

FRANK WHITE

Narrator

KIM HEIKKILA

Interviewer

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TRANSCRIPT—FRANK WHITE

Interviewee: Frank White
 Interviewer: Kim Heikkila
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[START OF INTERVIEW]

Kim Heikkila: This is an interview for the Oxford Community Center Oral History Project. It is Wednesday, May 28, 2025, and I'm here at the Minnesota History Center for a second interview with Frank White. My name is Kim Heikkila. Today I'll be talking to Frank about things that we didn't get to in our first interview. And just to reintroduce him, Frank is a Rondo elder, a historian, a lifelong athlete, coach, official, many years in the parks and recreation field, and is one of the guiding forces of this project, as well as being an interviewee. So, thank you, Frank, for doing this again.

Frank White: Kim, thank you. It's really a pleasure and an honor to do this. I believe that this, as I've shared with you before, first of all, it's a great piece of history. I'm really glad that you decided to start this, I think I've mentioned that before, and I'm glad you're doing it, or I'm glad we're all doing it. But you're the leader on this and I really appreciate that. So, I think, going back to the last time I talked about when I first started at Oxford, to me, it was a job. I was a college student. I was back from the service. I had in my mind I was going to play college basketball. And so, when I was asked about the job, when Bill asked me if I was interested, I first said no. Then I changed my mind, said yes.

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FW: And when I went into Oxford as a staff member, in the beginning, it was

disappointing to me because there was an office, and it was dirty, filthy. There was a storage room. Looking back, when you're dragging in equipment bags and stuff like that, I understand that that's going to bring some dirt in and that type of thing. I thought the office could have been kept a lot better, and I mentioned that. And so, I think that Bill and Steve and myself, I'm different from them in the sense of if I'm going to be sitting at a desk, I want to be able to write without sand being on the surface, or whatever, and struggling.

So, from the beginning, I was really disappointed in the upkeep and maintenance of the building. Steven and Bill are not bad people. We're just different. I think that after I started talking about it, I think Bill picked up on it, and he was the person that was in charge, and we started to clean it up. I think the impact of that was it made it easier for me to be there whenever we had to do work in the office. But I think the whole building, the cleanliness of the building started to change. And I think that's important because eventually, when we changed and cleaned up the building, that transferred over to the kids, and the kids began to respect the building in a whole different way.

KH: And this was in the early '70s?

FW: Yes.

KH: And so, the building was pretty new at that point still.

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FW: Yes. And unfortunately, the custodian that was there, and I mentioned this before, I think he was worthless. And without going into all of that history, I think that civil service jobs, or at least the custodian part of this, and I found this to be true in several situations. Even when I went to the [Martin Luther] King [Recreation] Center, the hours for the custodians were like 7:00 until 3:30. The hours in operation of the building was generally, I'll say 1:00 to 9:00, but generally kids didn't come until after school, 3:30,

4:00 clock. But that other time was we would get prep time; we'd get the building ready for activities. So I think the struggle was this custodian should have had the building clean by the time we opened, but it was terrible.

And I know this guy made a couple comments and I made some comments back to him and I shared them with Bill. He had a whole different image of cleanliness of a building. I remember one time, and I've mentioned this before, my example to him was he kept saying, "Boy, they sure don't know how to take care of this place," or something like that. And I said, "Well, who are you talking to?" "Well, you know, you know." And I didn't know what his "you know" meant. Was that a racist comment or was he talking about kids in general?

KH: And this was a custodian?

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FW: This was a custodian who was white. So it irritated me. And then, so one morning I said to him, "Let me ask you a question. That T-shirt that you have on, when you wear it a couple days or whatever or every day and you go home, does your wife wash it so you can wear it again?" He said, "Yeah. What do you mean?" I said, "Well, the building is kind of like your T-shirt. Your job is to clean the building so it can be used again. There's no damage being done." Now maybe some of the things again could have been better in terms of how kids treat the building. And I'll talk about that. But he was way out of line. Way out of line. And for the time that he should have been there, the building wasn't that big that he couldn't have cleaned the building in a reasonable manner.

KH: And that was his job.

FW: That was his job. And they got paid a fair amount of money. So part of the cleanliness, when I shared with Bill, because I told him about that. And then when we washed the walls in the gym, it was this epoxy paint so you could really wash it off and

not have an impact. And we painted the backboards, and we stripped the floor, and we put down new wax and buffed. And then we put up signs for the kids. The kids would come in and there was a trash can in a corner, so the kids would come in with a pop can sometimes and bounce it off the wall like they were shooting baskets. Well, then pop, whatever is left in the can, would maybe splash out on the walls and leave dirt or a stain. So, we put up signs and told kids that wasn't acceptable anymore.

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FW: And eventually, the kids took care of themselves. And if that happened, if somebody saw that, because we'd make them go clean it off. If we caught them, okay, you're going to clean it off or this is what's going to happen. There will be consequences. So, the kids ended up taking a whole different picture—or not picture. Yeah, their image of what the building was because it was clean. And it doesn't mean that it didn't get dirty, but they didn't need to bounce cans off the wall. They could just go put it in the trash and it wouldn't create that splash in that corner. Because eventually if you do that throughout the day, there's a bunch of splashes or whatever. And that wasn't getting cleaned. It should have been, but it wasn't.

KH: And what I hear when you tell this story is that not only that the appearance and the cleanliness and kind of the respect for the building is important, but that for kids to learn that it starts with leadership at the top, for the adults who are there. I've worked in many gyms myself where the atmosphere has varied greatly depending on the culture that is established from the outset by the people who own the gym or run the gym. So, a question for you. Can you just clarify at this time what your, Bill's, and Steve's respective roles were at Oxford?

FW: So, Bill was the director, and then Steve and I were staff members under Bill. It's interesting to me. Even as we have coached, even over the last 20 years together, we

still have some differences in our attitudes towards things.

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FW: I'm okay with that because we're good friends. I don't know where my concern came from. I think it came from in terms of cleanliness. As I grew up, we lived in a house, and it wasn't maybe the best house, but it was always going to be clean. Every Saturday morning, I had a job, my sisters had a job. If the trash got to be too much, it was my job to take out the trash. Saturday mornings, I had to mop the kitchen floors before I went and did anything.

And then I went in the Air Force. And in the Air Force, I mean, you cleaned things that you would never imagine that you cleaned. Like the wood floors, sometimes the cracks between them where they don't sit together, and there would be dirt that would collect in there. Those cracks were cleaned, I remember. I was in charge of a barracks at tech school. And so, we had an inspection, a standby inspection. You could only have in your laundry bag X number of pieces, which meant you were washing on a regular basis. So, I remember this one time the commander came in and he said, "Is the building ready for inspection?" I said, "Yes, sir." So, he looked at me and he went over to the radiator, and on the floor, there were these silver covers on the floor that probably covered up the hole.

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FW: So, he went over to one, took out a knife and popped it open. And under the silver cover there was dust. Well, I looked at that and he looked at me and he said, "I thought you said the building was ready for inspection. Get this building cleaned up and I'll be back." He left. Wherever there was a radiator in the building, we went and cleaned those up, we cleaned in the radiators to make sure, and behind, because the floors were already done. One of the jokes would always be like, if you did something wrong, you

were going to clean the latrine with a toothbrush. That was always a threat.

Now, I mention that because, is that where my cleanliness issue came from? And between that and being at home, I'm not really sure. I don't know if I'm a clean freak, because even in my office today, I have a couple stacks of paper and everything doesn't get filed all the time or whatever, but it's going to be clean. So I think our differences again were that sometimes it would be difficult for me to go to Oxford, and it was like, man, really, can we clean this up? If there's sand on the floor, shouldn't we take a broom and sweep? And even if you were a staff person, me or Steve or any of the other staff people, everybody just kind of seemed to go like it was not a big deal. And maybe it isn't, maybe it was only me, right? But I'd like to think that we made a change.

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KH: So, how many staff people were there at this time?

FW: I would say there was probably maybe about six, seven, something like that. And everybody had different roles and jobs, that type of stuff. We even had a kitchen in the building. And that got used and if people would have come in, health inspectors came in, they probably would have closed us down because people would use it, but not clean up. And so, anyways, I'd like to think that our connection between where I was at, and where Bill was at, and Steve was at, we all eventually came together to say, "Okay, let's do this and clean to the best of our ability." I wasn't going to change them, and they weren't going to change me. So, we coexisted with our own images, our own values, I guess. None of them were wrong.

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FW: I mention values in that, in the job, I started off by saying it was just a job. All these years later along the way, people would say, coaching sports and if you play team sports, you learn sportsmanship, you learn teamwork, you learn this, you learn this.

There are a number of things that I think people don't really think about all the time. One of them is being on time. If you have practice that starts at 6:00, you don't show up at 6:00, you show up to get ready to start at 6:00. I think that rolls over into jobs. I think people, "Well, we start at 8:00." Well, we work from 8:00 to 4:30. Some people show up right at 8:00, which means they're not going to really start functioning until sometime later.

I think that sports teaches a lot of values, and at the time I didn't think about that. I thought, okay, I'm coaching, it's a part of the job. We're teaching some skills. But I didn't think about the values, the things that we were demonstrating, role modeling. Even on a given day when we weren't at practice, these same kids were at Oxford, and how we behaved, how we asked for respect, how we showed up on time, all of those things kids could see. At the time, I don't think I was cognizant of that until all these years later.

KH: And remind me of the sports that you were coaching at Oxford around this time.

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FW: Football and basketball. But we had baseball, so I was still around baseball. And we had kids that played volleyball. So we had a number of different sports and different activities. Looking back at my job at Oxford, I think there was a much greater impact, not only for me, I don't want this to be about me, but I think everybody that worked there, if we did our job, the things that we were really teaching kids went way beyond just a job.

And it's surprising that even today, I think I mentioned this sometimes on Facebook, I'll get they're adults now that would say, they still call me coach, "Hey, coach, how you doing?" Whatever. These are relationships that have, so if I go back to the early '70s when I started, I mean, we're talking 50 years, and they're still remembering me as

Coach, or Bill, or Steve. I think, again, our impact on role modeling to kids and teaching values was way beyond a job.

KH: What do you think makes a good coach?

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FW: Today, I would say somebody that's a good communicator, somebody that has a basic understanding of physiological skills, what you're capable of at a certain age. And it took me some time to learn that. In fact, I have a printout that talks about that says—

KH: Pause.

[Audio Break]

KH: Okay, resuming after a little technical difficulties on my end, spilling my water all over. So we were talking about what makes a good coach.

FW: Right. I think understanding who you're coaching, whether it's boys, whether it's girls, and again, maybe, what they're capable of. I think most of us that get into coaching, we used the example of the last level of play that we were at. So, if you played in high school, you kind of mimic what that coach did. If you played in college, you kind of mimic that coach. So whatever level you last played at is probably how you're going to coach. That doesn't fit for a 10- or 12-year-old.

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FW: I think the other part of that is knowing the importance of teaching not only sports skills, but maybe life skills. And I'll go back to being on time and you communicate why it is important to be on time, realizing that sometimes kids depending upon their age, they don't have control of their movement. So you also have to be understanding. You have to be able to communicate to parents what your expectations are. I think these are all things for me that I've learned later on as opposed to when I first

started coaching. Again, because I was probably like my high school coaches or college coaches in the beginning. And it's taken some time, some education, learning over a period of time, I think, the pieces that make a good coach.

And I think the other thing is whatever the sport is, it's important to teach kids the skills that will help them be successful at that level, as opposed to trying to teach them everything. Because if you're a 10-year-old, and you're playing at a certain level, teach how those kids can be successful and participate at that level. Because next year they're going to be playing for maybe a different coach, they'll learn more about that particular activity. So there should be a progression. At this age you learn this, at this age you learn this. And there's a progression. Because you can't teach everything at 10 years old because kids can't do it.

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FW: I think that's one of the failings of coaches in basketball trying to teach kids to dribble with both hands. Well, if you're going to be successful at 10, you got to use your dominant hand. Because if you're going to use your other hand, it's not going to be as fun for you. You don't need to dribble with both hands at 10 years old. Somewhere down the road you're going to learn that. And it took me some time to learn that. Even when I was coaching seventh graders, I threw that left-handed thing out and I had them, whatever hand, right or left, you're only going to dribble with your dominant hand because that's going to make you more successful this season. I'm not worried about it. Later on, you can learn that. And I think it was a little bit hard for parents to understand that because everybody's, Oh, both hands. Well, if they can't do it, what are we doing?

KH: Now, if you had a kid, say in that situation who was maybe more advanced than some of the other kids and maybe had been ready to use both hands, were you able to accommodate or see that? Or was it more like, let's focus on this fundamental,

age-appropriate skill?

FW: I think at that time, I tried to stick with the basic fundamentals. The difficulty is you only get so much time in the gym. And if you, as an example, my daughter could dribble with her left hand, but I didn't. When we practiced, she's right-handed. I was like, everybody dribbles with their right hand. She would say, "Dad, but I can." I was like, "You know what? We'll practice that another time."

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FW: I think that's difficult because the general concept is in that situation you got to learn both hands. Well, not at 10, you don't. Maybe not even at 12 you don't. Because eventually if you stay with the sport, you're going to learn more and your physiological skills, your mechanics are going to help you then. The kid that is elite, that's advanced early, he or she's going to do that anyway. Sometimes they advance early, but then other kids catch up to them a couple years later. So I think coaching really takes some thought.

I think the basic thing is communication. We can say, "Do this," or "Here's how to do this skill." But if you can't demonstrate what you want, the kids, you're assuming they understand. I think we have found that out because we talked about that. Bill is really good at demonstration, or whatever, and it makes sense. If you're saying, "This is how we want you to catch the ball," we demonstrate this is how you do it and it shows kids, versus you catch a ball by putting your hands down and putting your head, and some kids are going to look at you like, What are you talking about? If you don't demonstrate. So that's a part of communication. And then we would talk about it again, if we're going to say something to somebody, let's make sure they understand. So not only do you demonstrate, it's like, does everybody understand? And then maybe you have them go through an example and then if they need help, you help them. Because every kid's going to be a little bit different.

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FW: I think when people first get into coaching, again, they use that example of how they played. But by the time they played at high school or whatever, kids had more skills than they have at 10 and 12. So I think sometimes we fail kids. And people will say, “Oh, well, what about this kid?” Well, they’re always talking about the elite kid. They’re not talking about the majority of kids. I think sometimes in our sports we do that to kids. We think we base everything on the elite kid and not to make sure all of the kids can play or participate or learn.

KH: Do you think there’s a different coaching strategy for boys versus girls?

FW: Fundamentally, no. Gender wise, I think yes. And let me share that. First, I coached all boys. Then I started coaching my daughter, my youngest daughter, and I started coaching her at 10 and under, and I continued to coach her through eighth grade. During her seventh-grade year, the first place we coached at, it was fun and helped kids learn. And then we ended up beating the King Center, which my niece played on, and we beat them. And so, they came back and said, “Frank, we want you to come back to the King Center.”

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FW: When these other parents heard, they were like, “They don’t need you. We need you.” So I mentioned that. It was hard to make a decision. “Dad, I don’t want you to.” “Well, come on, if you go.” So, when I did that, we brought another one of her friends to play, and it was different. But the other thing that was different—well, two things. I’ll go back to parents. Parents have a whole image of what they believe and who they believe is the best and all of that. So that was challenging. The other part of that, and I think this was in seventh grade, sometimes we’d be in the middle of practice and one of the girls would say, “Well, I can’t play today.” And I can’t even remember all of the examples.

But the woman that was the president of our organization, her daughter also played on the team, and she helped coach. Her and her husband helped me coach. And then sometimes she would say, “Frank, they’re girls. Uh, there’s certain things that happen to women that.” I was like, “Okay, you’ve said enough.” So I think there’s some things that I was not aware of, right? Or thinking about it. So in coaching boys and girls, if you were going to coach girls, I think you have to have some understanding at certain ages of some of the things that girls go through differently than boys. So I would say that.

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FW: But fundamentally, skills and stuff like that, I don’t think there’s a difference. I think you still teach the same skills. And girls can be just as good an athlete as boys and sometimes even maybe better. So I think there were some differences, but those are more in terms of physical things, maybe, if that’s the right—

KH: Yeah. Do you think there’s any differences between boys and girls in terms of their communication styles or their social dynamics or the soft skills that a coach teaches?

FW: I think there are differences. And I think, man, I hate to say this, I think sometimes girls are smarter than boys. So there’s a general statement. What do you mean? I can think about talking to girls and about drills or whatever. And I think there was an easier understanding. Talking to boys, I think the difference is like some boys think, “Oh, I already know that.” Okay, so they’re not really listening. So I think there’s differences.

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FW: Now, every kid is different, right? And even within an all-girls team or an all-boys team, you have to be able to recognize the differences. You can’t coach everybody the same. My granddaughter is an example of that. I remember when she was in high school and she played at De La Salle, one of the coaches was a player that I coached. After a game, she said, “Oh, she needs to get more aggressive.” And I said,

“What does that mean? Tell me, what does more aggressive mean?” Because I think people use that all the time. But what does that mean? Does she need to be more confident? More physical? I mean, what are you saying? So I told her, “Look, you can’t coach everybody the same. Let me give you some examples of some NBA players. If you watch them play, you go, well, this guy never said anything, but he might be in the Hall of Fame because he was so good, but he didn’t display things like somebody else. So, there’s differences, but you can’t coach everybody the same.”

I think sometimes that’s one of the other pieces is if you think motivation, by yelling at people, that’s a motivator. Well, I tell people when I traveled around the country and the Midwest and talked about motivation and sportsmanship, I said, “Just imagine as an adult, if you went to work and you’re sitting at a desk, if that’s what your job was, and then somebody yelled at you because you made a mistake. Does that motivate you to not make a mistake again?”

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FW: But that’s what we do in sports, and we think it’s okay. All of the examples, Bobby Knight and some of these others. So I would always use those examples. I think that that’s one of the discouraging pieces in coaches. They don’t really understand what that does and they think it’s a motivator. Well, it doesn’t motivate everybody. In fact, some people are going to turn them away. I’m not going to listen to that. If you’re a parent and you see somebody yelling at your kid, is that okay?

I often use the example in that I say, “So, you come home one day, and you pull up and the next-door neighbor is screaming at your kid out in front of the house. You’re probably going to get out of the car and go, ‘Whoa, what’s going on here?’ And even if your kid did something, is it okay? And would you allow that? But yet you’ll go watch a ball game and if your coach screams at you because you made a mistake, you sit back and

don't say anything. That's not okay." But I think, unfortunately, if we look across the board in our sports world, we've come to accept that.

KH: So, as I listen to you talk about how you can't coach each kid the same way because they are all different, including in terms of how they respond to various directions, that must be a challenge when you're coaching team sports. I mean, I can see how it would be much easier to tailor your coaching to an individual person if you're coaching an individual sport, tennis, track, boxing, whatever. But when you're coaching a whole team, that's got to be a challenging thing to figure out and to manage the separate 10 or however many, 15 personalities that you've got out there.

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FW: I don't think I was ever completely successful at that. I think the other part of that is learning that, one of our friends in football, we were talking one day, and he said, "I demand that kids come to practice every day at this time. And if they come to practice, I'm going to play them. A lot of times we play the best kids, but these kids don't get to play." Well, that's unfair. If you're demanding that they come to practice and they're putting in the same time, shouldn't they be able to play? So, I remember telling Bill that one time and Steve. And so, what we did is we tried to insert kids into, maybe not change the whole team. In football you got 11 players out there; you can substitute some people and maybe not have an impact on the overall team.

In basketball, some coaches switch five at a time. "Okay, you five are going in." When I watch that, it's like, there's a great situation because those kids also need to learn. At 10 or 12, you're not a complete player yet, but you have to learn not only at practice, but in a game situation. And if you never get in? So I think that's the other part of learning the team thing is understanding that. if I use basketball, if you got 10 kids, players six, seven, eight, nine, and 10, also if you're having them come to practice every day, they

deserve to play.

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FW: Whatever the number is, football, 11, if you've got 20, those other nine kids deserve to play. And I think we don't do well at that. That's another part of learning as a coach, in a team concept, how do you get everybody to play? Because you demand that they come to practice.

KH: Even in a rec program, right? I worked for Parks and Rec. Hopefully not too much, but there is that desire to field the best team, to give the "better" or good players a chance to win. It's a competition and competition is about winning to some degree. But there's also, as you've been describing, what's fair and what's the best for the growth of these kids in the game, in the sport itself. And because you learn so many different things from sports, and part of that is you learn by playing in a game. And so, even if you're not the best kid out there, you're still learning stuff that can apply to other parts of your life.

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FW: Eventually, if you went out to basketball to try or whatever the sport, softball, baseball, and you said, "Oh, I want to try this," and eventually you find that I'm not very good by your own observations, or you're not having fun, you're going to choose a different activity. You're going to self-quit or whatever, on your own, and that's okay because now you're maybe going to go to something that you enjoy more. But if you're not enjoying sitting on the bench and you're practicing all the time. Every time you get in the game, the coach yells at you and then takes you back out because you made a mistake. Making mistakes is learning, and we don't do that very well. And I'm guilty of that, too, to a certain degree.

But I think along the way I learned. I still wasn't the best, but I learned. It was also difficult coaching my own daughter, who I thought was pretty good. And then I decided

that her and this other player were going to split starting times, or whatever. And she said, “Well, Dad, if I’m good, how come I have to?” It became very difficult. And at one point, as seventh graders, we won the state championship. A few months later, we get into the fall or the winter season of that same year, we won the state tournament in March.

So I’m a great coach in March because we won the state tournament. In December, I don’t know what I’m talking about. Same kids. I almost quit, but if I would have quit and my daughter was on the team, what was I saying to her? So, it was a difficult year for me to coach, and some parents have come back to me and said, “You know, Frank, we were totally off.” I was like, “All of that’s over and done.” But it was hard because everybody wanted to win again, and we were expected to win. When we lost a couple of times, it was like, well, this player should be playing.

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FW: In fact, one girl came in. She came to us new. And then after our first tournament, she came up to me and said, “Well, I think my daughter should be starting.” I said, “Okay.” So, I called Lori, who was the assistant, but she was the president. And I said, “Lori, this mom has something to say.” So she repeated it. And then Lori looked at me, she said, “Well, Frank’s the coach, and he’s making decisions.” So I said, “If this isn’t the right fit for your daughter, there’s other options. You can go play for somebody else.” But I wasn’t going to get into that.

And so, I think in coaching, along with our recreational philosophy, with our athletic philosophies, I don’t think there’s anything wrong with the competition philosophies or those things, but I think it’s the people that have an impact on coaching styles, on winning is the most important thing. I think we find that all the time. And not that winning is bad, but are you using all of the kids? Are all of the kids enjoying? And some kids are going to think, “I should be playing more.” I mean, no matter what level,

there are going to be people that think, “I should be playing more anyway.” And I get that part.

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FW: That’s a part of the challenge of a coach. How do you figure out who plays in what amount? But everybody should be playing. At a certain point in time, even when you get to high school now, pretty much at high school level, it’s about winning. So, if you’ve got 15 kids on the team, everybody’s not going to play the same, right?

KH: So thinking back to when you started working at Oxford in the ’70s, I know you had been planning to become an accountant. The answer to this is probably self-evident since you spent years doing this, but did you like being around kids? Was that part of the motivating force for you to take this job at Oxford, specifically to work with kids?

FW: I think when I first started, I still wanted to be a CPA, because of my math aptitude. And when I was in the service, they wanted to send me to computer school. I think I mentioned that. But I wasn’t going to Biloxi, Mississippi, where computer school was. So I had it in my head, I wanted to be a CPA. But in the beginning, I was still, here was my plan. As I continued, I became more aware of, Oh, we could have an impact here. Or I would listen to parents. Parents would approach me and talk, “Well, my son, my daughter needs a job.”

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FW: All of a sudden in the community, I would go to the grocery store, and I can remember this, I think there was a Rainbow Foods up in the Midway shopping area. I would go up there and if I was going to just buy a few things, it would take me literally about an hour to get through the store because inevitably parents were going to stop me, “Oh, Frank.” And I’ve never been the one to say, “Hey, I’m busy, I’ll talk to you later.” So

I've always engaged in conversations. And some of them, the majority of those conversations were, "Frank, my son needs this, or thank you for this, or appreciate you, what you guys are doing at Oxford."

So as I was moving through that, it was becoming apparent to me how I could help kids, families. My family, my Mom's family, my Dad's family were always helping people. And so I don't know if that meant it was in me. I could see my Dad, he was always taking on odd jobs because he didn't make much money and we had a big family. So, he would say, "Oh, come on, we're going to go this Saturday and we're going to change screens or windows and screens or something."

[00:50:00]

FW: In the fall, we would take screens off and put windows back on, but we would clean them all. So I would be cleaning, he would be up on the ladder, putting them on the second floor or whatever. But it was extra jobs. But to me, it was, he was always helping. And there was a reason, because he was getting paid money, I'm sure. And then my Mom's family, my grandfather was the honorary consulate of Mexico. So he's somebody that they were influential. I was talking to somebody, as I'm preparing for that article, a couple of my friends said they had talked to a couple of the older people that were still around. They said my grandparents were the ones that continued the Mexican culture on the West Side. They did that through fiestas and stuff at Our Lady of Guadalupe.

And so, I think some of that I grew up with and I saw it all the time, and it may not have registered that I knew. So, as I was at Oxford, I started to enjoy the relationships that I was having with kids and Bill and Steve and some of the other staff members or parents. Sometimes that might have been like a verbal pat on the back, thank you for this, or whatever. And then as I continued, then when I was at Oxford, and then when I ended up

going to MLK, it really, I think, is when I started to, and I'm going to use the word flourish. But I don't know if that's the right word, but this is what I wanted to do.

[00:52:00]

FW: And I started to, I know people sometimes refer to me as the idea man or something like the idea guy. Maybe that's how my mind works. I don't know. So I started looking at things that we could do that we weren't doing. I remember one time I partnered with a different rec center, and I was able to go to a national conference. When I came back, I brought back these Shrinky Dinks, they were plastic, you would paint on it, and you would put it in the little oven, and it would shrink up. And then there was this stuff that you could put on clothes, like little drops, and it would make designs. So some of that stuff I thought, Oh, this is pretty cool.

So, we partnered with Edgcombe Recreation Center staff to the King Center and said, "We're going to have a craft fair." So we had like 10 tables set up in the gym and the kids could go to whatever table they wanted, make stuff. It was not something we had never done before, or other people weren't doing either. So, along the way, I started seeing, because of going to some conferences and seeing what other people were doing, maybe in other parts of the country, or Minnesota, and taking some of those ideas and maybe modifying them to fit our situation. And then I would listen to—so the Hallie staff. Mr. Thomas was the executive director of Hallie, and I would meet with Hallie. So, those people were influential, I think. And I would listen. Or the Loft, Jim Robinson, The Loft.

[00:54:00]

FW: I was always talking to Bill and Steve, and we would talk about a lot of different things and ideas. I know I mentioned before that people didn't want to come into our neighborhood, and I was able to help change that because I questioned it. And it wasn't just me, but when I brought it up, people said, Well, for some reason, that doesn't

make sense or whatever.

We were able to make a change. As I saw some of those changes happening, some of the activities we were doing, as I said, I began to think, kay, this is what I want to do. I don't think I ever sat down and said, "This is what I want to do." I think I just continued to do it. And I would talk to kids. But a lot of that influence came from Oxford. My first couple years at Oxford, I think, before I moved to the King Center, again, my whole introduction to things at Oxford was maybe the foundation of what recreation was to a certain degree. I think I continued to learn, going to conferences, listening to other people and putting more thought into it.

[0:56:00]

FW: We ended up creating the Summit University Basketball Association, SUBA, which was combining all of our kids into one big program. And then that might have meant we had two 12 and under teams, or three, I don't know. I can't remember the number. But we started looking, because some kids were going to tournaments and some kids weren't. So, we might have like a 12-U team, and I can't remember, did we have two that were pretty equal? And as the kids got older, we maybe had a good team and a lesser team, something like that. So the influence, again, of Oxford continued, even though I was at the King Center. Every day, I was still talking to Bill or during football season, I was at Oxford every day because I was coaching.

So, I think a part of that was just being at work. Even if I sat in the gym watching kids participate, it helped me learn about kids, who they were. I could see what was going on in an unstructured way but yet organized. If it was pickup basketball, I could see reactions. If a kid got upset or whatever, I could see that. And why was he or she getting upset? Sometimes I may have had to go over and say, "Okay, knock it off." But that observation, I think, was sitting there, observation was important again to learning about

kids, about people, and things that set us off.

[00:58:00]

KH: Well, and so you're talking about how what started as a job evolved into your career. But I wonder how your own experience as an athlete yourself must have factored into your interest in being at recreational facilities and coaching. And so, this is a way of saying, Frank, please tell me about your own athletic experiences and those of your father and your family.

FW: So, first, my father and my uncle, his brother, were outstanding athletes along the way. I would find out even later on more about, especially my father, but also my uncle. The St. Paul City Conference in either 1999 or 2000, celebrated the first 100 years of the City Conference by naming the top 100 athletes and top 25 female athletes, because girls sports only started in '76 or something like that. So there was 25 years. Well, my father and my uncle were included. So there are a lot of great athletes. I know a couple people were like, well, Frank should be in that. And not really. In high school I wasn't a great athlete. I became a good athlete. I made All Conference in basketball and played baseball.

[01:00:00]

FW: But I matured in sports later. I always played. I started playing peewee baseball when we lived on Dale Street and then at the Ober Boys Club. And then we also participated at Oxford on the Giants team. Then as I got older, when I got to high school, I still was playing baseball, but I really started enjoying basketball more, and I don't know why. I can't even tell you why. And then in high school, every day I played basketball, even if it was baseball season. After we left the game, I probably went somewhere that night and played basketball either at Ober or at Hallie.

So there was always time for basketball. Maybe on the weekends I would go to my

buddy's house, and they had a basket in the backyard in the alley, or whatever, and we would play. And then in the summertime, the same thing would play every day. I think from my 10th grade year, when I was on the B squad in basketball, there must have been 20 kids out. And there was just a lot. I wasn't very good. Then they got their uniforms, and I thought, Oh, they're pretty cool. So I asked the coach if I could come back out. He said, yeah. So, I went back out, and I was one of those kids that I would get in the game. If we were winning by 20 or losing by 20, I would get in at the end of the game.

[01:02:00]

FW: And I decided then that I was going to get better. After my 10th grade year in basketball, even though whatever sport, whatever I was doing, I played basketball every day throughout my high school. Every day. And I got better. I remember there was an article in the newspaper, they talked about me as being a reserve on the B squad to a star as a senior or something like that. So it kind of paid off and then I continued. Again, I wanted to play in college, but we couldn't afford it. So, Hamline offered me \$500 as a grant and aid, because that's division. They don't give athletic scholarships. And then St. Thomas did the same thing.

I'm sure Hamline came because my coach, Howie, was a Hamline grad and played for the Lakers and the Dodgers. So he had a big influence. But \$500, I think everything, tuition, books, everything was probably like about \$1,600 or something like that. Well, 500, where was I going to get \$1,000, 1,100 over the summer? There were no jobs that would pay you that kind of money. And my parents didn't have it. I knew that. So I ended up working a year after high school, and then my cousins went into service.

[01:04:00]

FW: I almost went into the Marines, and I'm glad I didn't. My other cousin went into the Air Force, so I went into the Air Force.

KH: So, what year would that be?

FW: I think January of '65, because I graduated in '63, I worked for a year, so I think January of '65.

KH: So the war in Vietnam was picking up steam.

FW: Yeah, pretty scary. When I went into basic training in January, so it's still basketball season. So the very first day we're there, after, I don't know, we get checked in, and we're in our barracks. The TI, the training instructor, had his room in our barracks. He came out and he was also the coach of the squadron basketball team. He said, "Any basketball players in here?" And I wasn't going to volunteer. One of the guys that flew down there with me, he was from Minneapolis. And on the plane, we talked a little bit, he said, "I know you," or whatever. I don't know. He went to Addison, and we played them in the Twin City game. He didn't play, but he was at the games. So, he said, "He plays and he's good."

[01:06:00]

FW: So this coach came over to me and he got right in my face, he said, "Airman, do you play?" And he screamed at me and he said, "Are you interested in playing ball?" I said, "I didn't bring any stuff." He said, "Well, we'll take care of that. Instead of going out for PT today, you go to the gym, and we'll have a tryout." So I did that, and I was able to play on the squadron team. When people were going out in the hot PT out in the field to do exercise, I was going to the gym for practice. And then some nights we'd have practice, so I was able to go to practice different from other duties we had. And then during basic training, you can't wear your blues yet. But because I was on the team, I was able to dress in my blues to go to the games.

I ended up doing pretty good and then we were supposed to play in whatever the playoffs were. I remember one of the TI's, he called me into his office and said, "Airman

White, if you guys don't win tonight, I'm going to set you back to the second week of training." And we're probably in about week four or five of an eight-week program, I think, or something like that. And I was like, set me back to the second week? So he said, "Do you still want to play?" And I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "All right, get out of here." So I did my little about face and when my hand hit the doorknob, he said, "Airman White." I turned back around, he said, "I'm just kidding, have a good game tonight." It was pretty scary though. I was like, uh?

KH: To your point about how you coach and motivate people, right? Through fear, or—

[01:08:00]

FW: Yeah, yeah. So, anyway, I did pretty well in the service. Then I ended up going to tech school and the season was over. So their basketball team, the guy asked me if I wanted to try out and I went to one practice and they already had a team, and they were pretty good. I didn't get to play on that team. Then I went to my permanent base in Laredo, Texas, and I would go play all the time, me and my roommate. There was one of the guys, he was in charge of the gym. He was like a little All American from some college or whatever, but so there's a lot of guys that can play. But I'm doing pretty well in pickup games and stuff. So one day this officer comes up to me and says, "I'm told we need you on our base team." I was like, "Okay." So he said, "Okay, well, we're going to go to the something tournament or whatever, all something tournament, all service tournament or whatever." So I was really excited.

And then the step up in the war came. I mean, it was going on while I was there anyway. So then they canceled, I forgot what they called it, an all something tournament, where teams from every base would go play in some big tournament or whatever. I mentioned that I didn't get to go, but it was good for me, because it made me feel I could

compete against a lot of guys. I was like, wow. So then when I came out of the Air Force and I started at the U, I still wanted to play. I walked on to the freshman team, and I was doing well.

[01:10:00]

FW: And then I got hurt, turned my ankle really bad. I was on crutches for about three weeks. When I went back, I was sitting in the grill one day, and some of the players from the varsity team said, “Frank, man, Coach is looking for you.” So I went over, and the coach said, “Frank, where you been?” I said, “Coach, I just got off crutches.” Because they took me from practice to the university clinic or hospital right there on campus, I thought they knew what was going on. So I didn’t know that I was supposed to stay in touch because it was my first year, my freshman year. So I said, “Well, coach, I just got off crutches. You don’t know that?” He said, “No, we don’t know that,” or whatever.

So I went to my locker and my locker was cleaned out. And so, I said, “Coach, where’s my stuff?” He said, “Well, we also found out that you were cutting a class to come to practice.” And I think I mentioned that before. It was a five-credit class, which meant it met every day. But for me it was a refresher. It was algebra. I had already had algebra and higher algebra in high school. But I was away in the service, so I thought, well, I’ll take this as a refresher and still help me be a full-time student, credit wise. So I took the class, pass, no pass, or pass fail, whatever. When practice started, I think the class started at 3:00 or 3:30, whatever the case is, a half hour later is when practice started. But when I took the class, I had no idea.

[01:12:00]

FW: So I told the professor, I said, “Look, I’m going out for the basketball team, what can I do? This is just a refresher for me. And we’d already had some classes.” So, he said, “Well, as long as you pass, it’s fine with me. You can still come to class for as much

as you can and then go, but as long as you pass your test, you'll be fine." So that's what he told me. But now the coach said, "You can't cut class to come to practice." I understood that, but at the time I was not happy. I mean, it was too late to change so I was no longer on the ball team. But it made me feel good because when I stopped playing, I was the sixth man. There were a couple scholarship athletes on that team that were starters or whatever. So I was feeling good about that. I had to say all that to say I had gotten better.

And so, I wanted to continue to play. Then I played in the intramural program at the U, and we had a really good team. Steve put together a team, and the first quarter I didn't play with those guys, and then after that I ended up playing. We were kind of the talk of campus. We were called the Soulful Strutters, or whatever. So we were pretty good. Over the time that we played there were a number of athletes off of maybe the football team or that kind of stuff that came and played with us, too.

[01:14:00]

FW: That was kind of, so to speak, my college career of playing basketball. Even though I wish I would have gone back out the next year, I probably would have made the team, I'm sure, but I wouldn't have been a starter or anything like that. But I would have been on the team, and I probably could have won a letter. Then later I played on an amateur men's team called the Pillsbury Kings. We won the national championships and we were runner up one year. We played four years in a row in the nationals, and we had a very good team. Some of the guys that played at the U were on that team. And Arvesta Kelly, who was my roommate, played in the ABA. He's the guy that put the team together.

So that was kind of like my basketball as an athlete. Now, at that same time, I started playing fast pitch softball. I chose not to play baseball, but I chose fast pitch softball because that's what my dad had played. When I was in the service, they needed a catcher. So, I said, "Oh, I can catch." So I did that. That's kind of when it started. When I

came out, I ended up playing for a team from the West Wide. By the end of that season, I was playing with their better team, and they were taking me to tournaments. Then they said, “The next year we want you to play with us.” So I was having a pretty good career in fast pitch softball. I’ve been inducted into the Hall of Fame, and I enjoyed that. Then one year Steve said, “Man, we don’t have a catcher in baseball, so do you want to come and play?”

[01:16:00]

FW: So when I wasn’t playing fast pitch, I played. Bill was the coach, and Steve was on that team. I would catch for them whenever I wasn’t playing fast pitch. So I played one season for Bill’s team. Couldn’t play a lot because I was really more committed to fast pitch softball. I remember Bill telling me one time, he said, “Man, if you would have played for me, you’d probably be playing in the Major Leagues right now.” So that was really a nice compliment, because Bill was a very respected coach. I was like, “Oh, really? Well, I can’t do anything about that now.” But so that’s kind of in short, my athletic career. I mean, I enjoyed it.

Then at Oxford and at the King Center, I started officiating basketball because we needed officials. As I got into that more, I enjoyed that and then became more successful as an official. I started working college also. Eventually, I worked the state tournament 13 years in a row. At that time, nobody had ever done that, which I guess I was pretty accomplished. Then eventually after I stopped, I got inducted into the High School League Hall of Fame as a basketball official, which I guess says I was pretty decent, I guess, whatever.

[01:18:00]

KH: So I asked you earlier, what makes a good coach? What do you think makes a good official?

FW: Being a good communicator, positive ethics, knowing and understanding the rules, and respect for coaches and players. I think unfortunately we have officials and today they have their own interpretation of the rules. So they don't apply the rules the way they're written because they think they know more than the rule makers, which is really a struggle for me because I still go evaluate and I know some of those officials that do that. They can be good officials when they're doing it the way they're supposed to. But when they set aside some things, in essence, you manipulate the outcome of the game.

[01:20:00]

FW: And, to me, I think that's an ethics issue. I think it's not easy being an official because anytime you blow the whistle, and even sometimes you don't blow the whistle, somebody's not going to agree. I think it's a very challenging situation. I think we're in a very difficult situation today because all of our youth athletics stuff has pushed so many people away that even today we probably don't have enough high school officials to work games. So, it used to be like for basketball games, they're on Tuesday and Friday. Well, now you've got games every day of the week because people, I mean, there's just not enough to only go Tuesday and Friday and cover all of the games. Now they have games on Wednesday, Thursday, always had some games on Thursday and then some games are even on Saturdays now. So it's all over the board and there's a reason for that.

KH: So this is going to be kind of a two-part question which they say you should never ask a two-part question, but I'm going to. So you're talking about how things have changed and evolved over the course of your career. I'm wondering what changes you have seen over the course of your career in athletics in terms of diversity, in terms of race, in terms of who's participating in these kinds of sports programs, who is not, from players, to coaches, to officials. That's a big question. I'll stop there.

[1:22:00]

FW: In officials and coaches, I think there's been a big change in terms of, when I started officiating, I think there were maybe only three officials of color in basketball, and today there's many more. I think it's because people see the opportunities. Also, in youth athletics there's tournaments every weekend. So people can go work at these tournaments to make money, in a sense, cash or a check at the end of the weekend. So it's kind of like a part time job without really knowing all of the rules, I think. So there's a downside. And it's not just with diversity, but for the need of more officials, it's included more diversity.

These youth tournaments on the weekends, there's nobody that's observing or challenging officials to know the rules. You can go work and, regardless, you're going to get paid on Sunday when the tournament's over. That's not a good thing. Then the organizations that do that, they're the Woodbury Basketball Associations or the Hopkins, and they're all aimed at making money for their program. So they're all based on making money. They don't really care about the cause of officials, or whatever, whether they're right or wrong. They charge people to get in, they have concessions, there's probably an admission fee. So their bottom line is how much money can we make?

I know that because sometimes when I used to assign officials for that, some of the people say, "Frank, keep us on schedule." Well, in basketball you can't keep people on schedule if you're going to blow the whistle the way it's supposed to, because parents are like, well, our team starts at 1:00 and we're going to be there so we can start at 1:00 and then we play again at 4:00." And they're expecting everything to be like clockwork.

[01:24:00]

FW: Well, it doesn't work that way in sports. So, that keeps us on schedule. It's like, if you don't blow the whistle, that means you're probably going to stay on schedule. If you're going to blow the whistle, the game's going to take longer. I think there's, for me, my opinion is, youth sports has really become all about money. And people will say

no; we're teaching kids or whatever. And it's like, well, then you would really be saying officials need to call the game better. The double-edged sword is some people get mad on weekends because the officials aren't very good. They're not knowledgeable of all of the rules.

In fact, a couple years ago, my grandson, one of the guys that had been assigned, said, "Oh, well, you play basketball, you don't know anything about the rules," and he went and officiated for a whole summer making 25-30 dollars a game, which was good for him. But I'm like, you don't know anything about it. But because he was a former player at Hopkins, he probably didn't get a lot of heat. Now is that good or bad? Overall, for me it's bad because we're not teaching officials the rules. They don't have to learn, and they still can go work basketball games. People get upset if they're not calling it right, so now there's that extra pressure. Parents are getting mad around the game. If any of those officials want to progress to high school, they come with the same attitude, like, well, I didn't have to know it back here. Well, no, at this level you're going to have to know.

[01:26:00]

FW: That's the process right now of trying to help people get better and what they need to do to get better. Coaches have got an increased opportunity, as have athletic directors. So, in high school sports, more opportunities have become apparent. You'll find today a whole lot more activity directors, ADs, than ever before. A lot of coaches. A number of those coaches don't work in the school system. They might work for some company, but they make arrangements to come and coach.

The problem with that for me is in the past, if you were a coach, you came out of the school, and you knew who the kids were. Today, they're just coming and it's a job. You don't really understand what education-based athletics is and what its purpose is.

You're coming in with a whole different attitude, and they don't always fit. But that's just not diverse coaches. It's all coaches, right? But the need for more coaches. So there's a lot of people that were in the school systems that no longer want to coach because they don't want to listen to parents and all of the junk. So, now if you're going to have sports, you have to reach out. Where are you going to get coaches from? So, they advertise, and people come from outside back into the school system and are now going to coach, but they're not, so to speak, school staff or teachers or that stuff which might help you better understand students.

[01:28:00]

FW: But that's helped create the need for more coaches outside of the education system, which has opened the door for more diversity. Today we have more activity directors, diverse, not only of color, but women. Same with officials and same with coaches. The high school league, when I was on the board the first year, there were two of us of color, Dr. Boyd and myself. He rotated. That first year I was on was his fourth year. So, you serve four years and then you're off. Well, then the next year, I was the only one. So, again, like at Oxford, where I said, how come people don't come into our neighborhood? I challenged the boards, said, "Hey, as I look around this dais, we're a pretty white organization."

KH: And what year or years was this about?

FW: Let me see. So, I've been off the board, I think, two years, two or three years. So, '22 was maybe my last year. So I was probably on '19, '20, '21, '22, something like that.

KH: So very, very recent history.

[01:30:00]

FW: Right, right. So, I challenged the organization to become more diverse. I

would send articles that were in the paper about diversity in Minnesota and said, “We’re changing, so we’ve got to be more diverse, not only in board members,” but that was for sure what I wanted, “but in everything that you hire.” So, like at the state tournaments, this maybe goes back 10 years ago, Kevin Merkel [ph], was the staff member that was in charge of the boys basketball tournament, and Lisa Lissimore was in charge of the girls. So, I said to Kevin, “Kevin, we’ve done a pretty good job of officials on the floor during the game. But if I look over at the table, there’s no pepper in with the salt.” He said, “What?” I said, “Well, there’s no diversity. Every game, by the book, if there’s three officials on the floor, there’s two more officials at the table, the scorer and the timer. So we don’t have any officials of color over there.”

And he said, “Oh, man, Frank, I’ve never thought about it like that.” If you look at the table, there’s a lot of people that work at the table. So, he said, “Oh, man.” So, then probably now, for 10 years, I’ve probably worked at the table for both the boys and the girls tournament. Lisa was more cognizant of that. She started, for sure, more women. Then she started also women of color and that kind of stuff. And then I also worked.

[01:32:00]

FW: So what I shared with the board and the executive director was in every tournament, hockey, soccer, football, not only officials, but you got to look at all of the other staff that you hire, so we’re diverse across the board. And so, they’ve done that. They’re increasing this year at the basketball tournament, probably the most people of color working since I’ve been around, which is a plus. I’d like to say it came from me pointing it out, because it had been apparent for years, but nobody else had ever—

KH: And why does it matter?

FW: Because it’s reflective of who we are in Minnesota in terms of families and students. If we say that it’s important to have diverse teachers in front of students as role

models, as leaders, as examples of leadership, of jobs, of all of those things, it would hold true in all of the sports activities. Well, sports, and drama, and music, and all of those things. I just talked about sports. But if it's drama, one act plays, if it's the music awards, if it's dance, all of those tournaments should reflect diversity in who's working for the Minnesota State High School League. All of the schools that are members pay a fee to be a member, and all of those schools primarily have diversity. Some a lot more than people even recognize.

[01:34:00]

FW: There was an article, I think, my last year on the board that was like the top 10 cities of diversity, or African Americans. And it wasn't Minneapolis and St. Paul. It was Brooklyn Center. It was St. Cloud. Then one of the staff members right now, she was on the board for a while, and one of her assignments is the girls tournament. She was the AD at Austin. When she was on the board, and I'm talking about all of this stuff she said, "In the Austin school system, they speak 53 languages." So, if you use the examples and you look across Minnesota, who we are today, it's far different.

So the Minnesota State High School League should reflect that. I don't want to say a quota system. It's not 10 percent; it's not 15 percent. Just recognize the importance. If you look at your own bylaws and your own mission, that should be across the board. And I think it's improving. But there were many years that Jimmy Lee never worked a state tournament, although he worked all over the state, because of the color of his skin. I mean, there's a number of examples like that of people that were denied opportunity.

[01:36:00]

FW: Bob Blakely, who graduated from Central High School, also went to Marshall, a great athlete. He led the Gophers in rushing. I don't know if I shared this story once before, but in '56, I think, he played for the Gophers. He led the Gophers in rushing.

I was going to interview him and a guy named Bill McMoore [ph]. I looked it up and he led the Gophers in rushing. He had 65 carries and 325 yards total, which is like five yards of carry. So the people before him carried the ball a lot more and had more yardage, but they carried the ball 200 times, or whatever. So, I asked Bob at this interview, I said, “Bob, did you guys pass a lot or what’s the deal?” He said, “They only let me play in the fourth quarter.” He went on to play professional football. That’s how good he was. So, at the U, he only got to play, but he still led them in rushing.

A number of these things again, for me, I’m sure along the way in my athletic career, if we had like an all-Black team and we were playing an all-white team, or if it was a diverse team, I’m sure I was always trying to prove to the other players not only that I was a good basketball player, but maybe I was a good player of color, too. Somewhere in the back of my mind.

[01:38:00]

FW: So, as I grew up, those things were always present in my background, which then influenced how come we always have to travel to Oxford to go because people won’t come in our neighborhood? How come the high school league isn’t more diverse? How come there aren’t more officials of color in basketball or any sport as far as that goes, or coaches? So those things have always been in the background. I don’t think I’ve lost any sleep over it, but it’s always been there. When I first started working in St. Paul, there weren’t very many staff members of color. It was very apparent whenever we went to a staff meeting or whenever we went to an MRPA, like a Minnesota Recreation Park Association conference, you could count people one hand.

There were always these challenges of, Okay, I want to be successful because I want to prove that I’m as good as anybody, I guess. I don’t know that I was trying to be better than, but I want to be as good as anybody. I can do the job just like anybody else. I

think along the way I helped people maybe have a different vision in recreation. I know I helped in Richfield. By the time I left Richfield, I know I had an influence on how they dealt with diversity. Because when I first went there, I was the only person of color on their staff and there were only a few people in Richfield that were people of color in the whole city.

[01:40:00]

KH: And tell us again what years you were at Richfield?

FW: I went there in '78 and retired in 2010. I think that whole backdrop as I went to Oxford, maybe that was always in the back of my mind, the diversity piece. But I think as I continued to learn from Bill, or the experiences of every day of the job and listening to other people in the city, if they had a citywide meeting, listening to what they did at their rec centers, and can we do that? Why can't we do that? It was always being willing to try. The winter carnival was every year, and there was always a junior royalty. And so, one year I said, "You know what? Let's do the junior royalty." We had the best coronation for junior royalty in the city. And that year, our young lady that was our queen and the young lady that was the Wind queen, the Wind queen, she won the West Wind, and then the young lady who was our queen, she won the overall city thing.

KH: And was this at Oxford or Martin Luther King?

[1:42:00]

FW: At Martin Luther King, I'm sorry. But it was one of those things that had not been done before. So what made me think that we could do a coronation? I didn't know. But one of our staff members, she's the one that I said, "Let's do this." So I explained to her. She recruited all of the girls and the boys. We actually had more girls that were running for the queen than we had boys that were running for the king, but for the girls, we had more, so when they'd come in, they walk together. She actually got other boys to

be escorted for the girls to come in. They were all dressed in tuxes and formals.

When the city staff people came for the winter carnival, and it was done in the theater, which wasn't Penumbra at the time. It was the theater. And then we had the lady, she was one of the TV people, something Hughes, I can't remember. Anyway, she was a weather person on 4 or, I don't know. But she was our MC. So it was like really a big deal. And I was really proud. I was proud of this young lady, Kim Prister [ph], really was the one that really made it happen. But here was another thing that I was able to observe that other people did, and I told Bill, and I think Oxford did some before I started working there, I guess. So it wasn't like we had never done that. And then Hallie had some kind of events like that, not connected to the winter carnival, but they may have had the Queen of Hearts, so they had some similar kinds of things. But that was a big deal.

KH: Because it was part of this significant city-wide thing that everybody knew about the winter carnival.

[01:44:00]

FW: Right, right. Yeah. And Sandra Battle, her father was Reverend Battle, and he was all excited and he was one of the significant ministers. He was at Pilgrim. It was good to see things along the way that we could do that people would say, "Our kids don't want to do that. Our kids don't want to do that." Well, even one year I had hopscotch taped into the floor in our hallway at the King Center. And we got these talls, or whatever, like a piece of rubber kind of thing, and you throw it down. So sometimes the girls would be out there playing, and the boys would be, "Oh, man," and I said, "Well, come on, let me see what you could do." I would actually play hopscotch with the boys and girls. And they were like, "Well, man, Frank," so here were the boys now. And sometimes the boys would be out there playing by themselves.

Simply by putting down this tape to be the hopscotch thing, which who would

have thought these boys that think they're these athletes would want to play? Now, if they didn't see me do it, they might not have. So, I think along the way, I tried to do different things. Some of the same things. Basketball was important to us. I made sure we got uniforms. I think that Bill was always encouraging because he was still around, and he wasn't my supervisor anymore, but he was always around and he was now municipal athletics, I think, by then, or whatever. So he was still in the department.

[01:46:00]

FW: If I ever needed a conversation, I would talk to him or to Jim Robinson, who was the director of the Loft Teen Center, or Mr. Thomas, who was the executive director of Hallie, upstairs. I think there were a lot of influential people that I could talk to and get ideas from, at the time, or some thoughts. "Hey, I think I want to do this. What do you think?" Which I think for me always is the way I did things. Seldom would I ever go, "Hey, we're going to do this." I would always ask people, "What do you think if we did this? Tell me what your reaction would be." And so, I think that helped me as I put together ideas that we did at the King Center, or eventually, in Richfield. But all of that again came back to the beginning at Oxford.

KH: So you are kind of uniquely situated to answer this question. You've mentioned both today and in other places that three different institutions, settings, where you played and or coached or worked sports in the Rondo area, Ober Boys Club, Oxford, and the King Center, and Hallie. I know Hallie and the King Center are affiliated, but have different histories. I'm just interested to see if you can talk about how those three places worked—the Hollow was in there too—as a location. How did these recreational sites work together in the Rondo community and how were they different from one another?

[01:48:00]

FW: I think they were always different. I don't recall that they ever worked

together until later when I was around, so to speak. I have to think about this. Is Ober Boys or Hallie older? I can't remember which. But because we lived a half a block from Ober Boys Club when we moved on St. Anthony, I was at the Ober Boys club all the time.

KH: And that was run by the Union Gospel Mission, correct?

FW: Yes. And so, they always had this faith-based kind of thing. There would be times where we would say prayers, or whatever type of things. Not all the time, but maybe before a game, or Woody would bring us into the game room and we would sit and he would talk, and he would just talk, and then he would say, "Okay, we're going to say a prayer today, because da-da-da." I liked going to the Ober Boys Club. The staff there were people of color that worked there. Gaynell Ballard [ph], I remember her working at the front desk all the time and she's still around today and I remember her specifically from that.

Then Hallie, as I got a little bit older and ventured out, I would go to Hallie with my father sometimes to watch him play. And then eventually I could go over there on my own. Still wasn't that far away. But they were two different places. Hallie, I believe, had a larger impact because it included adults and community types of meetings. If there was something that was going on, groups would meet at Hallie.

[01:50:00]

FW: They also had music and drama clubs, where Ober Boys, there was a wood shop, there was a wrestling or boxing room. There was the gym, there was the activity game room upstairs, but that was about it. And it was always youth. We didn't have adults other than staff or coaches. But both had their significant place. I think a lot of times Ober doesn't get talked about enough. But I think if you talk to people that Ober was significant in terms of the Rondo community. I think Hallie is the legacy organization because it had a bigger footprint than just youth, but it also included youth.

Then in the '60s, thereabout, Oxford comes about. At first, it's just this small little plan for skating. Then there's a brick building, which was pretty typical in the recreation departments in the city. A lot of places had that kind of building. Even after Oxford got a bigger place, some of those brick structures were still in other places of the city, smaller places.

[01:52:00]

FW: So when Oxford came around and I started playing baseball down there, there was an outdoor basketball court. I can't remember if there was tennis or not, but I know there was an outdoor basketball court. I just knew we were going to play baseball up there, and then eventually some outdoor basketball kinds of things. A city department where Ober and Hallie were not. Ober was run by the Union Gospel Mission. Hallie was primarily probably a United Way funded in some sort, along with maybe their own revenue type of thing. So now the city enters into this at Oxford.

I don't know that there was ever a plan for that and it kind of coincides with 94 going through. I know that the Hollow didn't have a building. It had a little wooden structure that was brought in, again, for skating in the wintertime. It was at one point in time owned by some white people. At that time, way before me, it was segregated. Evelyn Fairbanks in her book said she remembers looking through the fence and wishing she could go play on the swings, is one of her comments. She lived right across the street.

[01:54:00]

FW: I know the Rondo Businessmen's Association several times tried to get the city to upgrade the Hollow. It was lost to the white people that owned it through a tax forfeiture. I have that document or whatever. They tried to get it upgraded. The city at one point tried to make it segregated. But the newspaper, maybe Cecil Newman, and the Rondo Businessmen's Association, opposed that. But they tried a few times to get

improvements. The city kept saying they didn't have money and this is all in articles that I have copies of.

So Hollow other than an open space. We went skating there before Oxford. Because Oxford kind of coincided with 94 and the changes, so Hollow was gone. So now skating happened at Oxford and at Dunning. I can remember when I was in junior high, I would go to Dunning because some of my friends would always meet up there to go skating. I would go up to Dunning, which is just a couple blocks away, although they probably had skating at Oxford. I didn't go down there then in the wintertime anyway that I can recall. I think I went to Dunning because that's where my friends from school were going.

[01:56:00]

KH: And then when is the King Center built, or added on?

FW: Seventy-two.

KH: So that's the latest of this group of recreational sites.

FW: Right. So the King Center is built, and Hallie is the administrating agency, so they're still around. Model Cities has a clinic there. Hallie has a theater. Then the city puts in the recreation center portion of it, which is the gym, and a couple small rooms down below. It's been remodeled to be bigger than that now, but the gym is still basically the same, and there's been some additions on that side. So, Hallie, even then, had music and then they had the theater. So Lou Bellamy then comes on a program, I don't remember what it was called, but he asked if he can increase the plays, or whatever. In the beginning, it was still Hallie, but then it eventually became, I don't know the whole deal on that, but it became Penumbra. And a big part of that, obviously, or not obviously, is Lou Bellamy and his work.

[01:58:00]

FW: But people forget that it was really a part of Hallie in the beginning. When we had that coronation up there, it was Hallie. We had to get permission from Hallie to have the coronation in there or whatever, to use the theater.

KH: One of the things that we have been talking about and trying to figure out through this project that I'm interested in figuring out is, was Oxford unique? And you have had experience at all of those sites that we just talked about. You were in Richfield for a long time. Like, was there something unique about Oxford or is it just another—and I don't mean just, is it another important community site in the Rondo neighborhood?

FW: I think it's unique because by the time the freeway goes in, Hallie is getting ready to close on the original site. Ober is kind of also pulling back. Now Oxford comes in the '60s, the mid-60s, whatever, and it's continuing to grow, especially around the football program, which there's no other place to play football now in the community. Football is kind of one of those things that used to be in the community, that was extremely important, I'm sure, to young boys and dads, or whatever. So from that standpoint, Oxford takes on the football piece.

[02:00:00]

FW: We even had, there was the older boys, maybe eighth grade, then we had seventh, sixth grade; we had fourth and fifth grade. And then we even had first and second grade or third grade. They would put on a helmet and jersey and pass, but they never played on the whole field. We just took them over here on the grass area and we would line them up and say, "Okay, you block this guy," and then we would run like a little scrimmage without really any teaching or anything like that. The bad thing about that is here's the other influence of sports, so if a kid got tackled, every kid on both teams would just jump and pile on, because that's what they saw on TV, right? And unfortunately, the kid that was on the bottom was getting buried. So after a while we talked, that's maybe

not the best idea.

But on an evening, we'd have four or five football teams out there practicing on the field and all in some space around it. So that's a lot of kids. As that continued to happen, then kids just drifted into the basketball piece. Because Ober was starting to dwindle. Hallie was no longer there. And the new place hasn't started yet. So, now, with the new building coming in, now there's a gym and it's the brand-new shiny place. It becomes unique from a standpoint of, as the new building comes in, it's the place because Hallie's gone and Ober is dwindling.

[02:02:00]

KH: Now, do you have a sense from your experiences perhaps at or with other rec centers in the City of St. Paul, casually or formally, or your long experience in Richfield, was there something unique about Oxford in the recreation world or in the world of sports and community in St. Paul or in the Twin Cities area? What is the thing that makes Oxford what it is and has been?

FW: I think from a larger standpoint, it's the recognized sports place for football and basketball, and probably baseball, too, because of Bill, and Attucks Brooks, and some of the teams that we had. So, it's now become *the* sports place. Even when the King Center opened those first couple years, there weren't really any basketball teams yet either, until I went down there. It's still the recognized sports place. So if you go anywhere in the city, if they said Oxford, they say, Oh, that's the football team, that's the basketball team.

KH: So even people on the West Side, East Side or North End?

[02:04:00]

FW: Yeah, we were the team that everybody wanted to beat, so to speak. There were always big rivalries sometimes between our teams in El Rio Vista or our team in Battle Creek or Hazel Park in terms of football.

KH: You may not know the answer to this question, but I'll ask it anyway. Are there comparable rec centers that have made similar contributions to their communities in other parts of St. Paul, like on the West Side?

FW: Yeah, I would say El Rio Vista probably in terms of the West Side. Before that, there was the Neighborhood House similar to Hallie Q. Brown, which would have the same kind of history as Hallie had on the West Side. Merriam Park was also like a settlement house and then had a joint recreation. I don't know that Merriam Park was as known, sports-wise, as the places that I just mentioned. In Minneapolis, if we were to cross the river, probably Phillis Wheatley for sure would have been a comparable place.
[02:06:00]

FW: I'm trying to think about the south. Well, it's called Martin Luther King Park, but it was called something before that. But I don't know if they ever had a gym. They have one now. So that might be another one that would be comparable in Minneapolis maybe. So, yeah, I think Oxford just became the place. Some of that could be because of the newness, the new building, because there wasn't another gym or new building in the area. And Hallie had closed. In '72 when they opened, now there's a gym, Art Vestigo [ph] is down there, but there's really no organized program. That's where Bill said to me, if you go down there, you'll be able to start your own kind of deal, and I think that's what happened. So, Art Vestigo [ph], still my close friend, was not an organizer, so to speak. They had an open gym, but they didn't really have programs, so to speak. Can I come back to training?

KH: Yes, please do. Yeah, I think I've asked most of what I wanted to ask, so if you have anything else you want to add, please do.
[02:08:00]

FW: So, I think that for St. Paul Park and Rec, and this goes even back to when I

started, there wasn't a formal training plan. I think training was done by each rec center or each director or maybe supervisor of that area. But there wasn't a formal plan that said, Okay, here's what our policies are. Here's what we do across the whole city, the same. I think each place, the training happened at that site. Now, there still was some overall governing policies, but I would venture to say those weren't passed on, that I'm aware of. I wouldn't have known what they were at Oxford, but I'm not sure Bill was told those either.

The disappointing thing with that is then every center could be run a little bit differently. Some people say, "Well, that's because it was important to that neighborhood." Well, that's true, but still, there should be an overall philosophy for all places so that if we're having championship games over here, we could also have them over here, which gets back to why people weren't coming into the neighborhood thing. There should have been a philosophy that somebody should have said, No, we're going to play over here. But there wasn't.

[02:10:00]

FW: I think that continued into the training. Even when I was the director at the King Center, there wasn't any formal training. So the training that I would give to my staff was basically, Okay, here's our hours. Here's what we're going to do for our specific program. Sometimes that might mean like, Oh, we'll try this art and craft fair, or we're going to do this. Or we're going to do the coronation thing. And people are looking at me like, What's he talking about? And I can remember those looks. What? So I think that the city lacks that.

Even going forward to the last 10 years when I was working with just the basketball program, there's really a lack of that training to me, and I've shared this even with Nate, who's there now. What should happen, in my opinion, anytime that you're

going to have somebody be in charge of a building, they should go downtown or somewhere in the system, and the first week or two weeks of their job at that site should be a half day of training about policies, time cards, things that you can do, you can't do, here's where you get these supplies supplied to you. If you want more than that, you've got to get somebody else to help you with that, because we only provide this.

[02:12:00]

FW: I didn't know that the city had supplies until one time I went out to some garage. I said, "Man, what's all this?" And they said, "Oh, these are games." I was like, Really? I mean, they had a place full of games, Monopoly. And I mean, well, who knew this? So, to me, again, we could have had all of those games, and there would have been activities for kids that maybe wanted to do that, but we didn't even know about it. So that would be a half a day. Then they should go back to their site and then somebody should come, whether it's their supervisor or somebody, and they should walk through the building with them. You got lights, you should be looking at lights. You should be outside if there's lights. Every once a month you should be inspecting. Does something need to be replaced? Something that you know about the facility.

That doesn't happen. I've been to a number of places and I'm like, "Man, do you know your light's not working out there?" "Oh, really?" You walk in every night. So from there then you give some basics. Now along the way you still need to go, okay, maybe once a month or once a quarter, you meet with all of the directors and here's our programs for the next three months. We're going to have football, we're going to have this, we're going to have this, or we're going to have basketball. And here's how we're operating basketball.

[02:14:00]

FW: But I got to tell you, for 10 years, or longer, that I was with the basketball

program—so what's supposed to happen is Municipal Athletics, that runs basketball, they provide each center with a bin that has a three-ring notebook in it that has all of the rules, it has forms for the scorers and timers to fill out to be paid. They have some first aid supplies, and things that are necessary for all of the sites, but it's all the same. When you go through them, then it's up to the local place to replenish them.

At Oxford, there's three gyms. In all of those years that I worked, I got to tell you, I don't remember going to a place mid-season looking for first aid supplies. So sometimes there'd be empty boxes. If they used an Ace bandage or an ice pack, the empty box was in the bin. It wasn't thrown away. But nobody had replenished anything. The forms for scorers and timers to fill out hadn't been replenished. Sometimes I would get there on a Saturday morning and they were just setting up.

[02:16:00]

FW: We have basketball season coming up. On Friday night, you close an hour early or shut down activities, at least in the gym, and you set up for the next day. Turn everything on, make sure it's working so you don't run into a problem. Maybe once a month you turn on all of the scoreboards or whatever to make sure they're working. And if they're not, you call maintenance, so you're not caught short. Every Friday, you look in the bins and see what forms need to be. Do you have forms for all of these things? What about first aid supplies? You don't wait till Friday. Maybe on Monday, you look in the bins and go, you know what the list is. What was the given list that you had? Do we have these things? And if not, you got them replenished. You don't wait till Friday.

To me, those are easy checklists. Basketball is probably your largest program in the city, and you can't operate it the way it should be. That's telling to me. And then to go to Oxford, and I think I shared this, so the young lady that was working there when I went to get forms done, she said, "You know, if you all are going to be here every week, you

need to take care of this.” I’m like, “We’re a part of the same organization. What do you mean you all? Your job is to take care of that stuff. I shouldn’t have to come over here.”

But I didn’t go into that. First of all, I didn’t like the way she said it to me and secondly, I was trying to keep from cussing her out.

[02:18:00]

FW: But I did share that with the guy that eventually shot somebody about it. I said, “Hey man, I can help you. Let me give you a checklist on Friday nights,” because one of the first Saturdays that we opened, they didn’t set up one of the gyms because the person got there late on Saturday morning. Well, if you take care of it Friday night, all you have to do is open up the door on Saturday morning. You don’t have to set up. But all of that comes back to administration. Shouldn’t somebody know?

And then, all of the part time staff, and they may be unique in a situation that people have part time hours. So can you bring them all on a Saturday morning to an overall training session? And if you can’t do that, then maybe you do it in two or three groups together. Or if it comes down to it, then you go to that one center and somebody provides training. Here’s what you need to know. That’s the way we handle things. Do you have any questions? And your director is involved in that, so he or she knows what’s being done, too.

But that doesn’t happen. When I’ve asked about it, they said, “Well, the supervisor is supposed to be doing that.” Well, the supervisors all have different experiences. When I talk to people, none of them have had any training. So, really, even today, it’s lacking. And as an organization, how do you function that way?

[02:20:00]

FW: And to me, it’s about an image. I don’t know if people walk away from Oxford today, go, “Man, that always happens at Oxford.” I don’t know if that keeps

people away or what's being said away somewhere else. But if you go to Oxford and you're starting late, there's an image. If it's a place run in by people of color, there's another perception. Or when I've gone there to go walking around the main gym, there's young adults or teenagers down, and they're, "Nigger, pass me the ball." And you've got people walking around. So I'd sometimes stop, "Hey, knock it off." Then I would stop walking. I would go down and I would go get the staff person and say, "Come on, man, come into the gym with me." Then I would say, "Hey, look, you got people walking around here. It's taken a long time to get this place. We don't need people leaving here saying, 'Man, I don't want to go down there. Because the language down there is, I don't want to hear it.' If I don't want to hear it. Do you think they want to hear it? And they're leaving here? They're going to go tell people, 'Man, I went walking down there. I have to find another place because I don't want to listen to that.'"

[02:22:00]

FW: But nobody's doing that. They've got staff members. They'll have three or four staff members, and they're all congregated around the counter. I go in one night and you got over in their open lobby area that there's guys sitting on the tables. Now, in the scheme of life, it's probably not the biggest thing. So, I go to him, I said, "Hey, man, you sitting on tables at home? People have to eat at those tables." "Oh, oh, oh, my bad." Now, the staff hear me say that, but they're sitting right there. And to me, that's a training thing. You're over here talking to each other. What's your job?

Somebody should be walking through the gym or whatever periodically to know what's going on. But you're all sitting here thinking it's okay, but you don't even know what's going on in the rest of the building. So part of that is training. Part of it is work ethic and responsibility. But without the initial training, none of it works. Maybe people aren't complaining. I don't know. But for me, I've got to say, I'm from the neighborhood.

I don't want to hear it. I don't understand how you can be sitting here, and these guys are sitting on the table, and you know that people are over, they eat at those tables, they do homework at those tables. Some of those guys got their pants lowered. And I'm like, man, yuck.

[02:24:00]

FW: For me, I think, and I've taken time, I volunteered once, to go to all of the buildings and point out some things to the existing staff members. Did that help? I have no idea. But if there's not consistent training, what do you do? I only mention that because I would hate for the training session where, this is an emotional thing, so this guy gets beat up, he decides he's going to shoot somebody and he's in jail and we have an ugly incident. Then people say, "Well, he should have never been given that job anyway." That's pretty telling to me. If he had issues somewhere else, why would you put him in that spot? How did that ever happen?

But if you have training and you're told not to open the door, if he says, "Shut the place down," he's the director and he says, "Don't let anybody in here," and you open the door and let somebody in there, what's the consequences to that person? What's the consequences to the two guys that beat him up? Now, one of them got shot, but what's the consequences to the other guy? Because if he did that there, he's going to do it again. But all of that's training.

[02:26:00]

FW: Johnny Allen is there now and Nate, and they seem to be wanting to work together within the structures. But I still think they should know the history, some of it, and some of the things pointed out about training and why things are important, and the images. I don't know if everybody has that kind of image today. I mean, that thought process. I don't know what makes Oxford unique. There's a long history that makes it.

There's also a side of Oxford that is unique and not the best perception, also. Which one do we want?

KH: So that kind of brings us full circle to something you said when we sat down today, and you were talking about this project being important. So I'm going to close with that question, and you've already partially answered it when talking about if current staff understood the history of Oxford. But why else do you think a project about Oxford is important?

[02:28:00]

FW: I think that the Rondo community today is far different than the Rondo community as I grew up. I think the Rondo community today is also different than maybe 10 years ago, 15 years ago because of the people that have migrated here. It's a diverse community. It will be interesting to me to see if people come for recreational needs at Oxford or if some people choose to go other places because of their perception. I think it's important for that reason that anybody that lives in the Rondo community, a diverse community, should feel comfortable going to Oxford.

I think if people walk in the door and they're not treated as welcoming, or they hear things that make them uncomfortable, they're not going to want to return. It's tax supported. That says to me, again, as far as that goes, anybody in the city should feel welcome at Oxford. But especially if you live within the community that's closest, and that could even extend beyond Rondo. Because if Lexington is the western border, if we go up to Hamline and you live in that area, you should feel welcome to go to Oxford. That's probably the closest place.

[02:30:00]

FW: And are you going there? And if not, why? I think that would tell people something. I think the other thing is right now, to me, I would be interested in a survey,

and I know the city won't do this, but where are you going for your recreational or fitness activities? Now, some people might be choosing to go pay for it somewhere for whatever amenities they get there. Okay. Understand that. But why aren't you going to Oxford?

Not that everybody's going to want to go there, or has that need, but if you're not going there, do you have a need to be involved at one of our recreation centers? I don't know what the right wording would be. And if so, where do you go? How do you fulfill your recreational needs in terms of this, this, and this? Do you know that the closest rec center is this? Do you use it? If not, why? I know we can't control everybody, and everybody's got their own personal reasons. I would hope that those reasons aren't because of a negative experience at Oxford or even a negative experience that they've heard about that happened at Oxford without personally going there to experience it.

[02:32:00]

FW: If you had a negative experience, how do you get that handled? Who do you call? And can it be fixed? That's why, I think, staff really need to understand what their role is. Training, leadership, accountability. You're there, really, to serve people. That's your job. Or to help people. If you don't want to do that, maybe you need to go somewhere else. But I just don't see that happening all the time. I think right now people would be willing at Oxford, and some other recreation centers, to throw basketballs in the gym, and if kids go play, they've taken care of their job. I think that's a part of recreation, but sometimes sitting down with kids and talking is important.

KH: Well, I'm looking at the clock here. It's quarter to 12:00. And we talked for a long time, but is there anything else you want to add before we wrap up?

[02:34:00]

FW: Just, Kim, I really appreciate you doing this. I can't tell you enough. As I said to you, I said to Sara [Wood], I hope that we can come away with a written piece, so to

speak. And if we get a written piece, how do we make that accessible to people?

KH: Outside of the mailing list.

FW: Right, right. Yeah. Not that the *Spokesman Recorder* is the biggest read piece in the world, but is there a way to partner with somebody? I know sometimes newspapers, they do inserts and stuff like that, I know not too long ago, *The Pioneer Press* did an insert with, somebody showed it to me, Tony Stone and some other people. So I have a copy because I don't get *The Pioneer Press*, but there's a way to partner with somebody at *The Pioneer Press* that would really saturate that story to all of St. Paul, I guess. I don't know. I just think there's a value, so many different values of people to be able to read those stories and go like, Oh, I never thought about it like that. Well, Maybe I should go over there. I've never been there. I've only heard that.

[02:36:00]

FW: For some people, they'll read and go like, Yeah, I'm never going over there. And we're not going to change their mind. Then for people that live in this area, it will give them a history of what Oxford really is, or Oxford and now the Johnny Kaye movement or whatever it is, and his attempts at doing things. But by and large, still upstairs, Nate is still Oxford.

KH: I think we as a group have talked about many times doing oral history interviews and gathering these really great stories isn't going to do anything if they just sit in the archives. So, I think that is, as you know, of course, and as you just articulated, part of the ongoing thinking about what this project can do, and how it can be shared, and we have talked about this as a group, maybe one of those things is to have some sort of event at Oxford. And the staff can come. They will learn it whether they want to or not. Well, thank you so much, Frank. I so much appreciate your time.

FW: Oh, my pleasure. Thank you, thank you. I hope I didn't take us in too many

different directions, or whatever.

KH: No.

[END OF INTERVIEW]