

1 **Johnny L. Anthony, an African American, discusses his career as a skilled trades**
2 **millwright and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**
3
4

5 [clanking]
6

7Cheryl McQuaid: This is Cheryl McQuaid. I'm at the UAW Local 602 Hall and we're
8 preparing to interview John Anthony. It's September 14, 2005, and it's
9 approximately 10:30 a.m. Uh, also present in the room is:

10
11John Fedewa: John Fedewa.

12
13Linda Johnson: Linda Johnson.

14
15Kathryn Berry: Kathy Berry.

16
17Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.

18
19Michael Flemming: Mike Flemming.

20
21Cheryl McQuaid: [0:26] John, could you tell us your name and spell it for us?
22

23Johnny Anthony: My name's Johnny L. Anthony, Sr., uh, J-O-H-N-N-Y. Middle initial is
24 Lee and my last name's spelled is Anthony, A-N-T-H-O-N-Y.
25

26Cheryl McQuaid: [0:41] And what is your address?
27

28Johnny Anthony: My address is in, uh, 4738 North Michigan Road, Diamondale, Michigan,
29 48821.
30

31Cheryl McQuaid: [0:50] And your gender?
32

33Johnny Anthony: Uh, my gender is a male.
34

35 [laughter]
36

37Cheryl McQuaid: [0:54] Are you married and do you have children?
38

39Johnny Anthony: Yes, I'm married and I have 5 children.
40

41Cheryl McQuaid: [1:00] Uh, national origin?
42

43Johnny Anthony: Uh, black, African-American.
44

45Cheryl McQuaid: [1:06] And did you ever serve in the military?
46

1Johnny Anthony: No.
2
3Cheryl McQuaid: [1:09] And how old are you?
4
5Johnny Anthony: I am 51 years old.
6
7Female: [Inaudible 1:13].
8
9Cheryl McQuaid: [1:15] And what's your educational background?
10
11Johnny Anthony: Um, I finished high school here in the Lansing – at Lansing Eastern High
12 School. I attended, uh, University of Michigan, Mott College in Flint
13 Michigan, Lansing Community College. I have 3 degrees, uh, in
14 mechanical drawing, master blueprint reading and I'm a skilled tradesman
15 with the UAW GM along with the ironworkers degree, 4 years.
16
17Cheryl McQuaid: Very impressive. [1:48] Um, what is your hire in date and also what
18 department did you hire into?
19
20Johnny Anthony: I hired in in General Motors in 1972, uh, shortly after high school. I hired
21 in on the assembly line at, um, the main plant at General Motors at
22 Oldsmobile. My job description there was, um, installer at the motor drop.
23 We installed, um, the, uh, driveshafts and, and because I wouldn't stop
24 talking, they kept putting more and more work on me...
25
26 [laughter]
27
28 ...so I d-, didn't know not to talk and, uh, [clicking] and so in 1972, when
29 I first hired in in General Motors, I worked for 3 years. Then I decided that
30 I wanted to further my education, not knowing that I could, uh, be a part of
31 um, not knowing that I could go to school at General Motors, uh, I decided
32 to leave General Motors and – because at that time, they were asking
33 people do – if they wanted to be laid off and I went to school – back to
34 school to further my education, so I could become a skilled tradesman.
35
36Cheryl McQuaid: [2:53] And when did you come back? Did you – at that time, did you hire
37 back into Fisher Body or...?
38
39Johnny Anthony: No. I hired back in at, at – I left General Motors Oldsmobile main plant,
40 uh, in 1974 and then I hired back in General Motors 10 years later, uh,
41 with a degree in – a master degree in blueprint reading, reading schematics
42 and, um, I had finished my ironworkers training at that time.
43
44Michael Flemming: You said not knowing that you could go to school. Explain what you mean
45 by, by that.
46

1Johnny Anthony: At the time, I would see people that were – had those what we call now
2cushy jobs in skilled trades but, at the time, most of the people I worked
3around they were – seems to me now as I recall back, they were people
4that were from the South and all they wanted to do was just work and just
5being happy to have a job but I was noticing there were others that, that
6had the jobs of skilled trades and, eh, no one really knew how they became
7skilled tradesmen but I was eager to want to learn how to become skilled
8trades and have one of those jobs not to work on the assembly line but to
9be part of the, um, process of keeping the assembly line running.
10

11Michael Flemming: [4:02] Was this a, a benefit that was afforded you by GM? Did you have to
12pay for your schooling?
13

14Johnny Anthony: No. I, I left General Motors and came back – I went to school on my own.
15I left Lansing and went to Detroit to school and went to the technical, uh,
16trade center at – in St. Ar-, St. [Agnes 4:19] in [Inaudible 4:19] and then I
17went to Wayne State at night.
18

19Cheryl McQuaid: [4:26] So what is your, um, hire in date into the Fisher Body plant?
20

21Johnny Anthony: In 1984, uh, I hired in Fisher Body, uh, as a journeyman iron, uh, a
22journeyman, uh, millwright. So, uh, 9/4 of '84, I hired back in with my, uh
23– and they were hiring, uh, millwrights at that time and I could've become
24an electrician too but I decided to be in the millwright trade.
25

26Cheryl McQuaid: [4:53] And what shift did you hire in on?
27

28Johnny Anthony: I hired in on second shift.
29

30Cheryl McQuaid: [4:57] Second shift?
31

32Johnny Anthony: Yes.
33

34Marilyn Coulter: [5:03] So what was it like coming back in under a different profession and
35what did you think about 2 different, eh, being in 2 different facilities?
36

37Johnny Anthony: Well often time I would see some of the people that, you know, first of all
38they, you know – some of the people I worked with, they were saying that,
39you know, I was crazy for l-, leaving that good job at General Motors but I
40had other aspirations of becoming a tradesperson, and, uh, I wanted to
41further my knowledge in, in a field of being more, um, productive
42[clanking] in, in, in the arena of skilled trades. Uh, so coming back in, it
43was kinda like I had something to show those folks that was still working
44there on the assembly line that an opportunity was still there because I was
45not, uh, real happy working on the assembly line 'cause I was, I was
46young...

1
2Female: [throat clearing]
3
4Johnny Anthony: ...I was, uh, [clanking] 18 years old and I, I wanted to, uh, do something a
5 little different with my life. A lotta people invested in me to make sure
6 that I came to work at that time where I was at Oldsmobile but I, I had
7 other aspirations of trying to move forward.
8
9Marilyn Coulter: [6:03] So in 1984, where you came in in skilled trades, which is
10 considered, um, a preferred means of employment here, were there many
11 African-American males in skilled trades...
12
13Johnny Anthony: No.
14
15Female: ...arena?
16
17Johnny Anthony: No. A matter of fact, when I hired in, the person that hired me was – his
18 name was Bishop, uh, [Cato 6:23], uh, Clement [Katun 6:24]. He was
19 from New York and, and at the time, he was the active superintendent
20 [clanking] in skilled trades and he was one of the few black men in that
21 position and ever held that position here at Fisher Body and when he hired
22 me and it really wasn't an interview and I was so impressed with him that
23 he said we need to have more blacks like yourself to come through; do you
24 know of any other African-Americans that, uh, that have their
25 journeyman's cards that need to be hired? Because at the time, I was – I
26 think I was 29 years old when I hired back in and I was the youngest
27 skilled tradesperson at Fisher Body and one of the only few ever that went
28 through an apprenticeship program outside that got hired into the Fisher
29 Body plant.
30
31Marilyn Coulter: [7:11] Did that make a difference to the other people, the fact that you
32 were trained on the outside versus on the in?
33
34Johnny Anthony: Oh, there was, there was some animosity even from the supervision
35 because they were mostly hiring people that were farmers or farmers' kids
36 and those that they would bring up through their ranks and most of the
37 people that came through were older men. They were already – seemed to
38 me like they were ready to retire and they were actually bringing their
39 children in or their friends' children in to the skilled trades arena even, eh,
40 eh, at the time the EIT program was very prominent enrolling but if you
41 didn't know somebody, you wasn't gonna get in but...
42
43Marilyn Coulter: [7:47] For those who don't know, what's EIT?
44
45Johnny Anthony: The Employee in Training.
46

1Female: [Inaudible 7:51].
2
3 [clanking]
4
5Johnny Anthony: The Employees in, in Training is, uh, uh, EIT means the employees that
6 are in training and those employees are employees from all sectors of life.
7 They can come in from the outside of the General Motors' sector or they
8 can be brought in from the inside with an aspiration of being able to, uh,
9 wanna – have an idea to wanna work in skilled trades. Often time
10 employees that would work during the changeover periods would be
11 employees that would be good candidates that would show that they have
12 proficiency in those areas of the electrical, uh, trainings, uh, millwright
13 training or working with the pipefitters during, uh, the changeover periods
14 for like such as model changeovers or/and the Christmas breaks.
15
16Michael Flemming: [8:41] As we move forward to a new plant and we leave, uh, Fisher Body
17 behind, the Employee in Training, uh, process is that still, to your
18 knowledge, will that still be implemented? Will that be available? Will the
19 changeovers be the same as they used to be? Can you talk about that for
20 us?
21
22Johnny Anthony: I think we're gonna start seeing more, uh, activities where an opportunity
23 would be made available to members that would [clanking] like to have –
24 to further their knowledge in the skilled trades arena. Uh, the Employees
25 in Training, uh, per se may be used as a, uh, tool, such as, um, the
26 apprenticeship program and making that more a-, available to the
27 members on how to actually start off a process of being involved into the
28 skilled trades arena. So what we're looking at now because we have such
29 an older workforce and there is more people that would like to, uh, v-,
30 broaden their knowledge in skilled trades, we're looking at having the
31 buddy-buddy system or you could use the same term as an Employee in
32 Training working with the older people to pass that knowledge that has
33 been awarded to those members, uh, through the years to the younger
34 people so that we can continue to be world class in what we do.
35
36Marilyn Coulter: [9:58] John, going back to when you came in off the street...
37
38Johnny Anthony: Mm-hm.
39
40Female: ...and you went into the u-, uh, skilled trades arena, what was it like for
41 you on an average day and the second part of that question is what is it
42 about skilled trades that makes them special and makes them so [clanking]
43 tight?
44
45Johnny Anthony: The, the one thing that I – that, that – my fondest memory of coming into
46 an area, you have to, eh – when you understand that my main

responsibility was to build a building and to put up all the equipment but not to actually make the equipment run, so now my whole focus had to change [clanking] from actually building the building, finishing the product and going to the next job location or the next city or the next state.

Now my focus was to be there among my people that – the people that were actually going to build a product, so my knowledge was like many people in skilled trades, they – everybody brings a certain type of knowledge to a facility and so [clanking] there is no big U's and a little I's. We all brought something very special. Whereas I knew how to read schematics and blueprints, the next guy could probably weld and the next guy knew chains and conveyors, so we all would combine our thoughts together and work as a combined crew to work towards one common goal, that is to keep the assembly line running and making sure that the [clanking] workers n-, their needs were met as best we could and so, uh, that was the change in, in thought patterns and that's why the Employees' Assistance Programs, the, uh, the E, the EPG groups were as we could all combine our groups and efforts together working in conjunction with the members on the floor, uh, it tied in the whole process on how to make the process work within a, eh, eh, within a structured area to be able to build the product and building a product meant, first of all, building a people and once you build quality [clanking] people, you can build a pr-, quality products.

[12:06] Now you said EPG?

Employee Group Participation and that included, uh, skilled trades, uh, the hourly workers, the supervisors, the superintendents in the area, uh, and we would just combine our efforts as far as what could we do within that group to better serve a build process for the c-, entire car process.

Now [clanking] skilled trades are different from production workers and they seem to be a tightknit group. [12:43] Is it safety issues or is it because you guys ate lunch together, what drew you guys so close together?

I think, you know, from the beginning of, uh, my experience of being a skilled tradesperson, I relied so much on that 1 individual. If we were doing a job together, I needed to know what his thoughts were. I need to know what his next action was gonna be because his life depended on my life and my life depended on his life if we were working, eh, on anything. So in, in essence, it was a different – that was part of the difference but, uh, uh, you, you actually knew what type of – the next move was. When you deal with a skilled tradesperson, you, you wanna build a relationship so close that you want to know the next move because the next move could be fatal.

1 Marilyn Coulter: [13:36] Have those next moves and getting close to that person went
2 outside the plant? Have you g-, had friendships that went beyond these
3 walls?
4

5 Johnny Anthony: Often time you will build a relationship in the plant but also outside of the
6 plant you, you will oftentimes you'll find members that will like to, uh, do
7 projects, such as build pole barn buildings or [clanking] or build houses
8 and you can actually, uh, take your talent outside of the plant location to
9 help assist or to, uh – and save money. You save an awful lot of money by
10 knowing that you have an electrician friend or you have a pipefitter friend
11 or me being a structural person and an operator, a crane operator, they all
12 would call on each other or we would all call on each other to assist each
13 other and, uh, become our own contractors. So it's a big money saving
14 adventure when you can team up with a group of people that's on 1 mind,
15 1 mind and 1 accord. So that, that, that in essence brought about a
16 closeness with working together with skilled trades people and, uh, do you
17 get it from all people? No. because some people just wanna come and
18 work [clanking] and do their little thing in this 1 little, small area but when
19 you get someone that's energetic and, uh, uh, versatile in different, uh,
20 activities and don't mind taking their talents outside the workplace, it
21 makes such as difference.
22

23 Cheryl McQuaid: [15:00] What department of skilled trades did you work in – Facilities,
24 Body, Paint?
25

26 Johnny Anthony: When I first hired in, I worked in the fac-, in the Facilities Group and at
27 that time, we had, uh – everybody worked in the Facilities Group and we
28 were almost...
29

30 Male #1: [throat clearing]
31

32 Johnny Anthony: ...like fireman. Wherever there was a breakdown, we'd all jump on our
33 little trucks and we would go cruising to that location and everybody
34 would take the welders and the cutting torches and everything out and
35 we'd put the fires out, if you would use it as a fireman, but the majority of
36 the time, we would go there and find out what the problem was. [clanking]
37 Uh, we would be dispatched from the Facilities Group but then we
38 changed our way of doing business. Uh, we actually started, um, making
39 different satellite, uh, cribs in the Paint Department, the Trim Department
40 and [clanking] in the Body Shop but we also kept the Facilities Group. Uh,
41 those that were, uh, that were in those different groups were able to
42 become the masters of those different group. They knew those different
43 groups, so then at that point in time, we had [clanking] 3 different shifts
44 running – first shift, second shift and third shift – and we tried to
45 coordinate our efforts to make sure that the shifts overlapped so that we
46 can – [clanking] so that we could, uh, tell each other what went on in those

1 areas and where the problems were and any downtime. We could actually
2 – if we couldn't fix the problem to keep the line running immediately, we'd
3 make sure that the third shift would tear it back apart and fix it to make it
4 last.
5
6Female: [16:24] Do you know about when that was in the...
7
8Johnny Anthony: That was in 1980-, between 1986 and 1987.
9
10Cheryl McQuaid: [16:34] Was that part of a changeover?
11
12Johnny Anthony: Uh, often time we could do a, a major change on the weekends and, uh,
13 um, it depended on the, the problem, uh, but – and every-, we worked
14 every weekend. I remember working, uh, for years, for years 7 days. You
15 know, it w-, and we, we worked 7 days a week, you know, on fixing items
16 and making sure that things that needed to be attended to were done and
17 done well.
18
19 [clanking]
20
21Marilyn Coulter: John, you said that your lives depended on it and it was safety that kind of
22 brought you together. [17:11] Can you tell us, w-, what, what is meant by
23 that? I mean how safe do you have to be? What is it?
24
25Johnny Anthony: Well oftentimes when you're working on [inaudible 17:18] equipment or
26 you're preparing yourself to [clanking] work on equipment and you are
27 working in a group – with a group of different trades or similar trades to
28 yourself, you have to really know the person that you're working with.
29 Um, oftentimes it, it takes a combined effort to be able to put together a, a
30 plan. First of all, you have to have a plan and you have to have, uh, a safe
31 plan to be able to put the, uh – a project to completion. Uh, you have to
32 check the equipment over and making sure the equipment is safe, uh, the
33 cables, the surrounding area that you're working around and the overhead
34 [clanking] area that you're working around and most of all you have to
35 make sure that your coworkers are, uh, cohesive enough to realize the task
36 that's before us. Oftentimes I've been in situations where, uh, if it's after
37 lunch, um, that the – some of the players would have to be, uh – some of
38 the th-, [clanking] some of our – we have to change some of the ways that
39 we would do things because if some of the players are inebriated and often
40 time there were and some of our team members [clicking] that would, you
41 know, do a little bit too much drinking on the job, uh, or, eh...
42
43Female: [18:35] On the job?
44
45Johnny Anthony: Not on the job [clanking] but, you know, at lunch, um, and, uh, that would
46 change the way we would have to proceed at doing our project of the day.

1 Um, I've had a lotta close incidents on where we've, uh, really depended
2 on a coworker and they just could not handle the task at hand, [beeping]
3 so, um, [banging] I'm reminded of s-, a few of the incidents that has
4 happened to me personally where we were putting – we had a broken
5 chain in the Trim Department and I relied closely on one of my coworkers
6 to put air, uh, back onto the cylinders to, to tighten up the chain but you
7 have to put your hand into [tapping] the drive unit to make that happen
8 and it is so important to know each other and to know each other's actions
9 because if he - if my coworker would have put the air on too fast, it could
10 have snapped and my hands could have been cut off immediately but, you
11 know, knowing that it's important to have someone, uh, that's thinking
12 like you, that knows what to do and that has been well trained in those
13 same areas.
14

15 Marilyn Coulter: [19:58] Um, have you ever lost a coworker?
16

17 Johnny Anthony: Yes, I've, um, I've lost, um, 2 coworkers here at the Fisher Body plant.
18 Um, one, eh, in the past, when I hired in, eh, eh, it was – it didn't seem
19 like the safety issues were, uh, as well thought out or we didn't have the
20 proper equipment to work with or often time, because we all came from
21 different background areas, many times we would, we would make our
22 own tools because we had the capability of making hooks [thumping] or,
23 uh, using different types of chains that had not been inspected, uh,
24 according to the OSHA or MIOSHA standards, um, and we would make
25 different types of hooks to, um, make our job more easily accessible or to
26 fit the need to keep the lines running. I'm reminded of, uh, one of our
27 members out in Building 23 that made a s-, what he called was a safety
28 hook but under pressure that safety hook did not hold and it came – o-,
29 once it was under much [clanking] tension, it came back and snapped
30 back, broke, came back and killed [clanking] him, uh, and we're often
31 reminded of that, uh, time in Building 23. You never forget when
32 someone, um, dies because of trying to do the right thing and trying to be,
33 um, a good tradesperson but, eh, tho-, equipment must be purchased by a
34 supplier and it needs to be tested, uh, to make sure that it meets OSHA and
35 MIOSHA standards.
36

37 Michael Flemming: [21:43] Are there any other incidents that you know of within the plant
38 that, uh, we've had fatalities or like contractors or anyone that, uh, that
39 came from the outside that had the same types of...?
40

41 Johnny Anthony: We've had several, um, other incidents, uh, such as the one that happened
42 in the Paint Department and, uh, s-, where we had the supervisor went
43 down into this, this tank to, uh, rel-, you know, he – first he gave the – an
44 order to the employees to go down there and clean out the tanks and, uh, a
45 lot of times when you're r-, dealing with, uh, toxic waste, uh, it's, it's okay
46 until you go and stir it around and d-, then the fumes overtook the

1 employees and, and the supervisor went down there to get the employees
2 and he also was overtaken and that brought about some training that we
3 had to have as far as how to deal with toxic waste and, uh, believe me,
4 whenever a situation like that happened, you, uh, are always reminded of
5 the, the possibility of losing your life. So every day you come to work,
6 even though we don't know what are tasks are every day as far as skilled
7 trades, we don't know what job or job responsibility we will have but
8 whatever the job is, we must first treat it as though it may be our last day.
9

10 Michael Flemming: [23:03] That would be considered under our confined space...

11
12 Johnny Anthony: That's correct.

13
14 Michael Flemming: ...uh, training that we've...

15
16 Johnny Anthony: Yes.

17
18 Michael Flemming: ...been going through?

19
20 Johnny Anthony: Yeah.

21
22 Michael Flemming: [23:10] We also had an incident in, I think, Trim area?

23
24 Johnny Anthony: Yeah. We've had contractors come in and, um, you know, being a
25 contractor myself a-, and I mentioned earlier, you don't understand the,
26 the surroundings or the atmosphere [clanking] of a factory or y-, you're not
27 familiarized such as a tradesperson that lives in that factory daily knowing
28 the different E stops or the safety aspects or – of a tr-, of a – the, uh, train,
29 the direction of, of, uh, the chain on how it's actually installed.

30
31 You're coming in to actually work on 1 piece and you don't have the same
32 knowledge of the people that, that live there every day. Y-, you're
33 familiarized or you're reliant on someone else to make decisions that could
34 cause your life. As a tradesperson, [clanking] uh, from the outside, you,
35 you, you're, you're a specialist in an area but you're not familiar with all
36 the [clanking] all the surroundings or the things that are gonna happen if 1
37 part of a system is released and I'm reminded of that incident that
38 happened up in the Trim Department where we had a contractor that, uh,
39 someone gave an okay for the chains to start up, uh, on the doors return
40 [clanking] line and, uh, we had a fatality there that day also and, uh, my
41 understanding is that employee, uh, outside contractor, that was his last
42 few days of, of, uh – before he retired but it's a sad call when you
43 [clanking] have to call home to someone and tell them that their loved one
44 is not coming home anymore.
45

1Michael Flemming: [24:54] And that's one of the reasons why we have a Workers' Memorial
2Day, uh, when the health and safety standards that we've been through –
3are you, are you aware of [inaudible 25:03]?
4

5Johnny Anthony: Yes. I've had all those trainings, uh, and I've been involved with, uh, the
6Workers' Memorial and, uh, many people take it very lightly and not
7realizing the importance of it, uh, but it is, um, it is, uh, very touchy that –
8when that day does come and when we wear the white shirt day, that's,
9um, very touchy and, uh, knowing that there's, um, been bloodshed on –
10for our UAW members, uh, and thanks – and it is nice to have to have that
11day recognized.
12

13Marilyn Coulter: Hm. Thank you for sharing that particular reminder. That – it's difficult to
14talk about loss but it's also good for education of that but in changing
15gears a little bit, I know that you said it was difficult when you came in.
16[25:52] Um, have you ever worked with women skilled tradespeople and
17how do you feel about them and, and how – and what types of things did
18you notice some of the women had to go through?
19

20Johnny Anthony: Well a lotta, [background speaker] a lot of the things that I've dealt with
21with working with, uh, women or the females that were – are trades,
22trades, um, persons, um, you know, eh, seems like a lot, a lot of the
23women f-, feel that they have to fit into a man's world, uh, and that's not
24so. You know, women are, are as important and they're as knowledgeable
25as any man and everybody brings something very special to the table when
26it comes to, uh, the trades aspect, um, and, and I often have felt that
27discrimination to anyone is discrimination to all of us. Uh, we have, uh –
28[clinking] I've been privileged to work [clanking] with women in the, the,
29the electrical, the millwright, the pipefitters trades, the tool remake-, tool
30repair and the toolmakers, um, and, uh, we have had a great relationship.
31Um, um, we, we just have worked together and brought different ideas to
32the table and, uh, [clanking] making sure that everybody is treated equal.
33

34Marilyn Coulter: And, uh, now that's for you. [27:08] Do you find that that's for most? Is it
35[stuttering] at that point you're just a tradesperson and it doesn't matter if
36you're male or female?
37

38Johnny Anthony: Oftentimes some of the, uh, EEO standards had to be changed because
39[clanking] being that, uh, in the past, uh, here at Fisher Body, we've, uh,
40had, uh, men that were thinking that well this is my workplace and I can
41bring my pictorials and I can say whatever I wanna say and, uh, I can
42pretty much, uh, oh, she's just one of the boys and, um, you know,
43realizing and u-, understanding that, uh, the EEO standards, uh, brought
44about changes and, uh the civil rights, uh, acknowledgement of fair
45treatment and fair rights to all people, um, [clanking] made men come to
46grips and realize that women must be treated equal but ex-, you have to

1 leave all that foolishness at home. A lot of the pictorials and all that that
2 men would bring and put in their lockers and, uh, put Playboy pictures and
3 all that stuff, that's – the, the workplace is not the place for it.
4

5Marilyn Coulter: And that changed another thing. [28:22] Um, you're a skilled tradesperson
6 but you're also union active, yes?
7

8Johnny Anthony: Yes.
9

10Marilyn Coulter: [28:29] And what prompted that and what do you do as a member of the
11 UAW?
12

13Johnny Anthony: As a mem-, uh, as a member of the UAW, um, I'm a international
14 appointed benefits representative...
15

16Female: [coughing]
17

18Johnny Anthony: ...uh, also, uh, I've, I've have been a benefits rep now for 14 years, uh,
19 being active in also the Civil Rights Department, uh, with Civil Rights
20 Department for the local union and, uh, done that for – I think I'm
21 probably the longest standing member now, um, of the Civil Rights
22 Department for the local union of Local 602. Um, I've, uh, been a member
23 of the, um, [pew] several other different, uh, uh, activities within the
24 local union, including but not limited to, um, [knocking] uh [clanking] –
25 also a member of the Election Committee, uh, Skilled Trades, uh,
26 Advisors Committee, liaison between Management Union for the, um,
27 Skilled Trades Group, uh, Employee Group Participation member also.
28

29Marilyn Coulter: [29:49] So you've been active with the union for a long time. Are you the
30 only member of your family here and are you the only one active in the
31 union?
32

33Johnny Anthony: No. My wife is a member also of the UAW Local 602, um, and a member
34 o-, of a, a member of Local 602, um, and she works also at Fisher Body. I
35 have several cousins that are members here. Uh, several of my family
36 members are members of Local 602.
37

38Marilyn Coulter: [30:15] So now, did you meet your wife here?
39

40Johnny Anthony: Yes. I met my wife here in 1970-, no, 19-, uh, 90- [clanking] 2, eh, no, in
41 1990. We were married in 1992. We have 1 son.
42

43Female: [Nice 30:30].
44

45Johnny Anthony: She works in the Paint Department.
46

1 [clanking]
2
3 Cheryl McQuaid: [30:35] How did you meet your wife?
4
5 Johnny Anthony: At lunch up in our famous cafeteria. We just sitting there talking and, um,
6 I think at the time they were going through the transitioning of being able
7 to – having to sit in the cafeteria because, uh, production was slow, so
8 when I had some free time to be able to go up and talk to her and just try
9 to find out what her plans were in life and if there was any hope for us
10 and, uh, but I mainly married her for better and for work.
11
12 [laughter]
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: [31:02] Could you share with us, John, maybe one of your favorite bosses,
15 one of your favorite memories, um, something – a favorite memory of
16 Fisher Body?
17
18 Johnny Anthony: Well one of my favorite memories of Fisher Body probably was the day I
19 got hired because, uh, that day I, I was, uh, actually, you know – when
20 you're getting prepared to go on vacation and, uh, we had scraped up
21 enough money. Prior to working at Fisher Body, I, uh, would do just about
22 any type of odd job and so, eh, in the past, I noticed that every time you
23 try to get ready to pack and get ready to go on vacation the phone keeps
24 ringing and ringing, so I took the phone off the hook. Uh, probably 2 to 3
25 weeks prior to that, I had applied for work with General Motors here at
26 Fisher Body and I had put down a friend of mine's name, Willie [Loggins
27 31:48] and, um, as a reference of a second contact person and, um, you
28 know, at that time, we were home packing up and trying to get ready to
29 get all our other little things together f-, to leave and go to St. Louis,
30 Missouri, and, um, m-, my friend came over. He said, John, Fisher Body
31 has called you – called the house several times for you. Is your phone off
32 the hook or something? I'm going well, yeah, I'm, I'm leaving wor-, I'm
33 leaving town. He said, man, they keep calling; they want you; they want
34 you to come by and I'm like okay, I'll go by there.
35
36 So I pulled up at the front of the building and, uh, my family was all
37 [clanking] in the car and we were all packed and ready to go and, uh,
38 [clanking] uh, I called over first and told'm, I said yeah, I'll come over and
39 I'll just tell'm that, uh, [clanking] eh, eh – we just want you to come over
40 and let us know you want the job. I said well I'm, I'm not gonna stay 'cause
41 I gotta go on vacation. I need a t-, I need time off. So I came in and I had
42 talked to Mr., uh, uh, Bishop [Cato 32:41]. He was the superintendent at
43 the time through the Maintenance Department and he said well you have
44 the job [inaudible 32:46] you have time to go to an interview? I said well
45 really I don't really have time to, I said, but I will, so I went up to our
46 Medical Department and did an interview and did the, uh, physical and

1 passed the physical and, uh, mind you, the family sat out there and now it's
2 an hour later and, um, uh, so I, I, I w-, I was really pleased and thankful
3 and, [clanking] um, and, um, but, you know, knowing that, you know,
4 prayer changes things because you know when, when you don't have a
5 good job, you can't do a lot of things and, uh, mmm, I'm, um, forever in
6 debt to know that there was some older women – every, every, every
7 noonday, I would go to church every noonday and pray and I was just
8 praying that...
9

10Female: [Mm-hm 33:29].

11

12Johnny Anthony: [phew] [thumping] [crying]

13

14Female: [Inaudible 33:33].

15

16Johnny Anthony: ...that I would get a, that I would get a good job so I could make sure I
17 could take care of my family 'cause I knew that, eh, He – the Lord had
18 blessed my other cousins and with, with a good job [clanking] and I said
19 Lord, if you can just bless me. I have been obedient. I had went back to
20 school. I have, I have a – I have degrees and I, I have, I have something to
21 offer a good company 'cause I knew that every time I'd go to the
22 employment office and put down my knowledge and what I knew how to
23 do, they would say well, nobody's gonna hire you; you're overeducated.
24 I'm like well, what do I need to do? She said you need to start lying and
25 telling them that you'll work for \$9 an hour. I said well I'll do that and so
26 what I did, I would get 2 jobs so I could make sure 'cause, you know,
27 today's money is – today's market, it doesn't seem like it's fair when you
28 have a good education to be able to utilize it to get what you want.
29

30 So I was just thankful that I was able to get into Fisher Body, to take care
31 of my family and, as I said earlier, I, I worked 7 days for 5-10 years. It
32 didn't matter 'cause I, I was able to come out of debt. I was able to see
33 those older people there and many of those skilled trades guys and they
34 have lots a money and they would show it sometimes and I was like man, I
35 need to get some of that long money like that and within 2 or 3 months, I
36 would have 2 or 3 checks that I wouldn't even have to use because when
37 you're making \$3,000 and \$4,000 a week, money is good and you can
38 have a lot more, so we were able to do that but a-, when I left that place
39 that day, I still went on vacation 'cause I told'm I'll come back 'cause it
40 was the weekend of Labor Day coming up and when I left, I pulled down
41 toward [Sexton 35:12] and I looked at that big green building and that big
42 green building – I've been here every since and I went down the highway
43 and I would cry – that was – I would just say [crying] boy and I made it in
44 and at the time, I think I was making \$12 an hour.
45

1 That was a lotta money in 1984 and, uh, I, I, I would just, [thumping] just
2 get a, get a thought of man, when I get back, I gotta real job. I have a real
3 job. I can make some real money and they say you gonna work – and
4 oftentimes, the guys would tell me and say you're gonna make a lotta
5 money and don't be afraid of spending it; just go ahead and spend it 'cause
6 there's more coming and you'll, you'll, you'll have more before the next –
7 before you can spend it all and, uh, I just started saving in that 401K and
8 that PSP and, you know, and, and I don't know if without that and without
9 being able to work at a place like this [clanking] would you ever be able to
10 save over a quarter of a million dollars. No. And, you know, so, you know,
11 being able to put money away and be able to save money for your
12 children's education and be able to do the things that you want to do for
13 your family, it's just unbelievable, so, you know, to General Motors, to the
14 UAW, to the complete staff both places, you know, I'm forever in debt and
15 forever grateful. That's why I work hard today to continue to serve and
16 thank God for the UAW.
17
18Female: Thank you.
19
20Female: [Inaudible 36:43].
21
22Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you, John.
23
24Michael Flemming: Thanks, John.
25
26Female: [Inaudible 36:45].
27
28
29/lo