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Kevin Dean's
interview with
Carl Pellonpaa

Me: O.K., let's start off with some biographical questions.
When and where were you born?

Mr. P.: I was born here in Ishpeming in 1930, the 31st of
December, New Year's Eve.

Me: What were your parents' names?

Mr. P.: My Dad's name was Charles, my mother's name is Edith.

Me: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. P.: I had a brother, and he died just a year ago, his
name was Reino. I also had two sisters, Lilian
and Alice. They're still living, my sister Lilian is
living in Negaunee, and my sister Alice is living
in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Me: What's your wife's name?

Mr. P.: My wife's name is Doris,

Me: How did you meet her?

Mr. P.: Well, I used to follow her in the high school, down the hallway, I thought she was pretty cute.

Her friend arranged a bet to have a date, that came about, and we started dating, and it wasn't too long after that we got married in 1953, in December.

Me: Was that right after high school?

Mr. P.: She graduated in 1949, I graduated in 1948, and in 1953 we got married.

Me: Does she work also?

Mr. P.: She's retired now. She was director of nurses at Bell Hospital, in Ishpeming.

Me: O.K. What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. P.: My mother was a homemaker, and my Dad worked for C.C.I. That was his job ever since they immigrated from Finland.

Me: Were your parents from Finland?

Mr.P.: They were both born in Finland.

Me: So you were first generation.

Mr.P.: Yes, first generation, no, excuse me, second generation.

Me: Where did you go to school?

Mr.P.: Here in Ishpeming High School, that was my school.

Me: How long? Did you go to college?

Mr.P.: No, I didn't.

Me: Do you remember any funny stories from high school like from dances, plays, or something?

Mr.P.: Well, one that comes to mind is I remember playing baseball; I was pitching a no hitter against Gwinn, and back then there were seven inning games, and in the sixth inning I pitched a no hitter, and my coach pulled me out of the game because he wanted me to pitch another day two days later against another team, so I never did get to finish my no hitter. Annoying at the time, but funny today. (Chuckle)

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Me: Do you have any special memories from growing up in this area?

Mr. P.: Well, I think that you get know everybody, there are very few strangers, and there are so many things to do. Summertime activities and wintertime activities, whatever you choose to do, you can do it. You can ski downhill, cross-country, or jumping, basketball, football, anything; All sports.

Me: Did you have any other types of entertainment, like going to the movies?

Mr. P.: Well, we'd go to a movie once a week or something like that. It was mostly out playing all the time, growing up. I never had enough of sports.

Me: So you're a big sports fan?

Mr. P.: Oh, yes.

Me: What kind of trips did you take when you were young? The ones that stand out the most.

Mr. P.: Well, when I was young, the farthest I went with my folks was the state of Connecticut. In fact we made two trips. We got to see Boston, see a Boston Braves ball game, and swim of the coast of Rhode Island

Mr. P.: in the Atlantic Ocean. We were driving by car back
(cont'd) then before they had freeways, so it was rather
exciting. (5)

Me: What were some of your favorite hang-out places
with your friends?

Mr. P.: Generally the corners, the location where we lived,
which was the Cleveland Location. We would all
congregate there, and that's where the games would
start, for whatever the season. There were no
hang-outs in town that I can remember.

Me: Do you think there have been any major changes
in the city of Ishpeming compared to the city
you lived in back then?

Mr. P.: Major changes, um, count how many grocery stores
you see today, and I can remember when I
was growing up, fifteen to twenty grocery
stores. No matter what you wanted to buy,
you could find it. There were a number of
pharmacies, a number of furniture stores, clothing
stores, etc. Now we have very little.

Me: So you think that, basically all of the
stores have just....

Mr. P.: Disappeared.

Me: Do you remember any funny stories from back then? ⑥

Mr. P.: Let's see. I don't know how funny it is but my mother asked me to go; well, she would make potato sausage, which required casings, and she told me to get some at the store, but it didn't register. So instead of going to the grocery store's meat market to get the casings, I went to the drug store. And the drug store employees thought that was the biggest joke of the year, that I would come into a drug store to look for casings, and they called my mother. So when I got home, everyone in the neighborhood knew that I had gone to a drug store to get some casings. It wasn't the thing to do, (chuckle)

Me: So your mother was a pretty good cook?

Mr. P.: Oh yeah.

Me: Moving on to hobbies and interests; when did you start playing baseball?

Mr. P.: When I was young as I could throw a ball. I think I started playing in the location when I was in the fourth and fifth grades. In seventh grade we were already looking to challenge other teams. We had good location teams, so we'd play as often as we could.

Me: Did you make it to the Major Leagues? ⑦

Mr. P.: No, I was signed by the Boston Braves in the spring/summer of '49, given a contract to go to the minor league training camp in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in the spring of 1950. (minor leagues) The field in West Virginia was the Class D Farm Club at the time. But, unfortunately I went hunting and got shot in the head, neck, and shoulder, with a shotgun. And that gave me Bursitis in my shoulder and so I couldn't throw when I went to training camp. So I was there for two weeks, and I never did find out if I could have made it.

Me: So you injured yourself in an accidental shot?

Mr. P.: Well, with my hunting partner, I bent down to pick up a rabbit, and as I bent down the rabbit took away/off from me, and I stood up and shouted "There he goes!" and he shot. I was in the line of fire, in the head, neck, and shoulders, that's where the bullets hit me. It was in October/December when the Bursitis set in, and I couldn't throw.

Me: How long did it take to recover?

Mr. P.: Well, it's still not recovered, I still cannot throw any overhand.

Me: Did that end any hopes or dreams you had of playing Major League Baseball? (8)

Mr. P.: Well I did, in 1951 I tried again, I had worked on a punching bag and worked hard trying to bring it back. I tried out for the New York Giants, they had a tryout camp in Iron Mountain, I was lucky enough to get a start in a scrimmage game, but my fastball was gone. I had a good knuckle, and good control, but the scout from the New York Giants said that if you were capable of throwing a faster pitch, we'd consider you. That was it, I never tried anymore.

Me: Did anyone else make it?

Mr. P.: No, not that I know of, from up here.

Me: Do you regret that you couldn't make it because of that injury?

Mr. P.: Well, I regret that I never really had a chance, if I could have been able to throw, and have someone say I'm not good enough, that's one thing, but never having another chance to prove myself, the question mark was always there.

Me: O.K., I hear you were involved in ski jumping?

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Mr. P.: I started ski jumping at the same time I started playing baseball. From the very, as young as I could stand, there was a pair of skis and jumping was the thrill. I never did ride Suicide or any of the bigger hills, but the sport is still a love of mine, I try to help out by announcing at the hill.

Me: Do you still ski jump today?

Mr. P.: No. Cross-country ski only.

Me: I enjoy cross-country skiing myself.

Me: How good were you? How good do you judge yourself to be?

Mr. P.: Mediocre. It was just a fun thing, to put the skis on, climb a hill, and jump. The thrill of the flight, you can't explain it, you've got to try it yourself.

Me: Were you involved in any ski jumping competitions?

Mr. P.: Just our own location, we'd get together Sunday afternoon and make out like we were the big kids and we were going to have a big tournament and whoever was there, five, six, or seven of ourselves, and we would make numbers for ourselves. That's the biggest tournament I ever jumped in.

Me: Were a lot of friends involved?

Mr. P.: Oh, yes.

Me: So was it a big community thing?

Mr. P.: No, just strictly the Cleveland Location kids.

Me: Do you remember any funny stories?

Mr. P.: About ski jumping? We would work on a hill, we would wait until Christmas season was over because we had all kinds of Christmas trees to use to make take-offs wherever we needed them, or put them into a landing hill and then fill it with snow, and, uh, we would pack the snow as hard as we could the landing make sure the take-off was good, and wherever our in-run was going to be located, Whoever was first to go, we always put a big chute on the end of the take-off so we would fly high in the air, and the expression was if you made it to the bottom was to shout back, and they would ask how was it, and you'd say "Talk about go!" (slight chuckle) That's the only funny thing I can remember about ski-jumping.

Me: Did you have any injuries from that? Any big crashes you were in?

Mr. P.: I don't think I ever crashed in ski-jumping.

Me: You never crashed? That's pretty good.

Me: Describe to the best of your ability the thrill of flying through the air.

Mr. P: Well, that's very hard to describe, because I think each of the ski-jumpers that I've had the chance to interview myself over the years, and there have been a number, they each feel something, it's a different feeling, the thrill. I think, talking to them, you don't remember taking a breath or if you were holding your breath; Your eyes, they're focusing on everything, you can see the landing hill, you can see your skis, you know where your arms are, you know the landing's coming up so you're bracing for impact....

Me: ... Indescribable.

Mr. P: It is indescribable, no question about it.

Me: Did you ever feel out of control?

Mr. P: No, sometimes on the first jump of a hill, not knowing what to expect on the landing because you didn't know if you had packed it hard enough so it would be good and solid, but we generally did a pretty good job.

Me: Was it a bigger sport back then?

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Mr. P.: Oh yeah, everybody ski-jumped. Nobody, very few people went down hitting, up here. We could as I just returned from Iron Mountain, on the 20th + 21st where they had a Pine Mountain ski-jump, it was pointed out that Iron Mountain and Ishpeming had more jumpers, the two cities, and Kingsford, could hold a tournament, they didn't need anybody else, there were more Olympians from these two communities, than any other city in the United States, which told me that we had good quality jumpers.

Me: So you had really good ski jumpers from back then?

Mr. P.: You bet.

Me: What other interests do you have?

Mr. P.: Other interests? Well, I loved to play basketball back when I was growing up, I never did get to play on the ^{basketball} team for High School, but I enjoyed the sport. We played touch football a lot, I did some hunting, until I got shot, then gave that up. I just like to be out in the woods, it's a good feeling to be able to get out and get fresh air. Someone living in the big city doesn't have that opportunity.

Me: So do you consider yourself lucky to live up here?

Mr. P.: Absolutely.

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Me: Do you have a camp?

Mr. P.: Yes, we have a place on a lake called Little Birch, about 15 mi. south of Ishpeming.

Me: How often do you go there?

Mr. P.: I'm waiting for the snow to melt so I can get out there. I go out there as often as I can.

Me: So you really enjoy the outdoors.

Mr. P.: You bet.

Me: Is there anything else you want to add about your sports or hobbies?

Mr. P.: No, I enjoy using a video camera, and videotaping different people, events, etc.

Me: What sort of clubs or organizations were you in, or still in today?

Mr. P.: (Series of chuckles.)

Me: Do you have a long list of them?

Mr. P.: Well, I'm a member of the American Legion Post, I'm a member of the Vasa Lodge, I'm a member of the Elk's Lodge, I'm a member of the Bethany Lutheran Church with my wife, that's about it.

Me: Exactly what do you do in some of these clubs?

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Mr. P.: Well, let's see, in the Legion I was post commander - for a couple of years, in the Elk's Lodge I was Exalted Ruler for a year, which is a term that generally one person gets for a year. I just joined the Vasa Lodge, I've been a member for two years now. I don't join, I try not to join something if I can't be active in it.

Me: Was it bigger back then, or are there more people in it now?

Mr. P.: As far as the Legion? About the same numbers. We used to have a Post home in Ishpeming, but that was sold many years ago. The Elk's Lodge still has a beautiful lodge here in town, with almost 800 members, so it's still active.

Me: What major events go on with the Elk's Club?

Mr. P.: I think the biggest one that we do is the fund-raising that we use to offer to students who want to go on to a higher education, we give them an opportunity of getting scholarships outside of the Congress of the United States, the Elk's Lodge of the nation gives more scholarship dollars than anybody else. That's something we're rather proud of.

Me: That's pretty impressive.

Mr. P.: We also work a lot with handicapped people, and we donate a lot of money so they can go to Bayliff at our expense, and it's a worthwhile project, and I think most ELKS are proud of it. Then we also fund a baseball team in town, and have parties for the kids, Halloween for instance, and Christmas time.

Me: Is it pretty rewarding?

Mr. P.: Oh yeah.

Me: What were some of the biggest trips that you can remember?

Mr. P.: Let me tell you the story of sailing across the Pacific, Uncle Sam asked me to join the army, in which I did, and from Seattle, Washington I boarded a vessel and sailed for eighteen days across the Pacific and ended up in Korea, with a stop first in Sasebo, Japan, and then on to Inchon, Korea. Thirteen months later we sailed again in fourteen days this time on the return. So I've had my sailing, I don't care to visit the Pacific Ocean on an ocean going vessel anymore, not for that duration. A cruise is one thing, but going for that extended of a period on a troop ship, it wasn't much fun,

Me: What was the crew like?

Mr. P.: You didn't see much of the crew, they were U.S. Navy. They had their own work to be done.

Me: What activities did you do while you were traveling?

Mr. P.: About the only thing to do was stay on deck during the day because you couldn't stay down below. If it was raining, if it was wet, you were on deck. You would get up in the morning and get out on deck and have lunch, which meant you went back down, and in the afternoon you'd go back up, then at suppertime you'd go back down, then to your bunk. That was a troop ship.

Me: Rain or shine you were on deck?

Mr. P.: On deck.

Mr. P.: With the other trips to Finland I've had a chance to visit there eighteen times, three times we've gone to Hawaii, it's been a lot of fun.

Me: What do you remember most about your trips to Finland?

Mr. P.: I think feeling that I was at home, knowing where my roots were, knowing my mother and father were born there, knowing that I have relatives, right now I have two aunts in Finland.

Mr. P.: All the uncles and aunts that I got to know have now passed on, but I still have ten first cousins and their children and children, so I made a lot of friends over there.

Me: Do you still go there?

Mr. P.: We were just there in 1992, and had an excellent tour,

Me: You fly, right?

Mr. P.: Yeah, fly.

Me: What are the memories that stand out the most from your trips?

Mr. P.: I had a chance to watch with my wife the tryouts of the Summer Olympic team of Finland one year, having a chance to visit parts of Finland that you'd only see in pictures. Being north of the Arctic Circle in 1985, when the temp. was in excess of 90° F, where one would think being North of the Arctic Circle would be very cold, but it wasn't. Just to meet the friendly people of Finland has been a lot of fun.

Me: What was it like visiting Hawaii?

Mr. P.: If you can look up in the English dictionary what the word paradise means, that is how I would describe Hawaii. I loved it immensely and my wife did too, with the warm trade winds blowing, there's nothing better to do.

Me: What were some of the favorite things to do while you were in Hawaii?

Mr. P.: To eat the fresh pineapple, to walk along the beach, just to enjoy the tradewinds. We have brisk winds in the U. P., and unless they're blowing from the South, they're rather cold and brisk, to be able to sit there with a warm wind blowing, it's "awesome." It's a place everybody should go to once in their life.

Me: How many times have you been there?

Mr. P.: Three.

Me: Moving along now, why do you think it's important to preserve your slurs Finnish Heritage?

Mr. P.: I would think it important for everybody to preserve their heritage, to be proud of who they are, what they are, where their mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and great-great-grandmothers and fathers came from. It's a part of the heritage of this country, and what made this country what it is today. The mixture of all the different people that came here, and that's why America is so great.

Me: Do you think America could have been as great if there had been just one heritage or two?

Mr. P.: I think if America had been like England, France, Germany, it would never have been so great, or Finland, or Sweden, or Russia or whoever. It would never had been as great. It's the mixture that makes it what it is.

Me: What role do you believe yourself to play in the preservation of your heritage?

Mr. P.: I think the role that I've been blessed with is the fact that I hold a Finnish language television program, and in March it will be 31 yrs. old; it's given me an opportunity of sharing with the viewer music, the scenery, and the culture of Finland. Hopefully, through that I've had a chance to preserve that in the minds of other people. Not only just the Finnish Americans.

Me: When did you start that show? Were you the one that started it?

Mr. P.: Well, there were two of us, and myself started the show on the 25th of March, 1962. It started as a half hour show, about a month later it went to an hour, and for a while it's been two hours, 5:00 on Sundays, and now it's been an hour for the last 15 to 20 years.

Me: What time does it come on?

Mr. P.: It's on Sunday mornings at 9:30, eastern time.

Me: Besides that, have there been any other contributions you've made?

Mr. P.: To my heritage? Well, I think I've had the chance, through the years, to host 17 different tours to Scandinavia and to Finland. For those who have never experienced Finland I've given them that opportunity, by taking them on one of the tours.

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Me: What do you think the general public should do to preserve their heritage? What do you think the biggest mistake the average American makes?

Mr. P.: I think from the standpoint of the Americans, we think we can't learn anything anymore. But, unfortunately, those folks in Europe have been around a lot longer than we have. There are things that they do that are much better than ours; our system is better of course, our democracy that we have, the freedom of speech, etc, etc. But, there are so many things that they provide for their children when they grow up, to their senior citizens, that we do not offer yet. To not just blindly go ahead and do it our way, maybe there's a better way. Let's try something else.

Me: So you think we should seek different solutions.....

Mr. P.: Be more open-minded.

Me: Were you in the Armed Forces? When did you get involved?

Mr. P.: 1953 to 1955. That's when I went to Korea.

Me: Was that after high school?

Mr. P.: That was after high school.

Me: What did you do in Korea?

Mr. P.: I was with an engineering company. An engineering company is like your National board here in Ishpeming, assigned for road projects, and whatever the responsibility to clear an airport for a landing field, dig culverts, you name it, we did it. 1343rd engineer battalion.

Me: What memories or stories do you have from serving in Korea?

Mr. P.: Well, I could tell you that if I could have the same outfit that I had back then, I would go back for a while and just enjoy it, because we had a good group. Primarily, the majority of us was from the Midwest. Our first cook was from Detroit, I worked in supplies so I could get up late in morning and be sure of having breakfast because the first cook would take care of me. He needed a new pair of shirts, pants or whatever, he knew he could come to the supply room and I'd take care of him there, so it was a good group.

Me: Was this during wartime?

Mr. P.: No, the conflict ended, and I got out, thank goodness.

Me: When, what was your first job?

Mr. P.: My first job, I worked after high school at ~~Ruroad's~~ grocery store on Division, Ishpeming. That was the same thing that guys and gals do today, stocking shelves, bring up products.

Me: Is it still there today?

Mr. P.: No, the store is there, but it's not the same.

Me: Was your next job with t.v. 6?

Mr. P.: No, then I worked part time at Stern's Reliable Clothing Store on Main Street, I graduated from high school, commencement was on Friday night, and Monday morning I worked at WJPD Radio, That was my first job.

Me: What were duties?

Mr. P.: I was a morning announcer. I worked there until, 49' I signed a contract to play baseball. The radio station thought I would leaving them permanently, so they offered...

Mr. P.:

... ~~was~~ a part time job and I ended up leaving the firm at the time, so I sort of didn't do anything that winter season, it was right around the time I got shot, and when I got back from training camp, I was sort of mournful of what had happened to me. In July of 1950 I worked in the Cliff Shaft Mine underground until I was called ~~into~~ the Army. Upon my return in January 55' I went back into the mine, then I was transferred from the Cliff Shaft Mine to the Bunker Hill in Negaunee and worked there until the layoffs of January 58'. Then I worked in Abbott Laboratories in North Chicago for several months, came back in 1960 and went to work at WJPD Radio. In 1961, I moved to WLAC T.V., and I've been there ever since.

Me: What were the requirements of that job?

Mr. P.: I guess, learning how to talk, trying to talk without a brogue, be able to read news, and to be able to communicate. What helped me in my growing up as a radio announcer, which I still think is probably the best profession in the world, because you're one on one with your listener. My English teacher, who arranged for me to get a job at WJPD Radio, his name was Ben, he reminded me as you talk, as you pronounce a word, you accent or highlight that last letter of a word, and that will give you the ability to speak slower so you'll be understood.

Me: Do you think your job as a radio announcer helped you with your job at WLUC?

Mr. P.: Oh, absolutely! I used to something different. The studios of WJPD were on the highway, just down where Pizza Hut is located, there's still a little building there. They had a mobile home with the window facing the highway, and that's where the control room was. I could look out on the highway, and as the cars would drive by in the mornings, I would say good morning to the guy in Red Chevy, etc. Pretty soon I had cars going back and forth blowing their horns if they were listening. It got to be a lot of fun.

Me: When did you first start working for WLUC T.V.?
Mr. P.: That was in the spring of 1961.

Me: What were your early duties?

Mr. P.: I was hired to do sports, but the object of that time by management of the station, that if you were going to work in front of the camera, you would learn what happened behind the camera. So you would run camera, then you went out in front of the camera. You learned all aspects of what television was about.

Me: What kind of training was required for that job?

Mr. P.: Today the requirement is a college degree. I had no college degree.

Me: Were your grades pretty good?

Mr. P.: I don't think so, I wasn't a very good student...

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Mr. P.: ... I would change that all over if I had the chance, but I didn't. I'm happy I graduated from J Shpeming High School, the teachers trained me well.

Me: Do you think students today need to go to college or farther?

Mr. P.: I don't know if college is something for everybody. But, if I had to do it over again, I would go to college, I think in the years to come, you'd better have a college degree, there aren't going to be too many jobs out there that will handle a shovel and a rake anymore. If you don't have an education, there may not be a job for you, and then what are you going to do and how are you going to raise your family?

Me: Why did you choose that career?

Mr. P.: I enjoy, I think communicating, I love people, I could talk to people all day long, because everybody has something to say, I'm a listener, to be a communicator, you have to be a listener.

Me: What memories stand out during your early duties at WLTC T.V.?

Mr. P.: When I first started there, it was a limited crew, there were just a small number of people. So we knew each other personally, some of the things that happened behind the cameras or on camera are firmly etched in my mind, and some I can't articulate because it's something one shouldn't tell what happened, but belongs in house only. He stories were there. Nothing nasty,

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Me: Describe in as much detail as possible the early duties?

Mr. P.: Back then, there was no such thing as videotape. No such thing as satellite. No such thing as having a video of any kind for a story. You would use a polaroid camera to get a picture of something to put on the screen for either a commercial or for a story. For instance, if I was interviewing you, and you had just pitched a no-hitter, if I were lucky enough I could get a polaroid of you so I could show it on the air, and to get it on the air a camera would have to take a picture of it in the studio. Today it's so much more technical.

Me: Was it all live back then?

Mr. P.: All live, that's what was fun, there's nothing better than live television.

Me: Do you do as much live today?

Mr. P.: Well, I'm on everyday Monday through Friday so I guess I'm on as much as I was then.

Me: What do you do everyday?

Mr. P.: Well, I get up at 3:00 in the morning, and I'm at work by ten to four in the morning. I do a newscast shortly before 7:00 a.m., another one at 7:25, at 8:25, another one at about 5 min. to twelve.

Me: What equipment did you have back then?

Mr. P.: A typewriter, and 16mm silent black and white film.

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Mr. P.: Now we have Super V.H.S. cameras, editing sweets, computers, we have an associated press news desk, it's all computerized, satellite feed into the studio, it's very technical today.

Me: Is your work basically in the studio or do you go and travel?

Mr. P.: Initially, I worked in the newsroom, I did weather and I did sports, and then I went into creative service, I was writing commercials and directing salesmen. Then in 1973 I started the UPPER MICHIGAN TODAY program which was half an hour long, which was a great deal of fun. The Finland Calling program of course was on right from the start in 1962, so I think I've done just about everything except be a salesman and sweep floors, and answer phones.

Me: How have your duties changed?

Mr. P.: I don't think the duties have changed, it's the responsibility of your job, you have a product to put out and you do it as best you can.

Me: Did the advances in technology help your job?

Mr. P.: Oh, it helped. That's why television is so exciting, the video, the ability to have a piece of equipment you take the picture with it and edit and make your story from that particular piece of tape.

Me: What was the most difficult part or tasks that you had in your job.

Mr. P.: I think one of the most difficult assignments I gave myself was in 1976 the President of Finland payed a visit to Hancock, and I was the only person of the media given the opportunity to ask him a question. I had to submit the question two weeks in advance. I had never done that in my life and I still don't do that today. I don't know what I'm going to ask the person when I'm going to do an interview. I don't have it written down in my mind what my first question is going to be. Here I had to submit a question two weeks in advance. In

1976 the Finnish Olympic team was part of the Montreal Olympics. A fellow by the name of [redacted] was running a ten-thousand meter race, and he fell, got up, and won the race. I knew the President of Finland was and had been an athlete so I wanted to ask him what was his reaction to when his countryman did what he did. That was the only question I gave, the only answer he gave, then he said thank you and I said thank you and that was it.

Me:
Mr. P.:

What was his answer?

I don't remember. I think it was dealing with his response to the fact that we do have in the U.P. a number of Finnish Americans. And he was surprised to the extent of how many there are in the U.P.

Me: What were the most rewarding parts of your job?

Mr. P.: I think that was a rewarding experience

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because I knew I was the only media person talking with the President of Finland. I was given a medal from the current president of Finland in 1988, the Order of the White Rose, for my work in hosting a Finnish program, and taking tours to Finland. I served on County Board of Commissioners for nine years, two of which I was chairman. After which I was appointed to the Highway Commission, and I served on that 13 1/2 years, and the Department Transportation gave me the honor of naming Welcom Center in Marquette in my name. That was certainly a proud moment in my life, to drive by and see my name on the Welcome Center representing Mich. Were ever nervous at any time in your job?

Me:
Mr. P.:

I think the only time that I can say I was nervous when doing the job; Are you familiar with Tom Jones the singer? No? Well he was a very popular singer from Whales in England. (Part of Great Britain) I was working Saturdays, doing the news, when I was told that Tom Jones was going to be in the area and would I like to go talk to him. So, I did, I met him in town. I said I would like to do an interview with Tom Jones if it's possible. Lo and behold, he set it up, Tom Jones came in on his own jet, with the name Tom Jones emblazed on the side of the aircraft, this is like 1:30 on APRIL 12 in the morning. We had the studio all ready to go early in the morning, his

Mr. P.:

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back-up singers came off the plane first, and I was driving a small Honda Accord, and there were four big limosines that followed my little Honda to the station. We/I get out of the car and I walk in the studio and they're all trailing behind me, I get my mic on and the next thing you know, sitting next to me is the very popular, very handsome entertainer, Tom Jones, wearing a great big silver cross around his neck, big silver ring around his finger, and I totally lost control. I didn't know what I was going to ask him, in fact I think I may have mumbled, I consider it the worst interview I've ever done in my whole life. But what a nice man, I've been told he was a very short man he wore high heels because he was so short, but he was almost as tall as I was. I think I was awestruck, for the first time in my life and only time I'd been awestruck by anybody.

Me: Were you ever involved in dangerous situations?

Mr. P.: I don't think so, nothing that comes to mind.

Me: Any humorous?

Mr. P.: Nothing really that I can think of.

Me: What were your co-workers like?

Mr. P.: There's a great bunch of people, both men and women. As I said before, I enjoy people, I enjoy communicating. If someone is willing to do their job, I'm a happy person. If they're not willing to do their job, I'm not a happy person, and I stay away from that individual. That's always been my philosophy.

Me: Has anyone given you trouble in your job?

Mr. P.: I think life is trouble, from the day you're born you have problems, but you accept it, and soon, better days are coming. I have a philosophy that if someone gives you a bad time, what goes around, comes around. That individual, for what he or she may have done to you, they will feel something similar someday. I may not be there to enjoy it, but each one has their come-ups, so you try to do good things in your lifetime.

Me: What are the biggest responsibilities you have with that job?

Mr. P.: Well, I think just being there everyday is a responsibility, to be ready to go on the air, and to try to do the best job you possibly can; do the news as well as you can. That's a responsibility I look at.

Me: What time did you say you got up in the morning?

Mr. P.: 3:00.

Me: Was that hard at first?

Mr. P.: It's very hard. Today I very seldom need an alarm clock, but it's not easy. Ask your friends how'd you like to get up every morning at 3:00, and see what their answer is.

Me: Did you ever feel like changing careers?

Mr. P.: No, not really. Like I said, I've enjoyed television. It's a good vehicle if you want to communicate.

Me: have you ever had the opportunity to change jobs?

Mr. P.: I think I'd only look for a job at another television station and for radio station. I'm happy in the U.P. I might be happy someday in Hawaii, but right now I'm in the U.P. and I love it.

Me: Do you plan on retiring here?

Mr. P.: Well, that question has been popping up every once in a while when the day comes to retire what shall we do. I think I may be like some, find the warm climates in the wintertime, and enjoy the summers in the U.P. That has not been resolved yet.

Me: What sort of awards/recognition have you had during your job?

Mr. P.: Well, I think when you don't have turn back and accept your paycheck every payday is a reward itself. Employee of the month once, I don't remember the year. It was the same time I got the award from Finland.

Me: what are your fondest memories of working for WLUC?

Mr. P.: I think seeing it grow, seeing it change, being a part of the change. From being where there were only studio cameras and a 16mm camera to shoot video outside to today and know that it's going to be even bigger and better in the days to come. I don't think, that if you didn't have local television. the public would be very hard pressed to have something worth watching. Movies and the big networks are fine, but if you don't have someone doing something locally, "you don't have nothing."

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Me: Overall, are you happy with your life, are you glad that you've done everything you did?

Mr. P.: I'd say so. I think my only regret in my life is I never did find out if I could play major league baseball. That's a question that will remain unanswered.

Me: If you could do it all over again, what would you change?

Mr. P.: I wouldn't have gone hunting, I'd stay out of the woods when there are people with weapons out there.

Me: What advice would you give to someone who wants the same career as you?

Mr. P.: Well, I would go get an education, first of all, and learn how to read. I hear a lot of radio announcers today that do not know how to read. You have to remember when you're reading to someone else, you're not reading for yourself, you're reading for them. Make it understandable, enjoyable, and read with some thought, and read the stories to yourself before you go read it into the microphone. First, get an education.

Me: I forgot to ask you this, How old are you?

Mr. P.: I'm 62.

Me: How much longer do you plan on working?

Mr. P.: When I get old. (Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha)

Me: Any last things you'd like to add?

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Mr. P.: Well, I have to say I'm happy to have my wife with me who is my manager, my severest critic, and part of my life that's been very important to me. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Me: This was recorded on February 22nd, 1993, at the house of Carl Pellonpaa.

(Not recorded on tape - thank you's and good byes.)