INTERVIEW WITH DAVID EGNER – OCTOBER 10, 2011

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 David Egner on October 10, 2011. Conducted by Kathryn Agard, primary author and interviewer for *Our State of Generosity*. Recorded during the Council of Michigan Foundations' Annual Conference in Kalamazoo, 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.

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): Remind me of the roles you have played at Kellogg, CMF, MNA and with the Commission. I wasn't sure if you've had any responsibilities with the commission.

David Egner (DE): Not formal, they were informal. From 1989-1993, I was Russ Mawby's executive assistant. In that role [I] was involved in starting what was then the Michigan Nonprofit Forum, his work at the Council of Michigan Foundations, and really the starting of the Commission which was bubbling up toward the end of that tenure. Then I became the second director of Michigan Nonprofit Forum which became the Michigan Nonprofit Association, ended up testifying for CMF and others about the community foundation [00:01:00] tax credit, involved in the CMF public policy committee in that role, and then on the board of CMF I chaired the advisory committee for the Office of Foundation Liaison for the governor's office and public policy committee and all the Washington trips, and chaired the

conference one year. Then at the Commission, no formal role but the Volunteer Centers of Michigan, which were merged with Michigan Nonprofit Association, had a formal relationship with the Commission and so we were constantly connected as key partners.

(KA): What we are trying to capture is what is different about Michigan [00:02:00] or what lessons could be learned by other places. You have sat in enough seats now; can you put your finger on what are the behaviors or why has this come together the way it has in Michigan?

(DE): I think when you look at the organization around the nonprofits and philanthropy, we didn't forget how to have supper together. A lot of the things that were creative and continue to be created were done because people could sit around the table and have a conversation about how to work together, what common visions were and in many respects we rode a set of small momentums to a common vision, then to inclusion. Typically when you look at the world, we tend to do that backwards: inclusion, vision and then we get to the issue of trying to make momentum. We didn't forget to have supper together, we didn't forget how to informally relate to each other [00:03:00] and that made a huge difference. I think because of that, the organizational structures continue to be in place to permit needed activities but there are still a lot of organic pieces that continue to grow. It allows us to focus and be nimble in ways that if we weren't having dinner together, we couldn't be.

(KA): Can you share, in a way to the public, the importance of the role of Dottie and Russ' leadership?

(DE): When I look at what Michigan has as a heritage in CMF, MNA, the Commission and the Johnson Center, none of it would have happened without both Russ Mawby and Dottie Johnson. That their vision for this -- they were the people that convened the dinner meetings, they were the people that had supper, they were the folks concerned about the greater good, not building something [00:04:00] for the purpose of building it. Every one of those components, all four of them, were not focused on single issues but focused on how to uniquely serve Michigan and without the two of them driving, it doesn't happen. Funding, leadership, bringing people to the table, making sure we could continue to meet and grow, that happened because of Russ and Dottie.

(KA): What did you learn from Russ as an assistant?

(DE): I have had three great mentors that changed my life and Russ is one of them. I went in a very green, young, 20-something and in the process of traveling with Russ and watching him in meetings, I learned I couldn't look at any single issue from one side, that every issue had multiple sides. I also learned that there was no one solution to any problem. Which I think when you look at the weaknesses of institutions, that is what they do – do it is this way, we have to solve it this way. Instead, it is dozens of solutions [00:05:00] and you have to embrace them all until the market and the structure can determine which ones will work enroute. I learned that from Russ. I learned you focused on people first. Don't bet on institutions, bet on people. So when you look at the CMF and MNA and the Commission and the Johnson Center, it was the leadership that made them work because they focused on people. I could go on for days about what I learned from Russ.

(KA): What have you learned from Dottie?

(DE): I always say that Dottie has an incredible ability to get a firm grip with a velvet glove. She absolutely saw what she needed to get and along the way she made sure that everybody owned it, it was theirs, and they felt stroked, and valued. She was able to move mountains by being aggressive, and at the same time she brought people along. You get caught up in Dottie's wake and you were going to work to make everything happen. It was a [00:06:00] tremendous style, one that valued everybody and everything.

(KA): Can you tell me the story of how MNA came to be from your point of view?

(DE): Russ was looking at the work of CMF and he looked at the nonprofit sector in Michigan and said that we don't have a common place to come together, that the sector was eventually becoming siloed. Human services was different from health care, was different from higher education, was different from fill-in-the-blank, the arts etc. So he wanted to create a place where all of the sector could gather with common issues and make sure those issues were pursued with common solutions. So he called together a group of associations, from K-12 all the way through the arts and everything in between, and they sat together for nine months, off and on, and agreed that they needed to start [00:07:00] something and the Michigan Nonprofit Forum was born as a round table.

This is another great example of how having the table works. Russ knew exactly what we needed when he called them together but he let them discover it over the nine-month period. So the forum was originally focused to be more of a think tank, to look at issues of research and how the sector would grow, and in time it was found it had to be more pragmatic. It morphed from this group of associations to being a membership organization with permanent seats and then some at-large seats, with a focus on public policy and on the important issues of the sector. It then merged with the Volunteer Centers of Michigan and Michigan Campus Compact, two extremely important institutions for service, and as a result of that took on the whole service arm as part of their work .That was all in my time frame and then Sam Singh picked up the gavel and had a [00:08:00] very heavy public policy focus and a couple more mergers took place and then Kyle Caldwell came in after that and has continued to drive it forward.

(KA): Were you part of the raising of the 20 million dollars?

(DE): No, that was Sam. Actually, Sam and Kyle together raised the money in the endowment. Which some of us said, "It will never happen" and they were able to pull it off. It happened because Governor Engler had an understanding of the importance of service. Michelle Engler was head of the Community Service Commission and if Governor Engler didn't have an understanding of service, I think Michelle was going to make him have an understanding of service. They were very committed. The Community Service Commission was founded before we had a national structure. The Governor had put this instrument in place before there was a national movement for it; he was ahead of the curve, he understood that citizens had to engage. One of the other great mentors of the three I mentioned was George Romney who, when the Commission was being formed, [00:09:00] was bending the Governor's ear on the need for service and then he connected the volunteer centers very firmly into the Commission and MNA.

Romney was the driver of citizen action being an important element that we were losing as part of the Michigan society.

(KA): Identify any other qualities of leadership of key individuals and how they leveraged power.

(DE): Dottie and Russ both have a unique set of abilities to empower everyone around them. As a result of that, [00:10:00] they didn't need to be strong in the use of power in any way. People would feel valued, empowered, and included. They both have incredible integrity. There was never a moment where you thought there was anything less than a transparent discussion. I have not known a lot of people who have known Russ or have known Dottie that would say they wouldn't run through a wall for them for that very reason. You knew what they represented was the right thing, there was great integrity. They didn't care who got the credit. That was the whole other thing, they gave credit to everyone. As a result of that, they were extremely effective. I don't remember, in my three years plus working for Russ, of him ever actually playing a strong-handed role. He would set direction. He would sometimes lead by backing up, he would have the [00:11:00] tension push against him and just simply turn around the other way by explaining direction and lightly moving people, and Dottie, the same thing — brilliant leaders.

(KA): Has CMF been effective in benefiting the people of Michigan and if so why?

(DE): CMF, there is no question it has been effective. You can make a list of reasons for that from the whole youth in philanthropy movement, the community foundation tax credit that could have put in place, increase in giving, the growth in the community foundation sector that happened in that time frame. The numbers would show that it was successful. Why it was successful? Again, back to Dottie and Russ; it was leadership. It was folks knowing that they were behind the right issues because those two people were behind those issues. Russ provided a sense of [00:12:00] support and some capital early on and other foundations followed suit. Dottie was very persuasive at keeping a number of funders at the table. She worked a network better than anyone I've ever seen. She could work a room, make all the rounds and on the way out people would almost be dropping the checks in the hat, as a result of Dottie explaining where they were and what was needed and making them feel a part of the solution.

(KA): Everybody had a personal conversation with her.

(DE): Dottie and Russ had personal conversations with everyone. You always felt like you were the most valued person in the room when you were with Dottie or Russ.

(KA): What do you see as having been difficult for the philanthropic community in Michigan and was it overcome or is it still cooking?

(DE): I think there are some issues that we haven't overcome and unfortunately a lot of it is driven by some issues that separate the sector a bit. Community foundations have [00:13:00] different needs than private foundations than family foundations, and so sometimes we segment ourselves away and forget those common elements. CMF, as a membership institution, has this interesting balance of needing to serve the most needy in their realms of members that pay the least amount of dues. The 80/20 rule in

reverse, 80 percent of your resources are going into 20 percent of the marketplace and then the big funders need them the least but have to support it. It is a delicate balance and there were times I worry that that could come undone with the wrong change in players among the big foundations or in some family foundation or some community foundation leadership. It has still held together and I think if we try to structure it differently it will fail and it is just going to be, for the history of CMF, always about that balance.

(KA): Talk a little [00:14:00] about the transference of this ethic of working together from Russ and Dottie's generation to my generation to your generation to the youth.

(DE): Transference of leadership is a tough issue. I don't think there will ever be another Russ Mawby and there will never be another Dottie Johnson. I think we need lots of people that have to fill that role collectively. You are never going to have that gathering again of the intellect, the charm, the understanding, the drive that the two of them brought together. Humility, I might add, because they would both disagree with that but we all know it is true if we spent time with them. It is going to take more of us to push it. I am most optimistic about [00:15:00] handing the baton when it is my turn to hand it. What I am seeing in the generation 35 and younger, is an advocacy, a return to meaningful service that I think my generation missed. They care deeply about direction and not about making a buck in the same way. I have watched a lot of talented people under 35 give up successful, lucrative careers to engage in service or in community building. I think the sector is in good hands moving forward but again it will be collective. It is going to be different because of technology too. The round table is sometimes a virtual round table and that is something that is going to be more difficult to deal with and it is a global round table. We can't just talk about Michigan anymore. Of course, now you have the Community Foundations Ventures piece where we have merged some of the thinking around Ohio, and Michigan, and Illinois and that space and [00:16:00] that will continue to be part of the issue as we get smaller as a world because of technology.

(KA): What advice would you give to anyone who doesn't have the infrastructure of the four big institutions we have?

(DE): All those looking at philanthropy and the nonprofit sector and where it should move forward, there are two key questions: what are our assets and what are our needs? What made the four organizations in Michigan work was an understanding of both of those issues and then having leaders that pushed them. So I think in any part of the world where you are looking at philanthropic or nonprofit solutions, where are the assets? How do we get them to be part of the solution and how do we play? The other thing that has to happen is they need to find champions, [00:17:00] and when I look at Dottie and Russ they were champions for so many things and really zealots about moving those pieces forward. Without that you can't move it forward. Again, this notion of momentum to vision to inclusion; it is dozens and dozens of small things that add up to the movement, not one big thing. I certainly learned that from both Dottie and Russ.

(KA): I have never seen anybody run a meeting as well as Russ has. It doesn't matter how long the agenda is and if you have 15 minutes at the end of it you fit everything. What have you learned from Russ about running a meeting? That is a skill set.

(DE): [00:18:00] Russ could run a meeting like nobody could run a meeting. What a unique set, though, he was really a parliamentarian. He grew up understanding parliamentary procedure and where that went. I have never met anyone that could read a room like Russ Mawby, who's where, what their value system is, pull people in. If you went to a meeting you couldn't sit quietly, he would find a way to pull you in and get your opinion. I think it is because he sincerely valued everyone around the table. It was as much about moving an agenda forward as it was about value. Had it been just simply about an agenda, he wouldn't have been effective. It was remarkable about how he could synthesize the feelings, the direction, then set a tone at the end for next steps and push an agenda forward. I have not seen anybody run a meeting like Russ. Dottie comes close, but he was the best.

(KA): [00:19:00] Anything else you want to add?

(DE): I think when you look at both CMF and MNA, which are the two things I am closest too, it's not being static. It is being able to invent, reinvent, and be nimble, and not being afraid to take on some larger special projects and needs as they come forward where others would shy away and say that's not core mission. That whole notion of being flexible is critical. Both organizations evolved tremendously over their lifetime; they didn't just become that one thing. CMF is very different today than it was even five years ago, and MNA as well. They will continue to evolve. If they are the same five years from now, they probably will be [00:20:00] stale and no longer useful.

Susan Harrison-Wolffis (SHW): I need to know who the third mentor is.

(DE): A guy named Terry Jarko who ran Junior Achievement in St. Louis. I was a kid when I met Terry, I was a sophomore in high school; first real career coach, too. I ended up working for Junior Achievement for years. St. Louis, Missouri. Terry was the guy who you would call and say, I have an issue, I am trying to struggle through a dilemma and Terry, by the end of the meeting, would always say the same thing, "I don't know if I answered your question or gave you more questions to answer." [He] would never tell you what to do, would simply ask question after question after question. [00:21:00] And [he] had some remarkable statements that were a bit off-color but meaningful. Although using different words [he] would say, if someone is not angry at you, you are probably not doing your job.

(SHW): Your personal journey. How you got into philanthropy, [00:22:00] why did you choose that work, how has it changed you as a person, what you hope your legacy is?

(DE): I fell into philanthropy. I think that is how we all get here. I don't think we wake up one day and say, I want to run a foundation. I was working at Junior Achievement in a national office, actually in a St. Louis regional office which was then headquartered in Colorado Springs, so I would occasionally be in Colorado Springs. Pete Ellis, who was a longtime program officer at the Kellogg Foundation, had recruited a big chunk of the professional staff there. What Pete would do is go through his Rolodex of all of his [00:23:00] grantees and call people up and say, this is the type of person we need and you need to get one of yours on the inside. Junior Achievement had a grant from Pete and Pete had called out to Karl Flemke, the then national president of Junior Achievement and he said, "Would you get one of yours on

the inside?" Then, you could say things that you wouldn't normally say like, "The chairman is in his 60s and wouldn't be comfortable traveling with a woman, so it probably should be a man and it needs to be somebody who can write fairly well and we'd prefer someone younger who can grow into leadership." Karl Flemke called Marty Lee, head of Human Resources, and he scratched his head and said, "Who in the world could fill this profile?" and as he walked out of his office scratching his head, I walked in the front door of the headquarters building and he said, "Oh, you would fit." So if I had walked into the door five minutes later, I would have never made it to the Kellogg Foundation. It was luck or divine intervention, [00:24:00] depending on how you want to look at it.

Junior Achievement was not-for-profit, focused on business education. I actually said I didn't want to interview. I was in a field office in my 20s and was already rewriting the field office manual with a couple of other people and how we were working, I was having the time of my life. I had a boss at the time that basically drew a line in the sand and said I don't want you to interview; if you do you will be out of a job. At which point, I had to interview. So I am also grateful that Pete Rohen drew a line in the sand. After spending a day with Russ Mawby, I knew I needed to be in this business.

(SHW): Why?

(DE): Philanthropy is transforming. Where else, in any other job, do you have the opportunity to empower others to solve problems or to improve the quality [00:25:00] of life? The first thing I learned from Russ Mawby was if you are in philanthropy you really don't do anything, which was a bit of an overstatement, but what he was saying is we are in the business of empowering others to do. I found that to fit with my personal belief system in a big way, that if others could be empowered and charge forward that we could make a lot more change than if you try to do it alone or tried to solve a problem with a single solution. So I evolved at Russ' knee in many respects, watching him work but started to understand, as I watched philanthropy work, this role of empowerment, refocusing, asking questions, understanding multiple solutions were necessary and it just seemed to stick.

(SHW): Where did that come from in your life, in your 20s and to be talking about empowering others? [00:26:00]

(DE): I don't think it came from me. I think I copied it from Russ Mawby, I really do. I just saw it in him. I so admired it and I wanted to have the same value system. My family had always been involved with us as kids, they supported what we were doing and my dad drove the bus for the traveling basketball team to make it to the nationals one year. They served but it wasn't the same level of empowerment and volunteerism and service that I saw after coming to Kellogg. I was really formed at the Kellogg Foundation as a professional. Russ was important and there were others there, too. Joel Orosz was important; that incredible intellect and to be able to free that in so many ways and to do it with great wit as well, in tough times. [00:27:00] Joel was actually…I went back to get an MBA at Kellogg and I was a pretty lousy student as an undergrad…and Joel was the guy I would hand every term paper and every major paper to and have him critique it and he took the time to do that. I still remember him saying, "Your writing is improving a lot," and I don't think Joel knew it but that was one of the most important compliments I have ever received. What a great writer. And so many others there, too.

(SHW): Why did you need to go elsewhere?

(DE): I had been with Russ over three years and learned a great deal and you could tell the time was coming for him to make a transition and bring another assistant on. This was a growth position and was meant to be that. It was never meant to be a job for life. I could have gone into the foundation, there was a [00:28:00] spot in education and youth programming that I was really looking at and trying to prepare myself for and this MNA opportunity came along and two things collided. One, the understanding that I had so closely modeled myself after some of Russ' value systems that if I had stayed in the foundation I would, in some respects, have been counterproductive. They didn't need me to do that work in that way. Also, I needed to move out from under my mentor's shadow so that I could prove I could do it elsewhere. Doing it inside the system that I watched him build and adopting his practices from him, in many respects, would have been stopping growth. I needed to move to the next challenge and the Nonprofit Association was a bankrupt organization at the time. It was in the Michigan Nonprofit Forum and Pete Ellis who had recruited me and actually set up [00:29:00] for himself in retirement to run the Michigan Nonprofit Forum. I stumbled across Pete's original notes and what he thought the forum should be and on reading those I just got it, he was absolutely spot on. So I saw a great challenge to go and take this thing that was bankrupt and try to turn it and put back in place, the vision that Pete had for it because it had gotten off track a little bit. It was not pragmatic. It was not churning out the outcomes it should have.

(SHW): Are you willing to share what some of the vision is, a little bit of what his notes said?

(DE): Pete had a notion that if you could bring the sector together around common issues, you could strengthen every element of the sector. So it was as much about convening people—where the conferences and all the sessions came along—as well as educating people. So there was a whole other educational component he wanted to drive out. [00:30:00] The whole newsletter and the publication pieces were things that Pete had put in place. Then he had envisioned the need for public policy, that there needed to be an ongoing effort to understand what was going to affect the sector, what threats there were and what opportunities there were, and to try to unite the sector as a whole around those issues. So that is what I set out to put in place, really those three pieces.

(SHW): What about today, how are you bringing all that you have learned to what you are doing today?

(DE): I have two jobs today, so this takes twice as much time. I'll be brief. As president of the Hudson-Webber Foundation, the focus of the foundation since 1939 has been quality of life [00:31:00] in the City of Detroit, a pretty wide splotch to cover. We did incredible work under the leadership of Gil Hudson in seeding mid-town Detroit and its kind of rebirth and that continues. What we saw, there was some data that drove the foundation in a little different direction. Michigan was losing disproportionately its young, talented population. So if Detroit looked like Chicago, the same proportion of the population were under 35 with a college degree as the same proportion as metro Chicago, there would be 136,000 under 35 college-educated in the city of Detroit. If Detroit looked like Minneapolis-St. Paul, there would be 82,000 under 35 with a college degree. Detroit has 15,000, total. So the natural conclusion is to say, well the outmigration caused all the young talent to go to the suburbs and that is incorrect as well; [00:32:00] the

suburbs are half as dense with that cohort of under 35 college-educated as Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul. The bottom line is that if we don't get younger and better educated, attracting, retaining, and creating our own talent, the city can't survive, the region can't survive, and I would say the state can't survive. So we didn't shift our focus as much as sharpen it. We are now setting out to try to attract 15,000 under 35 college-educated to greater downtown by 2015. Why those numbers? One, they sound awfully good, we needed a vision and rallying cry, and two, it is doubling the current number and densifying it. So we think it is a tipping point. We never intended this to be a program of Hudson-Webber. It is a vision that we tried to sell to multiple people and have great ownership. We started with three key anchor institutions in mid-town Detroit, Wayne State University, Henry Ford Health Systems [00:33:00] and Detroit Medical Center, who are now working together on talent attraction and economic development. I knew we had succeeded when the Governor in his first state-of-the-state mentioned those three institutions in 15x15 and there was no mention of Hudson-Webber. We don't want there to be a mention of Hudson-Webber. This has to be the vision that everyone is inspired to share. So those values that I learned under Russ and Kellogg transferred: empower the others, inspire a shared vision, then seed the opportunity. We have gone about that in that manner, a lot of dinner meetings, a lot of pushing forward.

I had the privilege of hosting the first meeting in 40 years with the president of the DMC and Wayne State that wasn't about the medical school, where they had fought and fought for years. A trick from Russ Mawby. A quiet dinner with the three of us [00:34:00] and we spent the first 45 minutes discussing very lofty difficult issues, coaching soccer, where they could find a common way to work together and by the end of the dinner they said to each other, we should be able to fight like hell about the medical school and still be able to do this other work. They got themselves there. So that has been the Hudson-Webber work, the place building, place making in creating a shared vision to bring young talent back to the city. The New Economy work has been focused on trying to reinvigorate the economy, accelerate its transition to be more innovative. When I took that over, I think it is important to note that ten funders came together with 100 million dollars and frankly didn't know what they were going to do with it. It was a leap of faith, that if they put their money together they could make a difference but there was no plan. We stumbled along a bit, trying to find a plan and had numbers of meetings and I actually stepped in [00:35:00] just short of two years into the project. John Austin was the first director there and had done a great job of gearing up data but the foundations weren't pushing out an implementation strategy the way that they should.

We focused on the incredible assets that gave us comparable advantage and understanding where those could drive the economy, creating a robust employment workforce, and then creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem that could grow any business that is in place or any new entrepreneur and we found the greatest success in the last one. We are now doubling down in that space; we are putting more money into this entrepreneurial ecosystem if we can grow our own. Entrepreneur is a word that is misunderstood. It was actually first coined by an 18th century Irish economist and the definition says nothing about business or profit. [00:36:00] His definition was: it's a person who takes full responsibility for a success or failure of an initiative or an ideal. So under that definition, Martin Luther King Jr. is no less an entrepreneur than Bill Gates because it is about pursuing with this kind of focus, this outcome and don't we need more entrepreneurial schoolteachers, and firefighters, and city officials, and you name it? Nonprofit leaders

would fall into that category as well. The NEI work has been focused very much on creating an ecosystem that could produce more entrepreneurs.

(SHW): What do you want people to know about you in this, about you the person? The kid growing [00:37:00] up in JA, the kid who played center.

(DE): I was the big guy. I was the center, although in those days they had this guy named Magic Johnson who started playing basketball and made me realize I was too small to be a center and probably too small to play a guard.

(SHW): What do you want us to know about you in this story about the formation of this infrastructure of people who sat around the table? You are kind of the bridge generation from them to this next one.

(DE): I think my unique role is the connector. So, can you connect people that together can make a difference? The great privilege of playing that role is, [00:38:00] and again this goes back to Russ Mawby and what I learned from Russ, being able to see how people can contribute to each other's success and where someone may have the missing ingredient to the recipe to make something work and trying to just connect them into the mix and bring them along. The other great thing about being a connector is once you do your work and you have got them working together and empowered and moving, you don't need to be there. I think it is best that connectors be only visible when they are needed and then fall into the shadows. I think the core of the work of Hudson-Webber and NEI is to get movement with lots of people but take very little credit for it. Those people need to push the initiatives forward and I think the minute we start thumping our chest about it, we have done something wrong.

(SHW): Why not take credit, especially [00:39:00] in such a dismal time, to have some success?

(DE): Success has many parents and failure is an orphan, so we need to keep giving credit, not taking it. I am a funder, so the bottom line is the work is done by people who we fund and while we might be helpful and might make connections, I don't think we can take full credit for what they do. We will get credit, people will know where we were but we shouldn't seek it. I am convinced of that. I am also convinced that we give away our power if we try to. The real power is in connecting and slowly fading into the background. You get far more done if you don't care who gets credit for the outcomes than if you insist upon getting credit.

(SHW): What is next for you?

(DE): Who knows? [00:40:00] I have a vision for the work I am doing and I don't know what is next. I am really taken by the incredible place we live that people overlook. In Southeast Michigan, and Michigan in general, we are the victims of our own success. If you look back 100 years ago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek all had their own innovations growing. We were the equivalent of Silicon Valley. If you wanted to make it, you came here. If you had an idea, you came here and connected. Henry Ford launched numerous entrepreneurs that he needed to build pieces and parts and components and tires for the automobile and so this was an innovative place. Over a 70-year period we started to depend on the

paternal relationship we had formed with large corporations. It seemed to drain the entrepreneurial spirit out of us. [00:41:00] The question is, is there still an entrepreneurial gene in our DNA and if so, has it become dormant? We have found it is still there and it needs to be stimulated. So you have got this great history and then this incredible set of assets around us. We are surrounded by 20% of the world's fresh water supply. The largest manufacturing capacity in the world is still here in Michigan. Southeast Michigan has the sixth largest creative class in North America. There are three tier-one research universities that moved from the middle of the state to Southeast Michigan that take in just under two billion of public dollars in research annually. They are within 75 miles of one another. The best developed community college system in the country sits here. The best developed community foundation system in the country sits here. If you take a look at the north, you have these incredible hardwood pines; you are virtually a few hours drive, at the most, [00:42:00] from skiing or the ocean without salt in any one of the Great Lakes. Incredible resources that we take for granted. Arts and cultural institutions that rival those in the world. I just came back from a trip to Europe and the DIA (Detroit Institute of Art) stands up to any of the museums that I looked at there. Symphonies on both sides of the state. This is an incredible place to live. Unfortunately we have defined ourselves over the years by our deficits, not by our assets and if we would start defining us by our assets we could make a big difference. We could turn a lot faster.

(SHW): How does that connect with the work that you are doing with nonprofits?

(DE): The nonprofit sector fills out the equation inside of Michigan. You have got [00:43:00] the public sector whose role is very well defined; if you look at these issues of assets and growth, they have to make public investments in universities, in public spaces and that will drive people here and drive innovation. If you look at the for-profit sector, they need to make money; that drives everything else. Philanthropy is a beneficiary of the success of a number of great entrepreneurs and business people. So if the private sector isn't working, nothing works because there is no tax money and there is no philanthropic money. But without the nonprofit sector, you cannot complete the story…that the universities are nonprofit, the healthcare systems are nonprofit, our library system is nonprofit, arts and culture, nonprofit. It is the fabric of civil society that would be lost if we didn't invest in it. If we think we can have a successful society and a successful Michigan with just a flourishing [00:44:00] public and private sector and leave out that fabric of life, the whole kind of meaning of life—parks and recreation system as well—if you leave that out of the system, the equation as well, who would want to live here. I don't want to live in a state without culture and I don't want to live in a state without parks and recreation and working systems, and that is what the nonprofit sector does.