

Title: Interview with Anthony T. Grudnoski

Date: 1999

Location: Marquette, Michigan

START OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer (I): ...1999 and I am conducting an interview with an individual who is an alum and he will identify himself in a moment, the counter number started at zero. Sir, if you could give us your name and some background information about yourself such as your place of birth, where you grew up, and your education?

Anthony T. Grudnoski (AG): I'm Dr. Anthony T. Grudnoski, I was born in a little teeny-weeny town called Marenisco over on the western end of the U.P. and went to very small high school, graduated with a class of 14 back in 1960. Four of us from that class came to Northern that year and big city was marvelous. Big city lights and all of that stuff. It just so happened that Dr. Edgar L. Harden, president of Northern at that time was the speaker at my commencement and made an impact on us there and even more of an impact when we found that he was real and approachable here on the campus of the university, which at that time was just a college. The path that I have taken in reaching where I am has been interesting, at least for me. I got my bachelor in science from Northern in 1964 and marched in the commencement ceremony with a bunch of well-knowns, taught for a couple of years in downstate Michigan, came back to the U.P. for a few years moved out to the East Coast in another career field, came back to the U.P. and spent 24 and half years teaching at the Branch Prison. When I came back to the prison, I found federal funding available that helped me pick up a master's from Northern and eventually I was really consumed with education again, the opportunity presented itself and I went to Michigan State and got my Ph.D. in 1992.

I: In what area did you receive the Ph.D.?

AG: Ph.D. was in curriculum and instruction, education.

I: Can you tell us when you attended NMU and when you graduated, the years?

AG: I was here from 1960 to 1964.

I: And those were your B.A. degrees.

AG: B.A., yes.

I: You said that you also received a master's...

AG: Master's degree had started in '72 and finished in '76, I believe.

I: Ok. And what was the master's degree in again?

AG: Educational administration.

I: Educational administration...Can you tell us some of your favorite memories of NMU and go ahead and feel free but try to pick out some of the more dramatic things that you remember including individuals, places, events...?

AG: I got it.

I: You've got it! (Laughs)

AG: I was here at Northern when such things as the first panty raid on the women's dorm took place. Not that I participated but I remember standing on the sidewalk in front of my dormitory watching it. When we entered Northern in the fall, we had big congregation in the brand new field house gymnasium and we were told that we were, class of some 1800 at that point, the largest freshmen class ever to enroll in Northern, that in fact, we were almost half the population of the university. We doubled its size. NAIA football award winners like Al "Muff" Sandona [?], Len St. Jean, Gene "Mickey" Valesano who also went on to NFL work, Bill Rademacher [?] who's still in football down at Michigan State, Jerry "Moose", as we called him back then, Glanville, who happened to drive a little Ford Falcon, and interestingly enough years later he ended up coaching the Atlanta Falcons, so he guess he's still a Falcon at heart. Some coaches that I remember are Stan Albeck who gave me my first "A" in college in PE, Rolly Doch [?], those were the people on the sports side, there were instructors who in many cases didn't make big names but to us as students were big names and scholars like Dr. Orald Rocher [?], Dr. Barner [?], Dr. Gill and Martin Copenski in biology. Tom Noss [?] in math, Lauren Rickmeyer

[?] in marching band, Herold Wright director of music, Richard Wright in sociology who came up...

I: Can you tell us little bit more about Richard Wright?

AG: Richard came as a professor about 1963, my last year here, married a classmate of my wife's, my wife graduated in '63. I knew him as a beginning instructor, I worked in audio visual, he used a lot of audio visual methods back then. Very, very vague memories, just that I did have some contact. Worked closely with colleagues of his, Dr. Burrows [?] who we all thought wrote the Burrows Manuel [?] on testing even though he hadn't, and in psychology Dr. Jean Rutherford.

I: Can you tell us something more about her?

AG: Dr. Jean was built like a fire plug. She hunted, she was an ex-marine officer, she conducted the largest single class at the university at that time, it was a lecture presentation in psychology, probably 101. She had a lab assistant, a young lady by the name of Arnell [?] from Iron River who took role by the seat numbers, we were all seated in certain places. There was a lot of assigned alphabetical sitting in Northern at that time which for me, which for me means comfort because I always knew where I belonged. For the instructor it meant, we didn't keep track but Jean lectured from the auditorium of Kaye, or from the stage of Kaye Hall auditorium at that time which was the biggest room on campus. It held 300 or 400 people, I'm not sure exactly how many, but she would lecture and at times she would use a microphone, although she surely didn't need it. She was known to be a stiff grader. She was a character, she had her ways and that is the way things were to be done. As an audiovisual person, I often got to show films for her and she taught an aberrant psychology class, where I was allowed to go in and set up the film and then I had to leave the room while she showed it, she showed some, I don't know what kinds of movies they were, movies that I wasn't allowed to see because I wasn't in the class, anyway, it was... I don't know where she got them. Some of them said U.S. government, some said U.S. Army, they were all hush hush, and she ran a tight ship, wonderful instructor, you knew where you stood, I really appreciated and enjoyed her and a number of the other instructors. Dr. West, "The Tsetse Fly" West after who West Science is named was here at that time.

I: Can you tell us something about your experiences with him?

AG: Just that I know who he was. He was moving off the scene, but Dr. Hunt was in chemistry at that time, Dr. Thomas, Thomas Fine Arts, Jim Rapport who is just kind of living now, Forest Roberts, “Jungle Bob” as we used to call him.

I: Jungle Bob, why did you call him - ?

AG: *Forest* Roberts. [Laughter] Martha...and I forget her last name. In speech, where some of the instructors that stood out as just quality instructors, Northern had very few slouches back then, and as I drive around campus now, some 35 years later I looked at the people’s names that I used to see on my class schedules and there were very, very many dedicated...Of course, I don’t know, the university today, I’m assuming they are just as many dedicated instructors today. But it just seemed that Northern has so many good instructors who really cared about students and made them want to learn, it was just great experience here. And of course, Dr. Harden, always approachable, always understanding, always knew where he and the university were headed and would let very little interrupt that. Back then there were no 080 or 090 courses but there was a right to try, and no matter where you had been in high school, “D” student, “F” student, made no difference, if you graduated high school, you were welcome at Northern and it gave a lot of students a second chance.

I: Yeah, there’s quite a few distinguished alums who were right-to-try students.

AG: Yes.

I: Yeah, then they really accomplished themselves.

AG: Yes.

I: Are there any specific events or programs or functions you participated in you’d like to remind us or tell us about it?

AG: I was involved in audiovisual and radio and television, started in 1991 where I met a suitemate in Spooner hall.

I: You mean, 1996 – er, ‘61?

AG: Oh, ’61, thank you. That’s one of the things with age, you forget years. And he worked at the radio station, it was carrier current then, we had one transmitter, two hundred fifty watt thing

that our local radio station gave us, big lightbulb on the top to cut down the juice going up and we fed over the electric lines to some of the dorms, Cary Hall, specifically, and I got interested and I got involved and there were whole group of us that got involved in WNMR carrier current. And I worked there until it moved up to Lee Hall in 1963, in fact, we trucked it with hand trucks and carts, during semester break we hauled everything up there to Lee Hall from below the old Olson library, which is now gone, but which was situated north of where the Cohodas building is now on that big sloping hill. We trucked all up there, all the 16 millimeter projectors and all of that stuff and up in a service kitchen in the back of the Lee Hall ballroom, we started this little radio station. It became WNMR-FM which is now 35 years later, WNMU-FM. Back then, we had two turn tables, a couple of reel-to-reel tape recorders and some microphones and a brand new control board and now FM is going all digital. We built the first TV studios in what was then a ball room and started the first closed circuit TV production, actually got to producing some classes with Helmut Kreitz [?] and Dr. George Karnahan [?].

I: With Helmut Kreitz [?], can you say something about him?

AG: Just that I remember doing stuff with him, for him. It was late in '63, early in '64 and I was phasing out of that cause I really had to study an hour a week in order to graduate.

I: An hour on weekend! [Laughs]

AG: Yeah, I promised myself an hour a week in order to graduate. So those things were going on, I was in radio, I saw it going on, I wasn't directly involved in running canvas and stuff, but I knew people that were generally, and we went in and did it as part of a class and, you know, whoopee, we did it, and it wasn't the major thing, I was in to finishing their radio, we went out and took microphones out to the island where the city band has concerts every Thursday night and we did those live for whole summer back in '63. Went through several faculty supervisors of radio, met with the board of control at Dr. Harden's house about what direction it should take, there were a number of us students who, wanted student operated like BKX is now. Board of control was very kind, very understanding, but very firm, "No, the university will control the station we will operate it, we will have a faculty supervisor." And we did. In retrospect, great decision because look what it's become, a voice to the Upper Peninsula and well beyond.

I: You mentioned Olson Library, now you are part of the group of students who, probably some of the last actually, used the old Olson Library. Can you talk a little bit about what that old library looks like and how you used it and what the pitfalls were, the benefits, or whatever.

AG: Today, we we're so accustomed to open-stacks and I love to wander in the new library and look at books! The old Olson Library, you'd look at the card catalog or look at the indexes and you'd have to write on a card what you wanted, the stacks were closed, only a very few select students who worked there were allowed to run the stacks and search for you. And if they were good searchers you'd get what you wanted, if they weren't get searchers, you may not get what you wanted even if it was there. Today, that would never work because today people are so suspicious of each other that you'd always have to question them about, "Now is that book really there or are you just lying to me?" The world is changed so much, back then that's the way it was and it worked, it worked wonderfully for most of us. The collection was pretty small, but it was what we needed. The instructors knew what was there and didn't require things outside of it. I remember sitting and reading a book that was on reserve even back then about the lonely crowd that was required for one of my speech classes and just having my eyes opened about different ways people viewed the world, I thought everybody looked at things the way I did, and I found out, that's not really so. In fact, when I got married, I found that my wife was one of those people who definitely didn't see the world the same way I did, and we have often had discussions about different views. But the audiovisual stuff was all downstairs, there was photography lab downstairs, there was an auditorium for showing movies, the radio station was in a little projection booth down there, a little room, smaller than here. It's about the same size as a prison cell I later learned. But all of the functions took place and all of the operations took place just on a much smaller scale than we have here in the present day, fewer students and people were a lot kinder, I think, and a lot more concerned with keeping things together than they are now, I see a lot of, a lot of wanton destruction, a lot of disrespect today that we didn't see then.

I: Is there any other favorite memory that you can think of, that you'd like to tell us about?

AG: Just that I met a lot of people, some of whom I still keep in touch with. People like Robert Manning who came as I was leaving and I introduced Bob to AV and he made a career of it. People like Dick Hough [?] who were just coming, Jay Johnson, a name that's still heard around campus. Jay was just coming, in fact, Jay needed a few bucks one day and sold me a couple of

his record albums. The only one I can remember now, and I wish I knew where it was, is one that he had signed his name on, it's called "German Drinking Songs." [Laughter] It was pretty scratched up but...

I: You could have probably used that recently, right? [Laughter]

AG: Yes, I'm sure I could have! People like John Major who later went to the high school and spent his career over there in audio, visual, and television. Bruce Turner came about the time I was leaving. Lot of these people were coming in the late '60s. Northern was starting to bloom. Then there are people like Lynn Kavarek [?], was a physics honor award winner in 1963 dropped out of a school in '65, went into full-time radio, went down to WXYZ in Detroit, covered the Detroit Riots in '67, was one of those guys driving through and getting a shot at every day. He flew the first commercial flight of the 747 out of Detroit Metro and I still see Lynn about every year and when I ask, you know, what's his best memory in the world? He said, he's torn between that 747 flight and meeting Mother Teresa.

I: Can you tell us something, you were part of the group of students who were right in the middle as you pointed out earlier, things really took off and expanded, what was it like to that time to see the West Science building being built? You may have also started to see the LRC – well, no, that was...

AG: Actually no. We saw the Bottum University Center being built. That was *the* big new building.

I: Tell us something about that and also what it was like to take classes in Kaye Hall and to, or Peter White and Longyear and...

AG: Kaye Hall was wondrous. Any old yearbook you'll look at will have a picture of the Kaye Hall foyer with three floors and open stairways and it was –

I: Can you hold on just a minute?

AG: Yeah

I: We're taking a short break for a moment.

[Pause in recording]

I: And we're talking about Kaye Hall.

I: One of my fondest memories, and I think everyone who was here at that time has a similar memory of standing on the bottom floor of Kaye Hall - well, the first floor of Kaye Hall, outside of the Dean or President's office, and talking with someone up on the third floor by the math rooms, just shouting up and down that empty hallway, and it was all marble and you'd get this nice little reverberation. It was very common back then, the old cafeteria was in part of Lee Hall that later became placement services, but it was a small area, was very common when I was a freshman to go over and some of the upper classmen would start leading songs and you'd have an evening sing song.

I: Really?

AG: Oh yes. Oh yes.

I: Interesting.

AG: Once of the song - I don't remember the whole song, I don't remember the whole verse, all I remember is Mickey Valesano's part, he was a big football player, it was just strange to see a big tough guy singing. But his favorite part of "Down by the Riverside" was "ra-ta-tu-ta" [laughter]. It was something that we did as freshmen, that once the school got larger, it just disappeared, there was a camaraderie. A lot of vets back then, lot of guys had been in the service and just a wide, a wider variety of people than I'd ever seen. It was during that time that we actually had the first black person come to campus, back in probably '62, he was a basketball player and he was a nice guy but he got homesick and I can understand why now that I've been out in the world some and he left the team when they did road trip to Chicago which is his hometown. But that was very eye-opening. It was an opportunity for us to examine prejudice head-on because most of us, at least most that I grew up with, had never ever seen a person of another color.

I: What do you recall of the reaction of the students to him?

AG: Well, there was a young Finnish lady that dated him and the Dean of Women called her in and said, "I must tell your parents."

I: Oh, really?

AG: Yes. Most of the students accepted him, I mean, he was a ball player, he was just another person, because we knew him as an individual.

I: Right.

AG: And it wasn't threatening because he was all by himself, the next year we had a few more non-Caucasian students, a few more, actually, he was treated just like anybody else outside of the U.P. We're very provincial, we were at that time at least, and even Downstaters had hard time integrating into our society. I remember when I was a sophomore or junior, we have a young man come out as a freshman and start - oh, it must have been when I was a sophomore - start from New York, he had lived in New York City his entire life and as he described it he never left his two block area, he didn't have a driver's license, had never driven a car, had no reason to. Everything he wanted was in that metropolis, those skyscrapers. When he came here, he lived with a couple of guys who determined that he needed that have some U.P. experiences. So they took him out on the _____, and he spent the entire night in the woods freezing and getting wet, and at Thanksgiving time when almost everyone deserted campus several of us all said, you know, "come on home with us, you don't want to stay here all weekend, they're probably not gonna feed you or you'll have other problems." No, no, he was going to stay, was going to tough it out - well, when we came back, he was gone.

I: Really?

AG: He had gotten a taxi as soon as all of his roommates cleared out on Friday and gone to the airport and flown back home.

I: And he didn't come back?

AG: He never came back.

I: Wow.

AG: And we had a lot of that - well, we had a lot of students who lasted until Thanksgiving and then gave it up.

I: Was the snow ever a factor in a lot of those people leaving? The winter?

AG: You know, these days they close the university. We *never* closed the university. There were students on campus and you went to school. I think we had as many commuters, percentage-wise, as there are today, but you never closed, never. And we had some fantastic storms. You could not see out of the first floor in Spooner Hall, you can barely see out of the second floor of Spooner Hall. So you shoveled. And you plowed.

I: Like we do today.

AG: Yes.

I: Well, now I'm gonna ask you some, ask you to tell us some of what, for the lack of a better term, some of your more unpleasant thoughts, or things that you thought were not so great about your experience here. You know, we're trying to get a balanced approach to your memories and... Does anything come to mind? Like, for instance, some folks from your generation will comment on the concept of *en loco parentis*, the idea that the university somehow assumes the role the parent. That started to wane in little bit starting in the '60s, but really went away in '70s, but in the '60s it was still a part of campus life, you know.

AG: I think we ought to reinstitute it.

I: Oh yeah?

AG: Yes.

I: Can you talk about what it was like back then and how it impacted your life?

AG: Well, it effected specifically girls, who had to be back to the dorms by 10 o'clock, which meant that if you were going with a girl in the dorms, you could actually get home to your dorm and study by 11, which was very comfortable and very restricting and it helped - I'm into schedules, time conscious, that's the way I live, that appealed to me, I did not find that as a negative. There weren't a lot of things to do on campus in terms of concerts and speakers, and I didn't find that a major drawback, but I'm sure it's something that a lot of people found, especially people from downstate. One of the things I remember is people kept asking on the radio station, "Why don't you play more Supremes music?" The Supremes were big at that time. We had no idea who the Supremes were. And when we heard them, we weren't impressed. A lot of us were pretty hicks, country-type people and that kind of music was all foreign to us. So the

culture adjustment that people out of the U.P. had to suffer with coming here, I'm sure was, impacted them much more than it did me, just felt a lot at home and was getting stretched all the time to learn about these weird things.

I: But other than that, for instance, I've heard students complain about the long walk from the dorms like out in Magers in the quad dorms all the way to Kaye Hall.

AG: Those are after my time.

I: Those are after your time. How about the Burma [?] Road? Have you ever heard of the Burma [?] Road?

AG: No, I haven't.

I: It went through - that was probably a little after your time, too. So there really isn't a lot of...

AG: When I was here, the field house was the farthest walk.

I: Oh, is that right?

AG: Yeah. There was nothing beyond the field house.

I: Really started to expand it.

AG: Yes. So the whole campus on this end developed after that. And then they built the new Bottum Center, which was, we thought, in the middle of campus because Kaye was on the other end, but Kaye and Longyear and... Pierce was a great training school back then. So the campus was a lot more confined, a lot smaller.

I: Well, do you have any final thoughts then about your experience and your time here at Northern?

AG: When I came back to do my master's, Northern reflected all of this blooming that it had been doing in the '60s, I was away for about ten years and then came back.

I: Tell me again when you came back for your master's?

AG: '72.

I: '72. So by this time then, West Science had been built, LRC had been built.

AG: Right, right.

I: And I think Jamrich was built.

AG: Jamrich was built.

I: So you had quite a surprise probably when you came back.

AG: It was a shock.

I: What was your feeling about that?

AG: It was interesting to see where the university had gone, to see that, I guess one of the things we suffered when I was here was that we were always cramped, too many students and too small rooms and then the come in and see the Jamrich facility, for instance, where the rooms were enormous. And in my graduate classes I tended to be in classes of 15 to 20. I noticed the instructors were still excellent, I was really impressed with some of the instructors we had, people like Jim Lansfield [?] who is still in the area but went into another career field, came in with experience Elmer Shock [?], just a dynamite guy but we had instructors like this. So to me, wasn't any different. We had great people and you know, we could sit out in the snow bank as long as we had great instructors. But the Jamrich Facility was nice. Too hot in the winter, too cold in the summer, but boy, it was a whole lot better than some of those places where the wind would whistle through the window.

I: And there was the LRC with the new library?

AG: Which was just fantastic. You could spend hours and hours and days in here. You could find a quiet corner almost any time you wanted, which was a lot different than the old Olson which had two rows of tables and "Shhh shhh shhh" all the time.

I: [laughter] Now, you kind of leapfrogged over, so to speak, over the more contentious period of late '60s

AG: Yup.

I: And early '70s. Did you have a sense when you came back as a graduate student that had affected the character?

AG: Yes. Yes, it had. There were a lot of sour people.

I: Can you describe that a little bit?

AG: There were a lot of sour people, there were a lot of disappointed people, a lot of disenchanting people. It's much the same thing that happened because of the Vietnam era with the whole country, there was a general malaise. Fortunately, I had been here before and had a lot of positive experiences to draw on, so I don't think that affected me a lot. I went to school with a bunch of close colleagues where I worked and so we formed real tight-knit group and I don't think were affected much by some of the sociological developments here. We did see a lot of things we didn't like, we thought Northern had gone too far.

I: Explain when you meant then.

AG: We felt the university had a purpose. I feel the university has a purpose, and I feel it's gone way beyond what I think its purpose is. I think it's become far too liberal, far too loose, far too extended. I'm afraid that it's going so far out in left field that it's not doing the job that it, in my mind, should be doing.

I: When you say left field, do you mean politically left field, socially left field, culturally or by academically? Define what you mean left field?

AG: Ok. Socially and culturally. It is going far beyond what most students need or want. 70 percent of the students, I'm guessing, and I haven't looked at where they're all from, but I'm guessing 70 percent of the students are upper Midwest and will spend most of their life in the upper Midwest. To introduce them to concepts from far-flung areas is nice, but to force those concepts upon them is, I think, a little heavy handed. I loved being introduced to weirdos from downstate when I was here. But I wouldn't like to be forced.

I: Ok. Could you explain what...give me some examples what you mean by that.

AG: I'm not familiar enough with the university to give you specific examples. I have a feeling. For instance, even the affirmative action statement on Channel 12, or whatever it is now on the cable, the university channel reports only part of what affirmative action or EEO law says, and I'm curious about the parts that are left out. And I think that shows a bias. I also noticed when they run calendars that there's a definite bias, at least in my observation, and I'm concerned

about that bias because I think it's too far out of the mainstream of life from most of the students. And in fact, when the former president, the part timer was here, um...

I: You mean President Vandement?

AG: That's the one. Yes. "I'll only be here for a year" guy. I had a discussion with him one evening and he was looking for things he could do to change the direction of the university. And I thought, great! Because I didn't like where it was going. I didn't see any changes so I don't know if he was disingenuous as our current federal president is or he was just unable. I think we've got many, too many layers of administration factotums at the moment. But again, I was here when the president was approachable. When there were two deans, one of men, one of women, and when there were just departments head. I was here just as we were starting in to schools of this and schools of that, and so my whole background here was much smaller, much more reachable, much less folderol [?] and red tape, and I think the red tape drives me nuts more than anything.

I: So in a way your undergraduate experience was just the edge of the transformation, if you will. Physical and administrative and...

AG: Oh, that was actually before the physical transformation.

I: Right. It was just on the edge of when things really started to pick up and change. So you've seen a lot of change in that sense...I'm still interested in your idea, though, of how the university has, is overreaching itself a little bit. In the...just after you left, the black student population, for example, really expanded dramatically, the Native American student population, since then, since the end of the '70s, probably early '80s that has both dropped dramatically. And university has come under great criticism beginning in probably early '90s about its dedication or commitment diversity, diversifying the student population. I'm wondering if you were suggesting the efforts to do that or not.

AG: I'm seeing that diversity is not where the Northern should be going.

I: Ok. Can you elaborate on why you think that?

AG: It's not the population we serve. It's not the population we're ever going served. We're not gonna be world class as Michigan State and U of M are. We're never going to have the money to

throw at that kind of diversification and I think that we ought to pull back and do what we do and continue to do it well. As I said, I think the university has expanded to the point where it's not doing a lot of things very well, but it's doing a lot of things and that grieves me, I'd much rather see it do fewer things and do them well, do them superbly. Not everybody's gonna like a school like that. I think we need to eliminate about four levels of administrative bureaucracy. I think the president ought to be approachable. I've heard, don't know firsthand because I've never tried to visit the new president, but I've heard she's hardly approachable. That's a bad rep to have, whether it's true or not I don't know but it's something that concerns me. I see that we have deans of, followed by assistant deans of, followed by associate deans of... I don't think all of that's necessary. Northern is not that big a school. There isn't that much to be done. I have a nephew going to school currently here. The bureaucratic bungling, and that's all I can term it is bungling, that takes place in attempting to get credit for a course that he took at another school or to find out an answer to a question whether it's a disagreement between the catalog and the course schedule and what it says about how these things fit. It's a nightmare. That's ridiculous. The staff doesn't know the rules and the operating procedures of the university, apparently. So we need some training there, there are a lot of new instructors and they're probably very good. They have no idea what the university is doing. All they know is what they're doing. Should we reign in their education freedom? No, we should just make them learn what their first job is, which is to support the structure of the university, to make its mission one that can be carried out, I think.

I: Well, I want to thank you very much for coming and giving us your thoughts and reflections on history of the university, particularly nearly 60s which we don't have whole lot of, which wasn't saved, and thank you again, sir.

END OF INTERVIEW