

Winter 3-8-2022

Anthony Derezinsky, Oral History Interview, 2021

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Recommended Citation

Seitter, Michael and Jones, Matt, "Anthony Derezinsky, Oral History Interview, 2021" (2022). *Oral Histories*. 74.

https://commons.emich.edu/oral_histories/74

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Eastern Michigan University Archives, EMU Logo Change Oral History Project

Oral History Interview with Anthony Derezinski (AD)

Interview conducted by History graduate student Michael Seitter (MS) and EMU lecturer Matt Jones (MJ) on March 25, 2021 via Zoom. Katy Derezinski (KD) also appears periodically to provide technical assistance.

Transcribed by Michael Seitter

MS: Let's get this show on the road! This is Michael Seitter with the Eastern Michigan University Logo Change Oral History Project. Today is March 25, 2021, and today I am interviewing former EMU Regent Anthony Derezinski. Mr. Derezinski served in Vietnam with the U.S navy from 1968 to 1971, as well as a practicing attorney and Michigan State Senator prior to his appointment to the Board of Regents of EMU in 1981. While with the Board of Regents Mr. Derezinsky served EMU with an emphasis on creating an inclusive environment appealing to students of a wide range of cultural backgrounds and gender identities. Mr. Derezinski played a vital role in the transition from the Huron logo to the current Eagle logo and retired from his position on the Board of Regents in 1996. How are you doing today Mr. Derezinski?

AD: I'm doing, as they used to say in the Navy, "4 by 4"

MS: Could you explain that? What do you mean by that?

AD: It's an old broadcast thing; when your radio was working, it was kind of a shorthand for saying "it's alright."

MS: Oh, that is actually really cool. So, first question: what role did your upbringing play in your eventual education?

AD: Actually, my upbringing was in a medical family. My father was a physician who, unfortunately for both of us, died when I was seven and left my mother with seven-and-a-half children. But he was a physician who treated polio patients in 1949, when there was a big epidemic and he caught it and died of it. So I was raised in a single family with a wonderful mother and with seven brothers and sisters but very heavy on education. My mother had been a teacher and also a nurse, so as it turned out, three of my five sisters became nurses. I flirted briefly with going to medical school but I worked in a hospital for two summers and that made me go towards law. But I had a very good family friend who was a lawyer in Muskegon where I was growing up and he later became a judge and I used to sit in his courtroom and watch legal proceedings and that sparked me to go to law school.

MS: Was there any chiding or teasing you for not going into the medical profession when so many of your siblings chose that field?

AD: Well, not really. I think my mother was just a wonderful woman who said “to thine own self be true” ya know? I really found that my liking was toward that side of my brain I guess and not to the medical. But I’d worked in a hospital for two summers and got to see what doctors did and it just wasn’t my bag. But I really enjoyed going to the courtroom and watching the proceedings there. I just really liked it. I was on the debate team in high school and things like that impelled me eventually toward law school, but I did my undergrad at Marquette University in Milwaukee and more and more I was a political science and history major and both of those lent themselves very much towards a career in law

MS: Hmm, that actually makes quite a bit of sense because both go hand in hand.

AD: Yeah, they did.

MS: Was there an expectation from a young age for you to go to college?

AD: I’m sorry, what?

MS: Was there an expectation from a young age to go to college?

AD: Absolutely, it was sort of an imperative in the family, in fact seven out of eight of us went to college and finished and half of us got additional degrees beyond undergraduate degrees too. My mother was very big on education as was my family. Also, I loved learning; I enjoyed school incredibly, even law school, which was tough, but I did enjoy the intellectual aspects of it.

MS: I have a follow up question. You said seven of your eight siblings went to college, what about the eighth?

AD: Pardon?

MS: What about the eighth sibling that didn’t go to college? Did they go and [find out] it just wasn’t for them?

AD: She wanted to explore the world and right after she graduated high school, she went cross-country with a girlfriend of hers all the way to California and eventually when she got back, she decided she needed something to live on, so she went to a beauty school and became a beautician. So, that gave her a source of income that was pretty well guaranteed, and she pursued that all her life. But like the rest of us she read voraciously and was very smart; she lives in the Boston area right now and she’s very close to me.

MS: That’s incredible that even though she didn’t go to college she kept that voracious reading [habit].

AD: Absolutely

MS: You have said in some interviews in the past that you were effectively ‘mooching’ off your sister when you went to U of M. Can you explain what you meant by that? And can you explain how that allowed you to become interested in EMU?

AD: Yes, well, one of my sisters and her husband went to Eastern and lived in married housing in the old married housing complex. The food plan I was in at law school only gave me food during the week and weekends. I had to hustle on myself and Bernie and my brother-in-law Steve were over in married housing there. So on the weekends, I would go there and have dinner, Steve had just gotten out of the Army to go back to school on the G.I Bill, and I was on a magazine at the law school- the Michigan Law Review- and I was pretty good at writing or correcting, being very cautious with words, so I’d help him correct his papers and things like that. So, I earned my keep and Steve got both his bachelor’s and his master’s degrees at Eastern in Psychology so I spent a lot of time on campus over there.

MS: So, it wasn’t as much mooching as you were correcting the papers and getting a free meal out of it.

AD: Absolutely. Well worth my time. My sister was a very good cook.

MS: As a struggling college student I can understand you there.

AD: Absolutely- all on the up and up.

MJ: Can I jump in here for a second? Mr. Derezinski, was it the food that brought you back to EMU later? [laughter]

AD: Well, it was interesting how it happened. When Governor Blanchard took office, he had a great interest in educational institutions. One of the things he was interested in was universities complying with various acts that applied to them, but, in particular, a couple of new acts that I was involved with in the legislature- that is the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act, and complaints were coming in, things like that. About whether they complied and universities were most certainly under the acts. I had been involved in their formulation in the legislature. So the governor asked the Attorney General Frank Kelly to see if he could find some lawyers that would be interested in service at universities. At the time, I had a case with the attorney general’s office and Mr. Kelly asked me if I would be interested in being a university regent and I said “oh sure I would be.” There were a couple universities looking for regents and one of them was Eastern. I said I would like to be on the board at Eastern because I’m somewhat familiar with it and I’ve gone to school right down the street at that other institution whose name I am too humble to mention. So, I took it and I was very happy and served 14 years on the Board and it was a great experience.

MJ: Thanks for that. I am going to let Michael take it back here.

MS: We will get to your time on the board later in the interview because there is a lot to unpack there, but next question: what was your life like in the Navy during Vietnam, [when you were] working as a judge?

AD: Well, I was a JAG Officer; Judge Advocate General Corps of the Navy. I went through training in Newport, Rhode Island; they have a naval justice school there. I went through that and then I was stationed in Washington D.C. for a couple of different jobs. My second job, I was working in the Secretary of the Navy's office doing labor issues because we had something like a quarter of a million civilian employees in the Navy at that time a lot of shipbuilding contracts and things like that. I had worked for a year while I waited for my commission to come in from the National Labor Relations Board in Washington. I was clerking for one of the members of the Board, writing opinions basically, so my labor law experience is pretty good, and I got this billet. But the war was going on in Vietnam and I felt as if I wore a suit every day or most of the time and I did not feel that I was participating and I felt an obligation to do more. Then they were asking for a volunteer to serve as a military judge in Vietnam. And, what happened to the current military judge, they had one roving judge that went through three different courtrooms down in the delta area -Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay- and he had unfortunately gotten malaria and he had to be medevaced, but he had all these cases ready to try. Well, for my first job in Washington, I was arguing cases before the Court of Military Appeals. Through that two-year period I gained a lot of knowledge of the Uniform Code of Military Justice so it fit the criterion that it was asking for, and I got the assignment, so I went to Vietnam. At that time, you had a one-year tour that you served so I was there from August of 1970 to August of 1971. I rode a circuit; I had cases to try as a judge and I had the three courtrooms in the three cities and in effect I was a circuit-riding judge.

MS: Now my next question is: since you're a circuit judge, what kind of living conditions were you given? Were they just barracks or did you have an upgrade [compared to the] common soldier?

AD: I had the barracks; they were usually called the "officers area" or something like that, but they were basically big barracks, and they were reinforced with sandbags fairly high along the walls to protect it from attack and things like that. It was primitive but it was livable.

MS: From the sounds of it, going to Vietnam was as fulfilling as you imagined it.

AD: It depends on what you mean by fulfilling. In terms of doing good service, in effect I was part of the justice system in Vietnam, right on the line there. I was trying cases day in and day out and when my docket, that is the cases that were ready to go, were caught up, they'd assign me to defend people, usually more serious cases- officer cases or others involving serious crimes like, frankly, killings and things like that. So, it was a very

interesting job; it was very eye opening. It was also very challenging because you were there, you were the law in the wild west. In fact, they used to call me the “Law West of the Mekong.” I would come into town and get set up for a court process and stay three or four days in one place then go to the next one to try the cases. It was a very challenging thing because you had to see law and order in a very challenging situation where there was something called a war going on, as in all wars there were mortar attacks at night. I had a couple of weapons and I traveled a lot and traveling a lot meant you were, ya know, vulnerable, so it was quite an experience

MS: You said that it was very challenging, was there a challenge or circumstance that really sticks out to you as the one that really made you as good as you are now? One that really sticks to you?

AD: One thing the service does is throw you into responsible positions very quickly. All of a sudden, I’m trying people for things or I am defending somebody on a serious charge and both of them have their own unique challenges. In the trial work it was really trying to ascertain truth and most of the trials were judge-alone. But people had the right to have a jury. If a jury was impaneled or if someone requested a jury, it was service people on the jury. I would have to give them instructions as to what the law was in this particular case just like in the civilian world. And I found that the military justice system was pretty darn fair and that surprised a lot of people when I was telling that when I got back home. I thought the constitution was well-respected, your right to a lawyer was very heavily respected and also things like speedy trial and evidentiary rules were very similar to what they were here. But you were in a battle condition. A couple of times, the court martial process was adjourned because they had to use the electricity from the courtroom to turn on the searchlights at night, for instance. A fair number of our trials were at night because of circumstances when they needed people during the day. So, it was an interesting and unique application in a military situation like that. But it was a very fair system and we had a number of lawyers coming over, civilians to represent service people. There was a group called the Military Citizens Defense Committee that came over and provided assistance when people would want not just to have a military lawyer and they had a right to counsel of their choosing. In the military if you were reasonably available, they could ask for a particular lawyer and one of the dynamics there was if I’d win a case, let’s say a serious charge, and got somebody acquitted when I was defending somebody, all of a sudden people would flock to you. If you lost one, they’d flock the other way.

MS: Alright, next question. What was EMU like at this time when you were a student visiting your sister compared to when you came into the Board of Regents? How did it influence your decision making while on the Board of Regents?

AD: Well I got on at a point where the president, John Porter, who had been the Superintendent of Public Education in the State of Michigan- I knew him from my days in the Senate because I was on the education committee in the senate and got to know Dr.

Porter pretty well. I think that was one of the reasons I wanted to go to Eastern- because I liked him a lot. They were at a transition period; I think the enrollment was around 16,000 or something like that and they wanted to be a university that catered to first-time experiences with college. That is, they wanted to be a college of choice and opportunity. To do that though, one of the things that went along with that philosophy, was that if in fact we would admit a student we wanted to make sure that student had the ability to graduate. Therefore, we had a lot of remedial classes and things like that to prepare them rather than just blame the high schools or something when a student was having struggles. We would provide them [with] remedial programs. We also wanted to expand in certain areas of endeavor, particularly health care, particularly the nursing school. Also one of Eastern's strengths was education and education administration and that in fact is what we got our first doctorate in while I was there because we became a doctoral granting institution during my time on the Board.

MJ: I want to jump in here for a second if that's okay. That philosophy of making sure a student could graduate. Is that something that Porter instituted? Did he kind of bring that philosophy with him?

AD: It may have been. I know it was there when I came and John had been there, I felt it was there perennially, that it was just inherent in the institution and that it would be an opportunity school. Like my brother-in-law, he spent his time in the Army and got a G.E.D and then he came to Eastern. He was typical of a lot of the students who had the opportunity and it also reflected in keeping the tuition reasonably available for students and that had a lot to do with course work, even frankly where we got our students from.

MJ: Okay, we hear so much about Porter. I wish I could interview him.

AD: God rest his soul

MJ: Yeah, but the accolades and admiration is just constant for Porter here still.

AD: John Porter was a wonderful man and he was also an All-American basketball player

MJ: I didn't know that!

AD: John went to Albion, but his first job in education, and this was when there were not that many Blacks involved in education, he was a janitor at a school in Lansing and made it all the way up to be president of a university and superintendent of public instruction, he was really just a great guy. Also I think he succeeded Jim Brickley, who had been the lieutenant governor [and] who was also a wonderful man. I knew him from the political days when he was serving with Governor Milliken.

MJ: Okay, well, I can tell you right now that I will back out again so Michael can take his assignment back, but I wanted to say real quick we're going to have to have more

interviews with you about a lot more things because I can already tell you're a treasure trove.

AD: We'll I've lived long, managed to survive this long, but I'd love to. Eastern has a very special place in my heart

MJ: Thank you.

MS: With that long life you have given us a wonderful wealth of information so thank you for that. Okay, next question. When you first joined the Board of Regents in 1983... or was it '81?

AD: '82- maybe somewhere in there.

MS: I thought it was '83... what was the climate like surrounding the logo? Were people openly disparaging of or supporting it? Were there backroom conversations about it yet? Were people discussing it at all or was it just a logo?

AD: At that time when I first got on, there wasn't much discussion on it. But as the old saying goes, "nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come," and that came because the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was looking at mascots, Native American mascots, and also there were a number of Native American students at Eastern. In fact, when it started to bubble up, the people that brought it to our attention were students, Native American students, at Eastern and they would come to the public section of the meetings and say this is something that should not happen. [It was] around the country right then, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was looking at it, and they brought to our attention the idea to drop the logo and the mascot.

MS: Now my next question is, you said before the Civil Rights Commission recommendation, did you have students come forward and say this much or was it only after that?

AD: I'm sorry, what was your distinction?

MS: For the students coming to the meetings and stuff, did that happen before the Civil Rights Commission or was that only after the Civil Rights Commission?

AD: I think it was contemporaneous, it's an idea whose time had come. Other places were looking at it. Michigan wasn't the only place, and of course there were biggies in the world that dare you touch them like the Chicago Blackhawks or the Washington Redskins football team, things like that. Also the Chippewas right upstairs from us in Michiga. It was an idea that was going around and the fact that the U.S Civil Rights Commission eventually looked at it as well meant that there was a feeling, and these students came because they were personally offended by it. These students, they probably had general knowledge of what was going on in the world but they also had very personal stories of being offended by characterizations of Indians as being savage and all that sorta thing. This was a student population that felt offended by what was going on at the university

and it rankled my civil liberties heart to see that going on. Then we made some decisions that maybe we should look at that, and we did.

MS: How did your experience in law impact how you viewed the 1988 Civil Rights Commission? Did it change your view compared to other board members?

AD: I think as a lawyer and there were a couple other lawyers on the Board too, it gave me pause. Because the other thing is, when I was in the legislature, one of the things I worked on was the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act that was passed while I was there and, in fact, it came through a committee. The judiciary committee in the senate that I was temporary chair of because the chairman had been involved in an automobile accident and for almost a year, I was the acting chair of it and it came up while I was there. So working with the Elliott-Larsen bill and Mel Larsen and Daisy Elliott over in the house were both good friends of mine and when it came to the Senate, I had an active role in getting it passed and so it gave me a familiarity with the idea of equal protection of civil rights of people who are discriminated against, and that came up later too which is probably the subject of another discussion which was “how about gay rights? how about the gay community?” That came up later and we faced that as well in terms of our policies and our charter and things like, we were putting nondiscrimination language for the gay community. But this one was first, and the logo thing was kinda preparatory to the other one because some of the issues were the same, were you discriminating or were a substantial number of your students offended by how you treated them because of their skin color, their heritage or some other reason? So, it was to me very much a civil rights issue and an equity issue.

MJ: Do you think, in the EMU community and the surrounding community, that different groups were equally balanced? Like, the Native American cause with the logo, balanced against the LGBTQ community- did the community care as much about different groups?

AD: I think when we started looking at the issue regarding the logo and discrimination, in effect discrimination on students with Native American heritage. They were a minority group, but that didn't mean they didn't have rights and that they somehow should be singled out for disparate treatment or were somehow in a hostile environment, which is out of the civil rights act, if they were treated poorly that was wrong and a lot of people said “no” the argument on the other side saying “we want to honor the Hurons.” Well maybe so but did they [the Huron] feel honored by it? Hell no, they hurt, and a lot of them brought in instances of going with their children to a football game and here's some non-thinking kid dressed up as Willie Wampum or something like that and parading around like a drunken Indian and the kids would cry and say, “Dad, is that what I am? Is this my heritage?” And how do you answer that? It's wrong. It was wrong and the other thing is too it was a hot issue on campus. As you well know, it was very controversial and we'd get calls sometimes at night when the bars closed down of people who go “you can't take [my heritage] mine, I'm a Huron forever” Well, I wanted to respect the Hurons

but the other thing was- did they represent a substantial portion of the student population? And you could ask the same question of the gay community: how big is that at Eastern? Well, doesn't matter if they're hurt with no substantial reason and it's something they cannot change; it was a very controversial issue, but it was a small community but nonetheless it doesn't matter if it's a small community, if they were discriminated against or at least felt that way through other people's actions, it was wrong and it turned out it was, I think, the right thing to do.

MS: Kind of a side question on that: before the times with the logo change, with your acceptance of the gay community, was that also treated in a similar tone? Where other universities weren't doing it while you were, or was that more common at the time?

AD: I think with the dropping of the logo, we were one of the first universities to do that. In fact, I think I mentioned to you later on- I was asked to give a talk on that at a national conference about what our experience was with dropping the logo, and this was a higher education association of school administrators who wanted to see what our experience was like. Likewise with the gay community. The gay community came to the Board and I think I was chair of the Education Issues Committee at that time, and they said that we think Eastern Michigan should have, in their chartering documents, their policies, some nondiscriminatory language in terms of sexual preference and I said "what is your experience at Eastern? Is it bad?" They said it could be better, and that was sufficient for me because there were instances of real or imagined job discrimination- just treatment or disparaging treatment and that was something that, as a university policy, that we could not tolerate and we shouldn't. But it was similar to the [LGBTQ] other issue too, ya know. Because, again, if you're a university, especially, and you're trying educate people and you're trying to civilize them, you shouldn't have that. It should be very equal. And they told me the gay community people said "No, it's pretty good but it could be better." There are still instances of it happening and if it were forbidden by our chartering documents and things like that, and our policy statements on non-discrimination, it could have great effect. That's why we did that one too and you probably know the votes on both of those issues were one vote shy of unanimous. So that's a strong statement and particularly with regard to the logo thing, there was a lot of push back, but we did it.

MS: Okay, speaking of the logo thing, here's the next question: How cognizant were the students of the commission's recommendation? How open were the students to the suggestion to change the logo?

AD: I'm sorry, about what?

MS: How open were students to change the logo?

- AD: I thought the students, well, of course the Native American students were all for it. but I think they had a lot of sympathetic feelings from other students. I think the opposition mainly came from alums, and, no surprise, white alums.
- MS: Oh, so now my next question is kind of a follow up- with your statement that it was white alums, were P.O.C. or minority groups more aligned with changing the logo than were alumni?
- AD: I'm trying to recall. I thought that they were for it. I generally don't have a specific memory. My sense is that other minorities saw the writing on the wall.
- MS: Okay, so next question, excuse me. Having been on the Board of Regents for five years at the time of the recommendation, how did you expect the board to receive this recommendation?
- AD: How did you expect them to do what? To go along with it you mean?
- MS: How did you expect the Board to receive the recommendation?
- AD: I thought the most important thing was to have an open discussion of it and the reasons for it. One of the things I did was, as did other members, they wanted to look at it, they wanted to be fair and I think that's the main thing to me. This is the lawyer in me talking, there are two main pillars of the legal system in the United States: equal protection and due process. And those are in the 14th Amendment and the states could not violate those two principles and here were you equally being of service to your students and the other thing was when you make decisions is there due process involved? Are you going through a process to determine whether this is the right thing to do? So, we did research on it, we did legal research on it and we did have the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act which was passed in the 70's when I was in the legislature in 76' I think. So that was fairly new, but you also had a wellspring of experience across the country and what were other states doing, in fact that was one of the interesting sidelights that I had. I saw in a newspaper or legal publications article, the Attorney General of Wisconsin had issued a legal opinion that it may be a violation of the Wisconsin Civil Rights Act, the use of Indian mascots. So, I called the attorney general's office in Wisconsin and I said 'I'm calling because our university is thinking of dropping a Native American mascot logo and we would like to get a copy of this opinion.' And the secretary said "just a minute- I'll be right back with you," and who comes on the phone but the attorney general of Wisconsin. His name was Jim Doyle at the time and later became governor of Wisconsin. I said "oh my goodness!" He said "what are you doing?" I told him the university was considering it. He went through it and he said "you talk like a lawyer," and I said "I am one." And then we started just talking and he said "listen I got a yard full of material and I'll pull out some stuff that might be helpful for you. There are a lot of legal issues involved in discrimination also- copyright issues, things like that you have to consider." So I had this great conversation with him and he said "where'd you go to law school?"

And I said “Well, I went to University of Michigan and then later I got a Masters in Urban Law from Harvard Law School.” He asked “When were you at Harvard?” And I said “‘71 to ‘72.” Turns out we were classmates. He was class of ‘72. They put us grad students into the senior class at the time for the purpose of gunning us for contributions, and we found out that we were in a class together and it was this wonderful experience. But he sent me a lot of stuff. But it was going around, I felt that, you know, when we were considering this issue by the Board, they should be fully aware. Also of the consequences, at every meeting we had the Native American students there and we had other groups that came in support of it, but there were a lot of people that came and called us everything but the son of god you know. There was just a lot of opposition to it as well and people threatened to cut off contributions and everything else like that and the fires of Hell would descend upon the university if we did it. So, it was controversial but sometimes you have to make decisions in the midst of controversy and it was one where it was a question of how you viewed fairness and what you should do. That’s why we earn the big bucks, which is, we earn nothing as Regents. It was a controversial issue- you really knew you were in for a storm of a certain manner, but you just did it.

MS: I’m just astounded that you met a classmate inexplicably as an attorney general.

AD: Yeah, I know!

MS: It’s such a small world. That’s incredible.

AD: I did not get to meet him, and we did not know each other in law school at all because it’s a big law school and I was only there for a year. The master’s degree was a one-year thing in Urban Government actually, zoning and land use planning and stuff like that. At the time, civil rights was really big then. The War in Vietnam was going on as I unfortunately found out. It was a controversial time when peoples’ feelings of justice and the right thing to do were pretty heavy at that time and that was a good thing.

MS: I do think we could get back to that a little bit.

AD: Diet squirt by the way [holds up a can].

MS: How were members of the committee selected? What role did the Board have in their selection? Did anyone decline their selection?

AD: What was that in? What committee?

MS: The logo review committee

AD: Oh, okay that committee. I can’t remember. I think they were primarily charged with a recommendation and I don’t recall how we did that. Also I think later they were charged with the duty of finding a new logo and I can’t recall how we chose it. Usually you tried to get it sort of evenly balanced, but I can’t remember those details that much.

MS: Everybody forgets that type of stuff. Here's the next question: what are your memories of these committee meetings? How much tension was there?

AD: I think the tension was mostly at the Board of Regents meetings. They were packed with people on both sides. Who were the decision makers? The decision makers were the Board of Regents; it wasn't the president of the university. Under the structure of the Board of Regents, the sole decider was the Board. In fact, that's where people that were interested in that issue knew that. So, that's where the controversy was and the public displays; we had some wild meetings. I still have a couple of the placards left over at some of the meetings. I have [them] in my study here at home to remind me of that experience. But that's where the controversy was, because you had these Regents, and they were asked to make a very tough decision and some of the issues came up: do we have to take a look at this? Do we have to do it? Frankly, I and others were insistent that we did; you can't duck it and we didn't.

MS: Now with you speaking about these meetings, Board of Regents meetings, was there any meeting that really sticks out to you? 55:25

AD: Well, one of the things that we had, as required by the law, was to have a public session at these meetings where people can come up and talk. And all places that had public meetings, be it municipalities, be it Regents and other entities, townships, you have to have a public thing but can have reasonable rules in terms of the conduct of those meetings. And one of the things you can do is limit the time people had to testify and of course, under the rules at the time at Eastern, you had a limited time period for the public meeting and it was at the digression of the chair in terms of whether or not you expanded that time, subject to being challenged by any of the members, and frequently we allowed the time to go beyond the usual limit of time. Because we wanted people to be able to express themselves and we had it. But you know, once we established the rules of that particular meeting, we also would be very careful that people did not go over it because you could see people out there with their watches watching the time in terms of that so you had to be very fair. And, I had the gavel. When I was Chair of the Board, some of them started to call me Mr. Gavel. I was very disciplined because if you were unfair in the least bit you found out about it right away and you didn't want to be unfair. You wanted to be fair but everyone wanted the chance to speak and a lot of times you had a lot of people there to testify and sometimes they'd only have like 2 minutes apiece or something like that. So it was tough but it was a process. Your process had to be fair and that, to me, was something that was absolutely essential to get the buy in. If you made a tough decision, even a finance decision, or something like that, make sure your process is fair. People will accept it even though they don't agree with it if they felt they had been treated fairly in terms of their comments, both ways, both ways. I mean with the logo issue there were people that said "I was a Huron. I went to school to be a Huron," and they had deep-felt feelings on that, and you had to respect that. On the other hand, you'd

the students come up and say “I don’t feel that I should be portrayed as a savage,” and we had a right and a responsibility to them to give them their fair share too, so the process had to be very fair

MJ: I have a question about those meetings and the attendees. When we were speaking with Bill Shelton the other day, he said that there would be a lot of people represented there—that the Native American community was often heavily represented, but that a lot of the Native American students at those meetings came from U of M. Do you have that recollection of that?

AD: I don’t; it could’ve been and Bill would probably remember as well if not better than I am because he’s much younger than I am. But I think many of them were from Eastern and if any of them weren’t from Eastern, the answer would be the same in terms of other sympathetic groups. There were other Indian groups— there were one or two Native Americans that said “no I think that honors our tribe.” And they went the other way on it. Well, you know, again, everyone is entitled to their opinion and we wanted to know what they were. So, they could’ve been, but other groups came in and it was looked at as a civil rights issue. It was the same thing I presumed happened at the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, when they discussed these issues too. These were controversial and you have to respect peoples’ differences of opinion.

MS: That is very true. Now here’s an interesting question: How did Huron Restoration Inc. influence the decision-making process of the logo research committee, and contribute to the final decision?

AD: The final decision, as I mentioned, will be made by the Board. We had committees looking at it, we had other groups looking at it, including the restoration committee, and they all were listened to, you know, and again you get back to that process. As I mentioned, the most important meetings were at the Board of Regent’s meetings. These other groups that were advisory gave their advice as they were expected to do. But in the end, it came down to the vote of the Board of Regents. Also, you mentioned Dr. Shelton, Bill Shelton; we told Bill, “You’re a fairly new president here. It’s getting going, the Regents are going to make this decision. You can let us take the heat on this.” He was brave, he said “No, I’m the president of the university.” And he said “That’s one of my responsibilities.” I gained a lot of respect for Bill because he felt that way. He was the president of the university and should be involved in that decision, but ultimately, we did the voting. He was involved in it. He had his own, I think, strong feelings about it but ultimately it was our vote. But we listened to everybody and all the arguments from heritage, from fundraising, to civil rights, to people being treated fairly as human beings. [These were all just] other ways to cut the baby in half. Some people would suggest we drop the name or drop the mascot but keep the name, well it didn’t work. That wouldn’t

work but we looked at all those ideas and eventually we made our decision and I think to this day I was very proud of it.

MS: I would be very proud of it too

AD: I was.

MS: We have read that to balance the retention of the logo, the University pledged to make an effort to expand inclusion with regards to Native American culture. What measures for Native American students and representation were considered after choosing to keep the logo? 1:04:00

AD: I think, I'm trying to remember. I think it was where we may have done some recruitment for students in areas. For instance, in the Southwest United States where there were large Indian populations, I think the guy that did that was {Vice President for Enrollment Services] Courtney [McAnuff] and also, I think going to other states to get populations that would want to come here- I think that was part of the recruitment pattern that we set up, that we would go to other states to see. Michigan had, especially, well, frankly at Mt. Pleasant there was an Indian school there and also up in the U.P but I think the main thing that we had was out of state recruitments and requirements (cough) for other students.

MS: That extends your relatability to Native American students. Was there tension during these hearings, while debating the logo? Did you personally have any views that rubbed others the wrong way, related to the logo debate?

AD: I think it kind of boiled down to heritage vs. fairness or equitable treatment, and those were the two kind of things that tended to clash. It was also the idea of change; are you against any change forever? And also, as part of the aftermath, I had a sequel to that after we did it. It was pretty well publicized that Eastern Michigan was considering this and it got around educational circles. Other universities were looking at it and I got a call from a university administration association of sorts, and they said "Would you come to our annual meeting? Because we're going to look at looking at logos as subject matter and whether universities should consider it." And I said "I'd be happy to do that but with one condition." I said "At Eastern Michigan, our president was heavily involved, and by his selection and preference to get involved in the issue in terms of making a decision." And they said "That's fine." And it was in, like, Albuquerque, New Mexico or something like that. So Dr. Shelton and I went out there and gave a presentation, you know, him from the point of view of the president of the university and me from the point of view of the Board of Regents. Those were two disparate points of view because the dynamics of a university is different whether you're on the governing board or on the administration. So, it was a well-rounded discussion and I said at the end of it "If any of you need any materials or anything like that, I probably have 2 yards of materials in my files at home that I'd be happy to share with you." Well, a couple came up to me afterwards and said

“We’d like to take you up on that. Our university is considering changing its logo and dropping its Native American logo to something else.” And I said “Oh where’s that?” And they said “Marquette University in Milwaukee.” That’s my alma mater and I said bring out [unintelligible] and so I talked with them, and my university dropped it, and their university dropped their logo.

MJ: Wow

AD: And they came up with the Golden Eagles as their name in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At the time, they had an incredible basketball coach by the name of Al McGuire, but that’s a whole ‘nother story. But it was a great experience, so I was hoisted on my own petard.

MJ: I want to believe that you and Shelton rode your motorcycles down to Santa Fe for that meeting.

AD: I wish we had, but Bill and I did ride to Sturgis, South Dakota, and we had an incredible time doing that.

MJ: Can I ask real quick just to build on that? I had a thought when you were telling that story about other universities being able to learn from your experience at EMU with the logo, and I’m wondering- those other universities must have been pretty nervous about doing it. You had some wild meetings and it was a couple years-long, the whole process. Were [other universities] they ever kind of like, “We wanted to do it but then we saw what happened to EMU so we put it off for a while longer...?”

AD: We didn’t. The one I think we were watching sort of is Central and they went through a lot of angst in terms of “What should we do? Should we just drop the logo or should we change the Chippewas?” Everybody kind of looks for a compromise too, like the one about keeping the name but dropping the mascot. If they had some silly-looking warrior or something like that, but we didn’t hear too much from other universities actually. The other thing was it was not forgotten for a number of years after we made the decision. We had people that wanted to resurrect it and there was controversy- a follow up about a logo from the old days that were on band uniforms or something like that. That’s when Sue [Martin] was president of the university and that came up again. It kind of flared up again but it was pretty well put down I think or not as disruptive as it was before

MS: It’s good that it was put down relatively quickly.

AD: It was. It was kind of, sort of a bait to raise the issue, but nobody took the bait.

MS: Good that no one actually went after that one. We know that there was some time that passed between the decision to retain the logo and President Shelton’s public statement. What exactly happened during this time? Why was there a wait between the decision to keep it and Shelton’s statement on changing it?

AD: Frankly, I can't remember that as being something that was important enough to remember, I just don't recall that being a big thing maybe other people saw it that way, but I certainly didn't remember that bill I thought was with the decision from the word go

MS: What was the basis for this decision by President William Shelton?

AD: I think Bill had a strong sense of fairness, as it motivated most of the people and that was in the face of it. The fact is when we hired Dr. Shelton, when we hired Bill Shelton, part of the reason that we hired him we needed someone [proven in fundraising] and Bill Shelton was seen as someone who was successful at fundraising before, at some of his university places, and that's what we wanted. Well, if this is why you're hired and in effect how you are evaluated, would that have affected him? It didn't matter to him. I think Bill really felt it was the right thing to do and as it turned out, even as people threatened to not contribute to the university, that didn't happen; the university did not lose. I don't think they lost anything with their funding at that time.

MJ: I have two questions; one just came to me from [hearing] your last statement: do you think that the university didn't lose any money because maybe those people claiming to halt their donations never donated in the first place?

AD: I think that's really possible.

MJ: I've always wondered about that.

AD: Me too it's a good question, of course, how do you know that you're proving a negative? But there was a lot of sound and fury.

MJ: My other question is how well you knew Shelton before he came to EMU. But he told us how, in those board meetings with public commentary, how he was brand new- the situation started before he even arrived. So, he just got plopped into this logo controversy. He told the story about how in some of his earliest board meetings he would have to sit there with Dick Robb on one side and maybe yourself on the other side or John Burton on the other side or [Regent James] Clifton, and just take withering criticism from the public community members. You just have to sit there and take it. He said that his secret, was to try really hard not to take it personally. I'm wondering if your admiration for Shelton stemmed from those experiences at all- just having to sit there and watch a guy take this abuse.

AD: Well, that's uh, yeah; it did it heightened my belief that we hired the right guy. That he had the guts to take it. And there would be other issues that came up like LGBT, like the rights issue that later came up, and he was strong, and he was a big boy and he had to do that. It meant to me that we made the choice of having somebody who had some guts and Bill Shelton did, that's why I liked him, I liked him- he was a friend.

MS: Now, speaking of Bill Shelton, was Shelton's [written] address expected? Did Board members have a hand in the issuance of his public statement?

AD: I'm sorry.

MS: Oh, let me repeat that for you. Was Shelton's address expected, and did Board members have a hand in the issuance of his public statement?

AD: I don't recall any direct communication. You must say, this if that's what you're saying. No, it was up to Bill. And I'm pretty sure it was up to him, but I think he knew how the Board was feeling. Part of being a successful administrator when you are there at the sufferance of a Board is to know what your Board is thinking. At some point in time, it would take a genius to figure out that the Board if anything was going towards, dropping the logo. In other words, if you were worth your salt as an administrator, you could kind of judge that, you should be able to figure out where your Board is going. I think it became obvious, the more we were getting into the issue, the more it was obvious the Regents kind of saw that they were aiming toward doing the right thing here and that the decision would probably come out and as it turned out there was only one dissenting vote.

MS: So, with only one dissenting vote, you most certainly were on the right path. How did you think the public would react to Shelton's decision and do you think his statement could have been improved?

AD: To drop the logo?

MS: Yes

AD: It wasn't Shelton's decision, it was our decision, you know what I mean?

MS: Yeah

AD: It was the Board's decision and Bill basically put that into effect, but it was not his decision it was, repeat, our decision.

MJ: I think that's where some of our confusion comes in because of the way that the Board relates to the committees. One of the biggest pieces of literature that we have in our research for this is his address, his public address, that he read at a Board meeting that seemed, I think, to be a recommendation. Then the Board had the vote. Is that correct? Is that how it works? The committee did the research, the president makes a recommendation, the board makes the decision. Right?

AD: I think the Board took information from a lot of sources. Certainly the president's recommendation would have been one of those sources, but this took, I don't know, probably a year at least of time with the Board. It took a lot of Board time because it was a very important decision. Knowing that and knowing how controversial it was, the

Board wanted to basically get information from every source that was relevant, particularly the public, and that's what we did. But in the end, the Board owned up to it and I think his recommendation would be considered along with all the other evidence and the other views other organizations had come up. Also, my sense from particularly having been involved with the passage of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, my own bent on this was very strongly in favor of civil rights, which I thought was involved, and every other Board member was deciding on the basis of their own things. But the fact is that it was almost a unanimous vote- one vote shy, and that shows you that it had a lot of support. Now would it have been the same if Bill Shelton had said "I would not recommend doing it?" I sense the vote would have been the same.

MJ: That one vote shy of being unanimous is interesting to me because I'm wondering why? I guess that's why somebody voted no. We can take this off the record, perhaps if you'd like to, but I believe the one no was John Burton, correct?

AD: Yeah.

MJ: What do you think his reasons were? Was he receiving pressure from outside?

AD: I don't know. You know, I loved John. I was his vice chair before becoming chair. We had dinner at each other's homes and everything like that and I don't know.. it was disappointing because John, he had been very much involved in the politics of Ypsilanti and he was an outspoken labor leader. He was a leader in the community and just for those reasons and the fact I really liked him as a person I was disappointed, and I never asked him about why because it would've hurt a friendship.

MJ: What you're saying echoes a lot of what your colleagues say as well, that John Burton was an excellent human being and he was no stranger to civil rights.

AD: No.

MJ: Being kept out of the mayor's office for 20 years for example.

AD: That's right. Yeah and he was just a dear man, my best friend on the Board was Dick Robb. Dick was on for twenty-five years and I was there for fourteen, a mere fourteen compared to his. But he was just a delightful guy and Dick was, for me, a measure of the community. He was very proud to be from Ypsilanti. His wife had gone to Eastern. Dick had gone to dental school; he was my dentist too and he caused me pain (laughter), but we had a Board that was friendly and all with different opinions and different backgrounds, but for them to come together on an issue like this was pretty amazing.

MJ: Yeah, Dick Robb told us that when you asked him to chair the search committee, that he accepted thinking it would be really easy and quick, maybe he was wrong.

AD: Really, oh yeah, he is just a delightful human being.

MS: Building off that statement of the search committee, my next question is, what role did you play in the logo search committee?

AD: I'm trying to remember. I can't frankly. I know I didn't try to load it with friends or anything like that. I can't remember how that was put together and I don't remember whether, I suspect the Board had some hand in it although it may have been internally most of the administration too.

MS: Okay, now the next question about the logos. What was your personal favorite of the suggested logos and why? Now, keeping that in mind, almost exactly 30 years on, how has the passage of time and its accompanying cultural shifts influenced your views on the logo change?

AD: Ya know, I didn't have any strong feelings in terms of getting behind any one logo. Some people even suggested the emu as a logo.

MS: I think that's an awesome logo.

AD: Yeah, it would've been, or the ostrich I guess but no not ostrich.

MJ: (laughing)

AD: No, I think people are used to the Eagles. The only criticism I had that I recall, and it wasn't mine, it was just kind of free floating, was "Yeah, but everybody's got an eagle." I know we had research on the fact that other places had gotten the eagle as the American bird and all that stuff. But ironically, then a couple years later my alma mater got the eagle, the golden eagle at Marquette I think it was. But I had no dog in that fight.

MJ: I think that another thing that we heard from Dr. Robb was that you came down to three finalists: the Express, the Green Hornets, or the Eagles, and he [Robb] with all of his long history at EMU, he's got EMU in his blood, ya know-

AD: Yes, he bleeds green

MJ: He does, and he said when it came down to those three, I think he said this in a news article that I read actually, "I like 'em all." So with his long history that kinda made me think maybe this process was just going on too long and they were like "Just pick one, let's just pick one and move on." Is that how it felt a little bit?

AD: I think it did. I think the operative fact there is the length of time. At some point in time the issue is expired and you just come up with anything. I really had no dog in that fight. I figured that was as good as anything and I think there was some student input into there too, that the committee opened it up to suggestions, and that was good, but there was no reason not to like it and it was neutral in the sense that it wasn't likely an object of a civil rights fight down the line, and it was a good choice. I think, now, looking back as Mike was saying, thirty years later, I think it was a good choice.

MJ: Yeah, when I think about the people you had in that room, well especially in that search committee, you have [Regent Dick] Robb, you have [Assistant Vice President of Student Life] Glenna Frank Miller, [Director of Recreation and Intramurals] Bob England-

AD: Great people

MJ: [Vice President for Student Affairs] Larry Smith, I think, was in there too. You have a lot of people that have a lot of stuff to do, so maybe, yes just let's move on because everyone's pushing forward. We just interviewed Glenna Frank Miller yesterday-

AD: Oh, I love her.

MJ: She loves you too and she said to tell you that.

AD: Oh yeah she is wonderful. I worked with her awhile. I chaired the Student Affairs Committee and I worked with her a tremendous amount and she was wonderful. Bob England and I used to work out over at the Rec Center, the Rec/IM Center with Courtney McAnuff; we used to play racquetball over there and swim, and I got to know Bob through that. We just had some great administrators at the time. For us Regents, we were there- we went to the meetings we did our homework hopefully but for the administrators, they lived there. That was their life and decisions like this they had to live with every day. They were going to be taking the grief or the praise for it but people had strong ideas; they were the ones that would have to implement it and take the grief. We walked away from the meetings- they stayed and implemented it so their experience was very important.

MJ: That's a good insight because when we were talking to Larry Smith about the logo change, he was very philosophical and just speaking in this rarified air of the administrators but then when we talk to Glenna or [Director of Student Engagement] Greg Peoples-

AD: Oh yeah.

MJ: They're the face of that vision.

AD: Yes

MJ: On the ground and that's got to be a tough job.

AD: It was, and Greg was just great and Glenna Frank Miller, she was just wonderful, and they were the ones that lived with it and I think too probably saw more than we did the effect on the Native American students there. They were the ones down where the rubber meets the road- administrators that would see kids that were either suffering or suffering silently because of hurts that we could do something about. I can just imagine how it would feel. Now, I'm left-handed; people don't like left handers but it's a lot different

than being something you can't learn to be right-handed from. If people were hurting and we could do something about it, we should've and we did.

MJ: You mentioned Courtney McAnuff and I have to just add this to the record. I spoke to him a couple years ago about his time at EMU and he told me one of the funniest stories from the logo change. I mean, we both were laughing our way through the story about hatching the new mascot, Swoop, out of an egg at a basketball game.

AD: Oh god.

MJ: And it just going completely awry, like, apparently the student that was supposed to be in the egg got very intoxicated because he was so nervous and couldn't put his costume on. But, just so many people you've mentioned I've talked to it's nice to hear you speak about some of them.

AD: I love those people. Courtney and I used to have this regular racquetball game and we got to know each other pretty well and we had a lot of fun. There were others too, but he and Glenna Frank Miller were very special people and when we were doing the new library, I'm trying to remember the guy that was the chief librarian there-

MJ: [Edward J.] McCormick was here.

AD: No...

MJ: I don't know if he was a librarian though.

AD: That was controversial in the sense that there was a battle going on in terms of what would be the next big university project and some people wanted a convocation center. But we wanted, some of us, wanted a library because our library sucked. It's not adequate; we could not get a Phi Beta Kappa chapter at Eastern in part because our library facility was so bad. Morrell Boone, that was his name, and we really pushed for it. But in the background, people were there. Well, it was a question of what comes first for a university. I thought a library epitomizes a university and we got it and it was a roaring success and later on they got a convocation center which was great and then we got the President of the United States Bill Clinton to come in and give a commencement speech and we all got to meet him, the Regents did, and it was a thrill. You've got to work with administrators and we were the governance board but they were the people that lived the university more than we did and you had to appreciate that. That whatever decision you made, they would be paying a price for it.

MJ: Yeah

AD: In terms of effort or in terms of whether or not they agreed with it, and that was a great experience, but I love Courtney and he went to Rutgers, I think he's still there.

MJ: He still is.

AD: Yeah, but he was a real delight to work with. I was there at a good time where we had a Board that didn't always agree either. It was pretty contentious at times, but they really had the university's wellbeing uppermost in their minds. It was good to see that, especially on controversial issues like that. But the fact that we had a very strong vote there really says it. It said it was a strong feeling and likewise with later on when we dealt with the rights of the LGBT group it was again. I think there was one vote was an abstention on that issue. And those were controversial matters that were current at other universities too and we did it

MJ: It was interesting when we were talking to Glenna because she was saying she went through all of the civil rights reasons for the logo change, she went through the procedural recollections of the meetings, and she went through the importance of inclusion, and then lastly, she said "Plus, we just had to get some logos on t shirts!" That was a good example of boots on the ground, and what do they have to do.

AD: Yeah, come on, they did and you had to appreciate all that went into that. We made a decision and we went away. We used to get calls here like I mentioned previously around two in the morning when the bars closed and the people that were "Hurons Forever" would call me at home here and call me everything but the son of god. My wife took a lot of it, but it was an interesting time. When you're in public life like that, even though it was kinda voluntary, be prepared, you know, because not everybody will love you.

MJ: Thank you. That was a great answer.

MS: Okay, down to the final couple questions>

AD: A-okay Michael

MS: Since you're speaking of the public, the next question is: what responsibility to the greater community does a university have in addressing social change and social justice?

AD: I think that universities should be leaders for social justice, particularly being a forum for diverse ideas and there's a reason the First Amendment includes freedom of speech. Universities should be open to disparate beliefs, for instance the logo issue: we had a duty as a university to look at all sides of those issues and also to enhance, and I think this is where universities come in, respect for differing ideas. The logo issue was a very interesting aspect of that and that wasn't all intellectual ideas- they were heartfelt, personal beliefs and a university should be a leader in that but also in training or giving people the opportunity to realize their potential. Their potential also for seeing both sides of issues. As a lawyer, when I used to do courtroom work, you had to anticipate the other side, the arguments that would be made against you or your position and appreciate them and not to demean people who differed from you. I think that's where universities... I think Eastern is pretty good at that especially that it's in an area with strong feelings in regard to labor unions, strong feelings with regard to health and safety, environmental

concerns and all that. Eastern should have a leadership role in that. Also the idea, and it's still relevant I think, for Eastern to be an opportunity university. That, to me, is very important. My two brothers and one sister went to Central [Michigan University], and I forgive them for that (laughing), but we had within our own family a variety of different experiences in universities and that's a good thing and likewise for Eastern. I think they have to promote freethinking, free thought, the exchange of ideas and also to teach respect for those that differ from you. The logo issue really brought that to the fore. Where I did not want to disparage, and I tried not to ever disparage the people that disagreed with that issue because what does that do? They had histories there, they had reasons for their point of view, and you don't demean them or make it ad hominem just because you arrive at different places, or what do we build first? Do we build a convocation center, or do we build a library first? Different ideas, people on different sides that I respect both their views on something like that, and that's where a university comes in. You're never going to have an idea where- ideas are free floating where you have choices to make like a university and that's what I got when I was at Marquette, and certainly at law school here at Michigan and later on at Harvard, They all gave you a panoply of ideas to choose from but you also had to learn to respect other people's notions of it and that's where Eastern especially, with its variety of backgrounds of people, can be a leader.

MS: That is very true, your discussion of the interactions between a community and a university at large taps into every university I've been to- they are locations of deeper thinking and integration of those thoughts.

AD: Oh yeah, absolutely.

MS: Second to last question, is there anything else you'd like to say for the record

AD: One of the institutions at Eastern that I really got to cherish was WEMU. I have to say that in my experience both as a Regent and then afterwards, it was one of the jewels of the campus and they were hardworking wonderful people that did the university just a great service by what they do. and [Station Manager] Molly Motherwell, especially, was somebody who devoted her whole professional career to that, and it reflects well on Eastern. But it's a public service too, and it's a well-known public service, it's news coverage and things like that. Also, I hope that as time goes on it will always be a university of choice for people who are first time college students in their family. I think that's a very important thing because not everyone was "born on third base and thinking they hit a home run," as the old expression goes. But there are a lot of people who have to get to first and second base first and if you can provide that opportunity, it's critically important, so go green!

MS: Alrighty, Last question. Is there anyone else you think we should talk to?

AD: I'm thinking on that issue.

MJ: We were told maybe Jim Streeter.

AD: I think you've hit all the right people. Michael I know where I can get a hold of you and I've got your name and my computer here is showing that your battery is getting low; so am I.

MJ: Alright, thank you so much for joining us today.

AD: It was my pleasure.

MS: Thank you very much, it was a wonderful conversation.

AD: Yeah, well, again, if there's anything you want to get back to me on, that I'm sticking to it.

MJ: Alright, well I'm going to be contacting you to see if you'd like to be part of anymore interviews, I run the Oral History Program here in the library, I'm sitting in Halle Library right now.

AD: Oh, gosh. Bruce Halle- I remember when he was our commencement speaker because of the contribution he made to the library. He was just a wonderful guy, he was one of our successes and I get my tires from his company all the time. He was Eastern, he came up with an idea, he tried hard and did well and he was very generous with his time and money obviously, but that's a great library, I don't know if they even have books anymore.

MJ: They do

AD: Things have changed but any time I'm here I will be living here for quite a while yet, God willing, and the well don't run dry anytime I can help Eastern I will.

MJ: Okay, alright I'll be in touch then.

AD: Okay, thanks Mike! Bye.

MS: Bye

MJ: Bye

