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Interviewer: Brandy Miracle

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00:00:14

BM: This is Brandy Miracle and I am interviewing Abraham Kadushin on October 28th at the Wayne State under-graduate library. OK.

AK: Alright, I was beginning to talk about the fact that you know this is all helpful because I'm semi-retiring but I'm basically closing my physical office in Ann Arbor so that my son and his business partner, uh my son Andrew and his business partner Greg Stefanopoulos can open up a coffee shop on 1202 Packard so they going to call it Packard Café or Cafe Packard to start with.

BM: That sounds awesome.

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His family's been in restaurants, they've been friends long time so and his family also sells olive oil from their families thousand year old farms on the south coast Greece is the best around. It's founded in Martin, so anyway they are going to sell some greek teas, some Baklava, some desserts and just prepared stuff (Baklava) and Middle Eastern pastries. But basically And also do good coffee we've become familiar with coffee and in Miami, Cafe Con Leche in particular so Cuban Coffee.

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But anyway so I'm taking apart my office and Today Dan Grassmuck who's very much; lives in, has Marcus Borough's house in Indian village and I met him through the Kronk gym in southwest Detroit junction and McGraw which was a Marcus Borroughs building but also we were both boxing fans. He was a sports photographer for the Free Press and El Central, the southwest Detroit newspaper and other. So very much involved here for a lot of years. We're basically giving up a lot of our documents historical archives accumulated since 1972. I came to Detroit Ann Arbor from Brooklyn, I got my degree, I was pre-med at Brooklyn College. I transferred it to architecture at city college got a bachelor of science there and then came to Ann Arbor for my masters and doctorate. Met my wife is also from New

York and she was you in the 60s got a bachelor's master's and doctorate from Uof M in counseling special Ed and practice. So anyway somewhere where the process of really going through 45 years worth of professional work that really began in Ann Arbor and then I work for Gernot Berkants in Birmingham who was my professor and first employer and then I got laid off in 73 and started working downtown Detroit commuting from with Giffels Associates a very large firm dealt with auto plants. But I got tired of that. So this fellow on TV William Dean Smith who had a company called the Urban Collaborative located at fifty four forty Cass Avenue in the second floor of the Bell Crest Hotel. So what he had to say on TV Captured me, so I called him up and said are you looking for any help. He goes Come on in.

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So what happened. This is 74 and so we were together two years and so it was a nonprofit public interest planning firm, advocacy planning our clients included Wayne State because William Dean Smith and his colleagues were faculty in the Urban planning program, involved with the Center for Urban Studies which is now The Community Art, which is the nice house next to the Ruther Center which was built after so there was a steady stream of across Cass Avenue, I just parked in front of the Bell Crest Hotel.

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So you know this is like a second home coming here for me right now. And in fact I was also involved with planners who lay out the landscape architects who built a lot of the malls that are just you know mature now and it's you know some parts of the campus are really very nice, with the sculpture. And you know it's amazing since that time so that's 40-42 years ago and so our beginnings, our roots are right here, on Cass Avenue and Bell Crest Hotel, and involved with the Center for Urban Studies.

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Whose director at the time was Dick Simmons who became deputy Mayor. So William Dean Smith who was an architect, Michigan grad also called and he's doing lots of clients included Elmwood, you know Citizens District Council and the Lafayette Urban renewal was moving into it's third phase at that time and then university city A, right. You know the area south of basically Warren to Canfield's on both sides of the Lodge. So there was rehab, in fact rehab on the east side of the lodge to Cass was threatened. University wanted to knock it all down as they started to do.

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We don't need those nice little apartment buildings or houses, we want Campus, we want to expand south. So you know the citizens district council set up under Urban Renewal had a lot to do with you know they had an input. I mean it was a battle. So anyway that Urban Collaborative was an advocate, it sort of acted as an advocacy, advocate planning and architectural assistance to nonprofits and those that couldn't afford it. Well you can't afford it eventually. You know he was he was older married

three kids he needed a real job with benefits and I was still a hippy out of you know school so we could slide a little.

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So Coleman Young asked him to be new City Planner after Charles Blessing. You know I think what's significant here is this guy is not getting his recognition.

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He died at 49. Back cancer Yeah.

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So while he was city planner tragically died and we lost him but his contribution really to Wayne State and that whole era was really critical. The Urban Collaborative itself started as an offshoot of Crane Gorwick, Crane and Gorwick. Who started up the Urban Planning at University of Michigan. They did all the master plans like for the medical center probably early Wayne State and were probably very much involved in Detroit. Well they were asked to Urban Planning Program for UofM. So they shut the firm down and went in two directions. Well Victor Shrem did more traditional housing and architecture. Will Smith start of this urban collaborative, it was all post riot, post 1967. So I think the firm started out in 1968-69 and the first office was at 95 West Hancock which is now WSC Theatre then they moved, they got booted out of there by Wayne State.

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So then you know cheap or free rent there through the University. They we're all teaching sort of adjunct and involved with Wayne State. Then second floor of the Bell Crest Hotel overlooking the pool we have a phone that had a very long line that could stretch to the pool. So we had often have clients like John McDonald head of the Elmwood Free Citizens District Council, retired Uniroyal worker, and head of the Detroit housing commission. He liked to come and meet and have some ice tea what have you at the pool.

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So we were working with a long phone from the second floor in the summer time. When we weren't on the boat. Bill Smith's boat at the Bayview Yacht Club uh you know sailing and doing. So at any rate McDonald was very close with Coleman Young. So that was a very strong you know that that's probably how Smith got and his family is still around, involved you know he lived in Lafayette Park so very much so he was planning director but then he was a little, he might be what you would call a radical planner.

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BM: Can you explain what you mean by that?

AK: Radical planning I would call planning for the underdog. You know we are not looking at Condominiums on the, we are looking at Inner City and housing needs. The balanced what one might call comprehensive planning its not just physical, social, economic and political and all those have to be balanced to come up with good plans, good master plans, good neighborhood plans. Avoiding gentrification through proper management of programming especially in urban renewal when you had a really blank slate.

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But you know the idea you know a lot of it was sold of the fact you get to move back in. Well it really wasn't the plan was let's move it out let's move them out now. Let's bring in, bring the suburbia back in.

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It's ironic that that's sort of happening around it you know with redeveloping with existing properties not you know that blanket clearance which essentially brought a lot of suburbia downtown. So the roots are very much right, you know right here in Detroit and Cass Corridor I think that seems to be maybe your focus of the interview. Happy to have remembrances here, which are very strong.

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For awhile I lived, you know I actually moved from Ann Arbor to Detroit lived in the Pavilion and the Medical Center apartments, actually is a very large network of academics and professionals who are sort of tied into the collaborative it was a collaborative true collaborative that is different projects brought different people together so the whole idea of multi-disciplinary so that was the aim.

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But that was pretty radical back then.

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Actually people tended to stay their fields was very.

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There was a lot less cross collaboration between fields and there were sociologists and there were planners and architects and economists. In fact the guy who, there were two of us at the collaborative, Ron Snelling was an economist with, he grew up in Detroit, he is still around. And so he and I the Economist and the architect sort of but I was not even licensed at the time. So basically what happened was Smith takes the job with the city. He needed the job, I was owed money so basically it went bankrupt

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So we had to give up the the nice offices of Bell Crest but I still have the furniture and in fact I gave away a piece of what I had from to Dan Grassmuck that was taking it o, involved in and is involved in several projects we would like to see continue on like the Kronk that whole area, and north end and Herman Keiffer. So a lot of our stuff is more than building stuff it is neighborhood planning. So I sort of floated between architecture and planning. In the end that stuff doesn't, uh you are not able to support the family or other families so we got into, sort of evolved.

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Our real break in Detroit was on the East Side with Massia Housing and Island View Village, we did infield smaller projects with MISDA. We were very much involved with MISDA at the time. That was another sort of sponsor when it was urban collaborative.

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Can you explain what that is?

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MISDA is the Michigan State Housing Authority, which is really the major developer and bank for affordable and any government funded programs. They're pretty much the community development bank for a while the only game in town now you know now private banks are getting into it but they administer the tax credits that built a lot so for instance Woodbridge Estates we did across the lodge, we did six phases of that so it really relies on federal low income housing tax credits that are dolled out by the state so you get a certain allocation so that's what really financed a lot of stuff over the last, since 1989-1990. We did one of the first tax credit neighborhood preservation projects on Field Street right behind Grand Blvd near Belle Isle, starting in 1990. And then we evolved into the larger stuff Hud Hope Six which was Woodbridge Estates and Gardenview then I also got licensed and have been working Florida since 2000-20001 we did a big tax credit project on the West Side, in Prince Signora the replacement for FEMA City. So we are just licensed in Michigan and Florida, so basically a lot of stuff has HUD in it the federal government/HUD is our Angel so sort of becoming a sponsor just like this city's community development you know block grants these are really federal funds. It's going to happen next Brewster-Douglas will have if not federal funding, loan guarantees and mortgages very much a public private collaboration. But now Detroit is starting to see private development which is what everyone wanted, can be supported, I think it's still tough to do condos, we tried, Woodbridge tried to be a mix of for sale market rate, rental, owner, this and that, it's a little rough, the ownership has taken longer than the rental, rental is a waiting list. All around the city there is a scarcity of that, but it's getting there you know lofts, I think people want loft character more so than a new townhouses that they could get in you know Bloomfield Hills. So I am not sure if I answered uh a couple of your questions there.

BM: Yes Definitely. Yeah Definitely.

AK: But anyway we got started out of this area right here, right across the street and evolved since then.

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One of our early clients Southwest Detroit at the time was called Southwest Detroit Community Mental Health Center evolved into Southwest Solutions. Southwest housing solutions so they have a developing arm. So we started out doing their first outpatient centers. Warp Fisher Center, Boniface Fisher was in a school across from Tiger Stadium, part of the St. Boniface Church and School next to it, both demolished for parking lots by Monahan essentially.

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But the first one of the first outpatient centers counseling service was in the school budget of about \$500 we painted, but it was they didn't have real funding for capital. But then Warren's Center at 23rd then Delray Center, Fisher Center right there when you come into Mexican Town. There are about five or six of them that we did at the time.

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I wasn't licensed but I would walk into the city to set up plans like I knew what I was doing. Here we go, we need to start you know it was a different time. Anyway and then we did other buildings for them, we ended up doing twenty apartment buildings along Vernor and other facilities all the way out From Grand Blvd, to Mexican town area and out to Spring Wells, different notes all around Vernor. We did a lot of work with them over the years, so we have watched that organization grow. We did some planning for them. We pretty much ended up working with the non-profits in the city, Bagley which got absorbed into South West, and Hubbard and Rashard with the Citizens District . So there were citizens district councils under the urban renewal until that got eliminated, so then Urban Renewal program- some of them were rehab renewals like Hubbard Rashard and others and university city in way it was a combination of new on the other side of the Lodge is all new shopping center and housing there. So we did all the initial planning that got the developers involved on behalf of the City. So the district counsel got funding to help prepare plans, to help the city, oversight -citizen oversight mandated by Urban Renewal.

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BM: Who was in the charge of the city at that point? So what timeline was that?

AK: We are talking 70- Coleman Young, really he was around 20 years so really it was all Coleman Young.

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So we had a good connection in fact when Smith took the job. One of the reasons Coleman Young hired him was that he wanted a visionary new master plan for the City of Detroit.

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So he goes. And there's a large staff of planners but it's already been planning for years so. Bill said well we can't do the plan without my guys at the Bell Crest, you know I need them. We thought our ship had come in. We were desperate, we were broke. So what happens is Coleman Young was going to hire us and we were all set to go we were celebrating, and Coleman Young said "Wait a minute I hired you and you have a staff of fifty guys up there and you want to hire those hippies up on Cass Avenue to do the- it's not going to happen, you gotta train your staff or whatever." So that was the end of that, that was the final blow- we dissolved the collaborative. That's how I got started out of my apartment in Ann Arbor, and all the rest, for awhile I moved here and then a couple places. This was my stomping grounds, so lunch, dinner this is where I lived. Not for long, always back and forth- Ann Arbor was the base so been commuting for a lot of years, I-94 and then I-96 when they completed it. That's how I came in today, I was up on the northern side so it was a lot quicker.

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Where do you live?

BM: Auburn Hills.

AK: Auburn Hills, Ok.

BM: Actually, I noticed you did the other shopping plaza out there. I eat there a lot.

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Yeah you know that one? I don't know what's there now we did we did a lot of the shops there too. That was when they built the Chrysler world headquarters but we wanted a techy look so the , a little bit futuristic with the open look, we had our designer involved. There used to be an Italian restaurant in the middle Bristonis and Spargo the coney island on one end.

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BM: There's a sushi restaurant now that we go to a lot now. Very nice.

AK: OK ..

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BM: I think you answered to a lot of the very early questions I had. You did a great job. What are the demographics the area when you started working in the Cass Corridor?

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AK: It I would call it campus and uh Hippies, all the you know all. You have the bars down you know so you know there was a series. The demographics were. You know Cass Corridor.

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It was. It was changing at the time so there was a real unknown. The rest of the Chinese restaurants are still there to the Chung's and I can't remember not Wongs,. It was a mini China Town. Alvin's was is now an interesting thing- Alvin's Finer Delicatessen which also had entertainment which was also a cultural it was an in spot. In addition to decent deli by day/lunch you had the entertainment at night. But then the Circa that started, and the coney island. George Blonde, the owner of that strip his son bought a building with his assistance in Ann Arbor and we ended up getting to know him. Later this is all after, in the The 80s and 90's we did a nice renovation on North Main Street in Ann Arbor and we used to have lunch there. My favorite spot was a Hungarian restaurant that was just north of 94, I think it was a bookstore on Cass, I would walk up there. It was just a long thin counter and goulash and it was seriously good. Place was always packed.

BM: Sounds Delicious.

AK: It was! Filled with students and faculty and just reasonable really old country stuff.

What's your background?

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BM: pretty diverse. I actually just did the DNA testing. So,

AK: What's that?

BM: So I just did the DNA testing.

AK: Is that right.

BM: I did two different ones and I wasn't anything what I thought I was I was. I thought I was like Norwegian or something like that.

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But I'm like half Scottish and I have some Spanish 1 percent African and Georgian.

So a little bit of everything.

AK: So you got a ... So whats the main?

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BM: I'm half Scottish. That wasn't too shocking. I was raised in the south though so we ate a lot of southern food.

AK: What part?

BM: Mississippi

AK: Where in Mississippi?

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BM: Northern about 90 miles out of Memphis.

AK: What Town? What area?

BM: Ripley, not far from Walnut or Falkner.

AK: I drove the Blues trail.

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From Memphis down to New Orleans and that was it was great. So Natchez, I actually had work in Jackson and I was going to work. After Katrina because we were in public housing seriously and so we got referred.

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In fact the one of the women who ran the list in town here Evelyn Brown says try to get very you know high up.

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She was running the New Orleans program after Katrina. So anyway we did some conferences. So I went through a lot of. Then Jackson I actually spent in there a few times. Then Natchez is a beautiful town there are some beautiful towns right there. So the Blue's trail so I am a big B.B. King fan and barbecue fan, beer fan.

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BM: Everyone teases me about barbecue, yeah everyone teases me about barbecue that is my favorite thing in the world.

AK: Where do you go?

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BM: Well you know there's actually a newer restaurant in Clawson it's called Clawson Barbecue. It's my favorite and it's the best outside the South.

AK: Is that right.

BM: It's really good, it's my favorite. So Definitely.

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AK: I'll have go check it out. Well I just got introduced to Zukians which is on the West side like Livonia

BM: I haven't heard of that one.

AK: It's very old. But it was actually very popular among the Jewish crowd where they came out of Jewish northwest Detroit they were also in Lafayette park. . In fact I did work Walter Zukin but that was more of a traditional deli this may have been a cousin or what have you. But it's delicious Chicken, they've got one in Livonia and one down river.

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But then Brothers on Orchard Lake, wait no not Brothers. It is a small chain also.

BM: I'll have to look it up. Definitely.

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AK: Then there is Parks is a really old. Right off Grand Boulevard and Brush, you know North End. Parks's old line. These are some good ones right. You know know Young's barbecue. But Park's has been around a long time that's sort of a I think they may call it an Alabama style Barbecue.

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BM: I find that like Texas Florida barbecue are like really common but like Mississippi Alabama Louisiana are less common unless they are commercial, you know like family owned are less common So. I have trouble finding them.

AK: Yeah I like barbecue too.

BM: So what architectural needs did you feel the area needed when you first came over from Ann Arbor?

AK: The Cass Corridor

BM: Uhuh.

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It was sketchy, I mean there were certain bars, well it wasn't sort a hipster crowd at that time paving the way. Like the Temple there were certain bars you would stay out of.

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But uh because there was Drugs sex drugs and maybe some rock and roll. It wasn't the primary product. You Know. Color was you know I mean everything you but the needs with there was always a need for low income housing. Serious need in the city, the economy was very dreadful.

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The 80's were very rough, the 90's were uh I mean basically in a lot of ways until 5-10 years ago things were uh depressed. The only game in town was providing low-income housing through deep subsidies. There is no market. Nobody wanted to buy a 150,000 house. You know we were doing single family housing you know infill housing, we ended up doing a lot with modular construction and then the basically were qualifying, but you had to do income qualifications.

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So, but the city, it would cost 150,000 to build a house on a lot. Or you know we would take three lots and combine them into two so you have a little more space and.

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Then the city of was granting \$60000 subsidies, so people were buying a real nice house three three bedroom two bath \$90000 with getting a deep subsidy. That was the only way ownership was achievable. When we built the condos at Woodbridge Estates, they were nice beautiful stuff and I think they were trying to sell them for 180 so it goes back 5-10 years and couldn't do it. And so now uh eventually now things have improved but single family homes there are still lots people could buy a lot and build a house there if they so choose. I think what is more attractive now is next door, Woodbridge Farms beautiful old incredible mansions, incredible so people are discovering that. So I think there are these pockets of that people are now discovering the homes in Woodbridge, Woodbridge Farms, Boston Edison, Indian Village, West Village those are incomparable opportunities of quality housing. LaSalle Gardens even North End I think you are going to start to see people there is real opportunity. Even Virginia park near North End and north of Grand Blvd is the next frontier up Woodward into Highland Park. Eventually with the Woodward line of course that's going to, that brings you to new center and north end. I hope they continue extending it to Eight Mile it should be the next destination then go through Highland Park and it will light it up.

BM: I agree

AK: The Woodward Corridor which to me is all the way from the Lodge to the Chryslers at least so with what's happening downtown Gilbert built, Midtown. You know Sue Mosey- Moseyville. She's the...But a lot of great things happening you know I think the cultural aspect is really a driver now. Its always been involved with music basically through in a way through the work. Detroit has an incredible music

heritage that it can draw on and that in it self can attract new immigrants from wherever they are.

BM: I agree.

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AK: I printed the other one, the other list too.

BM: Thank you.

AK: So Democrat, so what was missed. You know I think the you know it took incentives to get you know workers I mean really once the institutions you know the medical center and Henry Ford together with Gilbert you know they created the incentives for renting that and I think that was the a big shot in the arm. So now that helped, it helped to sort of prime the pump and the market so now there is a demand and lack of affordable... now you get into the issue gentrification ...should/once a little bit gentrification; Community Development Corporation director Ray Hammel who has since deceased from Messiah, once said, there was a concern with gentrification in Island View which at the time was a little bit laughable he goes "We could use a little gentrification around here" and you know a little gentrification is like a little bit pregnant. Its almost, you know Gentrification is hard to manage you know you don't stop it. You really have to plan the affordable, you have to create the mix up front and that was what we were trying to do in these new developments. Right now I would have to tell you there is a biased against affordable housing in Midtown in order to promote the market rate and really escalation of values that's occurring. Not to say that again that most of the stuff we do has a public dollar attached so it really primed the pump and got the action going. But now they are looking to market rate, they will take the free money in a way it needs to be, so that's the opportunity for the neighborhoods and the next tier. It's gonna but there is definitely a clash of intent and objectives that occurs as a result of that. That's a tough one because you want the services to come with the housing and you need people who can you know buy products and services from the businesses. You need the units, you need the rooftops to really create the demand for the shopping- you know the Whole Foods and all that. It 's really a delicate balance on how to but everybody needs to have those services, so achieving a true urban diverse city is not easy anywhere in a sense. Maintaining it also, but in a way there is nothing wrong with the next hot neighborhood, the artists, in the end the artists are the ones that create the gentrification in a lot of cases - they can't afford it so they got to find the next hood. So in a way they are the pioneers. So now Hamtramck, Highland Park, Hamtramck in way North End, these basically these folks getting pushed out of the Cass Corridor, and downtown Eastern Market. Any developer, owner wants to keep, is trying to get better rent cause expenses are going up. So he's trying get a lifestyle himself, maintain a lifestyle in Bloomfield, Birmingham but anyway it's Auburn Hills or Troy.

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So in a way what's happened now is it is there was time nobody came to Detroit to do work to do building, there was no, unless you wanted to get into the public development, uh I sometimes call it brain damage in working with the public you know the MISDA's and the HUDS and all the tax which private guys because there are a lot of controls and standards. As one very successful developer once said to me- "No One is going to tell me how big my bathroom is should to be." So he didn't want to use those programs..

So. But uh Now It's everybody and their brother wants to it seems like wants to get involved which is you know that's what is going to get competition. You know Gilbert bought most of his stuff at the skyscraper sale.

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You know before all, now others are coming in and he can't get the same deals he once did. He was created basically created the market and that's what's going on. I think which is but again that will raise all values raise taxes raise raise you know. It takes everything to another level.

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So it's you know, it is both positive and negative at the same time. So you know. Those you know there's still a very large community development and you know affordable housing group of developers. but uh and there is still plenty of land in Detroit there is really no shortage. It's not as close in. And who's to say well you know. The river fronts there. You won't get land it's going to start to become expensive on the river so you can't afford it under the low-income housing programs but you could under, Urban Renewal essentially was a right down assembly then drive down, the cost was only 1.30 a square foot, it was a very low number. But that was part of the incentive, the city would clear it out, you know kick everyone, clear it out, relocate to who knows. That is sort of the tragedy of Detroit of Urban Renewal in Detroit, you know Black Bottom, Lafayette Elmwood going out there even around University City. Research park was a classic right up Trumble just north of 94 was a very that was sort of the genesis of the University City A Citizen's District Council because of Mildred Smith and literally laid down in front of the bulldozer. That happened, I am not sure what direction but that happened up Trumble and I94 where there is a midrise and some lofts. But up Trumble so the research park in fact the renewal was supposed to be a research park the university wanted to have a research park, but Mildred and others said if you are kicking us out our houses build some new ones for us.

BM: That's amazing they got that done.

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Yeah so they did change the whole uh nature of it, but you know so that in a way tech town, it was planned out that university would have it's research park across so and uh it was a conflict, you had the conflict between housing and uh research related to the university. Then you know Warren-South Warren it was supposed to all be torn down from Cass to the Lodge. There would be no Bronx Bar, no apartment buildings, no uh none of that stuff.

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University City that was the name of the project.

BM: That's crazy!

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So so then there were, so this was an Urban Renewal City. So in terms of the history that really was the game- federal funding, clearance, demolition. Then eventually You know the final straw was really General Motors the GM Plant wiped out. That was actually Coleman and I call that Coleman's revenge for having his Black bottom neighborhood wiped out.

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Lets to see how you guys like it up there in Pole town and Hamtramck, that was really his opportunity, plus he wanted GM to stay, uh keep some jobs in the city.

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Yeah I actually was involved, I would call it almost like a Deep Throat for the there was a documentary done, WDIV. Harvey Oshinski who was Emmy award winning, I think he won an Emmy for The Pole town.

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So anyway someone at the City Planner referred me to him, he wanted someone to talk to sort of on the advocacy planning, on who's advocating for Urban Renewal. I went in-but I went in I said I don't think I wanna, they said "well are you ready to go on camera?" I was still doing work for the city, it wouldn't have helped my uh it wouldn't have helped my income, my employees future to go. So I was literally, I provided information but no appearance so it was kind of fun. Sort of what's the real deal and so.. Harvey lives in Ann Arbor now still consulting on playwriting and film. I think he teaches at U of M. But his stomping grounds was here too, he wrote Fifth Estate and one of the early journalists but it was all you know Cass Corridor I think and then they moved now.

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But during that whole Era though, but in a way I came after that, I was here, too do serious learning but left that stuff in my protest days at Brooklyn College. I was into Architecture. We could protest through architecture, we could get our, you know in essence a lot of what we do and uh focusing on neighborhoods and housing.

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So yeah we worked with a lot of the non-profits, Corktown we were very early involved with the whole area around the train station, Corktown, Bagley, southwest as I have said in here not just building but neighborhood planning as you can see.

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Woodward East the whole Brush Park is now Woodward East, Jefferson and Jefferson Chalmers which is another beautiful area. Bill Smith used to go sit here, we knew the area from on Friday afternoon in the Summer we would go out on his boat, get a six pack, with the Mayor of the City of Ypsilanti- seriously George Goodman he would say "are we going to meet on the boat again this week."

BM: That's awesome.

AK: So anyway, let me look at the questions again.

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'Are there any projects that did not but you would like to'. Yeah so absolutely in fact we would still like to work you know Kronk Village the area around; I really came up with a good scheme to do housing and reopen. And tragically Emmanuel Stuart who was rooted, contracted colon cancer and was gone in six months. That was a tragedy.

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I work with also Greg Reed, Gregory Reed, who is an Attorney involved with entertainers and boxers. So he is trying to sell his, this was a police or fire station right off Michigan Ave, just south of Michigan Ave and the Lodge. He's been here a long time, talk about knowing the area. He is sort of a Detroiter, and he's got, if you need another good oral- He's involved in the Nation of Islam, he's a collector he's got stuff related of the founding of the Nation in Detroit, pre-Farakhon. They all started Medical Center of Detroit. So he's got a lot, then he's got a lot of the Motown stuff as he represented a lot of them, Aretha and all of those. So he is great, he started up the Detroit Entertainment Commission, I think he was no-I think he went to- he was a Michigan State Guy.

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BM: We are interviewing a couple artists for this class.

AK: Who's that?

BM: Because I am not interviewing them so I don't know who it was.

AK: so each of you got.. how many in the class.

BM: There are 17 of us; some of us are interviewing Motown artists some of us are getting interview from the Cass Corner and then some of us are interviewing LGBTQ people know that were advocates or fought for rights things like that. So, um I think that would be interested to see if he would be willing to talk, that attorney because of um both sides of that, it would be really neat. I will let her know.

AK: Gregory Reed, Gregory J. Reed. He headed up the Detroit Entertainment Committee, he helped found it and he's still on it. So that's how we got involved in the Kronk and Stuart and some other stuff. We were trying to do a walk of fame frankly that includes Memphis through a lot through my travels and he has contacts. There's a, so Don Davis, who's basically the United Sound founder who passed away a couple years ago was on sort on the board of this. Very nice guy, First Independence, he went from being a Funk Brother –one of the original Funk Brothers with Motown to having one of the largest black owned bank in the country. Assets over 2, so but very nice guy but really a musician at heart and producer. So he actually helped save Stacks Records in Memphis, very you know very important.

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So anyway Reed was close with him so we had this Memphis connection, that whole blues, we were going to actually do Walk of Fames sort of trying to market. Anyway we started with Detroit with Detroit it's still kicking around. We met with Gilbert's people to try to do it downtown with all the streetscape stuff and basically that is where, not have a, basically be all over town. Wherever the event took place, could be virtual, Grand Boulevard, could be Motown could be a location. You know all along Woodward. It happens, you know wherever it happens you know where anything happens.

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Yeah. I was very interested in the National Theater also downtown as sort of a centerpiece for that, it's amazing place. But I think Gilbert/they want to tear it down.

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I mean I was sitting face to face essentially with him, he said "oh you don't think this can be saved" I said I know it can be saved I have been through it a several times. If you want to save it, it can be saved. All it takes is money. If you don't want to save it won't be saved. So you either work it into the plans or you work with it or around it. Even if its just saving the façade, but that would be a shame because the theatre itself is magnificent. It's not that big either, you could work around it, you could work it into a mixed use complex if you wanted to. So it's not- it's all a matter of what you want to do.

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Planning, as a field is all politics is really you know it's a matter of who's making the plan. This is something Smith used to, so you know who makes the plans. There's no like perfect, there are certainly models of great city planning and you can look to models. But you know. Cities are constantly evolving and changing and it's really who's who's in power you know who's making the faces making decisions is the zoning planning officials who's been doing the master plans and who's carrying them out who's you know selecting the developers, architects or what have you the teams that are doing it.. But in the end it's less skill or reason and more. Influence power. Who's again who's making plans that's what was being done. Planning is politics.

BM: Absolutely, so that leads to the next question that I'd love to ask you because it's one of the ones I really want to ask what was it like to work at it for the administrations you mentioned you worked with Coleman Young.

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Yeah we went all the way through Archer and Kwame. We, a lot of our, by the time we got to larger stuff it was Kwame time. So, but we as architects we were very involved, just like anything there are good people and not so good people. But there were actually were a lot of good people at the City. So in terms of the stuff that we dealt with community and economic development, planning and development, city planning, you know all those. We were fortunate in a way we were very fortunate because you know I sort of grew up with it I was there very young and I had an In. You know we were in the fold and you know hanging out with those you know Young's top people.

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I once met, this Dan, he lives in Indian, so we did a lot of Messiah, even before doing the Messiah, it was more 89 in the late 70's early 80's. He said you gotta come to a meeting at Acapulco restaurant. It was on the corner of Field and Jefferson, it was good Mexican restaurant. It was with Mayor young with his bathrobe and pajamas but he lived in the Manooagian Mansion right across but it was his hang out in the back room having a burrito and a scotch. So that was a lot of fun. That was with Smith when we were still working together, probably Elmwood because that was dear to his heart, he sort of grew up – that was his neighborhood.

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So and we get it you know there were battles about Joe Lewis you know the last house that actually went down there were trying to save one house –Joe Lewis ; everything else just leveled. In the end so that's ridiculous. But it's, people, it's a tough thing. People were hanging on. In the end McDonald said "Naw, we are all gone already it's just another house. We can stick a statue there or what have you but lets clear, lets start, lets all go."

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So early on you know we were very involved in. You know they're always you know ways weird things happening. But if you you know even with plan reviews and you know you know there are some very, there are some funny stories about plans getting reviewed and who was behind them. In a way, I was –this One guy –I was a white Jewish guy from Ann Arbor and a left handed- had four strikes working against me but he knew me so I was alright.

One time we were at the city and a guy was giving us a hard time with electrical plans this was with Messiah, so Anthony Adams was an attorney, so I don't know if you know the name but Anthony was hired to help get these plans approved. He dropped me off at the electrical, this was where they were and I'm sitting with the inspector. He goes to drop the van off. So I'm up there in the office, I say "I'm here on the Messiah plans", he goes "These are your plans?" I said "yeah those are my plans" he said "those are your plans right here." I said "Yeah those are my plans. He said "That's toilet paper you can wipe your ass with those plans." So I go "Excuse me?"

At that time Anthony walks in, he said "Brother what's going on? What it is" and so he looks and says "are you with this guy, are you with these plans? These are f" excuse me, "These are fine plans, these are fine plans, It was these other plans over here, excuse me I apologize, forgive me."

BM: It was all about who you knew.

AK: all about, yeah so.

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So that was a good one. So anyway Kwame we were not involved but lets just say we witnessed some issues.

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Actually with Garden View States. Ferguson was the site contractor and. Actually. A lot of jail time as a result of not so, not such good actions.

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By that contractor who, stuff that we could not be, were not involved in but were hurt by. Delayed projects threatened budgets I mean there was money missing and the earth that was supposed to be down here was up here with toxics that was brought in. it was bad stuff.

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But you know. That was not a good use of public dollars, it's a whole other issue but the thing is they are not alone they got caught. People have been doing it, it's just a problem with the way things are done.

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But we'll stay out of politics for minute here literally this that this this real issues the way you know there's a whole economy that's grown up around Urban Renewal, federal funding and entitlement. It's a uh, you gotta keep feeding people's livelihoods are resulting. But there are some, the general, a lot of the public is paying for it. Something that should be \$1 is \$3 is a result and I see that in the hard cost of construction on what it really should be versus what it is. So uh, you know and clearly that is when you get people at their own pocket in mind a lot of people get hurt.

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So uh yeah, 70's, 80's, 90's.. uh The 80's was very involved with River Front Apartments, in through doing work with Holtzman and Silverman, Village Green folks. Who were actually involved, Toby Holtzman is involved with Wayne State, he was a book guy. Gil Silverman was an art guy, anyways Village Green they have been active in the city, sort of third generation builder. But uh they got us involved in River Front Apartments with Taubman and Fisher, that was sort of Coleman Young's contribution, Renaissance Henry Ford. He said "Henry can you build sitting on this side, Max I would like you to, you know Max and Al I would like you to build sitting on this side. I would like to get downtown moving." That's what happened, Renaissance Center and the River Front Apartments.

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The economy was very very slow in the early 80s really sort of a Reganomics, there was a lot of HUD was almost disbanded. So the stuff we had been involved in we sort of had to realign into private. My wife and I were ready, both from New York we were ready to go back. But I got a call. This job took like six six years you know finishing the two towers basically we were the on site architect. The main architect was out of New York. They needed somebody because it was under construction they couldn't wait for stuff so we were doing stuff. It was a very good thing. So we got involved there and did, that got into a good crowd. Working with, did a lot of work with them, With Holtzman Silverman and Village Green Apartments. We were involved with you know Davison and Hermalin- the Pistons in Auburn, all of those guys who built that they were all investors in real estate you know basically. Government insured multi-family projects around the country all but Texas. So that was the 80's.

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Sort of. And doing some stuff and Ann Arbor because again the public stuff went away that it's kind of came back with various programs you know historic tax credits low income tax credits. You brought that. Then Hud Hope Six, which is basically Woodbridge Estates and Garden View, were under federal grant programs. The Woodbridge Estates, Herb Strather, the street names were all Motown artists there was a demolition party and all the Motown folks were there- Probably Martha

Reeves there and the Vandellas and the Contours, and who else was there- Mary Wilson from the Supremes was there. So that was fun.

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Streets are all named, you know you have Aretha Avenue. So we designed all that stuff in there. It was fun.

