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HIS 7860 Kim Schroeder
Final Project Interview Transcription

Cass Corridor: Community, Organization, and Structure

BA 0:00 Hello my name is Banen Al-Sheemary. I am here uh today is December 9th. I'm here at the CCNDC with Pat Dorn. This is my oral history project for history 7860 with Kimberly Schroeder. Hi Pat, how are you?

PD 0:20 Good morning. I'm Pat. I'm doing fine.

BA 0:22 Good. Should have done that (Laughter). That's why we have two. And Pat do you agree to be orally recorded?

PD 0:34 Yes, that's fine.

BA 0:35 Alright, great. Um okay, so first of all uh Pat I'm going to get some background information on you, if you don't mind.

PD 0:45 Sure.

BA 0:46 Pat where were you born?

PD 0:47 I was born in Kiel Wisconsin.

BA 0:50 Wisconsin, okay. And what year were you born?

PD 0:53 '43

BA 0:55 I usually get iffy about asking people that question.

PD 0:57 1943

BA 0:58 Alright. So uh when did you move to Detroit?

PD 1:05 I moved to Detroit in 1967.

BA 1:08 In 1967, okay.

BA 1:10 So, what made you move to Detroit?

1:13 Uh

PD : I was in a seminary in Plymouth, Michigan.

BA : Uh huh

PD : And I took a year off to ah to live a parish life in downtown, Detroit.

2:00

BA : Very nice, um so then what convinced you to stay?

PD : Ah

BA : After the year

PD : The uh – I just made a home for myself uh it was a great neighborhood and great people to share it with and live with

BA : And where was that?

PD : And I was in love with it.

BA : That's beautiful, and where was that Parish

PD : Uh St. Patrick's Parish on Parsons.

BA : Ok very nice, so Pat can you tell me a little bit about your upbringing so umm remind me you were born in...

PD

BA : What year?

PD : 43

BA : 43 and you moved '67

PD : Yeah

BA : Ok, so can you describe a little bit about your upbringing, a little bit about your family life maybe siblings, what your parents did

PD : Yeah, I'm one of eight children.

BA : Oh wow.

PD : Yeah

BA : Big family.

PD : I was raised on a dairy farm in Wisconsin

BA: Ok

PD : Uh I left for seminary school after the 8th grade.

3:00

BA: Wow.

PD : So for the next 11 years ah I was in seminary school, which is like a boarding school you know its full time.

BA: Yeah, wow.

PD : And then in ah '67 I moved to Detroit.

BA: Uh huh

PD : And been here ever since, love it.

BA: Beautiful and what do your parents do, or what did your parents do sorry, excuse me.

PD : My parents were uh dairy farmers.

BA: Dairy farmers ah ok, very nice ah so can you tell me a little bit about Detroit in 1967?

PD : Well it was at the end of the riots.

BA: Uh huh.

PD : I had come out here to distribute ah parish... help a Parish distribute food to uh burnt out families.

BA: Uh huh

PD : Apartment buildings after uh having trouble getting food to and so ah we went out and delivered food baskets to the people that were affected by the riots.

BA: Oh I ok, and was this a part of a program with your Parish.

PD : Yes

BA: Ok, alright.

4:00

BA: Can you describe the group to me or was it just you like a small group or was it...

PD : Yeah just a couple of people.

BA: Uh huh, ok and did that impact you in any way, the riots and that community involvement, did that expose you to the community in a certain way.

PD : Um not, well I guess mostly just the fact that through all this so called riot or revolution of any how you call it, as a person, as a white person, I had a problem uh navigating the black community and delivering I never felt threatened, like it was or like that.

BA: Very nice.

PD: Uh on a grassroots level it was uh much different than seeing what national press put it out to be.

BA: Can you tell me a little bit about the contrast?

PD : Uh

5:00

BA: Between the two to your first hand account and um the national press?

PD : That was a really long time ago.

BA: Yeah.

BA: If you can give me something, if you can't that's fine.

PD : I just move on.

BA: Okay alright and...

PD : That was a very short period of time.

BA: Uh huh, and so umm so you stayed, stayed for that year in the Parrish group and then afterwards what did you do?

PD : Well I stayed ever since.

BA: Oh okay...so you

PD : Have stayed down there ever since.

BA: Okay and uh I'm gonna back track just a little bit and ask you about the Great Depression.

So if you can tell me a little bit about how that impacted Detroit, the specifically your community and like what demographics changed after that, do you see any parallels uh to today, I know that's a lot of questions.

PD : Well the Great Depression was all before I came to Detroit. Ah that's right...yeah...so the depression was early 40's...that may have affected my upbringing and that we were very uh conservative with money, we didn't like to ah extend credit, I like to have things paid for

BA: Oh okay

PD : So personally it probably did affect me

PD : But not, what affected this neighborhood was in the earlier ah especially in the early 70's

BA: Yeah that's what I was gonna ask, how it...

PD : Yeah the neighborhood was mostly made up of Appalachian whites.

PD : That were here in transition left the south, they lived in this neighborhood was all apartment buildings

7:00

PD : So they lived in the apartment buildings and got a job in the big three and went to move out to the suburbs.

PD : What happened in the early 70's was those jobs dried out.

BA: Yeah

PD : So you lost the influx of new people coming in but you retained all people that by circumstance, money or ah whatever couldn't afford or wouldn't leave our neighborhood.

PD : And so as the population declined we had uh situation where rents weren't moving up.

BA: Uh huh

PD : But there weren't as many people in demand, and a lot of the apartment owners were also retiring and moving to Florida.

BA: Oh okay.

PD : So what happened was that we had some outside investors come in.

PD : And they would buy the building for a nominal fee

8:00

PD : And then collect rent for like 2 years, do nothing to the building not even pay utilities

BA: Wow.

PD : And when they shut the utilities off then tenants got mad of course at us and burn the building but in the meantime, they had to earn a great amount of money.

BA: Yeah

PD : And moved on to the next building

BA: Oh wow.

PD : So in the early 70's we lost half the buildings in the neighborhood we lost probably over half the population just in the early 70's. There were ten times as many people when I came here as there are now, even after starting to rebuild, there were four story apartment buildings that went from street to alley and ah they were full there, there was nothing surprising to have a hundred kids in the building.

PD : It was much different place than it was later on, that took a tremendous toll on everything in the neighborhood

9:00

PD : And then the ah city kind a deemed it ah skid row because we had there a lot of bars at the time out there and so that added to the reputation of ah

BA: Oh I see

PD : Just the downplay the neighborhood for a lot of people it was still a large core of people that believed in the cass corridor.

BA: Yeah

PD : Still believe in the cass corridor, make it through, enjoyed it, enjoyed my whole time there, all the years I've spent here.

BA: That's really good to hear, seems like you're very proud of

PD : I am.

BA: Of you're here and that's good, that's valuable. Umm I actually wanna back track, I realized I forgot to ask you one question, like what do you consider as I guess the parameters of cass corridor so what apartment buildings does that include?

PD : Well it would go down to the fisher.

PD : On the south, on the ah east side, it would be wood-Woodward, west side would be ah the expressway and the North would be up in Warren.

BA: Okay

PD : Up to Wayne State

10:00

BA: Okay, yup. You might have to help me catch a bus back there (laughter) I don't know how to get back that way, uh eh. So let's move onto the Cass Corridor and development, so when did the umm CCNDC like establish itself.

PD : Uh well actually was ah there was a group in the name of the 4 c's (concerned citizens of the cass corridor)

BA: Oh okay yeah

PD : That had tried to bridge the relationship between tenants and landowners and black and white and uh...

11:00

PD : During its time there was a building on a Charlotte.

PD : And next to the Masonic Temple

PD : And the tenants were being evicted by the neglect.

PD : In other words the owner decided not to do any improvements.

PD : To allow the furnace to get stolen.

PD : And with the hope that he can then make more money selling it to the Masonic Temple, the Masonic Temple wanted to make assaults parking lot all the way around their building for protection and get rid of people so the neighborhood grew and decided to take that mission on and ah renovate that building and save it for the tenants that were there.

BA: Wow

PD : And that was the founding of the Cass Corridor Neighborhood Development Corporation.

BA: And in what year was that?

PD : That was in 1982.

BA: 1982

PD : So with that we were able to form a housing sub-committee.

12:00

PD : And they renovated the building, got some grants and moved the people, people stayed stabilized that building and then after that the housing commission kind of took over the organization.

BA: Uh huh

PD : And we since bought, renovated or built uh 350 units of affordable housing.

BA: Uh huh

PD : To keep with that philosophy of improve housing, improve quality of life.

B: Uh huh

PD : And our general philosophy of if you're going to have a good neighborhood you have to have a mixed neighborhood.

BA: Yeah

PD : And that's when I found when I got there mixed not only of black, white but all nationalities, we have a lot of buildings that people come from Indian...all over to be a part of the medical center or Wayne State and that was a very advantageous thing...

BA: Uh huh

PD : When my children started uh school at a local community school there were 18 different first languages spoken in the school.

13:00

BA: Wow

PD : And that was very helpful from a world view, and broaden horizon.

BA: Yeah I think my professor had to go through your daughter. I'm not sure what her name is umm to get a hold of you, cuz I was ah, I kept calling in here but I know that our busy you know you are always moving around so um yeah I think my professor tried to get a hold of your daughter.

PD : Right...she did

BA: Yeah, so uh yeah let's move on

PD : She lives here too.

BA: Oh yeah, does she? Ha ha very nice. So as of now um can you give me ah I guess the demographic makeup like what major minorities lives here. What would you say would be the highest numbers?

PD : Ahh you know that has changed a lot.

BA: Ah

14:00

PD : Ah there isn't only one group now that is...we had a huge ah Chinese contingent and that's pretty much dispersed all over.

BA: 15:00 His name is Keith Elias, I believe. I think he's a Cass Corridor resident so, longtime resident. Um he came to do a presentation for Kim's class. We were able to see those pictures and showed us like the new Chinese restaurant opening and...

PD 15:20 He opened a store, a restaurant

BA 15:23 I think it's a taco restaurant.

PD 15:24 No it's a small place. I forget the name of it.

BA 15:30 Oh really, yeah.

PD 15:33 It's not a franchise. It's his own Hispanic restaurant.

BA 15:36 Yeah yeah yeah, that's right. I remember like the picture of it. So, this is actually something I looked up yesterday in the archives. And I wanted to ask you about um, so this goes back to the seventies, and it's about the Native American community that was living in Cass Corridor. I believe it was about two thousand of them, I think between the seventies and eighties that were residents here and um, so I was looking through their newsletter, the Native Sun

newsletter, and um, and I was just wondering about the, I guess the monitoring that and the police brutality, that they were organizing against. Could you just tell me more about that?

PD 16:24 Well there was a large Native American population throughout the neighborhood. In fact, Burton school, which was the focal point of this neighborhood, um they had a lot of their pow wows and uh different events and uh police brutality was not just against native Americans, it was against anyone in this neighborhood. It was called the Big Four: judge, jury, and executioner. Coleman Young put a stop to all that. yes, when I started here I started a youth center and we would be... I was harassed constantly because I had black and white youth in the van and they thought there was something wrong. So I would be stopped constantly and would get out and be frisked and the whole car examined. But because I was working, they found out I was working for a church and I was white, I was never personally beat up or...they just had to finish the search and then let me go. The other kids, it was not unusual for the Big Four to take them in the back alley and beat them up a bit to get their point across. Wayne State was also anti-neighborhood at the time. Their police were just as bad as the uh Detroit police. We went to demonstrate in order for the youth to uh use the Wayne State's facilities, swimming pools, and fields, which they have to do by law. They brought out a whole riot squad.

BA 18:18 And what year was that?

PD 18:20 It had to be...between '69 and '68 to '72, somewhere in there.

BA 18:30 Yeah, I noticed even at U of M, I did my undergrad at U of M, and that was such a hot spot for activism, in the sixties, and I noticed a lot of the archives...someone actually mentioned this yesterday. Our archives are closed off s all those records of like student groups, and their demands and newsletters and statements, it's like kind of sealed off from the public. And if you look at the website they have a very different version of what happened. So you like talk to certain people who were organizing back then and you look at like their newsletters and paperwork and whatnot and their demands and you look at the U of M website and what they say is completely different.

PD 19:18 It was organized because they built...field back then.

BA 19:24 Can you tell me about that?

PD 19:25 Yeah. Well what they did is condemned a lot of houses that were...

BA 19:31 This is Wayne State, just to clarify?

PD 19:32 Yes, this is Wayne State. They condemned a lot of houses. And those they couldn't get, they got through neglect and I personally went over and to see a fire. We smelled gasoline on the way. And that house burned. There were three fires on that particular day. The general feeling in the neighborhood was that Wayne State was going to get that land, by any means, possible. They didn't personally set fires but they new real estate people and those real estate people knew that if the houses burned they could buy it and make a profit and sell it to uh. So

they were co-conspirators in my opinion, at the time. Now that's all changed. Supporter of the people in the neighborhood. And the university has changed even in their architecture. The architecture is one in which they had everything blocked up on the first floor so that they could discourage street cutting, everything, anybody from the neighborhood could not come on their campus. Because that was their idea of safety. That was the general feeling. Safety was to keep people away. Whereas now they've graduated to the point where they...people are their safety and windows on the first floor is what makes you safe. The more eyes you have the safer you are. It's a big revolution in change, neighborhood, university and this whole idea about uh working together has really just sparked a growth in change, a change in the neighborhood.

BA 21:26 My Wayne State questions were all the way to the back but since we're on the topic and talking about it now, you brought up a lot of good points and two things I want to ask is uh so first off, what do you think gave people, who are not residents of Cass Corridor, an image of Cass Corridor of being dangerous or unsafe, or in some ways act against?

PD 21:55 Well there were a lot of things that factored into that. In fact there were a lot of uh prostitution was allowed in this neighborhood. But the other thing as the news and the Free Press were just a couple blocks south. And whenever the drinking reporters needed a story quick, they just came up to the corridor. They had a quick easy story. So it all fed, one into the other. It just became like a world of its own. And the fact that the population was very poor at that time and the people that could leave, left. So you had the leftovers, less valued by society. Here they were easy to pick on because they had no political power and it was an easy story so...and at the same time real estate was encouraging people to buy in the suburbs and nothing helps you buy in the suburbs like fear of the city. They could just stroke that fear.

BA 23:05 Pretty much a redefining of the Cass Corridor character. I guess you would say. So I'm going to go down this list really quickly. And so can you tell me a little bit about what it takes to be a member of the Cass Corridor, like what kind of requirements are there to live in one of the apartment buildings because I know they're low income housing.

PD 23:34 Cass Corridor developments are uh affordable housing units..

BA 23:38 Thank you.

PD 23:39 Which means that, you have to, we get tax credits to develop these properties. That's our source of funding for most of our buildings which comes with regulations. You have to make enough money to be able to afford the rent and utilities but you can't make more than a set limit which is usually forty to sixty percent of AMI. So...

BA 24:10 So AMI is...?

PD 24:12 The average income. So uh like just a typical example would be a family of two, you couldn't be making more than thirty thousand and you couldn't be a Wayne State student. This is not student housing. Wayne State had their own housing. So they don't mix. The thing that is stabilizing for the community is that once you qualify at that rate, if you get a raise in your

salary, even double, you can stay. Once you've acquired, once you've qualified, you can stay. That has stabilized the neighborhood and achieved the other goal of opening up units because people that make three or four times what they did when they moved here, they can move to other places and that empties another two units but also for people that really love the neighborhood are comfortable, stay, and that helps the stability of the neighborhood and the continuity of the neighborhood.

BA 25:30 So let's say their salary like triples and they decide to stay, does their rent go up?

PD 25:35 No. The rent stays the same.

BA 25:40 Oh wow. Wow.

PD 25:41 So they pay...

BA 25:42 So now, I wanted to ask do you have a population of Wayne students that decide to live here versus Wayne housing?

PD 25:50 No, we don't..we can't accept Wayne students.

BA 25:56 And why is that? If you don't mind me asking?

PD 25:58 We don't because in the federal tax code, universities have their own sources of funding. So in other words, we're not going to draw from that population.

BA 26:10 Okay I see.

PD 26:12 You can't cross fund. University can't get tax credit for the neighborhood and the university.

BA 26:20 So..by the way Pat, has your position always been the executive director?

PD 26:30 No, I was first, I worked for the church for a couple of years, and then I was a roofer for most of my life.

BA 26:36 A what?

PD 26:37 A roofing company.

BA 26:40 very nice. And so...

PD 26:42 I was uh chairman of the board for a number of years and then I became executive director fifteen years ago.

BA 26:50 Fifteen years ago. Very nice. Can you tell me about any major shifts you've seen in the developments of the CCNDC and the Cass Corridor. Like how was the organization of this group reflected onto the Cass Corridor? So I guess to clarify, how do you incorporate the tenants into the decision making process? And have you seen any major shifts with, you know, the fluctuating populations at all?

PD 27:36 Well our board of directors, they're made up of some of the tenants. People in the buildings plus some experts and that always keeps us in tune and then uh we listen to the uh tenants complaints, discussion, we have different discussions, meetings, tenant meetings, so we get to hear, how it changes is the banks and the lending institutions would not loan any money to this neighborhood for a long period of time. Nobody could get a loan in this neighborhood.

BA 28:20 What year was it that you got the first loan? I think I read it somewhere online.

PD 28:30 First loan was about '90. We got a loan to do an apartment building on Alexander and then that was the first time a mortgage was granted in this neighborhood and then based on that other people started getting. So that...what we did was stabilize and stop the decay and renovate some of the buildings and that was profitable and could be done and that stopped the deterioration and we started stabilizing block after block. And now, mostly through midtown development, the for profit is using much of same technique, moving South and we worked together because it takes a whole variety of people. You can't run a city on just rich people or just poor people. You have to have mix to make it a healthy neighborhood. When I came here there was a good mix of nationalities but there was a limousine service next to the soup kitchen. There was a great tolerance and that was the main thing that drew me to this neighborhood. It was a certain amount of honesty about not putting up airs, like pretending I have a big house or you're such a person. Well it's like "I'm not such a good person but still the neighborhood accepted me" type of mentality here. So artists were really well accepted and they were living in the Cass Corridor and they were world renowned and there was just a whole lot of different...there's an open mindedness that isn't found in many places. We wish to preserve that.

BA 30:40 You know why I asked you about the organization, I guess of the administration, and how you interact with the tenants...Because I usually see like non-profits, throw them under the bus, no, haha, just as an example you see nonprofits serving a certain population but that population is usually little to almost never involved in the planning or implementation of the whatever their mission is, so it's very much like top to bottom versus bottom-up. So when I was reading online, I was interested in how um the community functioned here and I know you have a community center, like you said you have meetings and functions. I was looking through newsletters, they were like a decade old but I'm sure these things still happen like Halloween parties "bring your kids here." And I think like the entry ticket is...

PD 31:38 We're having a Christmas party Friday. You can come and see it for yourself.

BA 31:42 I would love to. I hope I can make it. I'll let you know. I'll keep you updated. Yeah, so um the entry ticket for the Halloween party would be like a bag of candy that people would share and I just found that to be like very different I guess.

PD 32:00 The thought that goes behind that is that there are so many do gooders and that once you start doing that you expect to get everything for nothing so you have to change the do good attitude and the expectation. What you do is you have a big party. It's not for free. You have to bring a big bag of candy which is going to get divided and given back to all the kids. So you contribute, you're a part of it. Especially seniors found that hard to get used to. But they've grown and they do it. So they bring the big bag of candy now and that's your entrance fee. You are a part of it. And everybody benefits from it because the candy will be distributed to all the kids. There's a lot of thought to the stuff that we do.

BA 32:54 I found that to be a very simple beautiful thing. Like you said there's a thought behind it, there's a reason for it.

PD 33:06 So even at this Christmas party, there's this "bring a dessert to share" so you're a part of or you have the opportunity to be of what we're doing.

BA 33:25 So I guess can you tell me about some major developments that you've seen. I know this is along a long span of time, but major developments in Detroit that stood out to you since you've first moved here?

PD 33:40 Well I think the M1 rails is a big one, a big change. Because now that enables you to..giving the economic climate of Detroit, the sparsity between rich and poor, the number of cars that people can afford, for reasons of insurance and lack of income, is dropping drastically over the last ten years. We have an apartment building right next door that has a parking lot for thirty cars. Fifteen years ago when we opened that apartment building, those spots were all filled because people could be in affordable housing and own a car. Now you can't very easily do that. so now instead of thirty some cars, we have two or three. And that probably happened all in the last seven or eight years. So there's been a drastic shift so it's very important that transportation takes hold of the city and bring back the density that once was. It's essential if you're going to have a city. So we're very dedicated to that.

BA 35:00 As a graduate student I can tell you that it's not easy having to maintain a car, pay the insurance. I always say it's more expensive to be poor.

PD 35:17 Yes! Many times over.

BA 35:21 Because you have to buy, you know, you have to buy a not so updated car, you can't even pay the insurance, and then you end up spending the money fixing it every month when it breaks down and...

PD 35:33 And you spend more money on bad food

PD 35:38 All those areas have to be addressed. Eastern market is a big part of that. I go every week.

BA 35:45 And where is that, Eastern market?

PD 35:48 Eastern market is just about two miles down Mack. If you haven't been to Eastern market you should be ashamed.

BA 35:58 Hold on, describe it to me.

PD 36:00 It's just a big old Saturday market where all the farmers bring in their produce and it's straight, you buy it right from the farm, so everything you could possibly want in food, that's not canned, is there. You could buy a whole pig, down to a couple seeds. You want the seeds or the fresh beans.

BA 36:33 Yeah, Ann Arbor had a lot of farmer's markets now.

PD 36:36 They're all based on Eastern market. It's been there for a hundred years, nonstop. Over a hundred years. It's the oldest inner city market in the United States. They even have slaughterhouses there and wholesale..It's a whole community.

BA 36:57 Is there an Amish community that sells their poultry...

PD 37:00 There are a couple Amish farmers that come there. There's Canadian farmers that come and some from Ohio that come up. They come from all over.

BA 37:15 I definitely have to check that out.

PD 37:20 Yes, you've missed a big cultural point.

BA 37:24 I need to leave Ann Arbor for a little bit I think.

PD 37:30 So where are you originally from?

BA 37:32 It's funny, I used to live in Hamtramck. Then we lived there for a year and we moved around a little bit and then we moved to Dearborn and when I started high school we moved to Ann Arbor. So there's block in different times in my life. I have a special place for the Southend and Hamtramck area. Ann Arbor is obviously very different from Dearborn so yeah, I haven't been too involved in Detroit even though I'm a grad student, I feel like I still don't know the streets and I don't know the areas because like Wayne State ind of I don't want to say purposely but with intent kind of closes itself off or tries to at least and I feel like I get that from Wayne State's like newsletters and things. People are always concerned about safety. I feel like people have this idea of a university in the middle of Detroit and so I think they try to do that in terms of trying to reassure people that it is safe. I feel like when I ventured out here, I was like this is completely different than campus life, even when you venture out of campus life, it's still kind of closed off. You have a couple blocks of businesses and that's what it is. And so I haven't ventured out as much and I really really hope to...as soon as it gets warm. I can't deal with the winter. What do you think about that? What do you think about what I said about Wayne State?

PD 39:28 I think that they have to portray an image of safety but they're growing. They had graduation last year and the year before for the first time..like they always had it downtown like at Cobo Hall, for safety reasons, just to make sure that parents feel safe enough, because there is that misconception of safety, a perception that is so much, like when we started in our school, At Burton school, so being part of the neighborhood, it had the same perception. It was K through sixth grade and after sixth grade the kids just quit they didn't go any further. My wife went to the meetings when she was pregnant with our first child. We said if we're going to send our kid there we have to do something about it. And we formed a good neighborhood group and we encouraged and we kept the same teachers. But we changed the perception and we made it Burton International School. We encouraged and extended it to eighth grade and when we changed the name and talked about the perception change we had more applicants than we could possibly...In a two year period we went from a couple hundred to eight hundred applicants. And then we had limits on who we could accept. First the neighborhood came and then we divided it among the different ethnic groups, the remaining spots, and it was all perception. It was the same school, same neighborhood, we did not change it, and we didn't kick any teachers out, but added teachers because we added students. But we created a multicultural curriculum and we had multiethnic days where each classroom became a country and so like the students from Pakistan did their ethnic and all that and the Chinese and there were seven or eight countries that were represented and you went and got a passport and you went around to each of the classrooms. And we tried to get the curriculum, like if we were doing geography of like the English teacher would do and then the English teacher looked at the papers and found out that the seventh graders had the exact same story as the Pakistani students would have the same exact story as the American students. You realize you did not value your background so they assumed the background of what the teacher wanted. So we went back and said no, tell us your experience. So they used those stories to talk about their geography It was educational for parents and educational for all the students. It became a very magical time and it was great.

BA 43:26 So it sounds like it was well received.

PD 43:35 I mean I was the chairperson for the parent group and to this day students come back and talk to me about their best event or their lives and they're from all over the world. They're not scared of anything.

BA 43:55 So are you still involved with that school?

PD 44:00 No, for environmental reasons they shut that school down. They moved it to another neighborhood. Just by circumstance, we had all the ingredients, it was an international school but it was in one ethnic neighborhood.

BA 44:28 I love that and it's so good for the students. It's really beneficial for the students because and I can speak for myself, with everything happening at universities now, the issues that students of color face, from like when they're in kindergarten and on, you always hear news stories about..I think maybe two months ago there was a Native American wears his hair as a

mohawk, and he was literally like five years old, and he said this is how the men in our tribe wear our hair and he was sent home...until he cut off his mohawk.

PD 45:15 We encourage that and we didn't have a dress code. And what was so neat was that it didn't matter if you were an Appalachian with overalls and had a couple holes in your pants because that guy next to you had a turban. And the little girl next to you had a long dress and there was no one to pick on....

PD 45:00 There was no one to pick on.

BA 45:03 Haha

PD 45: 03 Because there was so many, and uh the communities and teachers pushed for acceptance too. I mean, it was a part of, no one was claiming their control in the school.

BA 45:15 That really resonates with me. I really that people would recognize um how important it is for children to experience these things but also how students of color, how they're going to be facing later on in life. To kind of um, to give them that voice when they're younger and to allow them, just to allow them to be able to be comfortable in their skin, and to not have to worry is an interesting thing to me.

PD 45:45 It's very interesting in that, one of the most astonishing things is that students always did reports for their parents and they did uh like a genealogy. So two students, one Black, one White, did a genealogy, and one traced their family back to slaves and the other as slave owner.

BA 46:09 Wow.

PD 46:10 But it was an intellectual discussion at seventh grade. There was no "oh, you Whites" or "oh, you Blacks." It was "oh look it, our forefathers." Were the same but our forefathers did these strange things. It was just...It was so neat.

Laughter.

BA 46:30 Wow. That..Not only that resonates with me but that's just very reflective of how...

PD 46:38 You can get passed those things.

BA 46:40 Yeah.

PD 46:42 Yeah. You can acknowledge that you sinned and get past it.

Laughter.

BA 46:47 I mean, it's reflective in the way that you, you and your team run this place. That ideology is very important. So, I guess we're going to like break and go to...

PD 47:04 We can't break too long because we got to get going.

BA 47:06 Oh no, I mean, break as in my thought process. Sorry.

BA 47: 11 Um, I guess if could tell me a little about the redevelopment, so if I understand correctly, it's like a sixteen million dollar contract and Cass Corridor was able to buy a bunch of apartment buildings. I believe this was last year. It was approved...

PD 47:30 You got it all wrong.

Laughter.

BA 47: 32 Do I got it all wrong? Well you gotta clarify for me Pat. It's so funny because I'm like googling and trying to pick things out.

PD 47:38 Nobody gives. First of all nobody gives nonprofits these days. They just don't do that. That's a fallacy like, we're a nonprofit so people are gonna give us a lot of money. So we acquired a building, it's right across the street, you can see we're renovating it. And we were able to get that building for a nominal amount because it had been vacant for a long time. And then we applied for tax credit and grants to redevelop the building so we could get tax credit and historical tax credit, everything we could find that contributes to redeveloping houses. We put those all together in a pile and we developed that building. The cost of that was sixteen million. Sixteen.

BA 48:30 Sixteen. Yeah.

PD 48:32 Not sixty. Sixteen. So and you know in a couple months we'll have those 47 units ready for occupancy. That will be a part of the Cass Corridor affordable housing program.

BA 48:54 So is just that building with 47 units?

PD 48:57 There's two buildings. One with thirty nine and one is eight. The one with eight is already done.

BA 49:02 Okay. And are you accepting uh new applicants?

PD 49:05 The one that we finished uh with the eight, we open up, that was leased up, and the day we got our CFO, was at two o'clock on a Friday and on Saturday all eight people were moved in.

BA 49:23 Wow.

PD 49: 24 The demand is like ten times what we have. If we had another five hundred units, we could fill them in no time.

BA 49:35 Wow.

PD 49:36 There's just such a demand.

BA 49:37 That's how you know it's working.

Laughter.

BA 49:40 So yeah.

BA 49:42 So um now to talk more about like the business side. What kind of businesses do you see popping up around here. I know Shangri La, CanineToFive, which is right there, the Good Wells Market, and Textures by Nefertiti. So I looked up a couple places. But are you seeing anymore businesses popping up around here. Any of the tenants that have given you any ideas, maybe starting their own businesses up?

PD 50:12 Most of our tenants work or they're not starting businesses. They're working for people with businesses with the hope of opening up their own businesses. Or open up...or things like that. Yeah. But that takes big capital.

BA 50:31 Oh yeah. Yeah.

PD 50:32 To open general buildings. A lot of our tenants work in the restaurants and in the hospital complex in Wayne and at the casino. So this is uh, it has always been a working class neighborhood. Between downtown and the uh Boulevard and it's staying that way and becoming more so...there will be new businesses opening up, um, just the fact that we're making the city, there's more opportunities for more types of businesses so yeah we see a lot of businesses opening up.

BA 51:15 Okay. Interesting. Do you help your tenants with finding jobs around the city?

PD 51:22 We're not that big.

BA 51:24 I was just wondering.

PD 51:26 We're a small organization. I mean by chance we do. But it's not something...We don't have an employment..

BA 51:35 Yeah I was just wondering if you had an employment service. So with the talks of like development, I know you talked to me a little bit about the City of Detroit, but what's your relationship with the City of Detroit in general and in terms of the redevelopment plans?

PD 51:52 We'll we have a very good cooperative working relationship with the city. We get some city money as part of the development of the uh our projects and uh they've been very supportive of what we're doing, have been for a long time. So yeah...

BA 52:11 When do you think, like what year, can you give me a time of when your relationship with the city of Detroit really like solidified I guess.

PD 52:20 Uh probably the late nineties.

BA 52:24 Late nineties.

PD 52:25 Maybe uh maybe even longer. Probably the beginning of the eighties. Coleman Young was uh a good partner with us. The person there that we worked with.

BA 52:40 Very nice. Um, let's see. I'm looking over these questions. I feel like you've already answered these. I actually have a quick question about Preservation Wayne. Are you involved with that group at all?

PD 53:17 No.

BA 53:22 Okay, I just wanted...

PD 53:23 We do a lot of preservation but uh that's part of our...I'm personally not involved.

BA 53:30 Okay.

PD 53:38 That's Kim's...

BA 53:38 That's right.

PD 54:29 I work with Kim on uh safety in the neighborhood. We work at the same midtown alliance group. That brings in all the different enforcement of the police and and cleanliness to make the neighborhood a better place. She's chairperson of that.

BA 54:00 Oh interesting.

PD 54:02 When she's not, when she can't chair...because I chair. So we have a great cooperation.

BA 54:10 I feel like she's mentioned that to me before in her office hours.

PD 55:05 She's a very good uh.

BA 54:19 She's a great professor.

PD 55: 08 She's a great supporter of the neighborhood.

BA 55:10 Yeah I can tell when I talk to her in office hours. She seems very involved.

PD 55:13 Yes.

BA 55:14 Very involved in the community. And I think you get that with professors that appreciate oral history...They're just a different breed of professors you would say. They appreciate that bottom-up method, they appreciate people's stories and narratives, and know that there are different narratives.

PD 55:36 Yes.

PD 55:39 Who you listen to is a much different perception of this neighborhood than an old Wayne State person or an old neighborhood person.

BA 55:48 You know what, we have about five minutes left. I guess I can just wrap up with um these. Okay. So what do you hope for as Cass Corridor as a whole, for its future, and its future residents, and for the tenants that you have now?

PD 56:09 My hope is that this neighborhood continues to grow in numbers and that those numbers are very tolerant of each other and that there is always acceptance for people with means and people without means and whatever group wishes to be the next group that is dominant or be the most that they're accepted and they accept the history of the neighborhood that's been here so. Just one big happy family.

PD 56:37 One big happy family.

PD 56:40 But, it has to be a diverse family. It cannot be, there's nothing worse, then all rich people because they have nothing to lose, they think they have nothing to lose, there's nothing worse than an all poor neighborhood because they have nothing to lose so there's nothing to lose, so there's no bargaining chip.

BA 57:00 Yeah.

PD 57:01 What you need is a mix of all people and a few of the rich and a few of the very poor. But we can't take all the poor, we can't take all the rich. Otherwise, we destroy our neighborhood. Either one, by itself, is not good for a neighborhood.

BA 57:15 Yeah, that's very business savvy of you.

PD 57:19 That's just the reality of and extrapolate that to a nation.

BA 57:25 And so uh, what was I going to ask, to follow up with that? It seems like you have a great team, like there's so much history in this neighborhood, I didn't realize it until that presentation and like I actually wasn't aware, like I had heard of Cass Corridor, Cass Corridor, but I always heard it as like midtown. That's what I always assumed...

PD 57: 53 Just to get it straight here...This is the Cass Corridor. It's the very heart of Midtown, which is a big circle. The Cass Corridor is the heart of it and it is the source of its strength. Here's where it started.

BA 58:08 Beautiful. So yeah, that's what I'm saying. It has, it has like a legacy to it. And I think that with the team...

PD 58:16 It's put us all the way through. That's something that just happened. It's been here forever. When we stole the land from the Indians and gave it to Cass, who was the governor at the time.

Laughter.

BA 58:34 Yeah, I just think that like the mission and the way that it is implemented is just very remarkable. So I feel like in that way, and I hope and pray that, that it is continued, that it is sustained. So yeah! My final question to you is what has been the most rewarding event for you. You can name one you can name all of them. If you can pick one.

PD 59:08 The most rewarding part of being in this neighborhood is has been that all of my uh children have gotten a great education here and were well equipped to go off to university and to go off into the world and be successful and are very comfortable with moving back and living here and raising their children here and I'm very proud of their, their neighborhood and I think they're very balanced and are good citizens.

BA 59:40 Beautiful.

PD 59:41 I think the neighborhood, I got more than I gave to this neighborhood, so I feel very lucky and blessed that they've been here and have gone through all this stuff so yeah.

BA 1:00:01 Absolutely beautiful. Is there anything else you wanted to add Pat?

PD 1:00:05 I think that's pretty much it.

BA 1:00:07 Perfect. Well I just wanted to say this was very insightful. I'm very happy and blessed that you're my interviewee, that Kim assigned me to you. Thank you so much for your time. I will be in touch because I'm very interested. So maybe that Christmas party on Friday, I hope...it's finals week that's why I'm all over the place.

PD 1:00:32 As long as you got your paper done before finals.

BA 1:00:33 Thank you! Thank you! Alright Pat, I'm going to stop the recording now.

