

This is Joshua Kauppila interviewing Fred Joyal, the date is April 30th 2007

What is your date of birth?

December 24, 1943

What were your parents' names?

Sophia and Alfred

What school did you go to for your beginning schooling, elementary, high school?

I can't remember them all. I did not start or finish the high school... I did not start or finish school in the same school until I was a senior in high school. My father was in the Air Force we traveled all over. I graduated, my high school certificate is from Burlington senior high school in Burlington, New Jersey.

What colleges did you go for different degrees and could you describe them and what you studied?

I started out at Hobart College in Geneva, New York which was a small liberal arts college in western New York. And I was there for two years and we had some family issues and I came home and started to work and went to school nights at Trenton state college, which is now the college of New Jersey, I believe and Rutgers university at their Camden campus. Then I got drafted and rather than be drafted I joined the Air Force, I received the draft notice. And I joined the Air Force, and after training I came, I was assigned to Sawyer Air Force base here, just south of town. While I was at Sawyer I started going to nights at Northern, and when I got discharged from the air force, I just continued my degree work at Northern Michigan University and I got an undergraduate degree in geography and I got a Masters degree in Geography then I went to the University of Iowa and got a PhD in geography.

Upon completing your PhD, which job did you start after that?

I lucked out and got a job at Northern Michigan University as a faculty member in 1976, and I've been here ever since.

Can you describe your activities in the Geography department, anything specifically notable that you'd like to say you accomplished in that time?

I don't know about accomplished. Something that was pretty interesting, I think, is that when I left the geography department there were certain selection of faculty in the dep't uhh, that had been here when I came, let me start over again. When I was a student, there was faculty that were my faculty in my programs in geography both at the undergraduate level and the graduate level. And they didn't change in that time period, I run away for my PhD degree and came back and only one had changed, one had passed away. But that was the only change so I came back as a faculty member to be a peer with the people that had been my faculty when I was a student. not only that after several years I became the department head of the same set of faculty.

Can you describe any community involvement, projects you've been active in since that time?

Actually, yeah, with my background, part of my academic background was in planning and regional development, so when I came back to Marquette as a faculty member, I ended up

becoming involved with the local planning commission and was chair of it for a while. And then I got involved with regional planning and myself and another faculty member cooperated on the development of a regional economic development plan for the Upper Peninsula.

When did you come to the position of Provost and what lead up to it?

Well let's see I was department head of geography for a couple of years and at the same time, I had always been active in computing, so at the same time I got, I became the coordinator if you will for academic computing. We didn't have the structure that we have now, we didn't have the employees that we have now, certainly not in the positions they have. Academic computing at that time was just starting to grow, computing before that had been primarily an administrative activity, payroll, personnel, things like that. And there was a little bit of academic computing, but it was growing more and more when I came here as a faculty member and I got involved with it on a lot of different committees. And there was a particular point in time, when some money was available, and the presidency was about to change and we had acquired more equipment for academic computing and it turned out we acquired microcomputers, rather than terminals hooked up to the mainframe. And we set up separate labs, and things like that and I became what was called the academic Computing Coordinator which sort of made it separate from the administrative computing, there was a bit of confusion for a while but, that went on for a little while and an opportunity became available to move into central administration, which I distinctly remember resisting for a variety of reasons, I was still head of the geography department and devoting a fair bit of time to that, teaching at least one course each semester which I really enjoyed, and academic computing coordinator which really kept me busy. But then I was talked into being an applicant and applying for the assistant vice-president or associate vice-president for academic affairs and planning and ended up being selected for that, I'd have to check my palm-pilot for the date, but at that point I came over to Cohodas and this office suite, a couple of offices down. And that one semester, we didn't get a department head replacement right away, so that one semester I was department head, academic computing coordinator and associate vice-president. It was a very, very hectic time. That went on for about I don't know 8 years or so, 8 or 9 years and then we had a change in vice presidents one left and I was appointed as interim vice president and during that time we organized and changed to the current structure and I was interim provost and then they had a national search and I was one of the four applicants and ended up being selected for the position and have been in it ever since.

You were part of the TLC initiative what was your role in that?

There were a lot of people involved with it and I was probably, I guess it's safe to say and others would agree, the primary consistent instigator. There were a number of people interested in it, but because of my position, among other things, I was in a position to continue to keep it in front of other people on campus particularly the presidents. And I remember president Vandament and I, he was enthused about it, he and I would talk about it frequently. And there were faculty groups talking about not so much what we actually did, but about the role of computing on campus. Technology was changing rapidly, a few smaller school had actually gone with a similar program they had actually gotten laptops for everyone, but no school of our size had even come close. A few larger schools were talking about requiring everyone to have a computer Drexel had made some history, years before, of going through one round of getting desktops for a large number of the students and I believe Carnegie Mellon had done something similar, no regional comprehensive had done what we contemplating doing. And the time was really just right for us,

but I was in a position to be the spokesperson for it, did a lot of what we call dog and pony shows all over talking about both on and off campus. But we couldn't have done it without unbelievable support from a large number on campus. A large number of key people that had really key roles came together to plan this to work out the details and make it happen and like they say we were probably too dumb to know we couldn't do it. You know stuck way up here in the north woods, even IBM was questioning whether we had the horsepower to do it and we figured it wasn't rocket science.

What do you think the impact of that initiative has been on the university and the community as a whole?

probably can't measure it, it's probably beyond even what I expected. I knew it would be a pretty big impact but I knew it lead to, know it lead to increased enrollments. People far away from us saw this as symbolic of, you know, Northern having its head on straight. That they were able to look far enough ahead to make this just a part of what we did. There were, I mean, always little concerns in there but it's had a big impact on our enrollment it's had a big impact on our ability to recruit out of our region. Lots of people right away, Illinois, Wisconsin, you know kids heard that hey, you get a laptop, cool, and it sounded like a good thing. So that was helpful. It's caused us, a lot of faculty to look at the way they teach, it's given students, our students an unbelievable opportunity to get involved in the application of technology to a lot of different things. Students involvement in preparation of course materials is way more significant than it used to be and never mind other sorts of things.

Since you've been the provost what other initiative or projects have you undertaken or achieved?
I don't know if I've undertaken anything specifically, you don't undertake things as individuals no one person does something. And the higher you get the less initiative of yours that you act on, and the more you are in a position to coordinate development of initiative of interests of people below you. But the two things, other things that have happened on my watch and the president's watch but they started before, a little before Les [Wong], got here. Our internationalization which is just going on but it's building all the time, it's quite exciting and the Superior Edge program, which is phenomenal, which I didn't, I had not a lot to do with it beside other than keep promoting it and give people the resources to move it forward. that was the brainchild of really others, Paul Duby being one of them.

Since your time in this position what major changes have you noticed in the university, and the administration?

It's gotten a heck of a lot smaller, we used to have 7 vice-presidents we now have two we used to have 5 deans now we have 3. So the administration has gotten quite a bit smaller, the enrollment has gone up and we all very busy as a function of that. So everybody is sort of doing more with less, no pun intended. I think the thing that matters is because we have not had...we have a very enabling structure, so we tend to hire, have been lucky I guess, to hire very good people and rather than having them...the only reason we can do as much as we do with as few a people as we do is because we trust everyone to do the right thing.

Are there any particular challenges that the university or your office are facing at this moment or in the past?

Yeah, over time as I said we've cut down on the administration, the faculty is also very busy too. We haven't advanced faculty members at the same rate that our student have grown. Some of that is the function of the kind of contract we had at one particular time that gave faculty more money if their productivity or student credit hours per faculty member went up. And a number of people might argue that we overachieved on that and we probably went a little high, we are not using that scheme anymore and we're trying to hire more faculty to bring that down. one of the challenges is balancing the number of faculty you have and the area of interests they have with their costs and vis-à-vis our tuition. Neither the state nor the board have wanted our tuition to rise rapidly or high and the public doesn't either. People don't want to pay really high tuition if they can avoid it. Right now, Northern is a pretty good deal, so don't feel bad about that, at least comparatively speaking. But finances will be a challenge through time, it will be a significant challenge, because the support of the state keeps decreasing and we are becoming less and less of a public institution and more and more of a public assisted institution rather than a public supported institution. And so the finances are going to be a challenge. Something else in the future that will be a challenge is high school enrollment peaks, for the nation, in the 2010 at which point there'll be a decreasing number of high school seniors, which will mean competition will increase for everybody. And I'm not sure how people are going to work this out. And one of our scenarios that we're looking at is sort of managed decline, I mean can we manage decline so the rate of decline in enrollment is not as steep as it otherwise would be.