

Jared Lawson  
interview with  
Lonnie Tonge



ME: When and where were you born.

Mr. Tonge: I was born in Ishpeming at Bell.

ME: How many brothers and sisters do you have.

Mr. Tonge: 5 brothers, no sisters. I'm kind of in the middle of the boys.

ME: Their names.

Mr. Tonge: There's Bill, Larry, Dennis ME, Lee (chick) and Jack.

ME: When and whom did you marry.

Mr. Tonge: I met my wife <sup>Kathalyn</sup> at National Mine High School. She is originally from Brimley MI. Then her family moved to Sault Saint Marie MI. Before construction work brought their family to West Ishpeming, Sunny side Estates.

ME: When and where were your parents born.

Mr. Tonge: My Dad (William Tonge) was born in Minnesota some where and Mom (Gloria Hebert) was born Ishpeming along with her ~~brothers~~ brothers and sisters.

ME: What years did you attend National Mine School.

Mr. Tonge: I started school in 1960, to 73

ME: Do you remember some of your grade school Teachers, And what were they like.

Mr. Toung: Dorothy Gleason was my Kindergarden teacher. I remember her very well, she had her hands full. Most of the teachers Miss Magnuson 1st grade teacher and Miss Wasburg 3 grade Teacher, Had to be kind of strict to keep us in line. This was a very loudy school at the time. They didn't hesitate to pull our hair or wack us if we got out of line.

include

ME: Do you remember some of your junior high or high school teachers and what were they like.

Mr. Toung: The most I remember about junior high is sports I started playing Basketball and sports. High School was OK but there wasn't many classes to take. There was the basic math, English, Government shop History and 2 3 and sometimes 4 study Halls.

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ME: Fun Study Halls that's alot.

Mr. Toung: Most of the time we took extra classes like an Extra Government class with Percy Omstead or An Extra Drafting class with Mr. Ralph Keto.

ME: Do you remember any humorous or interesting stories about them.

Mr. Toung: I had enough Shop Drafting and Government classes. Shop was a little more fun when Mr. Keto wasn't looking someone was always boosing someone with a T square. Or when the power would go out and Mr. Keto left the room Sam + Marie would push the buttons on the belt Sanders when the power came on everything would go flying. I think Study Hall was my favorite subject. There was more action going on in Study Hall than any where Stan Roberts had most of my

include

Study and someone would go to put a tack on his chair. When he sat on it he always seemed to jump 3 feet in the air and grab the guy that did it. I don't think he ever grabbed the wrong guy. HE seemed to know.

ME: How did you get to school and how far was it?

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Mr. Toonge: School was something to do in our small town I lived about 1/2 mile from school so we had to walk. After I think the second grade, it was cold in winter. Summer we took shortcuts through Tundell's Cow Pasture. Sometimes the cows chased us all the way some times they freed us. The Bulls didn't like us going through we teased them *include*

ME: What was your favorite subject and why?

Mr. Toonge: At National Mine we didn't have many different classes to choose from like the big schools had. So you ended up with extra Government, Drafting, woodshop.

ME: What was your most favorite subject and why?

Mr. Toonge: Math was my best subject guess it was the only thing that added up.

ME: What kinds of extra-curricular activities were offered?

Mr. Toonge: Sports was my favorite activity I joined everything we had, CC, Basketball, Track. They kept me busy after school for 6 years until I graduated in '73.

ME: Which one was your favorite?

Mr. Toonge: Basketball was what I liked best. We never had a great team but they voted me Most Valuable Player in '73. That was a honor for me. Along with being voted King that year it was a good year. *include*

ME: How has the competition changed?

Mr. Toonge: I don't think the competition changed at all. We played and worked as hard as any team. But what hurt us was the size of our floor compared to almost any other floor. National Mine was and still is called the Cracker Box. So when we came onto a big floor we had to work a little harder compared to the kids who practiced on one. *include*

ME: How were Kids expected to act or behave.

Mr. Tonge: The Kids at National Mine acted different from any other school  
They were very tough and very Humorous. They had a Nick name for  
everyone. A lot of teachers probably had some of their worst  
experiences at the Mine.

emphasize

ME: How did Kids dress, were there dress codes.

Mr. Tonge: The dress code was no long hair (Basketball players had crew cuts,  
No Jeans, Shirt tails had to be tucked in, finally got them in line  
with other schools.

ME: What did you have for lunch and what was it like could you describe your hot lunch.

Mr. Tonge: Lunch time was different At National Mine we ate in the gym. The cooks  
and helpers would haul big tables and set them up every day. Most of  
the food we had was like home cooking. Only a few people went home for  
lunch. No one that I can remember brought lunch.

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ME: Who was your Principle and describe him.

Mr. Tonge: Mr. Fran Zoessing was the principle during High School, we had about 3  
different ones by the time I graduated.

ME: Did any teachers have impact on your life.

Mr. Tonge: Mr. Gordy Chinn was our Coach, for all the Sports plus he drove the  
Bus to CC meets, and the track meets. They had a regular driver  
for basketball it gave Mr. Chinn a break. Mr. Chinn made a big impact  
on me, we loved sports as much as I did. He did a lot for us  
Kids that went for sports. Like take us for a CC run toward his  
Camp. So when we go there he had pop and hot dogs for us and we  
could go swimming. He did the most for me sometimes just talking  
over my problems, he was always there.

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ME: Describe your graduation ~~ceremony~~ Ceremony?

Mr. Tonge: Our graduation was small, we had around 23 in our class by the time we all finally made it. Some of the kids I graduated with I haven't seen since that day.

ME: Were you able to maintain contact with your childhood friends?

Mr. Tonge: Some of my class I work with and see every day and hang out with others. The ones that still live around here, and that I see were really close. It's a closeness that comes more about each other, *in* with a small school. You care

ME: What are your fondest memories of National Mine School?













Mr. Tonge: The best memories are the kids themselves, some one always trying to be more funny than the next guy. It was an ongoing thing.

ME: What is the biggest change in the school today?

Mr. Tonge: The biggest change I see is the gym area the lunchroom now was the seating area and the gym was the stage. The wall behind the seating area was never there it was all seating, there's rooms there now.

The End.

Legend

- Early Childhood 
- Transportation 
- Present Lives 
- Elementary Teachers 
- lunch 
- Subjects Taught 
- Fund Memories 
- Parents 
- Extra Curricular 
- Behavior and Punishment  
and Dress Codes 
- Wife and when Did you  
get Married 
- Favourite Teachers 
- Biggest Change 