

Interview with Barry Knight, Head of the History
Department: Northern Michigan University, January 13th 1995.

RMM: Okay Barry what I would like to do is discuss the you coming to Northern and then your life as a professor here, and then as department head for two terms, your serving your second term at this time. So can we start off at with a little back ground. Where and when were you born and some of your background and some of your academic direction and so on.

BK: I was born in St. Johns, Michigan in March of 1941 and grew up in St. Johns, which is a small town just a short distance north of Lansing. And grade school education was through the Catholic school in St. Johns and then high school was through the public school system, Rodey Bulson was the name of the high school. Well from high school I went to Michigan State University and worked through three degree's there and came to Northern....

RMM: Wait let's go back to State. How did you get intrested in a history major and in history, were you always intrested in history?

BK: I think it was high school the history class I had in American History was probably the most significant influence. And I was intrested in teaching in the high school level at that point and John Furry was the teacher of the American Survey an introductory course they taught at the high school. And I think that experience in the reading that we used probably more then anything else intrested me more then anything else me in the possibilty of a history teaching career and I suppose competing with that I liked foregin lanuages a bit, I thought I might do that. And the school system in St. Johns in those years at least I'm not sure what the sisuation is today, was a pretty advantaged one because they got so many very good young teachers out of Michigan State who were willing to put up with wages that were not very good. And classes that were to large because it gave them proximity to advanceed programs to Michigan State because we were only about 20 well maybe 25 miles away from Michigan State. So all these teachers were teachers came in some were their Master's degree some were in their doctoral degree's but in the mean time were teaching in St. Johns because of the advantage of being so close by, it helped them. It created a pretty darn good teaching staff I think that they had in those years. Certainly far better then they were paying for because it was an agriculture area and with a great deal of wear with all in terms of tax base. So it really served as one plan and unnourished support system for the school system in St. Johns. Both the high school and grade school levels were advantaged by it, even the Catholic grade school there were lay teachers in that very same

process that were earning advanced degrees at Michigan State while they taught in St. Johns.

RMM: So then what year did you start at Michigan State?

BK: Started in 1959, graduated from high school in '59' and started at State in 1959. Went through the bachelors degree and earned teaching certification in the process as well. That was my goal at that point just focused on teaching at the high school level and student taught in a little town just a little bit east and north of East Lansing, Haslet was the name of the town. Small, relatively small high school I think they had about 400 students in the high school. Taught under a very good man, his name was Jim Wood-Cooler who I liked a great deal he encouraged me a lot I learned a lot from him during the student teaching part of it. But in the course of the student teaching I was notified that I could have a fellowship from the History Department at Northern excuse me at Michigan State had gotten two fellowships, National Defense Education Act fellowships. And one of them was International Relationships and I studied with Volvard a bit in the undergraduate in American foreign policy so there wasn't...I'm not sure exactly who were to have these the only thing I knew later was that one fellow from the University of Wisconsin got one of them and came to Michigan State in the masters program and I was able to get the other. But it was a very generous program for its time, it paid for three years of graduate school. You had allowances for...if you had family you could get loans, you could get a dependency allowance for your wife and for your children. So that part was..by the time I got into graduate school Karen and I had one child so.

RMM: So the getting this fellowship was the....

BK: Yeah otherwise I was going to go out and teach high school. I was just go out into the job market, I student taught in the spring semester of 63' and I had I think two more courses that I had to finish yet for the degree in the summer. So I decided to look around and hopefully find something which was not too difficult in those years, there is not the over supply I think there were more accustomed to today. But I never really got into that part of it....well take it back I did. I did go down for an interview in Flint while I was student teaching and before I knew all of this and that was a job as well in Catholic school system in one section of Flint. And seems to me that I interviewed for another job I think I interviewed for a job in a small town west of St.Johns, Fowler, Michigan. That again was a Catholic school, Catholic high school that existed so that is what I would have done. And maybe our thinking was as teachers normally do, you have to get certain advanced course work done anyway in order to sustain your certification and we turned that into a masters degree. But I had never really thought of going for a doctoral

degree as something that was within reach, financially I had pretty much contented myself possibly with going into the administrative end seemed attractive at the high school level. I had no great aspirations of going beyond that until this all came up. So I was really surprised when I was notified that I could have one of the two and it forced kind of a quick reevaluation, Karen and I talked about whether we should do that or should I just go out and teach. Karen encouraged me to keep going with it, it allowed for the significant reduction in the amount of change in our lives because we were already living in married housing at Michigan State so we just stayed there until I finished the degree...well until we came to Northern.

RMM: Now how did you, how did you come to Northern what was the process?

BK: Again I was at a point I think initially the contact came in 1966 and Paul called me and I was working and Paul was my advisor on a doctorine program and he called me in and said that he had heard that there is this position available at Michigan State, I have a feeling, I am not really sure but it came through Tony Forbes who was then the chairman of the history department

RMM: positioned in Cohodas?

BK: but the availability of it, it probably came through Bob McClellan who was staffed here and I knew Bob a little bit because he was grad assistance who graded my papers and Paul class when I was at Michigan State in the graduate program. But I only guess at that I am not really sure that that is true but anyways Paul knew of this so Karen and I came up to talk and decided in 1966 to come because I had really just started on the disortation work and finished the comprehensive exams so we thought we should stay and see if we couldn't finish the disortation before we did anything with taking a position somewhere. So that is what we did in 66 and then in 67 when word came to Paul again that they had a position, the University was growing rapidly at that point, Northern that is, they were, the history department was advantaged by that because they had it seems like one or two positions, new positions, available for several years in a row. But we came up and that time decided to take the job even though the disortation wasn't finished and I wouldn't be able to finish it just through the summer so we came and taught the first year, 67-68 and then went back down the following summer in 68 and Paul was able to get a, they needed a grad assistance in his office for the summer, I had worked for one year doing that already before we came up and so I did that and finished my disertation that summer in 68. It was a task that apparently wore on me more than I thought because right at the end of it I had an emergency appendectamy. I kept having stomach pains through the last part and I thought it was just I

don't know just the hecticness of it all, and trying to get things done and I had scheduled a defense of the disertation and we had to get it typed and down to a place in Ann Arbor that was less expensive in terms of getting the necessary copies that you had to have. So I took it down there and in the midst of all that the stomach problem got bad and really bad and so I had to go in for an emergency appendectamy and cancel as a result that was the very week that we had scheduled the defense of the disertation so that had to be put off for a couple of weeks. That brought me back the following fall in 1968 two weeks late to the university, I worked with the then chairmen Dick Saunderragger and he said that they could cover my classes until I got back. And it must have been hard on Karen too no more than sooner that I came out of the hospital and Karen had to have some surgery involving the condition in her uterus that was pretty extensive so you know it involved quite a bit more surgery than was involved with the appendectamy so I came up alone after Karen's surgery and stayed for a couple of weeks until Karen was allowed to travel back up and the kids stayed with my parents and her parents and with Karen until they all managed to come back up well I met my brother brought them up for me to the bridge so I went and came back in to Marquette. After that life settled down a little bit more but it was kind of rough in terms of getting everything finshed up and sort of like trying to get on with things. It was, I thought at the time at any rate that they had had just an excellent faculty at Michigan State. Went in to

alot of those people went on to other positions and you know particularly Eastern University so they had a very good teaching staff there and that made the and Paul in particular was very, very kind to us all, made the effort a little more manageaable than probably otherwise it would have been. But it is something I think looking back Karen and I might have put off having a family after we had gotten married if we had known that this was going to be our course. We thought we were just going to finish the degree and go on and Karen worked as a secretary at the in the Department at Michigan State until the kids until Sue was born and then Mike after that so it was I think particularly hard on the family when you are trying to do all of that in a short period of time and a very concentrative sort of fashion and it was something you know we don't regret doing but it did take a lot out of everyone in the family to manage to get it all done, difficult.

RMM: Now you came up in the Fall or you started in the fall of 67, what were your remanissances of what Marquette was like, what the University was like? Any problems with housing or anything?

BK: Housing was a problem, the only place we could find to rent, which was what we really preferred to do was an apartment on Main Street which would have it was a fairly sizable, and they had three bedrooms but was really not very accesable when you had two young children who were four and two, or three and one in

age when we came so it really forced us to our really only option was to buy and we weren't, I can remember very distinctly they we weren't really thinking that we were going to stay at Northern when we came. That it would be a good place to get some teaching experience but that we would probably want to go to somewhere, maybe more of an urban area or something adjacent to it than what Marquette was. The shopping situation was pretty disastrous basically Karen shopped through Penney's and Sear's catalogs because there wasn't a great deal of shopping options available to you. There was nothing west of town to speak of at all. Most of that has all developed since we came and I think making that all a lot more bearable is the fact that the department we came to was a really very exciting, talented group of, most of them fairly young and it was really a very vibrant department. They had I thought made marvelous progress in developing a graduate program which brought in line a few years before. They had four graduate assistants as I can recall that helped out primarily by either grading or very often as well taking attendance or offering other services to people who were teaching survey sections. I would not want to be held accountable if my memory serves me right we had about 450 majors in history when I came. They had a very very active summer program, most often we were offering 13 to 15 sections in the summer.

RMM: Just history courses?

BK: Just history courses. A lot of them for teachers who were coming back to get more advanced degrees and that at that time Northern's academic year ended in early June as I recall. So it really dealt pretty nicely with what was happening so there would be a week or two off after you finished the normal two semesters and then there would be a summer session. There was I think a lot of change going on in the university that added to the excitement; good, bad, and indifferent probably looking back but a lot of change going on in the last. So that was an upside, certainly a downside was the fact that when we arrived here in 67 and I first had a chance to speak with Tony I discovered he was no longer going to be the department head or I think it was still called at that time department chairman but he was moving up into the assistant or associate position in the vice president /academic affairs office. There had been a big shakeup and the then president, the president who was president when I was hired, Harden, had resigned and was leaving the university and an interim president was assigned and in the midst of all of that Bob McClellan had been terminated by the departing president because of some outing that they had had and that created a pretty strongly rebellious added to the more younger faculty which most of them who left that year, the best of them really I thought left, took other positions in protest over Bob's firing. Turned out to be particularly ironic because then the following summer Bob McClellan the summer of 68, Bob was

reinstated by the board as a new president, John Jamrich, came. And that required in turn that the department be very heavily involved with recruiting during the winter semester and summer of 1968. We brought in a number of people in that year and so there is a lot of turbulence associated with what was going on. But at the same time in terms of I thought the quality of the teaching that the department dispensed was very good I certainly encountered students who had very favorable impressions of the teaching staff at Northern.

RMM: What were the, at that time with all this growth and development students coming, what were the what kind of teaching schedule would you have and what were the sizes of the classes?

BK: I'm not sure I really remember that. They were generally speaking pretty good size classes I can remember that. I think on an average probably survey classes were about 60 to 70 student range. But what was so very different then was that upper division classes were also very large. The first foreign policy class that I taught, I don't think that happened until the fall of 68 I had over 60 students in that class and so we were, we not only had a much, what made the difference between then and now I think is basically that I think we had so many more majors in history and minors in history than we have now so we were servicing that community plus the what today would be called the liberal studies program, general education program. And that created classes that were in my memory a pretty stimulating group of students really a pretty able group overall of students. But very heavy burdened in terms of grading in terms of written assignments. I can remember the first set of term papers in that foreign policy class I must have taken months to get them finished. And I was fortunate that some of them came in early or I don't think I would've managed to get them finished within the semester. But it was a lot of hard work but the action that had taken against Bob McClellan I think really galvanized the faculty generally in the university because Bob was pretty well thought of and his abilities were pretty well recognized he had been here then maybe two or three years by the time I came. And you know it really caused Karen and I to feel because all of the recreation that had gone on and all of the anger and the frustration that had been displayed that we really didn't want to stay anymore. We were planning to come back for the 68-69 year assuming that Bob wasn't going to be here anymore and just do all that we could in that year to see if there was another position that we could find and go to that position. But then with Bob being reinstated that very much changed our minds and eased the interest in moving elsewhere and things got back more and more to a of normalsee. I really think that some of the issues that were raised as a result of Bob's termination by the administration were in my view the beginning point for what later became more and more discontent in the faculty over a number of fronts, the salary was certainly one of them, travel

benefits, travel support was another, the matter of faculty control over the curriculum, vitally important that was. It really began to stir things up in the faculty, you began to see more and more of sort of a moderate warfare going on between the administration and the faculty and the reduction in trust from both sides I think a reduction in a sense of cooperation or common effort or you know cooperating to achieve some valued academic common ends began to, I thought at least, began to deteriorate over the of subsequent years after all the rhubarb had settled down and it was actually only seven years or so before the union was voted in by the faculty here and the first negotiations got underway.

RMM: Now were most of the people that were behind the union, like I know that Bob was involved with that, so most of the people were then backing Bob then became the people that reared-headed the union?

BK: yeah, I think so, a lot of the people who I really knew only by name or by various meetings that were held and would see these people talking. The two things seem to happen, either they just left if they could find something else that was acceptable they left or if they stayed they became the core group, part of leadership for the faculty. The efforts crystallized through the A.A.P which is in my understanding what has been and is on most campus's isn't a terribly active organization on campus until suddenly it became an avenue well not avenue a vehicle for the expression of these problems and of suggestion as to a way to try and reduce them or elevate them. Some things totally new to me and Michigan State, I can't remember hearing anything, any kind of faculty organization at all except that I remember there was in the union building a faculty club. There was room where there was a place where they could go and eat lunch and it was just their place unless they invited any one in. But nothing in the way of political activity or a concerted effort to gain greater involvement in the faculty. Probably because the faculty there as probably most of the large universities did in the country already controlled the curriculum, controlled the things they wanted to control and were willing to put up with a system that was apparently pretty wide spread at that time in at least American public universities. Where administration in terms of raises and any other kinds of recognition for individuals work were pretty much able to move with impunity as to what they did in that regard. I never paid any attention to that one, I was either an undergraduate or graduate student I don't know why it just never had been something that I knew anything about or had tried to find out anything about. But when I got here you come across a system where very often department chairs were given a few hundred dollars per department and they were expected to decide and defend a decision as to why someone will get \$35.00 dollars for the next year or more or \$50 dollars a year. And the university I think didn't really blink or blanch to much what

they saw was the harsh reality that they had to find faculty help as cheaply as they could. They had a very limited budget and they wanted to do some other things to, so to do those things only to keep faculty salaries as low as was acceptable. Which is I am sure was the very same thing that was going on at Michigan State when I was there it was just that I had not had a part of it because it was not my salary but I had no salary from the university. The money I got from the fellowship was federal money so it was not from the department or from the university, so I was pretty naive about all of that. And so I went to a new school here then in terms of those issues but I think the student being effected by this that, my feeling was that they were most effected in the first year when Bob had been fired 67-68 academic year. He was fired after the school's year, the previous school year was over with so with the exception of the few students who were around over the summer, relatively few. Student's didn't even know about this until they got back and it was announced in the school newspaper very early on in the fall semester. And they were generally very supportive of an effort that got underway almost immediately to demand Bob's re-enstatement to indicate that he'd been fired for all the wrong reasons, which most of the faculty I think believed. Not all of the faculty, there were others who felt that the university had been fully justified in dismissing Bob. The majority that I saw at meetings around campus, and there were a lot of meetings that first year, very hectic, to make my year more hectic to, when I arrived and had that first meeting with Tony Forbs beyond telling me of all this other, these other events, informed me that he had taken the liberty to sign me up to teach a course out at KI Sawyer, which I had no idea what KI Sawyer was or where it was. So I ended up the first semester and the second of that first year teaching four courses rather than three which is to be the normal scheduled.

The assignment was what it is today, the twelve hour teaching load, there could be exceptions to that, but they would all have to be approved at the beginning at the department level. And I can't remember anybody in the history department taught more than three courses. There were lots of opportunities for supplementing your income. And I think, then as now those opportunities look mostly good to younger faculty who have smaller incomes. The largest of them was serving at Sawyer, that's where, you know, a lot of people taught, sometimes year around out at Sawyer because in addition to the summer program on campus there was a pretty expansive summer program out at KI Sawyer. What a number of faculty did in the summer the cost of research or getting much of anything else done, but did out of economic necessity was to teach one course at Sawyer and one course at Northern. And in the combination of the two, you were able to back then pick up, I can't even remember what it was, maybe it was considerably less, maybe you might make three thousand or four thousand dollars if you taught courses like

that. A little more than two courses would go as a part of the campus summer program. If I recall correctly I think it was not when I was first here, it wasn't based as it is and has been since on the sceme of one night at one salary it would be for a credit course, I don't think it was that much when I was first here, and at the air base, and I think that would have true whether you taught there or at Iron Mountain or in Escanaba or the Soo or up to the Kewannaw, that wasn't for one night that was considerable less than you would be paid for teaching the same course on campus. But it was one of the things that really attracted me to stay because I had some really, that was the experience that I know from a number of other people in the department, some really first rate students, so you had such an international community out there. A community I should say with international experience. Not any of the officers that you had encountered had been around the globe in terms of where they had lived and worked and the cultures that they had been exposed to and it was really fascinating to have their views brought into various historical subjects because they could sketch in the history from a different advantage point, a different perspective from what often I could in the course. So it was an exciting experience to work out there, I always looked forward to it. With the exception possibly of winter semester when the drive sometimes would get real hazardous. I can remember twice getting all the way out there, and I'm sure other people would have similar memory, only to learn that after I got out there the classes had been cancelled for the night which meant you still had to go all the way back to Marquette even though that had happened. But they have kept working on that and getting it more refined so that generally speaking if they were going to close it they would close it by 4:30 or 5:00 in the afternoon so that both the students out there and the faculty coming from campus would be aware of the fact that they had been cancelled.

RMM: Now how often over the years have you taught out at Sawyer?

BK: Oh gosh, I don't know. I would say the last seven or eight years I have been very very light but early on there with a good amount of frequency, I would say an average of one to two courses out there a year. That would include all three semesters through summer. So I, one of the things that I have done, and I suppose most of the faculties do it, its just something I haven't used the records much but I have kept all the grade books that I have accumulated through the years at Northern and it would be out of your question it would be a interesting thing to cout that up, a guess would be maybe that I have been out there twenty five times. Oh well that might be a little more like twenty times in twenty eight years, so. But most of that when it was younger. I think the joke used to be that you just saw people going out in summer because they had found out that their refigerator had gone out on the 1st of January and had no idea of how they could

replace it unless they went out to Sawyer and taught. And I think there was a lot to that, you took care of repairs on your home, appliances, car needed engine repairs. There always seemed to be something. And we, the, I learned a lesson and I am sure I am not the only one that learned the lesson but one summer and that I can't remember what year it was but it was probably in the early 70's my guess is, I had signed up for a class out in Sawyer and a class on campus, but I had done that before that was manageable. But somebody, it might even have been Bob McClellan, had signed up for a summer class but something else had come up and he needed to take care of that or wanted to do something different. So at the last moment I agreed to take classes on campus and one out and keep the one out at Sawyer and it was way too much. That was teaching four days a week on campus and going out there two nights a week because it was within an eight week span. And again the summer sessions were pretty sizeable as well and the students coming out of the teaching positions around the upper peninsula for a long time there that was a heavy part of the flow. And very gradually that started going down because quite simply no one ever really prepared for this I think. But quite simply people who needed advanced degrees pretty much already had gotten them after five or six years of

so that you had then a decline in the summer program that was first because there just wasn't as much demand for it and then in the 70's when we had such terrible economic times in the state of Michigan, virtually wiped out and brought it down to just skeletal levels and then we are trying to build it back up again and that's, it's probably not going to go back up to the level that it was then because of the demand was not just there and it wasn't just in history by any means but all departments involved with the graduate programs were really somewhat similar to, not quite as large as the education department's programming are. But there was, many of the departments had ten or more courses offered in the summer and sufficient students so that they could, I don't know what the finances of it were but I imagine at least the university was able to break even or maybe even a little better than that with summer enrollments through the years.

RMM: Did they, since you had so many courses was the regular faculty able to cover them all or would they have guest faculty? Like say in the history department when they 10-13 classes that went?

BK: I can't remember bringing in guest faculty. I think there were a few occasions when we had graduate students who were advanced in their program taught sometimes a full course for the department. And I think that happened primarily in the summer more. A lot of it would depend upon what, after I arrived a number of the people like myself came to the department, you know very good people and we thought highly of them, but they didn't have their degrees finished so very often shortages would occur a

bit because many of them very wisely said they didn't want to teach in the summer they wanted to finish up this dissertation, most of them were ABD I think all of them were ABD who weren't finished and that created some shortages in the summer I think for faculty. But I am trying to think and I just draw a blank there but I can't think myself specifically of bringing in a visiting professor for the summer. Although the university as a whole did that quite often. You know they would sponsor a visiting professor in one department or another or maybe for the summer, I don't know. And they would very often give some paper presentations for those who were interested. That was another stimulating part very often in the summer session. But it was a department that was really working very hard because they were not only carrying their normal teaching load but trying to work on dissertations and that's a difficult combination. And with one exception that I can recall they all manage that. And all stayed on, so that was a very nice thing. That's kind of in a sense as well an indication to where the market was already or at that time, I should say. A very different market for history faculty at least. Then you have today you have many many applications for every position. Sonya had a real problem finding people, I think the university or the departments preference probably as I recall to have hired people who were already finished with their degree know that this was a hard process. That it would be, you know, potentially disruptive even for the universities needs from these people. But I don't know, apparently I was not really directly involved with the searches what I'm gathering from the results is that they were not able to locate people who had, at that point, finished doctorates. Where today, you know, most often when the department has a position open in American or European History, or Asian or other fields it's unusual that we wouldn't get at least sixty applications for that and, you know, from people who are very very, amazingly accomplished, far more accomplished than I was when I finished my doctoral you know getting a lot of papers and conferences, written far more extensively and published more extensively than certainly anyone that I knew of when I went to graduate school. And it's a sad commentary in the sense that we are over producing in the area, but we've discussed this in the department a number of times, I don't know how, you know, other major universities are going to stop us pretty difficult a bright Williams comes, wants to study at your university in medieval history, to say no we have a quota even though you're very bright and very capable, we can't accommodate you. If I taught at one of those universities, I'd say, "well, we'll find a way, come on in and" but the accumulative effect of that has been very marked over the years and very often producing well over a thousand doctorates a year, just in history in the United States, that'd be all fields combined. There are nowhere near that number of openings on an annual basis in American universities so it really makes it an, I think, an insolvable situation, but a hurtful one for the young people who are

involved in putting in so much effort, demonstrating so much brilliance and yet can't find a job.

RMM: Now, when did you, when did you become department head? What was sort of the process of becoming department head?

BK: Ok, the first time was in 75, Steve Barnwell had been the department chairmen. It was department chairman at that point.

RMM: So it was _____ then from _____

BK: From when I got here until I think Steve probably started I think Steve was in the position five years. So he must have started around 1970, 1971 at the latest, probably 1970.

RMM: Wasn't at that time that the department heads could be, it was a temporary thing, you went in for the first time was three years and a second of two years.

BK: Yes right, so the end of that came for Steve, and the department elected _____ Polland to be the department in 1975 and the administration said that that was not acceptable there were one or two members on the board of control that would simply not tolerate that, even though the fight was some distance in the past they had not forgotten about it, was what we were told at least. And as a result we repolled and I was elected to do it for five years. I did it for a little over five years. I did it for five and a half years or five years and then one semester. The department had voted for me to do it a six year and I forget know why that was, if we were in the middle of something, I can't remember know, but at any rate, I started doing that but then decided actually I was seriously at variance with the administrative policy on a number of points. And it looked very much as though we were going to lose some more people and I just really didn't feel, I can remember feeling very self-rightously that we didn't deserve to lose any more people. And decided I didn't want to range over that activity and so as it turned out, I stopped in the middle of that year. I asked to be out as soon as possible and we were able to locate, what the department had decided was to do was to put Ruth Roebke-Berens forward.

RMM: So that was in what?

BK: That would have been in the fall of 1980, we decided that, and then she took over in January of 1981. So the winter semester.

RMM: So you had announced that you were going to leave the

BK: Right, I submitted a letter of resignation in the summer and the dean had responded that he would like me to stay on until

someone could be found and as a result I stayed on through that fall semester, and in the mist of that period of time we had selected, Ruth had her very strong capabilities in many respects, but really we selected her because we thought it was a way to save her job, because she was next, she would have been. We had hired Ruth in combination with her husband John, John had come in in the tenure tract position, and Ruth had come in in a one or two year position. And that was coming up and things were difficult for the university budget, there were queer indications that some faculty would have to be dismissed, so we thought, "well, if we put her in the chairmanship that will give her some protection" which it worked out to save Ruth, but it caused John his job a few years later. So we weren't as smart as we thought we were. And in that period, the first time around, the very year that I became, I had been very active in the effort to, well active anyway, in the effort to bring on the union, and in fact, they had, I remember one thing I was asked to do was to come up with a, I can't remember if it was a constitution or bylaws, and I had no idea what a constitution or bylaws was. I remember Less Foster in the English department said, "well, find one somewhere, and sort of take what's good from it and leave what isn't." So the first union constitution bylaws was really largely barrowed from Eastern Michigan University's faculty union bylaws. And so it was ironic, I was involved with that, just as we were bringing it on line then there was this movement in 75 into the chairmanship and during those years the chairmen was a part of the union. I paid the dues as chairman of the history department and that continued right through the period. And I liked that myself, because I thought, "essentially what department heads are are faculty people once removed and just in a different assignment for a while." So I kind of, I think I was comfortable with that. Then in the 80s there was a new contract where one of the parts of the contract was the administration wanted the faculty department chairman to be the department heads and be out of the union and in the administration. So that deal was made, I'm sure the union must have gotten something in return, I can't recall what they got. Maybe they got a little more travel money or whatever it was they were interested in in that year. So it was a different situation the second time around and that's then in the first. And it was a, I think something that makes being either chairman or head of the history department a little easier than it is than I know in some of the other departments is that there is a very strong sense of loyalty to the department and there is a determination to get through very difficult situations without allowing it to desimate the department or to see the creation of clicks of one type or another within the department and a lot of warfare between groups within departments and that's I think the strength that the department has as contrast with at least some others in the university system. And you know, it's a position that is most of time, for me at least, very enjoyable, very, I'm blessed with having very good people to work with. I can't imagine having succeeded otherwise in doing much of

anything. Their a very, I think, on the whole innovated department. I think in the last fifteen years alone we've pretty extensively revised our curriculum to bring it up to date with what we are capable of doing particularly changing faculty. And we've made numerable changes in the way that we manage things in adjustments to new sometimes unwanted but new realities in terms of administrating thinking or academic trends that sort of thing. That's been very, I think my best memory probably comes from those conditions in the department. Consistant whether it was the first or the second.

RMM: Now, when did you become then, the conditions where you became department head the second time?

BK: The second time, it occured that Ruth Berens was asked and I recall by the then president of the university to serve as an assistant to him to some capacity. That was only going to be a temporary thing, or there was no guaruntee he wanted her to work for a year or so. So the department was asked initially by the administration to find one of its number of possible who would do the department head thing for a year. So that's how I came into the second one.

RMM: And that was supposed to be a temporary

BK: Just a one year thing, right. And then in the mean time Ruth decided to stay on, the President asked her to stay on and Ruth at the same time told me that she really had no interest in it anymore as the administration at the department head level. That she really was more interested in moving on into administrative work at higher levels, either here or somewhere else perhaps. So then Ruth wrote to the Dean expressing that point of view and then the department, I guess, voted that I should stay on, so that's how that change occurred.

RMM: What year were you

BK: This would have been 1988-89 was the year that I came back in the department.

RMM: So actually 87-88 you were in there for temporary.

BK: No, 88-89 was the temporary, and then 89-90 started the full-time. That all came to a, it must of all came to a hem probably in the winter semester I guess of 89 when the group made this decision. And then Ruth did stay on the administration for another year I think or so. But the man who appointed her took another position, James Appleberry was the president then, and Ruth then after that, shortly after that just decided she would return to the department in the full-time teaching role. And that was a decision that I think came in part because she truely wasn't interested in administration at this level any more and

secondly nothing turned up after that. When he left a new president came in but on an innerroom basis and so there was nothing for Ruth to do to have found probably either something else at a higher level here or elsewhere. And then complicating all of that further for Ruth down the road was that her husband was head library at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. So Ruth has since then spent her weeks living in an apartment in Marquette and on the weekends at her husband's place. That's been hard, and I know she hopes something will turn up preferably in a Wisconsin system, you know in the teaching capacity or administrative capacity so that she wouldn't have to keep making that trip from the Green Bay area every week up here and then back down there on Thursdays or Fridays depending on her schedule.

RMM: How would you, we're getting towards the end here, how would you sort of characterize looking back at you came when Harden was here, you went through Jamrich, Appleberry, and now with Vandament there has been changes up and down in terms of the university, do you see any kind of guiding light, focus or anything in terms of, you know, your time here and how the university has gone? Is there any thread that you can follow in terms of these various people and sort of characteristics of the university?

BK: I guess if I had any sense of insight there it would be just that I think as we've gone along despite some bad moments certainly here and there that generally speaking the administrative capabilities of the university have gotten more people oriented, have gotten better on most fronts. I think the relationship between the faculty and the students and the administration has generally through that period, I think, improved. It suffered some set-backs, some set-backs in the 1980s but over all I think it's been to improve, in my own feeling, is that we have in the present administration and with the present president of the university the best I've experienced since I've been here. I think the most, the administration that is most responsive to both students and faculty interests. You know, you can't solve all of their problems and they can't do everything that they would want it to do, but it has certainly shown an interest in trying at least to find out what those wishes are, the kind of things, the various consinhuancies on campus are interested in seeing achieved, and I think President Vandament's administration of all of them is, you know, his term has been short has been in my view, by far the best at dealing with things. I can't remember a time in the past where we have seen happen what we have seen happen in the last two years. We've had some very difficult economic years, three years without an increase in the appropriations from the state. You would normally expect from that period of time, you know, faculty and administration would be after each other and yet I find a lot of cooperation in ways to deal with a very difficult problem and we

have done it so far in a fashion that has not seen blood letting. We haven't had to force faculty members in any kind of massive sort of "that's it we give up, the only thing we can do is fire people" from the university. I found that to be very encouraging. I'm amazed at it, really. I'm amazed at how high moral has remained through those three years. AND I think that President Vandament would probably be embarrassed for anyone to say that he was the reason, but I think he is a very important reason, the man who guides the university in its most prestigious problems position has a lot to do with how the university thinks about itself and how the university community feels about itself and its ability to deal with some really very severe problems. We have, you know I think some of the administration bend over backwards to find places to cut moneys that do not affect peoples lives in any really, you know, intendable fashion or terrible fashion. And that's been I guess most encouraging to me. I can see that kind of thing get with some as I say, with some bumpy spots her and there, you get better. I think many faculty at the time, and you would recall as well, when the union did come , perhaps it's necessary but we're just going to have constant warfare, and yet I think both sides are recognized in the interval since we've had a much more active union, involved in collective bargaining have witnessed some, in a number of ways how this has improved the relationship between the faculty and the administration and the faculty, not just the faculty but also the AP staff, the secraterial staff and that sort of thing to identify issues to clerify bargaining relationship has turned out frankly far better than I thought it would. I don't know, I've supported the union after it, right up to when we got it accomplished and got it under way but I've real about it too. I'm not going to be able to live like this forever, you know, cause there is a lot of very pronounced angre and constraination in the relationship as the faculty made that difficult decision to organize for collective bargaining like that, and yet, I think on balance it's been far more of a benevolent effect than harsh and hurtful effect that's been generated by the arangement. I'm sure as well there isn't everybody on faculty who would agree with me, but I mean that's my feelings on it.

RMM: Alright thank you.

BK: Thank you, it was kind of fun to remenice, I haven't thought about some of that stuff for a long