

Emil Valda head of Sociology Department from 1967 to 1975

INT: Emil when is your birth date?

EV: My birthday is October 13, 1926.

INT: So you were going to mention what the university was like back in those early days in 1967 when you first came here.

EV: I came for a job interview for a job to begin on July 1 instead of September. I was hired on a 12 month basis and Neil Carlson in the economics department picked me up from the downtown motel (Ramada Inn) for the interview with the department. I found most of the activity to be near the administration building, there was John D. Pierce where the Sociology Department was located, Longyear Hall where we held classes it had marvelous slate boards. You could walk indoors without leaving quite a ways it connected up with Kaye Hall the old administration building which looked like a medieval castle with the towers, prenels, and crenels and you went on and you got to what was then the Lydia Olson Library building there was a classroom and a stage for large introductory sociology classes in there. There was one more building, Peter White that housed part of the our anthropologists at that time was a gentleman by the name of Kirk O???? who later left due to physical disability. The Sociology Department had a sleeve of offices in the John D. Pierce and were rather large offices that had there own bathrooms and what not, and a secretary and 14 persons in the department. The only one currently still at Northern is Richard Wright the current department head who came in 1962. There was no President, this was very interesting, I was hired by Clarence Bjork I think he was the Vice-President and there was a nice dean called David Dickinson and I was lead around I met with the department. The Social work department was not accredited at the time as a matter of fact there was not as many social workers they picked up a number of positions since that time and most of the sociologists with the exception of myself and a retired gentleman wonderful person, John ???? doctor of University of Wisconsin-Madison and a student of the famous social psychologist Edward Allport Ross and myself were the only Ph.D's in the department. Dean ???? almost from the beginning said "If you want to build a department you are going to have to get Ph.d's." The supply of Ph.D's was very scares and it was a great time and it is quite changed today for job mobility a number of questions and I'll skip to question two and then back up to one.

How did you decided to come to NMU?

I had a number of offers, I couldn't say the same thing for today, at Ph.D granting institutions and my dissertation chairman would have preferred me to take but I came for personal reasons, my wife's family lived in Ann Arbor and my family lived in Milwaukee and that is the reason I came for location. Professionally it might have been wiser to go to Ph.D institutions, I had a job guaranteed at Tulane University which is a Ph.D university and from there I could have used it as a step stone and

gone to publisher. My educational background, question one I just

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answered question two. My education background is a bachelor degree in science and sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and my masters and my doctorate I got at the University of Chicago which was and is one of the leading sociology departments in the country. What was it like to administer a newly independent department is the third question and there is an additional statement in parentheses, sociology broke off from economics in 1966 was combined with other social sciences disciplines history for example, prior to that in the parentheses. There was no department until I got here, I don't know who decided there should be a department but my mission clearly was to build a department. During the summer of 1967 I used to eat in the Charcoal Room which is where President Harden, Dr. Harden who is an out going president ate and all the department heads ate there brought their breakfast but it was not demanded but it was considered policy. After President Harden the dean had all the power, Tom Griffith was very capable administrator who helped greatly with the development of the department by funding me too many, many conventions to hire Ph.D's and I got quite a view of the country and it helped to be funded the man was a very good dean in helping me build a department. I counted in the university bulletins over the years and I wrote down at one time the names of the people that came and left most of them left because they were Ph.D's and A.D.D's all but dissertations. Our masters degree that was understood they would not be on permanent tenure track but I did what I could to staff the department but I was always looking for Ph.D's. A strange thing with today's job market because their a lot more available but they were very scarce at the time. I started to say that I counted them I believe in my tenure as department head I counted 35 persons that came and left some of whom are still here. One of my better choices was the current department secretary, she was about my third secretary possibly my fourth and hard working, loyal really lucked out to have Gloria Slade, used to be Gloria Korpi. A number of the faculty, they were a very productive faculty they published and I guess they sort of reflected the fact that I was from a graduate school I knew that is what professionalism was all about. I might add that this is not the first university that I taught nor the first department that I was head of, I was at tenure track at other places but I just wasn't satisfied.

The problem in the beginning there was no president there was only a partially acting vice-president and Tom Griffith, the dean, we were wondering what was going to happen to the administration at Northern. We got an interim president Dr. John ?????, he was a very nice man who lasted for about a year and later on John Jamrich came. I remember the day dedicated John X. Jamrich Hall I was there at the dedication. The dedication took place at the door that leads to the learning resources building. So what was like to administer a newly independent department the bottom line it was tough to get Ph.D's in the field that we needed them in. Were there budget problems, question four, during 1967 to 1975 if so, who were they handled.

We had no union at the time and each department the Dean doled

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out almost promise of money and I was supposed to decide what kind of raises to hand out so I did it equally across the board in terms of the percentage, I gave them the same percentage to every faculty member I felt that there was such little funds to evaluate these people and to try and discriminate on the basis of funds is kind of pointless particularly since a large number of them just had masters degrees and I knew that they weren't going to stay. I can remember that we used to meet in West Science 104 every Thursday department heads meeting, sociology then was under department of I believe it is called arts and sciences under Dean Griffith. He got materials from Leo Van Tassle wherever he got them from financial vice-president and we had... we were given a template to work out the budget we were given a total amount which was not abundant it was rather scarce and we went through mass of the exercises and we were given deadline dates to submit these and I can't help but reflect on the fact we went through these exercises but they were meaningless as far as the actually funding later on. So they were handled by the department heads to allocate funds in certain line item categories and we seem to be..they really came to ferintion of we all sort of knew that this was going to happen and we didn't take this seriously, we went through the exercises but we took whatever money that the dean could dole out and the dean would not have that much money to dole out either.

Question Five: What was the student body like during the 1960's and 1970's, similarities and differences from the 1990's? It is interesting to be teacher because you can see society reflected in your students. One thing that I noticed was in the early time I was here it was the rare male student in any of the classes that didn't have a beard, reflecting the 60's. Today I couldn't help, or when I retired which was January 1st of this year. I couldn't help but it is the rare student in the class, the male student who does wear a beard. There was one flare up that was involved the sociology department. We had a social worker by the name of Benjamin Young and I don't remember all the details but I remember being in the Dean of Students or the Vice -President of Student Affairs, Al Meany's office with the dean, Dean Tom Griffith and the students during a sit in because of the Sociology department. Pushing and, shoving, and shouting and they demanded I write a letter of apology for some ?????. I felt it was my duty as department head to cover ??? who I thought was very capable very competent social worker whom I had brought to Northern. So I wrote the apology and got printed up in the last issue of the semester of the North Wind and I can't help but remembering a President Jamrich was rather displeased and none of the North Winds that year really got circulation they didn't get distributed, usually they are put all out over campus but I wrote the apology they were given to the students involved but they were never distributed to the rest of the student body. It was a political act at times the students my own immediate feeling was cultural shock I came from the University of Chicago ph d grad in the institution and I expected students to study and this was really the first school that I attended that

there wasn't a mandatory attendance policy which made for a nice climate for learning and it was called suitcase cause the students had cars and it was quite different from other institutions that I taught at so this question what was the student body like? I really can't philosophy but I got the feeling they were used to Sesame Street and television and didn't take education quite as seriously as I hoped they would but over the years this question asks how do they differ I noticed the change in the age in students the students population was older then it was then a lot more serious students their ability was higher I had some excellent students well I did back then but they were a lot more scare I had a lot more excellent students it's my opinion that except for money Northern has a few students that would do as well at Harvard or any school in the country as at Northern there's no lack of student talent although in proportion of other schools with more demanding entrance policies you probably not relatively as abundant.

Question six: where there any faculty or staff members during this era that were colorful or particularly stood out, any interesting stories?

Well there was quite a political brewha, Professor McClellan of the history department was leading a protest buying property and taking advantage of the people on the fringe down on Tracy and some of the houses that were bought there. My first thought was as a new faculty member here was Professor McClellan leading a large group of people parading and protesting around campus and I didn't know what the hell it was about but I soon found out. One of the first persons that I was introduced to when I ate breakfast at Edgar Harden's morning breakfast in the Charcoal Room was the head of the language department which was in the basement of Jamrich, ultimately. It was Helmet Kritz, a german whom I got introduced to and very gallantly clicked his heels and I thought was an old school german but later I found out that....I didn't think of him as a Nazi but later I found out that he was a commander of a German U-boats in World War II and I would have never have guessed it. He was quite a nice guy. ????? Rapport stands out, head of the speech department very flamboyant, drama, long stories and things of that nature. These are some of the people but there are many that stand out in my memory. I find the campus full of very helpful people, staff as well as faculty and there are quite a few colorful characters around this campus. If this interview were more about the campus and about the department I might continue but I think that is enough of that. I am sure there is a lot of other people that were around then that could answer this question.

Question Seven: What was the campus community like in the later 1960's and the early 70's did people know each other more personally during this era?

One of my regrets about Northern is that the campus is geographically laid out all over the and I can remember one incident. I used to go to every commencement then we had a labor union that said that you must go to one commencement a year. I was so offended by that because that is all that I did. I went because

I thought that it came with the territory and I enjoyed it, I had my own cap and gown. But I several occasions I had met people there I never seen there before and I said my name ? I'm from the sociology department you must be new here who are you? and I'm so and so and I've been here fifteen years and that sort of took me back, but I think it's layout of the campus were scattered to the winds in this campus I came here by the way before Jamrich Hall, was built so I mentioned I was at the dedication I came here before the library was built and after the library was built we moved from the John Pierce building over to the basement of the library. One of the things I did was I got two sets of keys for every office and I don't know what other department heads did but I thought one of the sets for the department, departmental secretary and the other set for the individual faculty members as it turns out that practice is still continue since they now the secretaries have pass keys and it's really not necessary but it's still handy desk keys people lose these things. People just don't know each other on this campus because of the distances between buildings and departments tend pretty much to stay by themselves and the people in the same buildings really get to learn one another. The basement of the library was nice because their was quite a few departments there and you could wonder around and see your friends in other departments and discuss things of interest of both departments. I remember complaining about the English grammer and spelling of the students at Northern it took several of the faculty to task in the English department and they all informed me this was not there job they didn't expect students to learn after one or two semesters of English it was the task of the entire faculty to grade but one thing that stressed me, nobody seemed to care about spelling or grammer or syntax it was substance that counted I personally ?? school but some people maybe. In other campuses that I have been on people new each other far more personally at Northern. I don't know if its the Scandinavian predominately Scandinavian population around here the community the reserve or what. When I came to Marquette I felt like an outsider for about five years and I talked to myself and said gosh this is a terribly cold community and I talked to other faculty that told me they had similar feelings towards Marquette some of them didn't last five years cause they weren't making progress on there phd's degrees but after I got on the insight thanks to a wife who got interested in community affairs and I was expected as an insider I thought it was an extremely friendly town and I keep hearing after I thought it was friendly other people who came saying you know this is pretty cold town a I can't say the same thing about the faculty they make it an effort to be nice to one another and to talk to each other but as I say because of the way the University is laid out building wise and we have cold climates and what not and walking between buildings and we have a lot of the University year when there is snow and cold there are many faculty here I think there is about 300 or so faculty here they know each other less I found is true then other campuses I was really surprised when I was on the committee parking traffic to hear Ken ? the head of security we

were talking about committee work and he says there is sixty members in the English department and I wasn't aware that there was so many members and I thought one out of every five professors on this campus is in the English department and the English departments spread out in a number of buildings all over the place. Right now the faculty is spread out in majors hall which used to be a dormitory on the far extreme of the campus west science and one of my regrets about Jamrich Hall which is a classroom building they didn't put a set of office spaces on the top floor or around like West Science it makes it nice cause students can drop in on you and talk to you and it was close to the classrooms and it was convenient for the faculty you didn't have to put your coats on and get off to class and what not. That was sociology department which is about to move to Gries Hall and was in Carey Hall quite a few of us taught over in West Science and Jamrich. I must admit when we were in the basement of Jamrich I saw a lot more students then I did in Carey well maybe some of the publishing faculty prefer it that way but I do know there very nice to students if there looking for help. Well that answers the seven questions do you have anything you'd like to ask or add to that? Thank you and if you think of anything later feel free to ask.