

PB: 1949.

MJ: You said that the eldest child usually take on a role of either teaching or fire, politics, etc. Did you expect to go into teaching?

PB: No. Like a lot of kids at that age, you don't know what you're going to do when you grow up. I had an extremely negative academic experience my junior year of high school. Detroit Catholic Central was a private school and they could make their own rules and - it's a very long story which I tell my students today- but the bottom line is that I failed two classes, and you could not do that and still stay in school. So I got a letter after school got out in June of that year. That would be 1966. They said "You can't come back. We're sorry, but you failed two classes and that is the rule." It was devastating because that was my whole life. I was in the band, all my friends were at Catholic Central. It was a culture that I loved. Not so much the religious aspect but it was extremely tight. Everyone knew everyone. Everyone cared about everyone. That informed me a lot. Also, I took those classes in summer school and so my Dad, having been a graduate, started calling the school about every three weeks all summer. Saying "Look, he's in summer school, he's got good grades, he can show you his test scores. He had a hard time with math and science but he is recovering from that. If he passes those, technically he hasn't failed them." They said no. So, I got my books and went over to Redford Union and got registered. I felt way out of water there because all my friends were at Catholic Central. The night before school was supposed to start, which would be the Tuesday after Labor Day, my family and I had gone out of town for the last summer vacation. When we got home about 8 o'clock at night at the phone was ringing. Unusual. My dad picked it up and he didn't say much, he just listened- "Hmmm. Ok. Ok. I'll tell him." He gets off the phone and he looks at me and says "They are letting you back in." So, I thought maybe it was a mistake, but I wasn't going to challenge it. So, the next morning I had no books, I had nothing, but I knew how to get to my school. I got there and I laid low for several months because I thought "They're going to realize they made mistake and kick me out again." I laid low. I caused no issues whatsoever. Actually, academically, I did very well. So about four months in, I finally went to see my counselor and I said "I don't

understand this. They told me I was out, they told me all summer I couldn't come back. Why am I here?" He said "Well, the Friday before Labor Day, we had a faculty meeting and listed who wasn't coming back. You were alphabetically one of the first people. We explained why, and your band director, Mr. Watts, said that's outrageous. He's a good kid. So he had trouble with math and science, but he made it up in summer school. Why wouldn't we let him back in? This is crazy!" And they did. Interestingly, Mr. Watts never told me that story. The only reason I knew was because of the counselor. So, I got back in; that really changed my whole focus. I saw the power of somebody to make a difference in someone's life. My life would be inexplicably different. I have no doubt that if I had gone to Redford Union and didn't have that experience, I wouldn't have gone into teaching. I'm just starting my 49<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. That wouldn't have happened. It just wouldn't have happened. So it was life-altering and that is what opened the door to me thinking about teaching. Of course, Eastern had quite a reputation for teaching and that is why I came.

MJ: What do you think you would have gone into had you gone to Redford Union?

PB: I don't know. No one in my family had gone to college. A lot of my friends that didn't go to Catholic Central, their dads were in the trades. I would have talked to one of them and said "Can I become a carpenter or welder or something?" Honest work. Important work. Necessary work. I honestly just don't think I would have gone to college. I don't think I would have gone into teaching. That was a very powerful lesson.

MJ: That sounds like one of the most important things you learned in high school. It wasn't in the curriculum. Were there any other secondary teachers or people who had an influence on you going into communications?

PB: Yes. When I went college, I thought I wanted to be a history teacher because I always enjoyed history. So- this is a true story – one night, I'm lying in my bed in Best Hall, Room 421 Best Hall. I have this dream, and I wake up and I'm like shaking and sweating. I'm thinking, why is that? I went back to the dream, and in the dream, I was teaching a high school class. Some smartass kid in the back of the room said, "So Mr. Barry, what was the date you told us about last month, about this war?" In my dream I could not remember the date. I woke up and I said "I can't be a history teacher. What if I can't remember the dates?" True story. People teach history differently now but back then it was all about memorization and dates. I said, "Well, Ok, I'll get a minor in history. Well, I can read, I can write...I'll teach English." I started teaching those classes and I liked them and I did well in thee. At the end of my fresh-person year, the adviser called me in and had a little talk and he said, "You've done well so that's good. So when are you going to take your speech class?" I sat there for many seconds, not being able to talk, not being able to breathe. I said, "I have to take Speech class?" he said "Yeah, it's a requirement." Well I was the quietest kid in the world in high school. In classes, if I could, I sat in the last row, I hid out, didn't answer questions. I was just very intimidated by other people. So, I said "If you're not kidding me, well then I will do it. I will get it over with so I don't have think about this for three more years." So, I signed up and went to my first class. The teacher was John Jamison; an adjunct. I think he had a law degree. I think he was here working with U of M in some capacity because he brought over the U of M debate team one time to do a sample for us. I liked him right away. He was probably in his late twenties. Snappy dresser. Very articulate, very friendly. I hated the idea

of going to class because of the speeches, but I loved going to because I got to know him - and unlike most classes in college - I got to know everyone in my class. That's what happens in speech classes. I went along and I still didn't love giving speeches, but I got a little better at it. I was convinced I would fail the class. Ended up with a B, which to me was like winning the lottery. I was walking out the door as the semester's end, when he said, "Pat, I just see something in you. I encourage you to take another communication class." He really had a lot of credibility with me, so I thought, "Well, OK." So, I took another one the next semester and I found that not only did I like my professor, not only did I like my classmates, I actually started liking speaking. By the end of that second class, I thought, you know, if I am going to teach, why not teach something that was very difficult for me that I will learn how to overcome. Then I can teach that to students. I ended up getting my bachelor's in communications through the School of Education. My minors were history and English. I did a lot of history and a lot of English in my teaching over the decades. He was the second teacher that was extremely influential in my life. The teachers in the Communication Department were - and are - just outstanding. Most of them, like me, never planned to go into Communication. They got a good professor and it changed their lives. They're very passionate about it. They connect fabulously with students. Students love the kind of classes they have. I just met all these professors that were just terrific people who taught. I could tell they cared about what they did, and they cared about their students. That was very powerful to me.

MJ: I have to say that I started college in 2000 and then left for a long time and came back. One of my classes was Communications - it was just a prerequisite class - and it definitely changed the way I thought about going to school. If you embrace it, it can really open your eyes to the fact that you actually have something to say. A lot of people think they don't. That was over in Quirk, I think. I can't remember my instructor's name, but I loved him. I couldn't believe how much I liked talking to the class. It didn't seem to make any sense.

PB: Your experience was my experience. He provided a lot of positive suggestions but he also provided a lot of positive reinforcement. I just saw that again, after Mr. Watts. This would be a year and a half after high school. There was another teacher who made a difference in my life. I stayed, got my teaching degree, student taught at Ypsi High in the spring of 1971. Then I wanted to go to graduate school. My goal was to get my PhD, teach for a while, and become a department head and still teach. I thought that would be a wonderful blend of organization, leadership, and teaching. I had several opportunities to go elsewhere for my master's and fellowships and such. I was all signed up to go to Bowling Green, and someone said, "Pat you ought to talk to Dr. Murray; he's the head of the department. See what he thinks." I did, I had a class with him—great guy—and he said, "You know what Pat? We'll offer you something to stay here. You can be a teaching fellow. We'd like to have you here." So, I went home and talked to my wife. At that point I was married. Family was always important to me. Mine all lived in Michigan. I thought, well, Bowling Green is only two and half hours away, but this is right at the center of my family. So, I stayed, which was a great decision. I had a phenomenal time as a teaching assistant. It was phenomenal. The last day I was sitting up in Quirk- no Pray-Harold - overlooking Quirk and I thought I would never be here again. I shed a lot of tears in that office. I went out and there were no teaching jobs at the time. I went out and got a management training job at City National Bank of Detroit and was in their management training program for

six months. At that point I thought that was where I was going. It was a good job. They had me in branch management. They said within a year I would have my own branch. We'd see what the salary will be, there will be prestige and influence, and it was working out OK. I moved from Ypsilanti to Grosse Pointe because that's where all the bankers lived. I was a boater all my life; Lake St. Claire was right there. This reference might not resonate with you, but three doors down lived Soupy Sales. Big TV personality. I moved in on a horrible winter evening in January. Terrible weather. I had a flat, second floor flat. I had to get all these people including my parents to help me carry all the furniture up the stairs. We're there two weeks. My wife finds a job in Detroit. And then I get this phone call. It is one of my professors from Eastern whom I was very good friends with at the time. I respected him so much. He said, "Pat, you're not a banker. You're a teacher. I know of two jobs in high school that I want you to apply for. Tell me you will." I said "Gail, I will." So, I applied to both. I had no plan to do that until Gail called me. I was offered both. I took the one in Howell, MI, because Howell was growing during that era of white flight from Detroit after the riots. I went there and I thought, well, I don't think I want to teach high school, but this will open the door to go back and get my PhD. So after a few years, I started on that program at Wayne State. After a year and a half, I left Howell and went to Plymouth. I taught in Plymouth-Canton school for 31 years. In 2005, they wanted to get rid of the old timers because we cost too much. They gave us a nice go-away gift. I had stayed in contact with the Department Head, Dennis Beagen, during my whole career. I called him one night at home - the night before I had to make my final decision - and I said, "Dennis, I'd like to come home. I want to finish my career where I started." He said they would love to have me. He couldn't offer me full time. I said, "Dennis, I don't want it. I've been full time. I'd be happy to teach less classes." He said, "Great." We set a date in July to confirm it. My wife had gone to bed before for me that night. She asked, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I have a great job in Plymouth. I'm going to go back." She was shocked to learn I changed my mind while she was sleeping. "I went into school in the morning and told them I was leaving. They were shocked because I hadn't talked about leaving. I left high school teaching and I came back to Eastern. And it's just been fabulous.

MJ: This is where you were supposed to be.

PB: I think so. I teach in rooms where I used to sit. I can relate to my students. Every time I come to campus, I feel like I'm 18. I look in the mirror, and I know I'm not; I see the grey hair. But I feel like I'm 18; it is very rewarding and affirming. If I stay healthy, I want to do next year and that will give me 50 years. Maybe then I'll retire. But on the other hand I love what I do and maybe I won't.

MJ: That's unusual. I've talked to so many retired faculty members and when we ask the question, "Why did you retire?" they always give the answer that the flame just went out. They knew it was time to retire when they weren't interested any more. It is usually way less than 50 years.

PB: Yes. 30, 35 maybe. Occasionally 40. I get that. A lot of the faculty have talked to me over the years and they ask, "My god! How are you still teaching?" I do two things. I change it up every three or four years. Every three or four years, I teach a different class, or I get on a committee, I serve in some new way. That makes it interesting. The second thing is I remember that while I have said something in class maybe hundreds of times, this is the first time that particular

student is hearing it from me. To me, that is exciting. It is also a responsibility. I've never had a plan to teach 50 years. I'm still surprised that I'm still here. 'Very happy, too.

MJ: Did you come here as a student in, what, 67?

PB: '67. I was admitted to Michigan State. All my friends were going to State or Michigan, so I went up there in the summer and checked it out. It was such a huge place. I was so intimidated. My high school was 600 people or so. I thought, "I just can't do this." I went home and told my Mom. She said, "Well, what are you going to do? I talked to some people who like Eastern Michigan and it is a lot smaller." So my Mom and I went and talked to them. I still remember the admissions officer. He said, "Well, you had a pretty bad junior year; it ruined your grade point." I knew that. He said "Well, I think we'll take a chance on you." I said, "Great!" Eastern had just exploded from four years earlier- they had 6000 students then and now they exploded to 12,000 in four years' time. So it was exciting. It was - even at 12,000 - a fraction of what was at Michigan State.

MJ: What was the explosion in enrollment from?

PB: People coming home from the wars. The baby boomers went off and fought wars. Korea, specifically. They came back and the GI Bill sent people to college. They were people like me that grew up in a family that wasn't upper-middle class, or even middle-middle class. We had no means to go to college. But the military helped a lot of these people go to college. Eastern was a welcoming place to go.

MJ: You came to campus as a student during a pretty tumultuous time in the history of the school. What kind of campus did you find when you arrived? In terms of attitudes? Can you describe EMU when you first got here?

PB: Well, when I first got here - this is how different things are- my parents got me a couple pillow cases. They said, "Put your towels and bath stuff in one and some clothes in the other." I looked kind of like a hobo, carrying them over my shoulder. They drove me to Best Hall. I got out and they said, "OK, we'll see ya." And drove away! I knew nobody. I sat there thinking, "What do I do?" We didn't have these great orientation programs we have now; they are spectacular. Nothing. So, I found my way up to the room, got in there and no one was in there. No sign of life. No sign of life in the next room. So overnight I'm just in this room by myself. I walked around campus a little bit because they didn't give tours back in the day. I walked around, kind of got acclimated. It was a lot smaller than it is now. The next day, this guy comes in and he says "I'm your roommate." Oh. OK. We started talking. He asked, "Where did you go to high school?" "Catholic Central," I said. He said, "Well, I went there too." I asked what year he was, and he said he was a sophomore. That explained it. He was a cross country runner. Now I got it. Band had band friends, cross country had cross country friends. Then I looked through into the suite next door and found out that two other guys from Catholic Central were coming. They made them my suitemates. I knew of them in high school, but they weren't in the band. One was a hockey player and the other one was a baseball player; that's who their friends were. I now had sort of a family. I didn't know these guys well but they all went to my school. I stayed at EMU. Ed became one of my best friends in life. In sophomore year we moved to an apartment.

In junior year we were in a fraternity house. Senior year I got married, so I lived in married housing (which is under the new student center). Ed and I stayed friends the rest of our lives.

MJ: Do you remember, as a student, any impression of administration? We talk about Sponberg a lot because he seemed like a dynamic character. Was administration any closer to the student body than they are now?

PB: Interesting question. He actually spoke- one of his first speeches was at my graduation ceremony in the fall of 1971. It was on the new football field. It didn't even have sod yet. It was up by the football stadium. There used to be a tiny stadium but they made parking there on the corner of Oakwood and Cross. He actually spoke and it was a sweltering hot day. I remember it was 95 degrees. So that was my first contact with him. To answer your question, I don't think most students had much involvement whatsoever with upper administration. It was a different time in the sense that professors kind of celebrated the fact that students looked at them like minor gods. You mostly didn't get to know them. They kept a lot of distance, which they did not in the Communications Department, which made it another thing that intrigued me. Administration- I knew Sponberg was the president and that was it. We had no contact just like student today; most of them couldn't tell you the president's name. I don't think it was any different that it is now. They lived in their world, they functioned in their world, and we didn't think much about them. Our contact was our professors.

MJ: It seems like, in the late 60s, and early 70s especially, especially with the Black Student Association demonstrations, and the anti-Vietnam demonstrations, and I know there was...well I guess I'm not sure how this fits together- the protests and bombing in Cambodia. Were they different protests or the same thing?

PB: They were the same thing. It would be difficult to overstate the impact of what was happening in the society at the time. Society was being turned upside down. Most moms stayed home and worked and raised the kids; all of a sudden moms are going to work. Politicians and corporate presidents controlled the way that people viewed the world and looked at the world with a very business-like approach. It was fostered by the political leaders-some of whom were military like Dwight Eisenhower. Some came from the business world. It was a very controlled environment. Not controlled like Russia with Putin or North Korea with Kim Jong Un, but very controlled. Women had three choices in life if they wanted a career: nurse, secretary, or teacher. There were a lot of women here- they outnumbered men as they still do at Eastern. We were coming in at a time where the dynamic of the culture of this country was changing; there were tremendous clashes. Mostly, at first, between the young people and even their parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles and the extended family who were older and grew up in a totally different way of looking at the world. There was that underlying sense that we would do things differently. We're not going to let "the man" tell us what to do. We all ended up doing that anyway, getting jobs. So there was that underlying current and I would say most students were very well-aware of that. Some embraced it more than others, and those that embraced it more than others tended to become the leaders of those protest movements. I became good friends with the Communication Department, one of the leaders; his name was Tom Morse. Tom was not me- I was an old soul. I was a pretty straight arrow, but I liked Tom, and we would get together. Grass was just coming onto college campuses; alcohol had always been there, but



grass was coming. Tom smoked a lot of grass. I tried it couple times but didn't like it so I didn't smoke. It was interesting to talk with him because he was much more passionate about changing things than I was. So I was kind of in the middle of that. I think most of the students were.

MJ: We've heard about police coming onto campus, tear gassing dorms...

PB: Oh, I don't remember anything about that. That doesn't mean it didn't happen, but it was a long time ago and I think I would remember that. There was a police presence when we had protests. We were not U of M- I mean, U of M was really going through some changes. That and out in Berkeley- two of the big spots of protest in America. They were always having things going on down there and people were smoking grass in public and getting hauled off to jail. That was a really dynamic place. Here was a little more muted. I do remember one big protest, and it was against the war. The police came in, there was no violence. People protested and yelled and shouted; they didn't throw couches out of the windows like they do at Michigan State (still). It was peaceful but it was loud. Contentious. Eventually we all went away. I was literally and figuratively at the periphery of that. My friend Tom was right in the front row there fighting and yelling and screaming. He was a leader in student government as well. I was on the outside edge watching it, feeling a tremendous amount of sympathy to the students' point of view but not engaging in it that way. It informed my view of the world tremendously. It opened my view. It was a kid from Redford Township, what did I know? Then they started telling me things I didn't know and I started learning about them. That really informed how I thought very substantially.

MJ: You don't have to be at the forefront of the protest to actually learn a lot from it.

PB: Right. And fraternities were huge at that time. I ended up being in a fraternity. The fraternity guys- the 'frats'- didn't have a lot of interest in all that protest stuff. They were mostly interested in the fraternity, having parties, meeting girls, drinking. Some school. The other things were more important to fraternity guys. So I was kind of an anomaly in the fraternity. I only pledged because Ed was in the fraternity a year, from the semester before me. Ed and I were living together. He said "Pat come one. You'll like it." They wanted me to come because when he was pledging, the whole fraternity would do all kinds of stuff. They called us "scummers." One night, they took all these guys that were pledging, drove them all the way out the Pinckney. They blindfolded them so no one knew where they were. 'Dropped them off. They had no money, car, no cell phones back then. They said "Find your way home." Somehow, they walked and walked and got to a gas station that had a phone and somebody talked to the people who helped them with a couple quarters or something. They called me and said 'Pat we are out here in Pinckney. We don't have a car.'" At that point I had a car. They asked if I could come get them. I said "of course." At that point I had a little Renault Dauphine- you don't know the car but if you think original VW, that's kind of what it was. I went out there and picked up as many as I could. I had five guys in the car, and one was in the trunk. I drove them home and then they still had guys out there, so a couple cars drove back and got the rest of their brothers. That was kind of a fraternity-life thing. I was kind of an oddity in that a lot of them were not really socially aware but through my communications classes and some of my friends, I was slowly but inexorably becoming aware.

- MJ: I wanted to ask you about your time with Arm of Honor. You just answered the when and why you became involved with Arm of Honor and I wanted to ask you, from my own curiosity, being a fraternity in the late 60s at EMU, was there any fallout from John Norman Collins?
- PB: That's an interesting question. One of my older fraternity brothers was on the Ypsilanti Police force as a detective. He was the arresting officer of Collins. So the John Norman Collins thing was big on campus because, I think, he murdered eight women, might have been seven or six but it was a lot. The murders all took place not very far off the campus. Once you got north of Leforge, that was just all farm and woods. There were no buildings out there at all. So you could be out of campus and into the wilderness in five minutes. These people that disappeared were not all sorority girls, but several of them were. So, people made a connection that it was at these parties where he these girls. People assumed it must be somebody in a fraternity because that is who would be at those parties. My brother was arresting officer. The reason he got caught was that John Norman Collins' uncle was a police officer in Ypsilanti. He was investigating the murders. He was out of town that weekend and when they came home, he felt something wasn't right. He went around and he found some blood splatters in the house. They started working the case and working the case and started connecting dots. Larry Mathewson was my fraternity brother and was probably four years older than me. The officers said, "We are going to get John Norman Collins." This guy's nephew. They did.
- MJ: Was there surprise that it was someone affiliated with a fraternity?
- PB: There was but I don't think there was any idea that fraternities were bad. I don't think there was any of that. I navigated both worlds really well; I navigated the world of the weed smokers and I navigated the world of fraternity and I navigated the world of academics because I became a really outstanding student. So I navigated all of them. Maybe that was kind of a result of being a first-born, having taken care of 4 younger siblings. So there were so many people in Greek Life back then, both sororities and fraternities. There wasn't anything about that.
- MJ: Was it kind of a given that you would stay here for your graduate work too?
- PB: No. I said earlier that I had offers elsewhere. I had an offer at Northwestern, it was really cream of the crop. I had an offer at Bowling Green, and as I said, at the last minute I talked with EMU and they said "We'd like you to stay" I asked my wife, whose family is all right here and she said it's up to you but it would be fine if we stayed." She worked at the library on campus and took classes. She said "It's fine here. If you stay here we could stay in married housing." So I Did.
- MJ: You became a teaching assistant then and that's when you realized that this is where you wanted to be?
- PB: I had known that through my student teaching experience. And then the teaching assistantship just really reinforced it. It was just such an exciting time. I'm in classes with professor I really admired, respected, and liked. So, I'm learning all the time and then I'm going to teach people who most of the time are just a year or two younger than me. I had to learn a lot about teaching and a lot about my subject matter. It was like, learn-apply, learn-apply. It was just fabulous. We were expected to do our master's in a year so teaching fellowships were one year. Now they are

two. We taught three classes and we were not assistants. We flat out had those classes; they were ours. There was a lot of growing up really fast.

MJ: I want to get into your time working at EMU, but I can't leave a 31-year hole there when you were at Plymouth Salem. Salem High School. What was that experience like? You were there for a while. How did that change over time?

PB: First of all, I nearly didn't take the job. I had been teaching in Howell and I had a job there. A friend of mine taught in Williamston, which is a small community just east of Lansing. This is a long story but I'll make it short. He knew the theater teacher there was going to be leaving. The administration didn't know that. He said "Pat, you can get there. You will love being there. So many of the college professors live here and have high level places." I went out and ingratiated myself to the principal. Throughout that year I visited him. We got to know each other. He always said, "Pat, there is no job." I'd say, "I know- let's just talk." It became very friendly. At the end of the school year he called and said, "You won't believe it, but this teacher is leaving. We have a job and we want you to interview." So I interviewed. The person who was leaving was the theater teacher. I had no theater experience, but they hired me because I had coached debate at Howell high school for two years and they wanted to start a debate program because they had really high-level kids there. I said, "I don't know theater." They said, "Don't worry- we'll hire someone from MSU. They know theater, they'll come in. We want to start the debate program." I hadn't resigned from Howell yet and now I had this job offered to me. A few days later I'm leaving my apartment in Howell to go on vacation. My wife and I are literally walking out the door, carrying our bags. The phone rings and I think, "Should I answer it?" I went in and answered it. It's this guy. He says "I'm Jerry Ostoin from Salem High School in Plymouth. We've got an application of yours. We'd like to interview you." I said, "I don't remember applying." He said, "Well, you did three years ago." I said, "You know what? I really appreciate that but here's the thing: I've got one job in Howell, I've got another job in Okemos, I signed a contract, and haven't yet resigned from the first one. So, thank you, but no." OK. So we left and we were up north on Glen Lake where we now have a home.

MJ: I love Glen Lake.

PB: Kindred spirits. I thought, "Pat, that's foolish. You should always take an opportunity." I had to wait until the following week to go home and call him. I asked, "Have you filled the job yet?" They said no, not yet. I said I would like to interview. They brought me in. I had never gone to a school that big. Howell was bigger than Catholic Central, but it wasn't as big as Salem or Canton with nearly 3000 students in each building. The building was massive. I drove in, parked in the front, and was walking around thinking, "I don't even know where I am, it's so big." I hear people in the gym. I walked down that way and poked my head in and was looking around. This guy sitting on a chair asks, "Can I help you?" I said I was there for an interview. He asked if I had ever been there before. "No, never have." He said, "Well, the kids are just practicing. I'll show you around." Then he stood up. He was six foot-nine. Found out later he was a basketball player at Michigan State; a basketball player of some note, and here he is coaching. He takes me all around so I'm thinking, "Well, I don't know the place, but I guess there are friendly people here." I interviewed and they offered me the job. I still didn't know if I should take it because it was so big. I told my wife "I might be overwhelmed there." Then I just balanced everything out, I

said "I'm going to go for it." What influenced my decision was that I knew I didn't want to be in Howell. When I was in Howell there were still members of the Klan living there. Cross burnings. Frightening place to be. Robert Miles, who coordinated the Pontiac School Bus Bombings, lived just outside of Howell. So it was a scary place and I needed to get out of there. I signed this contract with Okemos and I'm trying to decide what to do about Salem. Okemos calls me and said, "We have an issue. 'What is it?' Well, our state championship swimming coach has just resigned. He is taking his entire staff and they are going to a college to coach." He said "Well, looking at your resume we can see that you swam in high school and you did a lot of classwork and you helped out the EMU swim team, so it seems like you could take over the team." I immediately thought, "This is a no-win." Following a state championship, are you kidding me? I asked about the debate program. He said they would put that on hold for a while and would see how the swimming thing goes. I got off the phone and thought, "This is a bad thing." That's when I had to decide: Howell or Salem? I took Salem. Plymouth schools were a great place. When I got there, they had money. Howell did not. Here is an example: you don't know about ditto masters, but before Xerox you typed on this thing that had a carbon. You ran it on a machine that had alcohol in it. You could almost literally get high on this stuff. Seriously. You print your stuff out. At Howell, they were so poor, that if you wanted a ditto master you had to go to the principal and explain why you needed one. Then he'd give you one. I come to Salem, I'm looking around and I go in this storage room. I open doors and there are crates of ditto masters. I think "Oh my god!" I waited, looked, and then I took a whole crate of them and hid them in the corner of my classroom. I thought, "They'll find out and they'll take them away from me." Then I found out we had a copy machine. Are you kidding me? We had this thing called modular scheduling, which was like college scheduling. Students were in school all day but not in class all day. Kids would have open classes during which they were supposed to use for academics, which some did. I didn't understand that, and I kept thinking "Oh my god, they're going to put me on lunchroom duty because I have some open schedules." "No, you are supposed to stay in your office to help students." I have an office? "You have to stay there so kids can come talk to you." I taught there for five years before I had a class larger than 15 students. This was a public school. It was unbelievable. I loved it. They had fabulous classes, in a huge department. I was the only speech teacher, so I got to mold the program the way I wanted it. I coached and did very well with the coaching for several years. I loved the place. The only reason I left was that in my heart I had always hoped if there was a chance, I would love to finish at Eastern. Plymouth schools offered a buy-out. I loved teaching. I had done it for 33 years in high school. I thought, maybe I'd like to try another way to do this. That's what motivated me to leave. I had a good gig there. People were shocked when I left. But it was the right thing to do.

MJ: Did you still have contact with EMU throughout those years?

PB: Yes. Because I was in the world of debate and forensics and EMU has always been one of the championship programs in competitive speech in the country. I had students that I sent there to be on the team. I knew the department head, Dennis Beagen. He was my parliamentary procedures professor when I was here. I had stayed in touch through coaching. Then my daughter came here; she ended up being a Communication major. So I would see Dennis at events and we just continued that relationship.

MJ: What's Dennis like?

PB: Oh. My. God. Unbelievable. Just Unbelievable. He was one of the most influential people on this campus because he created this incredible department. He wasn't the first department head or the second. He was the third. He really developed it. He developed this national championship forensics program out of nothing and so that got everyone's attention. He just got his hands in everything. At times he was an interim Dean, or Program director. No kidding. Everybody knew Dennis Beagen. Everybody respected him. Everybody was impressed by him and his energy. He was just a force of nature, I'm telling you. He retired for personal reasons. He went and did other things for the state. He was involved in the lottery commission and then Rick Snyder contacted him. He was very well known in the state so Snyder appointed him to be on the EMU Board of Regents. He is a fabulous appointment. No one in that board knows this university like Dennis. No one has been as involved as Dennis. Now he is in his mid-70s. He's a little quieter, reflective. He isn't as outwardly dynamic as he used to be. But, oh my god- he is something!

MJ: Great. I can't wait. We have been chasing him for a few months now trying to nail him down.

PB: Dennis was recruited to come here and play basketball. He was not a big guy but really an outstanding guard in high school. The before he got here, he had a really severe knee injury and didn't know if I could rehab it. So he told the coach he couldn't.] But he was very, very, very competitive. When he got here and he was an undergrad here. He did his graduate work over at U of M and then they said "Come back and teach." He was very competitive, and then the administration said, "We want to start a competitive forensics team." Dennis was very competitive, and he just made it happen. He was really hard driving. He's an amazing guy. I'm really excited that you get to interview him.

MJ: There are a few people who have come in here and just bowled me over. We're expecting to talk to Larry Smith soon, who, just in my phone conversations, I don't know who's being interviewed sometimes. Glenna Frank Miller was another one.

PB: Has she come in? Isn't she something?

MJ: Yes. She's fantastic. She brought Greg peoples with her too.

PB: He's great.

MJ: Sally McCracken.

PB: Sally is a dear friend now.

MJ: She's awesome.

PB: Yes! She was doing standup comedy in college. It was a paying gig! She would do little clubs in Detroit because she went to Wayne State for a PhD. She would do clubs, and she did some pretty bawdy stuff. She was a wild one. In class, she wasn't, though. I had her when she first got her PhD and came here. She was really nice and I liked her a lot. But she was pretty straight arrow at that time. Kind of more by the book. As I got to know here, as we got older together, I got to know her as a friend, then I found out all this interesting stuff.

MJ: Maybe we'll have to have a follow-up.

PB: She's terrific. Let me go back to something about the campus life. I know you asked about the protests with Vietnam, and then you touched on it and then went by it. The other part was the protests by African American on campus. Again, this was a time when things were starting to change. I grew up and in my entire life before college, I had seen nor met an African American man. So that was sort of the culture among most of the students here. We started to get some African American men. Stereotypically, sadly, they were football and basketball players. The Civil Rights movement got going in the early 60s when I was starting in high school. It really ramped up when Kennedy was shot, then his brother was shot. Martin Luther King was shot I was on campus for all that stuff. It had an enormous impact on people. People were crying that Kennedy or King or his brother Robert were killed. It was very powerful to people. As the black movement got started, it was pretty rocky because there were not a lot of black people here. I was never in a class with an African American. I was here 5 years and I was never in a class with one because there were so few. I fortunately grew up with parents that were absolutely not prejudiced, so I didn't understand prejudice against black people. I'd see these things on the evening news, down in Alabama or Mississippi, they were using fire hoses and shooting at people. I couldn't believe it was happening. I was very supportive of our black citizens. I remember I was here when they went into Pierce Hall and took it over. I was here for that. I don't remember any of my friends, even my jock frat friends, speaking ill of that. It was a huge change in our culture, but I think many people realized it needed to happen.

MJ: It's interesting that you say you never saw very many black students because that mirrors what a lot of the black students told us. A couple of them told me that they felt really isolated and alone on campus, being black students, but then when the protests happened, they saw this mass of black students and they said 'Where have you been?'

PB: They were here but they were dispersed into various dorms and various colleges, and you just didn't see them.

MJ: You also said that as protest culture started to grow in the 60s, people started by rebelling against their parents and their grandparents. Then we talked about how upper administration had always been separate from the student body, but it seems like in those instances, they came together.

PB: They did.

MJ: It must have been jarring, especially for the administrators. It seems like Sponberg didn't know how to evolve.

PB: No one did. This was something that people did not know what to do about. It was such a sea change. It is hard to articulate it to someone who wasn't there. It was such a sea change in the culture of this country. So, no- they grew up in the normal, Eisenhower presidency where everything is organized and strict and militaristic- that's what they grew up in. They weren't bad people, just didn't have that experience. So they had to learn. I know Dennis became pretty tight with Sponberg, and in fact, the theater is named the Sponberg Theater (it is the smaller theater) because he was really involved in helping to raise money to build that. But Dennis...you can ask Dennis about Sponberg. He would have a perspective because being a department head, he had a lot more interaction with Harold Sponberg. As a side fun fact, I decided I was going to

write my master's thesis on Sponberg's inaugural address here. So, I went and met with him. I was impressed he took the meeting. I had never met him. I told him what I wanted to do and he was very nice. He had a lot of speech background. He might have been an undergraduate speech person. Ask Dennis. He was very interested in me doing this. So, he gave me a copy of his inaugural speech here. It was actually THE copy of his inaugural speech. He had written stuff on the side in pencil, stuff he inserted. He gave me THE copy! At the time, I didn't realize the importance of that. Later I decided that I wasn't going to go immediately and get my PhD and therefore didn't write my thesis sat this time; it wouldn't be as helpful as taking a few more classes so I had a better chance of getting a job in a community college. I dropped the thesis. I thought, well I'm going to return this to him. He had died in the interim though. So, I thought, OK, I'll take it to the archives. Two years ago, I'm going through crates of my academic material and my wife said, "Get rid of all this!" I had every record from college; every notebook, every paper, every test. Everything! I'm going through stuff about my master's and flipping through. I look, look again, and I found the script. I thought I had taken it in, but I hadn't. I felt terrible because I was sure I had taken it in...sure of it! I would have bet my life on it! But I opened this file and there it was. I felt embarrassed about taking it back, but I knew I had to. So, I brought it to Alexis, maybe two years ago; decades after receiving it. She was thrilled to have it because that was the real script.

MJ: I digitized that actually- the audio reel. It's on the website, him actually delivering the speech. That's a great story. I was going to say I hope you brought it in.

PB: I was very embarrassed. It was like someone who signs out a book and finds it 40 years later.

MJ: Did you bring a lot of your stuff in too?

PB: No. I brought in some stuff for the Arm of Honor collection and a lot of fraternity brothers who brought stuff in for the collection. Alexis tells us we have the most complete collection of Greek Life files of any fraternities. Arm of Honor was highly esteemed for what it accomplished. We had a lot of fraternity brothers who were very smart and did well in life, mostly teachers, coaches, presidents of universities. We had upstanding people. But when they were here, a lot of them acted the fool a lot. So there was some respect for the Arms, and some disdain for the Arms. It was well-earned on both ends. As you probably know, several important EMU folks were Arms. Mike Jones was a brother. Elton Rynearson was a brother. Lloyd Olds was a brother. We had a long, long and very positive history at the University. But when I wore my Arm jacket, which I did proudly, I knew there were people who would walk by and say "it's one of those Arm assholes."

MJ: What happened to Arm of Honor?

PB: Well, what happened was the fraternity movement on campus started to dissipate when we got bigger and had more commuter students. When I came here you had to live on campus and you couldn't have a car. So people lived here and stayed unless they could find someone to get them home. So, as the 70s came and the 80s came, and the campus got bigger and they couldn't accommodate everybody in the dorms, they got rid of the rules. That started the commuters. So, commuters have a whole different life. They're sadly, not very engaged in the life of the community because they come in like it is a mall- they get their learning and go home. Then

they go to their job and they don't come back for their events or speeches or games. The number of people that were doing fraternities in general just dissipated. The fraternity was small but pretty active through about 2008. Then it appears that it went off the rails. They recruited less and less and there were less people to recruit. It got down to about 4 guys. They would recruit a guy here and there but they really didn't have the full culture of the fraternity and they didn't know so many things about the history and the importance on campus of it. So, they just started finding guys. Then we couldn't sustain our fraternity house because there were too few people. We were going into debt because the alumni of the fraternity owned that house. They said, "You can bring in other guys." A lot of these other guys were into drugs, dealing drugs; we (alumni) didn't know this. They were dealing them out of the house. There were a few fraternities on campus that were continuing to have alcohol-laden parties, which we had in my time and everybody knew about it, but 'wink-wink,' they let it go. Now they weren't letting it go. Fraternities would have these parties and they would invite anybody on campus and some of them were bad apples. The police were coming and coming and coming. Over a period of a couple years- I'm going to say one to two years-there were like, 40 times that the police were there. We, being alumni, were kind of distant from the fraternity, physically and mentally. The University gave the fraternity a chance to clean up their act. It put them on probation but as long as they did this, that, and the other, they could come back. They never did those things. The university finally revoked their charter. They didn't tell anybody about that. So, the alumni didn't know this. They are recruiting these people- some of them are drug dealers- and it is just bad. They trashed the house. I started teaching here (in 2005). I'm teaching here for a few years and I started meeting young men in fraternities. I told them I was in Arm of Honor. They said, 'Oh well, the University kicked them out.'" I said, "What? Really?" Yeah, they kicked them out because they had these parties and one time a girl got so drunk, she nearly died. This also happened in other fraternities and they were kicked off campus too. So, things went bad. Every spring we had an annual meeting. We always had it in the house. We had a barbeque out front, and 40-some guys would show up. We looked at the house in 2015 and realized that it was just destroyed. We looked at what was happening and we said, "This isn't a fraternity anymore. It's not." When we found out that they had been kicked off campus, the actives at that meeting, said, "We have to shut this down." That was sad because we were the oldest active local active fraternity in America. So closing it was very very sad. But we did it; it was the right thing to do. Things have worked out pretty well since.

MJ: I have always been interested in that chain of events that led to Arm of Honor being dissolved here.

PB: And they weren't the only fraternity. There were a lot of frats on campus that were dissolved. It was, again, the culture change, the people here changed, the desire to be in a fraternity went away for most people and there was a lot of alcohol. When I was here, administration had to have known we were having beer parties at the Arm house. Nothing bad ever happened so they just winked and let it go. By 2015, they weren't winking any more. I look back and I probably threw your script out of balance.

MJ: That's fine. I don't like to go strictly by this. I never do. But I do want to move up to when you were teaching here. Another question about teaching. Alexis might be horrified to know that



when I do research on people, faculty members, sometimes I go to Rate My Professor dot com. Sometimes I do! Because I look at everything.

PB: Did you look me up? Wasn't it good?

MJ: it's incredible! I have quotes here like "Most involved professor I've ever had." "I think his class changed the way I saw myself and others." I think everybody has had professors that seem to go out of their way not to be involved. I just wondered what is different for you.

PB: I know it is a common saying so it sounds trite but you have to treat people with dignity and respect. I do that from the first day. Even before that, I send out emails in the summer them. I introduce myself and talk about the class. A lot of people write back and say that no one has ever done this. A lot of them do find about Rate My Professor; they go there and read good words and they get excited. When they come in the room, they are kind of expecting something good. I deliver. I don't say it egocentrically, I'm not arrogant, but I have learned what worked with me, and resonated with me, as a student and I have found that it works with pretty much everyone. Show people you care about them. Tell them that. Like, the first day of class, I tell them, "You know what? I'm going to tell you something. I love you. You're going to think I don't, but I love you because you're a member of the Honors College. I so respect the Honors College and all that it stands for, and I love you. By the end of the class I will love you individually and you will see that. But today I love you collectively. If there is a heaven, this is teacher heaven. It cannot get any better." They are bright, hardworking students. They have strong habits of mind, they do their work, they show up on time, they are courteous, they are friendly, they tell jokes- oh my God! It's like heaven on earth! Why would I not be excited every time I come to class? I think it's just a lot of little things that influenced me, because I didn't get it from my high school- they were real straight arrows- I got it in the communication classes at EMU. Then when I taught high school, I saw the influence I could have in making a difference in kids' lives. So, when I got here to Eastern, I just carried that with me. 'Just kind of ramped it up. I am genuinely in love with what I do. When I come into class I am excited. They know that. They see that excitement. They get excited. I don't know what else to say.

When I teach, I make my goals for the and I have students make their own goals. We use those as a final evaluation of the class. Being a former high school teacher, I have a lot of tools that a lot of college professors don't. Most of them didn't teach in high school but I did. I learned that you teach what you're going to test, and you test what you taught. You don't trap kids. You let them know what you're going to do and prepare them for success. So when you saw my score online for likeability, it's like 4.9, almost 5.0. Someone gave me a 4.0 and it went to 4.9. They're saying that 65 ratings and they don't round up? Come on! I was really cheesed when that happened. I don't know who it was, but I was cheesed. I had a 5.0! They'll rate me that I'm pretty easy. I tell them the first day: If you read that on the site, you need to understand why I'm rated easy. It's because I prepare you for success. When you're successful at something, it seems kind of easy. You will be prepared for success. They don't exactly believe me until we do the first speech, and then they go, "Oh- ok, he got us ready. We were successful. He gives us positive feedback. If he gives us any critiques, it is always written and not said in class." What do kids remember? They remember the negative, not the positive. I will write it down as a plainly worded suggestion. Then I give them ideas on how to improve. Because I coached debate and

speech for so long, I found that if I approach it that way, they will respond to it. I'm highly-communicative. I'm extremely clear on anything I do. My syllabus is 10 pages long. But it's really a good 10 pages. I told them just today that I didn't have a syllabus when I was in college. Professors would give you a mimeographed or dittoed sheet, saying here is this class, and this is what you read. It was just a reading list. There was nothing that told us about the class, like how we were graded, none of that. I just keep them informed and I don't let them get scared. I constantly let them know I care about them.

Does every kid respond to my approach? No. I had one in the fall term last year that just I knew I wasn't connecting to him. I tried so hard. He just wasn't into me. Ok. It drove me crazy because I wish every kid was, but he wasn't. We got along ok, but there wasn't the love. He was on one of the athletic teams and he just didn't love me. He got an A in the class. Once in a while I get someone who just doesn't like what I am giving. I had a student tell me to fuck off once.

MJ: In class?

PB: Afterwards. He was little older, maybe 27, 28. He was finishing his degree. He used to come into class, sit in the back row, and he had a laptop before most people did. I knew he was just on the laptop the whole time. I knew he wasn't doing anything that had anything to do with class. He'd say he was listening but I knew he wasn't. He was real disconnected mentally. Then he started becoming disconnected physically. He just stopped coming to class. He had done enough, and he would show up to give a speech, but he didn't do anything else. He eked out a C. So I thought, well, a C is fair. He must have contacted me and said "So what's my grade?" I said "Well it'll be a C." He wanted to come in. It was after one of my classes so I was in the classroom without students. He started building this case about why he should get an A in the class. I'll make up a name, I said "Paul, here's all the criteria- none of it do you meet." He said he deserved an A, but I couldn't make a case for that. "So you're going to give me a C? Fuck you." I said "No thank you." He walked out and that was one time that I wasn't upset. I thought, he's just an idiot and there is nothing I can do about him. It's just who he is. He was the only one who ever did that to me. So I remember it very vividly.

MJ: If that's one time where it happened in 50 years, it seems pretty good.

PB: I'm not trying to be boastful but I never had discipline problems in high school or college. I hear even here at Eastern, profs complaining about how their students treat them. I have to quietly say to them: I don't have those problems. They ask me what I do differently. I say that if they want they can come sit in on a class. One guy did, because he wanted to know. He sat in on the class. I don't know; I can't tell you exactly what I do, but it works, and I never have discipline problems, ever. I think if you treat people kindly as human beings it works. Most professors teach here because they like teaching. A lot of people teach because they love research and academia and they sort of have to teach to do it, but they don't really love teaching. Students pick that up right away. They know. If they know you care about them, they'll do great things. So I have to tell you this story:

I laugh at myself all the time and I tell them "I'll make fun of myself because I don't want to make fun of you. You can laugh with me and at me. That's ok. In the spring of this year, I knew I was turning 70 a week after the semester ended. Throughout the semester I would joke, if I said

something wrong, I'd say, 'Oh god, I'm going to be 70 soon!' They'd laugh and I'd laugh. They asked me questions now and again about myself and I thought nothing of it. The last day of the class comes, the final exam. I don't do in-class finals; I do take home. They had all pretty much turned it in; we were just going to talk for a little while and leave. I'm coming to the room and one student says "You can't go in." What? I can't go in? OK/ Something's up. I'll play along. I waited for about ten minutes in the hall and they finally said "You can come in." This is hard to say without tearing up. I opened the door and they were all standing there, and they had decorated the room with 70s, and they are singing Happy Birthday. They had slyly asked me what my favorite cake was during the semester. I said "I like Saunders's Bumpy cake and I like carrot cake." They had both. They had soda and cups and everything. I thought this was awesome, but it got better. One girl did not want to be in that class (and those are the kids I love because that was me) but by the end of the class it changed her perspective. She went around without me ever knowing, and said "the last day of class we are all going to give speeches to him." She took everybody's name in the order in which they sat. Kids know each other, they even know where they sit. She put the names on a screen. Every kid stood up -oh God, this is hard to say- and said how I affected their lives. One guy that I was really close said, "You know I never had a grandpa. I feel like you're my grandpa." Oh my god. I had the presence of mind- I don't know how- I had the presence of mind to whip out my cell phone and I record the whole thing. So I have it. I played it for my wife, and she cried. I really seriously thought about not coming back this fall because I thought, "It'll never be better than that. How will it ever?" I talked to Kathy Stacey, my department head, and I told her that. She said, "Pat, you have to come back. you're too good." I said, "It'll never be as good." She said, "No, but it'll still be good." I thought about it over the summer and decided I still had something left in the tank and I would come back. That birthday event was a very powerful moment in my teaching career. Very powerful.

MJ: My mother was a public school teacher for 40 years in English.

PB: English! You saw her grading papers all the time didn't you?

MJ: Yes. Every once in a while, she'll get some recognition from former students online or something, and really, she'll just be good for the day after that.

PB: That happens to me more than you would imagine. I'll get a stray email, "Do you remember me? This is how you affected me. I had you twenty years ago." I was at a gathering of Catholic Central guys in Traverse City a few weeks ago. I was sitting at a table with alumni leaders, and they all had their wives, at least the ones that weren't priests. It was wonderful. As we were finishing dinner. The woman that I was talking with -Mary Collins- looked at me and said, "Oh my god. You're Mr. Barry! I had you in class in 1983 at Salem!" Then we talked and got pictures together. She said "I loved your class because you had such good stories. They related to what we were doing." Years later, that's what she remembered; stories from all those years ago. That stuff is very powerful.

MJ: Why did you choose to get involved with the Alumni Association?

PB: There's a story there too. I called Dennis Beagen the night before I had to declare if I'm leaving Salem High School. I had to declare by 9am the next morning. If you didn't declare, you could

still retire, but they wouldn't give you any money. I had to declare. I called Dennis at home; I already told you about the conversation. He says, "Come in, in July." I went in in early July. We sat down in his office and caught up on old times. Then he said, "Well today is going to be the best meeting I'm going to have of the day." I asked why. He said we were going through budget cuts and he was going to have to tell people that day that they had lost their healthcare, and some classes. He didn't want to do this, but he had no choice. "So, this is going to be a good meeting." He then said, "I've wanted to get an Alumni Chapter started for Communications and Theater Arts. I've tried with several people and none of them have done anything with it. I think you could do it. I'd really like you to do that. I'll give you a class period of release time to get it started." I'm thinking, "OK. I've resigned from Salem and Dennis is telling me that he wants me to do this. I knew Dennis. When he tells you he wants you to do something, you really need to do it. I'm sitting there, my mind is going, "Holy crap! What if I tell him I don't want to do it?" I wanted to just come here and teach. I was like Dennis, but at the high school level; I had my hands in everything. I didn't know how I could stay there because I was too involved in everything. He asked, "What do you think? Will you try?" I said OK. Then I got it started and the ball started rolling. Dennis was huge on alumni relations. Huge. He always contacted the alumni, so he would feed me contacts and I would contact them. We started building our base and at one point it was like, 1300 alumni. Nine years later, we had created what would be the best alumni chapter on campus, by far. I came in one day and he asked, "You know, have you ever thought about the alumni board? Joe was on the board." (Joe was Department Head at Ball State, but he went through his undergrad and grad here. I know Joe very well.) He said, "Joe is on the board and he's been bugging me to get someone on the Board. I told him I had you and he said, "Pat would be great!" So, I applied. They had terrible communication, which really drove me nuts. They didn't even tell me they had gotten my application. A month they had their election meeting; they were going to elect seven people to the alumni board. I didn't hear anything for a month after that meeting. Finally, couldn't stand it anymore so I called. I said, "I haven't heard a damn word." They said "Well we have a problem because you and another person tied. So, we were trying to figure out what to do. A couple days ago we decided we are going to take both of you." I thought I kind of squeaked in. That fall, the woman who was the person I was tied with never showed up; never came to anything. Knowing who I am and how I have to get involved and lead people, within a year I was rolling into leadership. It just evolved. I became the chair of our recognition and award committee. I started meeting a lot of the deans because we were recognizing alumni from their departments. Dennis was just feeding the fire. He was putting the logs in the fireplace and he just kept me going. He was a master at that.

MJ: He must have known how to push your buttons the right way.

PB: He knew. He told me later that "I think what motivates Pat, motivates me." And I know what motivates me so I can use it with him." It was for good purpose but he was very powerful. After nine years, they had their election for the next president. I wasn't going to run because I had six years on the board. and I thought that was enough; it was time to leave. People started begging me to run. I said no. I went to other people who I respect on the board and I said, "I'll support you if you run." No. They wanted me to run. No one would do it. The incoming president, the president-elect, started lobbying me. She said, "Pat we have no one to do it. You're the best person." Finally, after two months of lobbying, I said I would do it. Then I became the president.

The woman who recruited me a month later became a Dean of a college in California. She left town. She said could run the chapter from California. I said "Katrina, you can't do that. You have to be here." She tried, but it was an unmitigated disaster. At that point we had a policy that if something like that happened, the president elect would step in. So effectively, I was president for four years instead of the normal two. That was the evolution of that. Never had it on my radar ever in my life. Ever.

MJ: How did you make it into the biggest chapter on the EMU campus?

PB: We have an incredible department and the people in our department do so many things. This was going to be an academic chapter. Oh my god! The stuff we would do! It's hard to explain. Every year, Dennis would find a way to endow another scholarship. He would reach out to me and I would reach out to alumni. We controlled about thirty scholarships. The Alumni Board thought "Oh my god- no one does this." But we would did do that. The theater program always reached out to alumni. Always. They were always having alumni back for theater, for programs. Dennis would have them back for reunions of the debate and speech teams. There was all this outreach going on. What I did was glom onto the resources. I was here on campus several days a week and I just listened and watched; when I would hear something, I would jump on it. Then I started producing newsletters. You should have seen them. A couple of them were 20 pages long. I went to everything, I took photos, I got stories, and I interviewed people. I just started putting these out and the alumni thought it was fabulous. I just kind of tapped into the energy of the department. It was there already, Dennis just needed someone like me to pull it all together and advance it. That's what I did. I resigned because I became president of the alumni board; I couldn't do it anymore. I knew good things were not going to happen. I was there, I was really motivated, and they struggled to find somebody. They found an alumna- a dear friend of mine. She calls me Uncle Pat. She's younger. She said she'd take it over and she did. She did her level best for the last 6 years. She tried so hard but she wasn't here on campus and I told her "Andrea, it's going to be so hard. I'm glad you're doing it but it's going to be so hard to do it when you're not here. You don't know the people or the events. You have a 9 to 5 job. You can't just drop something and go take photos." After 6 years she said 'Uncle Pat you're right- I'm resigning.'" I don't know what the status of the chapter will be now. It just may go away.

MJ: How is membership now?

PB: Not as good as it was when I was doing it because the outreach wasn't as continuous. Newsletters- I was putting them out every other month. They were all 4-6 pages with pictures and stories. That stopped with Andrea; it wasn't her fault. I just told her what I thought would happen. I wanted her to know that if it did happen, I wouldn't hold her accountable. It's just the nature of the beast. Historic Preservation had a very vibrant chapter and that has gone by the way. You get people who are really motivated and passionate, and they will motivate other people, but then they graduate and they go off and get a job, they get married, have kids, and it drifts away. Historic Preservation has drifted away. Black Alumni used to be very vibrant and then it just kind of ebbed almost to the point of dissolving. Then a couple really good alumni got involved and they're now building it up again. But it takes that person. It's a volunteer organization. You have to devote a lot of time and energy and a lot of people can't or won't. I don't know what's going to happen. We'll be recognized as an alumni Chapter of Excellence

because they had a criteria which I designed. I designed in mind of knowing what we did to be good and what other chapters would do to be good. So we'll get it this fall. It probably just will go away. Sad. I can't do anything about it. It's unfortunate, but you have to move on in life. When Dennis moved on, it was a huge difference. He was the sparkplug for that department. The stuff he did. Spent money, sometimes out of his own pocket, to do events and bring alumni back. He was a master. In steps Kathy Stacey. I love Kathy Stacey. She's a wonderful human being. She does a really good job. She's not Dennis. I knew when she came in, things were going to change. It's still a great department. 'Still has a wonderful vibe. But it is not what it was for thirty-some years under Dennis. She didn't have the same passion for having this chapter. She didn't meet with Andrea all the time and say "Hey I've got this idea- let's do it!" It's not a criticism; she's a wonderful person and I really like her. But she's not Dennis. So that's why these chapters that were academic ebb and flow. They come and they go. We had a chapter in Washington DC that was very vibrant. Then the guy who was heading it took a job in Alaska, so now he wasn't in Washington DC and people said they would carry it on. Well, they did for a year or two and now it's just kind of aimless.

MJ: Do you think students have an appreciation for being an alumnus and being a member of that organization?

PB: No.

MJ: Is there way to build appreciation by them?

PB: We did a lot of stuff while I was here. We tried to do events where we could pull in our majors and bring in some of our graduates who had done great things in life and bring them in to talk to them. So few students would show up that it was embarrassing. We'd bring somebody from Ohio. They'd come up on their own dime and time and ten people would show up. She would talk to them- she was great. I don't know if she was offended but I was dismayed. Then I started talking to a lot of the people that teach advanced classes because I had chosen to do just the foundation class. They said, "Pat, the vibe has changed. We've got a reputation as a great department but not the hardest department on campus like chemistry or biology or something. So we get a lot of students who just want to graduate. They come in and they're not that involved. I had this idea a few years back: I saw the school of nursing had sweatshirts. Nursing students were wearing them. My son had one. I said to Andrea, "Let's print up some shirts and sell them because people will surely want School of Communication shirts." We sold about ten. The rest of them we had in stock and we gave them away as gifts to people. I don't know. Most of the students who go through Eastern love Eastern. When I run into them as alumni they would say, "I loved Eastern. It change my life." But they don't do anything about it. They don't donate; we are one of the lowest levels of donations in America. Most universities, if they can get five or six percent, they're pretty happy. We're in the 2-21/2% range. U of M, surprisingly, although they are so rich, they are only about 8% or 9%. In the world of alumni relations that's really high. Eastern is down here (gestures). People don't give; they still will say they loved it. Do they ever come back? No. Whereas U of M people- they're nuts. They wear Michigan stuff everywhere. They are so proud of Michigan, up in Northland, overseas wearing Michigan stuff. I ask, "Why are you so passionate?" It comes down to how hard it was to get in, so they have a lot of sense of pride that they made it in. And how good their football and basketball teams are.

They're known for that: Eastern's not. They have a lot of nationally-known professors that they can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for. We don't have that money. They have incredibly wealthy alumni who donate not just millions but tens of millions. They're proud it and they should be. Eastern kids just aren't.

MJ: I only have a couple more questions for you and they are very broad.

PB: This has been fun.

MJ: Good! What do you think is your biggest contribution to EMU?

PB: Well, it's not the biggest one, but once I got back on campus, I have to admit that I was one of those people that if someone called me and said, "Mr. Barry we are raising funds for something," I would always write a check. I was a teacher, but I would write a check. So once I got involved in the Alumni Association and became more proactive about donating, that's something that most people wouldn't see. Alumni Relations knows I did that but no one else. I would say the biggest contribution is making people I teach-who I have a direct connection with-love Eastern Michigan with the hope that if I get them to love this enough, when they graduate, get a job, have some spare money, they'll start donating. If they love it enough they'll come back to some events. I guess I think that's my biggest contribution. I wouldn't say being Alumni President. My contribution there when I became president-elect was elevate the stature of the Alumni Association. I asked people, "who of our Alumni Association members will go to administrative meetings? There is no presence by the Alumni!" What are you people thinking?" I said I would go. So for four years I went to every board meeting. I spoke at every one. I just got myself on the agenda because anyone can speak. I would get on the agenda every time. I would tell them all the good things that were happening with the alumni. I would praise the positive. It got so there were a lot of acrimonious meetings and a lot of meetings where there were angry people, especially during the Huron name change. A band of Native Americans started coming and protesting and it got ugly. I became Johnny Sunshine. So, Vicky Reaume, who used to be the Alumni Executive Director but now is the Director for the Regents, would look at all the people and place me strategically. Sometimes at the beginning, or at the ending, or in the middle. Somewhere where I would have some good news for them. I knew every one of the Regents personally. I went to meals with them. I got to know every Dean. My whole purpose wasn't about me, it was about alumni, alumni, alumni. How can we engage the alumni? How can I help with the business side of alumni? What can I do? That, I think, on the alumni end, was a big contribution.

Sadly, when I left, that all stopped. No one from the Alumni Association goes to the meetings anymore and no one speaks at them. No one is forging those relationships with people that you have to have if you want money someday. It just kind of went back to the way it used to be. It's really disappointing. I had to say to myself, "Pat you did all you can do. You can't take ownership that they aren't anymore." The teaching end- helping kids love this place, and love speech, and then on the alumni end, making connections, which were really good for four years were my biggest contributions to the university.

MJ: That's a good strategy- to be teaching students to love a place, and then to connect with them later when they might be able to donate.

PB: It is a good place. But no one has the love, publicly, for Eastern. Maybe a little more for Central or Western or Grand Valley but not always even there. It's not like Michigan State or Michigan. I always ask my students, "How many of you came here because Eastern gave you a bit of money to come here? How many wanted to come here before they gave you the money?" A few raise their hands. I ask them later in the semester if they are glad that they came. They are always glad. I know that it's a quality education here because I've had a lot of student transfer in from big universities-Michigan, Michigan State, other universities- and (it's a backhanded compliment), they say, "This is a great place! I didn't think it would be. But professors care about you and they work with you. There is an undergraduate symposium, which almost no one has. Why don't we know about you?" I have had friends come do graduate work here. They say the same thing. "Michigan this, Michigan State that." But they are always so impressed with EMU. Tell people! I know it is a good place! I went to Wayne State for PhD work and I know that is a good place, but so is this! Tell people!

MJ: I agree. I ask everyone about their opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of the University as a whole. I like to start with the weaknesses...

PB: So we end positive. I like the way you think, Matt. Weaknesses. Well, we don't do enough to engage alumni and they're are going to start a capital campaign soon. We want to raise money. The last one we had, when I was President, we raised the most we've ever raised. 55 million dollars. We were thrilled. U of M was doing an alumni capital campaign at the exact same time. They raised 2 billion dollars. With a B. I felt good about our campaign until I heard that. They are going to start another capital campaign soon. You can't ask people for money and have them give if they don't feel like you've stayed connected and care about them. I knew that this was a problem when I got on the alumni board because we had an executive director, we had two assistant directors, and we had some student help. I looked at that and I thought, "For a university where there are 165,000 living alumni? Where is the money going?" The answer was that there was no money at all. It tells you the people at the top don't value it. That's why I went to meetings, did all that stuff, form relationships, so they would value it. They still won't do enough. They still have one director who is even spread thinner now because she directs the Alumni Relations office, but for half the time she is also a fundraiser for the Foundation. She's not even there full-time. They have only two paid assistants; they've lost so much money with these cutbacks that are brutal. They don't have any student assistants. They used to give them work study money; there is hardly any now. They got rid of a position of secretary, so the only secretaries they have are students. How do you think you're going to raise tens of millions of dollars when you have an office that is handcuffed and does have the means to reach out to alumni and build relationships so they will write a check? How do you fix that? They don't have an answer for that. "Times are tough. They don't give." The people who have given money- Bruce Halle for example- they massaged those relationships. So they (administration) should get it, but they don't. They massage the big donors, they don't massage the medium and small donors, which is the bulk of Eastern Michigan graduates. So that's a huge weakness.

They didn't used to do enough to promote Eastern in Lansing. Lansing, for many years, had a very negative opinion of Eastern because we had a president, Kirkpatrick, who was from the East Coast who sold the University on the University House because he thought presidents should have nice houses. It went way over budget; ended up costing something like six million



dollars. Most of that money did not come from the State of Michigan. It came from our budget, which is small. The State of Michigan knew we didn't have a lot of money and they were really angry that we spent that money on that house. For years we didn't get any appropriations for buildings. We have the second oldest campus in the state. So we have a lot of old buildings that need work, and we aren't getting appropriations. So we either don't fix them or we drain more money out of our meager endowment to fix buildings. I think that they are doing better now with lobbying in Lansing, but I don't think they have a full-time presence there. They have a guy that goes up and back, but I don't think they have someone there full-time. Other universities have those people and they are there all the time. One of my fraternity brothers, Kirk Profit, is one of those people. He owns the most powerful lobbying group in Michigan. He works for multiple universities, but he won't work for us. He doesn't because he's an alumnus and he wants to be able to tell the administration the truth and not sugarcoat it because they are writing him big checks. He said that's why he did it. That makes sense. But we don't have that up there, so that I think is a weakness.

Other than that, my friends that are full time, tenured faculty members, tell me that they haven't always felt highly valued. They did years ago. They tell me they don't feel that love as much now. I think a lot of it has to do with the cuts they've had to make, where people have lost jobs and departments have lost staffing. That makes everyone's job harder. Tough negotiations happen because the University doesn't have the money to give them anymore. I don't think the University is trying to be mean to professors, they just don't have the money. The professors don't like the fact that we have almost as many adjuncts as we do full time professors. They feel that is out of balance. The University loves adjuncts because they are so much cheaper. Their attitudes are often very passionate because they know they can be let go tomorrow. They are very passionate, but the full time people think there needs to be more full time people. I think the University feels that way but they don't have the money. Now we are really in free fall. When I was president, we had just under 24,000 students, and every year we went up 1000 to 1500. All of the sudden, it turned. It turned because we have poor students who can't afford tuition and so instead of being here four years, they were here five years, six years, or they drop out and never come back. So, credit hours are down. I know because the number of births in Michigan are substantially down, all the universities are fighting for the same kids. Central is in trouble, we're in trouble, Western's in trouble. Michigan and Michigan State aren't because kids want to go there, they are the flagship places. So they still get oodles at that location, but they're taking kids that we might have gotten before. The Honors College is getting a lot of love at Eastern. Kim Schatzle was the Provost for several years and she got money flowing into the Honors College to get kids to come here. That's what seduced them here. Once they come, they like it. A lot of it comes down to money. If they had more money, they would have more profs, better facilities, and it would look good to students on the tours. We could probably hire more full-time faculty and have less adjuncts. So, a lot of it comes down to money and we are in trouble now. I think we've got 18,000; down almost 6,000 in the last four years. We're in trouble. At our department staff meeting, Kathy Stacey said "We've got to start envisioning this as a smaller university. What majors and minors can we offer and what can't we offer.? How are we going to staff things? Fund things?" Obviously, at the administrative level they are talking about this. The free fall may continue. We may end up being a university like I had, with 12,000

people. What does that mean? That is a weakness. Some of it is beyond our control and some isn't.

MJ: Strengths?

PB: The biggest strength is that people who come here want to teach. By and large. We do some research here. It's growing a little bit; it's certainly nothing like a Michigan or State. So we don't get a lot of the people who come here because they love academia and they want to research and "Oh god, I have to teach a damn class." We don't get a lot of that so I think our strength is most of the people who come here genuinely care about kids and genuinely want to teach. They feel pretty good about their professors. Students tell me, "They're not like you, Barry, you're kind of the extreme end of that. But most of my teachers- they care about me. I can see that." That is a huge strength, and that has been what has helped us survive during a lot of lean times. People say, "I know I'm not making money but I care about this place." We have an inordinately high number of faculty that are Eastern grads. It's over 1000. Out of 1500 faculty and part timers on the payroll, about 1000 of them are Eastern people. That's kind of unheard of. And that tells you that a lot of them love this place and they really want to be here because it changed their lives and they want to change other people's lives. To me, that is the single greatest strength. We don't have huge lecture halls. My nephew Cliff graduated from State and I asked, "When did you have a class of 20?" He said it happened once in a while, but most of the time he was in a class of 500. That apparently was OK for Cliff. He didn't care. I would care. Our students would care. They want to be known, they want to have highly skilled people teaching them who know their names. This is something we get at Eastern. That has always been our strength and God, I hope it will always be our strength. If not, I don't know what we're offering that anyone else isn't offering.

MJ: I think that's been a running theme in a lot of these interviews- the familial aspect of the school starting to fragment a little bit. Then again, I did my undergrad here and worked in the archives, and was convinced by Alexis to go to Wayne State to pursue their School of Information Program. I did, but I didn't have Nancy Bryk, I didn't have Alexis, I didn't have Dr. Ted- people who know my name and were invested in my path. That is huge. I'll pay more for it if I have to.

PB: Parents don't get that. When I taught high school, I'd ask where you going? "Michigan! Michigan State!" We did follow up surveys and found out most of them didn't go there, but they had to say it to their peers. When they'd say Michigan, I'd say, "Great school, but what is drawing you there?" "They have a great football program!" "Do you play football? How does that impact you?" Then when I talked to parents, I'd say, "Don't think, because you pay the huge dollars at Michigan or Michigan State that you are going to get the best education. Your kid's going to sit in lecture halls for a couple of years and you are going to pay lot of money for that." When Michigan grads are honest with you, in their quiet moments, they'll say, "Undergrad wasn't that good there. I was proud of it, proud to be accepted, but they kind of want undergrads to be the ammunition to pay for graduate school. Michigan wants to be a graduate school for dentistry, medicine, law, business. So the undergrad experience is not what it is here. You can't tell parents and kids that. They don't get it. I'm glad you had that experience because that, to me, is a strength. We have that family connection. I hope for God sakes that we keep it. If we don't, I don't know what we're selling. Why would anyone come here? I don't know.

- MJ: Anything else you'd like to add?
- PB: Well, the interview was way longer than I thought. Its ok, like my wife tells me, I do enjoy talking. When I walk my dogs, if I say I'm going to be home in a half hour, she knows it'll be much longer because I talk to people. It was a nice interview; I enjoyed it. You asked a lot of really good questions. I thought it was really enjoyable. When you're interviewing people you want to come away from it saying it was enjoyable.
- MJ: That's goal number one. I've sat with some other people who have done them and they stick right to the script. It's very mechanical. There's no conversation. Nobody wants to listen to that.
- PB: You have to be able to do what you did today. You have to be willing to let the speaker go off topic because that might be an avenue you hadn't thought of, or might connect later. That requires a lot of confidence and also the ability to think quickly. Those people who are rigid, they don't have that ability to think quickly. If someone throws them off they want to go back to the script.
- MJ: It also helps to know its ok if it doesn't go well. You said you failed a couple classes. But you learned a big lesson after that because you failed. I've failed a couple of these, I fail stuff all the time. But I've had teachers like Nancy who says "Matt, if you have trouble in there, I'm going to drag you through. You just have to ask." I ask all the time.
- PB: That's the big difference. Some of my students say, "Other teachers just don't care about me like you do." I say "Look, I was a high school teacher, so I'm used to going to you to get you involved." They're not going to come to you to do that, but it doesn't mean they don't care. They feel like when you are in college, you ought to be treated like adults. One of the behaviors of adults is that when you need something, you go find it. They think that students should go and find the information. Don't take it that they don't care. Take it that they have a way in their mind to get you to adulthood.
- MJ: They're teaching you even when they're letting you sink or swim.
- PB: You need to learn to go and ask, that is one thing they need to learn. Our students don't go see their professors. When I was student that was common. Now, I think because of technology, and because they're working a lot of hours to be at Eastern, they seldom do. I offer office hours, but they are outside of the classroom before and after class so that they can get to me. I also give people my cell phone number. They can call me or text me and ask, "Can we talk?" I'll say of course. We can email and talk. I think these things are more convenient for them rather than coming to an office where no one ever comes. They don't want to do that. I preach it to my Honors College classes- get to know your professors!
- MJ: I think people are more afraid of face to face.
- PB: When I was walking to campus today, someone came up and said Mr. Barry, thank you so much. He was a student of mine three years ago, from India. Public speaking was a challenge for him, but he felt good about it when he left the class. Last year, he reached out to me and said, "I want to go to graduate school, can you write for me?" I did. A couple places he applied to said "Sorry no." This summer he reached out to me again and asked, "Can you write again? I want to

get into Eastern's Masters program." We're walking across campus together and he said, "I got in, you wrote for me. If you hadn't written for me, I would not have gotten in." That's the connection these kids need. They're not smart enough yet to figure it out. If I wasn't friends with Gail Compton, I would not be a teacher today. That's a little bit of a weakness that is more about individual students and technology that we have now.

MJ: Do you ever think if you hadn't been in band, you'd not be a teacher today?

PB: Oh yeah. I flunked out.

MJ: What did you play?

PB: Trombone.

MJ: I started on trombone and ended up on euphonium.

PB: A little fun fact: my band teacher was named Watts. He was a great teacher. All of his sons went to Catholic Central. Catholic Central has only had 3 band directors for 90 years. When they come they stay. They're all alumni. I reached out to him several times in my teaching career. I just wanted to remind him how he change my life. If I got a note like that it would be awesome. When he died they gave a reception for him at the high school. I went in and I talked about flunking out, about him getting me back in, and changing my life. None of them knew that. His wife didn't know that. When she came up to me afterwards, she asked, "Your name is Barry right? Do you know my husband's middle name was Barry? Somewhere in the past in Ireland, you guys were relatives." He never told me that. He never said "We're kind of connected here." I think he thought that he was here to be your band director, not your cousin." It was really amazing. Amazing.

MJ: Well, that about does it.

PB: What time is it?

MJ: We have gone two hours and sixteen minutes.

PB: I'm not surprised.

MJ: The only one longer than this was Bob England.

PB: He has so much background and is was so involved developing the Rec/IM Program.

MJ: He was a good guy. On Thursday we are talking to Lou Gianino.

PB: I think it's an Italian name so the pronunciation might be tricky. Call his secretary and ask how to pronounce his name.

MJ: I will do that.

PB: I have to do that with students. I have a Chinese student; his name is Gii Han. I wrote it down phonetically so that I will not make the mistake of mispronouncing it again. When you're transcribing this if you find anything else that you want to contact me about, feel free. I work by email or whatever you want, I'm here.