

Economic Development in Detroit Oral History Project

Detroit, MI

**Carol Schroeder**

Interviewed by

Mara Powell

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Sterling Heights, MI

As part of the Oral History Class in the School of Library and Information Science

Kim Schroeder, Instructor

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## Brief Biography

Carol Schroder was born and raised in the Detroit area. She received a degree in Communications from Michigan State University. Between 1983 and 1993 she worked as the Director of Marketing for the Detroit Renaissance, a non-profit organization which encouraged the economic growth of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan. She has also worked for Detroit Public Television, Ladbroke DRC, and has also worked independently as a fundraising consultant. She currently resides in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

## Interviewer

Mara Powell is a student at the School of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University.

## Abstract

Mara Powell interviews Carol Schroeder about her time working for the Detroit Renaissance from 1983 to 1993. Carol discusses how she came to be a part of the Detroit Renaissance and what her responsibilities were during her time there as Marketing Director for special events. She discusses the Detroit Grand Prix and the work that went into setting up hospitality suites for corporate sponsors. Carol also talks about the goals of her work with the Detroit Renaissance and how it impacted the city. President of the Detroit Renaissance, Bob McCabe, and Carol's colleague Baker Brown are also discussed.

## Restrictions

None

## Original Format

Wav file

## Transcription

Powell: Hello, I'm Mara Powell. I'm here with Carol Schroeder, and she was the marketing director for the Detroit Renaissance from 1983-1993. Hello Carol, and I just want to thank you for sharing your story, and spending your time with me today.

Schroeder: It's my pleasure! It was one of the best times of my life. We had a lot of fun but we worked really hard.

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Powell: Well, first I'd like to know a little about your background. Where were you born?

Schroeder: I was born Downriver, so I've always been in the Detroit area; down in Wyandotte- nice family place. Education was always stressed in my family- it was very important. So I wandered off to Michigan State, and kept being involved in special events, and special projects, it seems naturally- all the time.

Powell: And you went to Michigan State, you said?

Schroeder: Yes.

Powell: What did you get a degree in there?

Schroeder: Communications. And from there you start going off, and doing other things, and you find, by golly, you keep going into the same area, and expanding upon it. And I think that if you're having fun at what you're doing, you're better at it, too.

Powell: Now, before you got into the Detroit Renaissance, you were an independent fundraising consultant [contractor], can you tell me how you got into that?

Schroeder: Right. It seems like I've always been an independent contractor- almost always. Ended up working special projects- but special projects and fundraising involves the ability to be a salesperson, as well. So, you have to learn how to figure out what you have, what you kind of own- or your boss's own- that is attractive to other people- or is of interest to other people. And I did some of that through some Ford dealers here. We would be doing new car showings. We would be doing shows at the local Ford plants here with automobiles, and there was always special event trying to get people's attention, and stand out from the other people who are promoting the same thing, as well. So, you gotta figure how to make yourself special.

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Powell: Was any of the independent contractor work related to any of the work you did with the Detroit Renaissance?

Schroeder: Actually I was doing some business with a company that put together incentive programs. I would go out and set up these programs for them where they would be able to reward their employees for certain accomplishment levels. If it was in the sales it's obvious what they were doing there, but it might be something else with the community or within the company meeting their goals. And I was working with Federal-Mogul at the time (one of my people), and they told me they had heard of the Grand Prix coming to town, and did I know if anything was available- merchandise was available, tickets were available-so they could have something themed, a party like that, and I said sure, which of course, I did not. But I knew that if you go to a special event you can figure that out pretty quickly. So I told them I'd get back to them in about a week or so. And that's the first time I called Detroit Renaissance and got down to them, and it was a very impressive meeting- without a doubt.

Powell: Would you say that's how you got start working with the Detroit Renaissance?

Schroeder: Yeah. Actually, I went in there asking them questions, and they found out that I knew a lot of people in the area anyways from the other things that I had done. They had two women there, and two marketing guys there who were from Ohio, I believe, and they somehow had tied up with them to do some marketing here. I'm not sure it was going that well but they called me, and asked me if I'd be willing to work part time to try to gain some interest in what was going on. And boy, I mean, what an invitation! I was even gonna get my own business card that said Detroit Grand Prix on it! So I was pretty impressed with myself, and the facility. It was just so cool. When I went in there the second time I went into a women's office, and we chatted about what they wanted me to do, and what resources they had that were available to people, and we started talking at great length. When I went to her office, and I saw the maps, and the pictures, and all of these things are on me, and the hustle and bustle of the race, I thought to myself, "Someday I wanna work in this office". You know, within a few

years I was working in that office full time. It goes show you about having goals. It's very important. From there it just expanded. I mean, every year I stayed around. It got to a point where that was the only thing I was doing because it's very intensive. But Bob McCabe, the president of Detroit Renaissance, since I was an independent contractor, had no problem with me in our off season going off to do other things. So I'd pick up my pen, and in fact, for three years after the race was over, I would go. I went to the Thanksgiving parade for three years, because they're a lot of the same corporate people working there. And so I went to her to produce some of the events, and help them out, and work some of the sponsors. Yeah, it just expands once people know that you get it, and have the connections. That's the most important thing.

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Powell: Now you say there was a two person marketing department. Who was the other person?

Schroeder: Yeah. My partner was Baker Brown. Now talk about an interesting background. He was the general manager for years for the Ringling Brother's Barnum Baily Circus. So his talents were such that he was a great facilities manager. When we were setting something up, he could look at a field, and know where we should put everything- you know, that kind of conceptual stuff. So that was really helpful when you're building-really what we did is built a city into a city. Nothing was there, and then we had to put it all there, and take it all away. He was an accountant, too. His accounting acumen was just wonderful, so we used that a great deal, as well, too. He had been there the year before, and the year after, they thought they could do better with marketing at Detroit Renaissance. They told us all to clean our desks and go. And I thought "Hmm... Ok..." I thought I had a job. I thought things went well. I had three different radio stations at that point in time-and you know how competitive they are- working in Hart plaza together. But you know, there were a bunch of things like that. Sure enough, I thought we were done, and I got a call back, and I said, "Oh, hi. How are you doing?" And they said, "Could you come down and talk to us again? We're

interested.” “Sure.” So, I went down to talk to them, and they wanted me to come back. And with a certain amount of loyalty to the other people, I said “How come? What’s going on?” And they said, “Nope, we just want you to come back.” So I felt a little concerned about that, but there was nothing I could do. So, I went back, and found out I was going to be working with Baker Brown. It was a great relationship because we had different skills that overlap, and we just got along famously. Laughed a lot worked hard, you know, and just supported each other in every way that we could. But that’s what the whole team was like there. That’s why it was such a special place to work.

Powell: And what year did you start working with them?

Schroder: 83. So that was the second year of the race. I did go to the first year of the race, as a spectator, and I thought “Wow, this is amazing!”

Powell: The Grand Prix?

Schroeder: Yeah.

Powell: What were some the major corporations in the Metro Detroit area that you worked with?

Schroeder: Oh goodness! Well, the first 6 or 7 years we were doing Formula 1. So, we brought some of the local people in: the Big 3, and you know, other people. Because it was international, people in the U.S. did not know what a big impact the Formula 1 has on the world, really. It was much better known in Europe at

that time than here. Indy car racing, you know, Al Unser, Mario Andretti, those were the people that they knew, but they didn't know those other guys. So, I was getting phone calls from all over the world from people who were coming to Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, you know, the Mobil Oil people internationally. So that kind of thing. But when we moved to C.A.R.T. [Championship Auto Racing Teams] after 7 years--no more Formula 1, then it was more the local people. But always a lot of automotive suppliers- always automotive suppliers. But in the beginning, you know, we were working with Hudson's, who was in town, and Stroh's, you know, those guys were around. The utility people--Michigan Bell, it just was a long list, but as far as international goes, and some of the teams, like Chip Ganassi would have that kind of thing. There would be the bottler, the soft drink people- Coca-Cola, probably. And of course, if you're gonna have an event like that, you gotta have the beer sponsor, right? So, it was very different between Formula 1, and really the American racing series because we were dealing with people from Australia, like Foster's Beer, and those were the ones we were dealing with at that time, and then we changed to, you know, Miller's or Bud or something like that. So there was a definite difference in the sponsors. There would be about, oh, 35 hospitality suites each year- if we did our job properly- which I think we did a pretty good job. The attrition rate was pretty low, which gave us more time to try and get more people.

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Powell: Yeah. Now you mentioned the volunteers-

Schroeder: Oh! [Sigh]

Powell: What kind of people would volunteer, and what did they do?

Schroeder: They are wonderful people. They were so committed to us. Often times, I would have the same people for years and years and years. I had about

200 volunteers assigned to me. So, you say “Wow”. Not really, because if you realize that we had 35 suites--which when we were downtown, are scattered all over downtown. I was going from Cobo Hall down to the end of Atwater. I mean, it was just was all over the place--between Cobo and the Renaissance Center, and beyond. So golf carts were very important. But we would have a group of volunteers that were assigned to that location. And they always had their own table, their phone. Remember, we didn't have cell phones when we began, so we were still using hard line stuff. Isn't that amazing? And so they would be there, have their phone, and could call us if they had a problem, and were spread out all over the place, and they became absolutely, wonderfully immeasurably--oh-- they were worth so much to us, and I still stay in touch with some of them. But these are people who had jobs. Some people would take vacation time to come and work with us. Well, you figure what we are—we're Detroit—automotive, you know, and they were really interested in racing, too. But it was a pretty good gig for them, too, to be in the hospitality areas. They were troubleshooters for us. They told us if something was wrong. And things went wrong sometimes. Our contractors were really a big help in trying to fix some of those problems. So spread out all over, and don't forget signage! Signage was important was in areas like this, too. So signage had to be placed everywhere so people knew where they were going. Transportation, security--I didn't have the security people, but as far as making sure that the caterer, there's a lot access points that were closed. and the caterers had to get through. You didn't really know until you got there the first day. In some ways you know as to what you should do. The caterers would buy out a restaurant in the Renaissance Center for prep which was a really smart idea. There's no electricity, no phone service, there's nothing. There's no running water. It's a curious challenge to set up this town within a town.

Powell: So the volunteers pretty much took care of those operations?

Schroeder: Well, they were wonderful. Plus, there was another group that helped with the construction of the track, actually. Just think, we didn't pay them. Now,

as a not-for-profit, we couldn't have done it without them. There's no way. And they were so committed! We would have a debrief at the end of the day in my trailer, and the heads of each area would come in, and tell us what went wrong, what we can fix that night, you know, what needed to be done. If it was gonna rain the next day, we knew to remind them to put the umbrellas down, to make sure that the chairs were tipped up, because otherwise the chairs would be filled with water. You see what I mean? I know how many electrical outlets there are in each of the hospitality suites. I mean, you had to know this minutia. We had bags of towels, and what not so that they could take them out and wipe off the grandstands. But there's a huge amount of things that have to be done.

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Powell: Besides the races, what are some of the other events that you worked on while you were Marketing Director of the Detroit Renaissance?

Schroeder: Well, now you know it was kinda split up a bit. I didn't have as much to do. We also did fireworks, back then, and we did the Montreux Jazz Festival back then. My responsibilities were much less although I tried to do some cross promotion with my people to get them interested in doing those things, as well. But Jazz Fest-- that was McCabe, the president of the Detroit Renaissance, that really was what he did when he started. He loved jazz, and it was really, really well done. Yeah, not as much with those two. But with the fireworks, for instance, Hudson's was involved with the Detroit Grand Prix. They sponsored Free Prix Day. What we tried to do was tried to give the image of the fact that Hudson's was responsible for having a free day on Friday as though they paid for all the tickets for that day—it's not exactly how it works, but they were able to associate themselves with that day, and they cross promoted in their stores, and what not. Well, Hudson's also did the fireworks, so you know now I'm involved in all of that--making sure everything is going smoothly, and we're not switching people on them. So that's kinda how that worked.

Powell: What were some of the goals in creating these events?

Schroeder: Image. To begin with, that was really important. At that time, Coleman Young was our mayor, and there were some image issues, and some things that were going on; Devil's Night, crime, and what not. People didn't ask about that because they understood that this was something that was meant to make things better. If you saw the videotapes of the races, you would want to go to Detroit to visit it because they look so nice. And as far as internationally, the Formula 1 race was broadcast internationally. Cool, you know. Everybody thought, "Yeah, that's a nice place". And then the same thing, Indycar was more within the United States than internationally when we did that, but Belle Isle looked super. I don't know if you even seen it, but Belle Isle looked fantastic. You go to the point of the Isle, and then you take a shot of downtown Detroit across the river, and you see Canada here. We had guys who would come in from overseas who couldn't believe that we had a country across the river that was so close with such a minimal amount of security. We take that for granted, but you know they'd go "No!" I'd say "Yes! Look! Another country!" So image was really, really the most important thing. And I used to tell McCabe I wish I had been in the board meeting when he had gone to his board, and said "I want to bring Formula 1 to the streets of Detroit." Can you imagine? I wonder if anyone laughed or thought, "How are you gonna do that?" But they went along with it. I think it was really a good thing, though, for the city, when you think about all the people who knew about it, and came here and went back and said nice things about us.

Powell: Can you tell about coordinating hospitality areas for VIP guests. What type of VIP guests?

Schroeder: Ok, so, the VIP --the corporate hospitality image really, we'd have about 35 every year come around--a little bit more a little bit less. So there were 35 of those. Basically, they're 50 x 40 foot-- ok there's a tent, tables, chairs, and

we would build a mini-grandstand in them so they'd be facing the track so they could watch the races from there. All of those would have to be coordinated with the food and beverage people, too. They had 100 tickets for each of the three days. That way they could split it up. They could invite 300 different people. And they'd also call me and, of course, they'd want a zillion worker passes, and I could understand that. We gave them some worker passes because they've got employees who are working this for them and signing in, and what not, and you don't want to use the tickets that you purchased for your worker bees, so we took care of that for them. We encouraged them, after we got some experience, to do some things to make sure people weren't crashing the party. I said "I highly recommend that you have somebody checking them in at the entrance way. I mean, we are checking tickets, and what not, but make sure you're checking them so somebody's brother-in-law is coming, when you really wanted the brother to come, who is the corporate person that you wanted to impress with your generosity." So you learn those things after a while. So they're spread out all over downtown, and you've got to deal with-- ok, 35 times 100. 3500 people plus, and they also had the opportunity to purchase an extra 50, so by the time I'm done I'm dealing with about 5000 people that are very important to those people, and there's just a couple of us. [Laughs] And everything is a crisis for them, you understand. So you've got to figure out what's the most important thing to do. But our volunteers again, with some experience, were able to sort through that. We did have security in the area that could help out if someone was being belligerent or what not. But it was, it was quite the time, yeah. I had Ford Motor Company when we were on Belle Isle, and around the fountain, the big fountain, [James Scott Memorial Fountain]-they had it up and running, and it was gorgeous for us. Unfortunately, I got a phone call that said it was starting to overflow and draining into the streets. What people wanna know is that you're doing something about it, and that you care. So I called our people, and the city was there obviously, and so they went and made sure the pumps were working. And so I went to go and see my guy, and I said "Oh! Listen, we got right on it right away. I knew this was important." He says "They came through with a squeegee; they wiped everything up, the fountain's looking beautiful." And I said "I'm so glad! You know that we'll do anything we can do make it right. But I want you to

know next year the price of your suite is going to go up because I'm going to charge you for waterfront property." [Laughs] And he cracked up. At that point, it wasn't a crisis anymore. We were kidding around like we usually do, and he was ready to go back to his people and have fun, and know that we were gonna take care of it. So that's what we did.

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Powell: What type of dealings did you have with city officials?

Schroeder: Really, there were some other people that dealt directly with the city. We dealt with Parks and Rec. We didn't have to deal with the mayor's office or any of that. We would get approval through people in the office who were really doing the big production promotion who were at Detroit Renaissance permanently throughout the year because they kept relationship up with the city all the time. I didn't have that responsibility. My responsibility was more with the sponsors, and with the suite holders, and group tickets sales, and what not. But the Parks and Rec people-- once they were told what we were gonna do-- the hardest part was the first couple of years when you didn't know what was gonna happen or how to fix something. After a while, you knew if something went wrong you'd go, "Oh, ok, that's fine. We know what to do. We know who to call." So it went ok. It was not bad for us. By the time the approval got to us, the hard part was done--the negotiating-- so, we were ok.

Powell: So you personally didn't do much negotiation?

Schroeder: No. Not with the city.

Powell: How did peoples' bad impressions of Detroit affect your dealings with business leaders?

Schroeder: Again, not that much. I mentioned they knew there were things going on. The people who were based here were already involved and concerned about the image anyways, so they knew that that's what we were trying to do, and they knew that was what was part of what they were trying to do. Years after the race that I was with, I was talking with a gentlemen who I used to work with from Dodger Chrysler. I said to him, "You know, I was always amazed that we were able to get all of you big head marketing guys from all three in a room to talk about (that's unheard of) what they were going to do for a single event to make sure they didn't overlap, and everybody was able to sign their name to something they owned, like a part of it". And I said, "I just was so impressed that you would help us try to improve the image of Detroit." And he said to me, "We knew that, and that's why we were there. That was our responsibility-- to try to help, plus it's an automotive event." But I thought "That's pretty cool that they would put their marketing competitiveness behind them to make sure that we would be successful. That was very nice.

Powell: It seems like they all had the same goals as you.

Schroeder: Yeah, and once they were signed on, their goal was to use this tool as best they could to stand out amongst others, and they did. They were full, once they got going. You know, if there was a golf tournament on TV that same day, they would be make sure--

[Banging]

Powell: Should I pause it?

Schroeder: Yeah.

Powell: What was something that you were most proud of accomplishing with the Detroit Renaissance?

Schroeder: I think in explaining how people were really coming together and working together-- that was really something to see--when everybody was working towards the same goal. You don't see that usually, as I was saying, it's usually very competitive. The market is extremely competitive, and you're trying to outdo the other guy, and in this case, we were all working together, and I think that was good. And the other thing was that move to Belle Isle. I had more responsibility when we moved to Belle Isle to try to build something from scratch, and build another city with nothing there-- less there than what we had downtown, even. So I'm proud of that, and I'm proud of our relationship with our sponsors, and our suite people. I still have copies somewhere of some of the letters that were sent to Bob McCabe about what a pleasant experience they had, and they felt we went beyond the call of duty to try take care of them. And that's pretty nice. That doesn't happen very often. And I was able to do things with them after the fact, too. So, that was fun.

Powell: Was there anything you wanted to accomplish with the Detroit Renaissance but for one reason or another you couldn't?

Schroeder: I think I wish that the relationship that we had in that office could have carried on and spread beyond, and not just ended, you know. Like, when the race was over- boom- that was done. I wish it could've continued on in other areas, but even the relationship that we had amongst ourselves-- I found that even after I left, Bob McCabe used to tell us that he spoiled us for other jobs, and he was right because we would've stay all night long to help somebody else out in that office who had a problem that had to be solved for the race, and I've seen that teamwork is not as common anymore. It really isn't. Every man is out for himself, you know. It's too bad. Not all the time, but it was just a very unique

experience. I think we have that more now downtown, than we did back then, but it didn't maintain for as long as I hoped it would. And, of course, the race went away for a while, and one of the reasons that that went away is because it became for-profit. When it was a not-for-profit, we were doing it for lovely reasons. [Laughs] But you give that to somebody who is a for-profit company, and the personality changes. And I think that's really what happened. I was sad to see that happen.

Powell: Why do you think your work didn't continue beyond the races?

Schroeder: Well, Bob McCabe retired, first of all, and the last year that we were doing it without him was awful. I mean, it was just awful. We didn't get the support that we needed, and without his foresight -when the board decided to get out of the events, you know, it just dropped. The support was gone for us. So, we did it, but without that backup by your people, it's just gone. And two-- let's see, the fireworks was given to the Thanksgiving parade, which made sense. They did a nice job-- they still do a nice job with it. And then really, the Jazz Festival kinda went on by itself. It's working extremely well now, too. It's got a main supporter as well, so that's going fine. And then the race couldn't just go away. The race had so much value. We'd already built it up, and had lists of people who already were committed to it. It had some value, so it had to be purchased, so-to-speak, in order to transfer it to another owner. So, we got three legitimate bids, and McCabe and I saw them in, and we were comparing them, and McCabe had to make the final decision. Like I said, it went to a company that was a for-profit company, and it just changed. So that was that. And sure enough, eventually not too long after that, they stopped running it downtown, or on Belle Isle, and then Mr. Penske resurrected it recently for the last couple of years. It's good to see it going. It should be here. Belle Isle is just a beautiful place.

Powell: What year was the last year with McCabe?

Schroeder: With McCabe, it would've been 92, I believe.

Powell: Can you tell me a little bit about when you moved on from Detroit Renaissance? Why did you leave, and what did you move on to next?

Schroeder: Well, the race was sold, and so a lot of us were just let go, you know. The company who bought it brought its own people in, so you know, that was that. As a matter of fact, I was so concerned about the people I'd been working with for years, I called each one of them when I was leaving, and I told them that the race was going to continue on, I know they were going to be in good hands. It's not a problem, and when they least expected it I was going to call them again with some other project, and ask them to open their checkbook again for me. [Laughs] It was fine. I didn't have to do that, but I felt that was the responsible thing to do. So, we did that, and after that, I bounced around. I did a couple of things. I did some projects with the Detroit Public Television. I did some not-for-profit work. I found the same joy out of creating events for other people as I did for my own, even though they might be smaller. The Leukemia Foundation wanted to have a sailing regatta in Port Huron. That was a fun summer, boy. I went up there, and we had 130 sail boats set up, and they were doing fundraising for leukemia. When those boats went out, and the sails went up-- I mean, you know, what can you say? You know, and everybody had the same. I had to call the office because they were turning in so much money I couldn't count it all. I called the office I said, "Just send somebody else to count all the money. I can't count it." But you know, you gotta have that comradery with everybody no matter what's going on, and you feed off of that, I guess. If you love it, you do feed off of that. So, I was doing a lot of different events for different people. The event I did for Detroit Public Television was a pretty large one. We did an African American event in Detroit, a Native American event in Mt. Pleasant, and a Hispanic event in Grand Rapids, tied in with three Detroit Public Television stations in those areas,

recognizing outstanding support from the community by individual people. That was a great deal of fun. For the Native American people to allow you within--to open the door up to their community within their ranks-- it was very special. Very. Some of them are working so hard for their people. So I've been able to backdoor so many neat things through what I do. It's been a lot of fun, and it's been a privilege from people to allow me to do that.

Powell: Was there any stories or anything you think we missed in talking about the Detroit Renaissance?

Schroeder: There's a zillion stories [Laughs] when you're working that hard. There's something we didn't talk about that's pretty amusing-- wasn't amusing at the time-- but bootleg marketing is rampant in major events, it really is. You don't think about it. Now it's funny, but it was not funny then. When you have a company--I won't name who-- who you get to the event, and up and down one of the walls of windows in the Renaissance Center is the name of a company, whatever it is, it's not kosher. [Laughs] It's a huge, you know, 20- some story sign that they put up near the race, and that had to go. It was quite a surprise.

Powell: So they put up a sign like they were sponsoring and they weren't?

Schroeder: It was just the name of the company. It just said "Blah, blah, blah". It was their logo, you know, up and down. Pretty clever of them, I must admit, but that wasn't fair to everybody else. So we had to take care of that. But this is a good one. So we're sitting there, we're running around because the toughest part is Friday morning when you kick out the jams, and find out what wrong, and what's not placed, and who doesn't have a phone line, and the caterers can't get to so-and-so, and you know- what would they say- "We've got hamburgers and no ketchup! What can we do?" Just dumb stuff like that. But I'm looking out, and

suddenly in the river there's inflatable-- on a barge, huge-- Miller beer 6-pack. Didn't expect that. [Laughs] That was not our official beer, ok. And you have to be careful about pouring rights with that, too. There's restrictions, and what not on--what you can and cannot do. But that you couldn't do! That was, again, very clever. You gotta give them credit. So what do you do? Well, because its Formula 1, we're working with the Coast Guard, because there has to be a bumper space between where the track is and the water for safety sake because there's a bunch of boats running out there, too, wanting to be part of the race. So the Coast Guard was able to move that barge, but who would've thought? You expect bootleg signage to be going on outside, ok. I would always be walking around with my little knife, and what not, and going, and I was at the entrance way, and I saw there was a wine cooler sign, and it would just tick me off because these people wouldn't come to us, and they'd put fee stuff up. So, I've got my walkie-talkie, and my beeper, and all my stuff, and my phone, and I'm cutting it down, and because I'm on my way back to the trailer, and I just bolt through it in there and I've got this thing, and I can feel somebody behind me watching me, and there's a mounted police man [Laughs] standing behind me. I look at him, and I go, "No, no, no, no! Look! I've got my credentials! [Laughs] I've got my walkie-talkie, I've got my radio! Honest, I'm official! Why would anybody walk around with all this stuff?" And he laughed, thank goodness, and he said "Where you going with that?" and I said "I'm gonna take it back to the marketing trailer and put it there because it's a bootleg sign." He laughed and he said ok. But I mean there's moments like that, that you go, that wouldn't have happened at any other job.

Powell: So that happened at pretty much every event?

Schroeder: Oh, there would be something that would happen that would take you by surprise. That's what I would tell me partner. This is what they pay us for. They pay us for problem solving, which is true, and getting through without getting arrested or anything. [Laughs] And the bootleg merchandise would just get me so mad. You know, they're selling merchandise, and you'd have to tell them go

away. And you know they wouldn't go away because they could sell things cheaper than anything else. They'd argue with you, and it was just really frustrating. Oh, there was always something. People were clever. People were clever. They'd call you at the last minute, like no one had ever thought of this before. A guy would call me up and say, "Hey listen!" They'd always give me the goofy calls from the front desk. "I got one for ya." "Oh, ok." Guy said "Did you guys ever think of selling t shirts?" Now this is, like, 5 years into the race. You know, we've been doing this for years. "We wanna sell your t-shirts." And I go, "Well, we pretty much have got that covered already." It was amazing the crazy phone calls you would get, and the things that would happen. You'd have to think on your feet. Yeah. It was fun. But on the other hand, there's a lot of pressure when you get there. Other jobs, you would have deadlines throughout the year. Our deadline--boom. Everything was at the same time. Everything hit the fan at the same time, and you'd have to just sit there and wait for it. You know, if you get 4 or 5 hours a sleep a night, that be a pretty big deal because you were there late, doing the debrief and fixing things you couldn't the next day, and then next morning you start again--see what little surprises would be laying in wait for you. You'd get invited to great parties, but you couldn't go to them. I mean, you'd have to be there at 5 or 6 in the morning to start all over again, and that was that. But a lot of fun. It was like getting your bachelor's degree, your masters, and your PhD. You couldn't have learned any of that in class.

0:38:29.5

Powell: Well, thank you. Was there any other things you wanted to add before we wrap up?

Schroder: I'm trying to think. Food and beverage was always interesting, like I said, because there was no running water or anything else there, and a lot of people were not excited about the porta-johns. But there was nothing you could do, you know. The poor porta-john people, they would have to come in every night. This is a very wonderful conversation, but they would have to pump everything out, and clean everything up. And it worked. I mean, people expected

it. One of our sponsors kinda went overboard, and put a table outside of the porta-john area that was there, and put tissues,[Laughs] and aspirin, and other things I won't even begin to tell you about, and put it out there for the people, so the ladies, he said, would feel comfortable. He was telling me this, and his wife looked at me like "Nahhh." [Laugh] He was the one who showed up on Belle Isle when we had rain and mud in white slacks. So that's pretty much what we had. That became his problem, didn't it? It really was a lot of fun, and I'm glad we could impact the city. Like, oh that's what I should say. Galligan's was a restaurant downtown. It was very popular at the time. I think it's Tom's Oyster Bar now. Now they have a roof now as part of their restaurant. That was because they opened the roof up because of us because they could sell the roof out to a sponsor to somebody who is entertaining during the Grand Prix, and it stayed that way. So there were a lot of things that went on that we could point to that were because of what we did. So yeah, it was a lot fun, and every day was different. Crazy. My partner would come in with those little individual containers of Maalox [Laughs], and we'd throw 'em down and start the day [Laughs]!

Powell: Well, thank you. That's very interesting.

Schroeder: Oh, it was, it was. But like I said, the most fascinating time of my life. McCabe was right, it does spoil you for other jobs, it was just absolutely fascinating, and a wonderful education, and I'm very grateful for the privilege of being able to do that.

Powell: Well, thank you.

0:41:00

Powell: Ok, you were talking about the last day?

Schroeder: Oh, absolutely. We were in the office when McCabe was having his last day. It was very sad. He went through his things, and he had a large credenza, and he had some sweatshirts and some wineglasses, and he gave each of us a chance to pick one of those things to take with us. Oh. You probably have heard that he was nicknamed Champagne Bob, and people have asked me if there was a reason for that, and oh yeah, there was. There was champagne in his office many times. We popped many champagne bottles in that office, and we did that that day, too, and popped them off, and would pour champagne to celebrate a good race, to celebrate a new contract. When Formula 1 was over, we didn't know if we were all going to be working again, and he signed a contract with Indycar, so another reason to celebrate. Definitely. He liked to celebrate with champagne with us. You could see the secretary would be getting out the glasses and the ice, and we'd have to run and find the ice, and get the big bucket. It was a traditional thing with him. It was just one of the things that make him special. And he would stick up for you. There were a couple of times things were doing bad to us and I would have to report it to him and he would immediately-- there were a couple of times he called me on his side of the desk--can you imagine--to talk to somebody about something they were doing, or call the president of one of our sponsors to say you guys can't do that, that's not right. [Sighs] To know that somebody's got your back. We were very loyal to him because of that. He's a good guy. We miss him. He passed away not long ago, and all of us were back there, and his son was wise enough, by the way, to have champagne at his funeral reception. We all were telling stories up the wazoo. Yeah. One of a kind. He hung out with Max Fisher, and all those guys. Yeah, yeah, it was, again, a very special time.

Powell: Thank you for sharing that.

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