

Interview with: William Vandament

Interviewer: Dr. Russell Magnaghi

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Where: Marquette, Michigan

Start of Interview:

(Russell Magnaghi) Ok I think we are all set, good morning.

(William Vandament) Good morning.

(RM) And we will continue and this will be the last series of interviews that we have done over the past several weeks. And this morning we would like to focus on the facilities and the development of the facilities during your ten year as president. Can you comment on the, that development?

(WV) Yes, yes as a matter of fact I think probably the development of facilities unexpectedly became a major part of our activity during the time I was here since 1991. During that first year I thought my only claim to fame, the only thing that I would be remembered for is tearing down an old building. [Chuckles] And that was the J.D. Pierce building and of course later we failed our efforts to raise money for, to restore Long Year Hall um and we were operating by and large under pretty hefty financial constraints during those first four to really first four years, five years that I was here. And so in the early days we really were not thinking very much about capital projects or about improving the campus. There was a project that was in the wings when I came on board and that was the renovation of the University Center. The University Center is of course part of the auxiliary operation and the University Center and the residents and dining halls of course self-supporting operations then. And they get their revenues from a variety of sources but they are really not supported by the university's general funds. And it's the general fund that was taking all of the hits due to the state fiscal crunch. But, the University Center lay outside that, which made it in a way somewhat difficult problem because people don't always understand that a university's finances really reflect the operation of a kind of a multifaceted economy and some parts of the business can be strong where other parts can be struggling. And the general funds parts, which include the academic programs, were struggling of course, the administrative support but at the same time none of that affect the auxiliary operations. The University Center had been in existences for you know for some time I mean it was I suppose about a thirty-year-old building I think it was.

(RM) 1960

(WV) Yeah 1960 something like that, a little more than thirty years old and it was in almost desperate need of being renovated. So people got together a plan for it and it was about a six

million dollar plan but to my surprise when I got into the financial aspects of it I found out that the people in student affairs, where that existed, had done their financial planning, they really had been preparing for that kind of project and had mapped out the way in which they would be debt service. You know debt service at that time would be about six hundred thousand dollars a year on a project of that size. Fortunately, interest rates were low so it seems though that I was a good time to go out for bonds and so we did and undertook the University Center renovation shortly after I came here. I think we then undertook construction during 1992 and it took oh eighteen months, I say it seems though the project would never get completed but by 1994 then we did have a University Center that was up and running and I think much more functional than the previous center. The new one was of course more attractive, they asked if they should go through with a plan to create an atrium at the core of the University Center and I could not conceive of there being the kind of atrium that we currently have there. I thought they were talking about putting a skylight in the stairwell or something! [Laughs] I couldn't and when they showed me the plans I was very very impressed. I think you can see today it's a very attractive area that atrium, also in that project, a large part of the project was hidden and you know dealt with mechanical systems. But only part of the building had functioning air conditioning before so during the summer when it would get very hot you could only use part of the University Center, there were a lot of complaints about it. So part of the project was getting air handlings and air condition and heating fixed for the whole building. But a major part also was to make it more functional and inviting for students, so the University Center ended with meeting spaces for nearly all of our students organizations at one, there is one whole area of the Center. We had to get rid of the bowling alley to do that to get space but by getting rid of the bowling alley, which was not really used by students very much anyway we were able to carve out just a lot of space so that all of these student organizations could have their own spaces for meetings. So they have their own assigned carrels and offices, we use office landscaping they don't have their own dedicated rooms with walls between them always but they do have their own spaces. So I think it's a much more functional building and we changed the food service and got rid of the typical institutional dining cafeteria which served only students in the resident's halls and we opened that up into the multifaceted food court that we now have. It serves a variety of food and serves university faculty and staff and the public as well as students living in the resident's halls. I think that was also a very good move, I think generally speaking now that building is serving its purposes very well and it is real gathering place for people in the Upper Peninsula. In terms of our conference activity we have I've been told about thirty thousand people a year who attend conferences, seminars, special continuing education programs in the University Center so it is a hub in its own right. There isn't instruction going on there that involves credit courses very often but it does serve the region very well. And also in the project as well we moved the Dean of Students office out of the Cohodas building, moved that over to the University Center trying to get the services that are provided by that office closer to the students. So I was very pleased with the way that project turned out, although it seemed to me that it was going to take forever to get it finished. [Laughs] I sometimes had despair that I would ever see that atrium! [Laughs] But it

was worth the wait. Um but as we actually as we were thinking in 1992 and 93' thinking about the facilities of the university more generally. We had just gotten the Dome in 1991 and of course that was a building that most people said we didn't need, what we really needed was our science building renovated, we really needed a lot of other things on campus as well. And including and updating of our whole heating system, our whole system was somewhat fragile. When the Dome went online there was concern that the boilers that we had out on Wright Street would not be capable for heating the Dome, it would place too much strain on it. Turns out that was not the case but nevertheless the heating plant was stretched to the limit. The distribution system was breaking down too and I don't know if you recall during you know periods of 93', 94', 95', we had there was always holes in the ground during the winter where the steam pipes had erupted. Either the main feeder lines or the condensate lines that were bring things back to the heating plant, and so the distribution system itself was giving up quite a bit of difficulty. So truly we did need those things and those were things that... that were so large that one had to rely on state capital appropriation to handle. But there were a variety of other projects around the campus that were needed and had been waiting to be done for long period of time and it was clear, it became clear to us that some of those other projects were simply never going to be funded by the state through capital appropriation. They were, you know they were in a category of two to four or five million dollar projects and when the state would come along typically schedule was four or five years between capital budgets when we had a large number of those projects. You were not going to waste a turn at bat on a four million dollar project, you are going to put up your twenty to forty million dollar projects to get state help with. So it seemed clear that we either going to have to live, the university was either going to have to live with those things indefinitely or else we were going to have to bite the bullet and undertake the funding of those from our own resources. So even though we were struggling somewhat with our budget, we thought we should invest in the future because these were just things that were laying out there and they were irritating and they were impeding our service to students. We thought we had to get them done. So in the end we went for a twelve million dollar bond issue to handle some of those smaller projects on our own, and when I say smaller I mean they really all that small but for example a Gries Hall renovations. We had more than half of the faculty had been in those makeshift offices over on first floor of the Learning Resource Center for some thirty years. So that is a long time to be in a temporary office. That's a whole career for most of our faculty [Laughs], now there had been the renovation of Magers hall early for faculty offices and residence hall occupancy due to the changing character of our student population. We are having more nontraditional students, residents hall occupancy was down so we did have access capacity at the time. Well with that University Center being now a sparkling center and hub of activity it seemed to us that we could build on that by remodeling Gries Hall which was next door and turn that into a faculty office complex with some classrooms as well. That was about a four million dollar project so we actually put that on the top of our list then, the top of the list of things that really should be done and undertook it. There were some unrest in part of the students, some of the students to our closing down Greis Hall because it was those students were used to be close

to the University Center and all that. But actually it was not, there was not really as much resistance to that as I thought we'd encounter because apparently our Gries Hall had been conceived early when Magers ended up being renovated. In the end, we put about a hundred faculty into Gries Hall you know that's a third of our faculty, are in there and they came from the first floor of Learning Resource Center. Some came psychologist and others came out of old Carey Hall, which was really a dismal facility as well. So we thought that was very much worth doing and I think the faculty who moved there agree with us on that as well. At the same time, the Dome was still a kind of problem to us, um despite the fact I think it was a twenty one million dollar project but actually the Dome was incomplete as constructed as opening in 1991. Had no locker rooms in it, there was all that space under the grand stands that hadn't been finished so therefor it couldn't meet its potential as another conference center. Our thought was that we should try to turn the Dome into a conference asset, hold conventions there, trade shows things of that sort and in order for us to do that efficiently really did, there really did have to be meeting rooms in the place as well. Well our god father representative Jacobetti of course noted very cutely that there were things to be done to finished that Dome up, he was determined therefor that a phase two of the Dome would be undertaken. I had of course promise the people inside the university that our highest priority now was going to be dealing with our heating plant; we had to do that first and secondly fixing the science building. Those two things had to be our priorities with state government and so I braced myself to go and inform Mr. Jacobetti that those were our priorities that's what we needed, I'll confess I procrastinated I put it off, I put it off for three or four weeks [Laughs] people kept asking me "Have you told him yet?" No, I'd say no I'm going to, I'm getting around to it, it I'll do it. [Laughs] So I did set up a lunch with him, I thought lunch was the time to do it rather than just a regular meeting and so we did go, we had go off to lunch as I recall I think we went down to his favorite place which was Corey's which is a few miles outside of Lansing I went down with him. We had some liquid refreshments and met there for a while and I told him that we were going to find a way to handle phase two of the Dome, those meeting rooms, locker rooms and that sort of thing. We had to have our heating system fixed and we had to have the science building, and so he said alright he understood that. But as time would go on I would hear rumors that there was talk of another capital budget and I heard from other legislators indirectly that Jake was saying, we got to get phase two of the Dome for that Northern Michigan University. So I don't how many times I had to do this it was three or four times I would have to either call him or go down and talk with him and say, now Jake remember remember it's the heating system and West Science those are our two priorities. And he said, ok finally it became kind of a running gag with us every time he'd see me he'd say I know Mr. president it's the science building and the heating system. [Chuckles] But it seemed to be clear that our future might be taken away from us on that issue if we didn't get busy and actually do phase two of the Dome. Well the Dome was fiscally doing fairly well and was not consuming heat the way we thought it would, Ken Godfried had been named manager of the Dome and he was bringing shows in and bring business in and so that it was generating it was generating revenue that we thought could handle some debt service. And then also we thought

the athletic department could do some fundraising for the locker rooms as well and so in the end we had about a three million dollar phase two project in the Dome where we created those beautiful locker rooms we have there they are comparable to those you'd find for a professional team. And then a series of meeting rooms that are in there including the one little lecture hall which now has compressed digital or interactive television capabilities as well. So when ones holding a conference over there you can actually make contact with the outside world, so we again this was an instance in which we had a source of funds other than the general fund to handle that phase of the project then so it was not really a drain on core university funds. People of course didn't understand it, a lot of people didn't understand it. Again said your priorities are askew, here you can't fix up the science building you know which is a forty seven million dollar project but you can certainly fix up that Dome which was a three million dollar project, when the Dome brought its own money to it in other words it gets its own sources of revenue. We couldn't have fixed up the science building with revues from the Dome frankly because the Dome needed additional accommodations, food service among other things so that to protect its income generating capability that had to be invested there. So we did do that as part of the project as well as Gries Hall and then coming along later out of that twelve million dollar bonding project we also then fixed the second floor of Thomas Fine Arts and that was I think about a one point two million, maybe a little more than that. Faculty offices for the Communications and Performance Studies program, they had been over most had been over in the first floor of the Learning Resource Center and in those miserable headquarters. They were actually the last faculty to vacate those offices on the first floor of the library and so I think we've created a fine facility over there and now they are very close to the other classrooms that can be used to in the program. They are close to the theater and they are, you know the faculty is all together now where they were spread out before and split before. Also with that project we had money to do fiber optic cabling across the campus so now that we have all of our buildings are on a network that allows us a functioning computer network, I think that was a good project. We put in another project, an energy management so we have climate control centrally now operated with computerized kind of facilities and with that we get some energy savings which really pays for the cost of or will pay in about I think about five or six years we will have covered the cost of that part of the project. And then we got the kind of monster we created over on the first floor Learning Resource Center and part of that space was vacated by faculty moving out to Gries and to the Thomas Fine Arts building. We've created a complex of computer laborites that are on the first floor, which is a marvelous thing I call it a monster because we didn't know we had the demand for it until we built and once we built you know all last year it was completed, you know August of 96'. immediately within three or four weeks it was operating at full capacity, the walk-in lab that has about a hundred and forty stations is just almost always full during the day. And those class room, we have five classrooms that are with computers that are getting very high use too. So by creating that lab we learned what the need really is and so the university will eventually have to do more. Part of the funding you know out of the general fund for that array of projects, general funds share of that is really being paid for by a quasi-endowment that we set

up, had set up a couple of years earlier. The state actually defaulted on about three and half million dollars that it owed us in the summer of 1991, they simply didn't give us three and half million dollars that had been appropriated. We can't afford to do that, our fiscal years differ, ours starts July first their starts October first so there is that three month period and what they did was the money they normal would have given us during that three month gap they simply didn't pay us. But then in making their appropriation for the next year they specified that the money they appropriated was to match our fiscal year rather than their fiscal year so that we were to get all of our appropriation for the subsequent year in the first nine months. That meant that on our books we had to accounted, and on our books it looked as though we had a six million dollar wind fall where as in fact we had been cheated out of three and half million dollars, a very clever accounting device on their part! [Laughs] Well we were going into the next year after suffered a three and half million-dollar insult to our finances showing an improvement in our fund and balance of six million dollars. No that is not acceptable, it's really unacceptable and besides at some point some smart person down in Lansing might say well why we paying these universities early to match their fiscal years, why don't we spread their payments you know we can save money by spreading their payments over a long period of time. And then we would lose that six million dollars like that from the book. So the first thing we didn't was then to transfer that money to the plant fund, we thought we had to protect it but we didn't want to show it as a real asset because frankly we didn't think it was that much of an asset. We eventually then when we decided to embark on the capital project we created with that six millions dollars a quasi-endowment which meant that we would preserve the principle incase the state changed its funding methods later we would still have that principle. But we would use then the interest income off of that to pay debt service on capital project so that's really what we did. I think technically we can't, we don't acknowledge that we've done that we just say that about eight millions of the twelve million bond is being paid by the general fund and then we use the interest out of that endowment to replenish the general fund for the debt service that it is paying. And this has to do with how issues of unnecessary borrowing and things of that sort projects for tax exempt organizations, if you have that money out there that could be applied directly without borrowing, why are you borrowing? So of course the reason we are borrowing really is to protect the principle against further mischief by state officials. Um our next major capital move came when the state did appropriate nineteen million dollars that was to fix our heating plant and build a new administrative services building. We have all of our crafts people, lots of administrative services scatters, had been scattered throughout the campus and they were operating kind of inefficiently that way. So this project was kind of an add on to the core project the heating. [End of the first side of tape 1] Well as we had more experience with the Dome we became less concerned with the capacity of the heating plant then we were before. So we thought, well perhaps we can get by with upgrading the boilers there rather than really just starting from scratch and building a new heating plant. That meant lower down on our priorities list was a project to replace all the steam lines and to correct the steam distribution system which was ancient and have been giving us trouble and was also inefficient because the steam line went all

the way around Elizabeth Harden Drive out around the outside so we had you know melted snow, we were heating up the ground out there. We thought why do we have the distribution system go directly from building to building and cut off a lot of steam pipe and a lot of escaping heat out of the system. So we pulled that project up and instead of getting a new heating plant we'll remodel the old one and get the heat distribution system done. The more we thought of building an administrative services building, a new one we had been operating part of our services had been provided in the old Birdseye building. It's kind of ram shackle of a place out there, we thought we might be way to save money by remodeling and expanding it at the same time. And in order to do that then we had artist, some people from our Art and Design department who were in the old Birdseye building and not very well severed. Well we had an empty the old heating plant here behind Lee Hall and Spooner Hall had had some of our administrative services people in it and it looked like a perfect building for Art and Design, one monumental space in there where the old boilers were that's perfect for sculptors and metal working that sort of thing. It's just the sort of space that in my past experience I had seen artist dream about having that kind of space so we approached the Art and Design department and said how would you like to move that portion of your department into the campus and just be just across the drive way from the remainder of the department? And they said yeah that sounds like a good idea to us so we linked that in as well with money saved from simply re-having the heating plant and building off of remodeling project with Birdseye, rather than an entirely new structure. There was enough money left over then to fix up the old heating plant to serve the needs of I think about half of the Art and Design department. So that's what we did, we were fortunate the Joint Capital Outlay committee of the legislator and the office of management budget in Lansing agreed to let us modify that project to do all of that. So basically with that project we got things done that we had not planned on, we got a new distribution system and a we got a new facility for major piece of our Art and Design department so that was, I was pleased I was really pleased that state authorities would go along with us on that. And they did it after the project had been already approved, we really were afraid to go down and change the project before it had been approved originally because we thought it would put it in the back of the line if we introduced yet a new project. So we gambled in a way we thought well we will have to go through carrying forward the project as originally planned or if we can't get it modified but in the end they did cooperate with us and let us modify. I think the state got a lot more for their money by doing.

(RM) Was that a... I mean is that commonly done was this something, was this kind of a first time special case?

(WV) As far as I know, it's the first time. It's the first time. It's they get, state officials get very touchy about your being awarded money to do one thing, if you end up doing something else with it... but it accomplished the same purposes.

(RM) It gave them a lot more for their money.

(WV) It gave them a lot more for their money, and they saw that. They saw that and they really were pressing renovation of facilities rather than adding space to campuses at the time too and that was a help, it was a help that it blended with that kind of program that they had going to remodel rather than add space.

(RM) Now who came up with that concept?

(WV) It's difficult to say, it gradually merged. I know... I was preoccupied I have to say with steam lines, I mean I saw this building this enormous capacity up there and then I saw this you know the steam being wasted going through it, an inefficient distribution system. But also you know other staff members, Mike Roy and Bruce Radio [Spelled phonetically] the wheels were starting to turn in their minds when the Dome turned out not to consume as much energy as we figured. That gave us, that really started them thinking and everybody else thinking well wait a minute maybe we don't need to do as much to the old heating plant than we originally thought. So it was kind of a... I don't know it was a process that gradually evolved, the decision just evolved out of our meetings but it was primarily Bruce and Mike and I in our talking. In our talking we gradually came up with it, I've always enjoyed it working with those two guys because very often we come up with creative, I think creative solutions to things. We did manage you know in that project also to get one of the covered walk ways as part of the steam distributed project, we connected the Learning Resources Center to West Science with an underground walkway. When we worked also on the Thomas Fine Arts building and the theater which is next door, what we were trying to do barrier removal in the Forest Roberts Theater, Thomas Fine Arts and McClintock you know that complex of three structures that they are all together. With that also I mean we ended up with a system in which one can enter the lobby of the Forest Roberts Theater and in a wheelchair indoors go all the way through that on a ramp and then into Thomas Fine Arts take an elevator up a couple of floors and go directly through into McClintock and come out the other side of McClintock. So that's another long interior system that both is good for the handicapped but other students as well during the winter months can avoid being out in the cold that much. With the New Science building, there will be an addition that connects to the Jamrich classroom building so that one will actually be able to go from the back door of the library, the LRC down and through the tunnel across and into West Science go West Science then over to the classroom building and through the classroom building come out facing McClintock. And I know it's going to occur to somebody very soon, that stretch between McClintock and the Learning Resources Center in about three years that's going to be the only remaining missing link for a student to be able to come in the back door of the library, and go in a wheelchair inside and come out in the lobby of the Forest Roberts Theater. I am sure that final link between McClintock and the classroom building will someday be built. I think the campus will be a lot better off for it too.

(RM) Certainly for the handicapped students. Real plus.



(WV) Talking about facility I should mention also the emphasis that we placed on traffic and parking as well as I think over the year the cumulative effect has been pretty major. We did find ways primarily through parking revenues and then with the help of State Transportation Department, we found ways to greatly increase the number of parking spaces that are right in the core of the campus and very convenient. The first thing was to expand greatly the Commuting Student Lot between the library and the Hedgcock Field House, you know that area that area in there and I think we expanded that by oh maybe two hundred and fifty spaces or something like that. Then we followed that on the other side of the University Center between the University Center and Cohodas and then last summer we moved with help of the State Transportation Department, we moved the main entrance to the campus we moved it towards the Cohodas building so that it comes in just opposite of Hebard Court. That meant that we shifted more of our parking to the University Center side, where the need for parking is! And then we created some parking to make up for that which was lost in front of Cohodas we carved out a little more on this side as well. But in totally we probably added another two hundred or so spaces. I think in the core campus we added more than five hundred parking spaces during the last four years and with a large number of commuting students we have I think it's important, it's important for us to do that. We have to be friendlier really to the part time commuting student, so I am pleased with all of that. I got the reputation of being the asphalt king, [Laughs] I know I am quoted saying what, I never say a parking lot I didn't like. [Laughs] but I think that's improved the university. You know we are looking forward now to the West Science, really getting the West Science center renovated and expanded and also with a permanent home now for the Seaborg Center for teaching and learning science and mathematics. That's a forty seven million dollar project, we are working hard now in trying to come up with our share of the match, we got eleven point seven million dollars and we have to match, the state will provide I think thirty five point two million and we have eleven point seven million to come up with ourselves. So we are working trying to some federal funds, we are working trying to get the foundation funds to fill in as much of that as we can. We did in planning for the budget the past two years we have been building in an amount that can be sure to pay the debt service so that our budget for 1997-98 does include money that will cover the debt service in the event that we don't raise the outside money. So we've been, we could not let project go by because we couldn't come up with the match, we felt we just had to, had to come up with the matching money and get that done. It's going to keep the campus torn up for some time but it's going to be well worth it, it's really going to be well worth it. I don't know whether our fund raising strategies will pay off or not but at least we do have funds to cover the debt service if we fall short there.

(RM) You said that the West Science complex goes back to the mid-sixty or so so it's fairly antiquated.

(WV) It is antiquated. Yeah yeah. The problem is for us is always been a science building like that is so expensive to fix, we could not have done it on our own. But yet it was always out there as a kind of trouble some thing, because it meant that everything else we did was compared with

that and they say well how come you can always do this but you can't, why can't you do the core thing which is fix up the science building?

(RM) I think there...

(WV) And finally that will go.

(RM) I think there was some lengthy letters from science faculty in *The North Wind* about that.

(WV) Yes oh yes.

(RM) They would come up periodically.

(WV) Well when we would do something like fix up the Dome. With its own money or the University Center, sure you can always do that but you can take care of core business. So I am glad that one will be resolved and another one that is out there that's been an irritant I gather for years is the ice arena and the facilities for our hockey team. We are operating in a very bad facility owned by the state and we are paying far too much money for it, we are in essence operating two sheets of ices because we have another one for our own instructional programs and for the Olympic Education Center in the PIDF building that we are operating. And then we are paying the majority of the expense operating the city's Lakeview Arena and you know we only need one sheet of ice.

(RM) Yeah that's true.

(WV) And so we are I hope we can get that project going, we've really indicated that the general fund could contribute to that and we've built that into the budget as well, that project. But one of the major part of the debt service there will be borrow the cost be worn by privet gifts, we need to raise one more million dollars, one million dollar commitment or a commitment to handle the debt service of a million dollars and that project can be undertaken. About three point four million of the oh... roughly eight and half million dollars would be covered by the general fund. We could invest that three point four million in something else but you couldn't get eight and half million dollars' worth of construction out of, you only get three point four million dollars' worth of construction on some other project as well. Thus far, we consulted extensively the university priorities committee and others in doing so I think we will be able to follow through, I think we will be able to follow through with that. But it helps to have the science building control when building the ice arena. [Laughs]

(RM) Are you going to get more letter?

(WV) Without the science building I'm not certain that it would be politically feasible to the ice arena.

(RM) Another point here and we can hear the background noise of the renovation of Cohodas, how does, now that has been going for a period of time.

(WV) We have over the last five years gradually renovating Cohodas trying to make it more friendly to the students. So we downed the first floor just off the entrance merged a couple of departments having to do with collections from students and payment of financial aid checks and a lot for the financial we consolidated there and we consolidated two operations, cross trained the people so that they can handle more variety of functions. We are trying to work towards a one-stop-shop concept with students and part of that does involve them renovating the building, we are trying to get the things are needed by students as close to the first floor as we can. And trying to get them conveniently located adjacent to each other, so we just been chipping away at remodeling them, the Cohodas building, floor at a time part of the time. It's kind of interesting down there with the accounts receivable office, the cashiers office actually, where we took down the bullet proof glass separating the cashiers from the students. The glass that came out of there I swear was an inch and half to an inch and three quarters thick! [Laughs] It was like hall fortress and now it has the atmosphere of a branch bank where people can sit down and do their business with somebody who is also sitting down and hopefully has a more friendly.

(RM) I guess the other question I always had was how often would students come in with a thousand dollars to pay there bill for the university, usually it was done on checks so there was not that much cash floating around. I mean there is to a certain degree but not...

(WV) But I think you have to keep in mind the timing of the construction of this building, Arts and Design. And I think this building was designed when there was a lot of student unrest and it was designed with those narrow slits, narrow slit windows on the first floor, bit like a Romanesque fortress. [Laughs] Just windows just thick enough so you can aim your gun through them but not thick enough to let any enemy fire come in. [Laughs]

(RM) That's true.

(WV) So there was a bit of the fortress in the architectural concept of this building.

(RM) Now let's see did you get done with the variations?

(WV) Yeah I think we would facilities as much as we...

(RM) Yeah and then Cohodas. I guess would you want to comment on your...

(WV) I might just in wrapping up, I feel happy we were able to get as much as were given the facial constraints we were operating under and it took a lot of hard work on part of a lot of people. And it took, a tolerance part of the university community, because at the same time we were eliminating positions, you see we were borrowing and upgrading facilities on the other hand. It's very difficult to do both of those things at the same time because people tend to think of the universities as organizations that must operation in a hand mouth mode. It's difficult to think of them as organizations that can plan ahead and invest, they assume for example before you downsize if anything you ought to be out of money and of course the real trick is to

downsize before you run out of money. When you see though things are getting tight to take action, to take the actions which saves money over the long run. So that you don't operate out of despair or panic but really have a kind of rational financial planning process which accommodates to lower resources but at the same time invest in the future so you don't just continue in a downward spiral because you would if you didn't invest in your facilities. I am pleased that we were able to get that done and it did take some tolerance and understanding on a part of lot of people and the university community of course to be able to just politically manage to do that.

(RM) I think as you mentioned earlier you also had the physically obstacles especially last summer when we had the whole campus torn up with the heating system, that was a difficult time.

(WV) Yes yes it was. I thought we were going to lose some people in that though. I thought they might get buried alive!

(RM) I think that all ended in last fall where I remember you and the Engineering staff all met in the last hole over there celebrating...

(WV) Yes the last trench, yeah we broke a bottle of champagne, we christen the heat and steam pipes. [Laughs] Well I am glad, you know those fellas were doing unglamorous work and I thought we should call attention, that a very important work up here in the North Country. Have a good steam pipe put in.

(RM) Now with all of this construction that went on there was, you got involved in kind of a local history and the history of the university and then you were... Can you comment on how you got, kind of how you got interested in things like the Peter White, the development of the Peter White Lounge and well the Voelker collection and some of those things.

(WV) Well I think, I got involved in historical issues with the issues of those two old buildings of course I mean that really did sensitize me in a way. I might add something that I think people don't hear, don't know about me which was for five years I served as the Chief Financial of House for the Ohio State University and ended up being their Financial Vice President, financial and planning. There we had a marvelous old campus with historical building around the oval and we had a master plan for renovating those and saving those old buildings. Many of them were true architectural gems and so I was heavily, I really was heavily involved in restoration work and preservations of historic structures back at Ohio State. I mean we renovated about three while I was three, three major building and restored one to its original statue, we didn't really temper with modernizing it. So I had some experience with all of that before but the thing, actually the precipitating factor for me getting involved so much in historical things, came with the Voelker Papers. You recall that, because you got involved in that right away, and I had gotten tipped off by a newspaper columnist who called and tried to shame me because he said you have these papers of John Voelker up there that are either go to Boston or going to Ann Arbor, you are

going to lose them. Well I didn't know anything about that, I didn't know about them at all. So I immediately got in touch with Misses Voelker and this fellow was prompting and talk with her, we talked about housing the papers at the university. And it was at that time Cliff Mars [Spelled Phonetically] was in the interim position as archivist at the university. And so we got in touch with Cliff and he agreed that those, you know that we should have those for the university archive's if we could get them. And it expanded and then we got you involved and I don't know exactly how we got you involved at first but somehow we enlisted your aid.

(RM) I got involved I think the archives at that time would only take the paper, paper and photographic parts of his collection, and then the question was what was going to happen to his desk where he wrote and had a paper and so on and that when I kind of got in on that.

(WV) Because as I remember all of a sudden, you are there along as part of the team, we are going out on field trips and looking at papers and you were looking at all these other artifacts.

(RM) Yeah, more the three-dimensional items...

(WV) And before long poor Misses Voelker didn't have anything left there did she? [Laughs] We said did you mind if we take this do we mind if we take that? No she said go ahead go ahead.

(RM) Think of the summer, when was that... no it was the fall, no the summer of 92' I guess it was.

(WV) Yeah I think it was.

(RM) Yeah.

(WV) Yeah it was the summer of 92'.

(RM) Yeah because you lead the expedition up there.

(WV) Yes we went out and we went to the garage I remember at the, at the family, the old family home and she gave us free range with whatever we wanted out of that garage I remember.

(RM) It was covered with dust and coal dust, that was a mess.

(WV) And a marvelous old bible.

(RM) Yup and I think you found that under the layer of dust there. I remembered you picked it up what is this you know and we looked at it and said oh my it's the family bible.

(RM) Well that was kind of a...

(WV) Well as I recall...

(RM) That was a good exhibit.

(WV) Yeah it is. No I recall our aspirations for that sort of thing when we went out on that trip that day were really not very high and we just kept finding things and finding things and getting more and more excited. Before long we had a, we really had a major collection.

(RM) Oh yeah...

(WV) Of very interesting things and so that was the start of my collecting career with you as my coconspirator. [Laughs]

(RM) Because we did get that collection and then we put up the, when you right away wanted to have a display for the Board of Control so I think we...

(WV) So we put it up in that room that's.

(RM) Is foreign language addition I think...

(WV) Yes yes we had about twelve or thirteen foreign language addition of *Anatomy of a Murder* and everything. Well I began then going around knowing I had a good patriot with me who is interesting in things, collecting other things then. I remember I went out to Mory Warshawsky's junkyard, Ishpeming Steel out there. Where Mory had the mining cars and some mining equipment that sort of thing that we hauled in to get fixed up, and we went down to Earl St. Johns Logging camp.

(RM) Yup.

(WV) And picked up.

(RM) July of 1994 I guess went down there.

(WV) Picked up things down there dealing with farming and logging industry. Um and it just seemed to be a natural growth then that we would collect more archival material in the university, really on significant people in the history of the Upper Peninsula has been our focus. So at that time we began to compiling our list and naturally Glen Seaborg, Normal Loret [Spelled Phonetically], we were working closely with him and at first we were just interested in a few things for the Seaborg Center but then opened the door, I think you opened the door there in your discussions with him while he was here one time. Him ended up collecting, getting some major some, really major things in the Seaborg collection, I think Lynda Pamming [Spelled Phonetically] certain had more in our collection than they have at the University of California-Berkley probably!

(RM) Right right. I think the only place that outdoes us is the Library of Congress but...

(WV) But of course they are just doing printed material they are really not doing the personal artifacts and things of that sort.

(RM) And then we had, then you had also do you want to comment on the, it's kind of an interesting story the Cohodas collection which was tied to the renovation of the building.

(WV) Yes yes. The Cohodas building, the Cohodas room was down here on the first floor of the Cohodas building and it sat down there in splendid isolation, nobody ever went in it and when I went in it I think we had over the course of a six month period I used to check the sign-in sheet and we had maybe five or six people a month would come in it. So I thought it was not getting much attention and the materials it was crammed together in a short space, I couldn't make, it was not a coherent kind of display and so that's how we got Dian Cortage [Spelled Phonetically] into the act. Remember Dian can you make, let's see can you make this more coherent display which we did down in the Dome then. Then it freed up space in the administrative building and it also gave the Cohodas display a more prominent space and Dina actually took the tack of describing the history of an immigrant family in that so that the display is not just about Sam Cohodas but really has more universal. I think it has more universal interest in the people because it's the history of an immigrant family and then of course all of the immigrants we have in the Upper Peninsula are have their own stories.

(RM) I think now and I think this is going to happen you know with some of the things the initiative you started for instance with that, then we are going to have this new exhibited on the people of the Upper Peninsula which is going to focus on the immigrants. You can tie that with the Cohodas room and use it really as an educational tool for even young kids coming into the... now a lot of them come into the Dome for recreational activities but I think at some point we can always bring them in for educational purposes.

(WV) No I think so too. So I would hope eventually the university could serve as major historical center for the Upper Peninsula in part with the Center for Peninsula Studies that we have now formed and you are directing. It seems to me to be a logical, it's a logical kind of move, the funding for those things are is always difficult and we have kind of scrapped by with one time funds. But my own feeling was we had to get to a certain point where we had a kind of critical mass of materials and a critical mass of activity going on so that people can see the potential. And that was the problem at the very beginning, particularly when we were talking about the Dome it was regarded as an athletic facility and it was difficult to convince people and knowing that it can be a major cultural center as well. But as you know I mean we have four large display cases in there now and actually if you go around the perimeter of the Dome there is room for twelve so it may take another fifty years to fill that up.

(RM) But we started it.

(WV) But we've got a start on it, we do have a start on it. I am proud of that.

(RM) I think the other thing that you are involved with, we almost didn't know what was going to happen with it is the old Buick Marquette that's over there. It came in as a temporary I think you got it...

(WV) Yes we have the Buick Marquette, and that was created in honor really of the Marquette banker Willy Kaufman who was the sort of founding treasurer of what currently the General Motors. That car was only made for one year because they made it in the Depression and they made it in 1929 was not a good year to introduce a new model. [Laughs] But there it is and the Peterson's, John and Ann Peterson had fixed up that car so that it's in mint condition. Yeah we've had it over there for a long time and I was talking with the Peterson's the other day and Ann said, "John I think you ought to leave that car to the university. And John said no I am taking it with me!" [Laughs] But I think he'll leave it I think he'll leave it to the university.

(RM) There is a good garage for it.

(WV) Well that's what I tell him! [Laugh] I tell we should be charging him six or seven dollars a month rent! [Laughs] But we are happy to keep it, we are happy to keep it free. He is delighted to have it displayed, he said I fixed it up so people can look at it!

(RM) Otherwise it would be in his garage.

(WV) It be in his garage where nobody would see it. There is another one down state, one of our alums an alum who works at the university of Michigan actually drives a Buick Marquette.

(RM) Oh my.

(WV) That she got from her father and it's in driving conditions and she got in touch with us. So we will be in touch with her because we don't that one to get out of the family so to speak. In any event, you understand know why you and I are called Sanford and Sons! [Laughs]

(RM) I think we have done a good job and I've enjoyed the gathering and so on.

(WV) No I think it's been well worthwhile.

(RM) And I think it has had a larger effect on the campus, I know now there is various, the engineering office is putting up, they have a project of photographs and Mike Roy has this plaque.

(WV) Yeah we are going to be much more sensitive to the history, history of our own university and history of the area in more general. So no I am, it's been actually it's been a lot of fun, all those field trips collecting junk! [Laughs]

(RM) Well when you go out there you sort of wonder what am I going to do with this stuff? You thought of this kind of, I was crazy because I was grabbing all of the...

(WV) You were taking everything, yes!

(RM) Posters and what not.

(WV) Cigar boxes! [Laughs]



(RM) Cigar boxes yup, now they are all over on display and they make a little sense now that they are.

(WV) Now that they are all arranged properly, so we have Dina to thank for that.

(RM) Yes. Do you have to get to...

(WV) Yeah I have to leave yeah. Pretty shortly.

(RM) Ok. I guess we are down to well we are talking about the process, do you want to talk about, we have two last things the process, your process of leaving and your most, what you would consider your significant contribution too.

(WV) Ok I guess just briefly on the process of leaving, it is sort of thing one normally doesn't think about. I mean how does one exit one place, well you just you know put on your coat and your hat and you say good-bye. It's not quite that easy in a presidency so we are undergoing a transition period now and so with Dr. Bailey for example just spent oh some three days with me last week where I am really just trying to unload my memory bank all of the things that are going on that she will have to know about. And then she and I went down to Lansing together so that she met really the movers and shakers in state government and that trip went very well, she deals easily with that kind of thing. And that that's an important skill in this place, but then you have to arrange a graceful but pretty speedy departure after you once turned over the reins as well. It doesn't work well to have the ghost specter of an old president out there in the shadows at the time and so I really I feel as though I must leave town very quickly and not have a presence in Marquette for some time to come as a new administration gets established. Certainly don't want to be down in Hardees where the worlds critics are always talking about what's going on in the university and what you think of that, what do you think of what they are doing now! [Laughs] Like they do currently, you know I don't want to be around and be asked those things either and so I must get away. So my agreement with President Bailey is I said I will never call you after I leave campus but I'll never refuse your call, that has to be the offer that you have to make. So we are trying to, and that was the other thing too, Edgar Harden called me my first day on the job said this is my last phone call to you but I'll never refuse yours and he didn't. He was always there ready to help me and I'll be ready to help Dr. Bailey or any future presidents as well. But you do have to make yourself scarce for a while, so actually the only thing I am telling people now is I say you never know where we will show up again. It's like the children's books *Where's Waldo?* [Laughs] look around, you may see in the background somewhere Margery and I might be in there but we will trying not to be too prominent as we are around. So it's kind of a bitter sweet experience to leave that because you do know that you do have to make yourself scarce. It isn't, I mean you do. You have to get out as soon as you can, as quickly as you can so we are trying to get out of town within about a week after the people hold a farewell party for us, we will be closeted trying to pack up our things and get out efficiently.

(RM) Ok then the last item your most significant, what you would consider is your most significant contribution?

(WV) Well I don't know, I think it is difficult for you to evaluate contributions, I think if I recast it and say what is it that gives me the most pleasure or most satisfaction it really would be the change in the campus climate, the campus culture. I have a sense now that we are working well together, that people are united, that people I think people have more self-respect in some ways than they did. I think we were successfully modest, we have been successfully modest as an institution, kind of undervalued the quality of what we have at Northern. So I think in general I think people are pulling a little better together, I think they identify more with the institution as a whole rather than just their own separate activities. I think they have well, a well-deserved pride in the institution, there is more pride than we had before. And I think that's going to be good for us, so that's of everything that's really what gives me and I think the greatest sense of satisfaction.

(RM) Because I think before you got here, I know I was one of them and I said this in the past that I was kind of very suspicious about you bringing the campus together but I think today you have people talking about a community, a campus community and people actually not just talking about feeling that way. That was something I know did not exist prior to your coming certainly.

(WV) Well it's very important in an university, well I think it's important in any kind of organization but I think in particular of a university should be the model of collegiality and community. So I am pleased with what I see there.

(RM) Ok good, well thank you and good luck in your retirement and trip west.

(WV) Thank you, you can catch me at the beach any day now or the local public library, I think probably I will get squatters rights on a carrel on Long Beach Library. Pursue my work.

(RM) Now are you planning to do some memoirs or something?

(WV) Oh I'll do some recreational writing, essays you know primarily that what I like to do I like to write essays on various topics and burning concerns that everybody determinism, reductionism, all of these tidology all of these topics that are on everybody's minds. You will probably see some publications at some point on those simulating topics.

(RM) Ok well thank you for your time and over the days here we all appreciate it and you know people in the future will appreciate this.

(WV) My pleasure Russ.

End of Interview