



MORRISON F. WARREN
1923-2002

Honored as a Historymaker 1997
Education Leader



The following is an oral history interview with Morrison F. Warren (MW) conducted by Zona Davis Lorig (ZL) for Historical League, Inc. September 5, 1996 at Dr. Warren's home in Tempe, Arizona.

Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.

Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Heritage Center Archives, an Historical Society Museum, Tempe, Arizona.

ZL: First of all, congratulations on being named a Historymaker, Dr. Warren.

MW: Thank you so much.

ZL: When and where were you born?

MW: I was born in Marlin, Texas, on December 6, 1923 and the family moved to Phoenix 15 months later. I've lived here since then.

ZL: Where is Marlin?

MW: Marlin is, I think, about twenty or thirty miles south of Waco, Texas.

ZL: OK. Do you know why your family happened to decide to move to Phoenix?

MW: Yes, I do. My dad and his mother were semi-tenant farmers. My mother had attended college. My maternal grandfather was a Choctaw Indian born in Missouri, who went to Arkansas. As my eighty-nine year old sister says, "stole" my grandmother who was a black midwife, and brought her back to Missouri and married her. My maternal grandfather apparently was a good farmer, because he sent two daughters to Prairie View College which is still operating, before my mother attended college.

ZL: Is that in Missouri?



MW: No, that's in Texas. In fact, I have my mother's certificate, her first grade teaching certificate right here on the wall. My mother was born in 1890 died in 1990, very few women were in college when she was in college.

ZL: Absolutely.

MW: She had two sisters who preceded her. It was just absolutely amazing. She married my dad, who was a third grader. The thing that amazed me was both of their sensitivities to education, because my mother had been college trained, but my dad had not attended school. Yet I don't know who had the strongest drive for education. It's really amazing. My dad had been in a fight with a white male person at a garage where they were working and the rumor was that he was going to get killed, so he moved the family to Phoenix. A friend of my dad's who was also involved in the fight, a black male, was killed six months after we were here. My sister said my father always said he did not want to raise his children in Texas. This was 1925. I had three older siblings, two brothers and a sister. So that's how we happened to move to Phoenix.

ZL: Do you know how he happened to choose Phoenix?

MW: Well, one of my mother's brothers had come to Phoenix in route to Los Angeles and liked it here. He had returned to Texas for my grandfather's funeral. Since my dad was talking about moving he said, "Fred, why not consider moving to Phoenix?"

ZL: That was a good recommendation.

MW: I thank God every day that they moved here. It was chance more than anything else. That so often happens in our lives. Good things that have long term irradiating effects are more chance than by design.

ZL: At least in our minds they're chance.

MW: Of course I believe there is a larger order to things.

ZL: Your dad was a porter at the Luhrs Hotel?

MW: Yes, he was a porter at the Luhrs Hotel. He was an ill man, he had an asthma problem. During the depression, he worked at the Luhrs Hotel. There were two persons who were hired to do the work that he did. In cutting back, what the Luhrs', the owner's did was said, "Fred, we will let you continue to work. We let one person go, and you do all the work, but at the same salary." Interestingly, my dad worked one period of time seventeen years seven days a week.

ZL: And probably long hours.



MW: Yes. Long hours. My college students in class would use me as an example sometime when they were speaking of affirmative action. They would say, "Look at you." I would chuckle and say, "You can't imagine what my folk's had to go through in order for me to be here." I capitalize on it, but it took a lot of effort and energy. I'm the beneficiary of what they did. But seventeen years, seven days a week. And the only time he would take off was if one of the kids had some difficulty in school or something. And that wasn't release time--if he took off to come to the school, it was a no pay. I was a very successful athlete in high school and college and my dad never saw me participate. My mother did, but my dad was working. I hardly ever saw my dad because he would leave before we would arise and when we'd go to bed at night, most of the time he was just coming in. So when you look at many persons, so much of their success is attributed to people who preceded them. I think of my mother and father every day.

ZL: Did your mother teach?

MW: Bright, she only taught for a couple of years in Texas, in their early marriage. Then after that she remained at home. My dad wanted her to remain at home. It's amazing what one person can do. My mother impacted hundreds and hundreds of lives through her children. Everyone who entered my family, either as a daughter-in-law or whatever, went to school, whether they had a history of going to school or not. She truly had a legacy. It's interesting, some of my children now are going into other fields, business and law and so forth, but most of us are teachers. My mother was a teacher, so when history is written about her impact, it will be amazing. If a son-in-law came into the family who wasn't going to school he ended up graduating and being a teacher or something. She was a teacher, and only now are we beginning to enter other professions. One son is an attorney and another is a banker. But we've been primarily teachers.

ZL: But she would talk to all the individuals in your family and your friends and people in the community.

MW: All the time. In fact the day before she died in 1990, and she was 100 years old, she pulled the children together and said, "It's almost criminal, essentially, that we have all of this talent, all these degrees in business and law, and yet we don't have a business of our own." And I think what her concern was, there were children being born into this large, one hundred some plus family, who weren't necessarily as talented as the earlier students, and needed help. I think what she was conceptualizing is that if we had a business of some kind, we could always help. I think that's what she meant. She said, "It's almost criminal that we haven't begun..." This was the day before she died. This was the story she preached. We have all of these talents, I have a nephew with an MBA from the University of Minnesota, another an undergraduate of Harvard, and an MBA from Stanford. I have one nephew here in town who has a doctors degree from ASU College of Education and a law degree from the law school. Just multiple talent. But never, never mobilized into a business. That's what she was speaking of.

ZL: She certainly left you with food for thought.

MW: Yes, she did. Really good food for thought. That's exactly right.



ZL: Did you ever go down to the Luhr's Hotel?

MW: No, only past it. Outside. Never went in. If I went to a movie downtown, I would see my dad, sometimes working. But I never went in. I met some of the Luhrs family later on because my son Morrison attended Stanford and the Luhrs children went to Stanford. In fact, my dad died in 1967 and Morrison attended Stanford 1961 to '65. For about 3 weeks or so before my dad died, he wanted Morrison to carry him some place. Morrison finally agreed. But he wanted Morrison to drive him to Paradise Valley area because one of the Luhrs boys, who then was an old man, lived in the area and he wanted to introduce Morrison to him. Morrison said they talked and finally he said to Mr. Luhrs, George Luhrs, "By the way, this is my grandson. He graduated from Stanford." It's amazing. I guess that kind of legacy is so true for so many children. Just really gifts of perception and drive that in many cases you just don't see today. So often I wondered about the context in which they were born and raised. How did they develop those perceptions and then the ability to sacrifice? It's absolutely amazing. It's a gift. There has to be a power bigger than their individual selves. I have friends that I talk to and what I'm saying can be replicated in many families. So, when we see persons who achieve today, if you looked over their shoulders, into their background, there are people who gave a lot. That bothers me sometimes because we're a very young culture and we're very sensitive to youth and vitality and in so many cases we don't value the people who preceded us necessarily. This is one thing that pleases me about this award that I'm getting. I'm just so happy about this and I think there is a very powerful message to the community. It'll be educational for persons who attend the dinner and so forth and over the long term it will be educational. It rewards people. Normally we don't--I'm 72 years of age and when I will receive the award, I will be 73--and we don't go to many affairs where 73 year old people are being honored.

ZL: That's true.

MW: We just don't do it. And yet, some cultures do.

ZL: You think of the Chinese culture, particularly, where they really honor the elderly.

MW: They really honor the elderly, that's right.

ZL: You lived around 12th Street and Adams when you were growing up?

MW: Adams, Monroe, 12th and Monroe, in that area.

ZL: Would you talk about that neighborhood?

MW: It's a very interesting neighborhood in that the city limits of Phoenix was very small. In fact, when I left the military in 1943, I think the city limits of Phoenix was forty-eight square miles. Now it's hundreds of miles. But it was forty-eight. If you're familiar with the city, Van Buren, McDowell was far north. So that means the small number of people that were here were relatively compressed. So in the neighborhood where I lived around 12th Street and Adams there were Chinese grocers and their children, there were



some white grocers and their children, there were Hispanics and there were blacks. So my friends were young white boys, Chinese boys, Hispanic boys and blacks. They were friends. We played ball together all summer and after school. We'd play on the weekends, but then on Monday we'd go to different schools. The Hispanics would go to Washington School which was at 9th Street and Washington, the whites would go to Monroe, the Chinese would go to Monroe and blacks would go to Booker T. And yet, we'd plan to meet after school that afternoon.

ZL: At the time did you think about it?

MW: I thought about it because I couldn't understand, and then my dad, who was not a school man, but was very bright. I can remember one of the little ditties he used to sing and articulate to me, which really impacted me. He would whistle and say, "There were two little black boys playing along a railroad track." Because a railroad track ran along Eastlake Park at 16th Street south of Jefferson Street. And one little boy said, "Oh God, I wish I was white so I could drive that train." And then my dad would whistle. Utilizing really subtle, pervasive teaching tools maybe he'd kiss us on the forehead, put a hand on the head. He said, "The second little guy said, "I don't wish I was white. Just give me a chance and I'll drive that train." There he was just saying these kinds of things. You hear the little joke, but you didn't know what it was. But all the time he's imprinting on your mind that you don't have to be white. Just be proud of what you are and, given the chance, you drive it, you can. And I noticed my father was very careful about the kinds of experiences, even though we were very poor. In fact, during my whole four years of high school, we did not have electricity. We had an outdoor privy. We had coal oil lamps. He had lots of pride and I noticed my dad would never let me shine shoes. Because he said, "Morrison, I don't want you to shine shoes because I want you to be a man and if you put head in this certain position, it's conceived, people will rub your head and then there's a question about what I'd want you to do about it. So I won't put you in that position." He never let his boys go pick cotton, yet he and my mother would pick cotton at 40th Street and Broadway, but he wouldn't let the sons. He was very, very perceptive. I can remember when I was coming along one of the real quality type, high income--relatively speaking--things for young black adults was to serve as waiters at the country club. They weren't bartenders, they would serve. Really good extra income, but my dad wouldn't let me do that. He said, "I don't want you to get in the habit, I don't want you to adopt that serving role. If anything, you'd be on the end of receiving." At great personal sacrifice. He's willing to work. It was some time before I really sensed what he was doing. I often wonder, here is not a man who sat down and studied philosophy and developed an internally consistent philosophy about parenting. It was a gift. And I'm the beneficiary. He probably never read a book. He read the Bible to the extent that he could. He didn't have much time to do that. He couldn't go to church. These are some of the amazing things.

ZL: Did your mother give verbal support to that?

MW: Yes. You talk about support, my dad was the boss. And she was there to listen to it. You know how boys are and they get a certain age and they start feeling their manhood and they start talking about their dad. My mother would listen and then she would say, "Your dad works hard. You may differ with him, but his heart's in the right place." But she was always in his corner. In that neighborhood, I've always been a



multi-culturalist at heart and I am now. I want my kids to go to integrated schools. It is one of the reasons that I moved to this area, rather than Scottsdale. I just moved straight from South Mountain High School over here across from Marcos de Niza. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious school. I consult in the Paradise Valley School District and some people think that it's advantageous to attend school with a homogeneous group just like your own. I'm saying to them, "This is not preparing your kids for the 21st century. You call me a minority. But in the world, I'm the majority." Most people in the world are dark people. So if children spend their lives in Paradise Valley they are unprepared for the real world. You have to learn to deal with everybody. And I'm the beneficiary, I learned that very early because among some of my friends are Dr. Jose Burrell, who lives at about 70th Street and Camelback. We go back almost 70 years. Then another one of my best friends is Jack Ruble who is a financier. He played football at U of A, and I played at ASU and we get together at least once a month for a barbecue. We have done this for many years.

ZL: To that early neighborhood.

MW: Yes, One's Hispanic and Ruble is white. Others are black and American Indian and some are Asian. I'm a great believer in context, it's so often our view of the world and how we interpret events is a result of the context in which we were socialized. And I was socialized in a context of diversity. Went to school separately, but...

ZL: Talk about that Booker T. Washington School. What kind of teachers did you have there? **MW:** I had great teachers. I don't know whether you're familiar, Booker T. Washington is located at 12th Street and Jefferson. That's where the New Times is located now. I'm glad they maintained the building. I planted those palm trees along Jefferson Street.

ZL: When you were principal?

MW: Yes, the Encanto Women's Garden Club gave me little palm trees. They're big now. It's a beautiful Spanish tile building. Great building. I had great teachers there. I learned from an early principal there, Mr. Landry, what it meant for orderly dress, immaculate cleanliness, great suits. I love white shirts and nice ties. I learned that from him. Shiny shoes, a range of clothing, neatly cut hair, fingernails clean, this was my elementary school principal. Just spic and span, and orderly. We used to say he could see around buildings. He really ran a good shop. I had great teachers: Kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, great teachers. I returned to Booker T. in 1953 as the principal and my fourth grade teacher continued there, my fifth grade teacher and eighth grade teacher. And they were, amazingly, my strongest supporters. I had been to war, been to school and came back. And we turned out to be great friends. It had been a student-teacher relationship and later we were co-workers and great friends.

ZL: How many students would you have per classroom?

MW: About twenty-two, twenty-four.



ZL: I mean when you were in school.

MW: We would have about thirty-five, we were much larger. Fortunately--and I've given a lot of thought to this--in order for a person really to be challenged who is academically oriented they don't necessarily have to have a total class. It's always three or four persons who you really compete with. And it happened to be girls, in most cases, who were just extremely bright through elementary and high school. I was valedictorian of my high school class. But in elementary school there were about thirty-five or so.

ZL: So that would have been your core group, that thirty-five, and you ended up with nineteen?

MW: But there were a lot of dropouts, a lot of moving. Moving in and moving out. When the rent came due people would move. They couldn't pay the rent, they'd move somewhere else. Lots of mobility. I was graduated from elementary school in 1937 during the great depression.

ZL: Did you have adequate educational materials?

MW: Yes. They were simple, but we did. And the teachers were very creative. I think back on some of the kinds of activities and the parent teacher conferences that we had. At the end of the year, our parents would be invited into displays, where there would be a collection of materials that children would have developed. I can remember one thing particularly, I guess you refer to it as a solar system. I could identify the major star groups. We'd translate that onto butcher paper and how proud we were of our display of materials. I can remember I have a book somewhere I have to dig out, but my second grade teacher gave me a book, "The Little Swiss Wood Carver," for perfect attendance in the second grade. So they were doing those educational things. These were highly educated women, primarily without any other place to go, one of the highest calling was either the ministry or teaching. So the quality, they were really quality. Although segregated, I received a good academic education.

ZL: Now was the governing body Phoenix Elementary?

MW: Yes, it was the same body. The elementary schools, District Number One, were in terms of structure and the quality of materials more alike than they were different. At the high school level there was great disparity.

ZL: Why is that?

MW: I don't know. I don't know whether it was the governing board, or the power of children, little children. Same board. I don't know if you're familiar with the current New Times building at 12th Street and Jefferson St. That building was built a long time ago and it's an attractive building today. So if you look at some of the other schools, Emerson School on North 7th Street, for example, it's more or less the same structure. But yet, with the same high school board of education, we used hand-me-downs in football. The kids at Phoenix Union had Montgomery Stadium, we played with stickers on our field, no



grass. Absolutely, we were just ignored totally. But it was drastic disparity. The athletic teams at Phoenix Union High School traveled on Greyhound buses, our teams traveled on trucks.

ZL: What kind of trucks?

MW: Just trucks that hauled wood during the week. **ZL:** So you'd sit in the back?

MW: Yes, with a canvas tarp. You just would not believe the disparity. **ZL:** Then one year or two years you didn't even have a football team.

MW: No, we didn't have a football team. We had a person injured, broke his shoulder and the injury costs took all of our medical resources. So for two years I didn't play football. Stickers on our field, grass on the tennis court in the cracks. An example, I was a state class C hurdler champion. We were a small school. There were ten hurdles a race. We had three hurdles. It was awful.

ZL: So you couldn't even practice?

MW: No, we couldn't even practice. And yet, we had great teachers. Teachers are so important.

ZL: Now this was Carver High School.

MW: Yes, Carver, well they were honest then. It became Carver in 1945. I returned from the military in 1946, so it became Carver while I was in the military. It was Phoenix Union Colored High School.

ZL: Oh.

MW: So my degree from that school reads, "Phoenix Union Colored High School."

ZL: But it was part of the Phoenix Union High School District.

MW: Yes, same tax base and so forth.

ZL: And how many students were in that high school?

MW: It was a four year school and I would suspect, I'm going to guess now, there were only nineteen in my graduating class, but the class that followed me was larger, it was about thirty- five, so let's say about three hundred, maybe. I got a great high school education.

ZL: Now I've heard a story that the teachers at that school had to have a master's degree.

MW: That's when the principal came in at Carver. That was after me.



ZL: But that wasn't true in the rest of Phoenix Union?

MW: No, that was not true, necessarily. But he had come from Atlanta, there was a great study of secondary schools in America and he was in the South and he worked on that project. He was a very fair black man, in fact, if you didn't know he was black you wouldn't know it. But some way, he worked on that study.

ZL: Do you remember what his name was?

MW: W.A. Robinson. He came to upgrade Carver. He changed the name to Carver. He had been associated with black schools in the south and he brought some really talented teachers. In fact, when Carver was closed in 1945, the other schools in the high school district scrambled to get those teachers. Some were nationally known: In science, Dr. Arlena Senica and Mr. Flipper in mathematics, Mr. Jordan in science, English. They were great teachers. But even before them, as I've looked over my high school education, the principal we had, Mr. W. Lee, was very creative. I had two years of Latin in high school, great English teaching, we read Shakespeare, "Pickwick Papers," and so forth. Just very few books, but we read those. In our physics and chemistry, in order to get enough students to justify a physics and chemistry class, we combined junior, senior classes. We had chemistry one year, physics the next and so forth. I can remember being in speech contests. In order for a kid today to get the high school education that I had, they'd probably have to go to a private school. It would be very hard. We call them now gifted classes.

ZL: Did you have the equipment for labs in science and physics?

MW: Very little, we had a laboratory in biology and chemistry. Very few materials, but the teacher would scrape them up. He'd get it some kind of way. Really creative teaching. As I've looked back over and I've given thought to funding, there was very little money and the teachers probably said, "Let's get as pervasive a result from this little money that we can." And they spent it on a very few people. Because out of my group there were doctors, and lawyers who became world class people. As I look back, there were a lot of people wasted, whether consciously or unconsciously. I think of the person who became a great ophthalmologist and doctors and lawyers, they tend to be the persons that I interacted with in my school. As I look back, some of the others died at thirty and were on drugs at forty. That's probably what the educators did. They said, "Hey, this is all we have. If we spend a 'little bit here, a little bit there' we end up with nothing. So let's just take it and put it on winners."

ZL: Interesting concept. Were those teachers native to Arizona, or were they all people who had moved here?

MW: Some moved here, in fact, most of them had to move here. They came from black colleges all over the country. They started out small, because in the beginning, black students were on the campus of the Phoenix Union High School, they had separate little quarters. Then apparently, a group of black parents



said, "We'd like to have our own teachers and so forth." Then they moved out.

ZL: Do you know when they opened?

MW: That information is available. The Carver High School has a museum. I can get that material and mail it to you. When they opened and when they closed. In fact, I was a commencement speaker at the closing. But there is a history in a little brochure.

ZL: I know they've done quite a bit of work on that. What teams did you play in sports?

MW: I was a football player, a basketball player, very little baseball in high school. Then, when I went to Phoenix College, I concentrated on football and basketball. An interesting thing happened to me at Phoenix College. When I went to Phoenix College, football and basketball stars at North High School and Phoenix Union, the highly publicized persons, were on my same team and I became the star of the team. I also became a star in the classroom. In fact, after my first year, I was elected to the most outstanding club at Phoenix College. It was a Thirteen Club. It was the twelve outstanding students and the dean. I was a starter on the football team, and I was a starter on the basketball team and that was very pleasing to me because it validated an idea for me that it's only--and this is one reason that I'm an integrationist among some others--it's only in the open marketplace that you can find out whether you really are good or not. You can be a big fish in little waters, and I really didn't know at Carver High School. I was the valedictorian with nineteen people, but I didn't know how good I really was. It's only in the open market. I was a football player, but you don't know if you're a good football player unless you can play against the best. I served for the last three years on the Half Century Club at Phoenix College. These are persons who graduated more than fifty years ago, because really it was there that I really found myself. I had been in this isolated environment, except as a young kid in my community, and then at Carver. Then, I was in this open area at Phoenix College. And the teachers were just tremendous. They were very nice. I looked at some of my transcripts and I took botany and zoology and algebra, trigonometry, conversational Spanish and I was good student and I was a star of the football and basketball team. That's when I really discovered that I was pretty good. I was seventeen, eighteen years of age. In other words, I not only was good in the black community, but I was pretty good. Without saying these things to yourself, it really validated what my dad said, "You can do anything you want to do, all you need is an opportunity."

I've spent my life kind of opening doors. If there's just one thing you can say, if you're going to make a sentence about Morrison Warren's life what would it be? It would be, "Opening doors, modeling and opening doors so that talent can flower." Whether it's male, female, old, young, it doesn't make any difference. Talent is God-given, and I think as I look back over my life one of my saddest things that I think can happen is undeveloped talent. God did his/her part, and for that talent not to be developed is a loss to the individual and a loss around us. I've often thought about what some of the great minds have contributed, such as Einstein, and I just wonder whether a person with the mind of Einstein was in a female body somewhere who never developed it or was lost in a cotton field, or somewhere. And the answer has to be yes. There wasn't just one, there were others. So I equate that to today, when we can



shape thinking and we can shape agenda, and this is one of my fears of the media in shaping the agenda defining what we ought to think. I'm convinced that the power to label is the power to destroy. Through it all, some way, we just can't mask and thwart talent. Whether it's the least of us or whatever, we have to make sure that talent is developed and shines through, because we're all the beneficiary of it. It won't necessarily, that rare talent, be found in the most favored of us. A lot of times it's in the most isolated, hidden places. But we have to make sure that structures are such that we tap that talent. In my mind, at key times, individuals, white, black, Hispanic, whatever have taken me by the hand and pulled me. In some way we have to do that as a society. I've had friends, black, who were far more gifted than me, who for some reason, that was not done for them. They died on drugs or didn't care for themselves. But, we have to tap talent. We have not been good as a society in tapping female talent. It's just a recent phenomenon, I mean in the last few years. And there's still a ceiling up there. I see it in organizations. So when I'm talking about removing a glass ceiling, I'm just talking about removing the ceiling of people period.

I have a big concern--I read an article last week by Dr. C. Everett Koop, the former surgeon general, and he more or less was saying one of his fears of today is that proportionately, as a society, we in America are becoming older. We're hoping that older does not necessarily mean conservative in the sense that we become selfish and not do those things for children that need to be done under the guise of looking out for ourselves. And we're organized and we're going to get more organized as a group. And one of his concerns is that selfishness, in the process of looking out for ourselves, we don't become overly selfish and then become greedy. I think that's a very perceptive phenomenon.

ZL: Did you have scholarships available to you for the black students to go to college?

MW: No, Phoenix College was very reasonable. Just a small amount of money. I don't even remember the amount. But there was no scholarship, we paid that. No scholarship for football or basketball, we just paid, bought the books and so forth. I worked, at Phoenix College, I worked at the Santa Fe Railway. I tried to arrange my classes so that I would be finished by noon time and then I would drive to the Santa Fe Trailway, which was at 12th Street and Jefferson and meet a couple of buses, either leaving or coming in and then be back on the football field or basketball court at four o'clock. Then leave football or basketball and return to the Santa Fe Trailway at six-thirty and then, I would get home about nine o'clock at night and that's when I would do my studying and then I would study at school. I had to be very efficient and well organized and very disciplined.

ZL: How did you decide to go to Phoenix College?

MW: Why did I decide to go to Phoenix College rather than ASU? If I had gone, I was academically oriented, and I wanted to play athletics, football and basketball. At ASU, Arizona State College then, I would have had to play with the freshman teams and at Phoenix College it would be freshman and sophomore. And then, apparently some black persons had preceded me at Phoenix College who were great football players and had great acclaim locally and then there were some students, black students, in the sciences and such who were doing very well. I think I just naturally flowed and for some reason in my



mind it seems that ingress and egress seemed easier to get to 15th Avenue and Thomas than to get to Tempe.

ZL: And you lived at home?

MW: Yes, I continued to live at home.

ZL: What teams did Phoenix College play at that time? What other schools?

MW: We played a school at Thatcher, and we played New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell, we played Ready, California. There was a team, a couple of junior colleges in Southern California that we played against.

ZL: You had a lot of travel.

MW: Yes, a lot of travel. The amazing thing, traveling, it's amazing how you learn so much. We would ride trains primarily. We're talking about 1941, and I can remember I'd love to go to Southern California because we would have pitchers of orange juice. You wouldn't think orange juice was attractive. I can remember in 1941 my first big steak; I thought it was like a roast, the centerpiece for three or four of us to eat off of. In fact, I've never been a big red meat eater, we didn't have meat early in my life, so I just never... I like to go to Monti's maybe once every two weeks and then I get a small filet or small sirloin. But I thought this big steak, getting ready for a football game, was for the table to cut off of. The travel was good and the train travel was good. I had great talks, in fact I developed some life-long friendships with some of the porters on the train. It was one of the few, for the black community, really consistent high paid positions. They were classy people, they dealt with upper middle class persons. As a group they sent their children to college. It was a good education for me to travel.

ZL: Then World War II came along at the end of your second year.

MW: About midyear I was married, my sophomore year, in December. I had a set-back my sophomore year in that five of us from the football team took a test to go into, to volunteer for the Air Force, to go in as pilots. And five of us went downtown Phoenix and only one person failed. I failed, they passed.

ZL: Why?

MW: I guess because I was black, because I knew I passed the test and I knew I was a better student and so forth. So I was not accepted, and I was drafted in June. That was about February, and I was drafted in June to an all black outfit. Went to Fort Huachuca, was headed overseas and when we arrived in Boston, I retook the test and I passed. My outfit went overseas and I went to Biloxi, Mississippi where I took further tests. There was one Air Force base that trained black pilots, that was at Tuskegee Air Force in Alabama. While I was there at Biloxi--I had passed the test for pilot bombardier--a decision was made by the US



Army and the federal government that there were enough pilots to end the war and any person who had been in another outfit would either go overseas as a replacement or go back to his outfit and they would only train the new persons coming in since we had some skills.

I was sent overseas as a replacement. Here's God at work again, too. I was sent as a replacement when I arrived in Europe. I had some college and I could type and there was a quarter master group headquarters with thirteen officers and thirteen enlisted men, really high level, who were responsible for the trucks in the third army. This is General Patton's army. We had to make sure that we kept up with outfits, where they were so we could make arrangements for billeting, for feeding and housing and so forth. I think I had three stripes then and after eight months I was Sergeant Major. I was the top non-commissioned officer so I dealt directly with the officers, a colonel. I saw General Patton every day over about a four month period. Here is God at work again. I dealt with these colonels and others. What struck me, after about six months, I said, "I'll be darned, I'm as bright as these guys are." In the open marketplace again. That guy is big stripes, big rank, colonels and so forth." So here's another turning point in my life. And I was a Sergeant Major.

Then, with one of the officers one day, we had a down time near the end of the war. He wanted me to drive him to Buchenwald concentration camp, which was about two hundred miles away. And I went. It was about two days after the camp was freed. So I saw the concentration camp. All these things shown in the movie, "Schindler's List." I saw all of that, the bodies, thousands of bodies. So that was an awakening for me. This thing I had perceived as a black/white thing, was not a black/white thing. It was bigger than that. It was just man's inhumanity to man. I didn't know much about politics and control of human resources and all those things and myths and labeling. I didn't know anything about this but that enlarged my vision and it also said to me that if I looked at these hundreds of bodies, there wasn't a black body in the group. There were males and females. I said, "This is bigger than black/white. But if this can happen to all these people, this can happen to black people too." So that was a great, great education for me. And then when I came home we had some big national event going on during the Nuremberg Trials. And Americans never really caught a vision of what went on. This is why I was so glad that the movie, "Schindler's List" was produced. This kid from Scottsdale, I can't think of his name, the director...

ZL: Stephen Spielberg.

MW: Stephen Spielberg. He has since developed this museum, and has a Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, so that this never happens again. I was a Sergeant Major in a Quarter Master group headquarters in Germany, and near the end of the war, a friend of mine, who was an officer, and I visited the Buchenwald concentration camp, and we also visited Hitler's summer home. The impact of what I saw at Buchenwald concentration camp at Weimar was so powerful that it affected me for many, many years. My perceptions coupled with the Nuremberg Trials that later followed, bothered me because I didn't think that the American people, as a group, sensed the pervasiveness of the horrors that existed at that time. I was hopeful that some closure would come to the event to the extent that we, as human beings, would never let it happen again, and become very sophisticated about steps in the process as we are approaching



those kinds of realities.

I felt it so deeply that I tried to develop expertise in the area, develop some knowledge and some understanding about how such an idea could be operationalized. In my research I pulled together some ideas and I made it a point to visit schools and other places and really institutionalize into many of the courses that I taught, this whole idea of a philosophy of life and a philosophy of interacting with differences. Again, as part of the whole thread of my feeling about diversity and dealing with differences. Not necessarily emasculating it, but dealing with people as human beings. One of my most prized letters is dated April 21, 1982 from Rabbi Joel Rabibo who was the dean of the Phoenix Hebrew Academy. He had asked me to come and speak to their observance of the Holocaust Memorial Day. He indicated, I quote, "In speaking to our students about your personal experience, as a twenty-one year old American soldier entering Buchenwald, and the impact of this experience on your life, you gave them a new understanding of the meaning of the Holocaust." Then he stated later on, "Clearly, as you've stated, the most significant means of preventing another such nightmare is to break down the barriers that separate us from one another. We must communicate and get to know one another enough to care about each other's fate. This is the way to destroy the stereotypes that fuel prejudice." He went on to say, "You are a living embodiment of that message. When our youngsters will encounter the stereotypes applied to blacks, they will have yesterday's experience with you to fall back on for truth." Another letter I have is from Scott Colburt who was the Cantor of the Valley Jewish Day School, dated February 23, 1983, where he indicated, "On behalf of the faculty as well as myself, I want to thank you for your excellent presentation on multi-cultural education at our Arizona Day luncheon. Being in your company is always a privilege and your presence on campus added great prestige and importance to our day. The faculty gained a considerable amount of information from your talk and have referred to it often in our subsequent meetings." And I have letters from other Jewish persons as well as from Catholic nuns. I served as a consultant to the Los Angeles diocese one year and I received many letters from nuns. It was on the area of diversity, dealing with differences. Dealing with people as human beings who really were victims. I believe that we're all victims of the socialization process and I use the word victim in a positive sense in that we can't see everything and we're taught to view the world and we're taught to interpret events based upon the experiences of others. Some kind of way we have to learn to build bridges, across cultures, across age groups, I think it's all part of the same scheme. Unless we learn to do that, I can see times in the future, if we're not careful, we'll have young people against old people because we were the beneficiary of better resources. We, as a group of older people have richer resources than young people. Young people can work very hard now and it's very hard for them to save. They have the skills and so forth. Unless we build those bridges between groups, and can walk in other's shoes, I can see problems down the line. To summarize the World War II experience, it was very beneficial for me in viewing the world and learning to deal with differences and seeing other parts of the world. It was a very significant part of my life.

ZL: Then you came home from World War II and decided to go to ASC in Tempe.

MW: ASC in Tempe. Came home in April, overweight, not in good physical condition and decided in July that I ought to go to Arizona State College and renew my education and play football. By our first



game in September I was a sleek two hundred and ten pounds.

ZL: Lot's of hard work in between there.

MW: I somehow concluded intuitively that if we were going to really intervene into the problem of cross cultural interaction, we should start with children. Therefore I majored in Elementary Education.

ZL: So that's how you came to that conclusion.

MW: In my first job, following graduation and a brief pro football career, I was a two hundred and twenty pound football player in a fifth grade classroom. My most enjoyable teaching experience. I really enjoyed it. And I was good at it. I was really good and the students did well.

ZL: You went to school on the GI Bill?

MW: Yes, I went to school on the GI Bill. In that I played football I received a small stipend because I did not live on campus.

ZL: Because you were married. Did you have children by that point?

MW: Yes, in fact, my oldest son Morrison was born six months after I was in the military. I had a daughter, my oldest daughter, a year after I came out of the military. So my senior year at ASU I had two children.

ZL: So you were able to take that stipend and apply it to...

MW: To my rent, and my living expenses. I was living in South Phoenix.

ZL: The coach for football was Ed Doherty?

MW: Ed Doherty was coach during my senior year. Steve Coutchie was my junior year coach. That was the year of the infamous 63-0 University of Arizona win over Arizona State College. Coutchie was fired and a young, dynamic coach from the east, Ed Doherty was hired. The next year, following the 63-0 disaster, the score was 26-13. Arizona won but they had to come from behind. That was a new awakening too, because I can remember in that huddle, when the team as a group said, "We can play these guys, man to man." I can remember that event. There was a good article in the Mesa Tribune here a couple weeks ago about that.

ZL: Now ASC was in the Border Conference at that time. That caused some problems because you had four schools from Texas in that conference.



MW: Right, and in my senior year, ASC was scheduled to play the University of Texas at El Paso. A week before the game, the president of Arizona State College was informed that the two black players, myself and my brother-in-law, George Diggs could not play. This really angered the administration and the students at Arizona State College. I have some articles from the local press as well as the press in El Paso. The President of the University of Texas at El Paso said the police can't protect me, my two hundred pounds, "May run into a Texas Mines player and he's hurt and there may be a lynching or something." So Arizona State College, one of their approaches was maybe they will fly my brother-in-law and I on a private plane. Dress in Tempe, except our shoulder pads, and fly us there and then they'd fly us right back after the game. But I didn't want to do that.

ZL: So, you did not go?

MW: No, I did not go. I was really hurt and I'll let you see the articles, I have them available there. There were fist fights, our team was very upset about it. The students at ASC were very upset. This was in 1948/47. As a result, Arizona State College Representative, Southern--I don't know whether you know Reed Southern, local attorney here, his father, was our representative-- recommended to the school and President Gammage, that we would never play another team where all of our players couldn't go. Until then, if I went with the team, I couldn't eat with them, I couldn't live in the same hotel. They'd find some local black mortician or doctor and I would live there. But Arizona State was the first college team in the country to break the color bans.

ZL: Oh were they?

MW: They were the first in the country who said, "No more." This small college. So, as a result of that, I have supported the university. I served on the committee to select a new athletic director, the last three; I serve on the Grady Gammage Scholarship; I do lots of volunteer work at ASU. I was at the athletic director's house at 1101 E. Warner last week, it's in Las Estadas, a new development there. They call on me regularly, but it all grew from there. I do lots of volunteer work for ASU, but that was the first school in the country that said, "No, more." And as a result of that, ASU benefited because it appeared in the black press. That appeared in the press. So if we were to identify one, two or three reasons why we had these great athletic teams, that was a factor. Because why would we get a great, black athlete from Nutley, New Jersey to come down to Tempe? This was the reason. Now, the school is on the map. This happened to the University of Chicago. University of Chicago had some of the greatest athletic teams of any university and they were at the point where they didn't need athletic teams, their academic ranking could carry them. And we're getting there little by little. Our teams have put us on the map and now we are trying to improve faculty and so forth. But if you were to say, "What are the top two or three reasons?" That's one of the reasons. Because why would we attract them, and why didn't the U of A?

ZL: Was that your senior year? What happened the next year when they were ready to play those schools in Texas?



MW: They accepted. In fact, the next year, two years later, ASU went to play the University of Arkansas. And a black kid was the star running back, Jim Bilton. Now, a lot of schools balked. One of the schools who said right away, Hardin-Simmons in Abilene, Texas, said, "No problem." One school, Texas Tech, said, "Oh no, you can't bring them to Texas Tech," at Lubbock. We have never played Texas Tech in football or basketball. So we meant what we were talking about. We played Hardin-Simmons of course, UTEP now, but we never played Texas Tech. Arizona plays them, plays them every year. We've never played them. So there was integrity. As I've said to the president at ASU, "Whenever they call me, I clear my schedule, I come running." That took some courage, especially in 1947.

ZL: Oh definitely, especially in 47.

MW: And with only two black players. That took some courage. And there have been some outstanding events in my life. I was president of the Fiesta Bowl in 1982. There's never been a black president since, there's been a woman, Sherry Henry, last year. She did a tremendous job. No other bowl has ever had a woman president, no other bowl has ever had a black president. As I said, "One of the reasons I'm proud of the Fiesta Bowl, because at a time when they were trying to gain credibility as a bowl, they were out there taking risks, too." Isn't that a tremendous thing?

ZL: Yes it is.

MW: That's tremendous. And they knew the risk associated with me being president. The two competing schools were Penn State and University of Southern California. Big time. They said, "We don't care. You've earned it and you're our president. We'll go from here, we'll go for broke." It was the first time we had played on January 1st. All the other bowls were against us, they didn't want us on January 1st. The board said, "We don't care." So now they're the leader of the pack. We had the national championship last year. But, you can see the thread of things running through it all. It starts way back when you're young and it becomes kind of a guiding principle in your life called fair play, equity. You've got to stand for something.

ZL: So you graduated from ASC in 1948. Then professional football called you.

MW: Yes, I left and went to training camp in July. The season began in September.

ZL: What team did you play with?

MW: With the Brooklyn Professional Dodgers football team.

ZL: Where was training camp?

MW: The training camp was in Plattsburgh, New York, in upstate New York. And the reason I went to Brooklyn was--I had a chance to go with the Los Angeles Dons, or the Brooklyn Dodgers. I had two



children, but the year before, 1947, Branch Rickey, who was the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers had brought Jackie Robinson, the baseball player, to Brooklyn and I liked that. I didn't want to go to New York, I'd rather gone to Los Angeles but I felt compelled. If I'd been to Europe, and if I was authentic about what I was talking about, I had to go there. It was tough, because the coach and all the players, the coach was from Auburn, Alabama, and the players were from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi. And it was so tough. I made the team, I was the starting full back by the end of training camp. It was so bad that at night, when I would go to bed, I would put a dresser in front of my door in case somebody came in at night, they would knock it over and awaken me. For fear of a prank or something. It was tough.

ZL: How many black players were on the team?

MW: I was the only one. My team mates largely had never played with black people. But I won. There's something about sports that brings out real qualities, human qualities in people. People admire strength and toughness. They admire that. That means hard work and taking risks. I just look at skiers jumping off cliffs and all of that work that goes into that. We respect that discipline.

ZL: How many black players were in the league?

MW: Two or three. This is 1948. It was tough. But in the second game I separated a shoulder badly. In fact it still bothers me. I never let them operate on me. They put me back in. The doctor pressed it down in place and put a little rubber deal and tape across it and I played the second half of the game. Then I thought, "I don't need this." I wanted to go to law school. So they did cut me. They made it easy, they cut me a couple of days later. But I knew I could play, because the following year the Pittsburgh Steelers had never had a black person on their team and they wanted me. I'm your classic full back, about 5' 11", 220 pounds, even today that's your classic, except that they're bigger, they're about 240 pounds, but about 5'11", they're close to the ground. So they wanted me to come but I was teaching. A coach came out for a week. They were going to give me a non-release contract, but I was 25, almost 26 then. I was caught up in education. I really liked teaching so I said, "Hey, it's not worth it." So I didn't go, but it did affirm that I could play the game. I enjoyed that.

ZL: So you came back here, and you had a teaching job at Dunbar?

MW: Dunbar Elementary School.

ZL: That's where you taught the fifth grade, which you loved.

MW: I really loved it. Something happened in the fifth grade there that I've never seen done since or never heard before. I was appointed to the Maricopa County Parks Commission. There was a meeting once per month and I would have to leave the school at eleven-thirty and I wouldn't get back to school until about two in the afternoon. So I said to my principal, "I would really like to attend and take part in this board, they have ninety-three acres of land and their master plan is to develop regional parks and so forth." So the



principal said, "OK," jokingly, " We can't get a substitute, but if you can organize your class so that they can take care of themselves, you can go to the meeting." I took him seriously, so I discussed it with my class and that means that from eleven-thirty to twelve they would have to be on their own. Then, they would have to go to lunch, return and between one and two we had a combined science and social studies, so there was a lot of action. There were research groups and art groups and so forth. So I asked them could they do it? They said, "Yes. We can do it. We're fifth graders." So I told my principal, "They can do it." He was stunned, but he was a risk taker and he said, "OK". I wouldn't do it now, because I'd be in fear that someone would get hurt and get sued or something. We did it nine times. I would leave at eleven-thirty, they would go to lunch at twelve, they would line up, come in one and I would come back at two and they were working. These are fifth graders. Amazing, they did it nine times, once a month, on their own. Then, my third year, the principal became ill. The principalship requires five years of teaching. What the administration did was appoint me a half-time principal. I'd teach half-day and then they brought a sub in the afternoon. But I was principal all day.

ZL: How large was Dunbar?

MW: There were 500 students. It was Kindergarten through five. It was a small, local school. So I did that very successfully, and the next year, the principal was ill most of the year, so I was the full time principal and then he returned and there was an opening in the school, so I became principal of Booker T. So, I've had very little classroom teaching, that year and a half or so. But, of all the teaching, the fifth grade was my favorite. And I have so much faith in children. They can, if you know how to communicate with them and you teach them. My theory is that if there's no learning, there's no teaching. It's the best test I know. If there's no learning, there's no teaching. You can gripe all you want to that they aren't learning. But if they're not learning and I'm the professional teacher and I'm a designer of the environment, and after all they're just kids. Except most kids want to learn. Then the buck falls on me. I'm the mature member of the group. But it's amazing what kids can do for themselves if you plan well and I was a great proponent of teacher-pupil planning. So we planned out and they knew what was to be done.

ZL: Tell me about being principal at Booker T.

MW: I entered Booker Tin 1953, I was 29 years of age, and as I indicated, three of my teachers who had taught me in the fourth, fifth, and eighth grade were there. I came as principal. I just kind of revolutionized the school and really got the cooperation of persons, developed with them an internal consistent philosophy of what we were really about. To examine our views about the learners, to think in terms about what we really thought about learning, and why we were there, purposes and what our goals were. Just a whole new way of thinking. I was not there to just hold the fort. We were going to move toward some goals and some objectives. I had gotten my masters in 1951 in school administration and supervision with a concentration in school/community relations. So I really involved the school in the program. I was a local person, so I had the support of the churches and so forth. We developed really good skills in community relations.



I tried to upgrade the appearance of the school. I'm a great believer in context, environment elicits certain responses. It's more than chance, for example, that our court rulings are a certain kind of way. It's more than chance. If we go to great churches it's more than chances that the windows and the music and the smell and art, it's to elicit a certain kind of response from you. So I tried to do that with the school. I really cleaned the school up. It was two story, so the hallways were just bright. I had an arrangement through our art department to borrow good art from the central office. They borrowed it from the art museum and our downstairs hallways just looked like an art museum. Great art, great art! The custodians, three times a day, would sweep the hallways. They were just bright, really bright. I convinced them--they would gripe about graffiti--and I would explain to them, that if we never dirtied the place up, we wouldn't need them. So if it's on the wall, get it off. It's just an automatic response. Then I involved the faculty and students in cleaning the playground. Every class had a responsibility of cleaning. So they could see a means/consequence relationship. If you threw paper on the floor, someone had to pick it up. We bought a lot of garbage cans. Just put it in the can. If they had to go out and clean the playground up, then they could see a means/consequence relationship. Since we were on Jefferson Street with lots of traffic, our grounds were spotless, the building was spotless, great art and so forth. And I think that impacted the demeanor and the behavior. I see what you mean when we read the statement that, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." It's just nice clean environment. And this is in a context of public housing unit kids. So it was a whole new phenomenon. But they bought into it. And another thing we did, we identified, through a developed instrument, thinking in terms long before we started talking about self image. We'd try to find something that every child did well. Maybe a simple thing, like kindergarten skipping rope, bouncing a ball or a child who came to school early or took notices around, if you look hard enough, you can find something in everyone that they do better than anyone else. Then, we built on that. Because we developed the belief that it's only in the eyes of others that one views themselves. So if children look in the eyes of others and it says, "You are important. You're pretty good at that." Then they start feeling good about themselves. You've got to be able to do something and your peers say, "That's good. You're really good at that. Here's old Johnny, he's responsible, he just does not forget to empty the waste basket or whatever." So we just started building on that. Fortunately we had some children who had physical handicaps. What we did not do, we did not put them in some isolated place, we put them in some key places, and we involved them in the whole school program. We had an auditorium, so therefore we had all-school programs.

I thought that language is most important. One really can't read--you can learn to decode things-- unless you had rich meaning association. You'd decode them, but you really aren't reading. Language is very important for communication. If you have a stage, you have to use it. I've seen so many kids act foolish when they get in a group of spectators, so I wanted them in a participant position as spectators and then as deliverers. And you do that for eight years and you get a feel for speaking and you get a feel for being a good audience. You've got to be taught these things. Each year we would have an operetta. It would take months to prepare. But a cross-group of first, second and third graders were the participants. You see, this required great cooperation of the teachers. Another thing we did was use the lunch period as teaching time. Teachers were guaranteed a certain amount of time for lunch. But we discussed that if we really love children, it means we have to go over and above what the group union goals were. And that is, if these kids come from homes where social skills aren't the order of the day, then they must be taught. So the best way



to do that is at lunch. You don't have to stay with the children, but accompany them, sit down with them and teach them good table manners. In the beginning teachers remained ten minutes or so, but after two or three years, they just stayed the whole time. Well, I started attracting a lot of attention in the school district and in 1966, when the city started looking for members to run for the city council, I was appointed to the committee to help find candidates.

ZL: To help what?

MW: To find people to run for the Phoenix City Council. My name just kept popping up. Most of the names were persons who resided in north Phoenix. In fact, I think at one time, about three of our council members lived on the same street in northeast Phoenix. But my name just kept popping up as a potential council member, so I was asked to run in 1965. And at that time council persons ran at large, they did not represent districts and I won by fifty- five votes. There was a recount and in the recount, I won by sixty-five votes. It was a very, very good experience. The school board was reticent about releasing me to attend Tuesday afternoon meetings and other meetings. So what I did was, there was an eighth grade teacher who served in the military with me and was interested in becoming a principal and was degreed and I discussed with faculty, since we didn't have the money or the title of assistant principal, that if while I was away, he would assume the responsibility of a principal, if they would accept it. They bought it. I said to him, in exchange I would teach him all the nuances and subtleties associated with what it meant to be a principal. And do everything I could to get an assignment for him. And he agreed to that. He later became principal of two schools, did very well. So it was a win-win deal for me and the faculty. I became very active on the city council. My first term was 1966 to 1968. My second term was 1968 to 1970. I became Vice Mayor in 1969 because of my high vote.

ZL: Now is that an elected position within the council?

MW: Yes, the council itself would elect the vice mayor. It was a combination of effectiveness and the vote.

ZL: Was charter government involved for both those elections? Were you on the slate of charter government both times?

MW: Yes, I was on the slate of charter both times. At that time charter liked for persons to serve two terms and then return to private life. There was a Mayor, Milt Graham, who had served three terms and he was very, very good. He wanted to run a third term. I thought, in my own mind, that he was an excellent mayor. So he asked me if I would run with him. It just so happened that he was a Republican and I was a Democrat, and I said, "Yes, I would run with him." Which I did. He was running against Mr. Driggs, John Driggs. In the primary I did very well, but this was a whole new ticket now, not charter sponsored. I thought that was incongruous. If you did a good job, I thought you should be asked again to continue, a reasonable time. I thought that Milt Graham had done a very good job for the city. In fact, many of the positive residuals now, such as, we developed a master plan of the community, we developed the



downtown convention center concept. In fact, I served on the committee to select an architect. We're seeing the benefits now. The original center cost \$19 million. We wanted the positive effects of the center to move north, south, east and west. Everything we envisioned, there it is. Our street improvement plans, our sign ordinance, we don't have a problem with signs. Our downtown high-rise plan, between Seventh Street and Seventh Avenue was either developed or confirmed. We developed a Human Resources Department parallel to the Engineering Department. All of that was developed during our council. It was a great council. And when a person does a great job, I think they ought to be rewarded.

ZL: But the philosophy of charter government was that you ran two terms and then you were out?

MW: Yes, but that was not always true. I think Goldwater, I think some others ran more than two. But two was generally the standard and then you go out. But I had the feeling that Milt had some unfinished things that he was working on, and the balancing, and in my own mind I could see him serving two more years. Charter said, "No." So there was a meeting of the minds. I said, "I thought it was a good council, no I thought it was a great council. Which it is, I think it was one of the better ones that they've ever had." So I lost that time around.

ZL: And Milt Graham did also.

MW: He lost, too. But one person from our group won, Ed Korrick, who turned out to be a great council person. Really, that was the beginning of the end of the breakup of the charter. The charter here really served its purpose.

ZL: Explain the concept of charter government.

MW: Charter was, since it had been so much city hall politics in the past, a group of far-reaching, far-thinking citizens said, "Somehow we're going to have to reorganize governance in the city of Phoenix." Instead of having a strong mayor, we're going to organize ourselves in such a way that we will have a strong city manager who manages the city and then mayors come and go. We don't want a Mayor Daly in Chicago and so forth. We'll have a strong city manager, a professionally trained city manager and then we elect city council people and they come and go and what we 'll do, this body of people, we're willing to offer ourselves as counsel. Great concept, great contribution. And one of the reasons that we're an all-American city. There comes a time in our development when a small group of people should not dictate who's going to be on the council and who's not going to be on the council. In my view, I think one of the strengths of the Tempe City Council is that we have young and old and so forth. I would like to see a way that we have younger people, college represented or high school or something to get them involved. I don't think a body of people who know it all should dictate. As I said, "There was a time when our Phoenix City Council of our seven, eight, ten people or so, three or four of them lived on the same street." I don't think it ought to be that way. I think it ought to be balanced, whatever that is.

ZL: And you were the first black to serve on the Phoenix City Council. Was that a good experience, a



positive experience?

MW: It was a very positive experience. It was a good council and met some great people, diverse people come to mind: Milt Graham , Jarrett Jarvis, Charlie Case...

ZL: The second time, John Long was on there.

MW: John Long, long-time life involvement. John Long, Dorothy Theilkas, Kruglick, Frank Benites, union man, Hispanic, just a good cross-section of people. We argued and came up with good policies. We liked each other, too, and we respected each other. Then Milt Sanders, who-- long time APS--had worked in utilities. It was a good run. At the time the charter government moved in it was very critical for the city. Very critical, and they did a good job. Excellent job.

ZL: But after you lost the election you decided to withdraw from politics?

MW: Yes, I served at great duress, because during the time I served in 1966-70, I went to ASU in 1968. I was an associate professor but I wanted to become a full professor. That meant that I had to teach and research and write and serve the community.

ZL: And you also had a family with seven children. Is Kevin the youngest?

MW: He's the youngest. He calls me every day. We talk every day. He says, "Dad, I don't see how you did it." I say, "Kevin, I don't see how I did it either." We provided a nice place for them to live, we went on little vacations, we started going to the Grand Canyon, I bought a seven passenger station wagon, you know the one where the seats face the back. It started out one day or two days at the Grand Canyon. Finally we started going to Laguna Beach. My oldest daughter was married to John Pitts, who was raised in Laguna Beach. Once we discovered that, it was just heaven. Then every year, I'd try to save about \$1200.00 and we started going two days, and we finally extended it to the week, and it was a great for the kids, because the art festival was there and we could go to Disneyland at Anaheim. We could go to San Diego. Put on a pair of shorts. It was just great. We did that for about fifteen or sixteen years. He said, "Dad, I don't know how you did it. We never missed a bill ..." It was just absolutely amazing. But, I'm a great believer in faith. It takes hard work and luck, but every time I needed something it was always there. So that's why my political career ended, because I was at ASU, and I just could not do everything. And it was a very competitive environment, it was very competitive. I came into a new center, I. D. Payne Laboratory. It was established by Homer Durham.

ZL: He was President of the University.

MW: Yes, he was President. He closed the training school. The training school educated children kindergarten through eight. He closed that, but he felt he needed some tie to the educational community. So he established this very creative I. D. Payne Laboratory. The purpose of the I. D. Payne Lab was to



maintain and develop relationships with the public schools in the area, but also serve as a research arm of the College of Education. In other words, it was my responsibility, to identify with faculty and outsiders those issues in public education, for instance, multi-cultural education that impacted the total college. The question of whether we needed a special training for junior high school teachers. We don't have special training for junior high teachers. They're talking about it now. An elementary degree qualifies one to teach kindergarten to eighth, but is there something special about twelve, thirteen, fourteen year olds? I think so. We recommended that, but we weren't quite ready. I read last week where they're talking about it. Teaching kindergarten is not like teaching seventh grade. So it was our responsibility to develop prototypes, experiment. And I had a budget where I could hire specialists from the various departments and they would join the I. D. Payne Lab temporarily. So we selected some students over a two year period to develop a special curriculum, and then we recommended that we should establish a special program, particularly the psycho-educational. Questions such as the following were researched: What's happening in the development of children at eleven, twelve, thirteen, not only physically and psychologically and what they are going into, what's going on in the transition? What are they leaving and what are they entering? What do they need to know and understand? What do the teachers need to know and understand what's going on? So we said, "Yes. We think so." But they didn't adopt that. The college did adopt our recommendations regarding multi-cultural education. That's where the Institute for Social and Cultural Relations became a subsidiary unit What we did was develop programs in each of the degree programs where we developed mini--what we called--modules. Five week modules, whether you were preparing to be an administrator or an elementary teacher. We developed one major course and I taught it for years, on teaching culturally diverse populations. That's a requirement for every person in the College of Education now, teaching culturally diverse populations. And this was a long time ago-- long before we started talking about diversity--in the 60's.

ZL: I want to back up now. You went back, while you were teaching, and you got your master's. You must have gone to school in the summer and at night.

MW: In the summer time and at night. I got that in 1951.

ZL: What motivated you to go back for your Ed.D.?

MW: The key thing that really tipped it off and drove it was, during the period that I was working on my master's there was a professor, Dr. Emily Baker--I often think of her. I was taking a graduate course in curriculum and I was on a panel and I had notes on cards. She liked us to turn in our notes and I scribbled on my notes. So I said, "Please excuse these notes, Dr. Baker, I did this during the panel." She had said to me, "Mr. Warren, come by and talk with me some time. There is something I would like to talk to you about." I never did go by. So on the cards she said again, "Mr. Warren, I requested you come and talk to me and you didn't." So I made an appointment. She was near retirement. She was an older Anglo lady. She said, "Have you ever thought about getting an advanced degree?" I said, "What do you mean? I'm getting a master's." She said, "No, a doctorate." I said, "No," and I seriously had not. I was going to get the master's." She said, "The reason I wanted you to come by is I think you have the talent and you have the



personality and I think you would be a very excellent teacher/administrator." Then she said to me something very significant. "We as people, like our prize possessions in nice packages, whether it's a diamond or whatever. A lot goes into the research of the packaging. Why don't you just sell a diamond or cologne?" I said, "What do you mean by that?" She said, "A doctorate, you could go with a master's degree and you'd do all right on what you know and understand. But, the packaging, a doctorate would add a lot to it." I said, "I hadn't thought of that." She said, "I wanted you to know that. This is why I keep driving you. Give some thought to it." Now, I received my master's in 1951 and then I think a doctoral program was developed in 1952 or 1953. Then a few of us on and off campus applied for it and I was selected. So I was on my way then. I completed all the course work by about 1956 or 1957. But I did a very difficult dissertation. I intentionally did it. The title of it was "The Value of Selected Practices in Building Good Will Between School and Community." And most of the outstanding public relations experts were from business. The value, value connotes a subjective feeling, but to make it an educational research topic, we had to translate subjective values into figures. So there was a question whether or not I could just develop a questionnaire and assume equidistance between good, fair, poor, much, and so forth. So I had to develop an instrument. And the only way I could do that was with experts and they were distributed all over the country. So I arrived at about 150 items, appearance of the building and so forth, sent it to them, checked how they graded items. Some graded easy, some graded hard. A professor, Knight, at the University of Nebraska developed a statistical concept that translated qualitative scores into quantitative scores. But I came up with figures and found out the distance, for instance, between good and excellent was different from fair and poor. Now I had my instrument built. Then, what I had to do was to see whether or not principals, superintendents, board members, teachers viewed these things differently. So I went to thirteen schools and discussed my project with principals and superintendents.

ZL: Now was that mainly Metro Phoenix area?

MW: Metro Phoenix area. But the schools were segregated, very diverse, and I was in an all black school and the people who were going to carry out my research were all white and I convinced the superintendent's group that this was a worthwhile study because we were going to come up with twelve or fifteen items that were important for them to adopt. So they said, "Yes." So they let me into their buildings and with a table of random numbers, I put numbers in: one, eight, fifteen, twenty and so forth, I would go through the list and pick out persons these numbers represented. I had a randomized list. Principals and superintendents organized teachers to go to these parents and get them to fill out these forms, get them to me, and what I found out was that, let's take something like "Open House." The principals love it, teachers don't like it. Board members love it. Appearance of the building was common, parents think that's important. In other words, if I was on a busy thoroughfare, it was important for parents not to see kids on the playground all day. What they generalize is, "When do they read and write? They're out there playing all day." So then I reorganized my school. Where, most of the time you come by my school, the playgrounds are empty. Because the appearance of the building was important, parent/teacher conferences were important. We found out where parents and teachers and superintendents agreed or disagreed. That had never been done before. It was a really good thesis. But it was tough and it was a public relations feat on my part because I had about... Here was a black person, in the 1950's, and I had about 30 volunteers



working for me and for my study.

ZL: Now these were what, people working on their master's?

MW: No, these were just people, teachers, their principals would come in and say, and "A friend of mine is doing a study. I think this is a pretty good study and you need to identify six people in your class that aren't here and you either go to their homes or get them to come here and fill these out and you fill one out." So it was an amazing public relations feat itself. So, what I'm essentially saying is, I think a lot of my success is not only the power of personality, but a lot of those skills I learned too in public relations. I did a master's and a doctoral thesis in school public relations. You can call it marketing, or whatever, so instead of me marketing as a profession, I marketed myself essentially, unconsciously. I learned a lot of those skills, what counts to people and what I also learned from that is, position often dictates how we view something. If you've ever been in schools, one of the common statements people will say is "Oh, Mary or Joe, they were pretty good people when they were teachers, but when they got to be a principal, they were a pain." But new times make a different view. And that happens with politicians. When I was on the city council, I can remember people saying, "You know Morrison used to be down at the pool hall, he's a pretty good guy." But the more effective you become when you get around the conference table where you are developing policy, the less time you have to get around the pool table. This is why the incumbent so often gets beat. This is why McCain and those people are flying back in here every weekend. Because some guy here around the pool table and drinking beer will beat them out if they're not careful. Really, the more effective you become for changing policy, which is going to affect the people, the less effective you become at home. So out of this dissertation, I really learned a lot. But it took me a long time. So I finished all the coursework and then it took me two more years to get it together into something.

ZL: Who was your main advisor?

MW: My main advisor was Dr. Ray Wochner, who was really good. And I had some senior professors, the Dean of the College of Education, Dean McGrath, and then Bob Ash, who was a senior professor. It was a real good experience. It was a good dissertation. Therefore I was invited to become a faculty member in 1962. And I finally came in 1968.

ZL: Why did you wait so long?

MW: The reason I waited was because in 1962 it was near the first year of President Homer Durham, who was LDS. There was no black professor in the university. He was just a little uncertain. It had been approved by the department, been approved by the dean, but it was not approved at the president's level. And he was the one who sent for me in 1968. He is one of the most significant people in my life. He was a great human being. And he left after my first year there. If he had remained, my professional career would have been a lot different because he had in mind central administration for me. He had the dean, the chair of the art department at the University of Utah, to come and paint a picture of me that hung in the hallway next to Homer's.



ZL: I've seen that.

MW: That was Homer Durham. He was a tremendous...

ZL: How did he influence your life?

MW: Well, first of all, we talked continuously about views of black people in the church. He was a great resource for me. He brought a large number of black and Hispanic faculty to ASU. A senior professor in the College of Law, persons in liberal arts, me and about three or four of us in the College of Education. He involved us in the operation of the university and just strategically involved us in the operation. He changed the face of human relations on that campus, Homer Durham. And he was only there one year that I was there. Just tremendous. And I don't mean just surface, in the decision making bodies, we were very active. It was inclusive. Now, there may be people in higher positions, making more money but they don't influence anything. It may look good on the federal records. These were significant times. John Morris in the Law School was a significant person, for example.

ZL: That's fascinating. How did he come about that belief?

MW: I had talked about my concern about ASU as a team playing Brigham Young University, and he explained to me that, "These things are going to change, but you have to be patient, you can't push these things,. But they will change, because it's right." Visions typically come during stressful times. But this will come. He said, "You have to know and understand the history of how these things develop." Because essentially, I was against the belief that certain people could reach the Kingdom of God and others could not because of color. I just couldn't find any rationale. If a person wanted to believe that, that's fine. That has nothing to do with me. But, if ASU plays in a bowl game and after expenses are deducted, since we're part of the Border Conference or the Western Athletic Conference at that time, and then divide the remaining money with other conference teams and when there is not equal access to all of the schools, then that doesn't seem right. My logic doesn't say that. I think, if people want to believe that, then they ought to go and do what they want to do, but let's not share. It's not for us to say what you're going to teach and what's going to drive you, but then let's not play together on the football field and share, and then I can't reach the Kingdom of God, and so forth. And he said, "It's illogical." So he went as Commissioner of Education the next year. He was a great, aesthetically oriented person, kind of a loner, very bright, very decent. And what his strategy was in painting that picture was that nowhere in America do you go into buildings and you see minority people. In city halls, hospital walls. You rarely see black people. And yet, he put me, my first year at the University, put my portrait in the central administration hallway. You couldn't go in his office without seeing my portrait.

ZL: And it's a large picture.

MW: It's a large picture. The fellow who did it had never done black people before. And he and I really



struck up a good relationship and it's reflected in the picture. He entered an international contest and won to do Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

ZL: After painting you? Isn't that a wonderful story?

MW: Isn't that wonderful? Just great. Last year I had a serious schedule conflict, but Homer Durham's wife came to dedicate a building. And I was one of the special invitees. I couldn't make it because I couldn't change a previous commitment. So it was a long, enduring relationship. Very positive. And I challenged BYU about access to the playing field. I was Chairman of the Athletic Board. Wrote a two page intercommunication and I got the support of the University, and very significantly, I was invited by the president to come up. I did not go, but I'm very well respected. It was done, it was high road, it was class and it was understood they too have been outsiders and had problems. It was done in good will, and we're all better off for it. When I saw them play last, there were black people running the ball and tackling and so forth. But as I look, you know I'm a Presbyterian, but as I look at the views of Jesus, you know he was called "Yahweh," and he was called a lot of things through the years. It's a developing perception. There was a time when we looked at God and it was genderless, it wasn't male or female. It's a developing theory. So it's growing. So he said to me, "Morrison, these things will change. But you can't force this." And I had so much respect for him. But he changed the tenor and the dynamics of the University.

ZL: The I. D. Payne Laboratory, you were director there from 1968 to 1984. That was a long tenure.

MW: That was a long tenure. We developed a Center for Bilingual Education. There was a Center for Indian Education. At a time I monitored all of those. The residual is the Center for Indian Education. And I saw it last week where a doctorate is going to be given at the U of A in Indian Education. And the Center for Bilingual Education is still a very powerful center. But the role and function that the Payne Lab served is no longer a separate entity. So I was the one and only director.

ZL: Then you had kind of an interesting role where you were half time principal for South Mountain. That was in--that was backing up--October 1973 to July of 1974.

MW: Actually, in October of 1973 the principal of South Mountain left and moved back to New Jersey.

ZL: In the middle of the school year?

MW: At the beginning of the school year, in October. It was a time during the so-called black revolution. South Mountain was in a mess. One of the administrators from the central office went to South for one week. He lasted one week. It was such a difficult situation. I was attending a meeting at Camelback Inn, as a member of the board of Arizona Public Service, and we had a group of investors from over the country, and we were marketing some bonds and I received a call from the superintendent of the Phoenix Union High School District and he said, "Morrison, I'd like to talk to you." I kept a schedule in my pocket and I



said, "Well, I can see you a couple days later." He said, "No, I need to see you in the next forty minutes or so." So I said, "What's up?" He said, "We're having problems at South Mountain High School." I thought he wanted some consulting. So I left the meeting, told the president of APS and went. He said, "We have to have you as principal of South Mountain High School." I said, "Beginning when?" He said, "Tomorrow." I said, "When do you have to know?" He said, "I'd like to know within a couple of hours because I have a telephone call in to the president of the University to see if they can release you." But anyway, the next morning I met with the faculty at seven-thirty in the morning at South Mountain High School. But the University would only release me half time, so I had to teach my class, direct my lab and then I was full time principal at South. I asked for a person who was State Director of the Civil Rights Commission to come as assistant principal.

ZL: Who was Charles Murray?

MW: Charles Murray. He came as assistant principal and we had a good year. It was tough.

ZL: What was the racial make-up of South Mountain?

MW: It was one third black, one third Hispanic and one third white. It's about 60% Hispanic now. But at that time, the South Mountain High School, the athletic teams were the Rebels. The flag was the Confederate flag. So, really what was going on was changing power relationships among the kids. It was reflected by the kids. The community was changing and the school was changing. The principal who left was black, but he had only been there a year. So everybody was fighting for turf. There were turf battles then. And it was reflected in the kids. It was really tough. It had gotten out of hand.

ZL: To do that on a half time basis would be extremely difficult.

MW: Oh, it was tough. I almost had a nervous breakdown behind it. The University didn't want me to go. The way they could control it was they would only release me half time. They thought the response would be, "If we can only have him half time, then we can't use him." But they had to have me. I had lived in the community, I lived there then. Five of my children had graduated from the school and I lived there. So I had a network around. That's the only reason I could have done it. It was more than just knowledge and skill. It was "whoness." I had family members, people I had taught and had been in schools where I had taught, now they had children in school. So the whole network was working. I was informed of things before they even happened. It worked, but it was difficult. We had to change the whole value system.

ZL: What did you do?

MW: I looked for about a week and it was very messy. And we had competing factions among the teachers. We had the classroom teacher group who belonged to the AFT, American Federation of Teachers, and then we had members of the Arizona Education Association. They all had negotiated contracts with the central administration for certain kinds of considerations. If the principal spoke to one



group, he had to speak to the other. They were guaranteed so much time for lunch periods. They had negotiated themselves, really as I looked at it, out of many qualitative things that were good for children. In other words, they didn't have to go in the lunch room with the kids. The kids were in there on their own. So when I went in there, they were throwing biscuits at each other, and arguing with the help. There was nobody on patrol, they didn't have to do that. The teachers were over in a separate lunch room. I spoke to the faculty and explained to them why I was there and the risk I was taking and I would need their help. After I looked for a week and in my own mind developed some idea of what were the basic problems, I discussed them with the teachers. I said, "Now, in order for you to do, what in my judgment is the right thing, you're going to have to break ranks with your friends. I need you in the cafeteria, I need you to relate to these kids. And that's against your agreements." And it was hard for some people. But I had taught many of them, and they broke rank. It was very difficult, they broke rank. They started going into the lunch room. "I need your help," I said. And it was hard, because some people challenged me in meetings early. Then, in regards to the students, I said, "Some kind of way, I've got to win them over." I sent out word through the Parent Teacher Association that you've got to let me know what's going on in your household. Parents told me that white girls wouldn't go to the bathroom most of the day and when they came home, they'd have to leave the front door open because they'd come so fast. They were afraid to go to the bathroom, the black girls were jumping on them. So I had to know and I said, "You come to me with your gripes. I want to know what your gripes are." So they started calling and coming in. I had a list, I knew what was going on. Then I said, "What I have to do is I have to get to these students." So in the second week I was there I had teachers break our student body up into about eight groups. And I wanted to see one-eighth of them successively in the auditorium. They hadn't been in the auditorium for two or three years. And I said to the faculty, "You don't have to come in, just bring them to the door."

ZL: Now what was the student population?

MW: About 2500. It was a large school. So I said, "Bring them to the door of the auditorium and then you can go or you can come in or whatever." Clear the stage. Just Dr. Murray and myself. The first group was led in. They hadn't been in the auditorium in years and many had their hats on backwards and doing other foolish things. I merely stared at them from the stage. That went on for maybe 10 minutes. Then they started saying, "Sit down," to each other, because they were there by themselves. "Sit down, sit down, be quiet." Then it got so quiet that it was frightening. They hadn't experienced that before. And then I explained to them, many of them knew me or my children, and why I was there. I described what I did at ASU, and why I was willing to come here. And I more or less said to them to start thinking about what they are going to do when they leave here. But more importantly, they're designing an environment that their brothers and sisters are going to have to attend.

So I said to them, "We're really building and shaping the environment that your brothers and sisters will attend. Don't forget that. You're a part of that and it's in your hands. Now I don't have to be here, this is very risky for me, because I think I can straighten it out. And it's a very difficult situation. I'll tell you what I'm going to do. In all of your English classes tomorrow, I'm going to ask the teachers to have you write your criticism of what's going on in this school. Some of you, I'll ask you to make suggestions of



what needs to be done. I want you to tell me, because I don't think you really want to be in this mess." I did that eight times that day. I leveled with them. And I stood where they could see the full body, where they could really measure the person. Because I'm a great believer in authenticity. Is this man true, or is he jiving or what? That was what I was gambling on. I just gambled on the integrity of human beings, human to human. I did that eight times during the day. The next day in each of the English classes, students wrote their criticism. I read all of them, I studied all of them. About eight or ten things were identified: safety, organization, limits. And then, through the public address system and through notices I summarized what they were telling me. What I could buy and what I couldn't buy. And certain kind of behavior that would not be tolerated. And I said, in no uncertain terms in those eight meetings, "I have every intention to make changes. This is a war. It's you against me. And I'm going to tell you something, I'm going to win this war, because I have the community behind me. We're going to win this war. I'm going to win this war. You can believe that." They believed me.

So little by little, as fate would have it, key things happened. The following week two of the biggest, meanest students in the school were involved in a fight. Big, big fight, big guys. I said, "Oh God." Then kids came in and told me, so I came out of the office onto the playground, and as I was walking toward them I couldn't figure what I could do, but I did say, "If I can win these guys over, then everything is going to be all right." Because they had many followers. When I came, they stopped, they both faced me. Then I reinforced what I'd said before. "I'm here to help you, but it has come to the point that what I'm able to do here really is in your hands. You determine whether I'm going to be successful or not. I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I need to talk to both of you in my office. And what I'm going to do is turn and walk to my office and I want you to follow me. Now, if you don't follow me, I lose and I lose my integrity with the faculty and with the students. But if you follow me and we go in and we reconcile your concerns, then I'm going to win and we'll be all right." So I turned and they followed me. So I was off and running then. We worked it out. And then, I reinforced their positive behavior by rewarding them, by saying that I was so pleased that these boys did this. They had sisters and brothers and the little shattered egos, and what I was saying to them, "By displaying good behavior, you can get positive praises." So I started rewarding little things like that, and then more and more teachers started joining in. It was an amazing reformation. In the meantime, the district had been working on an all-year school. So we moved into that form of organization second semester. In effect, one-third of our student body was on vacation.

ZL: Oh that's how they worked that year round. So it decreased the population which helped considerably.

MW: Considerably. The combination of a quieter, relaxed school, within the framework of a year-round program made me a hero downtown. I was on the Board of APS, then I went on the Board of First Interstate Bank. It was like magic. He really was magical but a lot of risk taking, but still preparation.

ZL: Now did Murray then become Principal?

MW: No, he was an attorney. He was a math wizard, he had come to Arizona to participate in a math program at ASU, then he went to law school. He left the next year and went as dean of a black law school



in a small city in Alabama. But he was a good man. So I was Mr. Outside and he was Mr. Inside. He was tough, and he really loved the students and he was really good to them. He really knew how to deal with the students. Then, I was the community interpreter. It was a good team. And it worked.

ZL: Then, the Payne Laboratory had cultural and social relations.

MW: That was one of the sub responsibilities, like the bilingual and so forth.

ZL: What did you try to accomplish with that area?

MW: We had gathered statistics relevant to the dynamic changes that were going on in America and we projected these against the direction that schools were taking. These statistics included drop-outs among minority children, historical documents, as well as materials taught, training of teachers, particularly public school teachers and the changing dynamics in the public school. People were not really trained to teach culturally diverse populations. That's where we tried to get a head start. In fact, that's what I'm doing in Paradise Valley. My lab developed multi-cultural materials for the Department of Economic Security. So we really were ahead of the curve. ASU is trying to organize its College of Education now to teach culturally diverse populations. We were really ahead of the game.

ZL: Yes, because that was clear back in the '80s.

MW: Yes, that was way back in the '80s.

ZL: Twelve years ago.

MW: Twelve years ago. So that's what we were trying to do. To restructure the College of Education and the courses leading the faculty to becoming skilled in dealing with differences. That's the bottom line. Really. Dealing with differences. Really, that's the bottom line for children, today, too. We don't do a lot about it. Our churches- we don't go to the same church. We go to the same work place, but then so often we are divided there. We don't live in the same communities. It's a real problem. We are going to have to do more about dealing with differences. Being different does not mean better or worse. The world is becoming smaller. I guess you look around now and see this Hispanic population growing. I'm amazed at the India Indians, and the Asians that I see everywhere I go. They're popping up everywhere. It's different, it's not better, not worse, just different.

ZL: At a conference on disadvantaged children and youth, and this goes back to 1971, you were talking to teachers about students and the way to educate them. You said, "The ratio of thirty students to one teacher was just way too high for disadvantaged youth to learn." Do you still feel that way?

MW: Unquestionably, yes. I fought very hard as a public school teacher and administrator through creative arrangements to lower that ratio in the elementary schools to eighteen or nineteen to one. Really,



to educate is to lead. We're really establishing new norms in behavior for disadvantaged children who were socialized in a different context. As a parent expressed to me one time when I was a principal, "Poor folks have poor ways." They learn. So they lack words, they don't have the words. You can't read if you don't have words. You certainly can't read if you don't have experience. So they lack experience. So spreading one teacher among thirty students as against one to eighteen when there's a lot to be taught is unproductive. Words, experiences, rich meaning, touching, feeling, tasting, are all important elements in the learning process.

ZL: At that time--I was fascinated to find in this article--you forecast that in 5 years, this is in 1971, mind you, the state would be funding all schools, preventing the unbalanced distribution that we still have today.

MW: We tried to do that. As a society we didn't want to. The legislature developed an equalization formula guaranteeing each school enough money to support a basic school program.

ZL: Couldn't they do this today?

MW: Sure they could do it. I often say, the really dynamic factor, whether it's in human interaction or reacting to a proposal is psychological--feelings. If people want to do it, they do it. If they don't want to do it, they're not going to do it. And for some reason, we don't want to do it. Increasingly I'm reading in the newspaper about our legislature. I'm reading the word "meanness". I've seen times in America when we weren't quite so mean. Maybe those were better times, maybe people are fearful today. I don't know. I've served on councils and boards that they were not mean boards, they wanted to do the right thing. I got a call at ASU from Frank Snell, and he said, "Did I have a nickname of 'Dit'?"

ZL: How did you get that nickname?

MW: There was a girl named Dit in my community when I was three, four and five years old. Her name was Dit Cobbs. I had a brother who died two years ago who was seven years my senior and a brother who was six years my senior and they would have to baby-sit me, care for me, I'd just run around with them. They would tease me, when they had nothing else to do, about Dit. My name is Morrison Fulbright Warren. It is much easier to remember the nickname, Dit, than my long name.

ZL: Oh, I thought you were named after your father, Fred, but it's Morrison Fulbright.

MW: Morrison Fulbright Warren. That's a long name. One can remember Dit. I have friends I haven't seen in 50 years and they call me Dit. They don't know whether my name is Morrison, they don't remember Fulbright, or Warren, but they can remember Dit. That's what most of my friends called me. I received a call the other day from Bill Shover at the Arizona Republic, he told me that they'd bought two tables for the upcoming event, and he said, "Dit," I said, "Bill." He remembered Dit.



ZL: I don't want to interrupt, but that was a question I wanted to ask. So Frank Snell, called and said, "Dit..."

MW: He said, "Dit, we'd like to come, a committee from the board." I said, "What's up?" He said, "We'd like to submit your name for the APS board." I said, "Frank, you don't have to come, I can tell you now, 'Yes.' Now if you want to educate me on expectations, then you can come or I'll come to you. But you don't have to come." They appointed two people that year. Karl Eller and myself. APS didn't have to do that. Then it took me two or three years to learn the language and the business, and to really become a creative contributor.

ZL: A wonderful education, wasn't it?

MW: Just wonderful, wonderful education. One of the three or four or five best experiences of my life. I spent twenty-two years.

ZL: What were your responsibilities on that board?

MW: I served on various committees. For about ten years, I served as chair person of an ad hoc committee titled Directorship Practices. I later chaired the Human Resources Committee. Finally, for many years I served as chairperson of the Audit Review Committee. When I left the board, I was serving as co-chair of the Finance and Operations Committee with Ben Williams, an attorney. So I had very key positions on the board. As ad hoc chair person of Board of Directorship Practices, we bought an Hispanic on the board, and three women, Marianne Jennings is on the board, and the former President of Goldwater's, Pam Grant, and Wilma Schwada.

ZL: Was Wilma the first woman?

MW: Wilma Schwada. I guess Wilma was the first woman. This fact represents my belief about access, diversity. No other board here had a black person, a Mexican person and three women. APS, and it's one of the state's best boards. It's a really good board and it's diverse. But that does not carry... Most boards have been all men. So that's a long way to saying that we have not always been mean, there have been some very positive, good societal actions. APS is very society oriented.

ZL: For over two decades, probably three by now, you've been involved in consulting and you've talked some about that throughout the interview. Mainly you consulted to public school districts, but you also were on the Trustee Board of Brophy Prep and the Arch Diocese of L.A. which you mentioned earlier, and universities around the country. Has that mostly been about diversity?

MW: Mostly diversity. Teaching culturally diverse students. For instance, I consulted to one utility company, it's top management, years ago on the impact of changing demographics. So they can ready themselves for the onslaught and not suddenly be surprised. But it was primarily on diversity, dealing with



differences and diversity and teaching culturally different populations. I've spoken to the American Health Association, I've spoken to Presbyterian ministers at a large conference in Sharon, Pennsylvania. As I've said before, with Catholic teachers of the diocese of Los Angeles. So I try to serve as one who could see these things. With Warren Kingsbury. Do you know Warren?

ZL: Well, I know about him.

MW: He's a wonderful man. I guess he would say he's my best friend. In fact, I recently spoke in Paradise Valley at the Senior Citizen's home where he and his wife were. Warren and I used to do a lot of writing and work together. We traveled a lot. Warren was a member of the World Future Society so we presented there about these changing dynamics. So I adopted a long time ago, a lot of the little tools, primarily the demographic and statistics of the future. I try to peer into the future, some things that are happening. Going back though, to my early life experience, in particular the Buchenwald concentration camp experience, I long ago decided that building bridges was going to be my life work and that most of the time we were just dancing metaphorically to different music. It wasn't that we wanted to, we just were and we just never built a bridge. And that happens so often.

ZL: With your consulting and giving speeches, some of the places that you talked to were institutions of corrections.

MW: Yes. Actually, when I was at Booker T., a speaker was scheduled to speak at one of the downtown hotels. I don't remember exactly what the group was, but the person had flight problems and didn't make it. I received a call about ten minutes before twelve o'clock and was told a luncheon speaker was needed at twelve-thirty. So I said, "Yes." and I went, and gave a pretty good speech. And in the audience was a lady who was a professor at the University of Hawaii, and she was so impressed that she asked me if I would join a team of persons who conducted programs for prison officials who were responsible for education. The places that we particularly went were the University of Oklahoma and the University of Notre Dame. The area of our responsibility was education programs for inmates. And I became part of that team. It was a great experience and the speeches were placed in booklets, distributed all over the world. I made many rich contacts with prison officials and then was invited to do other speeches.

ZL: Was this again cultural diversity?

MW: Well, yes, actually it involved background studies of prison populations. Most prisoners, tend to be economically poor and poorly educated. So intervening into their lives and effective teaching was the orientation. So demographics, conducting studies on who the prisoners were, what their backgrounds were, what their state of minds were. Then intervening and developing programs. So it was our task, primarily, to develop background perspectives, really, on this population of student and curriculum strategies for intervening into their lives. It was a great experience. I forget the lady's name, but she was a great leader and the experience expanded my views. But the concentration was, again, in keeping with the belief that the perfectibility of people is never too late. You can intervene and turn them around. More or



less, the time the person spent in prison can either be qualitative or it can be destructive an experience. She had that contract. She was very good, too.

ZL: It would certainly have been an interesting time.

MW: Yes, it was interesting.

ZL: You were involved in the Civil Rights movement in Phoenix for a very long time. You were a member of the Arizona Advisory Committee to the United States Civil Rights Commission.

MW: Yes, US Commission on Civil Rights

ZL: From 1962 and then you became chairman in 1973?

MW: Yes, I served about ten years as chairperson. We conducted multiple studies. One of the studies that we conducted was in the Flagstaff area. We were primarily an information gathering body. That was our most powerful tool, information. For instance, in the Flagstaff jails, so many Indians from the nearby reservation, charged with misdemeanor crimes, would be taken to court and hearings held, and all of the proceedings were conducted in English. And they couldn't speak English. That's not right. But we conducted hearings and got that changed. The most recent pervasive one was the owners of the ski lodge in Northern Arizona wanted to desecrate some mountains in order to put in more ski lifts. The Indians in the area, the Navajo and some others indicated that would destroy relationships between their Gods in the mountains. The forester in the area, from New Mexico, gave approval for the desecration. We held a hearing, we thought that was wrong. We looked at the procedure and felt that it should not have been a one person committee, a one person decision. There were no hearings held. We developed studies and said there should be hearings, and they were held. The decision was overturned. And now, even in our Federal Court we respect the religious views of people. If you believe that your Gods will be disturbed, and you believe it and that's the way it is. We have to respect that. We did multiple studies.

ZL: Dr. Warren is showing us some books on the studies, the reports that United States Commission on Civil Rights did. The committee is comprised of people from around the state. About fourteen different people from Arizona. Each state has their own committee. Is that correct?

MW: Yes.

ZL: And then staff from the US Government would come?

MW: Yes, we were broken into regions. We had a regional staff. So for instance, here is the study on "Justice in Flagstaff, Are These Rights Inalienable?" See I was chairperson on that one. Then we looked at adult corrections, we looked at our whole correctional system, that was a very big one, that was a huge study. And that was done in multiple places in America. That was a national study.



ZL: Well, this looks like it was a very large responsibility.

MW: It was very big.

ZL: No wonder you had high blood pressure.

MW: I look back over these and I just say, "I don't know how in the world I did all these things while raising a big family." The amazing thing as my son said, "That you did all of them really well."

ZL: Another one is "The Navajo Nation, An American Colony." "Indian Employment in Arizona."

MW: This is that model of "Adult Basic Education in Corrections." That was part of my consultancy. That was consulting.

ZL: The ASU Alumni Association. You've been very active in that organization.

MW: Yes, I was active younger, in fact, I became vice president some years ago. At least twenty-five or more years ago, and I could not assume the presidency because there's just so many other involvements and I just couldn't fit it in my schedule. But I've always been active in it and involved with it and helped where I could. But I didn't want to accept direct responsibility.

ZL: You retired from ASU, but you're far from retired. So now you do this consulting to school districts. What are some of your other special interests now?

MW: I'm very active in my church. I'm an elder in my church.

ZL: And that's the Presbyterian Church.

MW: Southminster Presbyterian Church. The founder of our church forty years ago, Reverend George Brooks, retired this past year. So we had a task of finding a new pastor, defining the direction that we wanted to go. We have a very large Head Start program.

ZL: Tell about that Head Start program.

MW: It was founded around 1964, it was one of the earlier Head Start programs. We have one hundred and forty children. Back to our diversity idea, we wanted to have a diverse student population, so we bought about a sixty-five passenger bus so that we could go and get children from other communities. So we have primarily black, Hispanic, some Indian students, probably a sprinkling of white children. We've done that for thirty years or more. That's true of our faculty, which is integrated, too. And the bus provides us that opportunity to do that. We have a very fine Head Start program. The church views its function as



being outreach and we try to serve all elements of the community. Through the years we developed quite a nice kitchen facility. So in order to provide jobs for some community people, we have competed with other institutions to furnish meals for senior persons and others.

ZL: How many meals a day do you serve?

MW: Two. Two most of the time for Head Start and then we serve some senior citizen homes in the area, Meals on Wheels, as a function of the church. And then we serve other programs in the general community, other Head Start programs and other charter school programs. We're equipped to deliver meals to other sites. The bottom line is we are able then to hire a number of people.

ZL: It must be a large staff?

MW: Not really, we are very efficient. We have a lot of volunteers. We have a number of professionals in the congregation who volunteer too. We're very good at it. We make it look easy, it's very complicated, but we make it look easy. They do a very good job, they're very reliable people. But the Head Start program has been very successful through the years. I think it is one of the oldest programs in Arizona. My history with Head Start is I supervised 1000 students during the summer of, the first year of Head Start, I guess it was the 50's or the 60's, in Phoenix.

ZL: I think it was in the '60's.

MW: I'm thinking 1964.

ZL: I think it was when Johnson came in.

MW: That was '64. I supervised 1000. It was a quick program that we had to pull together. So I've been very interested in that.

ZL: You had 1000 Head Start students?

MW: One thousand in about seven centers. In 1964. And we were only funded about three weeks or so before we had to organize ourselves. And I was the director. It was about ten centers. But we pulled it off. It worked very well. I think that was the first funded Head Start program in Arizona. We had one thousand children.

ZL: I don't know how you could do that in three weeks.

MW: Well, we had done some preliminary planning. I was an elementary principal then, in the district where we were. We pulled it off.



ZL: Do you have any special hobbies or leisure time activities that you enjoy?

MW: I'm a sports enthusiast. I guess my major leisure activity is reading. I love to read. And I love sports. I love to be involved, I like to know and understand, so I attend a lot of meetings. With a large family and being an active sports person, I never learned sedentary games. I don't know how to play cards, I don't know how to play dominoes or checkers. And I miss that. So two things I push in education is a balanced education to develop technical skills, learn to build something or cook something or whatever, along with the reading, also leisure time activities. I have a lifetime pass for the ASU golf course. APS owned the property where the golf course at ASU is and it was given to the University. The result was, the board members were given lifetime pass. My first time over to the course was a couple of weeks ago. There's a group of retired professors who meet once a month with no agenda. We just talk, about six or eight of us. We had lunch over at the Karsten Golf Course. That's the first time I went. You know I didn't have much time for golf with the children and all the things I was involved with. After a while I just lost interest. I tried a time or so, but it takes a lot of time. So I love to read.

ZL: You've mentioned a couple of your children, but do you want to mention all of your children?

MW: Yes, I have seven children. Morrison, who graduated from Stanford in 1965, was a Marine Corps Officer, in fact the 35th Marine Corps Officer in America. The Marine Corps founded in 1600. He served in the Vietnam War and injured a knee and was discharged. My second child is a daughter, Carolyn, who is a Head Start director. The third child is Dwight who needs about six hours to graduate from ASU. He attended Occidental College for a couple of years. The fourth child is Wayne, who is a teacher in social studies in the Tempe Union High School District. He had worked in banking for ten or fifteen years and thought he would like teaching better.

ZL: And does he?

MW: Well, he just started teaching here last week, I guess. He's down in Ahwatukee. Our next child is Howard, who has engineer ranking, but he's a student at the University of Phoenix, and he works for Southwest Gas. He's doing very well, lives here in Tempe. The next child is a daughter, who taught in the Tempe schools, elementary school. She has completed a double masters at Texas Women's College. Her husband is a basketball coach. He was the head basketball coach at Southern Methodist University for seven years. He's in his second year as an assistant coach of the Toronto Raptors.

ZL: This is John Shumate?

MW: John Shumate. She's Marilyn and she and the family moved a week ago to Toronto. And then my youngest child is Kevin Warren, who is an attorney, a sports attorney in Kansas City, Missouri. So seven of them. The youngest is thirty-three and the oldest is fifty-three.

ZL: Of all the things that you've accomplished in your lifetime, of what are you the most proud?



MW: That would be very difficult. I didn't talk about my Presidency of the Fiesta Bowl, did I?

ZL: Well, you referred to it, but tell some more about that.

MW: That was significant, in that it was the first January, the first bowl game that the Fiesta Bowl was able to obtain, which caused quite a negative ripple with the other bowls because we were a young bowl. And I was particularly impressed by the Fiesta Bowl's action, that even when the Fiesta Bowl was trying to gain credibility among bowls, it still was bold enough to push for my presidency at that time.

ZL: Now, you'd been on the board of directors from the very beginning.

MW: No, near the beginning I had been on the board.

ZL: I thought it was from the very beginning.

MW: No, it was near the beginning.

ZL: Then, soon you went on the executive committee.

MW: Yes, the executive committee. Then, I was vice chair, then to the chairmanship. But you asked the thing I'm most proud of, I guess the thing I'm most proud of is the quality of work that I did as an elementary principal. It's probably the least advertised and the least notoriety associated with it, but it was pervasive. I think I did the best job. It was a fifteen year venture. I see the effects of that now as I travel about the country. I see people who were students of mine, I see them in barber shops, and so forth. And all of them speak glowingly of that time in their life. So, I think that was, that probably was the least advertised because it was in an isolated environment. But if I were to select one thing that I am most proud of, it was that. It represented a process of studying a situation, developing a strategy, developing an action plan, making adjustments as we went and moving toward some goals. Then, involving people, not only within the school, but also in the community.

ZL: I wanted to ask you about that and I didn't earlier. Were you able to involve the parents?

MW: Yes. See what I did, I had clone my master's thesis on developing a public relations program for schools. I was a manager for a swimming pool for many years, and every community I have moved into I have tried to develop a plan for teaching all children five years and younger, three or four to begin with, to swim. And I had a difficult time bringing, getting parents to bring their children. It struck me one day that maybe we could teach mothers and children and then we had no difficulty. Mothers brought their children.

ZL: Because those mothers didn't know how to swim either?



MW: They didn't know how to swim either. And then I thought of the statement in the Bible, "My cup runneth over." So suppose one's cup does not run over in security, in ego fulfillment, in love and understanding. How is it going to flow over into your children? So if we could teach mothers to swim, that guarantees teaching children to swim. That's what I was doing this morning. One of the goals that we're trying to develop is a parent university.

ZL: Now you're talking about when you consult with Greenway School in the Paradise Valley School District.

MW: We want to involve the community in helping us develop a parent university. Time spent with parents is better than time spent with children. Because if you do things with children, parents know nothing about it and then they can dissipate it when they go home. If you teach parents, then they can extend, we can mutually leverage off of each other. So you asked me a question, "Did you try to work with parents?" Yes, what I did, I eliminated, with the advice and then consultation with teachers and the community, the PTA, I'd say, "We're going to take three years and develop what we call parent education." So we surveyed the community asking parents who were the opinion formers? Who helped you shape your ideas about schools? When you have a question about schools, who did you go to? We identified about fifteen people. Some were educated, some were housewives with no schooling, they were significant people. Then, I went to each one of them and asked, "How can I involve you in an education program? I want to teach you what is going on in our school, where we're having success and where we're having failure. I want to teach you. What would I have to do to get you to come? What times would be convenient for you? Sometimes it was baby-sitting, or other things. We worked that out. We took three years and in consultation with them, the art program, the math program, the PE program, the home economics program all were studied. What are you trying to do? Why you do this? Why you do that? And so they became skillful observers of the school program.

Some of those uneducated ones went back to high school and got their G.E.D., some of them went to Phoenix College, some of them graduated from college and became teachers. Now, I had fifteen or eighteen others who, when they visited the school, they knew what they were looking for. And that made a difference when they would come and look around. They weren't just somebody you could pull the wool over, they knew what they were looking for. An educational saying that says, "Good schools only take place in an area where parents know what good schools look like." Now I visit all the schools of my grandchildren. These kids who were at Notre Dame and Dallas, I visit three or four times a year. Every time I visit I go to the schools. Meet the teachers, the principal. There have been times when I've been invited back to speak or when I come, will you speak? In fact, I try to coordinate some of my visits with the PTA meetings, so I could speak. I got a call yesterday, my grandchildren in Toronto said, "Grandfather, we started school yesterday. When are you going to come visit our school?" It makes a difference. Now, if we get a group of parents who can visit schools, look, etc., it would upgrade the quality. Teachers tend to find a comfort zone, they do good jobs, they do excellent jobs, but still they could do better if somebody was looking over their shoulder. Particularly people protecting their children.



ZL: Talk some more about this university concept for the parents.

MW: We call it Parent University. And actually what it is, we canvas parents and ask them what they want to know, whether personal development, or about the school, or filling out IRS forms or whatever. Then, we organize evening classes, get instructors to teach them. Sometimes they're volunteers, sometimes teachers will volunteer, we have a vast resource of retired people who just love to teach. And it ranges all the way from math to whatever to meet the needs of people in the community. Now in this area that I'm talking about, Paradise Valley, there is a growing Hispanic population. So now we have this large population and they're concentrated and they're all funneling into this junior high school. And, parents don't know much about the education system and how to help them. So you try and help them. You can't concentrate strictly on the child, you've got to get through to the parents. Let the curriculum be what the parents sense is their need. And the amazing thing is if you ask parents and give them time and talk to them, they come up with a pretty good curriculum. Then it's a task to get someone to teach those classes. Some you have to pay a little bit of money. Others will do it as volunteers. But you tend to get right answers when you raise the right questions. So time spent with parents is time well spent. The collateral effect is that parents develop a better feeling about the school and more realistic about teachers as people.

ZL: And some parents are frightened of schools.

MW: Sure they're frightened. One of the most significant research studies that touched me, I was part of a research project at Stanford University when I was a young administrator, in my late twenties. It was called, "Critical Mass Studies." It tested a simple concept, various economic groups of parents were asked to criticize the principal and those criticisms were recorded. Upper, upper income people said, "Dress, and manner, doesn't seem to be well kept, notices that come home aren't well-written and organized. Car looks like a junker. Office is messy." They criticized. Middle class people tend to criticize different kind of things. These people talked about control, management style, so forth. Just talked about other things generally. The poor and uneducated said, "Who are we to criticize this professor?" So if you raise the question, "Where are good schools going to take place?" It won't take place here. So if I'm going to get my knees cut on, and so forth, if I can go to Mayo Clinic, I wouldn't choose Saint Luke over Mayo's. Right? And if you're going to go to a restaurant that's going to be well-kept and clean, you're going to go to one where if you make a mistake you're going to get sued, rather than where you can just send anything out. That goes for schools, too. So parent education becomes very, very important. I've often said, as a joke, "Let us just suppose that in every class in America tomorrow and every day out of the year, there was a parent visiting every class. Just be in the classroom. They wouldn't have to react to what's going on, just kind of look quizzically at what was going on. It would drastically change education in America." Would you agree with that?

ZL: Yes, definitely.

MW: And nobody would be hurt. Now if those parents are educated and know what they're looking for, that would change it even more. So, I'm a great believer in parent education.



ZL: Dr. Warren, what do you think your legacy will be?

MW: There's a poem anonymously written and I often said I wish I wrote it, and I'd like to paraphrase it briefly. It goes like this, "A pilgrim going on a lone highway came at evening cold and gray to a chasm that was deep, broad and wide. He crossed the chasm in the twilight dim, the chasm held no fears for him, but he paused when he reached the other side and built a bridge to span the tide. 'Old man,' said a fellow near, 'Why waste your time in building here? Your journey will end at the end of day, you never again will pass this way.' The pilgrim raised his old gray head, 'My friend, in the past I've come,' he said, 'There followeth after me today a fair-haired, naturally haired, bald head kid who will pass this way. The chasm which held no fears for me, to this youth may a barrier be. He too must cross in the twilight dim. My friend I build this bridge for him.'" So I like to think in the world of today when we have cleavages between ages, genders, ethnic groups, economic classes, different jobs and so forth, I like to perceive of myself as having been a bridge builder, to try and find some common grounds for reconciling differences. OK?

ZL: If you could speak to young people today, what message would you give them?

MW: I would say, "Be very hopeful. To a far greater degree than I believed for a long time, individuals shape the environment that they work in. Far more, I thought for a long time that the environment was there and then I just moved into it. But far more than one tends to believe, you've helped shape that environment. So you have to be optimistic. Prepare yourself, gain skills, use your time wisely, and grow. Grow, grow and continue to grow. Build upon your growth and your background and stay active. And learn. This to me is living smart, versus just wandering." That would be my advice.

ZL: That concludes the interview and I want to thank you very much.

MW: Thank you so much. That was a long time.

