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Glenna Frank Miller & Gregory Peoples

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Eastern Michigan University Archives, Oral Histories

Oral History Interview with Greg Peoples (GP) and Glenna Frank Miller (GFM)

Conducted by Historic Preservation Graduate Student Matt Jones (MJ) and University Archivist Alexis Braun Marks (ABM)

Transcribed by Nonprofit Management Graduate Student Amelia Yunker

Recorded May 17, 2019, at University Archives, Room 310, Halle Library.

MJ: This is Matt Jones. I'm a grad student in Historic Preservation here at EMU and University Archivist Alexis Braun Marks is with me and we are in the Archives Reading Room. We're talking today with Glenna Frank Miller and Gregory Peoples. Gregory Peoples is a long-time administrator of EMU. He was hired in 1977 to work in the Campus Interact Office until 1980. From 1980 until 1982 he served as Assistant Director of Admissions. Peoples left Eastern in 1982 to work for the General Motors Institute and then as Director of Enrollment Services at Washtenaw Community College before returning to EMU as the Associate Dean of Students and then Dean of Students. In 2004 People[s] became Director of the Office of the Ombuds, an office he created in part with James Vick. Outside of the University Peoples has served on the Michigan Association of School Boards, Board of Directors, and Washtenaw Intermediate School District Board of Education Trustees. Peoples is also a recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Honor Award here at Eastern Michigan University and he retired from his position as University Ombudsman in June of 2013.

GP: Sort of. Do you want me to make some corrections?

MJ: If you'd like.

GP: Okay. So, you were correct I was hired in 1977 to work as the Coordinator of Campus Interact Center. In 19... I think it was '79 or '80, I did become the Assistant Director of Admissions. I left after three years as the Associate Director of Admissions. So in addition to the Assistant I was also the Associate Director of Admissions. I left to work at what was then called GMI Engineering and Management Institute, not General Motors Institute and they had separated from General Motors at that time and they had changed the name to GMI Engineering and Management Institute.

MJ: Okay, okay.

GP: I was there until 1985 and then I became the Director of Enrollment at Washtenaw Community College. I don't think you had that in there.

MJ: Okay. Alright. Got it. Thank you.

Glenna Frank Miller is the Emerita Vice President here at Eastern Michigan University. Glenna began at Eastern Michigan University in 1974 as a Resident Unit Administrator (head resident) before becoming Resident Life Area Manager and then Director of Campus Life in 1983. Miller is known for a high level of involvement on campus, developing meaningful relationships with students and creating educational programs for the empowerment of women. After retiring in June 2013, Miller returned to work for the University as the Interim Assistant to the Vice President for Alumni Engagement for a year starting in May 2016.

GFM: Oh so many things left unsaid.

ABM: So many.

MJ: They are going to get said.

GFM: So... One thing is that I did not retire as the Vice President, I was Assistant Vice President of ... Student Affairs I guess. Worked many years in Campus Life, and then McKenny Union and Campus Life and then McKenny Union Campus Life and Diversity Programs. We started all kinds of programs, which I suspect we'll talk about, leadership development among many other things. But I think most people would say what I'm known for is leading the Student Center project, which opened in 2006. In any event...

GP: That's a big one.

GFM: And yes I retired the same time Greg did in June of 2013.

MJ: Okay, alright.

GFM: And I taught here, eight years in the College of Ed and the Higher Ed Student Affairs Program and I came back as the Interim Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations. So I know Alexis ... and that's how our paths crossed because we worked on the little museum project together.

GP: One thing you didn't mention about me is I have been elected and served on three local school boards in Washtenaw County, Willow Run Community Schools, Lincoln Consolidated Schools, and the Washtenaw Intermediate Schools.

MJ: Okay, alright.

GFM: And I'm going to mention this, and then we'll stop talking about ourselves. Greg has a long, strong history of engagement and leadership in the community. Mine's not so long but there is a little bit: on the board for SOS Community Services; was on the Women and Philanthropy Board here, founding member; the Michigan ACE Women's Network; statewide Women Leaders in Higher Ed. So in any event I think most of these things are in my resume. I also have received the Martin Luther King Award, and was the first recipient of the Michigan... the EMU ACE Award in 2014, which just went to...

GP: Ellen Gold

GFM: Ellen Gold, a couple weeks ago.

ABM: Oh how wonderful.

GFM: Yes.

MJ: Okay. Well, we'd like to start out by asking what drew each of you to student life and higher education as a profession. This is very broadly.

GP: So my first job, after graduating from college was the Assistant Director of Admissions at Allegheny College, Assistant Director of Admissions for Minority Recruitment at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania which is where I went to school. I had worked as an undergrad, as a tour guide in the Admissions Office, and when I was graduating, my senior year, the Director of Admissions came to me and said "What are you planning on doing after you graduate?" and I said I wasn't sure. He said "Well, would you be interested in working in the Admissions Office here at Allegheny" and I said "Sure, why not." He said we're trying to increase our minority enrollment for students -- It's a long story about that, the minority, the enrollment at Allegheny -- so anyhow, they were trying to increase their minority enrollments. So he asked me if I would be interested in taking a job there. So that was my entree into higher education. I worked there for two years and decided that [laughs] I wanted to go and get a Master's in Higher Education. So that's what I decided to do.

MJ: Okay.

GFM: Well similar story, although mine in a different area. I was a Resident Advisor, which is how many, many people who find a career in Student Affairs. They worked in Admissions or residence halls or student activities or Greek Life or whatever. But for me it was residence halls and then my senior year I was a Hall Director. I went to the University of Detroit, now the University of Detroit Mercy, and started a Master's Degree in Counseling at Wayne State and completed that. Worked at the U of D for a couple of years as an Academic Advisor and Orientation Coordinator and then eventually came to EMU in '74 in a professional residence life position called a Resident Unit Administrator and then was the Assistant Director of Residence Halls, an Associate Director of Residence Halls, before I became Director of Campus Life in '83. A common story that you have this fabulous experience as an undergraduate in a leadership role and then decide that this could be a career.

GP: So, I guess I'll also add, so when I decided to go back and get my Masters I went to Kent State University which is my hometown. I went to Kent and I worked in the residence halls-

GFM: A common-

GP: Yeah, as a hall director for several years, and then I came to Eastern. Actually I interviewed for a financial aid position and I decided I wasn't necessarily interested in that, but then the Vice President for Student Affairs at that time was Larry Smith and he called me back and he said "Well, you know, there's another position I think you might be better suited for" and that was the Campus Interact position. But Glenna is absolutely right. I think a lot of student affairs professionals start their higher ed experience as undergraduates because they work in some office on campus which is very important as a student affairs position, which is why we believe that extracurricular activities, the things you learn outside the classroom are very, very important in terms of your overall development as a student and as a person.

MJ: Yeah.

GFM: Because certainly it was our own experience, and then working for forty years making those kind of experiences happen for students, the co-curriculum it's often referred to. The learning that happens, the rich opportunities for learning that happen for students outside the classroom.

MJ: Well it seems like obviously not everybody goes into student affairs, student life, after their undergrad. What do you think separates you from the other people who don't necessarily go into that field?

GFM: Well I was a psych major and so I was looking for some career in a helping profession, and a Master's in Counseling and then got encouraged as Greg described by supervisors and advisors that it was a good fit to work in higher education. At the time I remember thinking "What could be better than working in higher education? What could be a better career than working in higher education?" Little did I know I'd spend my whole life in that kind of career. It's a fabulous thing to drive to campus every day, interact with students no matter what age you are.

MJ: I read that beautiful thing you wrote about working on campus and how much you loved coming to campus everyday.

GFM: Yeah, no, that's true.

MJ: We already kind of got a slice of that.

GFM: Good.

MJ: Okay, well... Specifically about EMU, in the mid-70s what made it a place you wanted to work? What about EMU was special?

GP: Okay, so I'm going to add a little more to the question you asked before that.

MJ: Please.

GP: And that is to me, working in higher ed., working in a college campus has always been fun. I've always enjoyed being around college students. Obviously I had a very, very rewarding experience as an undergrad, but even working as an Admissions Officer recruiting and encouraging students to come to the institution that I went to. When I worked in housing the fact that you had an opportunity to influence young people's lives who are away from home often for the first time. And it was just a fun opportunity for me. Even when I talk to Glenna's students in grad school, I always tell them you know, when you're looking for a profession, you should look for something that is going to make you happy, not something that's just going to bring you a lot of money, because money comes and goes, but you should look for something that's going to make you happy and will reward you on a daily basis going to work. Because that's what you're going to do, you're going to be spending a lot of time with colleagues and it's about fit

and everything. And I say the most important thing I say is do something that you are enjoying.

GFM: Well, and I would add to that, and I know Greg would agree, where you can make a positive difference. And student affairs work I think many, many people would say is an opportunity to make a positive difference and for us the place where that could happen was at Eastern Michigan University. This was my first public institution, I had gone 16 years to Catholic, parochial schools including college, so this was my first public school experience. I felt like I had died and gone to heaven from working at the University of Detroit which was so resource poor and coming here which felt to me at the time -- we had a Campus Police Department, we had resources for programming in the residence halls, and it was just fabulous. I mean, people would laugh at how few resources we have, but at the time I felt like that compared to a parochial school it was really quite appropriately resourced and I felt that way for a long time.

MJ: How did your family -- Did your family react at all to you wanting to go to a public school after having been in parochial schools for so long?

GFM: I'm a first generation college student and I was the first one among my extended family to go to college. I'm from Cincinnati, Ohio, and I was very interested in getting out of Cincinnati and so Detroit. I came to Detroit in 1968, after the Detroit riots. It was a place where social justice issues were certainly percolating around race and equity and LGBT and women's lib. I mean all of those things were happening at that era. I think my family was always proud of my career choices and working in higher ed was something that no one could ever have imagined. I don't think my mom or my dad ever really understood what I did. My mother would often say "You know, every time I call you you're not at your desk." It's sort of like well, if I was at my desk I probably wouldn't be doing my job, you know, so not always a full understanding of that but always a lot of support for the opportunities that were available to me at this institution.

GP: So for me, what drew me to Eastern Michigan was -- as I said before, I went back to Kent to get my masters, which is where my family was from and I'm very close to my family. I play a very intimate role in my family. After I got my masters, I had considered working on my doctorate at Kent, which I probably should have done because I would have been close to finishing it. I would have started it, but it would have been closer to finishing then had I started later on. I decided I need to leave Kent because if I didn't I was afraid I wouldn't because I was so close to my family. So I came to Ypsilanti with the idea of staying at Eastern Michigan for about a year or two...

GFM: Couple of years.

GP: Before I moved on to something different. The other thing that is interesting for me is I had an older brother who was 10 years older than me. He started at Mountain U but then he transferred to Kent State to get his degree. But back in the late '50s and early '60s, they didn't have a support structure for students of color in public schools like they did when I graduated with my masters. Often times the black students who came to Kent State University would live in the community, the black community, and the people in the black community, such as my parents and others became the counselors, the dining service people, the advisors for us. I often say I got paid handsomely for things that my parents did on a voluntary basis because that's how the community was evolved for black students at Kent State, during that era. So I saw my parents had meetings with college students at our house. Sunday dinners we'd have college students around our table. It was a very natural thing for me to consider doing something like that when I came to Eastern.

GFM: One answer to the family question. I met my husband here. He's an EMU alum. He was a resident advisor in Pitman Hall. We've been married for almost 39 years. [GP starts laughing] We got married the same year, as it turns out.

GP: Five weeks apart.

GFM: Couple weeks apart.

(16:27)

MJ: Okay. Was there any significant or notable lack of quality in Student Life when you arrived here? Were there any very noticeable things that needed improvement?

GFM: Yes

MJ: What were they?

GFM: Well one of the things I would say is this persistent impression of EMU as a commuter, suitcase college. We have always had a small residential population here considering the size of our campus. So, you know, you'd always describe... there were a number of students who lived directly on campus in University owned housing and then there were a number of students who lived right around the campus who some people would call commuters but are sort of residential. They're just not in University owned facilities and then all those folks who commuted from their parent's homes or their own homes, because we had this widely diverse population by age and many other characteristics. So I would say one of the things that was pretty clear at Eastern was the sense that there was

just nothing to do here, there was not a lot of quality involvement. At one point in time, in 1983, so I'd been here not quite 10 years, I got promoted to the Director of Campus Life position with the implication that we were going to change that feeling on campus. And I remember my presentation for the director interviews I used the concept of Campus Life as a campus catalyst. I still remember that and it still resonates with me for your student activities, student leadership, your co-curricular experiences really need to be where the life of the campus is. I'm not in any way dismissing the important role of the classroom and credit opportunities, please don't hear it that way. It's important that students also have rich opportunities outside the classroom, leadership opportunities, involvement opportunities, opportunities to make a difference in their own way on campus and in the community. EMU students were the ones who started the SOS Community Services Center now, There was a hotline, it was a crisis center when it was first opened.

MJ: Wow, that's how SOS started on campus?

GFM: It started off campus, but it was started by EMU students and faculty. It's probably -- 46ish years ago. And in the meantime, interestingly enough at the same time I was part of a small group of students on the campus of the University of Detroit to start the Crisis Center, called the Mandela Center that many of us -- It was funny it was sort of the same era and in Lansing it was called the Listening Ear. So that's another story but there was activism on campus. You certainly are aware of it in terms of the issues around social justice, that you are doing your oral histories with Judy Sturgis Hill and others. There were other ways that students were able to make a difference here as well. But the whole concept of "There's nothing to do on campus" was something that we attempted to remedy. I was in charge of that for many, many years. Then they added on the role of McKenny Union which, when we brought in some consultants, described McKenny as woefully inadequate for our campus and in the wrong location and that sort of prompted the conversation about a new student center and on and on. But in any event this whole issue of "suitcase college," nothing to do was an issue that was certainly big when I came here.

GP: I think, also, Glenna came several years before I did, I think.

GFM: '74 I came here.

GP: Yeah, and I didn't come until '77. During the time there was a movement by I think. Was John Porter the president then or shortly there?

GFM: Mmmmm, '79 was Porter.

GP: Yeah, yeah, so ...

GFM: '79 to '89. The "decade of advancement."

GP: Yeah, so two years after I came. At that point in time there was an active movement to increase enrollment significantly by Dr. John Porter and also Vice President Smith at the time was very interested as Glenna said in changing the concept, the idea that Eastern was a commuter campus and everybody would go home on the weekends, to try to find things that would keep our students on campus on the weekends. There was a concentrated effort to change that image, both by Dr. Porter who was the President and Vice President Smith.

GFM: Who came in '76. '75 or '76.

GP: When I came in the focus was changing the image of the campus. At that time the University put resources into the Student Affairs and other areas to make those things happen.

GFM: The culture change.

GP: The culture change, yeah. I think I came in at a very, very good time for student affairs professionals.

21:20

MJ: Given your long tenures on campus, we'd kind of like to hear about how your work changed over time. Specifically, Glenna, we'd like to hear about the changes you oversaw on Campus Life and for example Orientation and programming. And Greg, we'd like to hear about your different roles in the Student Affairs Office and both in your first stint at EMU and your second so we can see sort of the spectrum of how things have changed.

GFM: Well interestingly, Greg worked with Orientation, like Orientation 1.0. When would that have been?

GP: That was '77 to '79.

GFM: And then I picked up Orientation in '83 when I became Director of Campus Life. We moved from the traditional drive-in, one and a half day orientation model, quite common on many campuses, which was what Eastern's program was.

GP: Yeah we had a three day program, then they went to one and a half day program, then they went ...

GFM: So it morphed into Fast Track, which was a drive in, one day, take care of all of your normal business program followed by a four-day session. At the beginning of the school year it was originally called the Orientation Pre-Session Program so it really had an enrollment management part (Fasttrack) and then a student development part to it. Fast Track stayed in the Admissions-Academic Advising areas because it was focused on getting students enrolled. It was important because it was different than many other programs of peer institutions because it started like in March. We were pulling students through the pipeline quite a bit earlier, getting much more management information about their enrollment earlier on, could manage the course selections, those kinds of things. Get people committed to Eastern. Get their picture with their ID card, those kinds of things at Fast Track, a very intentional program. And then all the kinds of things, you know where you try and build esprit, we moved that to the four days before school. It's really not unlike the model that has existed now for what 30... how many years later? A long time later. Of course there was a parent/family program. So on the first day of Orientation there were five, six thousand people on the campus. Dr. Porter, who we both loved by the way, LOVED Orientation because he wanted to bring, he felt pretty strongly that we were the best kept secret, that Eastern Michigan was the best kept secret, so bringing all these parents to campus and having them experience a great move-in day. We had a great big picnic. Parents came to an opening Convocation where the deans and others participated, not unlike what we have now, but Dr. Porter loved that. We delivered that and then we recruited about - over the years - 100, 200 volunteer student leaders per year called NSOAs, New Student Orientation Leaders [Assistants] to work with small groups of students. It was based on this peer relationship model with about 15 or so students in a small group and they had a couple of leaders and that's how you would manage through the four days of Orientation. Those days included workshops on diversity and academic success and there were fun things in the evening, the Eaglepalooza program, a big dinner...

GP: (softly) Fajita Fest

GFM: Involvement Fair, Fajita Fest, and Community Plunge program. These programs started years and years and years ago and most of them exist in some iteration even now.

GP: Well not only Campus Life and Student Affairs, but the entire faculty and staff also participated in Orientation because it was communicated that this is not just a Campus Life program this is a University program. We're all responsible for bringing these students to campus. That's the way we got the buy-in from the college deans, the department heads, and the faculty together

GFM: It was also a unique and productive relationship between Larry Smith, Vice President for Student Affairs and Ron Collins, who was the Provost. I don't know how many years they were together in those roles, but many, my memory is many. They communicated because, as you know, one of the issues in higher ed is there are silos among student affairs and academic affairs, but these two were absolutely committed to Eastern Michigan University and Eastern Michigan University students and the rich opportunities for learning and they worked together. As a result, we worked together. I was co-chair of the University Retention Council and co-chair of the First Year Experience Council with my academic colleagues and some of my best friends, professional friends, which ended up to be personal friends, were the Director of the Library Sandra Yee and faculty who taught the credit course for the EMU and You or whatever it's called now. These were great opportunities for us to work together. Marty Shichtman , I mean I could go on and on, Jeff Bernstein and I'm sure Greg did as well. These opportunities for the student affairs professionals and the faculty and academic affairs colleagues to work together. It was a collaborative culture like none that I have ever seen anywhere else. It was remarkable actually.

(29:27)

MJ: In terms of some follow-up questions, the sort of spectrum of changes: Why did you feel the need to create the Office of Ombuds?

GP: Well let me go back. [laughter] because I didn't answer the question you asked about.

GFM: There was the Orientation question and then there was ...

GP: Yes, so if you remember correctly, I said that my first professional job after graduation was in the admissions office at Alleghany College, and then I went and got my Masters. Well, when I applied for the Financial Aid job here at Eastern, and I came and I interviewed. They offered me the job but I didn't think I was a financial aid person, so, but Larry Smith had a vision for an office called the Campus Interact Center and if you remember we talked about, at that point in time, Dr. Porter and Vice President Smith were interested in increasing the enrollments and changing the culture of campus so that people began to believe that there was a lot to do on campus. So Vice President Smith

created the office called Campus Interact, which was really an arm of the Admissions Office but what it primarily did was focus on on-campus programming and so we did...

GFM: And leadership.

GP: And leadership. And so we did a number of things in the Campus Interact Center. For example, we housed -- anytime a tour came for campus, it came through the Campus Interact Center and it was established in Starkweather Hall for a specific reason. If a high school wanted to bring students to campus or an individual family wanted to bring, they started with the Campus Interact Center and that was one of our jobs. We also did things like, we had what we called EMU Canvas. And the EMU Canvas was an attempt to get back to the high schools about how outstanding their students were that were coming to Eastern. Again that was to encourage recruitment of other students so we had a staff, a student staff, who would interview these students about their scholarship abilities, whether they had gotten scholarships, the things they had done on campus and we would send those back to the local newspapers and also to the high schools and so that was an attempt to recruit students. We also ...

GFM: Ambassadors.

GP: We had EMU Ambassadors were, you know, when we had special programs the President had programs, we would bring these EMU Ambassadors and they would showcase the University. We had Parents Day programs like Glenna said, to bring parents to campus and highlight the positive things that were on campus for people to do. So that was kind of the initial thing and I was the head of that and a part of that I think had to do with fit. I had an outgoing personality, I work well with students so we could get, and so, that was, when you came to campus you saw this bubbly person, da da da, I mean, so that was part of it. And then, I transcended -- again because of my admissions work -- back into the regular admissions operations there and I left as Associate Director of Admissions. So I left Eastern in 1991, no, I left Eastern in 1983 and did a little tour of some of the colleges in the state. And then I came back in 1991. The main reason I came back in 1991 is because there was an Associate Dean of Students position open but I really came back because I missed the bonds of the people I had met at Eastern Michigan University. When we talk about -- there was a family atmosphere, a family environment that we grew up with, I mean like, you know Glenna and I talk about how we were married six weeks apart. There were, not only did we get married a few weeks apart, there were, like at that point in time the Chief of Police on campus was

(33:15)

GFM: John Garland.

GP: John Garland. He got married six weeks before I did,

GFM: Barb

GP: Then we got married.

GP: We all worked together, we had kids together.

GFM: Same pediatricians, Greg and Alice had a baby, we had a baby, they had a baby, we had a baby.

GP: I mean yeah, yeah, yeah, and so I, yeah, it was things like you know

GP: Glenna's husband and I would often, we often were the first gentlemen, men, fathers, who took our kids to the doctor. I mean, back in the day that just wasn't a popular thing to do. Glenna worked, my wife worked, somebody had to take the kid to the doctor and we just... it was a real partnership. But the other thing is like there was such a family environment here, I mean like in the Housing Office, across campus

GFM: Rec IM

GP: Rec IM, I mean people played basketball at noon. I mean there were such... so in addition to doing a job, again, like I said before it was fun to come to work because you ran into... I mean when I retired I sent to the people, I said "You know there were many days I felt like I didn't want to come to work but I came to work anyhow because at some point in time during the day I was going to run into somebody that was going to make me feel better and make me glad I came to work that day." That's just the type of, so in addition to the job

GFM: It was the culture again. It was a professional staff culture.

GP: Yeah, yeah. We socialized after work together, our kids played together, I mean it was just, it was like, what better place could you be? So I was the Associate Dean of Students for five years?... six years? Six years and then the Dean, the infamous Dean of Students

GFM/GP: [together] Betty White.

GP: She retired. And then I became the Dean of Students. I was there for like five years I guess and at that point in time, it was in 2004, when the state really started coming down on cutting funds for the state universities. And that's when Eastern really started having its major impact in funding. We decided, as a team, we decided, you know, that we've got to do something. In my office I had the Center for Multicultural Affairs, Women's Studies, I had established the LGBT Office, the Greek Affairs Office and

GFM: International

GP: What?

GFM: International

GP: International. So we had limited resources and we -- Campus Life had a lot more resources than we had but, so it really made sense, because we were always struggling for resources, it really made sense for us to combine those offices under the Campus Life regime. But we also had a need for an office to help students navigate through the system, which is what the Ombudsman's Office did. We didn't always side with the students, that wasn't the role of the Ombudsman Office. The role of the Ombudsman's Office was to help students understand what their policies and what their rights and what their opportunities were. So if a student, had a problem with a faculty person, if they thought they had been mistreated in the classroom, if they had a problem with a business office, then they would come to the Ombudsman Office and then we would investigate the office. So that was why we created the Ombudsman Office.

(36:45)

MJ: Just as a little interjection here: That whole family, culture concept that you described is very familiar to me, that's one of the reasons I came back. I kind of missed it. (laughs)

GFM: You know what, you don't realize, what you have, until you experience some place else. I actually am a graduate of Wayne State, I know a little bit about Wayne State, yeah this is different. And it's important. It's important.

GP: When you talk to people who were here between '80 and '95 or so, something like that. They'll tell you, it's very, very different. I mean I think that, first of all, I think we have a national, our Student Affairs Division was recognized nationally. I mean, people would always talk to us about "How are you guys doing that?" And we had a national reputation because of the leader. But also he instilled in us, the family environment thing, because

he would say stuff like “Even in the winter time, porcupines will hug together.” I mean he just had

GFM: And more little sayings

GP: I mean those are the things that, and again. Like if we had a crisis on campus, he would call the Directors together, and we would brainstorm on how to solve this problem. And so everybody would, particularly, and okay so, from the director, people felt that they were involved in the decision. Not only that, but he would say to us, either he would say to us, or we would go back to our next level management people and say “Okay, this is the situation, how do you think we should...” “ And then we would come back and so most people felt like they had buy-in to the situation.

GFM: As opposed to the racist graffiti situation on campus which we thought was so sad. Where are all of your faculty and staff when those students, those students were in such pain? It’s heartbreaking to think about that. Students are crying out for someone to hear them.

GP: To hear them yeah.

GP: There.

GP: I mean, there is no question in my mind, as opposed to saying you’re going to be disciplined, we would have been there to support them. We would have stayed in the building with them. Some of the staff, not all of the staff, would have been... we would have been there. I know as the Dean of Students I would have been there. That would have been my role. But I would have been there to support them. That’s how it’s a little bit different now.

GFM: So I’m going to pick up on three things that Greg said.

MJ: Please.

(39:35)

GFM: Just to amplify. Student Leadership. I hope that you hear from us over and over and over and over Greg was talking about the Campus Interact Office. There was a group of students that would do these Campus Candidats, and there was a group of students who did the

GP: Tours

GFM: University Ambassadors and there was the group of students for tours. What I hope you can see over - and then I've got the 150 group leaders and I've got the Campus Life Council and there's the REC IM Board and there's ... between all of our departments there's these opportunities for students to be fabulous, and it just happened over and over and year after year after year. Many of our alums would say that very thing. "I never had opportunities like I had at EMU" and the students that helped to build the Student Center, and were on the Student Center Advisory Board and those kinds of things. That was different. So I hope you hear that resonating. So that's one thing.

GFM: Um, the concept of families. Greg certainly has adequately described how we felt like we were part of the family. Larry Smith would bring the family to the table and we would figure things out and he would write on newsprint [GP starts chuckling]. You know he had terrible handwriting, he was left handed like I am. You know, we would walk out of there and you'd feel like "woah we really had talked something through," and that's how he was; that was his leadership. I also wanted to talk about my own family. My kids did everything here. They were guinea pig kids for the Children's Institute, at six months and two years. They did camps and my kids did Honors Band and you know over the years they attended everything. Our babysitters were EMU students. My kids were so advantaged about what higher education is in the relationships they had with students and student leaders. My kids did fabulously well at Michigan and Princeton. I'm absolutely convinced that it's because of all the college students that were in their lives. I wanted to say that.

GFM: And then Greg mentioned the Campus Life funding, which hasn't come up yet. As part of this culture change about we need to be able to say that there's something to do on this campus, something meaningful to do we're able to get -- and I can't remember what it was, it was like \$450,000 or something -- a big general fee allocation and it included all kinds of typical student activities, but it also gave us an opportunity to hire some students as well. We were able to bring in a professional, an additional professional staff member. Pease Auditorium had been recently renovated. So we brought in a professional staff member to help us do Performing Arts in Pease Auditorium. So I mean, so there was a lot of things cooking at the time. And eventually, as Greg said we did bring over the diversity programs areas into a separate area which has become the Department of Diversity and Community Involvement. We wove the VISION Office, which we haven't talked about, but we wove VISION into the Center for Multicultural Affairs, the Women's Center, the LGBT Resource Center, that became another area.

(42:30)

GP: So, Glenna's right. So often times, we would bring our kids to campus with us. I mean, if we had an event or program. So that resonated with our children. I'll tell you a story. One time, my daughter Ashley was at Spellman College in Atlanta and she called me on the phone and she said "Dad, Dad." She said "You're not going to believe it, we had a Pow Wow on campus today and I had to tell all the kids what it was all about because they didn't know what was going on." Because she had been to campus with me on several occasions, because we have Pow-Wows, she knew.

GFM: Yeah, my kids saw Maya Angelou. She had been here a few times. And my kids had gone backstage for Maroon Five, and I mean, just tremendous opportunities.

ABM: You've both spoken about the leadership under Larry Smith and sort of the culture that he created. And I can imagine that when somebody like that retires from an office that those are really big shoes to fill, right? And it was, to my understanding, Jim Vick was an internal, right

GFM: Yes

ABM: So he had been raised up underneath that leadership of Larry. Can you both talk a little bit about what that change in style was? Was there a change in style? Was there a shake-up of how things, having just hired an interim who's an internal to run the library I know there's kind of...

(44:00)

AFB: Pros and cons.

GFM: Oh did they hire -- who did they hire, Rhonda?

ABM: Yeah.

ABM: Yeah Rhonda's going to be the new...

GP: Rhonda Fowler.

GFM: Rhonda Flower:

ABM: The new head librarian.

GP: I saw that

GFM: Oh, I didn't see the announcement, but I knew she was a candidate.

ABM: Yeah, anyways, so I'd love to hear more about, kind of what that transition period was, especially knowing that, that was kind of the start to some pretty quick successions of leadership after you had had a Provost like Ron Collins, who had been in his role for over a decade, and Larry who had been in his role for...

GFM: 25 years.

ABM: For 25 years.

GFM: That's a long time.

ABM: And presidents who had been in their positions for a decade or more. And then you have, I mean, eight administrators that you both served under at the highest level. So I'd love to hear more about that.

GFM: They did a big national search. And a big committee, I think.

GP: So, I guess I'll start with that. Honestly speaking, Larry Smith had a very unique style. Often times people would say either you loved him or you hated him. Most of us in our division had a -- we all had our own individual relationships with him. Obviously he cared, he didn't have you on his team unless he cared about you. Some people felt that he was more, I think some people felt that he treated some people differently than others. I don't think that that's necessarily true. But like, as a child in a family of five, you always think that your parents treat your sister or brother differently. It's not really true, but he was that way with his team. But with the university community, he was a very strong force to deal with. It was because of his tenacity that the university eventually bought into the culture of student affairs support. Very few college campuses that I know of does students affairs have a seat at the table that the Student Affairs Division at Eastern Michigan had. I can't think of very many at all, divisions of student affairs, that have a seat at the table when the vice presidents were talking about issues and money and things like that, student affairs got theirs. Most college campuses, they play second fiddle. That wasn't the case here at Eastern and it's because of Larry's leadership. He was a very dominant, strong, force. Again, he was that way on campus but he was also that way in the community. So, again, some people, we obviously loved him because he took care of our division. But a lot of people thought he was a strong force to deal with. But his primary focus was students success.

GFM: (with emphasis) Students.

GP: Students.

GFM: Students and their success.

GP: When he retired, most people knew that whoever took over was going to have a very difficult time. First of all, his style, you couldn't match his style. It was just very different. Jim was a wonderful vice president, he was a wonderful leader, but his leadership was very different than Larry's. Jim's style was more of a conciliatory "We can do this together." Larry's was more "We're going to do it this way."

GFM: Strong.

GP: Yeah, yeah. As you said, the leadership of the presidency, had changed so much that it was difficult. I don't know if Jim had two or three vice presidents.

GFM: Well, when Larry retired, Sam Kirkpatrick started, I happen to remember that was May of 2000 because we had a consultant team in from the Association of Colleges International that started our Student Center projects. That's how I remember, there's no other reason for me to remember. The very first day Sam Kirkpatrick started in 2000 was when we brought our consultant team in.

GFM: He had his own issues, Sam Kirkpatrick as you know.

ABM: He left in '04 and then there was Willis

GFM: Craig Willis.

GP: Craig Willis.

ABM: For two years. And then Fallon.

GFM: And, yeah, that was that.

GP: So there's three.

GFM: So it's just, and Jim left with um...

GP: Fallon.

GFM: John Fallon. In 2007.

GP: Yeah, so there was, you know Jim did a great job as leader of student vision, but it was very different for two reasons. One, the executive leadership at the top, the presidency, had changed, we had three presidents in six years. And each of them had their own style. And Craig was really an interim, Craig Willis was really an interim.

GFM: And he was a healer, he was a god guy.

GP: Yeah

GP: He was an interim.

GFM: He was intended to be an interim.

GP: So it was different. I don't think anyone expected Jim to be the type of leader that Larry was.

GFM: I might add a complication, in addition to all the presidential leadership changes was the budget. And it just seems like, at Eastern, can we just ever have a stable budget? We were able to make a difference here because there were opportunities for growth. We were in a growth mode. But nothing kills the university like cut, cut, cut, cut, cut or unstable enrollment, which of course we've been dealing with here for a long time.

GP: So when he came in, when he assumed leadership in 2000...

GFM: 2001. I think Jim started in 2001.

GP: Okay, in 2003, the budget fell apart. So that's when we first had to start making cuts. Remember Glenna?

GFM: Oh yes, I do.

GP: We had to cut staff and we had to cut offices. That was very painful. I don't think we had, at least I don't think I had been here when they had done something like that before. That was very painful. I mean... the family aspect... I mean, you were close to your CSO2, CSO4 secretaries as you were your AP10. I mean there were seamless groups there. So to go and tell a person that you were going to have to be laid off. I mean that was just, for me that was devastating. So that's when things started to fall apart. And of course you

look to your vice president and you're like "I've got to cut this person. Are you kidding me?" It was some struggles there.

GFM: Lots of them. Lots of struggles there. Around funding, and that's what breaks people apart. How come you cut this but you didn't cut out of that department? And we were doing benchmarking all the time. Bowling Green was always a great place to benchmark because they had a fabulous Student Affairs Division. It was hard, it was a hard time. In the meantime, my job, and it was very clearly communicated to me, my job was to build that Student Center and make it successful. [emphatically] That was my job. In addition I was running the Campus Life Area and diversity programs and all that. But the Student Center got approved. It's a miracle still to me that all happened in some ways. And that was what my job was. So in the middle of all this cutting, we're building this place and needing to staff it and needing to put furniture in it, so I mean, it was a collision.

GP: So the other problem that Jim ran into was they built this University House. Kirkpatrick built it, and it was just a nightmare.

GFM: Nightmare.

GP: I mean that, and then Glenna's going to try on top of that to build a Student Center and people were already very upset that they thought that they were taking university tuition money to build this god-awful house for the president to live in. The one on campus wasn't good enough for him.

GP: That, and then she's trying to build this, which by the way, happens to be now the number one student center in the country. But at that time, building that was like, it was like, it was like "Are you kidding me?" So, it was a struggle.

(53:00)

GP: I mean, I hadn't thought about it, but as you look back on Jim's time here, it was very crisis oriented. And then of course the ultimate crisis was the death of Laura Dickinson. So, in six years it was barely, it was impossible... yeah.

MJ: Building on that statement about the Laura Dickinson murder, since you were so connected to the students on campus. We often read a lot, hear a lot about, administration response and parental response. What was the student response? What were they feeling if you can answer that?

GFM: I need to say one thing about this, in terms of my situation at that time. Laura Dickinson's murder happened five or six weeks after the Student Center opened. So we opened on November 6th and that happened right in finals week.

GP: December 15th.

GFM: I have very little memory of that. I was so exhausted, as was all of our Student Center team. We were focused exclusively, we had just had the Grand Opening Ceremony, and the dedication and all those things and so I can't answer that question for you because my focus was exclusively and understandably, I think you would probably agree, on that building. But Greg had a different - Greg was far more involved in it.

GP: So....

GFM: How did the student's feel?

MJ: Yeah, the student reaction.

GP: Well, you mean initially?

MJ: Yes.

GP: So initially, obviously there was shock. Dismay that this could happen on campus. What went on? It was complicated because it was characterized as a death investigation and initially they saw no foul play involved and it was... it was... So they were very upset. How could there be no foul play if the student was found dead on her floor? So there was a lot of ...

GFM: Confusion

GP: Confusion, upset, particularly people in the Hill. Parents were just livid. How could this happen on a college campus and what are you doing? It was a very, very traumatic holiday season for a lot of the staff and students because it happened. I think it was December 15th or something like that and it was just before break when students were going to go home. It was a long - by this time the city and the state police were involved in the investigation. Again, part of the issue was the fact that it was described as there was no foul play but it was a death investigation. That was complicated. Then when students returned in January, again they were continuing the investigation and people wanted to know what was going on. And it wasn't until, I believe it was the end of February, just before winter break, that they announced that they had arrested Orange

Taylor for the death of Laura Dickinson. I was intricately involved because my office was in the Vice President's office at that time, Jim Vick's office. I was asked to drive to Hastings, Michigan with the police to tell the parents before it hit the news that they had arrested someone for her death.

GFM: So it went from a death investigation to a...

GP: Murder.

GFM: Murder investigation. That was, there was some, difficult transition.

GP: That was very difficult. Very difficult transition.

MJ: How did you both feel about the dismissal of Jim Vick? What were your thoughts on that?

GFM: Well, at first he was, what do you call it, dismissed without, he wasn't dismissed immediately, I think in March or something. It was actually the first day of Fast Track I think when all that happened. What do you call it, release, he was paid but he was on leave

GP: He was on paid administrative leave.

GFM: Paid administrative leave. And then it was in July when Fallon and Jim and Cindy Hall all were "retired."

GFM: Or whatever you call it. So there were several months there that - and then Karen Simpkins was the Interim Vice President at that time. Right?

(58:30)

GP: Mm-hmm.

GFM: Yeah.

GP: But, in the meantime, the University hired, the Board of Trustees hired their own attorney to do an investigation whereby they interviewed staff and students and administrators and whatever.

GFM: I don't remember.

GP: You didn't know that?

GFM: I don't remember it.

GP: That was [unintelligible] hired ... that was the company. But they did an investigation and reported back to the board their findings. And that's when they decided to let the President and the Vice President and the Chief of Police go.

GFM: Tumultuous times.

MJ: Before you talked a little bit about how the University wanted incoming students and parents to see this bubbly guy on campus and make people feel welcome.

GFM: You talking about this guy?

GP: No.

GFM: That's a long time ago.

MJ: I wanted to know how that image, as opposed to being someone that has to go tell someone's family that it's turned into a homicide investigation. That seems like a balancing act.

GFM: That was a Dean of Students-like role.

MJ: Okay.

GP: Right.

GFM: Dean of Students does that kind of thing.

GP: Yea yeah so, I mean that was a particularly challenging situation. There were several student deaths that I had to talk with parents about. There were several student deaths that I had to talk to parents about and support the family in during the crisis situation. I don't know if I should have said bubbly, but an outgoing guy. Again, it's not a balancing act, that's what you do. I mean that's your job. Of course it's always easy to talk about great times and positive times and you know wonderful experiences. As a parent myself, I remember in this particular instance I didn't have to talk to the parents because the person had been killed on Ypsilanti City Streets but I remember -- I don't know if I was the

Ombudsman or if I was the Dean of Students then -- but I was kind of in the same role. A young lady was crossing the street on October 31st from going to a Halloween party and she was killed by a hit and run driver on Washtenaw Ave. out here. And I remember being called by the police. I forgot what year it was. I remember being called by the police and having to come down to -- I didn't have to identify the body, but I came down because I was a University representative. Seeing this body lying in the street and the body couldn't be moved until a coroner came and pronounced her officially dead. I just remember after talking to the police and getting some information, going back home and getting into bed and saying to my wife, as a parent that's every parent's nightmare. I couldn't go back to sleep then because that could have been my daughter. I had two daughters in college at that time so it must have been 2004/2005. I had two daughters in college, I mean that's horrible. It's a horrible feeling.

GFM: And that's the Student Affairs role. You know, we've talked a lot about culture and all that but that is also an important Student Affairs role.

MJ: Do you think that people going into that job know that before getting into it?

GP: No, no. You know, there's another situation where I remembered. I developed a very close relationship with one of the social workers at St. Joe's Hospital because often times I swear our students would go when they had problems like that. I remember this one particular lunch time. I just want to tell this story. So this one particular lunch time I had gone to the bank - to get my daughter who was at Western, she had overdrawn her checking account, so I had gone to put some money in her account. And I pulled into the parking lot at Briarwood and I got a call from this woman and she said "You know Greg, we have another one of your students here." "Oh really," I said "What's going on?" So she explained the situation as best she could. And she said "The father is on his way here and if you could come over that would be helpful." And I said okay, fine. I said "I'll be there as soon as I can." So I said to her, "How is this student?" and she said "Well she didn't make it." I drove to the hospital and I got there and the father was there. I met the father. She had committed suicide.

GP: In the meantime, my daughter had called me and said "Hey Dad, how are you doing?" and I told her "This is a bad time I'll call you back later." So I went to the hospital and this father was there and he was there with one other daughter. But the way he found out that his daughter had died was because his other daughter in Florida had made some sort of contact and that's how she had found out that she had expired. But the issue we had to deal with, he and I were trying to deal with, was his daughter was driving back from Florida at the end of spring break and the issue was how to keep her from finding out that her sister had passed while she was on the road. We set there, and she called him and he

said “Well, we’re at the hospital” and he didn’t tell her. Meanwhile my daughter calls and says “Dad, are you okay?” and I said “I’m okay, it’s just a situation.” She said “I just want to make sure you’re okay.” And I said “I’m fine.” The point I’m making is, as a father, to be in that situation, to have your daughter call to check on you, have his daughter call to check on him, it was just really... But again, those are the things that you don’t really, there’s no manual in Student Affairs classes that teaches you that. There’s no manual in Higher Education that says this is what you do. You just have to deal with it. Luckily, I don’t even know how we resolved it, but we came to some type of resolution, and he was fine with that.

(1:06:00)

GP: But again, my role was, at that time, it was a dual role. It was a role of two fathers, but it was also a professional representing the university.

GFM: He said no and I said yes at your question about if people know what they’re getting into or whatever. I do think student affairs professionals who aspire to be a dean, know that they’re going to be dealing with difficult conduct, behavior, these kinds of situations. But I agree with Greg that there’s no real rule book for it. I didn’t aspire to be the dean. [laughs] I was involved in all kinds of other things, but Greg was such a great asset to the University.

GP: But you have it in housing too. The housing staff was the first staff to find Laura Dickinson.

GFM: Yeah.

GFM: Sobering.

ABM: Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. I’m sure it wasn’t easy. I want to make sure that we have enough time to answer some of the questions that give you an opportunity to kind of expand on the things that you’re most proud of both individually but then also things you saw each other do that you can sort of, pat them on the back in a way that they wouldn’t themselves.

GFM: Well I’ll give you one great story. In my Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations role a year ago, at Homecoming, we attempted to bring back some of the successful programs that just deteriorated into almost nothing offered for alumni. So we’re bringing some things back and we had one little, Open House kind of a thing at Side Track. We had a number of alums come back and these two or three

GP: Three

GFM: Three guys. I recognized them and they came right up to me. They'd been out of college for a while. They were members of a fraternity and they said to me "Whatever happened to Dean Peoples?" And I said "Well, he's great. He's doing great. He retired. He's doing great." "Oh we would do anything to be able to see Dean Peoples." I said "Well isn't that nice." We chatted for a minute. I stepped away. I called Greg, and I said "You doing anything right now? Maybe you ought to come down to Side Track because I think there's a couple people who would like to see you." So Greg's like "Okay!" so off he comes.

GP: Friday night drinks.

GFM: Fifteen minutes later, there Greg walks in, the guys are still there. Oh my God they were thrilled to see Greg and it was just so great and it just confirmed for me, you know, years later, the relationships that they had developed with student affairs-type people are important to people. They were so thrilled to see Greg.

GP: Well, it was interesting because all three of them, for different reasons because I did recognize them, but for different reasons they said to me what a positive impact I had on their lives. That's what our goal is. I mean, the student affairs profession, and Larry Smith taught us this too that the true test of our effectiveness is the positive...

GFM and GP: Difference we make in the life of the individual student.

GP: And so, when they did that, when they said that, that was... I did okay, you know. In terms of Glenna, obviously her biggest accomplishment was her -- the student center building. And again the fact that she involved students in that process. Dan Cicchini. Is that his name?

GFM: Cicchini

GP: Cicchini. And I can't remember the other

[1:10:00]

GFM: Bobby Murkowski and Sean Gray.

GP: All of those students had a major role in the decision making process of that building. It wasn't like the building was built and then, no. They were key players in the decision making there which again that's part her. And then another thing that I guess that I have to say is that because of the relationship that we've developed here. We are doing some part-time consulting for University of Michigan Dearborn and Glenna had done some work with them before and like she'd said she done a year as the Interim Vice President for Alumni and they wanted her to do the job full-time by herself and she said that she just wasn't interested.

GFM: This was at Dearborn now.

GP: Dearborn. She said "You know, I have a colleague. If he and I could work together." And I had no idea that she was thinking like that. So she called and I said "Sure. I'd love to do it." The amazing thing is we just kind of had an annual reunion today.

GFM: At lunchtime.

GP: Our supervisors, both of them said that they were so pleased with the work that we had done together and that they don't think that anybody else could have done the work that we did in that year's time. It was reassuring but we always felt that way. It's part of that relationship, friendship, family thing that you develop. I think it's pretty special. I think all of it goes back to Vice President [Larry] Smith, and the team he created when he came here. In 1976/77, he set about to create a Student Affairs division that would be one of the best in the country. Consequently, he established that with that team and I would say, in fact many of the people on his team have retired and are also doing consulting work in other areas. Bob England, who was the Rec IM Director, just finished a consulting job with Syracuse University. Bernice Lindke for a year and a half has been the

[GFM chiming in, in unison] Interim VP of Mott College.

GP: Glenna and I are doing something because of that strong network. But the other key part of it is because of the opportunities that we had as young student affairs professionals we pass that on down to our student staff. Glenna, I don't know if we could determine how many students that we have worked with who have gone into student affairs because of the relationship they had with us.

GFM: Student affairs.

GP: Yes, student affairs. I mean many of them got tremendous graduate student opportunities because of the work that we enabled them to do as undergraduates that prepared them. In

fact many of them have said to us, when they got ready to go looking for grad assistants people would say “You did that as an undergrad? What?” It gave them an edge up on other graduate students who were looking for positions because of the training and the leadership development that they had from opportunities with us.

(1:13:30)

MJ: Sounds like that’s your greatest achievement when people tell you that they’ve made a difference later.

GFM/GP: Yeah.

GFM: I’d like to spend a little time talking about some other people you should talk to.

MJ: Please.

GFM: We have so many colleagues that we think would be so interesting for you to talk to. Kathy Orschelin, who started in Student Activities and Res [Residential] Life and came up through the Admissions. She retired as the Director of Admissions. Larry Gates who was the Director of Dining for years and years. These are all folks who retired with us. Terry Pap who was the Administrative Assistant for the Student Affairs division, in other words Larry’s assistant. She knows stuff, I’m sure she knows stuff, oh my god. And students loved her, you know, students loved her. Sarah Kersey Otto from Career Services and Bob England from the Rec IM. Many of these people are local.

GP: I would say Lynette Findley.

GFM: Oh sure, from Equity Programs and the Holman Learning Center. She’s local. I think it would be so much fun to put a bunch of us around this table and then see what happens.

MJ: That would be fun.

GFM: I mean I think any of those people who we mentioned would be happy to do that. Ros Barclay the Director of Counseling. She was the one who got called for so many sad situations.

GP: Yes.

GFM: Situations. She retired probably about six or eight years ago. I’m trying to think who else. And then there’s Ellen, who’s here now. Ellen Gold.

ABM: I just said that to Matt before you guys got here. We have to put Ellen on our list.

GFM: You do. You do. She has a different --she came up really through Health Center, Wellness Programming, those kinds of things, Counseling Services, so she has a little different, you know people wearing different hats for the process here.

GP: If you could, and I could give you his number, you should talk to Courtney McAnuff.

GFM: Oh Courtney. Who was the...

GP: Associate Vice President

GFM: On the enrollment side working for Larry and then at some point in time Bill Schulten separated that out so there was a Division of Student Affairs and a Division of Enrollment Coordinator, he was the Vice President for that. Courtney left in the summer of 2006 right before we opened the Student Center. I'll never forget that. I'm like "What!" As Vice President at Rutgers - how many years? Twelve years, whatever - done very well at Rutgers. He has old friends and comes back often. But he was a really important player. But we haven't talked at all about our Student Leadership Programs and all the people who would be involved in all those programs. So many people our paths crossed in so many ways. Orientation was one way, student leadership development was another way, student employment, and grad assistants and all those different kinds of opportunities.

[1:17:00]

MJ: Alright, well we'll take any suggestions you have and I would love to see that round table happen.

GFM: And you know I'd be happy to provide the coffee if you wanted to do it at my house, my living room, or something like that if you think that would be more comfortable. I don't know if you'd prefer the workplace to do it, but I'm sure people would be delighted to come. And if you had Larry -- Larry does come in, did he tell you this? -- he does come into town occasionally.

MJ: He's is going to get ahold of me and tell me when he'll be here.

GFM: He's doing consulting. I told you that so occasionally, I don't think he comes a ton, but I think occasionally they come in and you only need an afternoon. He's a stitch. He's such a stitch to talk to.

GP: Who?

GFM: Larry.

[1:17:55]

MJ: What do you see is the strengths of EMU as an institution and the weaknesses?

GP: You mean now?

GFM: Well I think I just ... go ahead Greg.

MJ: Now? I'd say, yeah. If you can.

GFM: I think they're different than they were.

ABM: I gather... I feel like I'm in a really unique position in the institution because I deal so much in the historic record of what this institution used to be versus what I feel as an employee of the institution today. You know this concept of a family and for me the memory, the institutional memory of that place that you all described-

GFM: Gone.

ABM: is what keeps me here because I get to deal in it all the time right?

GP: All gone.

ABM: I get to deal with alumni and emeritus faculty who have such fond memories.

GFM: Pride

ABM: And pride in the institution, that's exactly right. I think they are. They're very, very different institutions, what we have today versus what you all sort of grew up in professionally.

GP: It's almost like, you know, in some families you have children who have the same parents but -- like in my wife's family, my wife has brothers and sisters who are 17, 18, and 16 years older than she is. And when she came along, she was like a baby, she was by herself basically, so you know it's like she's raised by two different parents. They were the same parents. We had one experience here that was wonderful. It was sad to see it end, but I think people here now have a totally different experience from what I understand.

GFM: And there are some reasons for that. But I want to answer the first part of your question which is how we would have described it the strengths and the weaknesses. One of the things that John Porter said was that we were an institution of opportunity and sort of described EMU as a premiere undergraduate institution. That's how he would describe EMU which I agreed with. And I do think that there are so many students who were first generation college students or students of color or however you want to describe it that don't often have a clear path that had success at EMU for many, many reasons. I think our faculty were fabulous. I mean there are many reasons not just the co curriculum but certainly I think we played a part in that. Innovation, commitment, student support, student opportunities, student employment, and on and on. I am so proud of that in so many of our alums I think recognize the opportunities that they had here and that's why they say "If I could just see Dean Peoples one more time." And I'm pretty proud of Greg's retirement party and I'm pretty proud of my retirement party and the people that came back and the stories that we heard. And you know that there was a positive difference that was made. So that is something that I'm very, very proud of and I think was one of Eastern's biggest strengths.

MJ: Well, I think we had one more question. You were adamant to do this, you've already answered it over and over, but I think I'd just like to answer it pointedly. Why did you want to do this together?

GFM: Oh, well. We had talked about this a year ago. And I'm sure I gave you many names at that point in time, I'm sure his name was on it too. We just happen to be working together now. I had mentioned Greg, I had talked to him, I know Greg would love to come in. It was just easy to do because we work together. But all those names that we mentioned, any one of them would be delighted, would be thrilled to come in here. And the other thing [laughs] It's not exactly the answer to that, but. For years I saved Homecoming brochures and buttons and Martin Luther King Day programs, oh my god I always had an Archives box. When we moved from McKenny to the Student Center in 2006, I can't tell you how many boxes of stuff I brought over here. I have no idea where that stuff, if you have any of it or not, but it irritates me that the Student Affairs, and the Student Leadership, and the Student Involvement, and the Co Curriculum and all those things that

we just spent the last hour and a half describing to you, would somehow be lost in the history at EMU because it was such an important time. I feel like the decision to eliminate a Vice President of Student Affairs role in 2012 and subsume Student Affairs under the Provost was the worst decision at EMU, and has contributed to the very rapid erosion of the Student Affairs impact. And they're not at the table. They've cut a lot and making this orientation change is difficult. When you think about the number one student center in America, not because of the brick choice but because of the program and the way students respond to it and faculty, visitors and others, it should have strong student affairs leadership and sustained focus on students.

GFM: It's just...I'm incredulous why people don't get it, or why you wouldn't ask for help from people you know. Why not pull a couple people in and say tell us a little bit about it. I'll give you a great example. So, I can't remember how many years ago, I was retired, maybe three, four years ago. There was a big Pease Auditorium celebration, maybe it was 50 years.

ABM: 2015 was the Centennial Celebration.

GFM: Centennial Celebration. That was fabulous, and years ago I was on the committee that did the renovation of Pease Auditorium. Oh it was great, great, great and I got a chair over there that I donated to with my name on it and my husband's name. So we go to the celebration event.. Somebody took the time to do a commemorative booklet. My god, somebody spent a little bit of money. I was so pleased that we were actually doing this classy thing for Pease, look at this. And I open up the book and there's not one mention, not one, of the hundreds of programs that we did in Pease Auditorium that were student activities related. Maya Angelou...Jesse Jackson! How many times was Jesse Jackson on campus? On the front steps of Pease, so social justice programs, arts programs, student activities, just you name it. And in addition to all of the Close Up Theater performances from how many years, 25 years of that. On and on and on and on. Pease Auditorium. Not only the music department auditions and programs. Of course that's critically important I'm not trying - I hope you understand - I'm not trying to diminish that in any way - but to completely leave out all of these other ways that Pease Auditorium contributed to the life of this campus. I was so angry. And I complained to the person who invited me and the Development Office and you cannot believe how angry I am. That this was, it's like revisionist history.

GP: [laughs]

GFM: The booklet was apparently written by a faculty member in the music department. I mean I probably could put together right now with a couple of phone calls a list of one hundred

events that happened in Pease. But that's what worries me. Is that these important parts of our history will just be wiped out because we don't have a voice anymore at the table. There were a lot of fabulous people who had a lot of contributions to make here, many of which are [laughs] on that Student Affairs directors list. And we didn't even talk about the next rung. Like Melissa Ginotti who was the Director of Campus Life and Kay Woodeil Some fabulous director types.

GP: Mary Jo Larkin.

GFM: God, Mary Larkin, who's still here. Some of these people are alums.

GP: Reggie Barnes

GFM: directors or assistant directors of these departments who made a huge positive difference here. And they're mostly all gone. Except for Mary.

ABM: Yeah, I mean I think there's a lot that we haven't been able to cover today. I mean we haven't been able to talk about VISION.

GFM: Yes.

ABM: Right? We haven't been able to talk about some of the leadership programs that came out of Student Affairs. So, I would like for this to be, kind of like the first.

MJ: Series

ABM: of multiple conversations so that we can start to document the importance of the co-curricular, right, as you say, and student affairs on campus. And I will take a certain amount, even though it wasn't my doing it's what I inherited, this focus on administrative offices that were making decisions for Academic Affairs, or the President's Office or the Board of Regents, and that faculty members primarily are the ones who are documented in the Archives. We're trying really hard to right that ship. I have all of your Orientation buttons [GFM laughs]. I have those, I can tell you I have those. But there are still so many boxes that we haven't been able to touch.
Right, so

GFM: And half of them are mine maybe.

ABM: it's very possible.

ABM: They're still downstairs. I mean I think that's part of our initiative here right. Is to start to document some of these things that may have been lost in the analog. The stories of individuals that we can still capture.

GFM: And depending on how you want to drill down: VISION, for example. Well, Peggy Harless ought to be at the table. Peggy worked with VISION for years and was let go in one of the budget cuts. I'll never recover from that.

(1:36)

GFM: Like Greg, she could be, Reverend Harless. She was so revered and dealt with difficult issues. She's so fabulous. So anyway, she would be someone, if VISION is a topic. And then so many of our student leaders over the years. Haley Moraniec, who I think you know who started SWOOPS pantry, she came up through VISION. So many of our VISION leaders were so wonderful. I'm sure Peggy will remember names better than I will and Jasmina who replaced Peggy. So I mean there's years of stories just around VISION.

GP: I don't know if you've had the chance to talk with some of our past student leaders like Derrick Coleman who's the superintendent of River Rouge Community Schools. He was a great student leader. He was president of Alpha, we took him to leadership conferences, and he will tell you, he's another one that will tell you, the work that we did in Student Affairs made him, made the difference and helped him be what he is today. I mean, I get embarrassed sometimes when I'm out with him and "Come, you have to meet Dean Peoples." That's just the story they tell.

GFM: You know, when I was in the Alumni Office and it was right after the racist graffiti incident and the University was hemorrhaging, it's heartbreaking. So I suggested to President Smith, I said "Let me call together some African American alums that I know that would be so pleased to be consulted. To have a time to talk with the President about their own experience and what advice they have for us." He's like "Go for it". So we brought in about 15. They were student body presidents and they were RAs, I mean I knew them. And did they arrive. Everybody was there early, and some of these were people who lived in Wise Hall with me in 1975, years and years and years ago and they have such love for EMU and they were so thrilled. He stayed about an hour, or an hour and a half, and he brought his secretary in and she just did [taps fingers on table] you know and it was so respectful. And they talked and talked and then he left and then we stayed like another hour and talked. Lee was there, Leigh Greden, and there's another 100 that we could identify. I just think there are so many stories and they're so rich really.

(1:38:30)

GP: The other part of that, Glenna can attest to this, is the fact that she was so able to call black alum together.

GFM: As an old white lady.

GP: As an old white lady. [GFM laughs] And because of the context they came. I mean the relationship Glenna we had with the alumni, the Black Alumni Association, going way back. When you talk to certain black alumni between, I would say between those that were here in the early 70s to the mid 90s, and you ask them about Glenna, that's the conversation "Is Glenna still there?". That's the conversation because that's the working relationship we have, dealing with the dances, the homecoming dances, so they knew Glenna as a support for their organizations and their operations. They don't have that now. They don't have that now.

MJ: We talked to one student leader from the 70s, Leonard Posey. [GFM and GP laugh]

GFM: What a fabulous guy.

GP: He's one of my best friends.

GFM: Student body president.

MJ: That was one of the funniest hour and a halfs that I ever had.

GP: He's the first black student body president.

MJ: Yeah.

GP: He's one of my very best friends.

MJ: Oh wow great.

GP: Yeah.

GFM: And many of those students that I just talked about, 1974, 1975, they all knew Leonard. Everybody knew Leonard.

MJ: And so much of what you said, he sort of echoed that, especially talking about Larry Smith and how instrumental he was in his education and also bringing things, like how there was nothing to do on campus and how the student leaders lobbied to bring better musical acts to campus like Earth, Wind and Fire.

GFM: And he did it.

MJ: He's definitely an example of somebody who, he said that he took the things that he got here.

GP: He has fond memories, very fond memories. James Beasley, his vice president.

GFM: Beasley was here for the alumni graffiti roundtable that came together. Anyways, so many more stories. So glad that you're here.

MJ: We did have to skip a lot of stuff but like Alexis said I'd love it to be part of a series.

GFM: Unfortunately half of my comments will have to be redacted. [everyone laughs]

GP: It would be great if you had an opportunity to bring

GFM: More

GP: like, the Division of Student Affairs, what did we call it...

GFM: The Strategy Council?

GP: No,

GFM: Division Council

GP: Division Council. Division Council. Those who could come could come.

GFM: Well, and then you know some of the current people, like Sara Kersey Otto and Ellen Gold and Ester Gunel. Esther who is an alum, Mary Larkin. It would be fun, I'd love to sit down with those guys too.

ABM: I'd love to just continue the conversation. We can do it over email if that's easiest and kind of try to figure out how we maximize everybody's time. In terms of like the recording. If we wanted to do a sit down about VISION, who needs to be at the table?

What are some of these important topical areas that we should be documenting through oral recollection? Who needs to be at the table for those conversations?

GFM: Well Orientation would be another one that I would suggest. I'm worried about what's going to happen to VISION. Orientation changes already happened and I'm concerned that since there's no real sense of why decisions were made or why it's designed the way it is or whatever. These things are vulnerable so having some opportunity to talk about why things happened the way they did and the strengths that they brought and the students that were the products of those programs would be a good idea.

GFM: Okay, we'll stop talking here.

ABM: This was just so wonderful.

GP: Thanks for having us.

GFM: Thanks for giving us the chance to do it. Well Matt, I'm glad your experience here is one of family. I'm glad you shared that.

ABM: He gets to work with us.

MJ: I mean especially this and in Historic Preservation; it's the same thing.

(1:43:26)