Transcription of interview (10.27.16) with Jim Carter on
the start of the American Indian program at NMU

[question: how did you get involved with this American Indian program?] There wasn't a big, formal startup of the program. I have a little Indian blood in me, Ojibwa, and I have relatives up in Keweenaw Bay and over in the Sault, but I don't identify myself with that and I didn't have much interest in that. One time there was meeting in Marquette, possibly sponsored by the BIA [Jim can't remember], but there was a man there named Herman Cameron of Bay Mills Reservation. He was well along in years but quite active in Indian affairs down there. I was assigned to cover the meeting, and it wasn't a large meeting, and Herman was there as part of a panel. He did talk about the injustices and problems of the Native Americans. It opened my eyes a lot. Herman wasn't a firebrand or anything like that, but he really inspired me. I ended up writing the article for the Mining Journal, but a year or two later I was at NMU in Research in Development in 1968. In the spring of 1969, Pat Ferrell, head of Research and Development, had a stroke and then he never came back to the office. So, the administration asked me to take over the Research and Development Office. The whole thing about the Indians came to my attention. Jerry Defante [editor's note: it seems likely that the transcriber incorrectly spelled the name of Geri (Geraldine) DeFant, a local labor leader and politician], who was involved in a lot of union activities and in helping people, referred an Indian student to come talk to my office. He was an older fellow, and wanted to improve himself, and he was shy. He and I just connected and I got to thinking about the problems of the Native Americans, and the discrimination, and the injustices. I wasn't the type to go out in the street and raise hell, but thought there was a lot that could be addressed.. There was a lot of ferment around the country [because of] the Vietnam War. I had always been a writer and had a tendency to express myself that way. I wrote a white paper, even though I never did anything like that before. I sent it around to the President and Vice President and various people on campus and tried out outline various things NMU could get involved in. President Jamrich had just come that year and I did not know he had quite a strong personal interest in Native Americans. He hadn't expressed that, but then again he had just gotten to NMU. But anyway, I did a lot of this in a naïve way. Not that I was thinking I would start something, but I rather I felt something should be done, and I did it, and I didn't know how far it would go. There wasn't a long term plan or anything. But I wrote the white paper and sent it around. I heard a few of the VPs commenting and he thought, "This is great" even though I wasn't expecting anything. The Research and Development Office was pretty flexible. The Development side of the office was pretty open ended and I could do most anything I wanted with the budget as long as it was reasonable.

We had a VP of Academic Affairs, and when Pat was out with a stroke and I was filling in we were under his jurisdiction….[Jim had to stop and think about the sequence of activities. He continued]. There was a Jacob Vinecur...[he stops and laughs and asks me if I know him]. In the meantime, I was kind of talking to people and we formed a Native American Advisory Committee. Nobody from the higher administration told me I could do that. That shows how naïve I was. I believed if you want to do something, go ahead and do it. So we got up this committee and one thing we [did right was] got off on the right track. Universities at that time [in regards to how they normally would work] would picked out the people they wanted to work with and then would decide what they were going to do about the Indians. What we thought we would do was create a committee of Indians and have them tell us what we should do, what they wanted done. A lot of times Indian programs at the time didn't go very far

[because a group of university personnel] would tell them this is what we are doing for you, and the Indians weren't involved. Jake Vinecur wasn't a very good communicator or affable person. One day I got a phone call and it was Jake on the line. He said "Who the Hell gave you permission to start an Indian program here?" I just sort of mumbled and replied, "Nobody had [laughter]". So anyway, that is part of the genesis of the Indian program.

We got a good committee together by asking other Indians who should be part of the group, and got Indians from Keewenaw Bay, Sault Ste Marie (Mike Wright steered me on to people), then we got a great Pottawatomi down from Grand Rapids, Wills Jackson from Mt. Pleasant, the Dominicks from Petoskey (husband and wife). Then we got a guy from Bemidji, MN because we were interested in academic programs and they had an academic program there for Indians. Then we got a guy, Kelly Paroa [sp ??] from L'Anse, and they had an office for Economic Development [can't remember the exact name, but it had Council in it]….anyway Kelly had a lumberyard and he headed the Council up. Very sharp guy. We had a pretty good cross section of Indians. The guy from Bemidji was an educator. The Pottawatomi I think had a connection from Michigan State. We had a meeting up in Zeba, which is just east of L'Anse in the Indian community on the Bay. We went up because we wanted to go to them. So we went to the meeting and Dr. Strolle had replaced Jake Vinegar as Graduate Dean and Continuing Education VP and we [Research and Development] were under him. Strolle went up with him and Lew Peters [his first wife was an Oneida from Wisconsin and he was very interested in Indians]. There were some Indian leaders there that really raked us under the coals. They ask us "Do you really want to help us, and find out what we really need?" We went up there wanting to know what they needed and it was a frank meeting. The tribal chairman, Fred Dakota, was not at that meeting. The Keweenaw Bay people set up the meeting. We talked about stuff like Indian culture, preserving their language, educational opportunities. We kept in touch with them as we were developing the program. Dr. Strolle and Dr. Jamrich were very supportive of Indians. JXJ let us carry the ball, but the President had our backs on a number of things. One day Kelly Paroa came down from L'Anse or up from St. Ignace [Jim can't remember] and we had a good meeting, and he said one of the main things they needed as Indians was a way of communication, like a newspaper. The secular press wasn't giving Indians very good ink at that time. It was always slanted just like we did with Blacks. Kelly was trying to get a paper funded and told me a number of foundations that he approached through this Michigan Council that was located at the Sault or St. Ignace. They all thought it was a great idea but they turned him down. [Kelly wanted not] a daily or weekly newspaper; just a periodical. I thought it was a good idea and have been [involved] with newspapers, and in Research and Development we are writing grants all the time. So I thought I will give grant writing a try for this project. The president [Jamrich; Jim stops to think about who he got permission from to pursue this grant for the newspaper; he knows he got permission from Strolle and is pretty sure he got permission from Jamrich]….We tried all the major foundations, including the Ford Foundation and all the biggies, and I had a grant directory that I used for other grants. So I did a series of applications and had the same results as Kelly did. They didn't want to get into an Indian newspaper [question: Why do you think that was?]. [He said] It was considered…just the same reasons why they wouldn't fund a black newspaper at the time. They were all nice, but they turned us down. We had some students, Mike Wright, who came from the Sault, and the word was getting around that NMU was trying to do something with the Indians, we were picking up a few students. President Jamrich must have known about our efforts, [Jim ponders] I must have communicated to him about our efforts to start a newspaper and I just couldn't find any money, and I had contacted some printers and knew what kind of money we needed. And the students….I still have a picture somewhere where we met for the

first time in Kaye Hall with a nucleus of students forming the Nishnawbe News. So the President said "How much do you need?" Well we needed $10,000 to get things going and to maybe to publish for a year. So the President said he will take it out of his discretionary fund. And he, President, funded the Nishnawbe News, and that is how we got started.

The Nishnawbe News was a real catalyst and [provided] a communication needs for the Indian community. It turned out we were going all over the United States, not in great numbers as the largest circulation we had was 7,000, but it covered all the reservations in Michigan, and Canada and this general area. And word got out, and we got requests from libraries, both the United States and Canada, and government offices, and it went to very influential communities, Indian and otherwise. At that time there were three major Native American papers that got going all about the same time. There was Akwesasne Notes, that the Mohawks were publishing in up in northern New York State in Roosevelt town New York, the Nishnawbe News, and then there was Wasahaw which was started…well backing up, the Akewsasne Notes was started just like the Nishnawbe News. The University of Connecticut got it going but then that was a pretty outspoken paper and they got it off their campus pretty quick. It had to go off on its own, and I had pressure at Northern too. Dr. Niemi , VP of Student Affairs, he said "we have to get this paper off campus" this was after a year or so. Course we never did. Then one of the campus' in the University of California system started Washahaw just like we did, just like the University of Connecticut did, and it was published in conjunction with the university, but I think that was off campus too after a while. So those were the three major Native American papers at the time. [I asked what was the reason for wanting the papers off campus?] Because things were really happening with the Native American community. They were starting to really speak up for themselves, and you know about Wounded Knee out there? We had students on the paper that were very sympathetic with AIM, the American Indian Movement, which was involved at Wounded Knee. And a lot of things were happening then and some things were kind of unsettling or controversial [I commented "Just prejudices against Indians by white people at the time then?"]. Prejudice? Well [the Indian movement] was parallel to the black movement at the time. In fact, some of the higher ups at NMU, one of the VPs wanted to combine the Native American and black programs. Lots of that stuff were happening. Boy, the Indians didn't have any prejudices against the blacks, but they didn't want be in with the blacks, they wanted their own [program], and I think the blacks felt the same way. We were developing these things at Northern. I wasn't involved with the blacks, but I was with the Indians. So anyway, the paper wasn't something that was a flaming radical thing at all. The thing I want to emphasize. Once we got the ball a rolling we had some Indian students that were outstanding. I didn't do any writing for the paper. I got it going and kept an eye on stuff and kept close communications on the students. Then on my R&D budget we had student labor money, there were no restrictions. For a while there I paid the salaries for student labor. We didn't leave any stone unturned. As long as I didn't catch Hell for it [laughter]. Anyway, we had all kinds of stuff in it, but the students generated it. There was a guy in Marquette Prison, and he had a really deep interest in the Ojibwa Language, and he did a regular column on the language. We had a news on reservations, particularly on the ones in our service area. They had letters to the editor, recipes, anything of interest to the Indian community. Then we had an Indian fellow, at the eastern end of the U.P., and he was an excellent pen and ink artists. Indian people liked to have illustrations. Our masthead was always a pen and ink thing. Indians were involved with the paper who weren't at Northern or who even lived around here. The paper brought people together in a way that hadn't happened before because a newspaper can do that. We started out as a tabloid, and we would bring everything up to the Globe in Ispheming and they would put everything in tabloid form probably every

month or six weeks. That's how long it took for the students [to complete an issue of the paper as they had to] to come in on their own time…we always had an office in old Kaye Hall, and one at the University Center.

One thing we covered too, we brought in some top Native Americans to campus. LaDonna Harris, who headed the Americans for Indians Opportunity and her husband was a democratic senator (Fred Harris) from Oklahoma. She was sharp. Part Comanche. She was a sharp woman and NMU gave her an honorary doctorate later on. We got her, and then we brought in someone from the Indian Health service. And Jamrich was behind us all the time. And to show you to what the extent we brought a leading American pianist and composer. He created really good music. JXJ would have a reception at his house for each one of these people. Then we had Beatrice Medicine. She was a Sioux and had her doctorate. She came. They all came and visited classes and gave presentations. Later on she received an honorary doctorate. Extremely capable people. [question: After that initial meeting with the Native Americans, what was the vision you took back to NMU in regards to what you wanted to do?]. The newspaper was the centerpiece because it pulled everything together. We didn't have an overall vision, even after the meeting. We had a vision about what we wanted to help the Indians do. It was never we are going to do this, we are going to do that… It was developed by the Indian people, making suggestions this is what we need, this is what we need, and then we went to work on it.

To give you an example, the Franciscan Fathers had this big Indian school north of Baraga. There was a big building that looked like the orphanage; the Franciscans were closing this school. It was a good building. Really well maintained, and they gave it to the Indian community. Beautiful location, right near Bishop Baraga's original mission house. Most everything was cleaned out of the building, but in the basement there was a printing press and a bunch of lead type that the Fathers used to do printing and stuff. Not a stick of furniture was left, but just the press. So, Fred Dakota, tribal chairman, was trying to think about what to with the building. They were thinking of moving their tribal offices there, but Hell it was such a big building for that. Fred said what they really need is some training for office management and that kind of stuff to run their businesses. Jim Gadell [sp??], ran our Business Education programs or one of the programs. So we met with Jim and Fred Dakota and some others up there and we asked them what kind of classes or instruction would you like? They outlined what their need was. Jim then, through his Department set up some courses that we would go up there to teach. But there wasn't any desks up there, no file cabinets, or nothing. NMU had a bunch of stuff like that in storage through some federal grant that we were finished with. The equipment was on a permanent loan. We loaded up a big truck with all kinds of goodies and brought it up there and gave it to them. So that go them started. They got desks for their offices and classrooms, along with file cabinets and other stuff. So our people went up there and held classes in what we called the Tribal Center. That was in the summer, but they had a coal fired furnace and didn't have any coal. The Sault line railroad was running then and they had a coal yard and they volunteered to load up coal and bring it right up to the Tribal Center as the railroad ran right past it. That fired them through one winter. So that's how it worked. There wasn't a grand program. It just kind of grew like Topsy you know? [question: Did you meet with the Indian Advisory group every so often to get feedback?]. We did not meet very often. Occasionally they would come to campus, but we were in constant contact with them. We would pick up the phone and call someone or a group of people; whoever would be most likely to help us with certain things. Or they would come by themselves or a few others an meet on this project or that project [time on recording 48.29]. One of the things when we first started the Nishnawbe News, the Indian students got

the idea we should have an Indian Awareness Week. We never had anything like that. [It was felt] it would make the whole university and Marquette community aware of Indian culture. It wasn't really designed for protest of anything like that, but more positive. So we did it. The first Indian Awareness Week was in November or October, I don't remember, but anyway Ladonna Harris came as a special guest. And they had a parade on campus and we got a good image in the Nishnawbe News with our students marching with Ladonna Harris carrying a banner on campus in front of old Kaye Hall. We then started to bring notable Indian people, like the author who wrote "Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee" and then we had others like Floyd Westerman [political activists for Native American causes], he came two or three times, and we was great on the guitar and recorded several record albums. One Indian Awareness week Floyd came, Ladonna came, and we had one Indian, Coy Eckland who came from the Seney Stretch in a place called Walsh. It is no longer there, but was halfway between Shingleton and Seney. Coy went to school in Munising, then he joined the Equitable Insurance Company, and by the time we had our Indian event he was the president of the company in New York. He wasn't Indian, but his father was, and Coy was fluent in Ojibwa and very interested in doing things for Native Americans. He and Ladonna were really good friends as he was very supportive of woman's rights at the time, Native Americans, and was president of one of the biggest life insurance companies. [Jim tells story of Floyd, Coy and Ladonna being in the bar at the Landmark with Jim and Coy taking a request from Jim and played a modified version of "This Land is Your Land" on his guitar]. Coy ended up publishing an Ojibwa dictionary, but some Indians told me it wasn't very good. Coy wanted Northern to publish it but I ran it by our Indian people and they didn't want to hurt his feelings you know; it wasn't really that great. Eventually the Equitable Life Insurance Company gave him money to publish it.

Anyway, I am getting pretty far afield here, but there wasn't any grand plan, and it just grew and grew because the Indians led us to where we should go. [question: was there any talk about developing a curriculum?]. That was always at the back of our mind. The Indian guy we brought from Bemidji State and was an Ojibwa on the faculty, he was more of the academic type and so was the Potawatomi down near Kalamazoo. We brought this Indian guy from Bemidji on campus to pick his brain on how they got their academic program going and what they were offering. There weren't many [programs] offered in the United States then, even out in….[changes direction] I think the University of Arizona had something at the time, but it was uncharted territory from an academic standpoint. The Indian from Bemidji gave us some material that outlined their program, which wasn't a very big one, but they did have some courses. Then I wrote some memos and sent them around. We had some academic people too [associated with the effort], like Lew Peters and others, and we tried to get interest around the campus. They [unknown who they is, likely the committee of Indians or the guy from Bemidji] gave us some programs that would be good to develop academically….[question: when was this approximately] Oh this was before 1975 or so. We had CUP [to go through] and somebody on the academic side had to take the ball and go forward with it. [question: did you have support from faculty at all?]. Not really for academics. We had a lot of things going for the Indians as time went on. Other types of programs. We brought a lot of people on campus. It wasn't too long before Northern had a reputation as a place that was happening for Indians. [question: more so than any other place in the state?]. I wouldn't say we were the leading school, but we sure were in the forefront. A number of the issues that the Indians brought up we got into and developed things, but they weren't academic. You know a lot of things go on in the university that aren't officially or formally academic. And that's where we started because we didn't have to get approval from everybody. I was never an academic person, and had nothing anything against academics, but sometimes there is an attitude among academics, a

holier than thou view. If you are not an academic they don't listen to you too much. [question: how did Strolle react to you?]. Strolle always gave us support. [goes off on tangent] One time when AIM was going strong and there were problems out at the reservation, serious ones, we were reporting it. We had our Indians students in touch with people who were right there and we were having stories about what was actually going on. They weren't stories [that took] on one side or another, but of course Indians had definite sympathies. I was visited one time by an FBI agent, and we had a good conversation and I was total open with him. He could see the university or the newspaper had no official ties with AIM, but it was one of the important things going on with Indians at the time. We couldn't ignore what was going on in South Dakota. He was just trying to check out what type of ties we had and what involvement we had, but I must have satisfied him because I never heard from him again. We had some criticism from within the institution. Part of it was maybe we should get the newspaper off campus. Earl McIntyre was director of Communications, we weren't under him, but obviously he had a vested interest in what we were doing. One time he said "we need to get this thing off campus", but it didn't go. I never had any arguments about people about any of the Indians, the program and newspaper. I heard what they said. I listened to them. We had good conversations and did what we thought should be done, and nobody blocked us. [question: did anyone from the Indian Advisory Committee recommend or push for an academic program of sorts?]. Well, I'll tell you. At that time there was very few Native Americans that had a college degree. You wouldn't really think that was the case, but it was. Higher degrees you could count them on the fingers of two hands. I am sure they were scattered around, particularly in the Southwest or in California. There wasn't much of a value towards it as there was later. The basic things then were just like with the Blacks, to get basic rights.

The Indians had treaty rights from the beginning of this country, but they were never enforced, just like the fishing around here. We had Fred Hatch; he was from the Sault. He was one of our major consultants and he would come up a lot. Fred and I became real good friends. His father, Fred Sr., was for years the head of the band of Chippewa Indians at the Sault that covered the whole east end. Well Fred Jr. was studying to get his law degree, right when we were doing all of this. So one of his main things was so many of these rights granted to the Michigan Indians were never realized because for one thing the law enforcement people and legislators just kind of ignored them. So they didn't have their fishing rights. They didn't have their hunting rights. This was the early 1970s. So Fred was getting his law degree so he could get into that. In the meantime, he was running an office in the Sault for the Indians and it was [Jim can't remember exactly] state funded or maybe federally funded, and he was advising the Indians of their legal problems, but he wasn't an attorney. He did get his law degree and it was Fred that got into forming the cases that were brought before the Supreme Court in subsequent years. And the newspaper had covered a lot of that. All kinds of stuff in the Nishnawbe News on informing the Indian people. The newspaper at that time was a central force or entity in informing the Indian people of major things going on. The secular press wasn't covering it like that. We covered it and had sources like Fred Hatch. And he was outspoken, but a good guy, a hard worker, and totally dedicated. He gave me some of his manuscripts when he was forming his cases and I had those a long time.

Fred Jr.'s. son, John Hatch, was editor of Anishawnabe News for a while, a Northern student who graduated with a degree here, along with his sister, Nancy Hatch. John was editor for quite a while and his dad was doing a lot of the legal end of it so we carried a lot of information in the newspaper. The Native Americans in this area were really well informed about what was going on and what they [Fred

Hatch and the tribes] were trying to do. So when you ask [in reference to my questions about academics] weren't the Indians more interested in academics, yeah but there was some very major, basic stuff, like these treaty rights that Northern, through the Nishnawbe News, had a major role in disseminating information and keeping the people [Indians] informed. Fred Hatched used it [the newspaper] and we were happy to be used. So there were some really important things we were involved with at Northern that we were helping that were not academic, but were more important than the academic. I can't overemphasize that. We were involved in a lot of things. Indian students were coming [to Northern] and they were almost apologetic. They had this confidence and pride, but it was hidden under so much crap, discrimination and all that [stuff going on] for years and years. To see these Indian students come and develop pride and a sense they can do things for themselves, get these things going, it was just… [Jim pauses and breaks up]. They had suffered so much…..[long pause as he composes himself]…. So anyway, we had a lot of stuff on our plate and we worked hard, and Dr. Strolle was behind us. Dr. Jamrich was wonderful, but stayed way in the background. He never projected himself, but always was there and he did very kind things like these receptions at his house. [question: were there any forces against you at the university?]. There wasn't anything like that. For better or worse I had free range over the thing. There was nothing when we started. The Indian people had been discriminated against and their culture shattered for so long.

[question: did the program continue to grow or did it reach stagnation at some point?]. No, it didn't really reach stagnation. What happened that goes against so many things was the finances. I left Research and Development in 1975, Dr. Strolle retired, I went over to the Communications Office, but I still kept being an advisor and working with the Nishnawbe News, right up until the original expired. We had an office set up for American Indian programs and they were not academic programs, but helped Indian students with financial aid and all kinds of stuff that affected Indian students. [question: I asked about Robert Bailey, the first director of the American Indian programs]. I ran the thing until 1972, just in the R&D Office. I never had a formal title. Bob [Robert Bailey] was the first one they brought in and had the title of director of American Indian programs. He was an Ottawa from the Traverse City area and had been teaching high school in Lansing and had a degree from MSU. Really good guy. We became really good friends, to the point he took a bunch of us fishing every year up in Canada in the boonies. So anyway, Bob Bailey was our first one [director] and he served until 1978. And then we had….[trying to remember the names, says he has a list of directors and he gave it to the Archives at NMU; I mention the second director was a female, but cannot remember her name]…yeah, she didn't stay very long. Then we had a guy from California; he was here several years. [long pause] I can't remember all of them, but I worked with them. I made it point even though I was in Communications. [returns to his statement back a little ways about finances]. Michigan had a real sharp downturn in the 1980s involving the auto industry and so forth, and Northern, along with other universities, was really in a bind. Things were really tight. We tried the best we could to keep Nishnawbe News going. We got a grant here and a granting agency in England gave a couple thousand dollars. And we kept going to 1982. The Indian program didn't collapse or anything, but we just didn't have the money for the newspaper. The university was charging us $1500 for the Indian office. Maybe it wasn't $1,500, but it was over a $1000. Then there was printing costs. We just couldn't do it anymore. We tried to convert it into a quarterly, but there wasn't even money for that. Nancy Hatch [possibly director of American Indian programs?] had her hands full keeping her office going over there, and so we just had to let it go.

The seed was still there and that is what started the new Nishnawbe News, which comes out as a quarterly. It is all done on computer which saved us a lot of money because you didn't have to have a….[Jim now goes off on a tangent on the process of printing before computers] first of all we developed an office, this was an offset, we had a paint [?? Hard to tell what he says] stub, you didn't have hot lead, but you had to have a way to set type, and then you wax the back of the galleys, and paste it all up on layout sheets. Then you brought the layout sheets to the printer, who took a picture of them and made a plate and then made the newspaper. We built long desks with a slant that you could stand at and lay out the paper. We couldn't afford any cartographic [hard to tell the word he used; 1:18:24 on the recording] machine to set it up in columns. The Mining Journal would it set it up for us in galleys. So the students would send a copy down to the Journal, and the Journal would set it up. Then we would bring it back to campus, and we had a waxer, and you would run it through there. Then we had….I think the headlines had to be set up at the journal too. We didn't have a headline machine. So all that had to be laid out. The students laid out the paper. I went over there, because someone had to teach them how to do that and I had known that [part of the process from working in newspapers prior to coming to Northern]. We would go over there and lay out the paper on layout sheets. We would put the plates for the photos and we had to resize the photos, and put black paper where the photos go. We called those flats. We would take the flats down and had to bid them out to get the cheapest price. The Manistique Pioneer Tribune gave us the best bid and so we would get a station wagon and the editor, myself, and some of the staff would go down and they would run it off the press while we were there and we would load it up and bring it home. I tell you, those students were resourceful. There was this one woman from the Sault, an older woman, and boy was she a good cook. She would load up a big picnic basket and we would take the flats and we would stop at some nice place along Lake Michigan when we got to Manistique and we would have a big picnic [before going to the newspaper]. Then later the Gladstone Reporter got the contract. That was my only hands-on part of the paper. They [students] wrote it. I didn't edit it ahead of time. The only thing I told them was you had to be careful with was letters to the editor. They had to be accurate. You had to be a little more careful. Sometimes letters weren't fit to be published. They did everything, the students. I can't say enough about those students, their abilities. They were not trained in journalism. [upon graduation] Students didn't have a hard time getting a job if they said they were from the Nishnawbe News. It was a miracle as far I can tell.

[Jim randomly comes back to the academic issue]. I just didn't make any progress. We just had so many problems that we had to focus on, and put our energies on that came before academics. What the program did at Northern was get Indians on their feet, with advisors and focus on the things that they thought were most important to accomplish. During those first 5-6 years that's what we did. We never took our eyes off an eventual academic program, and we brought people on campus to advise us, but we didn't have a realization for the need for academic programs in the Indian area. Very few colleges were going into it. Even our universities in Michigan [weren't doing it]. So Northern was in virgin territory. Eventually as the program evolved and matured, there was more realization and support within the faculty. [mentions, but cannot remember the name of the head of the English Dept. and his wife who were supportive of Indians, and Pish Cianciolo]. I was on the committee with her [Pish] on multiculturalism right before I retired and there was people like her that slowly [came around] to support an academic program [for Indians]. We even have a major now, and that just happened recently. [comment by me: it has almost been 50 years since the start of the program]. That [academic program] was always in the future, but the Indians didn't feel that way [strongly about a curriculum].

They had more important stuff to do, and we helped them with that, and [the academic side] slowly, slowly grew.

The country has changed. The trouble with the Indian group, compared to other ethnic groups like blacks, is there aren't that many [of them]. Indian culture [he admits this is hard to express]…you know when they have a conference they go round in a circle [to talk]; nobody wants to speak out and be the bigshot in it. Everybody has a turn with the talking stick. You don't want to show up anybody. They are community and Indians are very careful [to make sure] they don't appear to be smarter than somebody else. When you are working with Indians everyone makes a decision as a group. Some are more forthcoming than others just like anybody. Indians can be very, very expressive in the proper context. Way back when we started, there were some Indian leaders, a number one guy up at Bad River, by Ashland, they were so concerned about what was happening to the environment. They've got prophecies about what may be happening to our environment and dammit it looks to me like they are coming to pass. They are very spiritual people. They really regard nature in a spiritual way. It is a different culture, and they have a different approach to each other, their relationships. They just don't project their ideas in a strong way. Northern's program was so much more than an academic program and at the beginning, we tackled some really big issues affecting the Indians. The Nishnawbe News was a catalyst.