

Documenting Minnesota: The 1970s Oral History Project

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narrator

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This project is funded by the Minnesota Cultural Heritage Grants Program, which is part of Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The program's goals: to preserve and enhance access to Minnesota's cultural and historical resources and to support projects of enduring value for the cause of history and historic preservation across the state.

The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, passed in November 2008, raises new funds from a sales tax increase to be divided among projects benefitting the outdoors, clean water, parks and trails, and arts and cultural heritage. A portion of the newly established Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund – \$22 million for the 2010-11 biennium – was appropriated to the Minnesota Historical Society for a variety of history programs around the state – programs intended to preserve and enhance access to Minnesota's history and its cultural and historical resources. One of those is the Minnesota Cultural Heritage Grants Program.

Documenting Minnesota: the 1970s Oral History Project

Project background

American society in the 1970s is increasingly a subject of historical scholarship, with numerous general works and focused studies appearing in the past several years. Yet there has been little in-depth research on the 1970s completed here at the state level and, more importantly, almost no focused oral history projects or individual interviews – the Powerline controversy project (housed at the Minnesota Historical Society archives), and the Reserve Mining case, with seven interviews conducted by the Save Lake Superior Association and located at the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center, Duluth, stand as exceptions. This project is an attempt to fill this gap.

Documenting Minnesota is organized around broad 1970s themes of environmentalism, activism and protest, and focuses initially on two specific topics: Metrodome protests (1972-79); and statewide activities and programs of the 1976 American Bicentennial, including the Esthetic Environment Programs (1973-76). Twenty-five focused, individual oral history interviews were conducted on these topics; these interviews were transcribed and edited, and are here made available for public access, thus creating a body of primary source material with potential for present and future use.

Oral history is particularly suited to these project topics. First, it enables the collection, evaluation, and permanent preservation of the experiences and memories of individual participants. To learn from our past, to employ history as a decision making tool, we must assemble the historical record. But perhaps more importantly, emotionally charged events – such as the Metrodome protests – can produce multiple perspectives, based very much on individual perception. To appropriately preserve these multiple perspectives, it is necessary to speak with the participants and allow them to recount events in their own words.

The topics

Opposition in Minnesota to the funding and construction of professional sports facilities predates Target Field (2010), or a possible new home for the National Football League's Minnesota Vikings. Protest accompanied plans for the Metrodome, the downtown Minneapolis stadium which opened its doors in 1982 as the home for Major League Baseball's Twins and the NFL Vikings – from the first public discussions for a downtown Minneapolis venue in 1972, through the 1978 approval for a facility by the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, and into the 1979 legislative session. Various organizations arose, focused on issues of funding, location, taxation, the impacts on neighborhoods, and the aesthetics of outdoor sports. Interviews consider multiple viewpoints of this controversy – from the Twins and Vikings to grassroots protesters, from political figures to journalists who covered the stories.

Minnesotans had multiple viewpoints of the 1976 American Bicentennial, too, and celebrated the event in many different ways. But statewide programs and activities to mark 200 years of the USA began in 1973, with the establishment of the Minnesota American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (MARBC), a state-funded agency. Energetic state leadership developed grassroots programs that placed decisions on programs and activities squarely with local residents – with the result that some communities planned and built and celebrated and documented, while others did little or nothing. Interviews focus on two locations that then Lieutenant Governor Rudy Perpich called ‘Minnesota’s two Model Bicentennial Communities,’ Fertile and Duluth, as well as on MARBC’s state leadership.

Additionally, a number of Bicentennial interviews look at the Esthetic Environment Programs (EEP), one of the major related activities in Minnesota of the 1976 Bicentennial. EEP created, and helped to fund, statewide and also local community projects focused on beautification programs, grassroots preservation initiatives, and protecting natural resources. This focus on environmental questions fits nicely with the larger national debate, and federal legislation and public awareness campaigns.

When future generations look back at the 1970s, and ask questions about what life was like for Minnesotans during that decade, I am pleased that these interviews will be available as a source for research. For this I thank, above all, the women and men who took time to be participate in this project.

Acknowledgements

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Thomas Saylor, Ph.D.

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Founder and Director, Documenting Minnesota: the 1970s Oral History Project

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Project narrators: Metrodome

Name; positions in mid to late 1970s.

Bell, Jerry. Worked for the Metropolitan Council; one area of responsibility was questions of downtown stadium financing. Later executive director of the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, which owns and operate the Metrodome. In 1987, became president of the Minnesota Twins.

Brandt, Steve. Reporter, Minneapolis *Tribune*. Covered state government, state agencies and the Legislature during period of debates on stadium and its financing.

Gage, Kelly. Lawyer, Mankato, and former State senator from Blue Earth County, 1966-72. Appointed member of Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission that made the 1978 decision for a domed, downtown stadium.

Gornick, Ronald. Business owner, Chisholm. Appointed member of Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission that made the 1978 decision for a domed, downtown stadium.

Griffith, Clark. Part owner, executive vice president and treasurer of the Minnesota Twins.

Kerr, Jon. Grassroots activist and journalist, Twin Cities. Active with Save the Met organization and Minnesotans Against the Downtown Dome (MADD).

Loscalzo, Julian. Grassroots activist and organizer, Twin Cities. Active with Save the Met organization and Minnesotans Against the Downtown Dome (MADD).

Mungavan, Tim. Community organizer, Cedar Riverside Project Area Committee, Minneapolis.

Ogren, Tim. Grassroots activist and community organizer, Cedar Riverside neighborhood, Minneapolis.

Primoli, Fred. Bar owner, St Paul. Head of Citizens Opposed to the Stadium Tax (COST), a bar owners protest group.

Rantz, Jim. Assistant minor league director, Minnesota Twins.

Sturdevant, Lori. Reporter, Minneapolis *Tribune*. Covered Minnesota Legislature during period of debates on stadium and its financing.

Weiner, Jay. Reporter, Minneapolis *Tribune*. Later author of Stadium Games: Fifty Years of Big League Greed and Bush League Boondoggles.

Wright, Frank. Managing Editor, Minneapolis *Tribune*.

Project narrators: Bicentennial

Name; positions in mid to late 1970s.

Beaudin, Robert. Mayor of Duluth, 1975-79.

Egge, David. Banker, Fertile. Member of Fertile Bicentennial Committee.

France, Al. Appointed Chair, Duluth Bicentennial Commission; also employed with Lake Superior Industrial Bureau. Former State legislator from Duluth area, 1963-70, and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce in Washington, D.C.

Larson, Bruce. Business owner, Fertile. Appointed Chair, Fertile Bicentennial Committee.

Mott, J. Thomas. Law student, St Paul. Worked with Esthetic Environment Programs (EEP), specifically with dilapidated buildings program.

Oldendorf, Yvette. Appointed Director, Esthetic Environment Programs (EEP).

Olson, Roberta. Owner and publisher, Fertile *Journal* (weekly newspaper).

Pollari, Lois. Appointed Director, Minnesota American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (MARBC).

Smith, Sybil. Youth organizer. Worked for MARBC in charge of Youth and Special Programs.

Vind, Merna and Charles. Merna: homemaker, Fertile. Charles, business owner, Fertile, and member of Fertile Bicentennial Committee.

TIMELINE – Metrodome debate and construction

1956

Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington is opened, originally only with minor league baseball.

1961

The Washington Senators are relocated from the nation's capitol, and re-named the Minnesota Twins. Vikings launched as NFL expansion team.

Late 1960s

Minneapolis architect Robert Cerny introduces a concept of a domed football stadium in downtown Minneapolis.

1972

Downtown stadium advocates develop a proposal for a \$49.1 million stadium and parking ramp. Nearly 1,000 people show up at a public hearing in 1973 to protest.

1973

Minneapolis Mayor Charles Stenvig, DFL, vetoes dome proposal – due, he says, to tax burden for Minneapolis. But Minneapolis City Council overrides veto, 10-3. The proposal then goes to the seven-person Board of Estimate and Taxation (which had to approve the bond sale for the project). Board is ready to approve with the required 5 – 2 majority, but Mayor Stenvig blocks appointment of a 7th member, stalling proposal.

1973

Minneapolis business leader Harvey MacKay recruits 26 people to serve on a Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce Stadium Task Force. The executive director of the Task Force is Charles Krusell, who plays a vital role in Task Force success.

1975, 1976

Wrangling in the State legislative sessions, with no conclusive plan. Both professional franchises claim they may be willing to relocate if no new stadium is built. Location of any new stadium undecided.

May 1977

A 'No-Site Bill' – the idea of Rep. Al Patton (DFL-Sartel) – passes and is signed by Governor Rudy Perpich, DFL. The bill creates the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission (MSFC), with seven members appointed by the governor, to select the stadium site and design. A revenue bonding package is developed to finance the stadium. If revenue streams to support the bonds are not sufficient to retire the bonds, a two-percent metropolitan area liquor tax would be imposed to generate additional bond revenues.

The MSFC has several options:

- It could spend up to \$37.5 million if it chose to build a new football stadium in Bloomington, and improve Metropolitan Stadium for baseball.
- It could spend up to \$25 million if it chose to remodel Metropolitan Stadium as a multi-purpose stadium.
- And it could spend no more than \$55 million if it decided to build a new domed stadium anywhere else. In effect, if any other city than Bloomington wanted the stadium, it would have to provide for a way to get the land at no cost.

May 1977

MSFC members are appointed by Governor Perpich. They are:

- Dan Brutger, St Cloud. Commission chair. Owner of a St. Cloud construction company and numerous other business holdings.
- Solveig Premack, Minneapolis. Vice chair of the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board.
- Richard Radman, St Paul. VP of the Minnesota AFL-CIO and secretary and business representative of the Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades Council.
- Marion Kennon, Edina. Elementary school teacher at Breck School.
- Ron Gornick, Chisholm. Owned a service station and motel. He had also served on Governor Wendell Anderson's Small Business Task Force.
- Josephine Nunn, Champlin. Mayor of Champlin and a member of the Metropolitan Council's advisory committee on municipalities.
- Kelly Gage, Mankato. Lawyer and former state representative from Blue Earth County.

December 1978

MSFC votes 4 – 3 to build a stadium at a site in Minneapolis. Nunn, Premack, Brutger, and Gornick cast votes for Minneapolis.

April – May 1979

Final legislative agreements on taxes for financing – hotel and liquor taxes in Minneapolis. Twins and Vikings sign 30-year leases, and reach agreement on rents, space usage and revenues from concessions.

December 1979

Construction of the Metrodome starts in downtown Minneapolis.

April 1982

Metrodome opens, on time and under budget.

TIMELINE – Bicentennial planning and activities

Bicentennial: the national context

4 July 1966

Congress establishes the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC) as an independent federal agency, to plan and develop an overall program for commemorating the Bicentennial of the 1776 American Revolution.

December 1973

Facing charges of corruption and criticism for top-down planning, President Richard Nixon disbands ARBC and replaces it with the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA), under the direction of Secretary of the Navy (and later U.S. Senator) John W. Warner of Virginia. Congress approves small levels of federal funding, and turns over much planning and funding to state and private organizations.

1974-76

ARBA works to coordinate state activities. Director Warner crisscrosses the nation visiting state and regional Bicentennial organizations and rallying support, but the Bicentennial remains a controversial event.

April 1975

The American Freedom Train, with more than 500 artifacts from U.S. history, departs Wilmington, Delaware on a 21-month tour of the forty-eight contiguous states. Millions will visit the travelling exhibit.

4 July 1976

Nationwide Bicentennial celebrations in communities large and small. Festivities include fireworks displays in major cities. Those in Washington, D.C. are presided over by President Gerald Ford and televised nationally.

Minnesota – some key events and dates

June 1972

Governor Wendell R. Anderson issues Executive Order No. 28, establishing the Minnesota American Revolution Bicentennial Committee (MARBC) and charging it to “to plan, encourage, develop and coordinate Minnesota's observances and activities commemorating the historic events and activities associated with the American evolution.”

MARBC organizes itself into three panels – Heritage '76, Festivals U.S.A., and Horizons '76 – that complement the federal Bicentennial themes. Lieutenant Governor Rudy Perpich is named as Chairperson for MARBC.

During 1972-74, Bicentennial themed projects are proposed, but initially neither state nor federal monies become available to the expected levels. Interest begins to lag and many plans are shelved.

March 1973

Duluth becomes Minnesota's first Bicentennial Community. Before the end of 1976, thanks to aggressive MARBC efforts, 349 communities will receive official designation.

August 1973

Another Executive Order of Governor Anderson establishes the Esthetic Environment Programs (EEP); Yvette Oldendorf is named as director. In keeping with the times, EEP receives a broad mandate for action on removal of dilapidated buildings, junk cars, and "other manifestations of visual pollution."

early 1975

Re-organization of MARBC, with Lois Pollari named in February as new director. MARBC also assumes the administration of EEP, which did not receive further funding from the legislature. Director Pollari encourages the development of grassroots programs that place decisions on activities with local community leaders.

August 1975

American Freedom Train stops in Minneapolis.

1976

Before the end of the year, MARBC approves grants for more than 270 statewide projects valued at over \$10 million. Focus is on activities in the Bicentennial theme areas, with an "emphasis on projects of lasting significance."

On 4 July, communities across Minnesota mark the Bicentennial with a broad range of events including parades, fireworks, and commemorative re-enactments.

Metrodome interview No. 7

JULIAN LOSCALZO

narrator

THOMAS SAYLOR

interviewer

Interviewee: Julian Empson Loscalzo
Interviewer: Thomas Saylor
Date of interview: 11 Nov and 4 Dec 2010
Location: living room, Loscalzo residence, St Paul MN
Transcribed by: Linda Gerber, Dec 2010
Edited by: Thomas Saylor, Sara Peterson, March 2011

Interview key:

TS = Thomas Saylor

JL = Julian Loscalzo

TS: Today is 11 November 2010. This is an interview for *Documenting Minnesota: The 1970s Oral History Project*. My name is Thomas Saylor. This morning I'm speaking with Julian Loscalzo at his house here, 1141 Portland, St. Paul, Minnesota. Julian, on the record, thanks very much for taking time this morning to be part of this project.

JL: It's a pleasure. This thing has haunted me all my life. *(laughs)*

TS: Let's get it out, we'll expunge this. You were born 1951 in Johnstown, PA. Grew up in Pennsylvania, right?

JL: Yes. Right outside Philly. By the airport.

TS: You moved to Minnesota permanently in 1976.

JL: Right.

TS: In 1976, at that time the baseball landscape and the stadium landscape was a little different around here. Let me establish kind of the beginnings of this. The Twins, the Vikings played after 1961 at the Bloomington Metropolitan Stadium. That place was opened in 1956. You've been there a number of times. Close your eyes if you would and describe Bloomington Met Stadium from your perspective. What kind of place was that?

JL: I've been a baseball fan most of my life. By the time I got there in '76, it was...I always referred to the Met as early erector set in terms of its design and structure. And again, I think that's how it was designed back then. We had the central part, then they added on, etc. But the other part about it was, it was like the prairie. I became a beer vendor there in '77. I remember you could...there were some very beautiful scenes there. I mean the beauty of a ballpark, like walking in and I always used to work left field, and I liked to sit in the bleachers. You walk up and there's this green landscape in front of you at the ballpark and then you had the superstructure behind it. At the same time, on the other side of the field there were cornfields. There was a farm on the other side. A massive parking lot, and there were farm fields on the other side. I can remember some

times, and this is the beauty of the old ballpark, of almost all ballparks in some form or another, to me, being an urban kid, I grew up in Shibe Park, Connie Mack Stadium [1909 - 1970], urban, in the city, packed, etc. and all of a sudden I'm on the prairie, and it felt like the prairie. So there were days I'd get done vending and I could watch the sun set over the first base line and be standing getting beer in the stands of left field and watch the moon rise. So it was really idyllic, if you could say that. It was not the world's greatest ballpark, but it seemed like it fit the prairie.

TS: What kind of place was it to watch a baseball game?

JL: And again, I've become a little bit of an expert on stadiums. I really liked it. I mean, I loved the left field bleachers. At least lower deck was kind of low. You were up top there, seating and arrangements, you know. Relatively speaking, compared to current ballparks, it was a pretty good place to watch it. Seats down the third base line were not that great. Not only because they were just regular seats - they didn't have that curvature that's current today. It was a little bit more like the Metrodome down the line, but around home plate and stuff it was pretty good. Second deck, and I think there was a bit of a third deck up there too. Kind of compact, and you're on top of the ballgame. I liked the place. Again, it didn't have the feel and intensity of like Connie Mack. Later on after I traveled to other ballparks like Wrigley Field [in Chicago, built 1914] or Detroit [Tiger Stadium, 1961 - 1999], I would not put it in the category of the classic ballparks, but it was that kind of Midwestern... The other one that [it] reminded me of, County Stadium [in Milwaukee, 1953 - 2000] was very similar. In my mind. Again, that erector set kind of feel and look to it. But I liked it. It had a more comfy feeling. But again, the game was different then. People were different then. I'm selling beers for ninety cents.

TS: You mean peoples' expectations were different, or what they thought a ballpark needed to be or should be?

JL: Yes. I mean then it was the game that mattered. We were secondary.

TS: The fans, you mean.

JL: The fans were secondary. The beer vendors were secondary. The money was secondary. It was really truly about the game.

TS: You think it was that much of a different era, Julian?

JL: Oh, yes. (*with emphasis*) I mean when we got into the stadium wars, we truly realized that we did not discuss it that much, that this was the end of the innocence of the game. This was the beginning of the business of baseball.

TS: When did that happen? When did that change come, and what prompted it?

JL: I'd have to go back. Corporate ownership. Then I think after that, arbitration, free agency. It used to be a family business that you could make your living on. But by about the mid-80s, I think almost when the Griffiths left [the Twins], they were about the last one. ... The folks in Pittsburgh, [John Galbreath owned the Pittsburgh Pirates, 1946 - 1985]. Then I think it was the Fetzers in Detroit [John Fetzer owned the Tigers, 1960 - 1983], and again you had the Busches [in St Louis, 1953 - 1996]. But a lot of these folks made their living at the game and not elsewhere. Oh, [Bill] Veeck, in Chicago. There's a classic example. They made a living on the game. I think about that time things changed.

TS: So the George Steinbrenner model comes in. [Purchased New York Yankees, 1973.]

JL: Yes, Steinbrenner. Why not blame George Steinbrenner for everything anyway. Him and Bud Selig [Commissioner of Major League Baseball since 1992] - two worst people in baseball. So in my mind that's kind of...those of us who started this thing, that's what we saw the Metrodome was. The corporatization of the game.

TS: By the mid-1970s, when you moved here permanently, was there a stadium issue already out there?

JL: As I recall, it had been around since about '70-71. This again, was not about a baseball thing, it was about economic development. If I remember correctly, in the early '70s somebody came up with the bright idea we need to build a dome, because that seemed cool once Houston did it [with the Astrodome, which opened 1965]. Someplace down in Minneapolis, that would be a tool of economic development and revitalization - which we know doesn't really occur.

TS: But the arguments have long been made.

JL: Oh, they've long been made and they've been long debunked! And they're still made, yes. I mean trust me. There's more than enough economists out there. Just like a lot of things, you just move them from one place to another.

TS: Who cared about a new facility? The Met Stadium was not even twenty years old. A lot of people are on the roadmap here - we have civic and business leaders in both Bloomington and Minneapolis, right?

JL: Yes. The Bloomington people wanted to hold onto what they had. And I think back then it was different too, because Bloomington was always the third stepdaughter of Minneapolis and maybe the second of St. Paul. So in their mind, welcome to Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, Minnesota was a big deal.

TS: With ice hockey [Minnesota North Stars], they had three professional sports franchises in Bloomington, right?

JL: Then they had the [Minnesota] Kicks [soccer team] too. Don't forget the Kicks. Short lived Kicks there, too. And they had the airport, which was a strip so in a lot of ways it was part of their economy. I mean they got the airport, but back then there was a lot of folks who would travel in for ballgames and stay out on the strip. So there was some economic competition. Bloomington eventually sold out because all of sudden they're like, hmmm, ballpark, Mall of America. But they didn't even see Mall of America. They just said - I can't remember how many acres there was out there - the ballpark takes about eight or ten acres. There was probably thirty, forty acres out there.

TS: Of prime real estate.

JL: Prime real estate. There may have been more. I mean you're talking all of a sudden *cah-ching*. (*cash register sound*) Again, economic development. We don't care about ballparks anymore.

TS: Economic development. As you remember it, what was in it for the Twins and the Vikings? They had a stadium that was already paid for.

JL: It wasn't quite paid for, but it was close. I think they owed \$3 million. Rents were cheap. I don't think Cal Griffith saw a lot in it for him. He did not, because I think he owned the concessions and even a good chunk of the ones that the Vikings had. ... He had to be bribed basically into going downtown once it was decided, they decided to build. They gave him all this stuff because I don't think from his end he saw the real upside to moving indoors. And here's a baseball guy. He was a purist. In essence he didn't....baseball indoors? Bah!

TS: He'd been with the Washington Senators. He'd had the Senators, they had been in the family for a while, right?

JL: Yes.

TS: So how did you become aware of this issue? You move here in '76, you're working as a beer vendor. What do you become aware of and when do you become aware that things are moving?

JL: I've always been sort of aware of social stuff and political stuff to some degree or another. I think what really did it is, all of a sudden I realized having worked out there and just my buddies, my softball team, and all of a sudden they're like, "These guys are talking about a dome." And it was the stupidity of it too. Granted it could be rotten out there in April and September, but you're cooped up inside in Minnesota for all these months anyway, why in the hell do

you want to be cooped up inside for the summer? Come on! It's not Florida, where you want to be cooped up inside with air conditioning.

It hit me back then. I think - and it was just a fluke - they started the first stadium commission I think, or maybe it was the third by the time I got here because they'd had all these other studies. I remember I went to one hearing. They were taking public testimony. I just stood up and said, "Hey, I'm a beer vendor. You want a dome, go to a movie theater. Baseball's meant to be played outdoors. It's that simple. It's part of the game and that's it." It rung a bell with somebody, somebody from what would be the equivalent *City Pages* at the time. Guy did an article on me. Then my softball team buddies. It just was this gut reaction. Something that we cared about.

TS: A lot of people may have had gut reactions, of saying no. What prompted you to get off the couch literally and even the first time go to a hearing and say, I care enough about this to speak publicly?

JL: You're baseball fans. There's something about the sport of baseball that kind of goes to your soul. And it was something I had a passion for. I think - I'm going to be a snob here - it's a deeper passion than football. Football is more a reaction in my mind, where baseball becomes a passion. It has an historical perspective and it has a timeline and it's that whole thing, father to son. Baseball, my father was passed down to me through baseball, by my mother. So there's something that's built in there. I mean I'm a product of the '60s. The only thing my mother and I could talk about - baseball. My hair was long. She worried about me smoking dope. She made sure I'd call weekly. We'd have rough conversations, but we'd always talk about the Phillies.

So I just think there's that much more passion around the game, because it takes place... I'm starting to sound like Roger Angell [American essayist and author, b. 1920] or something...but it does. Tom Boswell [Washington *Post* columnist and author, b. 1948]. It has a life. It starts in spring and ends in fall. So I think there's just more of a sense of it. Then all of a sudden it's sort of like somebody's picking on your little brother. You stand up.

TS: Did you have that sense, that feeling of wanting to stand up?

JL: Sure! I mean, who the hell are these guys talking about economic development? It's about baseball. I mean it's my game - it's not your game. It's the fans' game - it's not your game. That's why Bud Selig in my mind is the owner's representative - he's not the commissioner of baseball. I mean it's still our game. As much as they kick us around all the time and now charge us seven bucks for beers.

TS: And how much for tickets?

JL: My season tickets are twenty-nine bucks a game. *(laughs)* Twenty-nine dollars a game - I mean think about it! Thirty years ... I'm trying to think, I think box seats at Met Stadium when I was there were five and a half bucks.

TS: That's more than the rate of inflation. They're more expensive today.

JL: Yes.

TS: So we have this organization, Save the Met.

JL: Allegedly an organization. *(chuckles)* Yes.

TS: That's an interesting point. Allegedly. So talk about Save the Met. Who, what is this organization? Who were the people involved? Your name is attached to this oftentimes. Talk about that.

JL: I remain probably the figurehead and the spearhead, but in reality there were like... I can't remember how many years of battle this was. There were probably about twenty of us that were the core to this thing. We never really raised that much money. We were always ragtag. Folks having fun. But it was a different group of folks, from guys who were very conservative to us lefty types. We just were ragtag. We just were persistent. We just kept at it.

TS: Did you have meetings where you actually said, "We're going to have this organization and call it this and here's our agenda?"

JL: We just formed Save the Met, and we never wrote bylaws. We never incorporated. We never did any of the things that I now know as an organizer you should do. We didn't have a structure. That's the other part about it - it was a passion, cause of love, cause of passion. It's different than trying to save your neighborhood, because we're a disparate group all over the place. We had guys who were stock brokers through taxi cab drivers.

TS: How did you find each other?

JL: That's the most amazing story. First guy, my buddy Mike Samuelson, I ran into at a DFL convention. I was circulating a petition. The stock broker guy played on my softball team. George Hunkins showed up...I don't know how George showed up, but George was kind of a working class guy that kind of hooked up with us. It was at the ballpark I think. My good buddy Jon Kerr showed up, he was a research student at the U[niversity of Minnesota] and so once he kind of got done with his research project he became active. And we all were fans. Gil was a Red Sox fan. He was raised on the Red Sox. George was a diehard fan. Jon was a Cleveland Indians fan. That was the magic of it. We all brought different things to it, different passions. We didn't have great

strategies all the time about how to do this stuff. We flew by the seat of our pants.

TS: Did you have a goal of saying, "We're angry about this and what we want is..."

JL: Yes. That's the thing about it. People always used to say we were anti-stadium. No - we were pro Save the Met. Everything that we did was based on, "Here's what you can do instead." We had a remodeling plan for Met Stadium that would have addressed all the issues that everybody talked about. That said, for \$21 million - which seemed like a lot of money back then - you could fix up the Met.

TS: But the Metrodome was only budgeted at \$55 million.

JL: So I think we were probably under that. I think we were in the \$8-10...maybe \$10 million or something to that effect, that basically would have addressed all the issues that the teams had. We figured that nice gorgeous prairie across, that's where the Vikings could have had their practice facility for a million bucks back then or something like that. You could have filled in the rest of the ballpark there with more seats or something like that. Based on the same cost figures. I mean, we didn't hire anybody - we just used their numbers. When the Stadium Commission came out and said, "Here's what it costs to build a stadium, it costs X dollars a seat." "Okay. We'll use your numbers." But of course, and that's the dilemma in these fights is that they were experts. Even though we were using their numbers the same way, we were just advocates, trouble makers. We were always for it. Now there were a couple 'dump the domes.' Our organization said Save the Met. Pretty obvious that we were in for something.

TS: How did you attract the attention of people on the other side? When were you noticed by people as something...

JL: I talk fast and funny, so first off being from the East Coast certainly made you stand out a little bit. I think the media attraction.

TS: We found some articles in both the St. Paul and Minneapolis papers talking about this group and mentioning you.

JL: Yes.

TS: But the tone, it was hard as we read this to see whether they thought you were a serious group or not.

JL: They never treated us seriously. I mean the media thought we were cute and the guys on the other side thought they had to put up with us in some form or another.

TS: Did you feel taken seriously as a protest group?

JL: Yes, because I think they realized that what we did, we voiced a purity to the issue. We didn't care about economic development. I didn't care about player salaries. We just want to keep our game clean and in the meantime, we're using your numbers, your figures, your graph to show you that you can do it and do it a lot cheaper and at a better cost to the taxpayer. That was the other part that was missed here. What we ended up proposing for the ballpark would have been minuscule relative to what...I think our stuff is self-funded too. I think we showed that you could self-fund the renovations of Met Stadium. Where we made the mistake, to be very honest politically, we should have talked about the renovation of Met Stadium and a separate football-soccer facility. That's where we went wrong.

TS: Kind of like they have in Kansas City [for the football Chiefs and the baseball Royals]?

JL: Yes.

TS: About the same time they built it too, didn't they?

JL: Yes. I think Kansas City built theirs in the '70s, late '70s too. Yes. That's where we were too pure.

TS: Why would that have made the difference when you look back at it now?

JL: We still would have by now built another ballpark. *(laughs)* That's the economics, the business of the thing. I think if we would have held out with another option that...it was obvious what the Vikings wanted, and they ended up building the Metrodome, which was for the Vikings. Baseball got tossed in after the fact. So yes, I think we might maybe have had a better shot at it. But once Bloomington started thinking they were going where they were going, that was it. Our allies shifted constantly. Any of our allies that had any uumph.

TS: Which allies did you have that had uumph?

JL: The Bloomington guys. The Bloomington folks very early on were.

TS: Politically you mean.

JL: Politically., yes. The most fun group was the St. Paul liquor dealers.

TS: The Citizens Opposed to the Stadium Tax, the COST group. We read about them.

JL: Thank you for reminding me of the name. Yes, those guys were a gas to work with and really opened up...that's what made me fall in love with St. Paul, dealing with all those different folks because they were salt of the earth guys too. But once the tax wasn't coming to their end they still gave support in lip service but, "It's off my back." I mean we were passionate and they were practical.

TS: You're a small group of people here. Twenty isn't very big.

JL: Ragtag I think would be better.

TS: Okay. In what ways did you actually protest and get noticed? We think about meetings or rallies or actions. What did you actually do?

JL: Petitions was always a big thing to do. We did a lot of good media stuff. We'd hold a softball game or a football game on the site of the Metrodome. We just went down there and did that. Showed up at a lot of hearings. They realized they had to give us time, so we had a lot of hearings, a lot of testimony.

TS: So when there's a public hearing somebody showed up.

JL: Oh, yes. Always somebody was there. We never let it pass. The legislature the same thing. We were always around in some form or another. Somebody had time off of work, they were there. Ragtag stuff too. And the other thing that was interesting too is that there were a lot of people that respected us for what we were about, because we weren't about money. None of us were getting paid for what we were doing. We were purely citizen advocates. I remember during the stadium wars it was always so much fun because you would do things like...And this is the part that got me involved in politics. People were pretty fair with you. They treated you pretty fairly here. Ten minutes after the other side had a new plan, I had a copy of it. "Yes, give it to these guys." And these were even from guys who were supporting the other plan. "Let's give the little guy a chance."

TS: What did they see in you in this group?

JL: They saw folks who had a passion. They saw folks who cared about the issue from a different perspective. And they knew we were right.

TS: You think they did?

JL: Oh yes. Oh, yes. Everybody did. Yes. So why didn't we win?

TS: Yes. How do we add two and two and get five here?

JL: Money talks. Money walks. Here's the deal. Here's the way it's explained to me, and you can take a look at the Twins second round of stadium stuff [Target

Field]. I've learned this as an organizer and as somebody who works at the Capitol. The big guys only have to win once. Opponents have to hold them back year after year after year. Money talks. Money walks.

TS: I saw that with the second Twins stadium when we first moved to St. Paul in the late '90s and there was a vote on something.

JL: It was a tax.

TS: We got engaged to vote against it. It wasn't passed. I thought, great, the issue is dead and then I realized no - it just kept coming back again and again and again in different forms and different angles.

JL: I think they went out there for twelve years to be honest. They probably spent \$20-30 million on it.

TS: On lobbying you mean.

JL: Yes. Lobbying, communications, setting up fake groups and all that other type of stuff. And even when it was passed, public opinion was opposed to it.

TS: At the end it was simply rammed through?

JL: Yes. But they went through two different organizations. The first one was MAPA, Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action, and then there was ...I think it was called Progressive Minnesota. Then at the end there was just a little ragtag group of folks that again...that was all that was left. So after twelve years you wear people down.

TS: Is that part of the plan do you think?

JL: Of course. They know they can do that.

TS: Wear people down.

JL: Yes. You just keep hammering at it.

TS: Did you feel a sense of that with the Metrodome debate too?

JL: Sure. I mean, we knew it was going to happen.

TS: Did you?

JL: Oh, sure. We would kid ourselves...let me put it this way, when we were first starting, no, but we figured the skids were greased at some point in time because...okay, so they changed the liquor tax so the guys in St. Paul wouldn't

complain and the guys in Minneapolis kind of liked it. Bingo! They talked to Bloomington and said, "Guess what, man? You really don't want this thing. You'd rather do some development out here." They had the resources to do that stuff. When you're on the other side you don't have those kind of resources.

TS: You didn't have any resources.

JL: No.

TS: How did you use something like the media to your advantage?

JL: I'm not sure it was always a thoughtful process on our part, but we did. We were the only ones around and we were the most lovable. I have to admit what I have neglected here, there were the folks like the West Bank and the Minneapolis contingent.

TS: Minnesotans Against the Downtown Dome?

JL: MADD, yes. Brian Coyle. Tim Ogren. The Cedar Riverside folks. We had an alliance with them. They were a little suspicious of us, but we all got along because we both had a passion. They didn't want the dang thing in the neighborhood. They didn't want to pay for it. Whereas we were more like hey, leave my game alone.

TS: You said a little distrust. You both have the same goal in mind: no downtown dome. Where was the suspicion?

JL: We were all purists when it comes to this stuff. "What the hell are these baseball guys for?" That type stuff. Eventually that relationship got stronger. Once you got to know people. We drank beer together. We played softball games together. All of a sudden you realize... And they were much more leftist. I leaned closer to them than a lot of the other folks in the ragtag Save the Met group. And they were much more organized, they were better organized in terms of the pure politics of stuff.

TS: They understood from the Cedar Riverside fights in the early '70s how things worked, I believe.

JL: Yes. Right. So for lack of a better term, we painted a friendly face. We were for something. We weren't Minnesotans Against the Downtown Dome, we were for Save the Met.

TS: How did you communicate with the media? Because the organization shows up in the newspaper, 1977-78-79.

JL: I'm not sure it was thoughtful. They sought us out. Once we were there we became the darlings of the media.

TS: You had a good storyline.

JL: Great storyline. Yes. Beer vendor. Writer. That type of stuff. Yes, we were pretty good at what we did.

TS: You had some of the stuff we might consider typical kind of 'get the message out' things today, t-shirts, bumper stickers.

JL: Oh, yes.

TS: So that hints at a plan here, Julian, to get the message out, right?

JL: I wish I could go back to my archives and show you the plan, but we didn't. We really flew by the seat of our pants. We didn't have much choice. We had no money. Our times were limited. We'd come up with great ideas and a lot of them we just couldn't pull off. I think consciously, unconsciously we said our best shot is the media. Partly because we knew the numbers. The public was with us. The powers that be weren't. That's kind of part of it. You can sit back today and say we were right.

TS: Yes, but you watched the Metrodome go up anyway, right?

JL: Yes. I was an organizer in the neighborhood when it was built.

TS: Did how you were treated by the Twins or the Vikings or politicians or the media change over time? Lovable at first, but after a while you wouldn't go away.

JL: I would say the Vikings were always a little bit colder to us, but then again that would make sense. They're football. And Calvin Griffith and the Griffith guys, they appreciated us like we were but they were looking out for their best interests too. They were always very polite with us. What I think I was surprised with more than anything else was the Sports Facilities Commission people.

TS: That's the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission. Did you have interactions with them?

JL: Yes. I got to be on a first name basis with many of them. We had our discussions with them. That's when I sort of learned about politics too. Oo, I guess we're not going to get these guys. But again, I think the most courageous vote of anybody was Dick Radman.

TS: He was St. Paul, right?

JL: But he was a union man. He voted against building. because it wasn't the right thing to do.

TS: There were seven people on that commission. There was Josephine Nunn.

JL: I loved Josephine. Nice lady.

TS: Dick Radman. Dan Brutger from St. Cloud.

JL: Saw him recently. Yes.

TS: Ron Gornick from Chisholm.

JL: Good. Yes.

TS: There was Marion Kennon from Edina. Kelly Gage from Mankato.

JL: Yes. We just engaged them. They were courteous with us. They respected where they were. We had our arguments and tussles. Despite my East Coast tendencies, we were always polite. You couldn't ignore us. We were the only one there that had a true voice. If one of us showed up in a suit that was a miracle. We almost deliberately would never do that. We'd always show up with a shirt on.

TS: Did you have an image you wanted to give?

JL: Of course. Yes. "We're the real people. We're the ones you're going to screw with. You're messing with our game." That was our message. And they knew it. I think that was it. We stayed true to our message all the way through. We got more political in terms of...but I don't think we ever felt it a point...We didn't have to. We didn't have to follow corporate pigs. That type of stuff. We would be supportive of the folks. Aside from this, there's some folks that are concerned about their community. Everybody should be concerned about your community.

TS: It's hard to say no to that message.

JL: Yes, it is. Like I said, we learned a lot on the fly. We were treated rather respectfully I would think. The last weekend that there was at the Metrodome I got invited to the Sports Facilities Commission suite where I hung out with all my old buddies. We brought a sense of honesty, a sense of commitment and a reminder that, this ain't about baseball. We didn't have to rub their nose in it. They just knew that. That's what it was.

TS: The MSFC debated for about a year and a half before they made this decision on 1 December 1978. By 4-3 decision to build this in downtown Minneapolis.

JL: Radman voted no, Josephine voted no and Kelly Gage if I remember.

TS: Yes.

JL: Damn! I can't believe I remember that stuff.

TS: [It was a] 4-3 vote. Gornick, Brutger, Solveig Premack, Marion Kennon.

JL: Yes. I think they voted for it.

TS: How did you view them, as people called to this task to weigh the options and make decisions?

JL: Again, you have to remember we were a little bit naïve back in those days too. We bought into the good government thing.

TS: Did you?

JL: Yes, sure. I'm a Philly kid. Philly. They don't even have these kind of discussions in public. It's like Frank Rizzo [mayor of Philadelphia, 1972 - 1980], the difference... "We're building the stadium, and it's going down there!" "Okay, I guess that's it." Okay. Twelve people show up and, "You get going. You want to be part of the cement that's underneath it, or are you gonna get out of the way?" You know? So, yes. But again, what I learned in the long term was that money talks and money walks. Eventually they get what they want. What they do here, which they don't do in Philly, is that they get what they want but they do it nicer and you'd never catch anybody with their hand or their arm in the till like you can back home. But the same thing - the big guys win. It might take a little longer here. It's a little nicer, but the big guys win.

TS: It did take a little longer to get the Metrodome. By the time it was built in 1982 it was really the last of those multi-purpose stadiums and it was almost obsolete.

JL: Just like Target Field will be.

TS: Do you think so?

JL: Sure. I don't know what the next generation of stadiums will be but... We pushed on that one too. We suggested, and they gave us some lip service, we suggested that they needed to figure out how to build a more compact ballpark, even more compact than it was. A Wrigley Field type of facility that allowed

fans...which I think you could have done architecturally. In hindsight I realize it's still going to be a money issue. I still think you could have done the things and got the suites and all that other kind of crap....I would have done it differently. I would have put the suites in the roof, to be honest with you.

TS: Because it is all about money?

JL: It is all about money. Those guys don't care. Really. But I don't know what that next generation holds.

TS: Isn't this a Camden Yards [Baltimore] - Jacobs Field [Cleveland] kind of a stadium that we have here right now? And that model is already fifteen years old.

JL: Yes. Yes. This is not the last one. And they're all the same. What I realized after a while, the cookie cutter design of Three Rivers [Stadium Pittsburgh, 1970 - 2000] and...

TS: Riverfront [Stadium Cincinnati, 1970 - 2002] and all those...

JL: These things are basically about the same, if you really take a look at them. The only difference is, the superstructure is broken up.

TS: Correct. But the basic idea of trying to recreate Forbes Field [Pittsburgh, 1909 - 1970] or Crosley Field [Cincinnati, 1912 - 1970] with a newer model, it's the same idea, right? So is this outdated? That's an interesting idea.

JL: But again, it serves its function.

Interview Part II, 4 Dec 2010

TS: Today is 4 December 2010. This is an interview with Julian Loscalzo for *Documenting Minnesota: The 1970s Oral History Project*. My name is Thomas Saylor. And we're picking up a conversation we had with Julian on November 11. Again, Julian, on the record, thanks much for finding time again today.

JL: It's a pleasure.

TS: Let's pick up about where we left off. Back in 1977 the Minnesota Legislature passes the No-Site Bill, which means we're kind of on our way to having a stadium and we've got some funding but we haven't a location.

JL: Right.

TS: Governor Perpich in that year establishes the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission. From your perspective as you were following this, again, how did you see the role of the Sports Facilities Commission in the stadium question?

JL: I understood that the legislature was punting, that they couldn't get the votes together to put together a package that would work. You had the competing interests. You had the political competing interests of Bloomington versus Minneapolis, and then you had the competing interests of the Vikings and the Twins. It was not a Twins driven discussion. It was a Vikings driven discussion at least from my perspective, and the Kicks didn't even count. That didn't matter. In my naivety I thought Minnesota, good government, stadium commission, we'll be able to testify and people will see the errors of the ways of going indoors to watch baseball. Pretty much we didn't particularly care about football. I mean we followed football but...we had the same feeling about the football game. What are the Vikings indoors? You've seen how they have been since then. (*chuckles*) I was vending beer out there too. You don't think that the Vikings got to four Super Bowls because they played one or two of those games at home against teams that were probably better than them? And as much as they've gotten skunked in Super Bowls, you realize that that's exactly how they did get there. They snuck off one or two wins with the weather. I always remember the [Los Angeles] Rams coming out with hoods and everything else and the Vikings out there, Wally Hilgenberg [Vikings player 1968 - 79] and those guys out there with short sleeve shirts on. From our perspective, we thought okay, here's a good forum, a public forum for it to take place.

TS: So a public forum, because the meetings of the Sports Facilities Commission were open to the public?

JL: Yes.

TS: Do you recall actually going to their meetings?

JL: I remember how my near famousness occurred was, I literally showed up at like the first Sports Commission meeting because a bunch of us, softball team guys, some members go, "I can't believe that they're going to be going inside." Literally what I did was, I stood up at one point and said, "Listen. I'm a beer vendor at Met Stadium, a native of Philadelphia. Baseball is meant to be played outdoors. You want a dome? Go to a movie theater." That was kind of...I was the cutesy guy who showed up at that point in time just, like I said, a beer vendor. A reporter from - I'm not sure what the name of the paper would have been - it would have been the equivalent of today's *City Pages* or *Reader* or some incarnation. John...I can just about see him. He says, "Hey, what are you doing next week?" "Nothing." He says, "Let's have coffee." The next thing you know my picture is plastered on the front of this alternative thing. Then a bunch of us just started talking a little more about it, and that was the beginnings of Save the Met.

TS: So it really was the epitome of grassroots activism. You plant a seed.

JL: Yes. And of course I don't think we ever thought that we would do anything like that, and then it just kind of consumed our lives for three or four years or eternity, whatever.

TS: The Sports Facilities Commission meetings...how were those as venues for getting the message out?

JL: They were great, because we were the only ones that had any soul!
(*chuckles*)

TS: What do you mean by that?

JL: No matter what anybody else would say, we're the only ones that were really worried about the game and about the sport and about the fans. Despite everything else, the Vikings wanted more money. Minneapolis wanted the downtown ...this is the dawning of the age of the business of sports. I think that's what it really was. We came in it very naively.

TS: What was the Sports Facilities Commission about then? Weren't they about baseball?

JL: (*chuckles*) That's a good question. No! They were allegedly about good government and in hindsight my now cynical view is making you think (*chuckles again*) that you had a say in what was really going on. I'm a Philly guy. I mean, listen - when they decided to build Veterans Stadium, they just did it. They didn't go through four years, spend millions of dollars, make you feel like they've made a good public process. They just said, "It's going there. It's all over and done with." Minnesotans like to make themselves feel good about making decisions.

TS: So you think this kind of mentality led to the drawn out process?

JL: Of course. But also the other part about it too - my hat off to Minnesotans - there was a fair amount of activism. Prior to us coming on board there were folks who passed some resolutions, and they fought it back. By the time we showed up I think it had already been going on about eight or ten years.

TS: There were politicians who were pushing against it. How aware were you of other people like yourself who, for one reason or the other, were pushing back against this project or this process?

JL: That's how Save the Met happened. We eventually would show up and find out that there's another guy there that's a baseball fan and spoke out, and somebody else was. That's how we basically formed the Save the Met.

TS: Who did you meet? Put some names in this.

JL: Tom Bartsch, Jon Kerr showed up at one time. An old timer, George Hunkens. West side guy. My buddy Mike Samuelson. Sammy.

TS: These weren't guys you knew before.

JL: No. I met Sammy circulating a petition at a DFL convention. Jon Kerr I think showed up because he was doing a college project, thesis or something, and wanted to write about this thing. When he got done with that he just was like, Hey I'm in. Tom Bartsch and I worked at the Capitol together. We used to go to ballgames. Then the guys from my softball teams that I played on and stuff. We had some softball teams and we had some like lefty leagues for lack of a better term. So it just all came from there. But there really was not much of a concerted, organized opposition. That's always the problem in these battles is that the powers that be will wear down the opposition.

TS: Is that what happened here?

JL: Of course.

TS: Who were the powers that be?

JL: Joe Soucheray...did he call them the Downtown Guys? Basically the downtown guys, or the suits. He had some good terms for them. The powers to be. John Cowles, [Jr]. The Downtown Chamber. But then you had the Bloomington guys who were kind of trying to preserve at that time until the light bulbs went off and they realized the Mall of America or whatever else. "There's a lot better for us than the stadium."

TS: So you think they came to that realization.

JL: Yes. Eventually they faded.

TS: The Twins and the Vikings, from your perspective, what did they want here?

JL: My perspective was that this was a Vikings driven project no matter what you want to say, and the Twins came along for a ride. I think you had a split within the Twins brain trust. Calvin and those guys were old school.

TS: Calvin Griffith had been around a long time.

JL: Yes, yes. And a lot of those guys. Baseball outdoors and all that other type of stuff. They weren't drawing well. "Would this provide us an opportunity?" Then like Clark [Griffith], I think Clark was a little bit more of the downtown... "This is the next generation. This is where we gotta go." That type of stuff. I kind of viewed the Twins as sort of almost neutral. Publicly being supportive, but Calvin was very smart in holding out for something. He did. He did well for them. Relatively speaking. They got, if I remember correctly, they ended up with a big chunk of the concessions. They got a very cheap rent. The other guys decided to build out....they got a pretty good deal, but not good enough for what they had.

TS: Not good enough. ,We kind of touched on this a little bit, about how aware you were prior to the location decision. The location decision was made in December 1978. Other groups or individuals that were opposed. You mentioned Tom Bartsch and Tim Ogren as well?

JL: Tim Ogren, yes. I would call them the West Bank Gang. The folks from, they were primarily West Bank because the location that they were talking about was going to be in Elliot Park, across the freeway from them, and they've always been strong community activists over there. They had problems with the big high rise projects in Riverside. The ghetto in the sky, whatever you want to kind of call it. So there was a brand of activism there that viewed this more from a public purpose and they had public policy. So they came at it with a completely different perspective than we did though we found common ground.

TS: How did you find each other?

JL: I'm trying to remember how the hell that all happened. ... At some point in time they showed up at the Sports Facilities Commission as well.

TS: At one of the hearings.

JL: Yes. Community impacts. Another guy who was very active at the time was Brian Coyle, who eventually became a city council member [in Minneapolis]. Brian was very active as well in this arena. Then a few years later I ended up

being an organizer in Elliot Park. I ended up going to work as a community organizer right where they were building the stadium. So there is quite some irony in that. But that's how we kind of hooked up in some form or another. I don't know if they would say it now, but I think the West Bankers looked askance - how's that for a big word? - like, "What are these guys? Baseball and beer." But I think we both realized, like it or not, first off we're going to be outnumbered and if we wanted to change...I think we eventually got to the point that we understand that they were concerned about the impacts in their community. Again, I've always kind of come out of that organizing background. I think they also realized that our point was pretty well taken too. "This is one of the stupidest ideas ever."

TS: The Dome.

JL: Yes. Of course.

TS: What kind of conscious strategizing went on when you realized you had the essentially the same goal coming from different angles?

JL: Those guys were probably better at it than we were. They had better strategies. We had more probably spontaneous combustion. That's the way I would put it. They were very conscious about it. And again, I think my recollection would be that we worked pretty well in that stuff. I don't think some of our guys could do that if something came down to showing up at city council or something like that. But I'll come out. I'll show up and give a fan's perspective. So we kind of cut the turf that way. They were always, from my perspective, the tough, hard edge, in your face type of guys and we were, "Hey, stupid idea. Leave us alone. Leave my game alone. This ain't about baseball." We were able to rag on that stuff, but we ragged on it from our perspective.

TS: Those Sports Facilities Commission open hearings. How good a platform were they for getting public attention?

JL: They were one of our best as a matter of fact. But again you have to realize the media treated us as little kids.

TS: I was going to ask you, how did you feel treated by the media, because you show up in the newspapers?

JL: Yes. We showed in the newspapers. We always show up in the newspapers because they need to have something entertaining. I don't think they viewed us as effective...but they never do that to any anti group. Even today you read in the paper like "the protestors" or "the anti - " It's sort of like they have a slot that they have to fit you in. Save the Met just didn't fit that quite right because we were a little bit more homey. Though we were opposed to the dome we weren't Minnesotans Against the Downtown Dome. We were Save the Met. We were

for something. It's a nuance twist, but that's how we framed ourselves. Though we came up with proposals that we used, Stadium Commission numbers and everything else, how you could renovate the stadium and stuff like that, how you could do it without public investments and that type of stuff, even to this day I could live with some public investment in public facilities. I do view that. The question is, What is the mix? What do you get out of it? What's the return?

TS: In a recent interview Clark Griffith, who was with the Twins then, was talking about the Met Stadium in Bloomington and he argued that by the late 1970s Met Stadium had reached the end of its technical lifespan, and essentially the monies needed to bring it up to speed would have been far in excess of what was worth of investment.

JL: Wrong. No. It was wrong. You would not have not gotten out of that a new ballpark but ... I think we figured out you could renovate a Met Stadium for about \$9 million. We had a proposal for I think about \$20 million where you could renovate a Met Stadium, you could have built a Vikings practice facility across the street - and again, it was using Stadium Commission numbers.

TS: Then that begs the question: why didn't the Twins jump all over that?

JL: I think they saw the handwriting on the wall.

TS: What was the handwriting?

JL: The handwriting was, you're going downtown. The game is changing. And within three or four years the team was sold.

TS: In 1984 they sold to the Pohlad family.

JL: Yes. And again, I'm not sure. I think if they had been stronger about it...I think they could have gotten it, but they weren't sophisticated enough to do this and they weren't driving this train.

TS: The Vikings were driving, according to you.

JL: Yes. The Vikings were driving this train. If we made a mistake politically and we could have done it, what we should have had is a proposal for the renovated Met and building a new football-soccer stadium next door. Because that was an option that was on the table but never got explored in great detail and never got the support from anybody for reason or another. We always questioned some of the Stadium Commissions numbers when it came to renovating Metropolitan Stadium.

TS: Why did you question it?

JL: Needs and wants. What do the Vikings need and what do they want. We would base our renovations and some of that stuff based on what their needs were, not their wants.

TS: And there's a difference from the way you saw between those two?

JL: Oh, yes. Do they really need suites? No. That's what they wanted.

TS: And they got them.

JL: Yes. Right. That's that whole thing. Did you really need the type of things that they really wanted? I don't know. I don't think so.

TS: How much interaction or face time did you or Save the Met members have with officials from the Twins or the Vikings?

JL: Not an awful lot. We probably had more with the Twins than the Vikings. The Vikings didn't like us.

TS: How do you know that?

JL: They never liked us. Because we raised issues that they didn't like, and we stood in the way. It's the difference between football and baseball. I mean they're really corporate. Used to be. Vikings were on a mission. "This is what we want. Get out of our way."

TS: So someone like [Vikings GM] Mike Lynn....

JL: Mike Lynn, yes. And it's Minnesota, so everyone is nice to you.

TS: Lynn wasn't from Minnesota.

JL: But you're here. Everyone is nice to you. That type of stuff. They didn't really appreciate us, but they'd never crap on us is what it comes down to. They were really polite and everybody was nice. [*Star Tribune* columnist] Sid Hartman was an asshole, but that's beside the point.

TS: Did Sid have an agenda? I've got to ask you.

JL: Of course Sid had an agenda. Whichever way the wind is blowing and wherever the suits are, the downtown guys, that's where Sid's going. Sid has a hard time remembering the fact that he was opposed to outdoor baseball. (*laughs*) Which he conveniently kind of neglected with his shilling for the new Twins stadium. So of course he did.

TS: Do you feel that your organization and you personally were taken seriously by the Twins and the Vikings?

JL: No. No. They just had to worry about us. They'd never take us seriously. If they would have taken us seriously somebody would have cut a deal.

TS: In other words, you were good for the debate process from their perspective?

JL: No. They didn't like us being in the debate, but they couldn't do anything about it. My sense would be is that they had less problems with us than they had with like the MADD people.

TS: MADD - Minnesotans Against a Downtown Dome. We'll come to them in a minute. Let's talk about supporters for a minute. From your perspective, how did these things I'll mention here impact what was built and where it was built? The Chamber of Commerce Stadium Task Force. We're talking about Harvey Mackay and Charles Krusell.

JL: Harvey and the guys. Yes, they were players. Of course they got what they wanted.

TS: What did they want?

JL: Downtown stadium. They wanted a downtown dome.

TS: Why did they want that?

JL: Pride. Prestige. Alleged economic development.

TS: Alleged?

JL: Yes. The facts...it's proved over and over again that though you may create economic activity, you just shift it is what it is. You're gonna get more, but you shift it.

TS: The pie is not bigger, it's just the different...

JL: It may be a little bit bigger in certain areas, but it just gets shifted. People used to go to bars out in Bloomington. Went to a few that were down...and nothing really ever happened around the Metrodome. Economic development claims are specious at the best.

TS: Again, Clark Griffith went on the record saying that for him that was something the Twins really looked as at expecting to happen. He was disappointed it didn't happen, but they believed that would happen.

JL: Yes. A lot of people did. A lot of people did but again it's location, location, location. And what do you have? You know you had a bad facility. It didn't lend itself to those type of things that you get. And this is an argument that we made. It was absolutely true and nobody wanted to....Minnesotans are inside enough. Why would you go inside during the summer? Excuse me. I go to a lot more movies in the winter than I do in the summer. In summer I go in the afternoon. Why would you go inside? How many boats do we have in this country. It's ridiculous. All their arguments...you're just not going to do it and it didn't happen. So you went grudgingly.

TS: To the Dome.

JL: Right. Yes. You didn't have a lot of good experiences there. You can go to a nice outdoor ballpark in the middle of the summer with a crappy team and enjoy yourself. Watch airplanes fly overhead or whatever the heck it is. I hate to sound so nostalgic. Whereas you went to the Dome and there was not much to do there. It was pretty boring.

TS: A different type of atmosphere, wasn't it?

JL: Yes. But again, it's that...it's the Minneapolis being the Mini-apple mentality. Minnesotans have a little bit of an inferiority complex. Oh, yes. And I'm a St. Paul guy. I've certainly got a lot of it. (*laughs*) This was the next big thing that was going to put us on the map, a domed stadium in downtown. And what did they do? They built the last multi-purpose domed stadium that was built. They just built the last retro stadium: Target Field.

TS: Behind the curve again?

JL: Yes. Of course. I'm not sure where we'll be in twenty years. I don't know what the next fix is. And there will be another fix.

TS: If the past is any guide, there have been generations of stadiums and how they've developed. This one that we've got here, John Cowles, Jr. and the *Star* and *Tribune* newspapers also were players.

JL: Oh yes.

TS: What do you want to say about John Cowles, Jr. and what role he played?

JL: I don't have anything bad to say about any of those guys because they were just doing what they thought was right to some degree or another. I probably didn't buy into as much of the conspiracy theory as others did about John Cowles directing the course of the newspaper etc., particularly on the daily coverage side. The editorial side, yes - there's no ifs, ands or buts about it. Let's face it, if you know the bent of your boss, your owner, and you can write an editorial page,

fine. You're going to go that way. I don't think coverage-wise...as a matter of fact I think that involvement made some of the reporters at the *Star Tribune* probably better reporters in terms of digging.

TS: Did you deal with any reporters regularly on this particular story, people who would call you up or looking for information?

JL: Yes. We were a good source of glib comments. We didn't give folks that (*preachy tone*) "you're oppressing my neighborhood and what a bad thing public policy is." (*back to normal voice*) We had quick comments like, "You want a dome, go to a movie theater. Minnesotans are inside too much." I mean that was our shtick. And it wasn't...how to say...it wasn't fake. It was basically how we felt. I think that was the part about us that was better than anybody else - we were real. Everybody else was in there for something else. We were just there like, leave my game alone.

TS: So you were the purists?

JL: We were the purists, the conscience. We were the only conscience at the table. And again, I take nothing away from my friends on the West Bank. They had their perspective. They were preserving and looking out for their interest too. But we were the conscience. Even when they built the dome and all that stuff. It always happens. Sixty or seventy percent of the people don't want it. That's the way it is.

TS: Once you saw your picture in the paper a few times, saw some comments...once there was some public attention, how did the organization Save the Met sort of change or mature over time? Because you've got something now that people are noticing.

JL: I think we had a few more folks at the table working with us. We know that we could rely on public opinion as being favorably disposed to us. Our cadre grew so that it was easier to get fliers put together by somebody that has pertinent points that we would circulate to legislators. So that part...calling us an organization is always stretching it.

TS: Lower case letters then. How did you interface with legislators? Because this is where increasingly this battle was played out with stadium funding.

JL: My appreciation was, that particularly a citizen legislature - which we still have to some degree or another - was very amenable to community pressures. People were always pretty fair with us and they accepted us. We'd show up sometimes in our t-shirts. We'd just show up outside the halls and talk to folks and throughout the whole process people treated us at least kindly if not taking us seriously. But there were legislators who really appreciated us and worked with us.

TS: Put some names in that if you want to.

JL: Ray Faricy in St. Paul. Nick Coleman. Doug Johnson. There's a whole bunch of other folks. It seemed like it spanned so many years and so many different legislators. But those were probably the main ones.

TS: And how did you tailor your pitch to legislators? What you tell them?

JL: We never tailored our pitch too much different than where we were. We were more like...we were baseball fans. So we had the advantage that that's where we came from. We were very competent though in making our arguments about public investments, returns. "Is this a good public investment? Should it be done? Have you thought about the impacts, etc.?" We were sort of the ones out there that, "Like this really isn't about baseball anymore, guys."

TS: But that's much more than a nostalgia group. You were just mentioning things like finances, public investment. That sounds like you guys were doing homework and beginning to develop a platform.

JL: Yes, you're right. We learned. We weren't dumb guys, that's for sure. You eventually realize that like...our entire or our shtick was this, but we could make the arguments with anybody else. We could hold our own with Harvey Mackay. We could hold our own with Mike Lynn. We could hold our own on all those arguments. That was not our primary goal though.

TS: How much success do you feel you had interacting with state legislators, really getting people to think about options and alternatives?

JL: I think the legislators were probably more open to others because I think at least back then there still hadn't been that whole era of, We're moving and we're leaving. I think there were not that many...I can't remember blackmail talk back then.

TS: [Blackmail talk meaning] if we don't get a stadium, we're going to leave town.

JL: Yes. The worst we got is that we're going to be without the Vikings, and we're going to be a cold Omaha or something like that.

TS: But in the '90s we had the blackmail going on.

JL: Oh, yes. Of course. That became the thing to do. "I'm going to go here, I'm going to go there." Back when we were talking there wasn't that much expansion [of franchises in baseball]. We had gone through our expansion and I don't think the next round of expansion came until late '80s.

TS: We had already done the Blue Jays and the Expos in the '70s and that was it for a while.

JL: Yes, I think until late '80s or '90s. You think that major league baseball decided to use expansion as an opportunity to blackmail for ballparks? No. They wouldn't do that, would they? (*sarcastically; laughs*) It was business. I mean I think that's the bottom line. That was really what we realized - it was business. It was the beginning of the business.

TS: Is that a conclusion you came to over time, or was it a light bulb that went on, Julian?

JL: I think we all kind of knew it, but decided that we couldn't admit it too much publicly because then what's the use? Because we were doomed. It's sort of like nothing worse than being ...what's the Springsteen song...the last one coming home. Who's the last one going to die? Nothing worse than that thought.

TS: That's a good point.

JL: We knew it. So this is a perfect entre to the creation of Ballpark Tours. So you had the stadium decision.

TS: We're going to come to that next actually: on 1 December 1978 the Sports Facilities Commission voted, the seven members, and the location decision was on the table and by a vote of four to three, Minneapolis defeats Bloomington.

JL: Yes.

TS: What was your reaction to the result? How surprised were you by the outcome?

JL: I don't think I was really surprised, no. I think we acted surprised. I think we had hope. Who are the guys who voted against it?

TS: Josephine Nunn, Solveig Premack, Dan Brutger from St. Cloud, and Ron Gornick from Chisholm voted for Minneapolis.

JL: So who was the no vote?

TS: The no votes were Dick Radman from St. Paul, Marion Kennon from Edina and Kelly Gage from Mankato.

JL: And Josephine was the one I always used to be pissed at, because I think she kind of got it but she did what they had to do. Radman was a great vote. You talk about somebody who did the right thing. Many union guys were not happy with him.

TS: Yes.

JL: Now that I understand politics, he may have known already where the votes were so it was fine for him to vote that way. I've learned about trading. About how you count votes. How you can walk away with this one. But we were disappointed. And like I said, Josephine was the one that disappointed me the most.

TS: Why is that?

JL: She's a good lady. I think she understood what we talked about. I think she got what it was. But again, that's sort of that naivety that we had. These people were appointed for specific reasons and they represented specific interests. Sometimes you don't do what your gut and the right thing is, you just do what is meant to be done.

TS: This is a good segue into Ballpark Tours because at that point that train's left the station and it's going in a certain direction. What happens with Ballpark Tours? Talk about that.

JL: It started again in losing years. I think they passed the stadium the next year.

TS: The funding bill passes in the spring session 1979.

JL: In '79, that's right, because the liquor tax bill was before.

TS: Because we're going to come to the Fred Primoli group in a little bit here, which is spring session 1979 of the legislature. That's where the funding is finally ironed out.

JL: They do the liquor tax and then they ...that was all in one session. It seemed like an eternity. After the liquor tax was all taken care of, then it kind of got rolled back to Minneapolis and all that other type of stuff. So we're at the end of session. I think it's like two nights before the session...Saturday night...and the vote is coming up that night. There were like six or eight of us. We were still there hanging out in the gallery, working outside a little bit. And all the hitters were there. Harvey was there and Mike Lynn was there. All the big boys were there. We had the sequence outside the house chamber where...we got to know these guys. They would talk to some of us. Some of our guys would just *** you. Excuse my language. It was like, I don't want to deal with that asshole. But some of us they would talk to. All them kind of came over and said, "You know, great working with you." Sort of like patting the little kids on the head. Then the bill goes down. It loses. I mean that bill goes down and it loses by I think two votes. Needless to say, we're sitting outside after this and we're kind of smiling. These guys, they didn't really have much time for us. So it's like midnight, eleven

o'clock and I think it was a Saturday night or a Friday night or something. I can't remember. We're sitting outside and we're drinking some beers and we readily admit, we say, "You know they're going to pass this thing tomorrow. They're going to have every...there are going to be more arms twisted, but we should drink to our victory." It was right. Then somebody goes, "So what are we going to do when they build this piece of shit?" "We'll just rent a bus and we'll drive around and watch baseball in the great outdoors." The beginning of Ballpark Tours.

TS: Did you see this as kind of just a nostalgia trip or more like this could be a business thing here?

JL: I may be entrepreneurial, but I'm terrible as a businessman. No, it was more like it was the right thing to do. I mean, there were more than enough of us. And if I'd been smart and maybe had a good business partner, yes, I could probably be retired now and not have to worry about half the crap that I'm doing. But no, it was more like it was the right thing to do. And amazed me. The first trip we sold out. I can't remember how we advertised. We had a full bus. Fifty people.

TS: And where did you go? You weren't going to Three Rivers Stadium I take it.

JL: No, no, no. Hell no. It was probably a Chicago-Milwaukee run most likely. And a minor league team, which is something we did all the time. As a matter of fact, it was - we did Beloit, Chicago and Milwaukee. I remember again another person I met, Paul Nelson and his wife Paula were on the trip. Paula was about eight and a half months pregnant. We're in Beloit at a minor league ballgame and she calls and says, "Julian, come here. This guy is going to make it." "How do you know that?" She goes, "He's got big league buns." (*laughs*) And that kind of summarizes the enjoyment factor and the type of folks that's kept me at this all these years. And that was what Save the Met was all about. It was people like that, that cared about the game, knew enough, had a good sense of humor. So that's how we all started.

TS: And you've been at this with some regularity ever since.

JL: Oh, yes. We've done this...this will be our thirtieth year for trips.

TS: Do you target stadiums that are...

JL: We've seen every stadium go down. We went to Comiskey [Park, Chicago, 1910 - 1990]; we went to the Tiger Stadium. Saw Yankee Stadium. We didn't really bother going to Veterans Stadium. Three Rivers. Memorial Stadium in Baltimore. Municipal in Cleveland. So we've seen them all. Dead ballpark tours. Thanks to Bud Selig we had our second annual Farewell to County Stadium tour.

TS: How come?

JL: Remember the crane fell? When they were building the new ballpark, Miller Stadium. Do you remember that? They were building Miller Stadium and the crane fell. A couple guys got killed. They [Brewers] had to spend an extra year in County Stadium. Of course that's the curse of Bud Selig.

TS: For you is this new generation of ballparks, the Jacobs Field in Cleveland, Camden yards in Baltimore, are these the way baseball should be or is this more corporate sellout?

JL: It's as close as you're going to get to a blend of the two in today's business environment. It's about as best as you're going to get. We, ourselves and others, pushed the Twins to build the next Wrigley Field, not the last retro ballpark. But again, it flies counter to the economics of the game. You should stack the upper deck out over the top of the bottom deck. Take your suites and move them to the top. (*sarcastically*) Yeah, right. (*normal voice*) Cantilever. Things that they just will not do. Without realizing that I think that would have been a much better design. And again, I was enamored with Camden and then just took me to visit a few stadiums. They're all kind of about the same. A lot of those ballparks in the lower deck, you're exposed to the sun. No overhang. Let's put it this way, within the parameters of what we have to work with in the business of sports, yes, they're okay. Like I said, I would like to have seen a new Wrigley. I mean, you go to Wrigley Field - you're in the upper deck and you're in the sixth row and I can tell you this, if it rains you don't get wet. Half the stands...in Wrigley Field you don't get rained on. You're in the upper deck of Wrigley Field in the back, the last section you're only about fifteen or twenty feet further back than the last seat in the lower deck at Wrigley. It's intimacy. And you've got to remember that the design issues were all like pillars or bay and all that other type of stuff. There's nothing like sitting on the third base line in old Tiger Stadium. When the player swings you can hear him grunt. Literally. I remember we were there for a game. What's that noise? He swings and he grunts if he misses. That's intimacy you don't get. The affordability stuff...

TS: Affordability is another issue all together. The price of tickets.

JL: But it's business.

TS: It is business.

JL: It's business.

TS: And business is about money, which is a nice lead in to the kind of 1979 funding row that happened in the legislature. Once the Stadium Commission passes the location bill in 1979 there are questions about what kind of taxes are going to be used to fund this new ballpark and it's that time that we see the appearance of Fred Primoli and this Citizens Opposed to the Stadium Tax group,

the St. Paul bartenders group. How aware were you of Fred and this group? I mean the ship sailed on location now, but here we have somebody else standing up.

JL: And they were around I think before then, too. I think they always figured that this was going to come into play.

TS: They had been planning. Correct.

JL: Yes. And we kind of met with them early on. They were very helpful. They circulated...they put petitions out. They put our stuff out. They put flyers out. We had a natural affinity. On top of that their own business interests. These are St. Paul guys. They kind of got what we were about too. A lot of St Paul guys, these guys in particular, were pretty basic guys. They got it. "Why would you go to a dome? Why would you do that?" So they understood that but they also had the business stuff. Once the business stuff got taken care of, they were, that was it. They were still supportive and they still left their stuff there and everything else. That type of thing. We knew that they were there for the time being.

TS: How about Minnesotans Against the Downtown Dome, the MADD group, with Brian Coyle attached to that? Specifically how aware were you of Brian and how did you see that particular group?

JL: I can't remember where or when we crossed paths but probably at a Stadium Commission meeting somewhere along the line. Brian and Tim...there was some wariness for a while. They didn't kind of get us. We weren't quite pure enough for them. You gotta remember, our group is a little bit more diverse in terms of that. We had the lefty softball playing gang, we also had some guys who were rather conservative as well politically but just thought it was a stupid idea to be indoors. They kind of got some of the public subsidy stuff, but I would say there was wariness on their part for a while and then eventually they just kind of realized that we were just part of the mix with them. We eventually got to the point that we did a lot of stuff together. Certain things that our group wouldn't do.

TS: For example?

JL: I don't think we would have gotten a lot of our folks to show up at a city council meeting to beat up on the city council about funding.

TS: That was Brian's thing?

JL: Yes. That was Brian and those guys. Those guys were much more probably directed at that whole issue of public subsidy, impact on communities, that type of stuff, which we got. We eventually got it. We had inklings to it, but that was not our shtick. We eventually could pick it up and that's what you do if you're competent at what you do at the Capitol. "Here's our entre, here's what we're

about, but we can talk with you about that stuff too. Don't talk to us about economic development. We know that doesn't really work." Even though back then it was not that refined and diagnosed as it was for the next round of stadium wars.

TS: The numbers were crunched much more by the '90s about what works and what doesn't.

JL: Yes. Public subsidies. Economic development as a whole was much more...or the implications of economic developments or public subsidies etc. was understood much better by the '80s and by the '90s for sure.

TS: By the time a Twins stadium debate rolled around again.

JL: Yes. Right. Right. And we became long term friends. All those guys. We worked...like I said, I went off and I worked in Elliot Park years later. And then again, there's always competition between neighborhoods. Because of the working relationship I had with the guys on the stadium wars, we had good relationships on community stuff too.

TS: You mentioned working in Elliot Park. About the same time the Metrodome was actually going up, were you there in Elliot Park then after the Metrodome opened as well working?

JL: Yes. We were there for a little while. We attempted at that point in time to implement some good things for the community. We tried to negotiate hiring local residents. We even tried I think through someone to try to get a concession stand and operate and that was not...that was early on, and was not that successful an effort.

TS: From your perspective then working in Elliot Park, what was the impact of the Metrodome going up for Elliot Park and the Cedar Riverside neighborhoods?

JL: Elliot Park, the biggest impact was probably some of the parking stuff but we addressed that by critical parking and that type of stuff to some degree. I think the most significant impact was for, lack of a term, rising property values and speculation.

TS: How did that play out then?

JL: You could see it slowly...Elliot Park was always a very poor community, very mixed community, dominated by institutions. So what you basically saw was pushing out the low income stuff, but also continued speculation. There was a period of time while I was there that some properties turned over every year at some ridiculously...always on a contract for deed at some kind of ridiculous prices. Then though we had community base or other nonprofit developers...you

couldn't make the numbers work. Buy a building for \$500,000 and I sell it to you next year for \$750,000 and all you're doing is giving me my \$50,000 down and I got a paper. Contract. That's what we saw an awful lot there.

TS: So the ramifications of this stadium development turned out to be some property dominos of rising property values.

JL: Right. And at certain points in time what really happens in that is that - and again depends upon location - then the value of the property becomes more valuable for something other than housing. So you saw continued expansion of the institutions. Central Bible College. I'm not sure what it was. Hennepin County Medical Center. You saw some of those things kind of expand into the community. But by about ten years later though, they were able to do some other development and try to save some of it. Now again different people will tell you how much it was (*unclear*) and how much it was not. They were able to at some point in time basically do some nice development down in that neck of the woods that was very appropriate.

TS: But it took some adjustment to the new situation that this ballpark cost.

JL: Yes, it did. Yes. And again it kind of got to the point you had to stop talking about the ballpark costs.

TS: Really? Why is that?

JL: People just don't like their nose rubbed in it.

TS: That's interesting.

JL: That's kind of the reality of it too, at a certain point. If you're going to get people to play with you - and I don't know the history after I left Elliot Park - my sense would be is that things like the Greater Minneapolis Metropolitan Housing Corporation gimmick and some of those things were outgrowths of the dome stuff with Chuck Krusell's group. I can't remember what the name of that group was.

TS: The Chamber of Commerce group?

JL: It was Chamber of Commerce but then there was another one. There was the Industry Square Development Corporation.

TS: The actual property developers.

JL: Then it was GMAC. So eventually I think they were more than willing to make some investments in some of the nonprofit housing or the lower income housing or the affordable housing. The city agreed to do that. Again, Brian was there in that point of time as a city council member so he was very influential in

attracting some of that stuff to the community too. So the net result for the community was probably an overall displacement of a large number of poor people. But on the other hand, balanced off by the salvaging or creating a fair amount of a little bit more affordable housing and mixed housing, but then also sort of the expansion of institutions in the community.

TS: So some real impacts that happened years after the Metrodome's completion.

JL: Yes. Chip might be able to help you with that too. I'm trying to think of some of the other guys that were organizers in Elliot Park if that is an area that interests you. Joe Moran was there for a while. Loren Neely was there for a while. There were a couple of other folks that filled the gap after I left.

TS: So this neighborhood changes. There is real impact in this neighborhood because of the stadium putting its footprint there.

JL: Right. Yes.

TS: Did the Twins and Vikings, from your perspective, get what they wanted ultimately?

JL: Sure. Yes, I think so. It's what they thought they wanted, but of course as we found out twenty years later, it's never good enough.

TS: By the mid-90s, barely a dozen years after the Twins move into the Metrodome, they already want out.

JL: They want out.

TS: What happened? I mean why? For something they saw as an answer to at least some of the challenges they were facing, they already saw it as insufficient.

JL: They just looked around the country and saw what everybody else was doing and said, "I want some of that too."

TS: That was the basis for this?

JL: Yes. Business. Yes. Though they had a great deal there, they can make more money with their own facility ... The Metrodome was, despite all my bitching and moaning about it, it was probably one of the best public policy issues that ever occurred.

TS: Explain that.

JL: The downside was, they built a \$55 million stadium. If they would have built maybe a \$75 or \$80 million stadium the amenities would have been better, seating....you would have had some of the stuff that would have made it a much more enjoyable baseball facility. They brought it in under budget. They flipped on the liquor tax only like a year. That was used basically to back up the bonds. I don't think they ever tapped that money until later in the game for the next round of stadium stuff. And it operated. It's the last stadium to pay for itself. There's not many publicly financed stadiums that pay for themselves. Because they made the teams pay rent. They got a cut of the concessions. They operated very well. I guess I could claim, take credit for it because of the bitching and moaning we did. They ended up forcing them from a public policy perspective to do the right thing. That's the thing that has been so absurd about the Twins stuff and everything else. It's sort of like, take public money. Create a public facility and give them all the money. All the cash flows.

TS: What's up with that?

JL: Life is changing. That's the way it is. The reality was...talk to John Marty. You could have financed...with naming rights and concession revenue and the rest of that stuff, you could have built Target Field with very little public money.

TS: Why didn't we?

JL: Because the Twins wanted the money.

TS: So is there a changed public perception now of the value of retaining professional sports franchises for the image of an urban area?

JL: It's changed while you're winning.

TS: So if we had a hundred loss team in there the equation would have been different?

JL: Yes. Sure. Business wants, business gets. They really...the powers that be...the Twins spent probably \$20-25 million to get this most recent ballpark made. That got paid back in spades. With that the value of that team increased by more than their contribution to the ballpark - before it even opened. So the value of that team now which privately before was like \$100 million or something like that is probably worth \$400-500 million now. Not a bad investment. I think that's the cynical thing that you learn as you've done this stuff. The big guys only have to win once. You have to beat them back every time. Even the first round. There were probably five different citizen groups that fought the original Metrodome. They just wear them down.

TS: Or buy them off, right?

JL: Yes. Usually wear them down.

TS: Was your group worn down?

JL: Yes, but we rallied for some of the stuff on the Twins stuff on the next round. We moved to the next generation of our attempt to kind of salvage baseball, community ownership of the Twins.

TS: When did that happen?

JL: Probably mid-to-late '90s.

TS: So Save the Met kind of went into mothballs?

JL: No. We still drank beer. We played softball. We went to baseball games.

TS: But the issue was settled...for a while.

JL: Yes. And it was funny. I'm sure that at some point...yes, I do remember some places. I think it was really after we saw Camden Yards. The first time we went out to Camden Yards: "Oh boy - Round Two. *(laughs)*

TS: So you knew what was coming?

JL: Oh, yes. Yes. You figure that out. Like I said, that was our awakening, our term of innocence right then. Remember, we're baseball fans. So then we watched arbitration and then we watched free agency. We watched the loss of family owned teams. [The] Fetzers, the guys in Detroit. And Galbraiths [owned] the Pirates, but they had other money. ... They all left the game about the same time.

TS: And now the ownership looks completely different from the '60s and '70s.

JL: Yes. It's all corporate. Which I find so interesting. You move from family run businesses that were based on the survival of the stadium to compete and then once you interject the corporate ownership model you then need public subsidy in order to keep it going. If I remember correctly, in the '50s and '60s the reason a lot of those teams never moved was because they owned the stadium. You had an asset there that you couldn't really walk away from.

TS: You couldn't take it with you either.

JL: No, no.

TS: But that changed in the '50s because we had cities willing to build.

JL: County Stadium I believe was the first publicly financed stadium.

TS: To attract the Braves from Boston, right?

JL: Right.

TS: And was that equation also used in Los Angeles and San Francisco to get the Giants and Dodgers?

JL: I'm pretty sure, yes.

TS: Of course it was used here.

JL: Yes.

TS: Met Stadium opens in the 1956 with no tenant. So build it and they'll come?

JL: Yes. Build it and you'll steal them. Or you expand it. To me that's the real interesting part of this, is that you really look at this stuff. It was a much better operated business in the old days when they had to survive as a business.

TS: That's what Calvin Griffith understood, was the turning every penny over twice to ensure that the business stays....and to squeeze every advantage out of a situation.

JL: Right. And once the other folks got into the game, their time was done because it moved to a higher level. Because you could then....you can write off the losses on your team against gains you have someplace else.

TS: As a corporate business. Right.

JL: Yes. So that was a change.

TS: Last couple questions here. Looking back, if you could change anything about the process of how the stadium decision was made, that is what we got and where we got it, what would you change?

JL: The process ... gosh, I really don't know. On the surface the Stadium Commission and all that stuff looked good, and in hindsight what it got us was a good public purpose facility that paid for itself. Again, the last one. Would that have changed if it had been a purely legislative function? I'm not sure. I think my cynicism has weighed in long enough as I've gotten older that I don't think things would have changed much no matter what happened. In that sense and in hindsight...and this would be a great discussion to have with some of my buddies at some point in time after this is all done...is I don't think things would have changed much. As a matter of fact, they probably wouldn't have changed much.

No, as a matter of fact, maybe it would have been a better fight in the legislature because basically the legislature were the ones that put the constrictors on everything else. They said how much they could spend. They said who could tax. They said it had to pay for itself. Maybe in hindsight the Commission wasn't bad, because it fleshed out all those things for you and ended up with not a bad product except for a crappy ballpark, crappy stadium. The Twins battle...they put none of those strictures on those guys I mean they just, "Here you go. Take the keys and run for it."

TS: Things have changed, haven't they?

JL: Yes, yes. Naming rights. I mean really, why does that belong to the team? It's a public facility.

TS: But public written in what font size here.

JL: That's true. I mean it's a public facility because there's public support and it's owned by a large public entity, so they don't have to pay property taxes.

TS: How much better a deal could the Twins have gotten here? They got pretty much.

JL: They got everything they wanted.

TS: And that's the wearing down that you mentioned earlier. Just staying at it.

JL: Right.

TS: What lessons should we draw? Because we've had a couple Twins episodes and we have the Vikings, their lease runs out at the Metrodome next year. How's that going to go based on how these passed ones have gone?

JL: They'll get their stadium somehow or another.

TS: They're going to get it?

JL: Yes. Sure. They're not going to let the Vikings leave. Nothing has changed. The Vikings have probably spent more money than the Twins. The irony is that the Vikings, it's a less productive facility overall. It's used ten times a year and that's it. That's why they'll dome it.

TS: They will? The new stadium?

JL: Yes. So it can be used for other things. In all due respect, the Metrodome works here in the spring. Got all the college teams that can play ball there. A Vikings stadium without a roof has no public purpose. At least with a roof on it it

can be made available to the public for other usage. Of course my guess would be that it will all remain with the Vikings and they'll make the money on it too. I guess my cynicism would be is that we end up building a Vikings stadium and it don't have a roof on it, they should just add a little bit more to the tax or however they're funding it, keep the Metrodome going for college ball and all the other things that you could....

TS: But the Vikings won't be happy with the Metrodome anymore.

JL: No, they're not. They won't. They're done. They want out

TS: We going to have a break here, because if the Vikings can play there through 2011 on their lease which they can, thirty year lease, there's no way something new is going to be online by 2012. What's going to happen in the median?

JL: They'll hang onto the Metrodome. What probably should have happened, which was never in the cards because you had too many entities, they should have built with the Gophers. They should have had a stadium together.

TS: But they said they couldn't share.

JL: You and I can't share either. Our kids when they're playing baseball out in the backyard or soccer, they can't share either. But guess what, they eventually learn how to share. That's what it comes down to - they could have shared. Let's face it. They could have shared. But again, I find these things sort of just a microcosm of our society.

TS: What do you mean by that?

JL: It's all about money. It's all about getting what you want. It's all about not sharing. So it really does have this...I've come to the opinion that the society in whole is no longer willing to sacrifice and share, and that our sports enterprises are sort of very reflective of that. You tell me the Gophers and the Vikings couldn't share a facility that's publicly supported and maybe serve both functions and could be used twenty-five times a year, twenty times a year as opposed to each one eight times a year? In my mind it's sort of a microcosm of how we are overall. We all want our own thing.

TS: Is this kind of the logical extension of the mentality that really emerges with the Metrodome debate of I have to have, making this list of demands?

JL: Yes. I think it's just the next stage. I don't know what comes next. I don't know what comes for baseball in twenty years. Their economics remain out of control and they need more revenue.

TS: You don't sound very optimistic about what's going to happen next.

JL: NO!! No, I don't. Of course not. I don't. I've become a lot more cynical than I thought I would be at this age in my life. Again, like I said, I think sports is kind of a bit of a microcosm of that. What are we going to have next in order to pay Joe Mauer \$20 million a year?

TS: For eight years or whatever it is.

JL: Will it be the NASCAR thing, where they'll have advertising all over the backs of their [uniforms]? We got Bud Selig, by the way who I refer to as the owners' representative, not the Commissioner of Baseball, floating another round of playoffs.

TS: He is.

JL: Like how stupid is that? There's the business side of it, which is what that's all about, and then there's the sports side of it. Going back to where I came from. I'm not a wild card fan. I believe in the beauty of the game of baseball. You've got to win over a long period of time. If you're not good enough to do that, you don't deserve to be there. Also, how you going to do another round of playoffs? With another wild card team? The season can't get any longer. It can't get any shorter. It comes back to more money and how you do that stuff. So to me it's a really stupid idea, but it will probably happen.

TS: The trial balloons are up, and they're not being completely shot down.

JL: No. No. No. My answer to this, and again in my mind it's a step back, but it's one that's I think more reflective of the game, is that if you really need to have wild cards, you go back to two divisions in each league and you take the two top teams. And each division you play more within your division which is the basis of baseball. So it's not like, We won our division and we're fine and our second place team is sitting around waiting for these guys in this other division to beat each other up and maybe they get in and maybe they don't. Again, I would rather see head to head playoffs. First round, it's a seven game series. Cut back the season to 154 games. You've got to do that.

TS: That could be done too.

JL: But the players aren't going to like that and the owners aren't going to like that. The owners aren't going to want to give up that revenue and the players aren't going to want to give it up either.

TS: So they'll all grumble but play it anyway?

JL: Oh, yes. *(laughs)*

TS: Playoffs are where we see some bump in market share for television broadcasting, increased advertising rates, and so it is a matter of ,I want to maximize that time when I can get the most for my product. We're going to get it.

JL: Yes, yes.

TS: That's the last question I had.

(several questions off topic)

Thanks, Julian.

END OF INTERVIEW