

**Joel Thingvall**

**Narrator**

**Cole Steinberg**

**Concordia University, Saint Paul**

**Interviewer**

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**Concordia University, Saint Paul**

**Transcriber**

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**Minnesota**

**CS: Cole Steinberg**

**JT: Joel Thingvall**

**CS:** This is an interview conducted as part of a larger faculty and student research project initiated by Dr. Julie Luker of Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today is July 27th, 2022, and I'm here with Joel Thingvall. My name is Cole Steinberg, and I'm an undergraduate student at Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today I'll be talking to Joel about what life was like growing up in the Twin Cities. During this interview, I'm going to ask you to reflect on your childhood life experiences as they relate to a variety of social topics from that time period. For the purposes of this interview, we have defined childhood as birth or 17 years of age. To begin, please state and spell your full name.

**JT:** Joel J-O-E-L. Thingvall T-H-I-N-G-V-A-L-L.

**CS:** Please identify your race and gender.

**JT:** I am Caucasian male.

**CS:** Please state your date of birth.

**JT:** September 16th, 1953.

**CS:** Finally, please share where you grew up, such as the name of the neighborhood or a nearby street intersection. Include any major moves you made during this time period.

**JT:** For 17 years, I was definitely in the Longfellow neighborhood.

**CS:** Okay. Thank you. I'd like to learn more about your family life. Let's begin with the memories you have for immediate and extended family. Please share some memories that you have about these relationships.

**JT:** Okay. Well, I am an only child of only children now. My grandmother's grandmother was a territorial pioneer. They were French and came to Minnesota back there in the mid-1850s. My grandfather came over from Sweden. And the end of the 19th century as a kid with other siblings, and they were distributed among relatives. My grandfather served in World War One. He was a cook. And then he met my grandmother. And I have no memories of my grandparents because they, both my grandmother died before I was born, and my grandfather when I was like three. But my

grandfather purchased a house in Longfellow, which was the model home for the Sears kit houses. It was \$7,200 in 1924 and a mortgage payment of \$47 a month for 15 years. You almost lost the house in 1929, when he was unemployed and had to borrow money from relatives like \$250 to save it. And then he got a job at the VA hospital as a plumber. Now, my dad went to the same high school in junior high as Maria Sanford Junior High and Roosevelt High School. Actually, it was a two-bedroom house up until he was in junior high. He shared a bedroom with his grandmother, who then passed away. And then my dad went into the service. And after he got out of the service, he still lived at home and the house went to what was Dunwoody for watchmaking. He didn't pursue that because the only place to intern was like out in Pipestone, Minnesota, and he didn't want to go out there. And he worked for an electronics store and eventually became a truck driver for Glenwood Inglewood Springwater Company. He met my mother. My mother came from Keewatin in Minnesota up on the Iron Range. She moved down here right after high school. I went to business school and worked in the courthouse for then, I want to say, attorney general or whatever, Orville Freeman. And met my dad and they got married. And right after they got married, my grandmother passed away. So, they moved into the house to take care of my grandfather. So, my dad basically lived in that house in the Longfellow neighborhood for 86 years. My mother lived there from 1950 until five years ago herself for 68 years or whatever. I didn't really have an extended family because, again, I was an only child. I did have kind of an adopted grandmother, which was the mother of some friends of my dad, who would roam the neighborhood and the antique stores and always be, you know, the babysitter on call if they needed someone like that. But there were lots of people still in the neighborhood that my dad went to school with. I mean, the parents of people that my dad went to school with, probably 70% of the kids moved out of the neighborhood. There were probably at least eight to ten in the five-block area that still stayed there, that he went to school with. And, of course, knew all the neighbors because it was predominantly, when I was growing up then, an older neighborhood. You know with people who weren't going to leave until, you know, they passed on. And actually, when my mom passed away five years ago, she and one other classmate of mine. We still have. Ours were the last parents. But as of when we were 40, there were still 12 of our parents still living in the neighborhood.

**CS:** Okay.

**JT:** The this being the other interesting thing about my parents is my mother went back to work when I was like four years old into market research. She did door to door interviewing where would go up and knock on the door and ask people questions. And then she eventually moved into the office. So, she worked for a female-run company. Beginning about, you know, about 1956 on until she retired. So, my mom was a working mom. My dad worked for Glenn in Inglewood, moved into the bottling plant, became a union, was a union bottle washer filler whatever, you know, for Springwater. They both worked all the time. So, I was either staying with other kids during their early years or like at age seven I actually had just a key and I would let myself in after school. But of course, in those days you just went over and knocked on the door to see if someone could play from 3 to 5. And that usually happened.

**CS:** Yeah. Oh, well, did you have any family pets? If so, please describe them.

**JT:** No, I didn't until. Family pets? Nope. Didn't have dogs, cats or whatever. I later had a hamster. My first job, when I was in junior high, I worked for a guy who raised hamsters for all the pet stores in the Twin Cities in his basement. I would go over and clean the cages and water them. To give you an idea, he was a schoolteacher, and he was probably making, you know, \$7,000 a year. But the hamster business was I saw his books. They were bringing in like 15,000 hamsters and were selling for \$0.50 each back then.

**CS:** How were household chores divided between members of your family.

**JT:** Cut the grass, had the push mower. Laundry. My mom still hang-dried laundry up till her last day, so we never had a dryer in the house. Because my mom worked, we ate out dinner an awful lot. Housekeeping wasn't really that much of a chore or whatever, you know? I would sometimes an early day has got a few extra bucks for doing the neighbor's lawn, you know, because there are lots of older folks, but nothing consistently. Unfortunately, our housekeeping was pretty bad, so my parents don't really like having anyone come over. [Laughter]

**CS:** Thank you. Next, please describe the ways in which your family's economic status influenced your childhood.

**JT:** My parents were working middle class. The advantage was that they didn't have a mortgage. You know, because they were living in the house that my grandfather had and paid off. They were two working parents. So, if you go back that when I graduated from high school, I think pulled up here that the average wage was probably around \$10,000. You know, for a person, my parents made it made that. So, they were probably doing pretty good. Every four years they would buy a new car and pay with cash. Everything was, you know, cash back then. We would take a two-week vacation. We would drive like crazy, 70 miles an hour to this part of the country, you know, with sleeping bags in the back to the station wagon, and then just spend all of our time in the Georgia, Florida or whatever far state you would go to. By the time I was 50 and I had been in all 48 states. You know. But again, I know what's the advantage of being an only child. They really didn't do anything extravagant. No one. My parents didn't drink. My dad smoked but gave that up around 1960. My dad was a stamp collector but was very frugal in what he spent. When I needed to go to college, basically, I didn't have to worry about tuition. But still tuition wasn't that expensive. So, I was able to pretty much float it myself. When I went to the U of M was \$140 a quarter for 12 to 22 credits, \$500 a year. You could make that work in a small job. [Laughter] Kind of blow your mind, doesn't it?

**CS:** Sure. Yeah. [Laughter]

**JT:** Yeah, yeah. You know, and. But, you know, we ate out a lot. We traveled.

**CS:** Okay. Great. Now I'd like to know about your experiences. Religion such as Catholicism, Lutheranism, etc... Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

**JT:** Now, my mother was very religious, she was Lutheran. When she came to town, she fell in love with Central Lutheran Church, which was downtown Minneapolis. My dad, more so, probably wasn't. My dad was what you would call a nice guy, a friendly guy. He knew everyone's name. He wasn't the brightest student from the class of 41 at Roosevelt High School. [Laughter] You know, but my mom got him to go to church there. I started to later find that it was kind of a change going to a downtown church. I would go to Bible school in the summer because it was kind of like a version of summer camp or daycare or something, you know? Again, when my mom worked, she would walk to work. So, when I went to grade school, I would, a lot of times, meet her for lunch at the Snyder's or Petersen drug store counter. We went home for lunch when I was in grade school and then went back. We had an hour and 15 minutes or something. So, she was always within walking distance of there. But, with religion, what was interesting was, you know, had comments like my mom would say, "Don't date the Catholic across the street". You know, but there was, the Jewish you had the great the North Minneapolis. The Highland Park, Jewish enclaves which seem to be a whole different world. But it was a lot of Catholic. We had the Catholic Church, the Catholic school. Most of my friends that were Catholic went through grade school or, you know, eighth grade or something to their Catholic school and then went to the public high school. I was a

Lutheran. Churches were strong in the neighborhood. Our Boy Scouts were at one church or this other church. We had vacation church school. Everyone in the neighborhood went to, it seemed like, a church within walking distance, you know. So that was a whole big community that I kind of missed out on doing because all the kids that I did, the confirmation, catechism, all of that, were from all over the city. But it's interesting that you had the strong Catholic schools and then you had Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist. There weren't two churches of that domination are like probably in most of south Minneapolis. But again, church centered around, you know, I had Cub Scouts at the Presbyterian Church. I had Boy Scouts at Holy Trinity Church. And then I moved over to a super troop over on Chicago Avenue at Calvary Lutheran Church. It wasn't a huge deal, but I did feel somewhat in my parents' generation that there was still there, you know, anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, thing going on still. Just like there was still some of the ethnic heritage stuff. Like Swedes didn't like Norwegians and Scandinavians don't like Germans and so forth. St Paul was predominantly German and Minneapolis and a lot of the Scandinavian and Middle European, Czechoslovakian, Polish. You know that type of stuff. So, there was there was still. A lot of ethnic identification and modest religious identification. We also had in South Minneapolis, we had what some would have been termed, the crazy church. Where people go and speak in tongues and stuff like that, which was right down by the Mississippi River on Lake Street. A strange temple and, you know. But, you know, as kids, we didn't necessarily see that happening that much. Yeah, we didn't quite realize, you know, why we didn't see some of our friends who are Catholic who went to the Catholic school, but then we saw them later. And, you know, I had some friends that would then end up going to the private religious Lutheran or whatever, Minnehaha Academy, which was big, or there were a couple other church type schools.

**CS:** How important or relevant is religion to you now as an adult?

**JT:** So, that is an interesting question because at one point, you know, I thought about going into the ministry. You know, but I started to question it when some of my peers were also going into the ministry, mainly to escape the draft, and for more philosophical reasons. I looked upon religion as being more people oriented, reaching out, working with people, being a part of the people. I kind of started to grow away from going to a big cathedral church about all the pomp and pageantry, which was wonderful and glorious, but still. You know, there seemed to be a lot of money being spent on things other than what was the true basis of religion. I start to question it. I do believe that good deeds and good works are probably for the better. But I saw the movie "Marjoe" back in 73, and as I started thinking more, it was like, I don't know if I could play the part of a minister for the rest of my life. Especially when I started... I had gotten into theater and was doing a lot of, you know, performance-oriented things and that. I haven't been to church in, you know, 35 years. But at one point when I was married, I married a Catholic in 1980, and we had to go to the Catholic Youth Center and go through that program before to kind of get our marriage okayed before you could get married in the church. And then my ex-wife and I both ended up working for that program, doing dual career workshops and interfaith workshops and communication workshops. You know how you deal with inter-faith. How do you deal with religions, especially when you're almost obligated, when you marry a Catholic at that point to raise your kids in the Catholic faith. But they go to a Catholic church, Catholic classes, and everything. My son went to a Catholic school, Hill-Murray. He is not religious. Well, in some ways we all kind of... If we've been exposed to it, we still keep some of it. We keep hoping. We keep looking for the good. But I'm not fanatical. I always felt that the best thing that you can have, you can still have respect. You know, if the pope and the head of the Lutheran Church or the chief rabbi got together and none of them are going to convert each other. You know, and when you get right down to it, you know, religions are all based on. Basically, choosing an extension of the pagan gods. [Laughter] All the Greek gods. The Roman gods. I actually like Thor and Odin, stuff like that. Mean, those are kind of neat.

**CS:** Okay.

**JT:** Yeah, it's becoming a lot of discussion and controversy these days.

**CS:** Oh, yeah. Now I'd like to learn more about the neighborhood in which you grew up. If you moved during childhood, you may wish to reflect on more than one neighborhood. This is fine to do, but please indicate as you do it. Please describe what comes to mind when thinking about the neighborhood in which you grew up.

**JT:** I spent my youth. I probably spent up to age 27 living in my parents' home. I was there off and on, you know, from age 20 to 27. I would off in the summers or semester here or things like that or until I got married. But it was very neighborhood oriented. Everything revolved around, again, schools, churches, or the parks. You walked to school; I was before bussing. So, when you have a school concert, you have a fun fest, you would have a sporting event at grade school; people would walk. You know, they wouldn't drive. You wouldn't have to have a parking lot. Same thing with churches. People tended to walk to the churches. The parks which you had your intramural sports program. It was this park against that park, Longfellow Park against Brackett Park or, you know, whatever. And that was a program that served your immediate neighborhood. Because you were walking when I was growing up, you still had your corner drugstore. You still had a bakery. You still had a butcher. You have two levels of supermarket. You had one that was a little bit bigger within walking distance. And then you had one maybe a little further away, like a Red Owl or a National Tea, you know, where they actually probably butchered their own animals. You know, they had a massive meat market as well as everything else. You forget that when I was growing up in the fifties, we still had a freezer that was about the size of a shoebox in our refrigerator until probably 1960. And then you had the introduction of TV dinners, which you had to keep refrigerated and things like that. You walked everywhere. You took the bike. In the neighborhood, you took the bus. You went downtown living off of Lake Street. As long as the bus could get you to Lake Street, you could walk the four eight blocks on. It wasn't a big deal. You know, or I could go and catch the bus that would connect you to Lake Street, and if it wasn't there, you would just walk and till it happens. It also was that trips would take longer. I would go after school to go see a movie, but it would be in an hour and 30 minutes roundtrip to go see a two-hour movie on the bus, you know. But everything did revolve around the neighborhood. You had your Eagles club, your VFW club. You know, if you're your restaurant, you always went to like the same restaurants which weren't chain. You know, White Castle, I think. We had Red Barn. We had a Henry's hamburger before McDonald's. We had Porky's Drive-In. We had a lot of drive ins, drive ins with the big thing where'd you just pull in. We had the [Tropic Drive-In?] out by the airport. But events would happen at the park. You might have a light music concert, you know. Some kids band or whatever, and they would play at the park, play it again at a church. Things were, you know, somewhat laid back and all you had your high school sports programs that you would all go to. You would support the neighborhood high school. You did a lot of things. It was interesting, it was. I want to put in context, comic books. I was a big comic book collector all the way up until now. When I was in grade school, within my six to eight block environment there were probably 50 of us that collected comic books. When you got to junior high, there is probably 20, so down to 20. But suddenly we had a neighborhood of 16, 20 blocks. When I got to high school, there were probably like five people that collected comic books. And we were dealing with, you know, six miles of neighborhood, which was servicing them. But, you know, so that's how your interests kind of changed as you grew. Happily, I bought all the comic books from the people when they stopped collecting. [Laughter] But we revolved around, in my case, baseball was a big sport. Football wasn't as big because it was harder to play without the proper equipment or more dangerous. Our fields were still pretty dirt solid or blacktop. Which wasn't bad for baseball at the tennis ball or whatever. But wasn't uncommon, just two of us would go out. One would sit there and throw the ball up in the air and hit fly balls, or we'd get between a couple garages in the alley in which you could throw and hit that space right by the garage door would be your strike zone and they could hit the tennis ball,

but it was not going to break a window. It's going to hit the garage on the other side and not damage it or anything. So, you didn't have to really chase them all over. We terrorized the neighborhood on bicycles. No fences. We'd drive right through people's yards and take shortcuts. Ice skating was always big in the winter, but the warming houses at the parks. And again, you know, the parks always had programs if you wanted. I took ballet in grade school at Racket Park. They would always have activities to try and keep kids busy. We didn't really have a lot of, I want to say, juvenile delinquency or whatever in the neighborhood. I mean, our dads were World War Two veterans, and we would put on their old helmets and have these, you know, plastic machine guns and we'd be walking down the street looking like E Company from a World War Two movie. And you can't do that these days. You know, we would play war. War was, you know, so big. We had the models we would sand pits we set up we had a large place to set soldiers. You know we had set them up eventually we got to the rubber binder gun stage. Where they set up on their side. I stood up on my side and we said, okay, we'd go, you sit there and we shoot rubber binders on each other's setups. That was how we played with toys. We played with board games. We didn't have a lot. TV was Saturday morning and before and after school sometimes programs, but it was limited for the evening.

**CS:** How well did the residents in your neighborhood know each other and what were some of those relationships like?

**JT:** If I did anything bad, my parents are going to hear about it. Everyone on my block or the block across the street or whatever would know who I am, you know, because they would see each other at community meetings. The neighborhood people would come out and, you know, support the grade school. Even if they don't have kids there. You know, for their fun fest, they would talk. They would go to the concerts because it was free entertainment, you know. And they would see us running around. And again, these were people that my dad also grew up with. You know because they were the parents of kids his age. You'd learn which people's yards not to cut across. You know. Teachers lived in the neighborhood. Amazing. You know, schoolteachers. Your mailman lived in the neighborhood. You know, even the firemen, the policemen. You would actually you know; you would see them at the grocery store. You would see them with the restaurant, you know, whatever. And again, they would come to, you know, community events.

**CS:** Next, I would like to learn about the values shared by your family and your neighbors. Values are principles or standards that help guide behavior. What memories come to mind that demonstrate what these values were for your family and your neighbors?

**JT:** You know it was... You weren't necessarily allowed to run wild. Yes, there were always exceptions. You know, some people maybe were a little less disciplined or something. There was discipline back in those days. There was a spanking. There was tension. The assistant principal would grab you and shove, not me, but grab a kid and shove them up against the locker and kind of more intimidation and stuff like that. So, you respected your elders. Maybe don't respect everyone, but then you would avoid them because some people would push that line of respect. In my time, I walked so much of the neighborhood going to school, going to this store, going to that store, going to that movie theater. Everything that you did centered around the neighborhood. You know, it was a treat to go downtown. You know, it was a special event. You knew everyone. People watched out. I'm sure that there was still, you know, high jinks, and still crime, and stuff like that. But. It didn't seem to happen quite as much. Then the neighborhood changed again. I can use my mom's work as an example. She was within walking distance and suddenly they moved the office out to Penn Avenue in Bloomington. So, you know how to get a second car or I think she pulled right to begin with. Suddenly things changed where you... And, you know, as I got into high school, I would take the bus downtown by myself at age 15 or 16 years old. I'd take it everywhere, you know, as I got older. The joy of Minneapolis back then was that I did comic conventions. Where we produced

them, and we did them in downtown Minneapolis. We actually, when we opened our comic book store over on Hennepin and Lake, we opened it there because it was the second busiest intersection in the Twin Cities; Midway was the first. We had the Lake Street bus line, which all ran considerably faster than it does now, because they didn't stop every single block. And every bus allowed to downtown Minneapolis you could hop on the Hennepin Ave bus which ran every 10 minutes. Come and see us, you know, in a 10, 12-minute ride. Go back downtown and go home, be it White Bear, you know, Anoka, whatever. Every place was accessible by bus.

**CS:** Okay. Now I'm going to ask you all about leisure time. Describe some of the ways in which you, your family and your neighbors engage in leisure time when you're growing up.

**JT:** Again, it was mostly events centered around the church and the parks and schools. And whatever events they would have. Otherwise, you know, it was getting together and playing cards or board games. My parents would do that. My parents weren't social in the sense that they had people over. That they were social in the sense that, you know, I did a lot of stuff with the church, but that was going downtown. I was with the choir. I would have to go down there for youth group, you know. And so that was a couple of nights a week besides Sunday. My dad was a stamp collector and every two weeks we'd go downtown to stamp club meetings or have dinner in. And I would sit and read comic books. Meet a lot of interesting people in that respect. We did have some family friends which we'd always go out with after church and maybe take a drive, go down to Rochester or Wynona or something on a Sunday afternoon. We did take a lot of weekend trips. My dad would have like three weeks' vacation, would take a two-week vacation, and he would spread the other stuff out. And then he would go to a stamp convention if it was in Des Moines, Iowa, or Fargo or someplace for a long weekend. But most of our leisure time activities were actually playing with toys. Again, we had the Marx Playsets. We had Tinker Toys, building blocks, model kits. The model kits were huge. We'd always get together. We had Cub Scout. You had Boy Scouts, you had Girl Scouts. So that would be a weekly gathering. You know, and if you stayed in long enough, you had all the activities, be it general camping. Big Cub Scout events, and every year the Cub Scouts would get a window to all the different packs, would get a window in some store, and he would go around and look at the window display that the different packs would do. You know, not only time just for your own community, but to support, you know, the other groups and packs. You know, our mothers were the den mothers. So, you know, we would keep pretty busy.

**CS:** You mentioned you mentioned an interest in comic books a few times. What kind of comic books were you collecting around that time when you were a child?

**JT:** Well, when I was over at the babysitters, I had some older kids. It was Dell Comics called it was the Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, A lot of Archies, and stuff like that. I actually remember a lot of the early DC. I got into Marvel one year after the fact, 1963. And then I was a Marvel junkie after that. I actually thought Jerry's Drugstore on the corner of whatever the park was. When we talk about economics, I probably had an allowance of, like \$0.50 a week and then up to a dollar a week. And that was actually, you know, pretty good. I could buy a lot of penny baseball cards or even comic books. But Jerry gave me \$2 a week in credit to check in his magazines, which was, you know, eight. No more than that. I'd take 28 comic books a week or something, you know? Comic books have been a part of my life. My mom got me in. I had a speech impediment. So, my mom sent me to McPhail, and I got in the theater when I was 16. I enjoyed writing. I got an editor at my high school newspaper and did other things. So, I managed to spend my entire life working in either comic, buying, selling, whatever, promoting journalism and theater. But yeah, comic books. I was what they call the Marvel zombie. I worked for Jim Steranko as an assistant in 1974 out in Redding, Pennsylvania. He did Nick Fury, Agent of Shield, The Strange Tales, Captain America, Steranko: A History of Comics. I was in New York City for a couple of weeks trying to break in. I mean, I know Stan Lee. I know Roy Thomas. Paul Levitz who was publisher at DC; We were fans in the same

amateur press alliance and all that. I spent a lot of time in comics. And that also spread out the neighborhood, because once you discover that, oh, they don't have it at this store, I got to go to this one. And then slowly I started hitting, you know, instead of two or three drugstores at six or eight on your bike route, you know, as your neighborhood expanded. But I was lucky I got them first at one store. [Laughter]

**CS:** Describe some of the activities engaged in when you were with your friends.

**JT:** With friends. Yeah. I mean, again, like I said, you know, we played army with... model work was really big. You know, ships and cars, aircraft carriers, tanks, planes, paint them. Destroy them. Display them. No, but a lot of that was baseball cards. Baseball cards were huge. And then we played a dice game with baseball cards that had to roll two dice and they would, you know, single or double, triple, and you make your own line up and put numbers on the back and totally destroy them, you know. And though very few of us, I mean, no one that I know actually went on to do anything substantial in athletics. We still learn how to play basically. The joy of high school was that high school was there was the opportunity to play a sport. Not to be competitive in a sport. You know, which was kind of a plus that you didn't... Again, yes, the better kids would play the important games. And so, there was always a B squad. But you were able to be bad and still play. And again, we had basketball and baseball. Football wasn't so much of a pickup sport. Ice skating, hockey. We didn't really have hockey rinks back then yet to that extent. Some kids were lucky that it could flood their backyards.

**CS:** Next, let's discuss your experience with schooling. Please describe what it was like going to school as a child. I'm.

**JT:** Well, you know, we'd walk to school you to be a group of us in the neighborhood. You know, our parents didn't drop us off. It was seldom that you would walk by yourself, though. That did happen sometimes. You would walk home for lunch. And then walk back to school again from more classes. You know, it was a time when we had an awful lot of kids in school. You know, I think when I graduated from Roosevelt, we had, I want to say, pushing 3000 for three grades. Which at that time, you know, was pretty substantial. So, our grade school wasn't... You weren't going to have the same kids in your class every year. There were probably like three or four classes in second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth grade. And then of course, junior high was a whole big thing where you have your run around to different classes and you made other kids from this from the other four feeder schools. And then, of course, high school, which then fed them from four junior high schools. Mm hmm. We handwrite pretty much everything. We didn't have computers or typewriters. You had to learn how to use a library. How to use, you know, encyclopedias are huge. We don't have Wikipedia. You know. When I graduated, I felt that there was no need to know anything as long as you knew how to find things. That was the greater knowledge. How do you do you assess the system and find out the facts, figures. Looking back, it was a strange system. I mean, you had grades, my case, I hated Phys-ed, so that always brought my grades down. But he also didn't like math and they didn't like science. So, and you know that it was such... it was strange. But again, you know, a lot of teachers lived in the neighborhood that you would see them. So that again, you can't screw around otherwise your parents would hear about it. There was a lot of more interaction between your parents and the school. I mean, open house, every parent came. You know, conferences, every parent came. The other leisure and it wasn't a leisure activity because you did have homework. You did come home, and you might have at least an hour of something for school. So, it wasn't all fun and games right after school. And again, we had to hammer out everything. Even when I was doing my senior year and, you know, you had handwritten essays. So, you have to have clean handwriting and have to do it in person. You couldn't go to a printing or anything, so.



**CS:** Okay. For our final topic, I'm going to ask you to reflect on local and global issues such as war, poverty, discrimination, social unrest, etc... In your opinion, what were some of the biggest local or global issues affecting the people in your neighborhood when you were growing up?

**JT:** Well, I'll start with one politics that I distinctly remember from grade school. There was Nixon against Kennedy. So, you know, I was pretty... I was nine back then or whatever. And there was one kid that would ask, who are you voting for Nixon or Kennedy? On the spot like as a nine-year-old that you're even considering voting, but you go by what your parents. My parents are Democrats. So, I would say Kennedy and he would punch you [Laughter] because he was a Republican or whatever, you know. So, in some ways, our politics got ingrained in us according to what our parents. But my dad was, you know, a diehard union Democrat. And my mom, you know, was totally against the GOP, which were all, you know, money hungry, you know, business owners and all that kind of stuff. You know, which has carried over time. We had other big events. The whole space program was huge. And it was wonderful and wondrous. and all that. Jules Verne and H.G. Wells were great reads when we were kids, and we didn't have Lord of the Rings and stuff like that. And, you know, and the way that news presented astronauts as heroes and everything. You know, we had a war movie when the Longest Day was huge, or when that came out in 1963, I think, or whatever. We went to see it at the State Theater for a friend's birthday party because his dad was in the second wave that hit Omaha, and that's where he met his mom, who came ashore after as a nurse and nursed him back to health. The history of wars was huge when I was growing up, partly because of the movies and TV, and what we were getting in history books. We later had the mess in 67 where we had the race riots in north Minneapolis, which actually was dealt more with the... I'm trying to think what if it had something to do with, it was it was the blacks against the Jewish. Because North was just such a heavy Jewish area and somehow, they were I don't know if they were moving out and it was frustration and so much of that end of town got burnt. And which now brings to mind that, you know, when we talk about growing up, I grew up in south Minneapolis when I went to Roosevelt. When I went to grade school, we had the Carpenter Brothers, which was probably our only black family for grade school. And Roosevelt, my senior year, I mean, we had an all-white basketball team. You know, the year before that, Danny, one of the Carpenter brothers, was on the team. But we were in a white neighborhood. And it doesn't mean that we just didn't understand other cultural things. I could have gone to South my senior year when they built a new a South High, and that would have brought me into a Native American/French neighborhood. But we had, you know, Central High School, which was predominantly black, which was, I want to say, the Chicago neighborhood. We had Washburn and Southwest and West, which were kind of mixed. Then you had the whole mess in North Minneapolis, which was Edison and Emery. You know, some of them. But I grew up in a Longfellow was when I grew up as a working-class white neighborhood. Later when I was doing theater and I went to do an audition at Dudley Riggs' Brave New Workshop. I think I was like 20, and I walked in and I sat down and was talking with the person and yes, I was reading all the correct things. I was reading a New Yorker. I was reading New Times. I read The Washington Post and all that. But they said, you just haven't experienced life outside of your area of Minneapolis. [Laughter] We haven't got into the conflict and all of that because I... And you know, when I went to the U of M, I think it was spring of... Was it the spring of 1972? To have, you know, the antiwar riot where they tore down that huge metal fence around the Armory and laid it across Washington Avenue underneath the walking bridge and blocks it off from traffic. And my frustration was that with the tear gas and everything, I couldn't get from one end of the U mall to the other for my class.

**CS:** Did your family or your neighborhood have a bomb or fallout shelter in case of nuclear war? If yes, where was it and what was in it?

**JT:** I believe the schools had it in the basement. The only one that I really remember is that when I would go downtown Minneapolis to the YWCA, where they had the staff club meetings, and my

dad would always go downstairs in the basement to get a soda from the machine. And they had that as a fallout shelter with all the big, big containers with decals on them, which supposedly had food and water in them. And I'm sure that they had it. I believe they had it in the basement of Freeman's department store, which was on 36th and Lake. If schools had basements, I'm pretty sure that Sanford had. I don't really remember Roosevelt. And I was pretty much everywhere in that school. I'm sure some churches did. And again, by not being in the community big time for churches. Yes, Calvary Church had over on Chicago. I was there with Boy Scouts. They had fallout shelter stuff.

**CS:** Okay. This is the end of our interview. Your responses are invaluable and really appreciate that you took the time to do this today. Thank you so much for participating.