

David L. Brown discusses his career as a production worker and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI

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5 Cheryl McQuaid: This is Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team. Today is May 3, 2006. It's
6 approximately 9:15 a.m. We're at the UAW Local 602 Frank Dryer
7 Greenhouse. First, we'll introduce the team:
8
9 John Fedewa: John Fedewa.
10
11 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.
12
13 Cheryl McQuaid: And I'm Cheryl McQuaid. Today, we're interviewing David Brown.
14 [00:22] David, will you state your name and spell it for us please?
15
16 David Brown: David Brown. D-A-V-I-D B-R-O-W-N.
17
18 Cheryl McQuaid: [00:30] And your address?
19
20 David Brown: 524 North Deerfield, Lansing, Michigan 48917.
21
22 Cheryl McQuaid: [00:35] Are you married? Do you have children?
23
24 David Brown: I'm married. I have a blended family. My wife has 2 sons and I have a
25 daughter, but they're all our kids.
26
27 Cheryl McQuaid: [00:44] Uh, where were you born and raised?
28
29 David Brown: I was actually born in Battle Creek because, at the time, there was no
30 Protestant hospitals in Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo's where I lived, and I was
31 raised in Kalamazoo, but had to go to Battle Creek to go to a Protestant
32 hospital to be born. So kind of an unusual story for the time, so.
33
34 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:05] What did your parents do?
35
36 David Brown: My dad worked for the paper company in, in, uh, Kalamazoo, and my
37 mother was a housewife.
38
39 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:14] Uh, could you tell us what your educational level is?
40
41 David Brown: I am currently working on my second master's degree in public
42 administration, and I, uh, previously had a bachelor's degree in, in
43 education and a master's degree in education.
44
45 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:28] Were you in the military?
46

1David Brown: No, I was not.
2

3Cheryl McQuaid: [01:32] Did GM help you with any of your educational achievements?
4

5David Brown: Oh yes. I, I had my bachelor's degree, and I was probably about halfway
6 through my master's degree when I hired into, to General Motors, but I
7 finished up my, my, uh, master's degree through the tuition assistance
8 program and, in fact, I took an educational leave in order to do that
9 because I was starting to lose more credits than what I had on my record.
10 So, I took off 1 term for – to finish my master's degree and used tuition
11 assistance to do that. And I'm currently using tuition assistance to work
12 on my, my master's degree in public administration.
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: [2:08] When did you hire into Fisher Body? Do you know what your
15 seniority date is?
16

17David Brown: March 21, 1997, 1977.
18

19Cheryl McQuaid: And...
20

21David Brown: [inaudible 2:17] date there.
22

23Cheryl McQuaid: [2:18] ...why did you hire into Fisher Body?
24

25David Brown: Well I was married. I had a, uh, I had a little baby and, uh, I was tryin' to
26 get into the field of education. That's where I had gotten my degree, and
27 at the time there was [coughing] [inaudible 2:29] hiring for, for teachers.
28 In fact, I had actually worked for the school district, for the
29 superintendent, on a couple of different projects, worked for the re-entry
30 program and I worked for the Model Cities Program and developed those
31 educational programs for the city, but it was principals that hired, not the
32 superintendents, and, uh, I did not have the connections to get into the
33 schools and they were hiring very few, if any, people at all.
34

35 So it was almost impossible for me to get a job teaching. I was working in
36 the re-entry program in, uh, in Lansing as a teacher's aid but wasn't
37 making the kind of money that I needed to support a family, and my next
38 door neighbor, uh, worked, uh, both – he and she both worked for, for
39 Fisher Body at the time and said, "Well Dave, why don't you go down and
40 apply?" And so, I did that. In fact, when I applied, I went down and
41 found out that I had a hernia, which I did not know I had, and when I went
42 through medical, and they told me, "Go and get your hernia fixed and then
43 come back and we'll hire you," and that's what I did. So I actually came in
44 in '76 when the huge group of people came in but, at that time, I had that
45 injury, so they wouldn't hire me.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:39] Do you remember – what was the, uh, application process like with
2 long lines?
3

4 David Brown: When I came in, no there was not. Uh, like I said, I came in sort of an off
5 time in '77. There was a huge hiring group in '76 and another one in '78
6 but when I came in, there was probably only about 30 people a month that
7 were coming through. So I didn't have to stand in line and wait like a lot
8 of , uh, people did who hired into this place.
9

10 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:04] Do you remember your first day?
11

12 David Brown: I remember my first night probably more than my first day. I went home
13 at night and went to sleep and I dreamed about cars coming down the
14 assembly line so that was really a weird experience for me. But, uh, I was
15 painting cars and that's what I dreamed all night long was the cars coming
16 at me so.
17

18 Cheryl McQuaid: So you were hired into the paint department.
19

20 David Brown: Yes I did. I was spraying [inaudible 04:27].
21

22 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:29] How did you find the paint department?
23

24 David Brown: How did I find it? Do you mean...
25

26 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:34] Were you escorted to paint?
27

28 David Brown: ...oh yes, yes. I had somebody pick me up at personnel and walk me out
29 to paint and tar – which wasn't very far 'cause paint department, at that
30 time, was right next to the personnel area. It was downstairs currently
31 where the trim department has been located for the last few years.
32

33 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:55] Do any of your other family members work at Fisher Body?
34

35 David Brown: No I'm the, I'm the first generation. My, uh, my wife used to work here
36 that's how I met my, my current wife, Joyce, is she was working in the
37 shop and – but, uh, I didn't have – I'm not like a second or third generation
38 employee so.
39

40 Cheryl McQuaid: So you were spray painting cars, um, [coughing] what kind of training was
41 involved [coughing] [inaudible 5:20].
42

43 David Brown: I broke in with somebody on the day shift and they put me on day shift for
44 30 days to train me and, uh, basically it was the ol' 3 day kind of rule that
45 they believed in at that time. You - somebody worked with you, sort of
46 the mentor and helped you and showed you how to spray an' after 3 days

1 they put the gun in your hand and says, "you do the job," and [laughter],
2 uh, the expectation was that you could perform the job at that time.
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:44] And could you?
5
6 David Brown: Uh, I think so. I did fairly well, so.
7
8 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:50] What did you think...
9
10 David Brown: And occasionally somebody would come back and tell me there was a sag
11 in a wheel well or something but, uh, y'know I think I did a fairly good
12 job.
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:58] What did you think of the paint department?
15
16 David Brown: Uh, it was kinda scary. Probably why I had nightmares, I mean it was, it
17 was old and dirty and it was probably one of the older buildings in the
18 plant at that time 'cause that was before they had the new paint
19 department. Um, the booths were all enclosed. Um, the offices were, uh,
20 the old traditional green rooms where everything was painted green, sort
21 of the military type green and, uh, it was not clean. There was, uh, – they
22 had the cinder block-type floors and asphalt over top of it and had holes
23 every once in a while, in the, in the floor. So it wasn't what, uh, you
24 would consider a pristine environment but, um, I didn't expect to have a
25 clean spot where I came to work.
26
27 Cheryl McQuaid: [6:41] What did you think of the people around you?
28
29 David Brown: Oh, I loved the people I worked with. Um, lot of different variations in
30 people and a lot of different characteristics, uh, but, you know, people
31 welcomed you and they tried to accommodate you and work with you and
32 help you. There was sometimes a few pranksters or a few jokers that you
33 had to deal with but outside of that, I loved the folks.
34
35 Cheryl McQuaid: [7:05] What kind of jokes and pranks?
36
37 David Brown: Well, I hired in March and I got the typical, you know, go to the gate for
38 your Christmas turkey thing but I wasn't foolish enough to believe that.
39 But there was a few folks that I worked with, that came in about the same
40 time that actually went down to get their Chris – their Thanksgiving turkey
41 so. But I, I, uh, figured it was a prank, so I sort of stood back and watched
42 other people to see what they did [laughter].
43
44 Cheryl McQuaid: So, you were on the day shift for 30 days and then you went to second
45 shift. [7:34] Did you go to that shift to same job, different job?
46

1David Brown: I, I did, uh, actually broke in on the, the, the third door jambs is what I did
2 and actually, when I came to nights, I did the first door jambs. Third door
3 jamb was, was considered to be a premium job. It was more the touch up
4 and that type of thing. And first door jamb was where they got the initial
5 coats of paint on and that's what I did.
6

7Cheryl McQuaid: [8:01] What did, uh, what did you think the difference was going to the
8 second shift? Was there a big difference?
9

10David Brown: Actually, I liked second shift better 'cause I didn't like getting up at 5:00
11 in the morning and coming to work so. Probably there was a little bit
12 more laid-back atmosphere too. Uh, there wasn't as many salary personnel
13 on the second shift as there were on first. So there wasn't much pressure
14 on supervisors to, to get things done as there was on day shift.
15

16Cheryl McQuaid: [8:31] What did you think of the supervisors?
17

18David Brown: Um, I had mixed reactions. I had some supervisors that I really liked, uh,
19 and some of them that I thought were absolutely worthless. But probably
20 the, the person that I disliked the most is the one who did me the best
21 favor and that was Keith [Ward 8:49] because I was scheduled to come in
22 to spray, uh, spray the undercoats of the cars which was really a dirty,
23 messy job. And when Keith found out that I'd had a degree, he said that
24 was no job for me and he, uh, he ended up putting me in the spray booth,
25 but Keith was a very sneaky guy. He would, uh, stand behind posts and
26 watch people to see whether or not they were gonna mess up and, you
27 know, "ha ha I caught you" type of thing and [laughter] I didn't like that.
28

29 I thought that lacked total integrity, you know, if anybody had a concern
30 with my work or, or the quality of my work or the amount of work I did,
31 all they had to do was talk to me. They didn't have to sneak up and try to
32 catch me doing something wrong. So I didn't like that kind of mentality,
33 but I also had supervisors that, that, uh, that would nurture you and talk to
34 you and try to encourage you and, you know, if they didn't do something
35 right have somebody come show you how to do it or tell you how to do it
36 themselves. So, there was, um, – it was a mixed bag of, uh, people, um,
37 that were in supervision.
38

39Cheryl McQuaid: [9:50] Did you view your co-workers as brothers and sisters?
40

41David Brown: Well, I kinda viewed'm as family. I mean, I depended on them and they
42 depended on me so. You developed a strong relationship with the people
43 you worked with.
44

45Cheryl McQuaid: [10:05] Can you tell us what a typical day was like in the plant?
46

1David Brown: Well, every, eh, – you did the same job over and over and over and over
2 and over again, all day long so, I mean that, uh, was difficult at the time.
3 Um, it was enjoyable having breaks with certain people 'cause we had
4 rotating, rotating breaks at the time and you'd be off at various times with
5 people from different departments and you'd have an opportunity to meet
6 new people. So that became enjoyable was finding people that you didn't
7 really work with everyday but were scattered around the, the area where
8 you worked and had an opportunity to meet them and get to know more
9 about them. But, uh, the work was fairly repetitive and probably the thing
10 I disliked the most is if you saw something wrong or wanted to give
11 suggestions, you had no ability to do that.
12
13 I remember when I first hired in, in fact I was loaned out that day and I
14 was on the wet deck and this was probably one of the [horn honks] – so I
15 was still on day shift, uh, and I saw that there was a problem and the line
16 went down and I knew what the problem was and I approached one of the
17 supervisors 'cause, at that time, when the like broke down all of a sudden
18 it was like dozens of people in white shirts would come and, [chuckle] and
19 approach the, the, the problem area. And I stopped one of those people
20 and [coughing] [inaudible 11:23] it was and said, "I, I think I know what
21 the problem is," and the guy told me to sit down and shut up if he wanted
22 [inaudible 11:29] from me he'd ask me. And so, I sat there and watched
23 while they spent the next 15 minutes figuring out what I knew was wrong
24 and just kinda laughed to myself.
25
26 And, you know it, it created a bad attitude in me and I think there were a
27 lot of other employees who had the same kind of attitudes because, you
28 know, they had input and ways that they knew they could make the
29 process better and yet had no opportunity to do that.
30
31Cheryl McQuaid: [11:54] Being, uh – spray painting cars, you were in a booth?
32
33David Brown: Yes, I was.
34
35Cheryl McQuaid: [11:59] Could you try to explain the environment of working in a booth?
36
37David Brown: It's, uh, metal walls on both sides of you and above you and there were
38 hoses that were, uh, on, that were hanging up on the walls and, at that
39 time, probably had about 13 or 14 colors. Uh, at one point in time we
40 actually had to have 2 guns, so you had to exchange guns on hoses. And
41 so, you would have to pull a gun off one hose and put it on another, clear
42 the paint out and then apply the paint on the job and then end up doing the
43 same thing over and over and over again. Every time a different color
44 came down the line, you'd have to switch hoses and hang up the old hose,
45 get down a new hose and attach to the gun and spray the car and do that
46 repetition.

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: [12:43] So if there were 13 colors, were there 13 hoses?
3
4 David Brown: Yes.
5
6 Cheryl McQuaid: [12:49] And did you have any protective equipment to wear?
7
8 David Brown: Oh yeah. We had to wear, we had to wear, uh, well...
9
10 Cheryl McQuaid: [12:57] Had to or chose to?
11
12 David Brown: I'm trying to think of what we had to wear. Um, safety glasses were
13 probably the only requirement that I can think of right now that you had to
14 wear. I mean they gave you hearing protection but, you know, a lot of
15 folks did not wear hearing protection. They chose not to do that, and I
16 think safety glasses were probably the only thing we had to wear.
17
18 Cheryl McQuaid: Jerri Smith.
19
20 Jerri Smith: [13:22] Did you ever spray the wrong color on the car? [laughter]
21
22 David Brown: Accidentally or deliberately?
23
24 Jerri Smith: Either or [laughter].
25
26 David Brown: Probably more deliberately than accidentally, uh, in fact talking about
27 pranks, uh, I was guilty of pranks. We had a guy that worked down the
28 line, I won't mention his name, uh, but he did not read the manifest. You
29 know, we used to – actually we had a number that we wrote on the car, 19
30 for black or whatever it might've been and, and instead of reading the
31 number, he would look at the color that we applied. So we'd deliberately
32 apply the wrong color on the hinge and then he would put that color on the
33 side machine. I mean, I think about it now and that's a terrible thing to do
34 for, for the quality to the customer but it was funny to see somebody do
35 that and then all of a sudden panic and say, "Hey why you doing – that's a
36 black car, not a white car." But, uh, those were the kind of pranks that, uh,
37 you played on each other, and I think the environment had a lot to do with
38 that 'cause your, like I said, you're like in a little cell, you know, there's a
39 iron booth that you had to spend all day in so. You got wild and crazy in
40 there so.
41
42 Cheryl McQuaid: [14:32] Were there any repercussions from that?
43
44 David Brown: If we got caught there would've been repercussions, but usually you didn't
45 get caught. You got 2 more side machines that covered up the, the
46 mistake so.

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: [14:45] And, what kind of protective equipment did you wear in the
3 booth? What did you feel you should – they should've had people wear?
4
5 David Brown: Well, I mean now they wear, they wear, uh, coveralls and they wear
6 hearing protection. I, I mean I've got some hearing loss and I think a lot of
7 that's due to the fact that, that, uh, I didn't wear any hearing protection.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: So, it is loud in the booth.
10
11 David Brown: Yeah very loud. I mean outside the booths is like 85 decibels but inside
12 the booth is probably over a hundred decibels so, far exceeding what it
13 should be for wearing hearing protection.
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: [15:23] So was it easy to, to talk to – did you have a partner or?
16
17 David Brown: Well we screamed across the line. We had, you know, people constantly
18 talk in the booth but you had to shout in order to get anybody to hear you,
19 'cause it was that noisy.
20
21 Cheryl McQuaid: [15:40] What, uh – how did you pass the time?
22
23 David Brown: In the booth or outside of the booth?
24
25 Cheryl McQuaid: Both.
26
27 David Brown: Well, we did, we did some pranks inside the booth to, to make things get a
28 little more levity. In fact there was a guy, uh, Ron that worked down the
29 line from us that used to think it was funny to take his, his, uh, air off the
30 hose and then it would squirt just pure paint, and he'd get our pant legs or
31 our boots and put a little paint on'm. Uh, some days he would do that with
32 a guy across the line from me, do that guy that was across from him. One
33 day Ron wore in a pair of painter pants that – white painter pants. Big
34 mistake. We all decided that was the day to get even with Ron. [laughter]
35 And so we squirted him and – all day long, up and down, everytime he
36 turned around, you know, more paint. He looked like a rainbow when he
37 went– left that place for those brand-new white painter pants. So we got
38 some retribution. But you had to do things to keep you from going stir
39 crazy because, you know, doing the same job all day long just kinda made
40 people nuts.
41
42 Cheryl McQuaid: [16:50] So being in a booth you weren't able to read, listen to the radio?
43
44 David Brown: Oh no. I mean there was no place to plug a radio in because you were
45 dealing with, with Naphtha thinners and a spark would set the, the paint
46 department on fire. So you couldn't have any kind of device that would

1 have a spark associated with it, even a battery radio you couldn't have so.
2 And you could probably read if you could find some place to, to put a
3 book and if you wanted to have the book destroyed. It wasn't that people
4 told you you couldn't read, there was just no place in that environment for
5 it.
6

7Cheryl McQuaid: [17:24] What was – what did you do for lunch?
8

9David Brown: Well I brought my lunch in every day and, uh, probably the first year or so
10 just sat around and talked. Uh, after I'd been there for a year or two there
11 was a group of us that played euchre every time at lunch and it was
12 amazing how many hands of euchre you could play on lunch. In fact, I
13 would go outside and play with friends outside play, play euchre and I
14 would be absolutely nuts playing with them because they'd want to play
15 every trick in the hand. You know when you got good at playing, you
16 know when you had your point, didn't have your point, you'd throw your
17 hand in. "You can't throw your hand in." "You know I – we don't know
18 how many tricks you got."
19

20 Well yeah [laughter] I got this and I got – because you got to the point
21 where you knew exactly every card that was played and you, and, uh, you
22 could play 5 or 6 different rounds of, of uh euchre in, in a 30 minute time
23 frame. It was amazing how quickly you could play, but that's what we did
24 for entertainment at lunch time, while we were eating our lunch.
25

26Cheryl McQuaid: [18:26] How 'bout breaks? Did you have the wagon?
27

28David Brown: Uh, yeah that was a long time ago. I wasn't much of a, a wagon fan so I
29 usually brought in whatever I wanted in my lunch bucket and didn't use
30 the wagon.
31

32Cheryl McQuaid: [18:41] But did you enjoy the break?
33

34David Brown: Yeah I enjoyed, I enjoyed the breaks, but I did more, more conversation
35 on breaks. I didn't try to play cards or read or anything else during breaks.
36 It was, it was conversation at breaks, getting to know more about my
37 fellow workers.
38

39Cheryl McQuaid: [18:57] What did, uh, what did you, uh, find out about your fellow
40 workers? What kind of people did you work around?
41

42David Brown: Oh, I worked around every kind of people. I found there was a lot of
43 people who were as educated or more educated than I was. There were a
44 lot of people who had hobbies on the outside, rebuilding cars. A lot of
45 people had interest in hunting and fishing. A lot of people had interests in,
46 in, uh, arts and crafts. I mean, everybody had something that, that, uh,

1 was – made them special and unique and it's one of the things that I, I
2 really enjoyed about the people but then I didn't see the application at
3 work because, at work there was – you'd see all this individuality of
4 people. You'd see all this creativity and they never go the opportunity to
5 express that when they were in the work place, and I thought that was a
6 shame 'cause there were people who were civic leaders and people who
7 coached their kids' soccer teams and did all sorts of creative and
8 innovative things but when they came to work, all they did was the same
9 thing day in and day out.

10

11 Cheryl McQuaid: [19:58] Did you – were you ever a part of any of the department dinners?
12

13 David Brown: I can't remember that many dinners that we were a part of. I don't think
14 they were as prevalent, uh, when I was working the line, as they are now.
15 Um, it had to be a significant event in order to have, have a, uh,
16 departmental dinner, somebody passed away or something else where – or
17 you'd have a dinner and some kind of fundraiser associated with that but...
18

19 Cheryl McQuaid: [20:25] Did you ever have a co-worker impact your family life?
20

21 David Brown: Well, besides my 2 wives? [laughter] I actually, I actually married 2 of
22 the women that I worked with in the shop so, so they definitely had an
23 impact on my life.
24

25 Cheryl McQuaid: [20:39] So a romance in the shop, what was that like?
26

27 David Brown: Oh, uh, it was a patent place in, in Fisher Body. There were a lot of folks
28 that I knew that were, you know, couples in the shop that were both
29 married on the outside, that had their own spouses on the outside, but in
30 the – they were sort of the, the shop husband and wife and had torrid
31 affairs and all that kind of wonderful things that was going on in the, in the
32 shop so. I didn't do that but I saw a lot of that so.
33

34 Cheryl McQuaid: [21:09] Was it hard being married to somebody that your co-workers
35 knew or...?
36

37 David Brown: Um, well it was interesting 'cause I, I told ya I'd married 2 of them and I
38 was married to one woman and ended up divorcing her, and I was
39 divorced for about 2 years before I started dating somebody else and
40 everybody in the shop ran up to her and said, "Don't hang out with, uh,
41 Dave. He's married. Didn't you know he's married?" [laughter] And she
42 said, "No he's divorced." "Oh no, he's married, he's married." Because I
43 didn't try to make my life, you know, public knowledge in the shop so
44 people didn't know that I had gotten a divorce because I kept that to
45 myself and so everybody thought I was still married and thought I was

1 cheating on, on my wife and, and thought that I was setting this young
2 lady up so.
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: [21:55] What is one of your best memories at Fisher Body?
5
6 David Brown: I don't know that I have a best memory. I mean, I enjoyed every day I
7 came to work. I tried to make the best of everything. I mean that was sort
8 of my mentality and I still, I – you're talking about Fisher Body, you're
9 talking 'bout the old shop and I still have that, you know, concept today
10 with where I [inaudible 22:21] what I'm doing today. I mean to me every
11 day was an opportunity to do something different and unique and special.
12 Um, obviously when I went on, uh, on as a district representative for the
13 union that was a significant time in my life and, uh, I really enjoyed doing
14 that.
15
16 Uh, at the same time, you know, a lot of responsibility came with that. I
17 used to, used to party with folks after work and found it more and more
18 difficult to, to go to a party and enjoy people's companies because all of a
19 sudden, I was no longer the guy that they party with. I was the district
20 committee person and I had to answer all the, the union questions instead
21 of, you know, sitting back, relaxing, enjoying my time off work. So that
22 was both – probably one of the best times there and one of the worst times
23 'cause, you know, I added a lot more responsibility to my life.
24
25 Cheryl McQuaid: [23:11] So, how long did you work in the paint department?
26
27 David Brown: I worked from '77 until '81, and '81 I became the district committee
28 person.
29
30 Cheryl McQuaid: [23:23] For the paint department?
31
32 David Brown: For the paint department. On the second shift.
33
34 Cheryl McQuaid: [23:262] What was that whole process like?
35
36 David Brown: The process of being a district committee person or...?
37
38 Cheryl McQuaid: The process of getting the position and then being that person.
39
40 David Brown: Well, I'll give you a funny story that goes with that. I had told people for a
41 long time, since I played the check pool, if I ever won this check pool, I'm
42 gonna throw a party. Well, I won a check pool and it was a huge check
43 pool, and so I invited the entire paint department over to my place for a
44 party. Well this happened to be about 2 weeks before the election for
45 district committee. I'd already signed up but everybody accused me of
46 trying to buy the election by, [laughter] by getting everybody drunk so.

1 So, whether that worked or not I don't know but, uh, you know, that's what
2 happened. I actually ran for the position. There was a couple other people
3 running and, uh, you know, it – pretty much in every kind of election you
4 see the, the votes were like half and half so. And I won probably by about
5 10 or 15 votes or something for that first election.
6
7 Cheryl McQuaid: You mentioned check pools. [24:27] Could you explain what a check
8 pool is?
9
10 David Brown: Uh, at the time, and everybody played the check pool differently so – but
11 in the paint department, uh, there were, uh, there was a series of numbers
12 that were on everybody's check and watch you did is you, uh, you played
13 those numbers. So if your numbers was, was, uh, you know, 61238888
14 and you'd had four 8's you'd play it like a poker hand, so you'd play the
15 best five numbers that ya had. So, you could have 5 aces and you could
16 have four 8's or a full house or something else by having 3 of one number
17 and 2 of another number. So you played it like you'd play a poker hand
18 and whoever had the best hand won the check pool.
19
20 Cheryl McQuaid: [25:11] And how was that done [inaudible 25:14]?
21
22 David Brown: Somebody would come around with a – and ask you if you wanted to play
23 the check pool and they would take down your name. And then when you
24 got your checks on Friday, supervisors – or actually Thursday night on the
25 night shift they'd hand out your checks and, and the guy who was doing –
26 running the check pool would come around and find out what numbers
27 you had and he'd look at your check and verify the numbers. And
28 whoever had the best hand won the check pool.
29
30 Cheryl McQuaid: [25:39] Um, when you became the district committee man, uh, was that
31 your first introduction into the union or...?
32
33 David Brown: Actually, I had tried to run for a union election before that. I tried to run
34 for a guide and, uh, I'd lost. Uh, it was funny because I watched what
35 other people did and people would put their name and their department
36 and their seniority. Well I did the same thing, but I put 2 years as
37 seniority, and I got laughed right out of the work center because I'd put my
38 seniority date down there. 'Cause nobody would've voted for anybody
39 with 2 years of seniority. That was their, their, um, their um, thought on
40 that. I ran against Baker in fact, who later became a district committee
41 person on the day shift. So, at one time we worked opposite of each other
42 but that was the first election I ran for and lost that election and, uh, then
43 learned how to more appropriately run for an election so.
44
45 Cheryl McQuaid: By buying the vote.
46

1David Brown: And I, and I [inaudible 26:35] [laughter] That may have worked, it may
2 not have worked but, but I definitely didn't put my seniority on my, on my,
3 uh, cards when I passed out my cards running for office so.
4

5Cheryl McQuaid: [26:48] And what was it like being the committee person? Did you enjoy
6 that job?
7

8David Brown: Well I enjoyed it very much, uh, the, the only problem was that, uh, you
9 know, uh, the situation I talked about is that I probably took that way more
10 serious than what I should've for my own personal mental health. Uh, I
11 would notice I – well other people would notice, that come to work with
12 me, that as I got closer to work the veins in my neck would start popping
13 out because I'd start thinking about all the things I needed to do that day as
14 soon as I got in there. And, uh, at lunch time and after work there was
15 always somebody who wanted my time and attention so, it was, it was, uh,
16 very, um, demanding on your time and your, your personal life and
17 everything else, but the rewards were, were wonderful.
18

19 I mean there would've been people that I know who would've been
20 discharged if it hadn't been for, for what I did in interviews. There
21 would've been people who would've lost money or who would've lost
22 opportunities for advancement if I hadn't found, uh, the, the, uh salary
23 organization would make mistakes so. Knowing that I was righting some
24 wrongs that were happening was very rewarding. It had a very positive
25 [inaudible 27:56] reward for me.
26

27Cheryl McQuaid: [28:05] Being a district committeeman in the paint department, what was a
28 typical committee call? Why did people call you?
29

30David Brown: Well there's – really wasn't typical. There was probably some different
31 groups of, of calls that you had. Uh, probably the first group of
32 complaints would be categorized under missed opportunities for
33 advancement. There were a lot of people who put in transfers for
34 positions and you would find out that the wrong person was placed on the
35 job. In fact, it was probably one of the first problems that I had actually
36 with my union brothers and sisters. Because the mentality of the
37 committee at that time was: let management put somebody on and then
38 write grievances against them for, for, uh, putting the wrong person on the,
39 on the job.
40

41 And I just thought that was absolutely ridiculous because you'd have
42 somebody would be placed on the job and they would be upset because
43 they, you know, they' d be removed from the job and the guy that
44 would've been – should've been placed on the job, you know, a week or
45 two weeks ago was upset because he should've had that job 2 weeks ago,
46 instead of waiting for 2 weeks to get some kind of justice, if it was done in

1 that short of period of time. And, uh, one of my first confrontations with
2 the union was over that issue and I said, basically, that I'm gonna start
3 looking at all the, the transfers and make sure the right person's put on.
4 And, in fact, today we have a person who does that full time, that's their
5 job is making sure that the right transfers are placed on. But at the time, it
6 was heresy [coughing] [inaudible 29:28] to actually do the work of
7 management and make sure the right person was placed on the job.

8
9 Probably the second biggest group that I had was, was disciplinary issues,
10 and when I went on committee it was not unusual for me to spend, um,
11 probably an hour or 2 hours every night in an office with disciplinary
12 interviews and 3, 4, 5 people would run through a night for disciplinary
13 interviews. And, uh, there were nights that I actually spent 8 solid hours
14 doing nothing but holding interviews and couldn't even get a committee
15 call, because there was interviews lined up one after the other. And
16 people were being disciplined for stupid things. Uh, probably the worst
17 case that I had was we had a guy that was up for discharge because he had,
18 had a coffee pot in his area and it was an illegal coffee pot. The
19 supervisor, who took him down to the office to discharge him for that, was
20 there the night before.

21
22 I had witnessed him drinking coffee out of that same coffee pot. So he
23 knew it was there [chuckle] and that was when we had first started Quality
24 Work Life and I actually, uh, went to day shift to Al [Vandervort 30:39], I
25 think that's what his name was. I ended up going to, uh, the QWL rep and
26 myself and, and one of the, uh, the day shift committee member went to
27 Al and talked to Al about this situation and, uh, I said – I tried to get this
28 thing resolved the night before and everytime I brought up the fact that the
29 managers knew this coffee pot was there, and the managers were drinking
30 out of this coffee pot. So they – you know, this should not have been an
31 issue that they disciplined anybody for. Their response was management's
32 not on trial here.

33
34 And I'm going, well this is absurd and we said that hourly workers are
35 going to have an equal voice and the organization are going to be equal
36 partners with Quality Work Life and then you turn around and you
37 discipline somebody for doing the exact same thing that a manager is
38 doing in the plant. So it's – obviously there is no equity and there is no,
39 you know, whatever else. And, uh, that was probably my most unique, uh,
40 grievance experience because he'd – I'd actually written a couple of
41 grievances on that, as a consequence of that, 'cause they were trying to
42 discharge and him and they were giving another guy 30 days for it. And
43 the supervisor, who had drank out of the coffee pot and had wrote this
44 discipline up was determined he wasn't going to undo the discipline.
45

1 And, um, Al had a, a lot more influence than he did, talked to the night
2 shift superintendent and told him that he wanted those 2 grievances pulled.
3 We got into the office with, uh, Keith Ward and Keith said, "I'm not gonna
4 pull those grievances. You're gonna – they're gone. They're outta here."
5 And it ended up being a situation where he said, "I'm gonna – you know,
6 you need to do this. I'm gonna have to give you a direct order if you
7 don't." He made the superintendent give him a direct order to pull those
8 grievances. And then, it was just as nasty as can be about doing it. But,
9 I'll tell ya, from that point on my grievance load and discipline started
10 going down and down and down [laughter] because they didn't want to
11 have this experience of having direct orders to pull grievances that they
12 should've never written in the first place.
13

14 But that was kind of the mentality. I mean the whole purpose behind the,
15 the grievance procedure –this one procedure is to – and it's not even a
16 discipline procedure, it's a corrective action procedure, is to correct
17 people's behavior. And the managers were not approaching this as
18 corrective action. They were approaching this as discipline. They wanted
19 to punish somebody that they thought was doing something wrong, and
20 that kind of mentality had to stop. So we, we, uh, put a lot of pressure on,
21 uh, to you know to undo the behavior of management and to reduce that
22 kind of workload. By the time I ended up going off of committee on to
23 my next position, we were probably down to 1 discipline a month, or 2
24 disciplines a month, as opposed to having 3 or 4 a day.
25

26 But that was a huge part of my daily work was doing disciplines. That's
27 probably, actually, more time commitment than it was for, for the other.
28 Uh, the third group was, uh, uh, uh, issues that I had as a committee
29 person, were probably just general things that people were unhappy about.
30 Uh, you know the water fountain didn't work or a floor was slippery or
31 some of them might've been safety issues, but there weren't a lot of little
32 things that, that [coughing] people got upset about. Uh, you know people
33 being told they couldn't go out of their department and all those kinds of
34 things. So, it was just sort of a general miscellaneous category.
35

36 Cheryl McQuaid: We interviewed a gentleman that was a district committee man in the '50s
37 I'd say, and he was like a part time committee man. [34:00] Did you do
38 this full time or...?
39

40 David Brown: Yes. I was a full-time committee person, that was my job under the, the
41 contract was to be the representative for the paint department. And I was
42 district for 1 term, which was 3 years, and started, uh, my second term
43 before I went to a different position.
44

45 Cheryl McQuaid: [34:20] And what position did you go to next?
46

1David Brown: I became the training coordinator for, um, Fisher Body Local 602. It was,
2 uh, before actually training coordinators were a part of the contract. Uh,
3 both our plant and Local 652 had put on full-time training coordinators.
4 And that stemmed out of the experience we had where we were retraining
5 our work force to build a new Grand Am in 1984. And they had a massive
6 training program which had been labeled Main Street School by our
7 employees because it was in a building on main street and, uh, we had
8 some discipline problems over there and I was the committee man. I was
9 also the education chair for the local union, and that's why they called me
10 over to, to be the principal at main street school to handle any kind of
11 discipline problems or academic problems whatever that we might have at
12 the school.
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: [35:11] And is that about the time that, um, Fisher Body was no longer
15 Fisher Body it became BOP, BOC...?
16

17David Brown: BOC. You know, I can't remember when all those changes were. We, we
18 changed, uh, titles many times in, in my career over at Fisher Body so. I
19 can't remember exactly when those changes were. But I, I would say that
20 was probably when it was 'cause we were building the Grand Am and that
21 was Buick, so it would've been – we were the Buick Oldsmobile Cadillac
22 group at that time so.
23

24Cheryl McQuaid: [35:44] So could you tell us a little bit about Main Street School?
25

26David Brown: [coughing] Well Main Street School was basically, uh, just a collection of
27 different, uh, people who had disciplines they wanted to share with people,
28 suggestions, uh, uh, Quality Work Life. We had our employee assistance
29 program. And, and they also talked a little bit about the manufacturing
30 processes and new things that they were expecting to, to do with this new
31 vehicle that we – they were producing. Did some little bit of problem
32 solving, those type of things. It was just a series of classes. I think it was
33 a 40-hour program that they had actually put on and all of the employees
34 had to go through this 40 hours of training.
35

36Cheryl McQuaid: [36:22] And how many employees at that time?
37

38David Brown: There were probably 3,000 employees at that time.
39

40Cheryl McQuaid: [36:28] And where did you go from there?
41

42David Brown: Position-wise?
43

44Cheryl McQuaid: Yes.
45

1David Brown:

I became the first Joint Activities Representative for the, the plant. And that's kind of interesting because we'd had a problem with, with training and many of the other disciplines. Uh, the UAW started becoming more joint with the corporation. Um, we had, like I said, Quality Work Life. We had health and safety. We had apprentice programs. We had, um, some quality initiatives we were working on. There was a number of programs that we were working on and all these programs sort of developed independently. They were like silos in the organization and there was no coordination between them. So, if a trainee wanted to do a training program and Quality Work Life wanted to do a training program and somebody else wanted to do a training program, they were all fighting for the same manpower.

That was the same time that [Louie 37:15] Schultz was the bargaining, uh, bargaining chair at, uh, or in Detroit for, for General Motors and UAW. And, uh, [Louie 37:25] and I had talked about the fact that we could really use some coordination, uh, among our, uh, different joint activities so that we can manage them better, and [Louie 37:35] asked me to write a proposal. So, I wrote a proposal on how we can manage this process through a person that we'd call a joint activities coordinator. And I submitted that to [Louie 37:45] and [Louie 37:46] took that to the bargaining table and actually got a position in the contract called Document 46, and that's where the joint activities reps came from.

So, I was actually the first Document 46 in, in General Motors. At the time, I think we only had 13 full-time people who were doing those positions and normally at the largest GM plants. During the next contract they actually expanded Document 46 to include all programs and they allowed plant to have a Document 46 person for every 250 people. The same way they did for the district committee. So there were as many full time international pointees within the plant as there were district committee persons in the plant. So my first full time position was the Joint Activities Representative, which I held up until just recently when I switched over to Quality Network Representative.

36Cheryl McQuaid:

[38:39] So did you enjoy that job?

38David Brown:

Oh, I loved it. Um, it was, uh, kind of interesting though 'cause I did not like mornings and we were on day shift at the time. I was on day shift at the time and we were doing these things and I had a hard time getting in here at 6:30 in the morning. [laughter] And I started forcing these coordination meetings and telling everybody that we're going to coordinate these activities and these things are gonna – everybody's gonna know what everybody else is doing. And so, I forced all the, the different heads of these different groups to, to, uh, actually meet with me on a daily basis so they said, "Well do we get to pick the time?" And I said, "Yeah."

1 They said, "Okay 6:30 in the morning." And they knew they had me
2 there. So, I had to come in at 6:30 in the morning to hold these meetings
3 so. Eventually, I started having less and less of these meetings, 'cause I
4 did not like 6:30 in the morning. But, uh, you know, eventually we
5 needed less and less meetings because we actually did a good job of
6 starting to coordinate the activities. Everybody knew what everybody
7 else's responsibilities were. They knew what they needed to do. They
8 knew where we needed to, to allocate resources, where we needed to
9 allocate monies. And we did have monies at that time because they had,
10 uh started what they called the nickel fund where, uh, 10 cents of every,
11 uh, hour – 10 cents for every worked in the corporation went to the
12 National Center for Human Resources.

13
14 And the National Center for Human Resources would send back 5 cents of
15 that amount of money to local plants to all these different various, uh, joint
16 programs like Health and Safety and Employee Systems and training and
17 everything else. So, we had a pool of money and we had all – some
18 people and a whole bunch of things we had to manage. And one of my
19 first activities with, uh, with the joint activities position was actually
20 develop a process called Attachment C, which also came out in that, in
21 that contract and that was joint goal setting by the corporation in the
22 UAW.

23
24 Which I thought was a fantastic concept because it really got the, the 2
25 parties to sit down and instead of talking about their differences to start
26 talking about what it was that they had in common, and what they wanted
27 to achieve as an organization. And I think great things to happen as a
28 consequence of that Attachment C. Even though that process sort of died
29 with the next contract, the , the concept of management in unions setting
30 mutual goals and trying to achieve those goals did not stop. In fact, that
31 has actually improved year by year and contract by contract.

32
33Cheryl McQuaid: [41:11] Did you attend your union meetings?

34
35David Brown: For 21 years I had a perfect attendance record. Prior to me becoming a
36 district committee person, I did not ever attend a union meeting. But, uh,
37 when I was elected, I thought that was one of my responsibilities and I did
38 that. Like I said, for 21 years I never [sniffs] missed a meeting. I would
39 schedule vacations at a different time. If some event came up that
40 would've meant I missed a union meeting, I would not go. I mean, I
41 almost became, um, vain about my record of attendance at union meetings.
42 But I had – I spread that word among other people to 'cause I would tell
43 people, you know, when I was bragging about my attendance record that,
44 you know, at one time I let other people make decisions about my life in
45 that shop. And that's what happens at a union meeting, at a union meeting,
46 you set the priorities and policies for the UAW.

1 And why would I let somebody else do that for me? You know, I think I
2 want to set my own direction for where I want to go and what I want to do
3 and that's my opportunity to do it, and I'm not gonna ever miss that
4 opportunity. So I have made a point to, to try to make every single union
5 meeting. And, and like I said, I've become a little more lax in the last few
6 years, uh, but I have probably missed about 6 or 7 meetings in the last, last
7 25 years that I have attended union meetings.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: [42:30] When you became the JAR, or the Joint Activities Representative,
10 did – were you [afforded 42:25] an office or ...?
11
12 David Brown: Was I – did I have an office?
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: Yes.
15
16 David Brown: Well yes, I did. And, in fact at one point, I had a wonderful administrative
17 assistant named Cheryl McQuaid so.
18
19 Cheryl McQuaid: [chuckle]
20
21 David Brown: Um, actually, um, yeah we – uh, most appointed positions had offices and,
22 uh, the offices were usually in conjunction with their salary counterparts
23 so. You'd – if you saw Quality Work Life there, all the quality life, work
24 life people would be in the same location and they'd all have their own
25 separate offices.
26
27 Cheryl McQuaid: [43:14] What kind of atmosphere was in the offices?
28
29 David Brown: I guess I'm not understanding what kind of question you're asking. What
30 are you trying to [cough] [inaudible 43:22]?
31
32 Cheryl McQuaid: [43:23] Did, did the management and the hourly, did they get along well?
33 Was – were there a lot of struggles throughout this whole process?
34
35 David Brown: Well there was, there was a, uh, a lot of change in the concept of what
36 jointness meant. When I first went on joint programs, if you had a
37 position you had to have a salary counterpart or if a salary person was
38 there, they had to have a union counterpart. And jointness was measured
39 in numbers, you know, every position had to have, uh, a counterpart for
40 that position because, you know, there was equality with the numbers. As
41 time went on, the management work force – we had a big push to try to
42 drive out numbers of managers and what you started seeing was more and
43 more of the managers in these positions going away.
44
45 Currently I think the only department that has equality in numbers is
46 probably Health and Safety. Uh, in fact at one point in time, John

1 [Rosendahl 44:18] was, was the, the salary counterpart for training, for
2 quality network, for the newsletter, for joint activities and probably a
3 couple of other things. I mean they had 1 salary person and they had a
4 half a dozen hourly people doing those positions. Maybe even 10 or 12
5 hourly positions for one manager. The concept of jointness no longer
6 meant numbers, it meant mutual goals, mutual, uh, ideas that we were
7 trying to, to reach. And, in fact, there are probably some activities that are
8 totally union driven today that were, at one time, had to have half and half.
9 But the equality or the jointness is no longer in the numbers or the
10 resources. The equality or the, or, excuse me, the jointness is, is in, uh, is
11 in, you know, the fact that everybody has mutual goals that they're trying
12 to reach.

13

14 Cheryl McQuaid: [45:16] So how long were you in that position?

15

16 David Brown: Of Joint Activities Rep?

17

18 Cheryl McQuaid: Yes.

19

20 David brown: I was in that position until this year.

21

22 Cheryl McQuaid: This year.

23

24 David Brown: So, uh, from 1984 until 2006, that's 22 years, I guess.

25

26 Cheryl McQuaid: You've been really involved in a lot of things going on in the plant.
27 [45:34] Could you, maybe, tell us if you've seen any kind of
28 discrimination against women, um, different races? Touch on the
29 atmosphere in the plant like that.

30

31 David Brown: Yeah, I'll tell you a specific example of somebody that I know, uh, Nadine
32 Reynolds, uh, who is currently one of our employee's assistance
33 representatives. When I was working in the, in the paint booth they
34 brought Nadine in to do a job and, uh, Nadine is probably about 5 foot
35 even and that job was hanging up hoses on hooks and I could barely reach
36 the hooks, where you had to hang the hoses up on, and I'm 5 foot 10. And
37 there was just no way that she could do that job and I kinda saw that – in
38 fact Nadine is a black woman and I think that a lot of times, especially
39 with shorter women 'cause there was some kind of a, a mentality in the
40 shop that short women couldn't adapt to the job in the shop.

41

42 And I saw a lot of that where they tried to drive these women – or put
43 these women in positions where they actually tried to drive them out of the
44 organization. And, uh, they tried to do that with Nadine, I think. They
45 talked about well they're gonna disqualify her, and she wasn't fit for
46 industrial work and Nadine was such a likeable person that she made

1 friends real quick and when that kinda talk started happening, the workers
2 sort of rose up and said, you know, "This is ridiculous. You've
3 deliberately put her in a job she couldn't do. You need to give her another
4 job, give her another chance." And they ended up doing that. They ended
5 up putting her on a job in the sealant line, which was just ideal for
6 somebody of her, of her stature, of her height so.

7
8 But you'd, you'd see a lot of that kind of discrimination. I think there was
9 discrimination against women because the shop, at one time, was a male,
10 uh, dominated environment. Um, you didn't, uh – you saw a lot of
11 resistance to the changes that women demanded. Uh, as an example, uh,
12 when I was the district committee person there was a young lady that was,
13 was offended by some of the posters of half-naked women that were, you
14 know, aligned on the desk and in the – on the wet deck and, and brought it
15 to my attention and, uh, I talked to the supervisor and said, "You need to
16 take all those down." And he – "Why should we do that for one woman,
17 you know, why, why is she running our business, you know, tell her to
18 keep her nose out of our area."

19
20 And you know, basically had to explain the law to him and explain to him
21 that they were going to come down one way or another and either through
22 his cooperation or, you know, with him kicking and dragging 'cause it was
23 gonna change. But, you know, a lot of the mentality that we had in the
24 shop had to change because you know we were adapting to an
25 environment where all employees were considered to be equal employees.

26
27Cheryl McQuaid: You've seen a lot of changes. [48:11] What do you think was one of the
28 biggest changes within the organization?

29
30David Brown: Well, um, I think as employees started having more of – like I – I initially
31 talked about that, you know, that employees were told to sit down and shut
32 up and weren't allowed to contribute. I think the ability to contribute,
33 uh, to the organization has been the most significant change. Um, it took a
34 long time to get people to realize that your greatest asset in your work
35 force was your workers who did their job every day. I mean there was a
36 mentality that, that supervisors knew what was best for the corporation or
37 that skilled tradesman knew best how to fix something because they were
38 skilled and had technical knowledge.

39
40 And the fact is that we were underutilizing people that we had in our
41 organization and through activities like Quality Work Life and some
42 problem solving activities and quality network initiatives and a lot of the
43 other initiatives that we instituted recently, people are having more and
44 more say in the business. And I think that's absolutely essential. In fact,
45 the new facility is, is pushing for total employee empowerment where,
46 where employees will actually run their work groups and set goals and,

1 and business plans for their, their work group activities. And I think that's
2 where we need to go if we want to be successful and compete with people
3 in foreign countries.
4

5Jerri Smith: [49:31] What about the Suggestion Plan? This is Jerri Smith. Is that
6 going to be outdated then, once we get into the new plant, that the
7 Suggestion Plan's no longer gonna exist?
8

9David Brown: Well they still have the Suggestion Plan. In fact, they're populating it right
10 now with, with people in the new facility and, uh, they're going to have the
11 same Suggestion Program they had over at Lansing Car Assembly and
12 Fisher Body. Uh, it'll just probably be more team driven than it was in the
13 past. The past was more of what could individuals come up with to help
14 improve the organization, but as they're driving changes, they'll be able to
15 submit those in suggestions and give suggestions for it. They've also
16 instituted, in addition to suggestions, a reward recognition program and
17 they've had that in various forms also, in the different facilities that we've
18 had, or the different name changes that we've had. But, uh, there's, uh,
19 spot rewards that they're allowing people to have. Both as individuals and
20 teams for significant contributions and all of those that have been done so
21 far have been given to hourly people for their initiatives in managing the
22 business so. I think it shows that, that change that we're actually working
23 towards as an organization.
24

25Cheryl McQuaid: Lansing is known as the Capital of Quality. [50:48] Why do you think it's
26 called that?
27

28David Brown: Well, at one time, it was called that for a very specific reason because they
29 used to use a Q index, uh, and it was a quality index and they had a
30 numbers rating from 0 to 150 and, and Lansing consistently had 145s in
31 the quality index. Uh, if you look at that quality index to the day, it's kind
32 of a joke because there are a hundred more things that are looked at in
33 terms of quality statistics today than what they were when that initially
34 happened. And for quite a period of time, uh, actually our quality slipped
35 in terms of our [foreign 51:27] competition. We were still probably in the
36 top 10 or so within General Motors but, you know, we worked in – on a
37 par where our foreign competition was. And I think that's been, with our
38 history and the fact that we were called the Capital of Quality, that we
39 really want to be the quality, it probably helped drive people to, to build a
40 better quality product than the would've otherwise. Because once you
41 have a reputation, you want to maintain the reputation and our employees
42 worked hard to ensure that we could keep that reputation up.
43

44Cheryl McQuaid: As we're sitting here today, they're tearing down Fisher Body. [52:03]
45 Could you tell us how you feel about that? What your thoughts are?
46

1David Brown: Well, I live really close to here, so I have an opportunity to probably drive
2 by here every day and it, uh, it's kind of disheartening. And I said, I was a
3 first generation, but my wife's father worked in this, in this factory also so.
4 I kind of – we sit and talk about this every once in a while, and the fact
5 that it, uh, gives you a little pain in your heart to, to see them tear down a
6 place that you spent most of your life in. I spent most of my adult life in
7 this, in this facility and, and, uh, you hate to see it go. But at the same
8 time, we're really making way for change. I mean, we're – we've got a
9 new facility. If we didn't have that I'd really be heartbroken but, you
10 know, we're trying to move onto something that's newer and better.

11
12 And I think we have an opportunity to, even though we're tearing down
13 the building, we're not tearing down the heritage. I mean, our mission
14 statement at Lansing Delta Township is "Building on Our History" and we
15 carry our history with us to our new facility. Our history is not in a, in a
16 building, a building is just metal and block and bricks and steel and all
17 those types of things. You know, the history of that organization really
18 goes with its people and I think our people are carrying a lot of that
19 positive history with them into the new facility.

20
21Cheryl McQuaid: David, I really appreciate you spending your morning with us and want to
22 thank you for this opportunity, and I also would like to ask you if there's
23 anything that you'd like to share with us that we've not asked you about.

24
25David Brown: Well I could share tons of things with you so. [coughing] [laughing] I
26 know, I, I guess from a personal standpoint a lot of what I have learned in
27 the organization, a lot of what, um – the knowledge that I've gained, the
28 interactions that I've had, I've been able to carry outside of the
29 organization as well as inside of the organization. And I think there are a
30 lot of other people in our organization that are the same way. Um, Fisher
31 Body and, now over at Lansing Delta Township, has caused us to become
32 leaders in our facilities and, and as a consequence of that I think leaders in
33 our, our communities. I see a lot of folks that do things now that they
34 would've never done 20 years ago. Schoolboard members, uh, you know
35 elected officials, um, people who are the coaches of teams, people who are
36 head of their Boy Scouts organizations and they're taking in a lot more
37 leadership positions probably than [cough] they would before.

38
39 Because, you know, when we're teaching classes [coughing] about LTD
40 and one of the first things we hear from people is I don't like standing up
41 in front and talking in front of people. Well when people get used to
42 standing up and talking in front of groups of people, they start assimilating
43 new, uh, relationships in their communities. They're doing things that
44 they never did before. They start taking new steps, so I think we're
45 building leadership in our organization. [beeping] I think that's probably
46 the most significant thing that we can do. [whispering]

1
2Cheryl McQuaid: Well thank you David, very much.
3
4John Fedewa: Thanks Dave.
5
6Jerri Smith: We've enjoyed your interview very much and I do have one question for
7 the end of this. [55:12] Now that you're going to retire, what will you be
8 doing then?
9
10David Smith: I actually am working on my master's degree in public administration and
11 I'd like to, um, get a job as a city administrator or county administrator, a
12 local government somewhere in a small community and do that for a few
13 years until I really retire.
14
15Jerri Smith: [55:30] Are you planning on it in like Lansing Township or...?
16
17David Smith: I'm gonna go wherever the job is so I'm gonna start applying for jobs, uh,
18 elsewhere –around the, around the state and maybe even outside the state.
19
20Jerri Smith: Okay.
21
22David Brown: Really not, uh – don't need to be in one place. I kind of moved around so
23 I'm used to going wherever I need to go to get the job done.
24
25Jerri Smith: Alright. Thank you, Dave.
26
27David Brown: Thank you.
28
29Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you David. [beeping]
30
31/fp