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## Juanita Reid, Oral History Interview, 2021

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Eastern Michigan University, Oral Histories, EMU Logo Change Oral History Project

Oral History Interview with Anthony Derezinski (AD)

Interview conducted by History graduate student Michael Seitter (MS) and EMU Archives lecturer Matt Jones (MJ) on April 9, 2021 via Zoom.

Transcribed by Michael Seitter

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[BEGIN TRANSCRIPT: 00:00:18]

CT: Today is Friday April 9, 2021. This is Oral History Techniques graduate student Cheyenne Travioli. Today I am speaking from Ypsilanti, Michigan with former EMU Vice President of University Relations, Juanita Reid. An EMU Alum herself, Reid also served as Executive Associate to the President, Secretary to the Board of Regents, Associate Director of Development and Assistant Director of Financial Aid. In addition to her twenty eight years with EMU, Reid also spent three years at Washtenaw Community College as Assistant to the President. I am so glad you were able to meet with us today, I have been looking forward to it all semester.

JR: Thank you, looking forward to it myself.

CT: Okay. So my first question, just to get us warmed up here...can you tell me a little about your childhood growing up? Who were your parents and what did they do for a living?

JR: Okay. I was born in Washington D.C. and raised between Washington D.C. and a small-town in Prince George's County, Maryland, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. I went to an all-Black elementary school. Taught by all-Black teachers and during high school, junior high school and high school, our school was integrated, when I was in, I think, maybe the 11th grade, and the integration was not with students, it was with faculty. The teaching faculty. And so it was my first experience of, um, having caucasian teachers. After having gone through almost eleven years of public education with African American faculty. That experience probably was the biggest development. That with along with my parents who were not educated in higher education, but did have high school degrees, diplomas. We come from a very large family. My paternal father is of Hispanic descent, Puerto Rican. My mother is of Western Indies. So I uh,

come from a very mixed background. My siblings have a biological African American father and there were ten of us, and I am the youngest. Youngest of ten. And there is a gap between the ninth and the tenth, of about, I think it is about almost nine years, eight and a half, nine years. So for practical purposes, I grew up as an only child, because all of my siblings were much older. And that experience I think, in and of itself, afforded me far more opportunities probably than my siblings had. When you look at both the decades that we were growing up, but also the experiences of being the only child having a lot more opportunity to do a lot more different things than they did...and they were changing times. They grew up in a very different time than what I did. But, I also had tremendous support coming from my siblings who had experienced a lot of things that I had not and that um interaction in my childhood and growth and development, as I became a teenager and then as an adult, probably gave me a lot more experiences that I would not have had had I not had the fortune of being their younger sibling. They guided me significantly through my early years and into my adult years. I am not sure what else I need to tell you. What else would you like to know? [laughs]

CT: No, no, that was great. I wanted to ask a follow up question of what that experience was like, growing up with you know...ten children, but you kind of already went into that so...

JR: Yeah, my siblings...all of us were educated. We all went to school, so even my oldest sibling went to a two-year college. My oldest brother graduated from a four-year college, so all of them had professions and education, because my mother was the biggest advocate of education. Huge advocate of education, and so without her, will if you will, [laughs] if I could call it anything else, you really did not have a choice but to further your education. You had to finish high school and you definitely, if you had the opportunity to go to college, it was required. And that has been passed on to my children, my grandchildren. You don't have an option. Education is not an option. It is a requirement. And that, for that I'm thankful that she had that foundation for us in terms of education.

CT: Yeah, that's awesome. My life, I myself kind of have that experience as well, so...

MJ: Can I, can I jump in here for a second, um did any of your siblings go to EMU before you?

JR: No, I'm a transplant to Michigan.

MJ: Okay.

JR: Yeah. Born and raised in Maryland. I went to undergraduate school in West Virginia. Only because it was a historically Black institute at that time, when I was there. I did get to

experience reverse integration. It went from a historically Black institution to a predominantly white institution with students of color coming from states all over the country. And they were the foundation in terms of students staying on the campus. During the day, you would not have known it was ever a historically Black institution, and that was a huge influence in my education and my growth and development. Big.

MJ: In what way? Can you explain that more?

JR: Sure. Again, the dynamics of the campus when I first got there, we were saying that the change, and I'm trying to recall, they had a slogan. It was a window and the best way I can describe it, is that there was a slogan on the campus at that time that talked about integration from the perspective of "this is a window into the country in terms of things to come." I will recall it because over the years I have repeated it but it's a great slogan that the marketing department came up with. But it really was profound in terms of describing the changes that we were going through in the 60s and so you've got to put that, within the perspective of what was happening during the 60s, and here you have a historically Black institution that was experiencing reverse integration. And it became like a melting pot, and it worked. It truly worked. But, the students who came, the white students who came to campus, came during the day. They did not reside on the campus even from afar, they just transported themselves and lived in the communities around the campus, but did not live on the campus because the campus was predominantly Black students from out of state. Predominantly. And then, when I finished, I decided that we worked a little while and then decided to take a break and ended up in Michigan going to Eastern Michigan University for my first master's degree. And that too was a great experience and a great decision to do. And it was chosen, because during that time nationally, it was known for education and I thought I wanted to be a teacher. That lasted for a very short period of time after doing my student teaching. [laughs] I didn't want to do it.

MJ: Yeah. I'm sorry Cheyenne.

CT: No you're fine.

MJ: But, I have to ask.

JR: I think those are great questions because as you will hear me talk through this whole local issue that we will eventually get through...much of my grounding and growth and development and experiences going from state to state in my education really rounded out my standing on the issue.

MJ: Mhm, mhm. Alright, well I am going to duck back out now. I have a million questions that I am going to stop.

CT: Well, going right off of diversity, I want to ask you about diversity in administration in a moment, but what was the student climate like during your time as a student at EMU with respect to diversity?

JR: I was a graduate student and I worked in...I have to remember...I think it was called the, office of, it was within Student Affairs, but they had an opportunity office that really developed programs and services closely aligned with the Dean of Students and my graduate student job was to develop programs for minority students on campus because it was a good number. And I don't think that the number has changed over the years, perhaps a couple of years, but we're talking amongst what twenty some thousand students. You probably have ten percent minority students on campus and the Office of Student Affairs and Minority Affairs always wanted to make sure that we had programs during key times on campus bringing in speakers and those kinds of things. And so that was my opportunity to bring in social development for minority students through that office. I think the climate on campus at that time wasn't too bad. But there were things happening in the country slowly making changes and what have you and by the way, that office also embraced Hispanic students and programs as well as Native American programs. It was, all in all, inclusive. So, many minority programs or minority student organizations were affiliated with that particular office in terms of developing programs and initiatives for the students. I think that change was occurring during that time, good change. And I probably would think that also talking about the 70s by that time, '72 to '74, we had already gone through the 60s, with significant change in the country, with things that occurred that became catalysts to activity with change throughout...and Eastern, Eastern's climate was no different I think than any other major institutions in the country in terms of its services and what was happening on the campuses. I don't remember too many disruptive kinds of activities on campus during that time. But I do remember proactive activity. Marches, programs that were dedicated to understanding changes that were happening in the country. And for that, I think that Eastern was probably low key, amongst all of the other institutions in terms of what it was doing because it was happening, but, the bigger institutions in Michigan were taking the lead in terms of things that they were doing. Your University of Michigan, your Michigan State, your larger institutions. And then there is Wayne State that was in the middle of a predominantly Black city, Detroit. So they got the highlights, but Eastern was still doing its thing during that time. [laughs]

CT: Great. In what ways would you say the climate or diversity changed over time, once you were an employee?

JR: Well, I think that much of the management of student activities and programs and services, while it fell within the Student Affairs Office, were a group of Black faculty and staff. And there was an official organization, who took the lead, I would say, in terms of ensuring that students were understanding and having conversations in large groups on a regular basis about what was happening in the country, what was happening in higher education, what was happening on the campus. Some of the changes that were impactful for them. And as the Black faculty and staff took leadership, we were rather given the responsibility if you will, to manage, to make sure...to manage the programs and the services, and where the students, giving them guidance in terms of what they should be doing and could be doing about the things they felt strongly about. And staying within the rules and guidelines so that they would stay out of jail, not be um, not be invited to leave the campus because of their position on things. I mean I have gone through and sat through and seen and observed sit-ins outside of the president's office, marches on campus, um disruption on campus...but not to the point that it was uncontrolled. Now, in some peoples' minds, it could very well have felt like, looked like, that it was uncontrolled. But what they were doing was no different than what we were seeing across the country, in terms of colleges and campuses, and their activities. No different. And for the Black faculty and staff we were very proud of the position that they were taking. And it was a responsible position and they did responsible things. If they were marching, they followed the rules and regulations of marching. If they did sit ins, they were not violent, they were not disruptive, they were disruptive to the point that they were doing a sit in. But they were not disruptive in terms of any type of any dangerous situation to anyone on campus. And Black Faculty and Staff was a very strong organization from Martin Luther King events to even a position on, um, who was engaged in developing the golf course? Because at that time it was a South African golfer who was being engaged to develop a golf course. And at that time the country had sudden policy shifts where we were not supposed to support anything from South Africa because of their civil rights situations there. Then we were faced with the situation of, should we support a golfer who was from South Africa to build a golf course? Now that's one thing that I disagreed with, because I think a form of discrimination is to push everybody into one category just because of their background. And in this instance the golfer had done so much, that supported doing the right thing by different people. This is Gary Player, from South Africa. He was pulled into the madness of nothing given the opportunity as who he was as opposed to where he was from. He was South African, yes, but he was not a part of apartheid. People did their homework and because he was South African it was the decision was, I mean it was the Black Faculty and Students, everybody that you could think of took a position, a formal position, that he should not be chosen as a person to help develop the golf course simply because he was from South Africa. That didn't feel right to me. It's singling out an individual to represent something that we were all against, that, for which he was not responsible, he just happened to be from South Africa. Never a supporter of apartheid ever that we could determine after doing our research, and yet he was barred. To me that was wrong. That's one example of how powerful I

think some organizations can be within an organization, within a higher ed institution. And later on we're going to talk about some other examples of how powerful some organizations on campus can be and still be out of order, yet totally on board for education.

CT: Wow.

JR: And if at any time you think that I am giving you too long of answers you let me know, I'll shorten them.

MJ: No!

JR: [laughs]

MJ: I always tell interviewees that rambling is exactly what we're after.

JR: [laughs] Yeah, you get a lot more information that way don't you?

MJ: Yeah [laughs]

CT: Um, well kind of backtracking a little bit, back to your time as a student, do you remember, you know, what the views towards the logo were? And if so, what were they?

JR: Logo meaning?

CT: The Huron Logo mascot...

JR: Oh, the logo you said...not the local.

CT: Yeah...Sorry. [laughs]

JR: Um and this was as a student?

CT: As a student, yeah.

JR: Yeah...um so I am going to remind you that I was born and raised on the east coast in Washington, DC and I'm going to do this connecting here because when I got to Eastern Michigan University this was not the first time that I had heard about people being against the use of logos. Because we had the Washington Redskins and all my young life I could never understand why um sport teams or anyone else would depict a people in a negative way...and

whether it was intended or not intended it was occurring before our eyes and to retain something that continued behavior that was negative didn't ever make any sense to me. Even when I was younger and before I got to EMU. I get to EMU and then here is the same thing. By the way, when I first applied to EMU as a graduate student, I wasn't interested in what their logo was. I could not have told you what their logo was at that time. I am interested in getting my master's degree and moving on with my life. But, as I was introduced to going to a football game and watching the students being dressed in, with face paint, and no clothes, and headgear...and these were not Native Americans, these were caucasian kids doing this. Occasionally I would even see an African American student doing it and not understanding how could you do that because in my mind I have already learned about people doing images of blackface, doing that during those times. And those are issues that are with us today. I mean if you still look at what's happening in society today, we have all these politicians for example who forgot that they did something bad twenty years ago, run for office, and your history does keep up with you because people will dig and dig and dig until they find something and you find all of these individuals, who oh by the way I was dressing up as, in a costume. Not internalizing the impact of that depiction would have on the people that they were degrading. There's no connection there and to see it in the stands as a student, never could understand why, just why? There were so many other options that people could use for logos. Why did it have to be negative? And it wasn't so much the actual dressing and the appearance, it was their actions that were very disturbing.

MJ: Hmm.

JR: Their actions were very very very disturbing. On the depictions of being um angry and wild and dangerous. Didn't make any sense to me. [Phone rings] So sorry...

MJ: It's okay.

JR: I meant to turn this off...[laughs]

MJ: Okay [laughs]

JR: There. And so that um, again when I was applying to go to Eastern Michigan, I came from a high school that had eagles, the Frederick Douglas Eagles. Why Hurons? And then seeing the students in the stands and their actions...and of course you know there was always alcohol involved and the more you involved alcohol the worse the activity becomes. I mean it was outrageous, it was truly outrageous. And beyond my comprehension at that time that the institution was stirring that, but never ever ever thinking that years later I would be involved in the name change. Absolutely no connection for me whatsoever. Totally outraged about seeing it as a student and understanding the connection about how people had depicted blacks the same

way. As being angry when really that anger was probably there but more fear tied with anger and that was depicted as someone who was dangerous in terms of a black man, especially. So when you think about two strong emotions, of anger and fear, and depict that in somebody's face not understanding which is going on, which is more overpowering than the other? You do have a negative depiction of an individual. And that is exactly what has, what has been done over and over and over again in our society, in terms of how we depict people without giving any understanding or empathy to what they bring to that situation. Or how it affects their activity, affects people that they're depicting negatively. Profound to me, I can't understand it.

MJ: That was just a great description and answer and I am wondering if you felt so strongly about it, even as a student...graduate student, seeing things enacted on campus. There must have been other people too who were disturbed by it. And was anybody voicing that at the time?

JR: I can't tell you that I knew of anyone...I think that there were some Native American organizations on the campus who were voicing concerns about it, but it never rose to the level of seeing anybody take on actions to address it.

MJ: Hmm, mhm.

JR: It was just kind of, "Oh there's students in the stands." And even later, hopefully it comes up in the discussion about how logos and mascots were just kind of put aside and not really addressed in terms of the impact they were having. "Oh they're just students at a football game." Well no, it's far more than that, but I can tell you that I'm pretty sure that there were Native American organizations, active, very active organizations on the campus who were saying this should stop. But nobody ever took it up ever as a serious action. And you would think that maybe Black students should have some empathy towards that, but they were on their own path of having to defend their own situation, so what have you. So, um, to answer your questions, I didn't see any activity coming out of the administration that was dealing with [it]. It was almost as though it was expected, [like] it's okay, we've been doing it all this time, it's alright. [laughs]

MJ: Mhm, mhm. Okay.

JR: And I think that over time you see the position of those kinds of things gradually changing that caused us, especially from younger generations, (your older generations were settled in during that time), saying yes that was a depiction that they accepted as being okay. And that, therein lies a huge gap between the generations who were coming into Eastern Michigan University seeing that and many other institutions, and colleges, and universities, and high schools across the country. Coming in seeing that and saying "no more," as time, as years went by. And then you have the older generation saying "Yeah but that's a depiction that keeps the

attention on us,” it really wasn’t. The attention was negative and they didn’t see that. They saw it as “At least we’re getting attention.” Albeit negative. And I know that that is a strange concept. And even for me today that is a very strange concept, that any attention is better than negative, better than no attention even if it’s negative. I don’t know [laughs].

MJ: Thank you for that.

CT: Well Matt kind of asked my next question, but I mean, would you say during the years of 1989, like leading up to 1989, how would you describe the feelings towards the logo in administration at that time?

JR: Well, I think that as the years went by, more and more concerns across the country, and that included right on our campus, bringing attention to many high schools, and colleges and universities that were using or depicting negative logos that were disparaging to people. And so, yeah, we started to see and hear nothing big initially. But just a kind of a quiet concern and movement growing about the use of the Huron logo. And I think the emphasis came when so many students, in smaller situations across the country and across the state specifically, started to bring this to the attention of legislators and other folks, with complaints. Basically writing complaints about these logos being negative depictions of people, and it ended up in the civil rights- Michigan Civil Rights Department. And I think that would’ve been somewhere in the mid to late 80s...maybe somewhere in there. That’s when the attention started to grow and the minute that hit the national news about various states starting to look at logos...I think that’s what wrapped up the organizational structures on campuses across the country and in high schools for us to start that debate.

CT: Okay. What was the initial reaction to the logo change on the administration side post-Civil Rights Department announcement?

JR: Well, I’m not sure exactly of the timing but what I recall is that, even after the Michigan Department of Civil Rights directed that institutions and high schools start to review the use of the logos, even at that time I’m pretty sure nobody paid attention to them. That’s how powerful I think that some of these sports organizations and teams across the country, from the professional level right down to little leagues, that’s how strong sports had taken a position. And nobody did anything for probably two or three years. Until, again, the activities I think on campuses started to grow as a result of their becoming knowledgeable about the commission, that the Civil Rights Commission saying you should be reviewing this. And it finally hit Eastern’s campus and I’m not sure how it hit us so hard so fast. Because there were lots of organizations. There were high schools...Ypsilanti High School I believe had a Native American logo and I never heard of them doing anything about it, but somehow EMU jumped to the national level quickly. Now the first

thing that I remember seeing or having done was, a committee was established and that committee was led by the athletic director...

MJ: Gene Smith.

JR: Gene Smith.

MJ: Yeah.

JR: In my mind, asking an athletic director to lead an initiative that would change the logo of a sports team was as closely related to the saying, "Let's put the fox in the hen house" [laughs]. There was going to be no win for him just as we found out there was no win for anyone who had to take the leadership role on reviewing this. But Gene Smith did, in fact, convene a committee or commission; it went on for a length of time with lots of committees and subcommittees and my colleague [Vice President for Development] Kathleen Tinney, who is now deceased, also worked on that. They did research, they tried to find representation from Native American tribes. They did interviews with students, with the community. Keep in mind that the whole city of Ypsilanti was so entrenched in this logo that there were businesses that had names of Huron this, Huron that. Huron Automotive, Huron whatever. Because that became a branding for the city. And unfortunately that commission came back and had somewhat of a split decision in terms of their recommendation. And if I'm not mistaken, in terms of the historical perspective on this, and if you've done your research and you know more, let me know where I go wrong, but it seems to me that the committee came back and it had not necessarily a split decision but it certainly was not a profound decision. It was half of the committee or commission said "keep the logo," and the other half said change it. There came the rush of pandemonium that just kind of rambled out of control. So the [laughs] the recommendation went to the Board [of Regents]. I believe they took a vote. Gene Smith was married to, I think, a Native American. So I don't think that resonated for anyone at that time. Nevertheless, he took the leadership role on that committee or commission and when they made their recommendation it was not a profound recommendation to change it. It was kind of a split decision.

MJ: Mhm.

JR: And they reported, I believe, that they could not find any representatives of Native American tribes that could speak to the issue and so then later that was found to be not an accurate statement. It just became fraught with more entanglement in terms of what we're going to do. That was what started that big snowball roll down the hill on the logo. That committee [laughs].

MJ: Was that the committee that was assigned to review the logo to decide if it was offensive?

JR: Yeah.

MJ: Alright, so that's where it started to get a little tense? After they decided that, yeah the logo is fine?!

JR: Yeah. They...pretty much. How they could say it was not offensive? If you'd ever gone to a football game...and it was football more so than basketball for some reason. I never really saw it, a little bit of it in basketball, but no other sport more so than football. That's where you really saw it. And it was offensive.

MJ: Okay, hmm. Well, I have another follow up here. Again, Cheyenne I apologize [laughs]

CT: [laughs] No, you're fine!

MJ: Okay. We've heard from other interviewees it was athletics on one side and the rest of the university on the other side...and I'm wondering do you think that Gene Smith had something to do with that? Or do you think that would have happened regardless of who the AD was or who was in charge of that committee?

JR: Well, again, logos are associated with sports. And I'm sure that whoever assigned that committee to Gene Smith thought that- it's in sports. He's the athletic director, he should be the leader. And again, probably that should not have occurred because it played into the whole thought process that you're asking the very people who have allowed this over in the athletics side of the institution to review this and come back with a recommendation. Why do you think the recommendation is going to be anything other than "keep it?" So um, if you really wanted to do that, I'm not sure who could've been assigned that role as a committee that would've been a level playing field for everybody because when you look at the institutional structures, you've got faculty, you've got students, you've got administration. Those are your three main pods of individuals on any campus. So students, yeah maybe they could've done it, but that would've been a dividing factor there. Faculty probably didn't want to be too involved but maybe were pulled into the madness simply because of the position that they were taking, one side or the other saying "oh it's not a big deal," or, "oh yes it is." Then you've got the athletics side and athletics play a big role in any college or university in terms of presence on the campus. Sometimes it's as profound at some institutions to be a leading factor in why a student decides to go to an institution. It's because they're a Big Ten or they're a Mac this or whatever. Sports and its winning records divert attention to students because it's exciting. I mean it is what it is. So the fact that Gene was given that position, I always thought at that time, I said this is a no win

situation for him. I knew him. I knew that he was married to a Native American. He has kids who play sports. And here he is, the athletic director being given a huge responsibility to make a recommendation as to whether you keep or get rid of a logo, and it was going to be a no-winner for him. If he recommended keeping it, from the committee, one side of the institution and students and what have you, would have been in an uproar. It just, it just was a no-win situation for him. Likewise it was a no-win situation for the president. [laughs]

MJ: Your position seems so unique because you were so close to the president as his executive assistant...is that right?

JR: Yeah.

MJ: So you must have been privy to some conversations that no one else will ever hear.

JR: That's true. [laughs]

MJ: [laughs] Okay and I just wonder what it was like to operate in that position when you were also Secretary to the Board of Regents at the same time?

JR: Yeah...and talk about walking a very thin and fine line that not always was straight [laughs]. I didn't start out as being Secretary to the Board. Bill Shelton hired me as his Executive Associate to the President. That was the first role and then when there was some reorganization happening where the University Relations Division President Roy Wilbanks and his Associate, Melanie Colaianne, who was also serving as Secretary to the Board, were transitioning to a different division or area within the university and she was taking on a different role. I think that was more aligned with the Foundation. She was giving up her role as Secretary to the Board and recommended that position be added onto mine. That's how that transition occurred. But by that time I had been in the president's office probably about a couple years and knew more about him because I didn't know him when he first came to the campus. But knew more about his background and his experiences and his positions on worldly kinds of activities and he was a great supporter of athletics. Don't get me wrong, because that's what he did when he was, when he came out of another Mac school to us. And so he was quite supportive at Kent State, he was quite supportive of athletics. So he was not anti-athletics at all, but boy he got put in a position from- it was so immediate and so fast it was unbelievable. Unbelievable. It defined his presidency, unfortunately.

CT: Um, I am going to come back to what you just said in a moment, but I want to backtrack a little bit...

JR: Mhm...

CT: So you were Secretary to the Board of Regents; I was wondering if you could tell us a little about what that experience was like? And what your relationship with the Regents was like?

JR: Well keep in mind that Regents are appointed by the governor and so they come either as Republicans or Democrats [laughs]. Those are the categories. I don't think I know of any Board member that was not affiliated with a party during the time that I was there. Mainly they came to the Board as result of their involvement politically with certain candidates who came to be the governor, and that support was usually through some sort of financial arrangement or the governor chose those individuals based on their leadership in a community that surrounded the institution. Or, their leadership with a business or an organization that helped their candidacy to the governorship. So it's political. Totally political. When I was first Secretary to the Board, the Board members were predominantly Democrats, led by a very strong political advocate in the community, tied to unions- John Burton is his name, was his name. He's deceased, been deceased for a while now. And my relationship with the Board was fine but here's what I think grounded me for that work: I had served on boards before in the community. I knew how they operated. I knew the politics behind boards that sometimes it's apparent to the public, but most often it is not. Lots of deals pop up behind the tables, behind the doors. Then when you come out, you're just acting on things you've already decided on, but the public doesn't know that you've been doing this behind the board. It is probably against the Open Means Act, but nevertheless, putting that aside...my relationship with the Board was pretty good. For the Democratic board. Not so good with the Republican board, to be perfectly honest, and there was a transition during this time period. We started this whole process with a Democratic board that had to deal with the logo issue and then it transitioned to a Republican board that had to deal with the logo issue. Very interesting dynamics within that time period. I think that the Board, the Democratic Board, was fine with my role as Secretary to the Board, I don't think that the Republicans were as comfortable with that. So at some point in time, I do recall that there was a transition away, my portion of the Secretary to the Board, which was recommended by the President as I recall, was to separate that because remember I was hired by him, initially without that piece. Then the Secretary to the Board was taken away from my position and given to an independent individual who was working half time to do that role. So that too allowed me to be able to assist the president more profoundly in all of his aspects of his role as opposed to having to be concerned about board members. Because that role also entails setting the agenda, developing documents, everything from A to Z that had to deal with the Board. There were times where I had to walk a very thin line about maintaining my support of the president but not revealing confidential information that we had discussed with the Board because in some

instances it was about the Board [laughs]. So, a very fine line. I think I did okay with the Democratic Board. I had challenges with the Republican Board...and I will stop there. [laughs]

MJ: Noo...keep going! [laughs]

JR: [laughs]

CT: Um I mean I wanted to ask, you know, if you're comfortable...would you be able to describe those complications a little more in-depth?

JR: I would only describe them in terms of, I love the way Republican's managed the logo issue, I will say that. Absolutely loved it. I do believe that even the Democratic Board during this whole process of reviewing the logo, it was cumbersome. It was a seriously cumbersome process and response. It was not good. I can remember having a Board meeting where the Board had on the agenda, a decision about the logo. And it didn't happen. And I know that in a previous conversation, you and I, Cheyenne, had a discussion about some of the behind the scenes discussion that the chair would have with the president, etcetera. Again, I am not going to divulge that, I haven't for all of these years, and I don't plan to start now, but at the same time I remember one of the Board meetings where we were expecting the Board to take a position, take a vote on the logo and it did not happen. John Burton was the chair and there was a motion put on the table, I believe, and you can take a look on the Board minutes to make sure I am accurate on this. But a motion was put on the table, to table the topic of making a decision that was on the agenda. It passed to table it. There's no discussion on the table, of a tabled movement, so it happened very quickly and there we were no decision and tabled. Then the next process after that was the President was asked to make a recommendation, to review the issue, and to come back with a recommendation to the Board. That is what started the whole formal response by the president and the administration being totally involved as opposed to it being left at a Board decision. And then even after that, I believe it was Tony Derezinsky, and if you have not spoken to him, I truly recommend you do so because Tony Derezinsky was the chair, a Democrat during much of the decisions on the logo. So the Board was split. Best way I can describe it. They were not- it was not a cohesive decision. It was not- they did not have a majority at that time who wanted to keep it or they were just plain split down the middle [laughs]. They just, it was, half the Board wanted to keep it, half the Board wanted to keep the name and change the logo, and much discussion occurred around that. The whole topic was an issue, because most of us felt that you could not separate the two. You could not keep the name and stop the behavior. It was the behavior, if we had not never ever seen the students dressed half nude on the top with the headdress and the painted faces and their behavior with all of that. If that hadn't happened in the stands, we would not have been having any discussion about it. It was the depiction of the name that caused all of the angst for everyone. Somehow, some Board members thought that we could

separate those two, that you could keep the name and somehow control the behavior. It just was not going to work. Trying to convince them of that, it was my first time of understanding that we were not only talking about people, but the divide according to the age of the folks who were on the Board. So some of the Board members didn't think it was a problem. Those were the older Board members. The younger Board members thought it was a big problem and that if it was offensive to anybody at any time that we needed to get rid of it. That's the basis of how it was taken off track from the very beginning. So you had your committee now making a kind of a split decision about keeping the logo. That didn't go over. Then you have the Board that was supposed to receive it, that recommendation, they tried to make a decision on it; it was tabled. Now you're moving to lots of discussion everywhere about it and now it's been given to the president to come back with a recommendation to the Board. Then in between all of that, there's a board change. Burton is no longer the chair. New Board members come on. Now you've got fewer Democratic Board members. A balance between those Democrat members finishing out their remaining years and then the new members coming in who were Republican. Who more than anything, pretty much those who were not pro-sports, said just get rid of it. Just get rid of it. So it was interesting dynamics for everyone involved, but a lot of transitional activity that influenced the decision in the end. Lots.

MJ: Mhm...hmm.

CT: Okay. I'm going to kind of backtrack a little bit again. I was just wondering, you know how would you describe your experience being so close to these momentous decisions that were being made?

JR: How would I describe my...?

CT: Like, the logo decision, so in your position to the president and as secretary, I was just wondering what that experience was like, being so close to the logo decision...?

JR: I would describe my position and, said it to the president in private conversations, many times have said, it is a no-brainer we had to change. We did not have a choice. Because, again, we could not control the behavior of the students in the stands at the football games and other activities, depicting negatively what they had internalized what Huron meant to them. That's how they defined it, that's how they depicted Huron. You can't control that. The only thing that you can control is that you don't give them a platform with the Huron logo to do it. So if you want to depict what an eagle looks like and does, yeah fly all you want in the stands. But when you have people associated with the tribal name you invite misuse of that and you cannot control the behavior. So keeping the name and thinking you can do that was outrageous and I was saying that over and over and over again because that was my biggest fear. That we would go through

the transition of keeping a name and thinking that we would see changed behavior as a result of that. And I knew that was never going to happen. As long as you kept the name, the name had already been defined negatively in the minds of many who depicted it that way. If it had been otherwise, you would not have seen the activity in the stands. They would've understood the nature of the name and the pride that went with it and that it was not something that you depict negatively. They didn't get it. It's the culture that was passed onto them years, and years, and years, over, and over, and over again. By the way, the change of this logo and this mascot and this name...was not Eastern's, of this one, Huron, it was not Eastern's first time doing this. Every time they had a name change it was huge. You could go back to, I believe, something called Normalites or Normals when it was the Normal School and if you do your history there, you'll look at it, it was the same thing. People were angry about name change. So we should've known, if history is supposed to teach us anything, you could avoid repeating bad activity if you just take a look at the historical perspective of what the institution had experienced over the years about name change. We should have been using that information to know this is, this was not going to go easy, and to maybe learn something from those experiences in terms of how we could manage the change. We didn't quite do that. I have to say I didn't do it either, but I knew that they had been aggravated before about being changed from Normals to Normalites and whatever and here we are doing it again. So we didn't learn much by that. But I think that for me it was a no-brainer. The change had to happen. We had to get rid of the name. That was the only way we were going to get out of the situation we were in. Believe me, it took years after that name change and it probably is still going on even today. Most of the people are deceased who were probably the most vocal because they were older during that time period so now they are probably, either deceased or at an age that they probably don't want to be that much of an activist. When they followed people to events, they spoke over the president rudely; it was unbelievable. In my mind, I was watching what I felt probably happened to African Americans over the years trying to change how they were being depicted as wild and savage and uncontrolled. So for me, I'm internalizing what I know, what minority groups in the past had already experienced and here we have Native Americans going through the same thing. Again, trying to get rid of something that depicted wrongly their culture. Yet here we were faced with it one more time and going through the same changes. I think that the board understood my position, I won't say that as a broad category, individuals on the board with whom I had really close relationships with understood my position. As I said before, you move people to where you need them to go, not necessarily in a public setting, but in conversations you might have outside of Board meetings. In terms of what your position is and how you are supporting it, making a case for it, so that they can see a different side. That was my role. And I didn't have to convince the president, he already knew. I think that one of the most profound pieces that I have ever read, and if you have not read it, you probably should, and that was his presentation on the position and why he was making the recommendation.

MJ: That has been a pretty central piece of our research in the class.

JR: [inaudible]

MJ: That address, yeah. Mhm.

JR: It was profound and when he was reading it, it was so quiet in the boardroom as he was reading it because it was just that profound. And it was a sign that I think people had not seen of Bill Shelton, but his position on it was straight and clear. It set the premise of what the responsibility of a higher education institution was, and when you use that, as a basis, it makes people get away from how they have scuttled away from the profound foundation that the institution is supposed to have and come back to that foundation. What is our responsibility as a higher learning institution? It certainly isn't to depict people, nations, negatively, but we have a higher responsibility as a higher education institution. It also aligned with his initiative about trying to make Eastern Michigan University, changing Eastern Michigan University from a teaching institution to a broader higher learning institution. But again, lost, lost, within the context of a name change, the logo unfortunately started Bill Shelton's tenure as president in the wrong way. It really did. It never gave him the opportunity to really be the president that I think that he had in his mind in terms of making Eastern Michigan University a premier learning institution based on its teaching foundation and moving further. And we can get into the politics with that with the AAUP Union versus the Faculty Council and how he positioned himself to work with faculty directly as opposed to not working through a union, which I totally agree with, totally agree with that position. A union is there for another purpose other than what the Faculty Council was. He should, and he did, he should have worked with the Faculty Council in terms of building the learning institution of Eastern Michigan University. But the AAUP took him on about that from the very beginning and pretty much used all these other little aggravating things that were going on as a building block about how they did support his initiatives with working with the faculty to promote this premier learning institution. Lost opportunity. And he was ahead of his time because if you even look at some of the other pieces that were being written, lots of educators across the country were going in exactly that same direction, and we got left behind. All because of attention directed to our logo.

CT: Wow that was a great answer. You're starting to touch on my later questions. So again I'm going to back up a little bit. Native students like Deisha Myles who we have already interviewed, were one of the Native American students who demanded for more awareness on campus about Native American history and Native American people, in and outside of the classroom. What were some ways in which Native American representation was bettered or carried out, that you know of?

JR: I think support of their student organizations was the beginnings of being proactive to make sure that we were inclusive. African American students on campus were by far the largest minority group on the campus and so of course you know, just by size and demand, they got the attention of the administration. But Native Americans, I can remember the celebrations with powwows, huge, huge on our campus and it was not just local. People came across the state and in some instances outside of the state to these big events that usually lasted a whole weekend. Yet it so reminded me of African American history, where, somehow, we are diminished to one weekend, one holiday that the culture is celebrated, and I still don't understand that. Why it isn't somehow embedded in our everyday activity as part of the fabric of the country. Why do we just get one day? Why do Native Americans just get one day? I guess I understand the celebratory piece of it that there is maybe one day that you celebrate, but after that celebration it seems to me everything quieted down until the next year when it was time to do it again. Now, maybe there were great things going on but it certainly was not brought to the higher attention on campus so that real learning, if you will, about the cultures were happening everyday and being inclusive everyday, it was let's do it here, let's do it there, and go back to our normal lives all of the other days. But that is no different than what we did with, Latino organizations during that time, the Black student organizations, it is a nature of who we are that we did that, and we continue to do that.

CT: Can you remember the students who were selected to speak at these meetings, especially you know, Native Americans or other minority groups that might have voiced their opinion on the logo change?

JR: There was a process associated for speaking before the Board and so they only needed to sign up. No decision was ever made that you would pick and choose. If you signed up, you got your five minutes before the Board. There were guidelines because people had become stupid enough to be disruptive and not polite. While there is freedom of speech, the expectation is that you can say what you want, but you have to say it without being threatening or disparaging. So after a while there were some Board meetings where we had security present, especially when students would be speaking about the issue, which was fine, I don't ever remember them being disruptive. I do recall alumni being extraordinarily rude at some of the meetings, at some of our events to the point that they would start yelling in the Board meeting. At that point, security would have to escort them out. I wouldn't say it was the ugliest thing that I had ever seen, in terms of those kinds of actions, but it certainly was outside of what we would have expected in an educational setting. Totally. But again, the process I think that was in place for speaking before the Board, students had every right to do that. I think that there was always like thirty minutes allowed for public response. Everybody got five minutes. The board chair controlled that. I was secretary during that time period and would look at my watch and then give the Board chair the nod that five minutes is up, no matter what, and to be fair that's how it was managed.

It's part of the Open Meetings Act that you have to provide that opportunity for the public to speak to the board and students took advantage of it.

MJ: Hmm.

JR: And had some very profound comments to make because they internalized, they talked about how it made them feel, especially the Native American students. But then you had the older people coming in and saying that, this is proud for our tribe or our nation, and therein was the divide.

MJ: Hmm.

CT: Just out of my own curiosity, what were some of the most profound statements made by those students? Do you remember?

JR: I could probably categorize them in categories about how it made them feel. How disrespectful it was. They were the people, they were the students, the students were telling us, it's time to change. And almost all comments talked about the negative depiction, how badly they felt about seeing that. How wrong it was. That it had to change. In some instances there were tears. It's um, yeah it was, it was a difficult time. I mean to hear someone, and I never got that feeling by the way, from any of the older people who were making their points about why to keep it. Why we should keep it. I never felt the profoundness of statements from their rationale about why we should keep it. Why it should be kept. Compared to the students about how they felt about the logo and how it was depicted. That was far more powerful for me than positions about this has represented us, blah blah blah, keeps us in the forefront. No. Nothing negative is good to be kept in the forefront.

MJ: Last week we spoke to another person who was on that committee, the review committee, and she said that before the logo change process started, she didn't have much of an opinion on the logo. That she was kind of, she was kind of like, well if people think it needs to change, lets just change it. But then, once being in those meetings, she said that she saw one woman come in, a Native American mother come in, with her child, and it was just one of the most emotionally affecting presentations that she'd seen. And that is what put her firmly into the "change the logo" camp. I wasn't expecting to hear that there was so much emotionally charged...

JR: Oh yeah.

MJ: ...content to those meetings. You know.

JR: It really, it really was. When that happened, I think that those were some of the most profound moments for most people to try to internalize what they were hearing from individuals, about how it impacted their lives, and, how are they supposed to teach their kids to be proud about their heritage if they were seeing the negative depictions and what have you? And again, for me, there was never any question for me, because what I saw was a repeat of what had happened to Blacks over the years with the same kind of ugliness. It's...there's no difference. No difference whatsoever. And so it didn't matter whether there was a Native American or any other group of people who were experiencing that. It's the same. The foundation of what should be done, what is the right thing. It is the same because whenever anything makes someone feel so badly about seeing a depiction that is so ugly, why, what is it that would cause any human being not to respond positively to do the right thing?

MJ: Yeah.

JR: It just baffles my mind even to this day to some of the alumni's positions on this... it is just unexplainable. It's just, you can't. You cannot, you can't wrap your head around it, you can't explain it. Then you're forced to try to make a decision about "is this racism that I am seeing?" Is it? Does it come into the category of racism? And when you can explain something that is in your face but you don't want to say it out loud, it is what it is. Why would someone want to hang onto something knowing how it negatively impacts someone else? You have to ask yourself why. Why?

MJ: Mhm.

CT: I'm going to jump forward a little bit. That was a great response. So, three possible mascots were sent to the Board of Regents for a final decision: Express, Eagles, and Green Hornets. This was a tedious and time-consuming matter. How would you describe voting on these names? Was there, at any time, a vote cast just to get the process done and over with?

JR: [laughs] Um, I don't remember the specific details. Of who voted for what but I do recall that there were three. When the Board got those three recommendations, I think it took two votes, two different votes for them to get to Eagles. I don't remember the details about how the vote was put on the floor for the names, but I know that the first vote that went to the floor failed. So they did not get a name out of that one. Then, when the second vote went to the floor, I can recall, that only one Board member voted against Eagles, and I believe it was John Burton. If I'm not mistaken, and that confused me. Because at that point I am trying to understand, in the moment, never will forget this- because, remember, he was the Board chair when this all started and now he's a Board member...and he's the sole Board member who votes "no" to Eagles. I couldn't understand why, I don't think he was in favor of any of the three. Which then made me

start to question, is he in favor of keeping the Huron logo? Did someone get to him to say we should keep it? That was truly a possibility because the alumni especially really went hard after Board members to try to on the side, coerce them, convince them, to keep the logo, and the name. But when John Burton did that, it baffled me, it really did. Because of all the people who would have ever known anything about the Civil Rights [Movement] and been a forefront person in the Civil Rights {Movement}, it was John Burton. Truly John Burton. So, to this day, I don't know why he voted against Eagles.

MJ: Hmm.

JR: I don't know whether he thought it wasn't strong enough, but I don't know. It is the national symbol for everything else. I don't know to this day why, but he was the sole "no" vote.

MJ: That also baffled our class because we read the minutes. We read, we've got newspaper articles, we've got all kinds of administrative materials and we did our research and we came to that part and it just screeched to a halt.

JR: Yeah!

MJ: Why did he vote that way?

JR: Don't know and I never had a conversation with him about it. It may have been, I may be able to say that I was so disappointed in his vote because I knew him.

MJ: Mhm.

JR: And I knew his history. And I knew what he stood for. And how he had fought for Civil Rights for years, decades, and for him...it had to be something else. Maybe it was in the name itself. I don't know. Either that or maybe he had a point in his life that he didn't understand the vote. I don't know. It could have been a confused moment for him. To this day, I don't know. But he was up in age during that time period and was experiencing illness and maybe I am making excuses for something that really isn't there. Wasn't there at that time...but because I had so much respect for John Burton and his legacy, in Civil Rights, it truly baffled me when he voted no. Then I wondered if there had been another vote to say keep the name, what would have been his vote. I will never know.

MJ: Fascinating! Thanks for that. Hmm.

CT: Well you kind touched on both of my next questions, um, but I did want to go back, and I think you kind of briefly touched on this, as with any historical vote or issue there tends to be an outside pressure to vote a certain way. How would you describe outside influence that may have swayed any Board members' opinion on the logo?

JR: Massive. Massive. That's how I would describe the attempts to influence the Board otherwise. We would be at alumni events out of state and there would be local alumni who would have traveled to the out-of-state function and disrupted those activities. Chanting about Huron logos, making disparaging remarks about the president, a lot of discussions, I mean no one could go anywhere without being accosted somewhere. I mean, I would be in the grocery store and someone would come up to me and say, "Give me all of their reasons as to why we should keep it," and then someone else at another location would see me. It got to the point where I hated to go outside of my home. I wanted to just go home and then go to work and that's it, because there was only so much activity that they could do in the offices and on the campuses. But if they saw you out at any events and what have you, everybody made every effort to come up and give their position on it. Lots of people would say, "Yeah you cannot keep it, it's a no brainer." But there were more people and they were predominantly white males, few white females, but predominantly white males who were making the biggest case to keep it. Now, some of this, I would step back and think about, "Okay this is a financial implication for some of the business people who had used the Huron name for part of their business name." Because, now, they have to change everything. Business cards have to be changed. Letterheads have to be changed. Signs on buildings have to be changed. Really, it didn't. It really didn't because we weren't asking businesses to change their names. But those were the kinds of cases that they were making, you know that, "Well, I've had this name on my business for x number of years," but no one is telling you that you have to change your name. We're saying that *we're* changing the name. You want to keep it? That is your business. But then I would always say however, "I am not going to tell you that maybe your business will be impacted if you continue to say that name because people will boycott if those people don't support the use of the Huron name." I have to tell you that every opportunity that I could say that to a business person, I would, because I would be hopeful that it would be impactful. Because if you are willing to keep a name depicting something negative, you deserve the outcome of your business being impacted negatively by it. But yeah, they took every opportunity on the side, at activities, at events, protests. They did a little bit of everything. To do everything that they possibly could to influence in keeping the name and the logo. They were not settling for just keeping the name, they wanted the name and the logo. Then I think I mentioned to you before, some of the most disturbing things years later was to find the only female president, and I think I'm accurate on who allowed the band to have the logo sewn inside their uniforms. Now if I'm not mistaken the uniforms belonged to the institution; that was a clear violation. Clear violation of a Board decision that [the EMU logo] was no longer the [Huron] logo and to have given permission to anyone within any department to continue to use the logo

or the name is against Board policy. She should have been held accountable for that. Now, that, I am never going to change my position on. Totally irresponsible on her part.

CT: Um, okay yeah you kind of, my next question was going to be, what was the community response like, but you kind of got into that.

JR: Yeah, it was big.

CT: Yeah.

JR: Very big. But equally as big as some people, you know it's interesting for people who are against something, you get loud voices. For people who supported the initiative of changing the name, they weren't as vocal. And they needed to be. They needed to equal the loud voices of those people who wanted us to keep the name and the logo. They weren't nearly as vocal. They were supportive but they were quietly supportive but they were not loudly vocal.

CT: Okay. Sorry, if both of you see me moving around, I am yelling at my cat. I don't mean to be a distraction. I think you also briefly touched on this: who did the decision of changing the logo ultimately fall on? Because I think in some interviews we kind of had the impression that President Shelton and then some say the Board of Regents, so who would you say that decision fell on?

JR: Well clearly it was a Board decision because the president does not have the authority to make that kind change. The president's role in terms of policy is always to recommend policy to the Board. It is the Regents' responsibility and final decision in terms of either approving [or disapproving] a recommendation that came from the president. I would say that the process was totally, totally followed in terms of the president making a recommendation and the Board approving that. Approving or not approving a recommendation going from the president, but clearly the focus of those who wanted to keep the logo and the name was directed to the president and not so much to the Board. There were a few Board members who maybe got, you know, sidelined at some event and what have you, and had to listen to it, but it was mainly the focus of the ire of the people who did not want the change, and went to the president.

MJ: I think some of that comes out of the conversation we had with [former Regent] Richard Robb. He was quoted back then in a news article saying "We couldn't make a decision as a board so we wanted the president to do it." But then we have also heard from [former Regent Anthony] Derezinsky, who was very emphatic that the Board made that decision, so I'm wondering if maybe Robb meant when he said we wanted the president to do it, if he just meant he wanted the

president to deliver that address, to be kind of the public facing figure of the logo change. Maybe take the heat off of the Regents for a little bit.

JR: I don't know what the intent of his comment was but clearly the president recommends. The president has no final deciding factor of policy.

MJ: Ok.

JR: And that was a huge policy change. So I got to, from a Board member's perspective, I got to believe that Robb knew that when he said that, he meant that he needed the president to make a specific recommendation to the board.

MJ: Ok.

JR: So that the Board would not...

MJ: Ohh, yeah. Ok.

JR: Yeah. So the Board could say...would be able to act or not act on a specific recommendation because everything is done that way. They have the right to alter a recommendation or proposal for some change that comes from the president.

MJ: Ok.

JR: But, after the motion goes on the table, that is when you have the opportunity to say, or have the discussion, and say "I would propose a friendly amendment to what the president has put on the table." And that could have happened as well. They did not, because they really did want a specific recommendation, not a wishy washy one, half this, half that, what is the recommendation coming from the president? And gave him the responsibility to do all of the background work, the leg work about what it should be, and then deliver the message as to why he was making the recommendation, which, again, I would say is one of his defining moments in terms of making a really great statement as to why we needed to change it. Then the Board, if they have to listen to that and then make another decision, I don't know how they could have lived with themselves.

MJ: Ok.

JR: I mean if you really listened to the statement you didn't really have any other choice but to go with the recommendation that was put before them because to do otherwise would have

really, probably highlighted individuals depending on their vote in terms of where they stood on certain things that were happening in society. And nobody wanted that. Nobody wanted to be singled out. To say you could... what about this could you be against?

MJ: Well it sounds like maybe, what I am hearing is that maybe what Robb meant, and tell me if I am right or wrong, maybe what Robb meant when he said that is we need the president to kind of make up his own mind and make a decision for himself so that he can then make a recommendation to us. Is that kind of maybe...

JR: Yeah...

MJ: Ok.

JR: No...the president was pretty firm. I mean I never heard him waiver about where he was headed on that decision. Not ever. Not once.

MJ: Ok.

JR: Everybody had their own opinion. But I think that from his background and experiences, he knew he could not make any other recommendation than the one that he was going to put forth. I don't think he had a choice but to do that as an educator and a leader in higher education. He had no choice. That he did not have a choice, but to put forth the recommendation that he did. But more importantly, he believed in that recommendation. You can escape your responsibility by just putting it out there saying "I'm just going to get rid of this." But he believed in his recommendation, and is married now to a Native American.

MJ: Mhm! We met her, Paula.

JR: Paula, there you go. [laughs]

MJ: [laughs] She made sure he was operating Zoom correctly.

JR: [laughs] Good! Good.

CT: Okay moving forward I know you brought up your friend Kathy Tinney...

JR: Mhm...

CT: ...who has unfortunately passed, who we would have loved to interview. Can you tell us a little about your impressions of [former Vice President for Development] Kathy Tinney?

JR: I don't know many people, and I can truly say this, who are as sincere and truthful and caring and empathetic as Kathy Tinney was. Don't know many people. Very, very supportive of athletics and I think that if there was one thing that she did in her role then, because she was very, she was over in University Relations. So she took on some of the responsibility of supporting Gene Smith and his committee activity. And I think that she provided every opportunity for everybody to provide their input. I know what her position was at that time and it was that we had to change the logo and the name. But I think that the one thing that she did was to ensure that everyone had equal access and equal opportunity to voice their opinion. And then sometimes she would have to just cut it off, you're just not going to hear anything new. I think the committee stood too long, took too long, and as a result it just dragged things out so if there was any critical situation, criticism that I would have had about the committee and the involvement that Kathy had, the committee just took too long. It dragged out the situation. But in terms of Kathy's position on this, she knew that we needed to change. She was totally against seeing people um, you know, during the activities that she saw at the football games [inaudible]. A quietly effective individualist, is what she was. Quietly effective. Very supportive of women's sports as well.

CT: Backtracking again a little bit, I know you mentioned that the boardroom was kind of quiet, but I was wondering if you could describe the atmosphere of the room that night once the logo change decision had been made?

JR: I think that while the statement was being read, it was very very quiet. The minute that the Board finished its vote, it probably was quite probably for no more than five minutes before many of the anti-change folks who were in the room became very loud and boisterous. Then, from there on, every attempt was made to reverse those actions. From that day forward every attempt, every board meeting, every public event, every opportunity there was someone there representing, now what had become a formal organization within I guess the alumni or local folks, to change the name. They had bumper stickers made, "Once a Huron, Always a Huron." They had buttons. At every athletic event they marched and protested and were in the stands. I mean it was just an ongoing, seemingly endless nightmare of them. [laughs] It just was.

MJ: Yeah, Huron Restoration Incorporated.

JR: Yeah. Yup.

MJ: My students have been doing research and part of that research is a lot of these photocopied notes that were sent in. Written on the asks for donations from alumni when they would receive something in the mail, that said "Give to EMU ". They would send it back with, "Not until you change the name back."

JR: Oh yeah, yeah.

MJ: And I was wondering if like, did that make a dent in university finances? How big of a threat was that? Like the lack of giving by alumni who might be upset about the logo change?

JR: We were always being told that the alumni were not going to give as a result of the change and what have you, but from those very individuals who would write that, we would go quickly into the database to see, okay what have you done before? And how much are we going to lose?

MJ: Mhm.

JR: Zero. Or very small amounts that you wouldn't miss it if it had come out of your own checkbook. Your own bank account. I think that the one thing that I can say that maybe was impactful, was that the initiative of going with strengthening a foundation that would do fundraising and building dollars for scholarships and what have you, that got off to a very very slow start. The foundation was there and they had all of these ideas and concepts and growth and development of building a foundation for alumni to give, and I would think that that probably was slowed in terms of going forward. But in terms of the financial impact of these individuals who said it- they hadn't been impactful from the beginning, so we didn't feel that there was any major loss. But I don't think that it would have made any difference either. It would not have made any difference in terms of making the decision and the recommendations that were made. Because how do you measure, financially, the impact of something that negative has on an institution? What dollar amount would you put on it?

MJ: Mhm. Good question.

JR: Yeah. If anything, I would say that it would be in student enrollment maybe. Where the real dollars are. Except for institutions like the University of Michigan, and I will give you one good example, if you'll recall, the impact of a president at the University of Michigan having changed something that was affiliated with the stadium. The University of Michigan stadium, football stadium I believe. The alumni were so angry about it, that they did make a huge impact. Now it was about either the design or color that they had put on the stadium. Uh, how important is that to anything in the world? The color? The design? How important? Something that could

be so easily changed, and it did get changed because they made that big of a dent in the dollars that were coming in. And that much noise from the alumni because they had a bigger base. Our base for alumni, comparatively, was nothing. Our base for dollars, comparatively, the decision about a building and its color or design compared to the decision of something so human and so impactful, with the logo, and its impact on a people; think about that. It makes no sense to me what people think is important in their lives. Here we are talking about whether somebody is going to still give ten dollars to the foundation because you changed their logo and wrote it on a piece of paper and sent it in and then when we look we find out you maybe gave ten dollars in ten years. I don't know. But it did not have that great of an impact, the financial [impact], but what did have impact I think is that some of this did spill over to the legislature and we cannot forget that. You can't make a direct connection to the dollars that EMU did or did not get to that cause. But there were a lot of legislators who got involved in this debate about the name change. A lot. Some of them were alumni, others were not, but they jumped on the wagon because that was the next step in where the [pro-Huron] alumni went. They went to the legislators. It's insane for me to even try to comprehend why it was so important, to hold onto a name that was successful with a negative depiction. I will never ever ever comprehend that, never. But they did, they went to the legislator and so can you make a correlation between: did EMU get all of the state dollars that they should have? Because we were going through some financial situations during that time period where we were not getting big dollars from the state. We had to make cuts, we had to reduce some things, but can you make a correlation that the name change had anything to do with the legislative actions that supported the institution? Probably not, but in our heads we maybe could. But nothing concrete. But, we did see some financial challenges from the state level and I will say that I believe that the initiatives with our foundation were slowed, not stopped, but slowed. As a result of not being able to kick off big campaigns and that kind of thing, until years later.

MJ: Ok.

CT: I think you kind of briefly touched on how there was talk at the time of the EMU logo change, but you know, EMU was one of the very first institutions to change their Native logo. How do you think the logo change has affected EMU's identity nationally?

JR: Well, somebody had to be first. Unfortunately, it was EMU, we were first. I would say that that is the direct impact of the students and particularly Native American students. Now you talk about being proactive, I think it was their initiative that required us to be first, to take a look at this. Because I do not think that any of the other regional institutions were taking this on. I believe that Central Michigan University had a logo, a Native American logo, Chippewa's maybe? I don't know any of the others. Lots of high schools, but yeah, we were the first and I think that if nothing else we probably provided some insight for those institutions and other

institutions, high schools as well as colleges and universities, to take a look at the process. And how it could best unfold. If you are going to take it on, what can you learn from EMU's experience that you can perhaps avoid or duplicate? Well I think that was the influence of it, but somebody had to be first and we were it.

CT: Yeah. Alright, moving forward, is there anything else you would like to say for the record?

JR: Haha! For the record [laughs]

MJ: [laughs]

JR: I think that, for the record, I am personally proud to have been at the institution during a time of such profound change that made a difference. I am proud of the decision that was made. I am proud of the fact that Dr. Shelton had the fortitude that supported his decision to stand for what was right. Again, his statement, and I'd read a lot of Dr. Shelton's statements, but this by far was the most profound that I had ever seen or read that he had delivered. And the sincerity in which he delivered it! It's too bad that that was not recorded somewhere along the lines. So to broaden, to paint this picture that Bill Shelton had somewhat of a southern accent, coming out of Tennessee I believe (so you contrast that with the words that were coming out of his mouth), that a lot of people who have ideas about southern accents. Because we all come with our internal concepts about what "south" means and people who come from the south, but for him, his sincerity and reading this piece that he had written, and then making that recommendation- it is a lasting piece of history that I think even to this day is not fully appreciated by the people who will come after. [The people] who were there when it was happening and who will come after, because most of the students coming in now, they are Eagles. They don't have the history about [the] Huron. They may learn about it in history class some place, maybe there are some faculty members who still remember and they bring it up in a class discussion or something like that, or similar activities like this where it is an actual assignment. But, the students who came after that, they came as Eagles. That is the profoundness of it. That we went through all of that and now the students are Eagles and they could have cared less about what happened back with the Hurons because it is gone. It is done. We are not doing it anymore and it was the right decision, the right recommendation and I think that Bill Shelton probably paid a price in his presidency for that decision. But it was so the right decision, to make that recommendation.

MJ: You know, in my first conversation with Shelton, on the phone, just like how I called you. I called him and he didn't know who I was and he was [laughs] he was a little cagey at first, "What do you want? You're calling from EMU."

JR: [laughs]

MJ: So I told him what we were doing, and I said “There is an oral history project that we would like you to be a part of it,” and he was like, “What is it about?” And I said, “It’s about the logo change.” And he was just like, “Ugh. I knew it. You know I did other things while I was there, right?” I thought maybe that he was afraid that that was all he would be remembered for. Not that that’s something entirely bad to be remembered for, it seems like a good legacy to leave, but I could tell he would have rather been interviewed about another, maybe a different facet [of his tenure at EMU].

JR: Yeah.

MJ: Because it was something that he was so um aligned for. And when we interviewed him, it was really poignant, at one point when he talked about, “Here I was, I was a brand new president, and immediately I’m finding myself in the boardroom between Robb, Richard Robb, and I think maybe Regent Clifton...”

JR: Mhmm.

MJ: “...just being reamed out by the public. You know, just being ripped and I had to just sit there and take it.” But that must have been kind of good for you and other people to see that part of his character, that he maybe would not lash out the way other people might. That he would just absorb the criticism. Did that go through your mind?

JR: Well I think that, I think more than anything, you know when you take on those kinds of high level positions and what have you, there is a level of expectation that some of that comes with the territory. So you know that coming in. You know if you’re a seasoned leader, I am sure that that is not the first that he had to sit and hear something that he really didn’t care to have to listen to, even when he was at Kent State. But in this instance, he was so new.

MJ: Yeah.

JR: I mean they would jump all over him, from that point, and again if we had to do it all over again, is that the right thing to do. They should have taken care of that before he came. After all, we’re talking about ’88: they had a whole year if not longer to have done that. I believe he started his presidency in ’89. So they waited. They certainly didn’t take it on when John Porter was there, why not? Why?

MJ: In your words, why didn’t they?

JR: Good question!

MJ: Hmm.

JR: I mean John Porter, I think, was president for ten years. I worked with him over those years and maybe they did and he said "I am not touching it," who knows?

MJ: Hmm.

JR: But it fell on Bill Shelton and truly did somewhat define his presidency and is totally, you are right, there's nothing wrong with that being part of your era.

MJ: Mhm.

JR: Because you made a profound decision, but there is so much more to higher education than a doggone logo.

MJ: [laughs]

JR: [laughs] So much more!

MJ: Yeah.

JR: And I think that it was that and his aligning with the AAUP, not with the Faculty Council, and not with the union, that also kind of went parallel in terms of defining it, because that union was...it was, you talk about awful. They too were awful! And I am never taking that out of my comments either, because they were awful. They just were. Way over the line in terms of being a union versus being an academic policy maker for the institution coming from the faculty. That should be separate. But they were enmeshed in and involved in every aspect no matter what and there were individuals who took advantage of the logo issues to support their union position against the president. They aligned.

MJ: We have another oral history series in development now about AAUP so maybe we will have to have you back on that one.

JR: [laughs] Yeah, interesting topics!

MJ: Yeah. Ok.

CT: Ok.

JR: I am looking at my watch because I do have to go shortly.

CT: I just have one more question...

JR: Ok.

CT: ...and then we are done. I know you mentioned Roy Wilbanks and Courtney McAnuff, is there anyone else you would recommend us speaking to?

JR: I think you heard you say that you did talk to Tony Derezinsky and Rich Robb, right?

MJ: Mhm, yup.

JR: Did you talk to Jimmy Clifton?

MJ: No, but he is on my short list!

JR: Yeah, I think you should. He [is] sometimes here in Michigan, he is between Michigan and Florida most times, but yeah I think you should.

MJ: Ok.

JR: Those would be the individuals that I would suggest that maybe you touch base with and then they may have some recommendations as well. I don't know if you have talked to any of the supporters of keeping the logo.

MJ: That is what I will be after this class is over.

JR: Ok.

MJ: Hopefully with some student volunteers like Cheyenne, maybe, you want to help [laughs].

JR: [laughs]

MJ: I have some names from that organization and I have talked to a few of them too.

JR: Yeah, yeah. Hmm.

MJ: So...okay.

JR: Interesting times, very interesting times.

MJ: Yeah. Well thank you so much!

JR: Yes, it has been very very, it's been delightful, it made me really start to think back about those days when we were going through it. It was an experience, one that I shall never forget  
[laughs]

MJ: Well I hope that these oral histories make it so not many people do forget.

JR: Yeah. Well what I am hoping is that oral histories will help us to not repeat the mistakes of the past.

MJ: Yup.

JR: I'm not convinced that that is the case, but....

MJ: We're trying.

JR: Yeah, it won't be because of lack of trying.

MJ: Yeah, yeah, and I have to say that you are just a wonderful interviewee. I feel like that you know what the importance of oral history is and you really, I couldn't think of a better person for Cheyenne, a beginning interviewer to sit with, this was just wonderful, thank you.

JR: Thank you for the compliment, I appreciate that. Cheyenne, I have enjoyed talking with you and I don't see you on the screen. Is she with her cat?

CT: Oh, no, no, I am still here. [laughs] The cat, I got my sister to take care of the cat. Um, he's so naughty.

JR: [laughs] Yeah, so if something comes up after this, that you want some clarification or anything like that, but I would like to hear it before you publicize it, if you don't mind. But it has

been enjoyable. You too have an interesting background in what you have been raised and more importantly I liked hearing that you challenge, that is good.

CT: Thank you, thank you!

MJ: Yeah...

JR: Really good. That's good. That is how we implement change- to just challenge it a little bit, make people think differently about, or seeing just another little bit of a difference inside of something, and if they stay where they are that is one thing. But it is not because they have not been shared with what another side is and then you make a decision and move on. But if you are anything like me, you will continue to try to convince and that is good. That is what we are supposed to do.

MJ: Mhm, mhm.

CT: Mhm.

MJ: Man, do we have to hang up?

[all laugh together]

JR: Unfortunately I have to go and try to get more shots in arms for this vaccine. We're spiking here in Michigan and I have been setting up vaccination clinics all over the city of Detroit. I think that we have done a really good job with the older population in the city, but now it is hitting the younger population. I think that our rollouts strategy from the national perspective was to stop the spread amongst people who were dying the fastest and those were the older populations, so we should have been able to in a country this size. With this amount of resources, to have been able to do both rather than do these levels because now the group that we have now put aside, they're being hit the hardest.

MJ: Mhm, mhm.

JR: The forty and younger, twenty to forty year olds, they are in hospitals now.

MJ: Mhm, mhm.

JR: Lots of them.

MJ: Yeah.

JR: Yeah and we cannot get them to give the shots so we have a lot of other people that we are pushing to get shots in arms. Even if we get one shot in, it is better than none, because it gives some protection, but boy it just, convincing some people that, to take it...

MJ: Yeah...

JR: It is beyond my comprehension because I keep saying to people that the virus kills. The vaccine has not killed anybody and if someone did die as a result of the vaccine, it is not at the same level as people who are dying of the virus. It's a no brainer here.

MJ: Yeah. Yeah. I still see and hear friends say things like, well so and so got it after the shot, and I'm like yeah okay them and the other .00000008% of people who have had that happen, yes. But don't...

JR: Yeah, they never promised...the virus never promised that you would not get it, but they are saying that you are not as ill and you're unlikely to die as a result of getting it.

MJ: Right.

JR: But with no protection, there is no guarantee.

MJ: Yeah.

JR: And your odds are greatly against you if you have no vaccine.

MJ: Yeah.

CT: Mhm.

MJ: Well I am glad you are doing that.

JR: Thank you!

MJ: Yeah [laughs]

JR: Have a great day, both of you.

MJ: Alright.

CT: Alrighty. Thank you so much, Juanita!

JR: Thanks a lot! I appreciate it.

MJ: Okay!

JR: Bye, bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION 1:57:18]