



INTERVIEW WITH JACK HOPKINS – APRIL 23, 2013

Our State of Generosity, a project of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy (JCP) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), in partnership with the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC), and GVSU Libraries' Special Collections & University Archives present:

An interview with Jack Hopkins on April 23, 2013. Conducted by Kathryn Agard, primary author and interviewer for *Our State of Generosity*. Recorded at the Johnson Center for Philanthropy in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This interview is part of a series in the project, *Our State of Generosity* (OSoG). OSoG is a partnership of scholars, practitioners, and funders from four institutions – the Johnson Center; CMF; MNA; and MCSC – that collectively form the backbone of the state's philanthropic, voluntary, and nonprofit infrastructure. OSoG's mission is to capture, preserve, analyze, and share the developments, achievements, and experience that, over a period of 40 years, made Michigan a State of Generosity.

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Abridged: The following interview has been edited to assist readability. Extraneous verbal pauses and informal personal conversation not related to the topic of Michigan philanthropy have been deleted. Footnotes to the transcript have been added clarifying any factual errors in the memory of the person interviewed.

Text of the interview questions are as asked. Individuals interviewed have had the opportunity to add or edit their answers in order to provide their most accurate answers to the questions. For these reasons, the edited transcript may not exactly reflect the recorded interview.

Kathy Agard (KA): To get us started, and to have it on tape, can you remind us of the roles you have played with the Council of Michigan Foundations, the Michigan Community Service Commission, [00:02:00] and the Johnson Center? Not everybody has been involved with everything but...

Jack Hopkins (JH): Right. I think, Kathy, the only one I've really been involved with to any degree has been the Council of Michigan Foundations. I was really introduced to it by my predecessor at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Howard Kalleward, because he was there at the time that the Council was formed, and so he introduced me to it from day one. I had the pleasure of, of course, working with Dottie Johnson; subsequently Rob Collier; Russ Mawby, who was one of the key people in founding the Council; and others. I had the great fortune of serving on the board and as vice-chair at one point. I actually left the board when I became the chair of the [00:03:00] Leadership Team at the Council on

Foundations because I didn't feel I could do both. That was a time, at the national level, where time was required [*due to considerable unrest among community foundations at the national level*].

I also served on the Community Foundation Ventures Board and as chair at one point of that and the Community Foundation Committee of the Council of Michigan Foundations. So I had lots of fun working with lots of great people like yourself when you were at the Council.

(KA): How long were you at the Foundation, Jack?

(JH): 25 years to the day, and I just read something, here at the Johnson Center, that Dottie was president of the Council of Michigan Foundations for 25 years, and I didn't know that. So it was actually to the day, and that was the day I retired.

(KA): Good, thanks. That's a good warm-up for us. The Kalamazoo Community Foundation is one of the oldest in the country, and it certainly has been a founder. Howard gave great leadership to the Council [00:04:00] of Michigan Foundations, and has always been there for the Council. Coming out of the college to the role that you had as president of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, what was your understanding about the role that a big, mature community foundation should have – in an association like the Council of Michigan Foundations, Council on Foundations – in the field? Not so much what you do in the community, but is there some expectation of the role of a big foundation in the greater picture?

(JH): Well, I think there probably is, but when I was first in Kalamazoo, there was no expectation that we were going to play a role outside of the community. We were pretty focused on Kalamazoo, and it was really a stretch for the board at that point to even go to conferences. That was not something that had been done generally. [00:05:00] When I became the CEO of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, it was the first time we actually had a formal budget. So it was a kind of maturation process within the community foundation in Kalamazoo to start to think about the role we might play. People were kind of surprised at the national level when here, this kind of small community had this rather large community foundation on a per capita basis.

In many ways, we were fortunate to be able to play a role at the national level, much like the Grand Rapids Community Foundation with Diana Sieger was nationally. The board really embraced that and supported me in that role. Even board members became involved nationally when there was a joint community foundation, United Way committee [00:06:00] at the national level, when there were tough times around the Aramony period – Betty Upjohn Mason served on that. Then subsequently, our board chair and another board member served on some national committees as well.

(KA): Now, Jack, some of that is going to be your leadership – I mean a CEO helps to set the tone and move the organization. Why did you do that? Why did you move beyond Kalamazoo?

(JH): Well, I think in many ways because we had so much to learn. I had so much to learn, as did our staff, about what was going on in other places. Kathy, I'm not a believer so much that our communities are so unique; people are people, issues are issues. It's probably a matter of scale, and we had [00:07:00] so much to learn from other people. I felt that we were in some ways isolated if we just thought about our



own community, or just about other communities in the state of Michigan. I think we learned an awful lot from our colleagues around the country, and so that's somewhat selfish. I remember one day also being asked what I aspired to in terms of leadership nationally and I said, "You know what, I don't know that I aspire to anything." I had, fortunately, been a small college president and had some modest success in that, and then was in the community foundation role. Because of the support of the board, I became the CEO there after being mentored by my predecessor. I just wanted to do good work for our community, and that's where our focus was. But I don't know if you can do that without knowing what other models exist.

(KA): Well you dove in [00:08:00] with two feet. [Laughter] In the story of the community foundation projects, did you start with Exxon Energy Initiative? Was that the very first one?

(JH): Well, that was one that, really, the Council brought to all of us

(KA): They brought to you.

(JH): Yes, they brought to us. We were, fortunately, members of the Council and part of that whole initiative, I think, at the Community Foundation Committee at that time. We were fortunate to be able to partner in our community with a wonderful and nationally recognized nature center [*the Kalamazoo Nature Center*] to do some energy work. As I look back on that, that's the only one, I think, where we did not create a permanent endowment. I was thinking driving up today that, with all the needs around energy conservation that exist today, I wish we had because that became a driving force for us. Anytime we were involved with an initiative, we created a permanent endowment in our community. [00:09:00]

(KA): What was the reaction of the Kalamazoo Board with this first foray into doing things as part of a statewide project brought to you by an outside group? Was that brand-new to them or did they embrace it? How was that exactly?

(JH): I think it was brand new for all of us in the state of Michigan. They fully embraced it but it was new to them, and it was new to all of us. I think that I have to hand it to a great board that they were willing to kind of risk it, because they recognized the potential value for the community. I think that the driving force always was, 'If it's good for the community, then how do we do this?' In our case, Kathy, we did not run any of the programs. I guess I had learned from higher education that with soft money, programs come and go. If you don't have the resources [00:10:00] to maintain them, you really haven't sustained anything that's of value. So we decided never to run our own programs, we always partnered with somebody else. That was kind of a philosophy that I and the board shared together.

(KA): It's a good segue, and I also need to tell you as a little aside that I'm trying not to give you verbal feedback which is very hard for me, because I don't want my giggle on the tape too much. [Laughter] That is a good segue, Jack, into the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project. Can you tell us the story around the Kalamazoo Foundation's point of view about that? And kind of then continue on with – you made a decision to manage it differently than your colleagues. I think that would be good to talk



about. Then also, you were the energy behind the tax credits, so maybe you could just start the story with the Community Foundation, your [00:11:00] beginnings with the MCFYP and then through the tax credit.

(JH): Okay. Well, I'm going back in history and I don't know that I have everything in the right order, but the Kellogg Foundation was such a great partner in so many ways, and under the leadership with Russ Mawby in particular. He's such a wonderful and gentle man. Actually, he taught me some things when I was the president of a college – to always make sure my door was open. I learned so much from him along the way but that's a little background. The Kellogg Foundation was very interested in providing support for youth programs and with Dottie's leadership, we received a matching grant from the Kellogg Foundation. We decided in our [00:12:00] case to look around the community and say, "Who should we partner with? Who doesn't make sense? Who might like to partner with us," and we partnered with the United Way.

[I give credit for this inspirational idea to a fine vice president, Dave Gardiner.]

We provided the leadership on the fundraising for the endowment portion. Donors told us that – in fact, board members told us – that if we can raise money with kids, we'll never be turned down. So kids have to be a part of it every step of the way, and they were. The United Way became our partner and today, to this day, they still manage that and they have the staff component of it, and we provided the endowment component.

Perhaps the thing that didn't go maybe as well as I would have liked, I think kids have learned more about the United Way than they have of the community foundation. But, in the long run, kids are learning about philanthropy and that's [00:13:00] important. Early on in my tenure at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, I had conversations with Dottie about the tax credit concept. I had experienced the tax credit in higher education through the Michigan Colleges Foundation, because they were part of the tax credit. So we'd go around the state raising money and I heard, repeatedly, CEOs who were interested in private higher education call their chief financial officer into the room and say, "Are you aware of this tax credit?" And frequently they'd say no. It was kind of embarrassing to be there when the CEO said, "Well, I should know about this because I can get leverage."

I remember saying to Dottie in a memo that we ought to think about the tax credit for every community in the [00:14:00] state of Michigan. I also mentioned the possibility of corporations providing matching funds for their employee gifts. Well, it was about the time that Kellogg was interested in youth initiatives, and also supported the whole concept of the tax credit at the public policy level. So that got legs and became a permanent part of philanthropy in Michigan, until recently when we've faced real financial stress in the state. I know I'm going on and on here, but it was about 'How do we provide permanent financial capacity in communities all over the state of Michigan that will never go away, and to empower communities to help fill the needs of their community?' It [00:15:00] worked, and Kellogg then supported the creation of community foundations in every county in the state; the two went kind of hand-in-hand. So every citizen had access to being a donor and also the beneficiary of philanthropy in their county community.

[And, on the corporate level, Consumers Energy providing matching funds for their employees' gifts to community foundations as my early memo had suggested.]



(KA): When the tax credit happened, I remembered it was not without controversy...

(JH): Oh, yes.

(KA): Yes, in the field, and part of the controversy was are we going after small donations in competition with United Way, versus raising big endowment gifts, which had been the historic role of the foundation and certainly the historic role of the Council on Foundations. How did your board react? Why don't you kind of chat a little bit about that controversy at the time, how it got worked through at CMF?

(JH): Well, the original concept was about endowment, but the United Way [00:16:00] was concerned [*that if passed, gifts formerly going to United Way might shift to community foundations*]. We had multiple meetings with United Way, and I had been a vice-chair of our United Way campaign in Kalamazoo. Our United Way and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation were formed the same year by the same people in our community. We had a relationship that was like this: no way did I want, nor did any of our colleagues want, to hurt the United Way because we were partners in our community. One is more of a flow-through to the community; one is a long-term support base for the community. So as we had meetings with the United Way, the United Way decided to remain silent on it because of the endowment focus.

Now, what I did learn along the way is that once it was approved by the legislature, in the writing up of the bill [*by legislative staff*], the word "endowment" was left out inadvertently by staff. That became a controversy again because I think the [00:17:00] United Way felt we had not been honest with them. Again, we had meetings. Again, we expressed that our focus all along was for endowment, and the inadvertent mistake that was made [*was not of our doing*], and that it was initially passed, as I recall, for one year with a renewal needed. So we promised that when we went back [*for the renewal*], the word "endowment" would be included and it was. Ultimately it passed a second time and then a third time, permanently, with the added components of homeless shelters and food banks [*the third time*].

(KA): Why do you think it passed?

(JH): Why do I think it got passed?

(KA): Yes, what do you think were the compelling reasons?

(JH): Well, we had an interesting situation in Kalamazoo. Mary Brown, who was our state representative, was against it initially – Mary said "because of our largesse." We happened to be able to demonstrate to Mary all the grants and support for [00:18:00] people (her constituents, basically) in her segment of the community. The first time through, she decided then to remain silent and not to oppose it. The second time through, she led the floor fight. I think the reason it passed was because people saw that this benefited their constituents, and that anybody could be a donor [*and a potential beneficiary of some community grant*]. I think the biggest issue at the state level was 'How much is this going to take away



from tax revenue for the state? Is it going to hurt?' I'm not sure that we ever had the right kind of research – that we were able to demonstrate that it didn't hurt too much. Maybe we know that today, I don't know.

(KA): In these times, I think there is lots of speculation about it. One of the things (it was a part of this story) that I was always impressed with – where it came out the most was on the computer project – was the fact that the CEOs, people like yourself, were [00:19:00] willing to sacrifice their own self-interest in order to be able to do something together. Can you talk a little bit about your thinking about that? I know the big foundations were all on their own paths to become computerized and then were willing to work together. Tell us a little bit about that project from your point of view in Kalamazoo.

(JH): Well, I can probably only respond from my point of view – [there were] lots of conversations about it. It was not easy to kind of get us all together. My chief financial officer at the time did not want to go with the FIMS [Foundation Information Management System] product. I asked her what would be the limitations of going that way, because the benefit I saw was all of us doing it together. Through discussions, the limitations were pretty small. So we decided, even though there were some limitations for us, the bigger picture long-term was that we would all work together. I got the feeling along the way that if [00:20:00] we didn't go with the group, it would collapse. I felt that that was a leadership position that we had to take. Ultimately, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation was very happy with FIMS. I think they're changing today, but lots has happened to that company along the way. I think that the one thing, Kathy, that I never felt we accomplished was the potential of state-wide data and actually mining that information for the long-term benefit of the state in terms of philanthropy. That was probably a disappointment for me.

(KA): Sure, we could have been a bigger learning institute of our own.

(JH): Absolutely. Yes, absolutely.

(KA): Yes, good. Well, you've seen the effect of public policy on the field and there's one section that we're writing about the relationship of CMF and MNA, in particular, in public policy. Can you talk [00:21:00] a little bit about what would be important for other people to know, who might be afraid of working in public policy? Let's say you were moving into a RAG [regional association of grantmakers] in Louisiana, and people were hesitant about doing public policy work. Talk a little bit about CMF's role and whether that was important or not important, or what people should know.

(JH): Well, at least in terms of the tax credit, and I'll speak to that one in particular, because that one was one I was knee-deep in. One, I'm not sure I ever had thought through how important the coming together and the support from the private foundation sector was, that we all stood together. I want to speak to that a little bit later as well. But that was critical because those foundations were critical to the passage. They had a credibility that the community foundations did not have at that point in time in the history of our state. [00:22:00] Secondly, I didn't realize how long it would take. I thought I knew, but I didn't realize we'd have to hire basically a lobbyist or a firm that would help us through the process, and how the waters changed daily in terms of who is supporting it, who wasn't, what the questions were, and so on.



The third was, all of a sudden, you're in the public eye. That means that you could be criticized for your work and it takes just a ton of energy.

The long-term benefits I think are worth it on so many levels. But you have to be prepared for it, and you need the leadership – in our association, Dottie was critical to that. She was continually the driving force, but without Russ Mawby and others actually taking their time, testifying in [00:23:00] a committee on behalf of philanthropy – and community foundations were part of that – it would never have passed. Now to go a step further, why I think the Council of Michigan Foundations has been so important, from day one, is that private foundations, corporate giving programs, and community foundations all were part of the founding of it. All had stood together from day one. That is different in Michigan than in a lot of places. One day, Ranny Riecker asked me at a board meeting (when the private foundations were being looked at in terms of their spending policy and their federal tax on private foundations) – she said that there had been some statements by community foundation leaders in other states, like Pennsylvania, against private foundations. She asked what our attitude was at a board meeting. I remember saying, “Ranny, we have always stood together, and we are here to support you [00:24:00] like you have always supported us.” Ranny smiled and I thought: *That's part of what this Council of Michigan Foundations and our philosophic approach has been over the years.* Dottie taught us, Russ taught us, Howard Kalleward taught us. Lots of folks taught us along the way.

(KA): That's great. You brought up an interesting point which I'd like you to chat a little bit about. You were on the inside workings of the CMF board. Can you talk a little bit about how things happened at the board level? So these are all strong people, who are kings in their own kingdoms and queens of their own queendoms. It's not like they don't have opinions on things, but there never seemed to be any – there would be controversy without hostility – is that the way to put it?

(JH): Yes.

(KA): So can you talk a little bit about how things got processed inside the board? [00:25:00] If you were advising one of our grad students here about how to manage a big, powerful board, what kind of advice – what happens inside the board?

(JH): Well, I think that first, the CEO had such great stature and wanted to make sure that everything got discussed, and that there was comfort on everybody's part, to make sure that things got approved. I'm sure people voted in favor at times on things that they didn't feel 100% about, but there is the art of compromise that we need in the legislative bodies in our state, and more nationally today. Dottie worked so effectively with the board and never kept information hidden. It was always out in front of us and I think that's a great lesson. She respected everybody on the board. She never pitted us against each other, which is not always the case of a CEO, but Dottie was so comfortable in her own skin [00:26:00] and so well respected that we knew that everything was on the table – that we were all going to be focused on the common good.

(KA): So it would get worked out.



(JH): That's right.

(KA): So it moves us into this idea - one of the things that I've been exploring is the idea of whether it's true that we could cast this particular period of history as one where there were servant leaders. Whether, in fact, people were aware even of that concept, or whether they just lived it. So I want to capture for students and young professionals what the qualities were of leadership. To the extent you can do it, Jack, what were the behaviors those leaders would do that moved this field forward?

(JH): Well, Kathy, when I saw the question originally, I was reminded that when I was a pretty young academic [00:27:00] vice-president or CEO, a nun at the college where I was president gave me a book by Greenleaf called *Servant Leadership*. I've looked back on that and said, "Ginny probably knew that I needed to read it." I subsequently gave it to one of my board members at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, a minister, and he started to use that terminology and concepts with his congregation. He subsequently took the book with him to another community. I'm hoping he's doing really well there, but I think as I've reflected upon it, servant leaders are not about themselves. This is not about your own career. It's not about perhaps the legacy that you provide. It's about the people in the community that you serve. I think that's one of the most basic [00:28:00] elements of it, and that's pretty hard sometimes for young people to grasp as they are trying to develop a career. I don't know if it was where I was in my development or not, but reading that was really important. I think it's about helping people come together; it's not about stepping out and trying to be a leader. It's about serving other people and helping them realize their dreams and their aspirations. In philanthropy, we have lots of resources available – both human capital and financial capital. It's trying to find a way to help use that capital in ways to support other people in their dreams, not to control it.

(KA): Great. We're going to press Joel on this, this afternoon, because this is the day that Joel and I are going to interview each other. [00:29:00] One of the things that, as I think about it – and it relates to what you're saying about human capital – is it seemed like our funders were not above us, they were alongside of us, if you will. Can you chat a little bit about the relationship with Kellogg at that time and what it was like? [Laughter]

(JH): Well, again, I point to Russ so much. I never felt like in any conversations with Russ that I was speaking with somebody who was going to control my future. [Laughter] It's so easy for a private foundation to give you that impression because community foundations were in fact grant seekers often times, but I never felt that way about Russ. He had such a tremendous aspect of his personality and his leadership style that you always felt comfortable and welcome there, and he was such a good listener. [00:30:00] I think it's something for all of us to aspire to, to be more like him. It was working together, and I felt that Kellogg throughout the time I was in the field, or at least most of the time I was in the field, was there to support us in our dreams and aspirations for our communities. I think Kellogg, because of Russ's leadership, and the people he had on his staff, realized that they couldn't be as close to the people as maybe they would want to be. That we became almost an arm of their founder's desires to support the kinds of things that he was interested in, which were not different than what our communities needed.

(KA): I always felt that we were just minions [Laughter] I used to say - in the good sense.



(JH): I might add something. [00:31:00]

(KA): Yes, please.

(JH): I think that Russ, and at that time at the Kellogg Foundation, was quite different than most other private foundations and even subsequent to Russ's time there. I think that I've used the phrase, "I felt more like a supplicant" in later times, and that was difficult – to feel like a partner one moment and a supplicant the next.

(KA): Well said, good job. What would you say have been the challenges? What were the challenges during your 25 years that were difficult?

(JH): At the Community Foundation?

(KA): Yes, or in general.

(JH): Well, one challenge was we had a very small board of five and we tried to expand it to seven. That was a monumental change, in terms of percentage, but the board was really wonderful [00:32:00] in doing that; very thoughtful. It's still a seven-member board. I think another time was when a longstanding board member was going off the board, was retiring, and was hoping that his brother might become a board member. I remember a member of the board saying - I think she had been chair but no longer was, and this gentleman had also been chair and no longer was – she said "There are no family seats." That was such a powerful statement at the board meeting, and taken so well by this gentleman as well, and by everyone else, but it set a tone for the future leadership and governance of the foundation. I think probably the most difficult time fiscally was when I presented a million dollar budget to the board, and they gulped – I mean literally, I think they gulped, but we were growing. [00:33:00] The board was just marvelous. Kathy, I had the pleasure – when I came to higher education, I worked with a group of religious women. When I had an assistantship at Ohio University at the graduate level, I worked in a woman's office. The women in my life at the foundation, on the board – Martha Parfet and Betty Upjohn – taught me so much. So for me along the way, the women in my career had been such powerful influences to me personally, in terms of my approach to my work. I think other challenges...

(KA): You went to CoF – I'm thinking at the time you might have been, [00:34:00] when there was some ouchiness about Michigan starting all these community foundations, and what's the right mix of public advocacy versus service at the Council... Were you involved in some of those conversations? Did that happen during your...?

(JH): I probably have forgotten them...

(KA): Okay, yes.

(JH): ...because Dottie helped us through it so well.



(KA): [Laughter] And it may have been a different time so...

(JH): No, I think there was some question about the number of community foundations and in some cases, the infringement on other community foundations from a territorial standpoint – yes, there were discussions about it. I'm sure there are discussions today about it. That probably has changed some, and there may be a need to bring smaller community foundations under a larger umbrella, just from a fiscal and a cost-benefit ratio to [00:35:00] the community that they serve. Those things probably don't ever fully go away, but my hope is that people always keep their eye on the ball in terms of what's best for our communities. I literally recommended to our board, when Pete Christ retired, that our board have conversations with the Battle Creek Community Foundation about a merger. I said "If I'm in the way, I'll step out of the way." I didn't know at the time that they had already selected Pete's successor. And I don't think any discussions ever occurred, but I really thought – you know, we're a small region. We're 20 minutes apart; could we do a better job together by shrinking our administrative overhead basically, and having regional reach? It might happen someday, who knows. [00:36:00]

(KA): Yes, exactly. The sense of community identity to me is a very interesting thing about people, kind of self-identified where the boundaries are.

(JH): Yes, and in Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, the two United Ways have come together under one structure.

(KA): Have they really? That's good, yes.

(JH): Yes.

(KA): So I want to move into another section. I want to make sure, Jack, that in thinking about what we're trying to accomplish and all the experience you bring to it, was there anything I haven't asked you that you want to make sure to get on the record about this time, and lessons learned, and things that might be useful to others who would be looking at Michigan's model? I think what we have felt was extraordinary was the relationships and the amount of people being willing to work together. I want to hear your thoughts; what would be useful to somebody from Brazil who might be coming on to the website?

(JH): [00:37:00] Well, a couple of things, Kathy, that I think were important. The committees that were formed in CMF were not populated only with the larger community foundations. Everybody was equal. Again, I attribute a lot of that to Dottie and you, while you were there, and other staff and the board of the Council, but also my colleagues in the community foundation field recognized that it wasn't about how large you were, how much professional history you had in the field. It was about 'we're all in this together.' That allowed the joint marketing, which had its own issues I might mention quickly – the larger community foundations [00:38:00] had to change their name.

(KA): After how many years?



(JH): Probably 60 in our case. There was some feedback that said, “You will cheapen the name and the concept because you will appear to be more like a community theater,” which I didn’t understand necessarily how it would cheapen it; it might reflect the community aspect. One of my board members said the word “forever” is not two words, it is one word [*For good. For ever. (tag phrase)*]. I knew she was an English major in college and journalist, so I did look it up and quietly pointed out to her that it could be either way. [Laughter] There was a feeling of ‘Let’s hold on to the past,’ but every one of us changed our name for the betterment of the collective group, [00:39:00] so that we could work together. Dottie again, and Rob, provided great leadership to us in that regard – and yourself. It took conversation together and for us to be honest with each other about how hard it was and how we could support each other. So I think that’s really important.

I think the other thing that was important for me, in terms of our work in Kalamazoo, was the Council’s ability to help us build permanent endowments. The tax credit was focused on that. The youth funds were focused on that. I’m going to miss some obviously, but in every initiative we took, subsequent to the Exxon Initiative, permanent endowment was created. Because of the variant powers that community foundation boards have, [00:40:00] if those endowments were too restrictive they could be modified to benefit the community. It produces some permanence, and in a day where there is very little permanence, you know that you have a community foundation with elements that are greatly permanent. I know there’s been a lot of discussion in the field of philanthropy of late, ‘Is that the right business model?’ of endowment building. I guess I’m a little old-school and believe that without it, I’m not sure community foundations necessarily have a permanent mission for their communities. So I think CMF helped us in that regard. Younger community foundations, other states, other countries, that are [00:41:00] looking at it ought to think about, is there an element of permanence with flexibility? That is really important to the sustainability of this thing we know and call “community foundations.”

(KA): Great, thank you. Good. So then I want to take the last few of our minutes and I’d like to ask you if you could tell us your personal philanthropic story. Were you born a foundation director? Mom and dad involved in a lot of things in the community? Tell us a little bit about your past.

(JH): First, it’s my mom and dad. My dad worked in the White House for 40 years as a civil servant, from Hoover’s administration through Nixon’s first term. I saw my mom volunteer in the Girl Scouts with my sisters and do a few things around the church, but I honestly don’t know if they were philanthropic [*in the financial sense*]. I had an experience as a young kid with a friend in the neighborhood who [00:42:00] choked to death one night. I remember as a small kid thinking, “I hope someday, I’ll have enough money to be able to help do something so that this doesn’t occur.” Now, why I thought it back then, I have no idea, Kathy, other than I was probably grieving over my friend’s death. I never thought about philanthropy. I guess I didn’t volunteer much growing up as a kid. I kind of ended up in higher education because people had pushed me along the way and encouraged me. I learned how to fundraise, so to speak, in higher ed, and went to foundations for support of my institution of higher ed. I kind of wore blinders; I had enough pigeon holes that I could probably keep a handle on in higher ed. [00:43:00] One day, I had a conversation with Howard Kalleward about the Kalamazoo Community Foundation; I was there looking for a grant support. He mentioned that they were looking for an assistant. I could tell he was uneasy – he



had never had an assistant. I said, “Oh Howard, lots of people would love to work with you including myself.” He called me a few days later and said, “Did you mean what you said?” I said, “Are you talking about the grant request?” He mentioned the position. I said, “Gee, I don't know.” I talked to my wife, and she beamed because we had three teenage sons [*whom we could continue to raise in Kalamazoo*]. So I applied, went through the national search process and was selected.

I took a pay cut. I gave up [*the potential of*] three college tuitions, but it allowed us to stay in Kalamazoo, which was a community we had come to love. My board [00:44:00] vice-chair at the college, and the nuns said, “We don't want you to leave but if there's any place you're going to go, this would be the best place for you to go.” The vice-chair was the brother of the chair of the community foundation board. So everything was open and above board, which is the only way I like to operate. So I was selected and realized I knew nothing about the community foundation. I didn't know anything about all these various funds; I had to learn about the various systems that existed. I actually would meet with nonprofit folks to teach me about the various systems, about disabled youth and what families faced [*for example*]. I ended up buying rental property, partly so I could learn about what low-income people face who have to [00:45:00] get housing vouchers and assistance and are homeless. I had so much to learn, and I learned from day one the wide variety of issues community foundations are involved in. I used to say that I might wake up in the morning and the first thing on the agenda is we're going to talk about the environment. The next hour it might be economic development; the next hour it may be homelessness. The next hour it may be the arts and humanities. Every moment, I was learning something new about the community and the issues facing members of our community, and the passion, and the love people had to solve issues, but I had so much to learn. I thought I knew quite a bit in higher education but I only knew a small sliver [*about our community*]. So it was kind of an eye-opening [00:46:00] experience and every day of my life in those 25 years provided eye-opening experiences.

(KA): Jack, have you tried to do something with your children and grandchildren to be more intentional about passing on this experience?

(JH): Andy and I created a donor-advised fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation quite a number of years ago now. A portion of our estate will flow in to that when we are gone and it will become unrestricted at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. About a year ago, we asked if a portion of it could allow for distributions outside of Kalamazoo County because we have three kids who live outside of Kalamazoo County. Last summer, we indicated to each of the families that they had access to a very small amount of money [00:47:00] for decision making by their families for distributions in their community. They haven't done anything yet and then every once in a while, Andy and I say, “They haven't done anything yet.” [Laughter] She says, “I'll remind them.” [Laughter] We hope - and we see in our kids also volunteerism in a certain way. Whether or not we've done as good a job, Kathy, as we would have liked? I remember when you spoke in Kalamazoo about families and giving, and how important that is. My hope is that our grandkids, our own kids, when they're able - I do have a son who owns a business here in Grand Rapids. It's a fundraising consulting business and he works with nonprofits on capital campaigns. I know he and his family are quite philanthropic.



(KA): It is, that's always the first teacher, [00:48:00] is what happens inside the family. So Jack, one last question, what do you worry about? You're out there consulting now. You've got a good sense of history. Anything that is on your mind about the health of the field?

(JH): Well, I'm probably not as well connected to the field. I really have done almost no consulting in the field at all, which has been kind of a surprise. The consulting I'm doing is with a major, well-established university in St. Louis, Missouri, called Washington University. I'm currently consulting with two real estate development firms, for-profit firms, in Kalamazoo. [Laughter] That surprised me.

(KA): [00:49:00] You've done real estate development work as a part of the Kalamazoo Foundation too. Didn't you guys make a great big economic development investment?

(JH): We did. Again, the board was terrific. Although I think they're backing away from it today, from what I understand, but the board approved about 15% of the foundation's unrestricted endowment to be used for program-related investments; loans, loan guarantees, etcetera as one of the tools. It was after the 2002 ["*Tech Bubble*"] decline in the market, when we just didn't have [*sufficient grant*] resources. We've done a great deal in the rebirth of downtown Kalamazoo in particular; helped make possible what's called the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center which is a life science center in Kalamazoo; It works up here with the Grand Rapids folks in the life sciences. [00:50:00] And we did some important things in terms of bringing banks to provide mortgages for low and moderate income individuals by doing a loan guarantee which took the risk off the back of banks. So we did an awful lot. There are still loans out there working. Some of the nonprofits are struggling to pay them back because of 2008 [*the fiscal recession*], but it's done a great amount of work. We established a fund called the Community and Economic Development Fund. I was really taken aback when the board named it for me when I retired. It's still there, and it's got an endowment component, it's got a grant component, and it's got a loan component to it.

(KA): Yes, I mean it was a real risk, and I think of the leadership position that the Kalamazoo Foundation took.

(JH): Yes.

(KA): For something to run a decade or more is really quite a run.

(JH): Right, and the fund is still there [00:51:00] to do some things. It's not a huge fund but...

(KA): Good. Anything else you want to make sure to add? We've covered the waterfront quite a bit.

(JH): I don't think so, nothing...

(KA): Thank you.

(JH): Well, thank you.



(KA): Yes, it's good to have you.

- End of Recording -

