INTERVIEWS WITH RUSSELL MAWBY

Interview #1 – August 15, 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 Dr. Russell Mawby on August 15, 2011. Conducted by Susan Harrison Wolffis, consultant, and 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.

Susan Harrison Wolffis (SHW): Thank you so much for doing this. I have to confess that you are the person that I have been waiting to talk to. [00:01:00] I just need to know a little bit about you. I need to know how you came into philanthropy.

Russell Mawby (RM): I always say that it has been a privilege to be involved in the broad world of philanthropy and nonprofit efforts to improve the human situation. I always describe myself as just a lucky farm boy from Kent County. I grew up on Orchard View Farm, a fruit farm, went to Orchard View School, which was a two room country school and that was [00:02:00] a privilege. I think the concept of

the old one room school when grades 1-8, or in Orchard View were 1-4 and 5-8, made an ideal learning situation in so many respects, so it was great to have that experience. In those days, and that was the late 1930's, there were no consolidated high schools. We lived about seven miles from Creston High School in Grand Rapids and so my folks, and I had two brothers and a sister, and somehow we were exactly four years apart, for 16 years my folks got a son, and then a daughter, and then a son, and a son to Creston High School, encouraged us to be engaged in post classroom activities, and so [00:03:00] just made that all happen.

That was a blessing, my folks, I always marvel at my mom and dad. My grandfather, my dad's father, came from England in 1871 when he was ten years old and came with his maternal grandparents (this is just background of how Russ came to be, I guess, what he is.) So they came to northern Ohio where some of the Mawby families had come earlier, and other friends, and so he grew up with family and friends in northern Ohio. Completed one room country school, was an avid learner, then went to a little school in Valparaiso, Indiana where he got a credential in teaching. I suppose that was one year, or something, but then he could teach in one room country schools. He started doing [00:04:00] that in Ohio and then Michigan, got married, and came up to near Grand Rapids, bought 80 acres, and then began teaching in Peach Grove School. He had an orchard and was a schoolteacher. My dad was the oldest son and so he went to Peach Grove School, graduated from the 8th grade, and went to work for a neighboring fruit grower, Oscar Braman.

Oscar was a successful civic leader and a successful farmer; very much engaged in his career profession. [He] said to my dad apparently, just encouraged him with, "you are bright, you ought to get more education." So in 1913, when he was 18 years old, he got on the train in Grand Rapids, had never been on a train before, got off the train in Lansing, walked seven miles to East [00:05:00] Lansing, and enrolled in a 10-week fruit growing short course in the winter of 1913. That changed his life, of course, because it was a whole different world that had been opened up for him. The contact with the university, with professors, and fruit growing, the whole experience was dramatic. He went back and worked for Oscar until he got married and then bought a fruit farm nearby, Orchard View Farm, that the family, my mom and dad purchased in 1925. My mother was also an 8th grade graduate of Peach Grove School. She also was very much interested in education and so forth. The family, I mentioned, there were four of us, all encouraged in school, all went through high school, then had the options of going on. I was the first to go to college seeking a baccalaureate degree. [00:06:00]

So that was family, parents' particular encouragement that led me to have that interest, but it was also a consequence of very active involvement in the 4-H Club program. My mother was a 4-H Club leader, my dad was very enthusiastic about it and supported 4-H in so many ways. Both my mother and dad were engaged in all sorts of extension activities, the extension homemakers program for women. The concept of going on to college became natural for me. Of course my first experiences on the East Lansing Campus were 4-H Club work, 4-H Club week, stayed in Abbott Hall, and that whole experience made me begin to think, "Gosh, maybe this is something that I could do." My dad also was very active in two state level organizations: one, the Michigan Apple Commission concerned with [00:07:00] the industry, of course, and then in the late 1930's he was on the Michigan Land Use Planning Commission, talking about land use for the future. The two great initiatives that he was involved in were the Metropolitan Park System,

over on the east side of the state that runs from Ann Arbor all the way over to Port Huron, and then thinking about what the Land Use Planning Commission did, and how it came together with county participation and so forth. The second was Yankee Springs, just south of us here down by Hastings and Gun Lake, and so again, different experiences. He would go to those meetings usually held in the student union building, at the Michigan State college campus, and sometimes he would have me go along and then just roam the campus. He [00:08:00] gave me a dollar maybe, so I could go to the dairy store and have an ice cream cone. Again, I began to feel at home and just the experience of being with him and those kinds of activities; talking, going down about the issues that were on the agenda, and then on the way home about what the Planning Group that the Apple Commission had decided, the problems and the opportunities. Just another incredible young life experience.

(SHW): This was during the depression, right?

(RM): Yeah, it was tough times.

(SHW): Let's talk about that at some point, about how that shaped your world view and your sense of responsibility.

(RM): We'll come back to it. It was tough times. [00:09:00] Our community had some fruit farms, a little bit of other kinds of farming, but a lot of people were troubled with unemployment. A lot of the parents of my schoolmates at Orchard View were working for the WPA or PWA, the public works programs. The East Beltline was built at that time and so you know people who are helping do that. They brought their teams and were, with horses, building the East Beltline, improving Three Mile Road down past our house. You were aware of all those things, and then the four years of high school were the years of World War II. Pearl Harbor was the fall of my freshman year and VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) was just at the time of graduation in 1945. So that also [00:10:00] tempered life, the farm, because farm labor was short.

My older brother was in the Navy and so, well of course, on most farms kids had responsibility and roles. That was one of the blessings really in retrospect, because at an early age you had responsibilities, you were part of the family team to get things done, make things happen. In a lot of ways it was a blessing, in retrospect, to have some of those experiences. To have German war prisoners picking apples, coming from a prisoner camp in Sparta, go pick them up and bring them down for the day, and so forth. Some of them could talk a little English and so we would talk about their lives back in Germany [00:11:00] before the war. So all of those things were influences.

(SHW): Did you have family move in with you because they needed a place to live during the depression?

(RM): No, the only part of that really was my grandmother, my mother's mother, who spent her later years with us, which again was a pretty typical pattern of families at that time. Farming, of course, provided a lot of opportunities to deal with the lack of cash during the depression. Sure we had chickens, we had one cow. My dad didn't like cows and as soon as the neighbor began to bottle milk, we began to have bottled milk instead of a cow. Anyway it was an exciting and significant period of time. A lot of

lessons about the problems of others, [00:12:00] the problems of kids who didn't have boots to wear to school in the winter, and just the families couldn't afford a new jacket.

(SHW): I was wondering if this helped form who you are.

(RM): Sure, concern for others. As a Boy Scout, I had learned first aid and the Red Cross held training sessions for first aid in our Township. My dad was one of the civilian guards for our square mile. We would have blackout drills, and we would drive around to see if we could spot lights anywhere, and we would stop and remind persons of "well you left the light on in the Brooder house," and so forth. So all of those things, [00:13:00] and so I was engaged as an assistant for a Red Cross worker in teaching first aid at the Grand Rapids Township Hall. Just lots of experiences that do shape your thoughts, and some of your values for service beyond self, for example. The family was a blessing in that regard, my mother and my dad were both involved, and my siblings were involved, and it was tremendous in retrospect, a blessed growing up experience, always encouraged with opportunities beyond.

The two youth organizations that really made a tremendous contribution, each in a different way, were 4-H Club work and Boy Scouts. In 4-H, my partners in the Peach [00:14:00] Grove Rustlers 4-H Club were all basically rural kids. Some of them on farms, but all rural. Then I joined the Boy Scout Troop and it was in the suburbs of Grand Rapids, so I was the only farm kid in Boy Scout Troop 43, and got acquainted with kids I had never known. Different experiences in Boy Scouts than in 4-H, so I reflect on those experiences. For example, in the summer of 1944 (which was the last full year of the war) the Michigan Department of Conservation had a real problem because of manpower shortage, of keeping up with the roadside parks and with the fish hatcheries, keeping them clean and stocked and so forth, all of those conservation responsibilities. So they engaged the Boy Scouts [00:15:00] to establish a camp for the summer at Higgins Lake. Troop 43 was one of two troops that went up to set up the camp before them. Groups would come up for two weeks to do all of the jobs with the conservation department. So one day you would be working on painting buildings and the next day you would be knee deep at the ponds at the fish hatchery, and so forth. Just again meeting kids, young people from other walks of life, different experiences, but a different sense of responsibility.

I would have to say that then, as more recently, opportunities to influence, contribute, hopefully positively, to youth development experiences. Always those experiences which I had, I thought were valuable and tried to incorporate them. I think for example in American society we [00:16:00] have prolonged adolescence for young people. As a kid at 14 I had a driver's license on the farm. I don't know if nonfarm kids could then, but 14 years old, driver's license. So I could take a big truckload of peaches to L.V. Eberhard, to his store on Eastern Avenue, I could deliver spray material up in Sparta, I could do a lot of things so that is quite different. In all of society, I think there was engagement of youth in plenty of different ways than is characteristic now. So adolescence is prolonged, I think, into the mid, sometimes late-20's for many young people, and we need to change that in a positive sense. I am not talking about child [00:17:00] labor, I am talking about the opportunity to live life in the more realistic sense, and to contribute through my own productivity, and my contributions to others in positive ways. It changes then not just the physical engagement, but the mental mindset, and the values which are then reflected in all aspects of life. Some of those experiences really made a difference to me during those years.

(SHW): Was it something that you and your family talked about? I don't want to belabor the point, but I think the era in which you were brought up says so much about who you became. Did your family talk about tithing, or we need to share what good we have, or we need to help buy food for the neighbor?

(RM): Oh, sure, in all sorts [00:18:00] of ways. Typically at the Mawby household, depending on schedules, we had breakfast together. Lunch depended on whether you were working on the farm, and if it was on the farm we usually had two or three hired men who also had lunch with the family, and then at supper time, we didn't have dinner except for Sunday. Supper time we would talk about what had gone well that day, and where the problems were, and what was exciting, and what were the plans for tomorrow so it was a conversational exchange. When I was 10, Ed was 18, so he was living a different life than I was living, and that was interesting to be a part of and relate to. So it was very much a family [00:19:00] enterprise, but pretty typical of a lot of families in our community, a lot of community activities and projects. The school was very much a community center with various activities that would engage family and which engaged kids of all of the ages in community participation.

The other thing that I still remember is that many of the kids in Orchard View School were first generation, their parents came from abroad. That usually was Germany, or Italy, or Poland for some reason in our community, related not to farming [00:20:00] generally, but to the employment in town where you had all of the furniture industry, and all of the woodworking industry, and the manufacturing starting for the auto industry, and so forth. So at home there might be some conversation in Dutch with the Butendykes across the road from the school, or in Polish, or German, but the parents always insisted everything was done in English because their kids were Americans. That's again a difference that sort of has taken place in our society, I think. So many people want to be immigrants of the United States, but they don't want to become Americans. I think that is a change that we as a society need to be concerned about. So they had some of those traditions and they were very often, when you had a potluck, you know, you would have a Polish specialty; we [00:21:00] just know they are going to bring this, and it was exciting, so it was wonderful! You can talk about some of the problems, but we were never poor. We didn't talk about it and the folks managed things carefully, but we were, you know, we didn't have a lot of money, but we were never poor.

(SHW): I am thinking that you carried all of this into your career.

(RM): Oh, sure. A lot of it is values that just become a part of life. You appreciate more in retrospect. We didn't sit around the table and talk about values, but you knew. Nobody in the family ever smoked, we never had alcohol. It wasn't an issue, there just wasn't a question. [00:22:00] It was just a part of the Mawby family and so those were always lessons learned.

(SHW): Take me to your college years.

(RM): College was exciting. I went to Michigan State, majored in agriculture, and more specifically in horticulture. I really thought I would be a fruit grower. I admired my dad who was an early adopter in sociologist terms. For example, many of the orchards in Sparta and around Grand Rapids had started dairy

farms. The typical family farm in Michigan had a combination of [00:23:00] enterprise and usually it was built around a small dairy herd, 10-15 cows, so you got a milk check every two weeks and that was sort of the stable part. And then you might get into fruit growing or you might raise hogs or you might specialize, but it was a combination of enterprise. That and even if you were a dairy farmer as your main source of income, you probably had 50 hens so you had, if you look at farm management records of that period of time.

One of the experiences I had at Michigan State, farm management had a farm record-keeping program in which farmers kept records and sent their annual reports in and we helped summarize them and analyze them but you know the farm would have 12 dairy cows, it would have [00:24:00] 50 hens, it would have two sows for pork, they got some pigs for sale, but a couple to use at home. So most of the fruit growers for apple storage changed the basement of the barn, cleaned it out and changed it into apple storage. My dad was one of the first. We never had a big dairy barn. He didn't like cows, so as soon as we could get rid of the last cow for milk, when Hap Woodworth started bottling milk and delivering it, we got milk from the back door. We didn't have a barn to convert. My dad was one of the first to build an apple storage, tiled, insulated and with fans and so forth. We would bring in a huge piece of ice to put in the bunkers to cool the apples in the fall, but it was a [00:25:00] building designed for apple storage and then it was added on and then it was mechanical refrigeration and so forth but then you add a packing house because the industry changed. So he was one of the pioneers in apple storage in the farm-based packing house, so that you could sell directly to the supermarket systems and then, of course you are not old enough to remember when you went to the grocery store, you went to Johnny Hines store on Plainfield Avenue. My mother would go in to shop and a clerk would take care of her. You asked for five pounds of sugar and you needed a box of salt and you then needed a bag of flour and two cans of peas. The clerk would collect all of those, you would pay for it and he would help carry it out to your [00:26:00] car.

Then we began to shift to self-service. There were two pioneers in this area. One was L.V. Eberhard, and that name is familiar at Grand Valley State University. L.V. was one of the first out on Eastern Avenue to have a self-service supermarket. It had a door with a light on it so that when you walked in it opened the door and that was a new feature and you had a cart and you went around and picked up your own goods and a checkout counter. L.V. was one of the pioneers. Another was a gentleman named Frederick Meijer and he was in Greenville. Now L.V. Eberhard and Frederick Meijer and their other counterparts then didn't want apples in the bushel baskets, otherwise, you know, they would have a basket and you would say I need three pounds of apples and they would go weigh them [00:27:00] out, they wanted prepackaged bags. These were five pounds, purple mesh bags with apples in them, six of those bags would fit in a standard bushel crate and so I had an early career in delivering apples to Frederick Meijer when he had one store in Greenville and then a second on at Ionia and then a third one at the corner of Fuller. So when Fred Meijer and I see each other now we still talk about those early days. So my dad was a pioneer in those kinds of things, so that was just another part of growing up and getting acquainted with, well people like Fred Meijer who was an innovator but also had great social and societal commitment for community and [00:28:00] so forth.

Back to Michigan State College. I went there with a major in horticulture, specifically pomology, now you would know that pomology is fruit-growing, olericulture is vegetable growing and floriculture is

obvious. So I was a pomology major and that was a marvelous experience. It was right after the war and veterans were coming back and had priority on dormitory housing quite appropriately. So I lived in a little boarding house off campus for my freshman year, became a member then of the National Professional and Social fraternity called Alpha Gamma Rho and moved into the fraternity house and that was a very positive experience and a lifelong relationship and leaders in agriculture in Michigan and across the country. [00:29:00] So that was a very positive part of life. Majoring in horticulture and doing pretty well as a student.

I will just mention, at that point ROTC was required for freshmen and sophomore men, so I had two years of military. If you opted for the four year option, you ended up as a 2nd Lieutenant and I am not sure two or four years of service. I was just two years in ROTC. That again, I would say, was a positive experience in a lot of ways. So again I think society needs to rethink about some of the things which maybe are "required" as a part of concern for service to others and service to country, national as well as, sort of, [00:30:00] self-centered choices.

Toward the end of my sophomore year, and I had become engaged in the college activities, particularly the college of agriculture and the horticulture club, became a member of Alpha Zeta at a very early age in my college career. Alpha Zeta is the agriculture academic honorary, became involved in the Agricultural Council student group and was a reporter on the State News, the school newspaper, so was engaged in college broadly. In the spring of my sophomore year the head of the department stopped me in the hallway of the horticulture building [00:31:00] and I was surprised that he knew me. He just stopped and said, "Mr. Mawby, could you step into my office? I would like to speak to you." Well you know, I wondered what has gone wrong, but he just said, "Russ, you are doing well as a student, we are proud of you, keep that up and we are pleased you are a horticulture major. But I just have an idea that I would share with you for you to think about. If you really are going to be a horticulturalist as a career, you need to get a master's degree and probably a Ph. D. degree and we will make you a specialist then. I suggest you think about for your junior and senior years, you take as few courses in horticulture as we will let you take and still be a horticultural graduate. Take as [00:32:00] few courses in the college of agriculture that we will let you get by with and still have a degree in agriculture and if you then use the freedom in your course selection that that offers to sample this great university." I didn't have any ideas about great religions of the world, literature, music, physics, anything, but sample this university and I took his advice.

(SHW): What was the most far out, far away from horticulture?

(RM): I enjoyed writing, and so I really had enough credits to have a degree in Journalism and at that time they didn't have an Agricultural Communications major, but I did a lot of journalism work. I took courses in geography, took courses in history, beyond the requirements and so forth, and just became broadly and similarly became more broadly [00:33:00] engaged in student activities across the campus. One of which led to the creation in our senior year of a magazine for the combined Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics, it was called the "MSU Homesteader." The whole profession of home economics was started in colleges of agriculture. I always think of things started in the early 1900's, like 1905 and 1910, as colleges of agriculture developed extension services working with farms on farm

management, and farm technology, and so forth. They then became concerned with improving the quality of family life on the farm and the house, interior design, and experiences, and foods, and nutrition, and clothing, and so [00:34:00] forth. So home economics in most institutions started with the department in the college of agriculture, then moved to college status. I became good friends of the Dean of the College of Home Economics and department people there, and then students, and we created the "MSU Homesteader" magazine, for the first year I was the editor, and so it was just another aspect of college life. So that was sort of college.

Now another great experience came about between my junior and senior year when the 4-H Club program nationally launched an international exchange program for 4-H young people and it grew out of an initiative by three farm kids and the state of New York. They [00:35:00] would serve in Europe in World War II and came back with the notion that people in Europe don't know us, and we don't know them, and there ought to be communication, and there ought to be an opportunity for 4-H kids to live with families there, and for kids from there to come and live with families here. So the first year of that program was 1948 called the International Farm Youth Exchange, but then changed to International 4-H Youth Exchange because a lot of 4-H kids aren't farm kids. They may be rural, they can even be center city now. So there were 17 of us from 17 different states that went to Europe in the summer of 1948, and again that was a life-changing experience. I went to the United Kingdom, mostly in England and Wales, so language wasn't a [00:36:00] problem. Others went to Sweden, and Denmark, and Italy, and France. It was a great experience in all sorts of ways, and again influenced then my course selection. In my senior year, following Dr. Tukey's suggestion to sample this university, I got into different kinds of course selection and activities. All those tremendous influences of growing up shaped a lot of my ideas, my concerns, my priorities, the values by which I try to live.

(SHW): You have been working ever since to provide those opportunities for others.

(RM): Yep. Both professionally, and then if you look at my volunteer activities, that pattern pretty much follows.

(SHW): How did you learn that you were going to be a [00:37:00] leader?

(RM): I am still working on that. I've never described myself as a leader. I never use that as a description of Russ Mawby. I can see myself as a guy who does care, and if there is a problem, or there is opportunity, then I want to do something about it.

(SHW): How did that parlay into going to work for Kellogg.

(RM): There was Extension (Michigan State University Extension), it was my first career. I have always been concerned with the importance of relationships between people, individually, and relationships between people and communities to make a difference, or in organizations, institutions. You have to work [00:38:00] together to make things happen, and so I have always been engaged. I have always volunteered, even when I was in the Army for two years, I volunteered. I could talk about two blessed years in the Army which happened after I completed the Master's degree, and most of my Ph. D. degree,

and so I was drafted, it was the military draft. I still would favor compulsory public service, I would broaden it from military, to all of the other… I think it would just be great for all the young people to be engaged in and initiative and the contribution which can develop life skills also, but it certainly changes values and mindset about what an individual can do if she, or he, [00:39:00] wishes to do with their life.

By pattern, my mom and my dad volunteered. They were collecting for United Way in our rural community before most rural communities did anything with United Way and so I was just engaged, would volunteer and out of that I guess identified, or labeled, as a leader. My description of a leader? A leader is anyone who sees either a problem that needs to be addressed, or an opportunity that ought to be capitalized on, and then does something about it. The person who is a leader in the neighborhood in getting a little league team started for kids is quite a different [00:40:00] person than one that will be concerned about how do we create better home services for the elderly, but the pattern may lead the kid who has been in little league to be concerned about doing something for home care for the elderly. Leadership comes in all shapes and sizes and manifestations depending on the issue and the opportunity. I saw an opportunity here to get students in agriculture and home economics working together in their courses of study and good frame perhaps the kinds of things they do when they become a home economics teacher, wherever that is, or simply a parent in the community concerned with whatever the issue may be. [00:41:00] I still have that bad habit of not saying no as often as I ought to.

(SHW): What an opportunity you must have had at Kellogg.

(RM): Incredible. Priceless. How could an old farm kid end up.... If you wanted to write a training program for being the CEO of one of the greatest private philanthropies in the world, you certainly wouldn't say major in horticulture. Although it is not bad cause you learn some lessons about all sorts of things.

(SHW): How incredible. [00:42:00] One of the things that we wanted to talk about is the leadership that the different foundations provided, and then coming together in some of the larger organizations. I am learning all these acronyms. Maybe if we could just somehow talk about how it has changed Michigan and how it has changed the people of Michigan? [00:43:00]

(RM): Others will be describing that better than I can. Let me lead into that with a coincident of transition from Michigan State University. My first job was with Michigan State University in the Cooperative Extension Service. I was an Extension Specialist in public policy and my Horticulture degree changed to a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics. I wanted something broader, if there had been a major in Agricultural Communications, I might have gone that way, but I went to Agricultural Economics because I then became concerned with management, and marketing, and those aspects. Then in my doctorate became more concerned with policy issues, and the importance with policy issues nationally, all the way down locally, [00:44:00] related to policy decision.

Simple statement, all of the drinking water in Michigan, now this is overly simplified, but all of the drinking water in Michigan is ground water. It comes from underground and underground quality is the responsibility in policy terms, not of the State of Michigan, not of the counties of Michigan, but of

townships. So when you want to deal with water quality, and dealing with issues, pollution for example, townships are the first players in carrying that out. I became concerned and intrigued with all of those sort of idiosyncrasies, because here is underground water flowing, it's lakes and rivers. It starts in your township and you pollute it, and it comes to my township, and so here we are, and how are we going to solve that problem? I became intrigued [00:45:00] with all those kinds of issues. I became Assistant Director, you talk about blessings of the farm, I became the Assistant Director of the Cooperative Extension Service for Michigan State University on July 1st of 1956. I had been in the Army in 1955, came back and picked up as an Extension Specialist in agricultural extension and policy issues. It was the time when farmers came under social security. Until then they had no retirement program and social security became available and so I was involved in designing a program and educating farmers. You are 67 and you are thinking about retirement. How can you get into extension? Somebody else is 23 and starting out in farming, what does he want to do about Social Security? That was [00:46:00] my first opportunity after the army.

Then, to my surprise, I got another call from the Dean. I wondered what had gone awry again. I met with him, and he and the director of extension simply said, "Russ, we would like to have you become Assistant Director of Extension responsible for youth 4-H and youth programming on July 1." Well, Ruth and I talked about that, and decided that would be a wonderful opportunity, so I became the Assistant Director of Extension and this leads me to the transition to Kellogg because one of the problems of the extension service was getting understanding; cooperative meant that you had some federal resources, you had the land grant university and then you had the county extension office. The county usually provided support, the secretarial staff, [00:47:00] for travel and operations and so forth so having county involvement was important and it was difficult for many people in local government and so forth to appreciate that cooperative relationship and we needed to develop stronger agricultural leadership, farm leadership throughout the state. Young women and men engaged in farming who would become concerned with policy issues, become engaged in county, or township, and school board activities, etc.

So the director of extension asked two of us to think about some kind of a leadership program for the state of Michigan for people engaged in farming and so I was one of [00:48:00] two that had that responsibility of designing what we called the Farmers Study Program. We put together a wonderful plan and sent it to the Kellogg Foundation and it didn't go anywhere. That was just coincidence. That was the spring and summer of 1964. In October of 1964 I got a call from a fellow Glenwood Creech, talk about human relations, I had become acquainted with Glenwood Creech in an interesting way because he was involved with the master agricultural extension center for grant study at the University of Wisconsin and I won't go into detail on that but I got a call from Glen Creech saying, "Russ, I have decided I am leaving the Kellogg Foundation, I am going back to my alma mater, the University of Kentucky and [00:49:00] Dr. Morris, who was the president would like to talk with you about the opportunity of coming here." And I said, "Oh Glen, gee whiz, here I am. I think my future is in the academic world. I am enjoying it. I was a tenured full professor at the age of 35, or something, and I said, "I just don't think it would be fair to take any of Dr. Morris' time." He said, "Oh, you ought to come down." I said, "Alright Glen, if Dr. Morris understands that I really am not looking for a job." So I went down and had lunch with Dr. Morris, and then worked there for 30 years.

I was intrigued with the opportunity as we talked about the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, what it had been, what its prospects and opportunities [00:50:00] were for the future, and so I accepted the position. I joined the foundation December 1, 1964 as director of the division of agriculture and there were seven program divisions, and agriculture was the one for which I had responsibility. And one of the early prospects that got reactivated was Michigan State University had a request for a Farmer Study Program. And by golly it got funded and then it was replicated for other states with foundation assistance, different models and then it sort of swept the country and there are still 37 states that have active Farmers Study Programs based on that early model. Anyway that is just coincidence, [00:51:00] so I had the privilege of becoming a part of their seven program teams. Mr. Kellogg's first concern was education. Education in his words, education offers the greatest opportunity for really improving one generation over another, and that it is education of the child, but also of the parents, the teachers, and the doctors, and on, and on.

So a real priority in all of the areas: agriculture, and the other divisions with education, the division of medicine, and public health, division of dentistry, nursing, hospital administration, education, agriculture, and Latin American programs. I was one of the seven with [00:52:00] responsibilities in each of those areas. You can immediately see the interrelation. Why did agriculture come into that as a title? The first emphasis was education sort of in the formal sense, school: elementary, secondary, but then higher education, and the whole concept of a continuing educations or lifelong learning. Kellogg was very much a partner with the institutions and organizations which were engaged in that concept, but concentrating on health, and then all aspects of education and learning.

The real theme if you read the history, and maybe you have, of the Kellogg Foundation, the first annual report was printed in 1941. The foundation was established in [00:53:00] 1930, Mr. Kellogg was then 70 years old, still very active in the company, very active in the foundation, and during the first decade they concentrated on seven rural counties in south central Michigan and Mr. Kellogg was personally very much active with the board of trustees during that period. He became essentially blind in 1941, died in 1951, so continued to be interested and engaged right up until his final trip to the hospital. A remarkable man, he completed his formal education at age 14 and went to work selling brooms for the business that his dad had, and so just a remarkable man and the values and his vision in so many aspects of life. So learning about him has been an [00:54:00] inspiration. He started out as a hospital administrator, quit his job when he was 46 years old and started the Kellogg Company. That is another story, but another remarkable example in learning, so that he and the board of trustees then, he formed the foundation in the spring of 1930, attended a White House conference on children and youth in Washington at the invitation of President Hoover. He had done some things in Battle Creek, came back to Battle Creek after the conference and said, well, I need to organize my philanthropy differently.

In the spring of 1930 [he] formed the W.K. Kellogg Child Welfare Foundation; the board, the staff, just a couple of people, and began to develop their plan. Now what are we going to do? So they studied the work of other foundations, and in the annual report it says, after studying what others are doing and [00:55:00] looking at various issues, the board of trustees finally made its first decision: that the resources of the foundation will be essentially for the application of knowledge, rather than for research or relief. Research is being more generally supported from various sources and relief charity is more of a responsibility of government.

Well, the greatest challenge we see is putting to use that which is already known. We know a lot more what good education could be than is generally practiced. We know more about what good health services could be, and should be, than is generally experienced, and in all of these areas then, the great challenge is to put to use that which is already known, and so here is the focus of the foundation. [00:56:00] It started then in these seven counties and grew from that. Agriculture then was not a word in the mission initially, but immediately when you look at health, if you solve the problem of clean water, and that is true locally, but globally in developing countries, impure water is the greatest source of infant death. Water and then nutrition, so agriculture was really concerned with food systems, and food supply, and even now we get concerns about food safety, for example: if you buy fresh raspberries from Chile, what kind of water were they washed in? Those were the concerns that were expressed in that first [00:57:00] annual report, food safety. Particularly then it was raw milk, so just fascinating to see the commonality of some of those issues.

So I became a part of the team to everyone's surprise, and to my amazement I became, two years later, was Vice President for all programs, working under the President with all of them trying to understand nursing, and dentistry, and so forth. You must know how dental schools were separate, how were the problems of the mouth and teeth separated from the rest of the body? So it's not a part of health benefits… Anyway, I began to ask questions like that. Why do we operate in such patterns of foolishness? So I became Vice President for programs, a couple years after I was there, and then in 1970, [00:58:00] Dr. Morris retired and I became the CEO, had the privilege of serving as CEO for 25 years until my retirement from 1970 to 1995. So just a lucky old farm kid again who happened to be in a wonderful, wonderful situation.

(SHW): How many changes did you see in those 25 years?

(RM): I get a lot of credit for things… Anyway I was engaged in one way or another.

(SHW): Could you help? [00:59:00] This is what I haven't been able to find in my research yet, just kind of set the scene if you will, what was going on in Michigan at the time? And the rest of the country, and world, if you want, that made you decide that we needed CMF. Why did you, and I know that you were part of the leaders who did this, so I need you to talk to me about this. Why did we need this?

(RM): [01:00:00] A lot of people currently involved don't know. They think that was in the olden days, and that is not true because I was there. It can't be the olden days. I was Vice President and Michigan, you know the problems going on etc., but in the summer or early fall of 1969 Bill Baldwin, who was the CEO of the Kresge Foundation invited a group of foundation leaders to a luncheon meeting at Meadowbrook Hall and that was the great home built by Mrs. Wilson and is now a part of the campus of Oakland University. We were invited to Meadowbrook [01:01:00] Hall for lunch by Bill Baldwin and Dr. Morris was going and he invited me as vice president to go along and that was wonderful because I met a lot of people I didn't know and talking about what was going on in Washington and Congressional hearings and decisions which then resulted in the Tax Reform Act of 1969. So this was just an update and had a representative from Washington, the National Council on Foundations, lawyers and so forth, to talk

about what's going on in Washington. That was all new to me because I was in agriculture and the foundation and then had this broader responsibility and trying to figure out how do you get the nurses to talk differently, and work differently, with physicians and vice versa [01:02:00] and etc. so I was learning about all those things and engaged in a variety of issues that started under agriculture.

You see this is where I never wanted a very specific job description. I wanted to know what I was expected to do, but then I wanted the freedom to do also what else ought to be done. So I didn't want too narrow a fence. I talked about that with Dr. Morris way back when he bought lunch before I made a decision… Anyway, that led us, for example, to a first national initiative on the part of foundations to work with the 1890 land grant universities; they were segregated. So in 13 states, a second university. They had a land grant university at MSU. They had North Carolina State University, and that [01:03:00] was the extension service. But North Carolina A&T (North Carolina Agricultural and Technological State University) was the black land grant university. So I learned all about that and most of the rural kids who were going – foundations had worked with the private universities like Atlanta Group (Atlanta University Center Consortium), Spelman, Morehouse and so forth, none with the public universities, but if you looked at black students, the numbers were the public universities and with the civil rights legislation of the mid-60s, the opportunities for those universities and those young people changed dramatically, so as director of the division of agriculture I invited myself to seven of those institutions and we didn't do anything in agriculture. We did it in Engineering and Library Science, wherever they saw opportunities that their institution ought now be thinking of training their graduates for. That is not agriculture [01:04:00] at all, but it's for rural kids, and it's their future.

So anyway, went to this meeting and learned about the issues which were being discussed in Washington which resulted in the Tax Reform Act of 1969. A lot of the provisions of the act were just right on target, very necessary, very good. There were some that were troublesome, so I suddenly became – that passed in 1969 and in 1970, the summer really – I became president and then with the title of CEO on September 1, 1970. Immediately concerned then about the implications because one of the aspects of that act that Kellogg is concerned about. We want to endorse, we want to support [01:05:00] those positive elements; one of them, for example, accountability. A lot of foundations wanted to operate in secret, you know, *you have no right to know how we operate and what we do etc*. The Foundation had for years, the first one was 1941, but then at the annual publication, dissemination, accountability and so forth and so we wanted to be positive in the support of the legislation which we thought were right on target in terms of public policy.

We also wanted them have the capacity to respond to those that we thought may need to be reconsidered or refined and so suddenly I was in a different chair so I called Bill Baldwin and said "Bill, I am concerned with this. We in Michigan in foundations don't know each other. [01:06:00] We've never had a meeting. You had that nice luncheon. Well I think we ought to have a second meeting, invite all – there was no list of foundations – but we find as many foundations as we can and follow-up in some way" and he says "that's a wonderful idea." I said "well, why don't you go ahead. I will be glad to help," He said, "I did the last luncheon, can you do this one Russ." Well he was very senior in every way, so I said "okay, will you be on the committee with me." He said "sure." You see, I didn't say "no I won't do that." I said "sure, I will do that."

So I began to identify a group and we got about ten of us together. I hope there are records that give you some of those details. But we had lunch, talked about this need and decided yes, we had about ten in the planning [01:07:00] group but we had private foundations and we had some family foundations that didn't have the kind of visibility of Mott and Kellogg and Kresge and a few others. There were a few community foundations in Michigan and so Howard Kalleward was in the group, Kalamazoo and some corporate grantmakers from the Ford Motor Company Fund which is not the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation is in New York and the Ford Motor Company Fund is in Michigan so we drew together trying to get a leadership group together and we talked about this, and we decided that we needed to hold a meeting broader involvement, identify and then invite but to announce publicly so anyone interested in the [01:08:00] foundation concept and participation would be welcome and this would be a meeting of two purposes. We wanted substance, to talk about TRA69 and the various components and the positives and how we helped made that happen. The area for example of payout was one concern because the payout requirement was to start I think at 5 % but was to be established and announced annually by the Secretary of Treasury and it would be related to the interest rate on treasury bills. I could be more specific than that but that started to go up and eventually went up to 12 and 13% which would be disastrous on the payout requirement on a private endowment.

So we wanted to talk about substance then and the things [01:09:00] we thought everybody ought to react to positively and about how we could then address other issues. So we decided on having a conference of Michigan foundations and we needed the committee and "Russ, since you provided this group you can just be chairman of that committee, and we'll work with you, we need to broaden it, get some other participation, but we'll plan the first conference of Michigan foundations." Interestingly it ended up a CMF conference and it may have that for a couple of years but one of the activities at the first session, which was held at Schuler's Restaurant and Hotel in Ann Arbor. We met there. I had become acquainted with a guy named Dr. [01:10:00] Phillips. He had been a sociologist at Michigan State and he was engaged in community development activities and so forth and he had a discussion technique.

If you had a large group, get groups of six people around a table and then you would have a question for them and they had six minutes to discuss it. So it was the Phillips 66 method and that was when we had Phillips 66 gas. So at the meetings then, the luncheon meetings where we had the people at the round table, each luncheon meeting had different question that they talked about and then fed back into the discussion, which dealt with questions of "should we have a conference next year, should we have another conference, was this good enough to do again?" Secondly "should we think about some sort of an organization of Michigan foundations [01:11:00] ongoing?" And third "if we had such an organization, how could it be funded and how could we have a sustainable pattern?" I think those were the three basic questions that we dealt with so we ended up at the end of the meeting saying yeah, we are going to have a committee; we are going to have a conference. We needed a committee and people could volunteer for the committee and then we have a committee to plan the conference, and we would have another committee to look at what kind of structure it could be, and a third one how could it be funded? So that led to those committees and to the planning of the next conference. That's sort of how CMF began and we had a foundation chipped [01:12:00] in.

Russ could call Bill Baldwin and he could call the Mott Foundation and so forth. Herb Dow was very active and of course, that is Dow and that is Ranny Riecker and so we got funding to have a part-time staff to help us the committee, in planning and so forth, grew from there and then the part-time person moved to California and we needed somebody and there was a young lady, she was just a kid who had come to the first meeting. She was a member of the board of trustees at the Grand Haven Community Foundation and her name was Dottie Johnson. I am sure I am factual on that, you talk to her, but she became engaged in the planning and so forth. And it was just obvious then [01:13:00] that if Dottie was available, she should be our executive director and she agreed to do that. She had two little girls. I think they were still elementary, maybe preschool, just kids, little girls. And she said the office would have to be in Grand Haven. We can't disturb that. Martin has his business, his career, and that is where we are living. We want the kids to go to school here so if the office could be in Grand Haven. So the office is in Grand Haven, and probably a couple foundations there helped make that possible. So CMF, that is where it all started.

(SHW): What would have happened if you all had just operated individually?

(RM): It would be chaos. We still have some policy issues at the national level. We've got some new ones [01:14:00] at the state level and it would be desperate situation if not. CMF started with sort of a focus upon services for members, the conference and then educational, etc. Then became more engaged and structured to address policy issues, became a player at the national level of both in terms of encouraging people from Michigan to become members of the Council of Foundations board so they were engaged but then active in those activities and leaders in, for example, pioneers in the Foundations on the Hill. We did that as Michigan first and then the Council of Foundations said "can't we get other states to do the same kinds of things?" [01:15:00] CMF has been the pioneer, the leading RAG, Regional Association of Grantmakers in the country, just marvelous. And then they began to be concerned how could we get foundations engaged and established to serve, so we can say every community in Michigan has the potential, and talked about the challenge grant and that is where somebody said, "Well that is an interesting idea, I think we could be interested in that but it would be particularly exciting if we could figure out how we could get younger people involved." I probably said, "I was driving a truck when I was 14, so we ought to give kids an opportunity to be engaged. They are marvelously responsible if you just look at this." So that was the Youth Advisory Council (YAC). That was another dimension that worked; [01:16:00] a lot of people. I can remember Byron Cook [First chairman of the Greenville Area Community Foundation] in Montcalm County saying, "We would never have gotten our foundation going if we hadn't have had YAC. That got us as adults going." And it just happened.

(SHW): It is remarkable how you have prepared the next generation of community leaders.

(RM): And then you see CMF said on some of these things we need to have research. Does YAC make a difference? And that is a longitudinal study and so you follow to see what happens. I'm a YACer when I am 16 and then I become more active, then I go to college, then I go to work, what happens then? [01:17:00] It just is so remarkably evident that those experiences do change, it may not change your career, you may still go into engineering, or business, or teaching, or whatever, but then what you do in your career, personally, you are engaged, you volunteer, but then you also get others volunteered. So it

just makes a difference in how you handle both your career, how you earn a living, and secondly how you live a life and there is a difference.

(SHW): And the ripple effect in the community.

(RM): The multiplier, the so-called ripple effect is incredible, so that's sort of how CMF came about and the difference between the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Council of Foundations [01:18:00] at the national level is, I think, the greater participation (quite understandably) in the state organization. If you go to the national meeting of the Council, most, not all, but most of the participants are staff of foundations and you get a few family members and so forth that are engaged and they become active at the national level. The state conference, you have those foundations which do have staff, community foundations, and other foundations. Staff come, but you have a lot of the donors and their family and trustees, not all trustees of foundations are donors to the foundation, but they are on the foundation board, community or private foundation and they come to those meetings. It changes the nature of that and then builds capacity [01:19:00] to reinforce, for example, policy initiatives at the community level and at the state level and so the role of CMF, I think, has become more significant with experience as we learn to respond to both new challenges, problems or new opportunities. And you look dramatically the whole concept of Learning to Give, which is ingenious. We are still struggling with getting it to expand to its full potential, but that is a CMF initiative.

(SHW): What are the issues facing CMF in the 2011, 2012, 2013 years?

(RM): [01:20:00] I'm chair of the Advisory Council at CMF and I describe it as the meeting of has-beens because everybody there has been a member of the CMF board, so we are the has-beens. I'm dramatically a has-been because that's a lot of change since I retired in 1995. I am on the CMF board but not actively engaged. I appreciate the way I can communicate and get the minutes and so forth. So they are much more sensitive but I think that one of the things at both the national and state levels is the absence of understanding and support for the importance of the nonprofit sector and they can say glibly and in their grand rhetoric say "We are going to cut expenses and somebody else is going to pick up expense for the homeless, [01:21:00] expanding health care to those who don't have health care, to expanding opportunities…." All the things you look at… I say simply, that we as a society have to understand the role of three sectors.

The first is the for-profit business sector, that is the economic generator for the support of everything else that happens, and so the private for-profit sector has to be recognized as the heart of our society. It's the economic generator and without generating resources, you don't have the resources for the public sector, and we need government, public institutions and services at the local level, the city, and the county, and the state, and the national level and so we recognize the role of government [01:22:00] sort of ebbs and tides. It rises, and it shortens, and so forth, but certainly the role, and the impact on the daily life of each of us, of government – government is so much greater than when I was a kid, for example, or than it was 20 years ago. We need to recognize that as a society and some of that is very positive, and some of it I question whether that's a proper role for government, so there is that debate. The third sector is the nonprofit sector, and if you look at life at the community where life is lived by most of us, now some of

us, our community is much different but for a lot of people the community is fairly narrow and fairly restricted. They may travel a little bit but life is pretty local, but in any event, life is lived at a community level and much of the character of the quality [01:23:00] of life at the community level is determined by the nonprofit sector, but that requires collaboration between the nonprofit sector with the public sector and both of them have to have the resources generated by the business sector. So the connections are inevitable, necessary, vital and generally positive.

But right now in the state legislature we do not have a lot of understanding of the importance in the role of the nonprofit sector and so we do away with tax credits. That is just one little piece of the whole problem of the budget and we have been indulging and living beyond our means, not as badly at the state level as at the national level, but to think then that we can quit doing and not be concerned about the consequences of the decisions we make in the [01:24:00] legislature and the governor's office, the consequence of those will be felt in every community as the impact is felt. So I think that is probably the biggest challenge. But that's a lack of understanding and real appreciation for that as a legislator or a governor dealing with the horrendous problems which that office has. Public policy regarding finance at the national level, I understand that's one of the things that they are talking about in this big committee of twelve. The incredible consequence that two of the three house representatives on that group are from [01:25:00] Michigan and pretty well informed about what CMF has done and so forth and hopefully they will have understanding of that. In general there is a problem articulating the nonprofit sector and having people understand what it is and where it is and what it does because a lot of what it does in a sense is invisible to those other than the direct beneficiaries.

(SHW): Until somebody needs it.

(RM): All the activities of church. If you look at the life at the community level, all of our religious activities, much of the enrichment of education, the things beyond just the classroom and so forth, are nonprofit contributions: youth services, most of the arts, the cultural activities, [01:26:00] so many aspects of health programs, particularly when you look at individuals who don't have resources to get the services they need, etc. So the consequences of a decision simply… *well we've got this whole list of tax credits, we'll eliminate them all*. A lot of them I don't think have a justification, but I think the support of the work of nonprofit organizations and most people don't think of what churches do, our local symphony, and on and on goes the list. They don't recognize that those are nonprofit organizations under the conceptual framework and the legal structure. CMF has the continuing challenge of trustee recruitment and training, [01:27:00] engagement of different populations that are traditionally involved as they ought to be, providing opportunities for youth. All of those things are still on the agenda, but some of the public policy issues at this point, it seems to me, are the particularly troublesome ones. And Michigan will suffer the consequences or the benefits of national decisions in addition to decisions at the state level. We were the first state to have a tax credit for community foundations. Others have followed our example and now we don't have it anymore. So those are the challenges. I am glad we have got bright young people on the CMF board and staff really dealing with some of those issues in various impressive and substantive ways. It's compounded in Michigan by term limits [01:28:00] because everybody goes in their first concern in their first term is to get elected the second one and then to get elected the third one

and that is success. I guess if you can get any final gunshot for your local community you've really been a hero. That doesn't necessarily rely on good public policy.

Kathy Agard (KA)**:** You have watched a lot of collaborative work and your humble leadership of putting causes and community first. Could you talk a little bit about your perception and experience with the bringing together, because one of the things that you are alluding to is the splintering of our society and I think some of the work that you have been involved is about bringing people together to finding solutions in a humble and effective way. Do you have examples? [01:29:00]

(RM): It seems to me if you look at society globally, the greatest challenge is human relationships and how do we get along, one with another? To go to the other extreme, from the global society and its human relationships, go to the unraveling of families, the individual at a local level, that is the other extreme you see that it's about social relationship and it is a matter of relationships and communications. As you look then at all of the issues which confront us, the tough issues, human relationships have become tremendously important and so I think we just need to have a continuing commitment to the engagement of people [01:30:00] in the most positive ways as we can. And I was pleased when the Kellogg Foundation agreed to be a major partner in creating the National Institute for Global Ethics and Rushworth Kidder as the leader of it and out of that work he helped me define the values which I think about continually as I make decisions about our own family engagement and generosity and I come down to five values that I even use these in thinking when I sit in church. I think about what Russ ought to be doing as a Christian. I get overwhelmed when I try to think about the biblical leaders and so forth. That is all interesting but I say as an old farm boy, "Now what do I do?"

(SHW): What are those five values?

(RM): The first one is [01:31:00] honesty. You've got to be honest. There is no greater detriment to human relationships than, "I can't trust you" or "you can't trust me." So you have to be honest. The second is caring, compassion. You have to care about others. You can't be self-centered. You've got to care. Am I my brother's keeper? You bet I am, or ought to be. So you have got to care. As you think of decisions that are made of all kinds that are sort of uncaring and without the sensitivity to the other perspective and point of view. The third is respect. Now I don't necessarily agree with you, Susan, but I can respect your point of view, and we can talk about it civilly, and I can respect you, and I respect people of other religions, I respect people of other color obviously, [01:32:00] and etc. So you have got to be respectful of others in all of your relationships. Fourth is responsibility. I have got to be responsible for self, my own behavior, my own conduct, how I spend my time, how I perform my job, and how I work together with those who are engaged with my work. I've got to be responsible for the way in which I conduct myself in society, and I have got to be responsible for trying to help others be responsible also, that they appropriately engage in assuming their responsibility, and aren't just working the system. The fifth is fairness. I try to be fair in decisions and all of these, you see, some of these you can't quantify [01:33:00] statistically and what is fair, but you try to be fair as you consider all the aspects of a decision or an action or whatever has to be taken.

I think Rushworth Kidder, I hope I don't do him an injustice, would say that if he – you know this all started out of his study, the going around the world and trying to find out – it's easy to identify the issues that cause us to be antagonistic one to another, or to be difficult, you can find all of the causes of friction and problems, but are there some areas in which humankind can agree? He would say those are the five values that he finds in all kinds of cultures, nationalities, etc. I think that's an accurate summary, [01:34:00] and he has tried to work with all sorts of groups including now youth as well as adults, but talks to corporate executives, talks to people in government. You know, the simple ethical question, "How could I as a member of Congress say that I ought to have a different retirement program than I supported for the whole population? How can I as a member of Congress say "I should have a better, obviously more generous health program for myself than we provide to all citizens?" The list goes on, but that is an ethical issue to me, so I just find those five values, you know, as you try to deal with what role you have, what relationships you have when you are in a church council meeting talking about [01:35:00] tough decisions because their budget is short, "What are we going to do? How do we deal with it?" I am just a simple kid from the farm who tries to deal with life in a positive way.

(SHW): Tell that to somebody else Mr. Dr. Mawby.

(RM): Just call me Russ.

(SHW): We are probably down to the last few minutes.

(RM): What haven't we talked about that we should?

(SHW): I need to know why this worked in Michigan and it didn't work in other states. [01:36:00]

(RM): Well, you can't be around me or invite me to speak when you won't hear me say something about *in the final analysis only people are important. People make a difference*. I have had the privilege of being involved in philanthropy. The most important decision you make is the identification of the grantees because it is the people with whom you empower with just money who have the more important ingredients in dealing with problems. They're the ones that are living with it, they are trying to make it happen and a little money will help them [01:37:00] make it happen. Usually, it should happen anyway if they really mean it. It will happen but it will take longer and you can't implement it as successfully as it can with this system. So you are looking always at people. I don't know why it doesn't happen in other states. It just seems that it's so obvious that if things are going to happen, people have to communicate and they have to decide and they have to work together and so in those efforts that I've been involved with, it is simply a matter of getting people engaged to understand and to do something. [01:38:00] So I don't know why but it's obviousl that there hasn't been someone who really tried to kick the can down the road in the most productive and positive way in terms of human values and consequences.

(SHW): I notice you use the word engaged…

(RM): Yeah.

(SHW): It really means more than just getting involved, doesn't it?

(RM): Well you have to be committed and you have to believe in the cause, whatever that is. You have to be willing to obviously commit yourself and that is more than money, it's time and talent [01:39:00] and treasure, but that really means engaged and if you are on the board of an organization, you have to help make it happen. It is interesting in states that people who are really making their livelihood at philanthropy aren't making some of these things happen, I don't have a good answer for that. At the present time, I am only on one board where I have a vote. I am on two or three boards where I share chairman emeritus. That means I can come and I can have coffee and even have lunch and I can talk but nobody has to listen, cause Russ can't vote. I'm being facetious but I am engaged in a number of initiatives that are, to me, [01:40:00] tremendously important.

(SHW): What are those?

(RM): The kinds of issues we're talking about… there's an organization in Battle Creek called CIR, Community Inclusive Recreation engaging people's problems, the handicapped, physically, mentally, emotionally, to engage them in positive ways in the larger community where so many of the opportunities are limited to them. I'm engaged with the Sherman Lake YMCA Center down the road from us because they have four words that they use, four of my five (they say fairness is incorporated in other places). But they have camping programs, they have the typical Y programs but now they are particularly working with school groups in which the teacher and the class come for three or four days and [01:41:00] it is a nature setting, and so you talk about nature a little bit but it is not science and nature, it's relationships and it is the citizen's responsibility. If you look at what our schools are doing, the whole education hierarchy from the national level are increasingly emphasizing an education, earning a living and now they are making the standards of education on three things which can be statistically measured. One is reading. You can test me and yeah he can read and understand or he flunked. You can do it in math, obviously and you can do it in science. But you can't have those statistical measures for the most important elements of living a life. And we used to really concentrate, I think in the early elementary years.

I had a wonderful sister-in-law [01:42:00] who taught kindergarten for 43 years and the real goal, she said, was this is the first time that kids are away from home, we've got to learn to work with each other, I have got to learn to hang up my coat, and do whatever those responsibilities are. We have to help each other, we have to be nice to each other, learn to play together, learn to work together, do things. But now you don't give a teacher in the elementary grades any credit at all for making Russ a good kid and making Susan a good kid who… you aren't pushing alphabet, you may do a little alphabet, you aren't pushing math, but you may learn to count and so forth. Now they are talking about even [pushing] the alphabet and mathematics in preschool programs. And I think it is a consequence of that de-emphasis about the importance of these human [01:43:00] components that are causing riots in high school, for example. So that is what Sherman Lake is working on. The evidence in increasing and teachers say that after we have that experience in which we work together nice they'll say, I now deal with my class differently than I did before and when my new class comes in I treat them differently than I did before I had this kind of experience and how we can learn to help one another in games and so forth and so on. I think we are missing that as a society and the consequences are becoming increasingly evident and you know the

subtle changes in which we have got families now and I think we can talk about the fifth, sixth, seventh generations who have never earned a living.

I was on the board of Starr Commonwealth for boys. [01:44:00] That's the boys of Michigan. A marvelous program, takes kids by court referral. Most of them, you talk with these little guys, they come about age 10, or 14, or 15. They've not been in a family that has breakfast or supper together, they come home from school and there is no adult there, and they might not see an adult until they go back to school the next day. Incredible, desperate kinds of situations and we as a society just aren't addressing that and I am disappointed.

I was on the school board for four years way back when my kids were still in school and I used to say to the educators, you know, [01:45:00] "Why has education set up the standards which force the school board to make the wrong decisions?" They said, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "Well, whenever resources are short, you come to us and say 'well, we solved that by increasing the class size in the elementary and so instead of 18 we go to 22. We do away with special music. We do away with special reading. We do away with special art. Why? We have to keep our high school accredited so we can get into an accredited college.'" But all the research says the early years are the most important and if you really believe your research, you would accredit the elementary school, because you know that if those youngsters don't have some adequate capacity in reading particularly and in math and thinking and decision-making, [01:46:00] by the third grade, the fifth grade, they probably won't graduate from high school.

And yet the whole system is disoriented, based upon what we know if we really believe the research, high school wouldn't start at 7:45, it would start at 10:30 but we shifted. It used to start at 8:30 or 9:00 when I was a kid and now it is earlier. Why? So a very small percentage can go out for track and football and volleyball. The whole thing is distorted. Doesn't make any sense. The school year is wrong. We know that. It was established in 1835 by Horace Mann in Massachusetts with an agrarian society. Start classes in the fall when potatoes are done, and quit classes in the spring when it is time to plant corn. [01:47:00] It was an agrarian society with farms. Kids were part of the farm team, more than when I was a kid, but that is still the school year, so we've got those problems. Those are the things that I find troublesome. Now I am wandering off from what…

(SHW): We want to hear what you have to say.

(RM): I am less engaged so I am very sensitive to that, but these are the kinds of things which concern me.

(SHW): Think of a special project that you are particularly proud of, a special person. I don't want to write just about organization. I want to write about the people [01:48:00] whose lives were changed, if you have a favorite person or story. In the course of a month or so, tell me who you would like me to interview.

(RM): Well, some of the people who have been… See, I always say I have the privilege of being a part, but what really ever happened with grants happened in the organization, the institution, not me. So some of the exciting things [01:49:00], one obviously would be the Youth Advisory Council. I can think about so many examples, a crazy decision to help Costa Rica develop EARTH [Escuela de Agricultura de la Region Tropical Humeda]. EARTH is an acronym for the Agricultural Institute for the Humid Tropics. It is a land grant university in Costa Rica. USAID has great programs and Costa Rica had compiled quite a reservoir of 50 or 60 million dollars of aid funds that they wanted to use to create an agricultural school for the humid tropics. They couldn't use any of the money to plan such an institution, so they came [01:50:00] to us with a crazy question, *could you help us plan this institution?* Well that's not normal procedure but we did. We not only did, we helped them identify Glen Taggert, retired president of Utah State University, and three or four other experts, and we had been programming in agriculture in Latin America for a long time in the U.S. and EARTH is a model institution now.

An effort now going on to try to replicate something of the same model in Africa, bringing young women and men from rural communities into a setting of learning agriculture, learning skills of relationships of organization to make things happen because you not only have to know the technology [01:51:00] of growing corn, or cassava, or chickens. You need to convince people that this is a better way to do it and then how it will benefit your family. So you have got to have the technical knowledge, but you have got to have more than that, and you have got to be a leader, and so that is why it is interesting. If you look at what the Kellogg Foundation did in the leadership area broadly, concerned with leadership always, and I'll let you go back to the Farmer Study Program of Russ Mawby's. You know we have got to do something different about farm leadership, not only just for the industry, but for their broader part in community because they need to be supportive of education, and health services, and so forth, and not just the corn [01:52:00] yield rates. So for the 50th anniversary of the Kellogg Foundation… Do we have another five minutes?

(SHW): We absolutely do. Okay, let's continue with talking a little bit about the South Africa project, and I want to hear your thoughts on the leadership aspects.

(RM): Let's talk about Southern Africa. The foundation geographically started out in seven counties in south central Michigan. Then World War II came along. The State Department came to the foundation world, invited foundations, and Kellogg went to a meeting in Washington convened by the Department of State. Simply, they said, "We, of course, don't know how the war is going to come out in the South Pacific or in Europe. We hope we will be victorious, but regardless of what happens, the Western Hemisphere, North and South America, will have common interests and we would like to… and South America is not directly engaged in either of those conflicts. Would you think about ways in which U.S. and South America could be involved?" And the Kellogg Foundation stepped up immediately with a fellowship program to bring young professionals, specifically in the health fields: medicine, dentistry, nursing, hospital administration, public health. No university in South America had advanced programs, graduate programs in those fields, and we had them here. This was the foundation's initiative, to bring them here. You've got a young nurse in Bogota, the department of nursing wants to expand in pediatric nursing, so you identify this young person and you send them to the University of Michigan, School of Nursing, specific purpose, graduate degree in pediatric nursing. The faculty here knows that, they know

that is her program, her research is going to be done in Bogota, so it is relevant. Her faculty may go to Bogota and get that link going. She goes back, starts the program, and continues that relationship. The fellowship was really awarded to the Department of Nursing for that person to come, so the rate of non-return, you know, was virtually zero because everybody knew, and she knew, that she was going to go back with this job, to do this task. Most of the people who came on fellowship didn't want to go home, but we had zero erosion of that. So that started us in South America.

Then the foundation after the war continued in South America, and the U.S., and Northern Europe. Northern Europe was concerned about the quality of rural life, about the fact that their agriculture, food system, they weren't able to feed themselves, and the quality of life in rural communities. So we had 30 years of engagement there. In 1980 we began to phase out our European involvement. We increased our activities in Latin America and we had been studying, thinking, talking about Africa, and were thinking about how can we get engaged in a significant way, but you can't look at the whole economy without being overwhelmed because of all of the problems. Well, simultaneously, the Kellogg Company which was what Mr. Kellogg started, and which the success of the Kellogg Foundation was really based, and still is.

The Kellogg Company was getting stockholder, shareholder requests to divest. All American corporations should get out of the Republic of South Africa because of apartheid, get out. Bill LaMothe was the president. I was on the board of the Kellogg Company because we were voting a third of the stock at that time, so it was an important shareholder responsibility which I had. Bill LaMothe said, "We are getting these requests to get out of South Africa. We started in South Africa in 1946 in a small way, we now have 450 employees. We have done more than the Sullivan principles, which Reverend Sullivan had set up, we had done more than that. We are engaged in the village with helping with housing, with mortgages, we are helping with schools, we are helping with health services, we are the first company in South Africa to recognize a black employees' union. We have blacks at all levels; they're working in the factory, they're truck drivers, they are in finance, they are in public policy, they are in the whole company." He said, "If we sell, and the scale of it doesn't make that much difference to the company, a couple percentages, it is not that great," he said, "but I had been there and given these folks 25 year pins. I can't do that because if we sell, all of that will disappear. We will have to sell either to a South African company, or to German, or Japanese." He said, "I can't do that. So I would like to have three members of the board go to the Republic of South Africa, meet with anybody, you set it up to meet with people in government, people in business, anyone you want to do." He asked three people: he asked Pete Estes, who was the retired CEO of General Motors, who had been engaged in South Africa; Paul Smucker, the jam and jelly guy, who is just a remarkable human being; and me.

So we met with the South African representatives at the embassy in Washington. We met with the Department of State. We talked with all sorts of folks. We went to South Africa and it was such a different and revealing experience. We visited the village where the workers lived, we talked with the officers of the employees' union, we talked with ministers of government, we talked with lots of folks, and we recommended that the company stay because they were making a difference. I remember the president of a huge, sort of the A & P, or Krogers, or Wal-Mart now, of South Africa in grocery stores, he said, "I can do things. I have integrated my facilities for staff, I give them opportunities." He said, "I

couldn't do that if I couldn't say I've got to do it, because of Kellogg and other companies that are doing these things. We have got to do it." He said, "If you go, I have less of a case, and the government will force me to do what I don't want to do."

So anyway, simultaneously I had talked with my board of trustees about Africa. We had been talking about it, so I came back and said we recommended, the three recommended, to the company board that the company stay in South Africa, which the company continued to do. Then to the foundation board, I said, "Well, you look at apartheid. Apartheid is wrong. Apartheid will end. There is no question about *if*, it's *when* and *how – how quickly can it happen*. How can it happen without violence, or negative consequences, as well as positives. The reality is there simply needs to be more blacks trained to assume the responsibilities which will become available to them, and that means higher education. Over there they call it bursaries, scholarships, and the evidence was clear, all of the major universities were already integrated, and that there were more blacks qualified for university entrance than they had support for. So we set up a major program of bursaries. But I said that when we are talking with people, they say, "Foundations have come, and a group of six have come, and we host them, and talk, and they go home, and we hear nothing." So I said, "That's not Kellogg." So we told one of our vice presidents who went to South Africa with $5 million dollars to commit to bursaries.

We selected the areas of the health professions, broadly: education, food systems, farming, agriculture, rural problems, business administration, and public administration. We would support students in those majors through completion of the degree, so long as they made progress. So the vice president, our representative at Kellogg, sat down with the president of the university, and talked with the staff at the relevant colleges and ended up with a handshake saying, okay, 15 bursaries starting next semester. So we went in very quickly, that was the fall of 1985. I went there in February of 1985 and came back with these recommendations, so we went back over, and got those commitments. So the next semester the students could be starting, and of course apartheid ended more quickly than anyone anticipated. It ended really in 1990, and already some of those students were beginning to be prepared for responsibilities in public agencies of government, public administration, in business, and in those three areas of emphasis. So that is how we moved, very quickly.

(SHW): You're still involved there?

(RM): They have run into a problem, and really criminal activity on the part of some of the folks over there in terms of misuse of funds. So I don't know the details of that, so it's sort of in neutral at the present time. But you see 1985 that's 25 years… anyway, it made a difference. So I don't know just the status of it now with the company.

(SHW): One more example of creating a program where you provided the leaders for the community.

(RM): That brings us to the whole broad area of leadership. If you look back, the foundation has been involved. It was interesting, in those seven counties for example, it was always the application of knowledge. The knowledge source generally is universities, so they had close relationships to the University of Michigan, obviously in medicine, in education, nursing, public health, hospital

administration. So back in the 1930's, Michigan State then had education broadly and agriculture, rural development. The third was the University of Chicago, you know a prestigious university, again health professions. So they would load on the train each year, the school board members, hospital board members, Department of Public Health board members, and professional staff, and go to Chicago, or go to East Lansing, or go to Ann Arbor, and that was a kind of leadership development. One of the interesting results of that was the concept that continuing education, lifelong learning, was always an interest of the foundation, but what do you do with a group of adults who are coming in for four days to look at health services? Where do they stay and how can they convene? So University based Residential Center for Continuing Educations. The first one was at East Lansing, then Georgia, Oklahoma, Chicago, Nebraska, New England, Columbia. Anyway, now that concept has just multiplied, you see those kinds of facilities at universities all across the country and beyond, so that grew out of that Michigan Community Health Program in the 1930's.

So always leadership, but I became very concerned as we were programming in our various areas of responsibilities, of the benefits of specialization. Specialization in health care, specialization now in early childhood education, specialization is important. We would get requests from bright young women and men from various organizations, institutions, and communities, but they would do a great job of describing the problem, the issue with which they were concerned, but their solution then that they proposed was usually sort of prescribed by the narrowness of their profession. It wasn't broad enough to engage and deal with the broader problem because the reality is that none of the things that really concern us can be dealt with by any one specialty. You've got to get them together. So if you look at ground water, for example, sure, that is the quality of drinking water for the State of Michigan. You've got to have the technical, so you got to know about percolation rates and the degree of pollution caused by this and that, and you got to have all of that, where are the underground flows of water, you've got to have all that science.

But the political decisions start at the township level, and then go to the state level, so you have got to engage them. So you have to get engaged with government officials, and public health officials, and the general population, to deal with it. So you have to have a broader approach and that is true with every significant problem. So we were concerned with how do you benefit from specialization, and how do you prepare the specialists to be leaders in a broader sense? So that conceptualized the Kellogg National Fellowship Program (KNFP) in 1980 as an observance of the 50th anniversary of the foundation. So we started KNFP and the concept was to get release time for bright young professionals, to bring them together and provide a variety of experiences. You wanted a mixture within that study group. The group was about 15 in number. You wanted women and men, you wanted racial diversity, you wanted demonstrated specialization.

They had already earned some degree of recognition, of credibility for others in sociology, or nuclear physics, or business administration, whatever. The easiest source was usually academic institutions, and then nonprofit organizations, all sorts of details of government restrictions, which made it difficult to get people out of government into the KNFP, and difficult also out of business, but we have had various degrees of success. This was a three year commitment, and about a quarter of the time of the person, and each of them in addition to participating in the group activities had to develop a personal project to which

they were committed, but it had to be different from their specialty. It could be related in some way, but could be completely different. So if your specialty is in theology, you may study environmental issues. If I am in nuclear physics, I may want classical music. And so they had to get outside your area of expertise. Tremendous experiences, and you can remember first time on a farm for these folks, and you look at this tractor which is planting corn and it's planting mechanism is done by computer and a satellite hookup, and this field of 40 acres we've harvested last year, and we've got the records so that here is where you need to apply more fertilizer than you do down here and it is all programmed into that planting machine and they say, "this is farming."

And the other extreme would be spending the night in the emergency room at a big metropolitan hospital and the problems of people, desperate problems, homeless, no resources, sick kid, where do you go? Or problems with addiction, and violence, and so forth. They just saw a sector of society, of humanity, that they had never seen before. So that was KNFP for 18 groups. I always met with them, the average age tended to be in the early to mid-thirties. Because we wanted … They had to have a degree of maturity and credibility, and so forth, in their profession, but we wanted them in longevity, and you could hear me talking about them getting younger, you don't have to wait until they're tenured. I always met with the first session of each group and simply talked about the concept this is why we are here, this is an opportunity for you to indulge yourselves intellectually, indulge. So each of them had a resource in addition to the group operative to travel, and they would get subgroups to go to Europe, to go to China, whatever.

So an incredible experience and the longitudinal evaluation assessment of that is incredible. So that was a major initiative, but then we also, you have to realize that at that point in time, incredibly, the concept of leadership was not universally accepted, because you are born into leadership. That is the old European model, and unless your ancestors were dukes, and lords, and ladies, no chance for you to be a leader, you know? So the remnants of that still, if you are not born to a family of substance, no possibility, don't worry about thinking about leadership. And then the other saying, yes, there are different styles of leadership etc., but there are certain concepts and skills of leadership that can be taught, and how the individual uses them, and then of course how you use them differently. You use them differently if you are talking with an issue in health care practice in the community where you have the role of responsibility than if you are on a national public study committee in a professional group. You are in sociology, or you are in psychology, or in education, you are in nursing, or whatever.

There your pattern of leadership is different obviously than… but the skills and the basics are not much different, they are not much different. So we began to support the concept of leadership in academic institutions, and then of course the whole relationship of concerns for leadership in the broad field of philanthropy is another interesting issue. Indiana University with its center on philanthropy is still the premier, the model internationally, and I never served on their board. They had a small advisory group, and so Kellogg was a major funder, the key funder was the Lilly Endowment, and then there was the anonymous donor, the Atlantic Group. Anyway, and Kellogg was one of those partners with Indiana, so there is Russ Mawby saying, "Gee, what about Michigan, they are close by, but they aren't Michigan." So we began… I was on a first name basis with the presidents of certain institutions in Michigan, the

University of Michigan, Michigan State, Western, and some of the private institutions, just to keep engaged it was the professional, and the staff working the details.

I was always concerned that our assistance to, let's say the University of Michigan needed to be also consistent, and maybe in the college of medicine, or in the department of X, but it somehow needs to be consistent with the leadership institution, and that is where I would just keep in touch with whoever was there. I tried to develop then the concept of philanthropy in the institutions and finally ended up, and I didn't get much response, we began to get engagement from specific faculty, Michigan State University I think was involved in the longitudinal study of the Youth Advisory Council to see how they differ from the nonparticipants in YACs, but we didn't get response up to the level to create a center, which has to cross over, in my judgment, every college. You can't leave any of them out ultimately, because it needs to be a part of an understanding that the three sectors, wherever they end up, in government, or business, or in the nonprofit sector, I need to be knowledgeable about the nonprofit sector.

So finally called a meeting and invited all the public and all of the private colleges to it, and we had a big turnout, and just in a general talk had a presentation by Indiana University about how they were engaged, the uniqueness there that they have adjunct professors in law, and business, and medicine, as well as social studies, and so forth. And that is what we are working on here at Grand Valley State to get that kind of engagement of faculty, and undergraduate students, and graduate students, and that will happen. What is interesting out of that whole group and University of Michigan was there, and Michigan State was there. One person rose to respond and that was [Arend "Don"] Lubbers of Grand Valley State. That is why we are here. It is wonderful, and it is a remarkable start because it is very young in terms of academic institutions and structures, but Grand Valley State is, as I look at the 15 public institutions, is one of the most creative, and responsive to societal changes of our institutions, so I think the Center is at the right place.

So that's South Africa, Southern Africa. I should say when we went to Africa we went to the Republic of South Africa, plus four other countries, and that's now been expanded to South Africa plus six other countries, because of the natural relationships there and but of course, the Republic of South Africa is the big one, both geographically and in terms of resources, structure, and so forth. Then the whole leadership issue, I think is of continuing concern, but the thing again, I am delighted, absolutely delighted, the Council of Michigan Foundations, the Michigan Nonprofit Association, and now we haven't talked about the Michigan Community Service Commission, but all of them are partners with the Johnson Center on Philanthropy at Grand Valley State so they are working collaboratively. Each of them has a specific and major role, but they realize that they're partners in the larger picture. That's back to people and relationships.

(SHW): That and the five values.

(RM): That is right. I hope it has been useful. I hope that we covered what you really wanted to talk about. As you can see, I wasn't a polished professor long enough to stop in 50 minutes. So I hope it has been useful. It's been fun for me.

(SHW): Is there anything that you were burning to say that I didn't ask you today?

(RM): I think those ought to come from follow-up conversations that you have with others. The one thing that I am struggling with in my own personal philanthropy, which is small, is moving philanthropy into the undergraduate curriculum. It's just a natural part of being a student, because engagement beyond self needs to be a part of your practice as a lawyer, or an engineer, or a teacher or whatever the heck you are doing. We have got an interesting program, I don't know if there is another one in the country, where there is a pittance for a faculty member to engage a couple of, two or three undergraduate students in a project related to that field, but specifically then to philanthropy. So we are working on that one and got it going at Grand Valley, but getting it started in Indiana. They keep saying I ought to support graduate fellowship and I say, "Well, why wait?" That is just a personal interest.

(SHW): I can't thank you enough. You've mentioned church quite a bit as well, are you active in a church at home? What church do you go to?

(RM): Yorkville Community Church. It is a nondenominational church, and we don't have to respond to anybody else but God's principles. The sanctuary was built in 1851. I wasn't on that committee. The basic framework of the sanctuary is just like the barns, you know, 10 x 10 hand hewn timbers. The windows are still the same. We've added on and so forth. It's a small church in our community, Lou Ann is secretary to the church council, and I have to get her back for her 4 o'clock meeting. The thing that is interesting, the church council suddenly realized that they were all retired, not necessarily in their sixties, but they are all retired, so instead of meeting at 7 they now meet at 4, social change. So we go to a little church. I had the privilege of attending a national prayer breakfast not quite 100 years ago, one that is held on the 1st Thursday, or the 2nd Thursday of February, in Washington D.C. I thought it would be a great idea for Battle Creek community.

So 30 years ago, I got together with the federal center in Battle Creek and had a little prayer breakfast. The community was invited, but nobody went. It was essentially employees. I knew an ophthalmologist who was also interested in this idea, so invited the two of them to breakfast at Holiday Inn. We talked about the Battle Creek community prayer breakfast. The idea, they agreed, we agreed that each of us would identify five women and men, not from just our church, that we knew, and that would be the core committee. We hold a community prayer breakfast now in early May. The attendance is usually between 1,000 and 1,600 in the Kellogg arena, and it has become an institution. We will be holding our 30th or 31st coming up. It's interesting and it's hard to quantify the difference that makes. We got acquainted as a group that didn't know each other before, and those are the contacts that get you involved with the Haven, and Salvation Army, and other things that otherwise might not touch your life, and so that is another one. But don't call me a leader.

Interview #2 – OCTOBER 10, 2011

An interview with Dr. Russell Mawby 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.

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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): Could you talk a little bit about over the years; Kellogg invested tens of millions of dollars in the development of these organizations: The Council of Michigan Foundations, MNA [Michigan Nonprofit Association], The Commission [Michigan Community Service Commission], and The Johnson Center [The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy]. Can you tell me what your vision, your thinking was, why you put not only money, but also your own time and leadership into those organizations?

Russell Mawby (RM): In terms of organizations in the philanthropic nonprofit sector? [00:01:00] I had a real concern in both the national level in which I was involved, but then specifically thinking of Michigan. How do we make the whole concept of philanthropy? I always defined it simply as the engagement, the giving as we do in American society; the giving of time and talent, as well as treasure. Very often people sort of think the word philanthropy just has dollar signs on it, and that's one part of it. But in a sense, the bigger part of it is the sense of commitment, of sharing responsibility beyond self, so that as we mature as individuals and as we mature as a society, we have to develop generations that have those values sort of intrinsic in their character. So I was concerned with how do we build [00:02:00] into the broad and multifaceted nonprofit sector an understanding by everyone, that everyone in America can be a philanthropist? You might not have a big bank balance, or the possibility of giving large sums of funds, but all of us can give something. More importantly we can give of our heart and of ourselves in a variety of ways. It's giving time, whether it's service at a homeless center project in the community, or improvement of recreational facilities, whatever the effort may be, we can give time; we can give our talent and everyone has talent.

When you are looking at a community and enriching the lives of people there, we need some people who are engaged in little league sports, recreational opportunities, art, music, care for the homeless; concern [00:03:00] beyond self. Concerned with how we build an understanding of perpetuating that American tradition. Because if we look back at American society two centuries ago, life was quite different, life was quite simpler. When the early settlers came, all of the initiatives were through community engagement by individuals because in the early colonies, of course, there was no system of government, of taxation, of providing those. If you wanted a meeting hall, if you wanted a playground, if you wanted even schools initially, most hospitals and health care programs started in the voluntary sector and became a part then of the broader society with governmental, as well as, private support. Simply concerned with looking at the institutional structures of the nonprofit [00:04:00] sector, wanting ultimately to engage philanthropy as a part of the intellectual community, the academic community, to make it a part of the learning experience at all levels of education, beginning really in kindergarten as we organize on through elementary and secondary schools, but into higher education. Then as you study history, as you study social sciences, as you engage in whatever your career pattern may be, to recognize that it is the interaction of the three sectors of society. The private, for profit industry business sector, which is the generation of the economic wherewithal to support the other two sectors, one being government, and we need good government in all levels: in our local community, in the village, and the township, the county, the state, [00:05:00] and nationally. The government has a variety of responsibilities in generating resources to carry out those responsibilities.

The third sector, of course, is the nonprofit sector and there it is dependent really upon the voluntary leadership in the boards of trustees, who create and carry on the purpose of those organizations, their particular mission, the professional staff people who then help implement the activities related to that mission, under the guidance of the governing board. And we need to have then an understanding of the importance of these collaborative efforts, institutional relationships between those three sectors, so began thinking about how we as one player in the total, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, could be a partner, and in some [00:06:00] sense a leader, in engaging the whole nonprofit sector and the relationships with the others. So it was looking then at the institutional framework of the three sectors, how the three can relate and collaborate in the best possible ways to the ultimate benefit of the total society. So it was thinking about those things that caused us to undertake some of the initiatives that we were involved with.

(KA): So you were there at the start of the Council of Michigan Foundations. I remember you talking with Susan about that in your last interview. The next one that was developed was the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project. Can you tell me a little bit about what you were thinking was, (it was a huge grant at the time) again from Kellogg's point of view, or from your vision for the state, why that grant, why was it important? [00:07:00]

(RM): The Council of Michigan Foundations was a creation really motivated in response to the Tax Reform Act of 1969 (TRA 69) and some of the major provisions, and I would emphasize that there were a lot of very good components of TRA 69. The recognition that the foundations do have a responsibility for paying out, the pay-out provision and requirement; they do have a responsibility to be communicative, communicating their mission and their accomplishments, and being open in every way about their role. So there were other aspects of TRA 69, one of the biggest was the encouragement of the institution we

call the community foundation. That was a brilliant component of TRA [00:08:00] 69, so a lot of good things created the Council of Michigan Foundations.

As you look at that and the State of Michigan, CMF developed a proposal, they wanted to encourage every community in Michigan to have the benefit with having a relationship with a community foundation. So they looked at the geography of Michigan, and various components, and they were wondering how could we develop a vision in which that could happen in densely populated areas in Southeast Michigan and the southern part of the lower peninsula, and then you get the variation of the upper part of the lower peninsula with differences on the coastlines up both sides, and the interior communities, a different prospect, and then you look at the [00:09:00] upper peninsula where limited population, limited economic resources, across a wonderful part of our state. They had the vision saying we need to develop a plan for encouraging communities to develop community foundations and came to the Kellogg Foundation with the idea of a challenge grant, in which we might provide some support through a challenge grant to encourage communities to think about this prospect for the future.

My contribution in all of that, I was excited by the idea because I felt they did a careful job of planning. I had felt for a long time that as a society we had prolonged adolescence for too many young people into their mid and even late twenties. The whole institutional fabric of education, professions, careers and so forth caused us to prolong the adolescent [00:10:00] phase of life, when we really should capitalize somehow upon the brilliance, the energy, the compassion, the concern, the talent of people at a younger age. So I simply said to that planning committee, "As you think about, now based upon our discussions about some of the details, would you think about how we could engage teenagers?" I just reminded them that when I was a kid in the late years of the depression and during World War II, as a kid living on a farm I had a drivers license at age 14, then they raised it to 16, and when your own kids become of age you think it ought to be 20 or 21, but anyway, just the idea that we should engage more positively, teenagers ought to have more opportunities to be engaged in more adult like responsibilities. [00:11:00] The community then came back with the wonderful idea of a challenge grant to communities in the planning process for a community foundation of involving young people, and that was the concept of the challenge grant which created really the youth involvement.

(KA): A lot of people at that time thought that little communities couldn't have, or shouldn't have community foundations, that Grand Haven and U.P. communities were too small and that people in those communities wouldn't be able to handle the responsibilities. You really bucked that national point of view. Can you talk a little bit about your philosophy about communities and community leadership?

(RM): Simply as you think of the nonprofit sector in particular and the great variety of organizations [00:12:00] dealing with all sorts of issues, that there was possibility for young people to engage positively in relationship to those initiatives. You think of the areas of recreations, you think of the concerns with cultural opportunities with music, the arts and theater, but you think also of the caring aspects of independent living for senior citizens, people with disabilities, conservation issues, the environmental concerns we have as a community, as a society. All of these can benefit from engagement by young minds, and their energies, and capacity to do things, and that it is best to get young people more actively involved at a young age. [00:13:00] We had the initial idea, and it is true, as you get to an area with

limited populations, you can't have a community foundation with every village, or every township, or that unit but you can have developments that those communities in relation to the legal structure of a community foundation, so that you can have a community foundation in Escanaba, or in Traverse City, or in Marquette, which then can have satellites, Grand Marais or Seney, and so forth so that those collaborative relationships between the smaller communities where they can have an Engadine Fund in their broader community foundation. People in the local community of all ages can be involved in that local unit, which becomes a satellite [00:14:00] of the community foundation legal mechanism.

So we encourage that kind of creative thinking about relationships and again at the community level, as well as at the broader level served by a community foundation. You can have young people involved at both levels, so that there can be a level of engagement, so that young people, as well as the full governing board of the organizations begin to understand, appreciate, and capitalize on the opportunities for collaborative efforts. So it was simply that vision of community, as the place in which we live but geographically it has the potential for broader kinds of relationships.

(KA): Russ, I have always been impressed with how you have empowered people and listened to people at the grassroots. [00:15:00] Could you talk a little bit about your own philosophy…? Kellogg is huge, it is enormous, you had the muscle to do whatever you wanted to do, and yet my experience with the foundation was that you did what the people in the community wanted, not what the Kellogg foundation wanted. Can you talk a little bit about your own philosophy in working with local people as partners?

(RM): As I look at community life and as you look at so-called leadership roles and responsibilities, in my judgment, every person has the potential to be a leader. The kind of people that you engage in any specific enterprise depends upon their skill and upon the particular mission, or problem, or issue you are trying to deal with. So if you are looking at providing additional recreational opportunities in the neighborhood and in the community, [00:16:00] you look to different people for those skills. There are women and men who have talent, who have interest in kids, who have interest in service to others, and they can help implement the details of a broader mission. So they will be providing leadership in their neighborhood, getting together to develop a playground, or to have a Meals on Wheels component for that community. But both adults and young people would be different than those you would try to mobilize if the challenge related to a hospital that was then trying to develop an outreach program with health service in a different way.

So we would have to involve people, women and men again, who have a broader set of experiences, a different set of relationships which they can bring to the table. Because all of us have relationships, people with whom we deal, people with whom we play, people with whom we work, and so [00:17:00] each of us can involve different folks in a given mission. So I just think there is potential for everyone and that the best initiatives come closest to where the issue, or the problem, or the opportunity exists. So the closer you can be to where the opportunity exists, the closer you can be to having those people involved in making the key decisions. I have always felt that you could never sit in Battle Creek and decide on what, let's say a child care initiative, ought to be in a given community. If you are thinking of Grand Marais up in Alger County in the U.P., you think of a school system there I think with about 75 students kindergarten through high school already bussing kids 60 miles, there is a daycare need for [00:18:00]

youngsters, infants, early childhood periods in that community. The way in which Grand Marais develops a plan though, has to be quite different than that which you are trying to deal with the same issue, let's say childhood care, in a neighborhood in Detroit.

So that the decisions, the details, so that the commonality of concern between Kellogg Foundation would be a concern for the issue of childcare, but not a prescription about how the community should deal with that issue. I always said the Kellogg Foundation should be issue-oriented, not prescriptive. Encouraging then always, our concern went back to the vision of W.K. Kellogg himself, which said that the foundation's concern really was with the [00:19:00] application of knowledge, mobilizing the information we already have available. We know in most areas of human concern, we're as a society, we know more than we are doing. We know more about what good education could be, and should be, than is generally experienced in all of the schools. We know more about what good health care can be, and should be, than is generally available. The challenge is to take the best of what is known and see how it can be applied most effectively in a specific situation. So the details of implementing a program have to be localized and that's where people, and that is just where women and men, all ages really, do have the ability to make and carry out those plans. No questions in my judgment [00:20:00] that they do have that capacity if they see the need and then are motivated to do something about it.

(KA): Let's move on a little bit and see if we can get through MNA before we run out of time here. Tell me about the development of the Michigan Nonprofit Association and what happened. Did we need another organization… why does it work?

(RM): The vision was when you simply, as you began to think of implementing programs in the broadest concept of philanthropy we started with the grantmaking resources, the Council of Michigan Foundations, but then as you begin to become more sensitive to the realities of life at the community level, where life is lived by most people, and as you began to think of the decision-making processes at national and state levels, I always use the two terms the grantmakers and the grantseekers, [00:21:00] or the givers, those who have resources and that would be all of us because we do have some capacity.

We give to our church and we give to other programs and organizations that are important to us, and then we may have the benefit of resources that are greater than that, as we have in mobilizing family foundations, private foundations, and community foundations. So you have the resources, the givers, if you please, but the most important players in philanthropy are the doers, those who are making things happen in the lives of people, wherever that mission is serving, so we need to collaborate, and it is [00:22:00] not a difference. The more important, in my value sense, are the doers, the ones who have a vision about something, somehow we ought to be doing a better job with early childhood care, we need to be doing a better job in providing opportunities for senior citizens who need a little hand up, they don't need to move from their home and their neighborhood into a strange environment of assisted living or whatever, if we can mobilize to just provide some support. That is where the exciting things really happen. So as you think, even in a community, of saying we really need to do a better job of providing and enriching cultural experiences; music, lectures, and so forth. The initiatives need to come from the community and those are the ones that make things happen.

[00:23:00] We began to say, "how do we get a different engagement with nonprofits and the givers and the doers?" and felt that somehow we need to see where are the common interests between those who are providing resources, and those who are the seekers of resources. Secondly, where are the collaborations among all of those engaged in nonprofit organizations and institutions, because in a sense there is competition between all of those organizations as they seek resources for their particular programs. So we simply decided let's get together representatives of these organizations to talk about areas of common interest and also recognize that there are some areas in which [00:24:00] we may in fact be in competition.

It was tough to think how in Michigan with the multiple organizations and communities, so we finally identified simply 10 organizations statewide and the scope of their activities. They had to be involved throughout the Upper Peninsula, the Lower Peninsula, the urban, the rural communities, and so forth. It had to be statewide in their perspectives. Then we wanted the different concerns: the education at various levels, the cultural activities, the arts, the environmental issues, healthcare issues, and we finally identified simply 10 organizations statewide. It could have been 50, but I said we just need to get a few thoughtful leaders to come together, and we asked each of those organizations to have two representatives if they wanted to be involved in it first. [00:25:00] We needed to have the chair of their governing board, who is the person, woman or man, who has been engaged in that organization, who has been engaged enough that they now have the Chairmanship of that governing board, the Board of Trustees, whatever the title, so we wanted that kind of citizen involvement.

Secondly, we wanted the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Executive Officer, the professional, because in most of these organizations serving youth, recreation, health, and so forth, you have people professionally, experts in those areas and they have a perspective that they bring to work together with the governing board in carrying out the programs. We asked that each organization have two representatives to come together. We held the initial meeting and talked very candidly about those areas of concern. Immediately [00:26:00] we all have problems with recruiting members to be on our governing board, and training for them, and continuing educations for people who are engaged in the governance role. We needed similar opportunities for engaging professionals, and how do we then have in-service training, and then ongoing lifelong learning opportunities for both the volunteers, the governance, and the professionals. Knowledge is continuing to grow, so those were immediate. Then organizations, particularly the small organizations, had concerns about how do we provide benefits for our employees? We only have three on the staff, we have an executive director, an assistant, and a secretary, but they need health care benefits, they need arrangements for retirement, and so forth. It is difficult for a little organization.

[00:27:00] A big organization with national stature you can tie in the local Salvation Army or Boy Scouts with that, but they can't if we are just a little independent group. There were a lot of areas. They admitted quite frankly, yes, we are competing, to some extent for the givers. But the donors to the symphony are very often quite a different of prospective givers than those in some environmental issue, or senior citizens, or the homeless, or whatever the issue might be. But if we do our job of selling our mission to the right people it will all work out well. So with that initial discussion, out of which we set up, I think, about three committees: one to think about how do we move ahead, how do we structure some kind of an

organization, [00:28:00] how do we think about sustaining such a statewide group financially itself over time. Those were task forces which came initially from those 20 people that came together. Immediately we began to reach out, they began to reach out to other organizations because here is expertise, here are folks that ought to be engaged in this planning, and resulted then in calling the first statewide meeting which was called the Michigan Nonprofit Forum, because we just wanted people to come together because they did have some commonality, obviously. We didn't know whether or not out of that coming together there would be an agreement that there ought to be an organization. So the Michigan Nonprofit Forum moved forward with then the establishing of a board, identification of a board of trustees, [00:29:00] a staff executive director, then program staff. I think it was three, or four, or five years that after that structure began to operate, the decision was made to change it from the Michigan Nonprofit Forum to the Michigan Nonprofit Association. So it was a collaborative effort; our initiative was simply to bring people together to see if there was common concern for youthful purpose, and I marvel at the response over time.

If we think now it is 20 years of MNA that the variety of things in which they are engaged, the tremendous variety of programs in fundraising, in grantwriting, in employee benefits. The lists go on of activities, [00:30:00] just remarkable. One difference that followed in Michigan than in most states, many states have in a sense a nonprofit organization, but the grantmakers are not included, that is separate. We felt that without the doers, the grantmakers have no one to work with, and we are all concerned. It is private initiative for the public good, and so the grantmakers and the grantseekers, the clear understanding is that if I come as a representative of a nonprofit organization and you are from a foundation, we don't use that statewide meeting to try to seek grants and so forth. We are there for a different purpose in that setting. No one abuses the privilege of meeting together, but recognizes the benefit of working [00:31:00] collaboratively.

(KA): We believe that Michigan is unique in how well these infrastructure organizations work together. In your reflection on these organizations, can you pinpoint why the state of Michigan has been successful in not ending up with organizations that are fighting one another, but in fact are working together. Was it set up that way? Is it in the water?

(RM): Kathy, you always come down to the basic reality in life, that in the final analysis, only people are important, only people make a difference. Any organization, any institution, is a consequence [00:32:00] of the people who are involved in it, and its creation, and in its ongoing existence. So it has been a mindset from the very beginning, I think, that we benefit from collaborative efforts and that a community benefits if the various organizations, nonprofits most of them, if they do collaborate to the extent possible. They share because those youngsters who are interested in one kind of activity, won't be in the other one, so we need a variety of activities, and we don't need to regard ourselves as competitive always in that sense. My philosophy personally, and whenever I was engaged in initiating any of these, my part usually, was simply to get people together to talk about an issue [00:33:00] or an opportunity. So we would simply talk about it, and is it useful to think about this or the ways in which we can work together collaboratively to the greater benefit of all. I think it is a mindset that we tried to build into the structure and that people continually have seen the benefit of that kind of a mindset.

Initially I had the vision of saying we need to get the grantmakers together, because we didn't know each other, we didn't know how to work together, how to even collaborate in programming, let alone in the broader structure of society, then to think about the ways in which the grantmakers and grantseekers for the nonprofit organizations could work together. The other two areas that I have always been concerned about and materialized, and one [00:34:00] the Michigan Community Service Commission which really tried to bring the public sector of government together with the nonprofit sector so that they could be collaborative. Over time the role of government in society tends to change and for a while governments will be expanding their role in these activities and then there will be a change in mindset, and so that the relationships of getting these and the realities of getting things done change over time, but government and the nonprofit sector generally benefit. The ultimate beneficiaries benefit from having those two sectors work together.

Of course the final sector that I have had a long commitment for is incorporating this understanding of philanthropy and volunteerism, and its relationship to the goals of society into the intellectual world, [00:35:00] the academic community. We tried to do that in one initiative called Learning to Give, where you begin to put this concept into kindergarten and through high school of learning about how you analyze needs and then do something about it. Following the leadership really of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University of Indianapolis, a desire to create a similar kind of center on philanthropy in the state of Michigan, and to encourage the replication of that idea in states throughout the country. I am delighted then that in Michigan, Grand Valley State University took the role of leadership in creating the Johnson Center there. But again, it is important that those four entities then work [00:36:00] together. To some extent you could say in a few areas there may be an element of competition, but basically with the larger vision and with all aspects of society there is benefit if all those four work together collaboratively. So the mindset of the professional staff and of the trustees of those four entities is very much one of, how do we work together, how do we support each other? Yes, each has its own role, but the MNA will say, gosh, that is really something that is more appropriate for the Johnson Center to be taking leadership on, and how can we help in that relationship? I suspect over time those opportunities for collaborative efforts will be increased. It is a matter of mindset. It is the key people, the spokespersons, the board of trustees, [00:37:00] the leadership of the professional staff, and if you get a different person, then there will be the challenge of whether the institution changes, because any institution or organization is a consequence of the people that comprise it.

We have been blessed in Michigan and as you look nationally, you look objectively, and I am able to do that more objectively now 16 years into retirement, we are blessed. I don't think there is another state where you have those four components. Maybe there will be a fifth and a sixth in Michigan later on, I don't know just what that will be; but at least now the four in Michigan are working together beautifully and we benefit from that. [00:38:00]