

**Tom O'Connell**  
**Narrator**

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**JL: Julie Luker**

**TO: Tom O'Connell**

**JL:** This is an interview conducted as part of a larger faculty and student research project, initiated by Dr. Julie Luker of Concordia University St. Paul. Today is Friday, June 3, 2022, and I'm here with Tom O'Connell. My name is Julie Luker, and I am an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Concordia University.

**JL:** Today I'll be talking to Tom about what life was like growing up in the Twin Cities. During this interview, I'm going to ask you to reflect on your childhood life experiences as they relate to a variety of social topics from that time period. For the purposes of this interview, we've defined childhood as birth through seventeen years of age. To begin, if you would not mind, please restate and spell your full name.

**TO:** It's Tom O'Connell.

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

**TO:** I'm a white guy.

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

**TO:** January 7, 1947.

**JL:** And please finally share where you grew up, such as the name of the neighborhood, or a nearby street intersection.

**TO:** I grew up in the Mac Groveland area, east of Macalester College. And so, the main intersection of that neighborhood were Summit and Snelling, the address was 1497 Fairmount.

**JL:** Thank you. I would like to begin by learning more about your family life. So, let's begin with the memories you have for immediate and extended family. Please share some memories that you have about those relationships.

**TO:** Well, I come from this big Irish, Catholic family. And there's ten kids. So, my dad was Bob O'Connell, who was the city attorney when he died. And my mom was Gloria [Rosini 1:56] O'Connell, and she kind of grew up in that area too, kind of Saint Claire and Cleveland. So, there's um - my siblings are: brother Bob is about a year older, and my sister [Gloria 2:13] is after me: I'm second, she's third. She's born in '49, and then Kate '53, and Dan in '55, Dick in '57, Shelly in '59, Patty in '60, and my brother Steven-well my brother John was in '63, and my brother Steven born in '69. We moved into that neighborhood in February of 1950. And uh, you know, before I lived in student housing, Quonset huts, after World War II. I was born in the middle of the last century.

**JL:** Did you have any family pets?

**TO:** No, we didn't have any pets. My mother had skin issues, and so she always told us that we couldn't have pets, and so we didn't. Which is, you know, kind of a loss for us. There was the occasional fish or something, but no pets.

**JL:** And with such a large family, how were household chores divided between you?

**TO:** Well, the family was kind of set up-there was the older three, and then the second family. So the older three of us, we got our chores set up pretty early, and so we got our own dishes night when we were quite young, and so I would say early grade school or before, so I had two dishes nights-Monday and Thursday-and somebody had Tuesday and Friday, and somebody had Wednesday and Saturday, and I can't tell you which is which: and Sunday's everybody chipped in to do that. My mother was a really good housekeeper, and so we had endless chores. Our tactics were, at least mine was, to get my chores done and get out of there.

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

**TO:** I think, um, money kind of drove everything. And, you know, with so many kids. My dad had a good job, and he was a well-respected lawyer, but he was in government, and so even though he had a good job, if you spread the amount of money he made over eleven or twelve bodies, there wasn't a huge amount there, and so we for instance, didn't have an opportunity to play musical instruments or anything, but you know we weren't poor and we weren't rich and in that time frame, after World War II, the kids did whatever they did in the house, and then we were outside playing. And we played from sunup to sundown. And in my case, it was trying to avoid chores.

**JL:** And so, it sounds like your mother did not work? Was she a stay-at-home mother?

**TO:** She stayed at home, yes. She was too busy having kids.

**JL:** In what way has your family's financial circumstances shaped your spending habits today as an adult?

**TO:** I usually refer to myself as the second cheapest guy that I know. So pretty frugal. I don't spend money. I always had spending money myself, but I always watched it pretty close. I mean I could almost do anything I wanted to do, which usually buy candy and pop, but I am a product of the way I was raised, and the money that was available.

**JL:** Now I'd like to know about your experiences with religion such as Catholicism, Lutheranism, etc. Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices as you were growing up.

**TO:** Well, we were a Catholic family, like I said a big, Irish, Catholic family, and there were a lot of them in the neighborhood. The whole neighborhood went to the Catholic church, was Immaculate Heart of Mary on Summit and Snelling, at 550 Summit. There were zillions of us. I think there were a hundred kids on one side of the street. To get to a hundred, we had to count a few older people who were past their teenage years, and there were fourteen residents on that side of the street, and all the streets around were like that. So, we went to mass every Sunday, and once we got a little older, we would go on our own. My parents went late. They might go to the 12 o'clock mass. That kind of drove most everything.

**JL:** The people that live nearby went to the same church it sounds like?

**TO:** Yeah, and so the way it worked was that the Catholic kids hung out with the Catholic kids, and the other kids hung out with themselves, and we didn't particularly like that because we would invite the other kids to play with us and they just wouldn't have anything to do with us, in my view. And that was kind of disappointing because I think our philosophy was kids are kids and we wanted everybody to play, and it just didn't work out that way.

**JL:** And so it sounds like you're saying they didn't want to play or hang out with you because of your religion, perhaps?

**TO:** I think they all went to different schools - so there was a... I think the school was called [Moriah-Sandford 8:24], now it's Ramsey Junior High if they haven't changed the name, and that's down on Grand and Cambridge, or Grand and Summit. So, since we weren't in school together, and you know, they played wherever they played, so we didn't see them much, and that's just the way it was, and I think I always found it disappointing.

**JL:** What, if any, impact do you think that religion has had on your life as an adult?

**TO:** Well, I think we got a pretty good foundation. I think, at the age from zero through seventeen, that gets me almost all the way through high school, and I still hang out with a bunch of my high school friends from Cretin High School, which is kind of in that neighborhood, it's more in Highland Park. They're a really good bunch of guys, and I think that we had a pretty good foundation and I think that we were raised along the same lines and so, in our neighborhood, we had our own parents, but all the other adults, were watching us too, and if you got out of line, you'd get whacked by anybody, and so that was just the way it was, and we expected that and we behaved ourselves. And I think all of us, the occupations we went into, virtually everybody did pretty well, and so... I'm seventy-five now, and I am kind of on the older end of the bubble of the kids that came along, baby boomers. Although my brother, he's not a baby boomer, he just missed it by a couple of months, he's too old. But then all my other siblings are pretty much baby boomers, and so are all of our friends too. So, I think we did pretty well coming out of that neighborhood. Truly, we were really lucky, being born after World War II, in a prosperous time, in a very nice neighborhood with really nice parents, you know you couldn't pick a better time.

**JL:** Now I'd like to learn more about that neighborhood in which you grew up. Let's begin with describing what comes to mind when thinking about the neighborhood in which you grew up. Talk about that.

**TO:** Well - you know - it was a very nice place. The housing stock was reasonably new. Probably built in the 20's and in that era. Tree-lined streets... We had huge elm trees, so in the months when the leaves were out, the streets were kind of like a cathedral ceiling of leaves, it was just beautiful. There were asphalt streets with curbs and gutters, and it was a really nice area to grow up in. That would be the physical nature of it. I'll say this about that neighborhood, there weren't any playgrounds in that area, which was kind of strange because you'd think there'd be a lot, but the only green space were the islands on Summit and Macalester College. You'd look at the area from the Short Line and you go from there and you go west to the other side of Macalester College and you go from St. Clair to Marshall, and there aren't any playgrounds in that gigantic area, so we played on the street all the time or on the islands on Summit, and when we got old enough to actually use the playgrounds, they were Dunning - over where you are at Concordia - and then there was Groveland, which is prior in St. Clair for instance, and then there was Edgumbe near Hamline. And so you have that huge area there where the kids didn't have any place to play except on the streets. And it didn't hurt us a bit, because the athletes still ended up being able to play in grade school and high school, and the really good ones could go on and play in college, so it didn't hold us back at all, but it's very peculiar that you have a big area of the city with no playgrounds.

**JL:** Can you describe what you recall about your home, such as the layout, maybe other features that come to mind?

**TO:** I can give you every square inch probably, the house from the street looked like a small house, looked like an expansion bungalow, but it was a really big house once you got inside. It had a front entryway where you could hang the coats, and you came into the front dining room area, and then there was a sun porch on the east side and then there was a hallway that went down in that you could get into the kitchen on the left from the dining room of the hallway, and then there was a bathroom on the right hand side and then you went down that

hallway, there was two bedrooms on the back on either side of the hallway. And so there was up upstairs too, and that was eventually finished off and there were 3 bedrooms upstairs; at the top of the stairs there was a little bedroom where my brother Dan and I were, and that was my dad's law library, he had lots of law books up there initially, and they ended up in the hallway so we can get bunk beds in there, and then there was the hallway with a big air conditioner eventually in which it was really necessary cause it was hot, there was a full bathroom up there, with toilets, sink and tub, and my brother Bob had a bedroom - that Bob and Dick shared - and then my sisters Kate and Gloria had the front bedroom. And then there was a full basement under that house and that was all fixed up. We put a really nice floor in there and eventually it got paneling and stuff, there was a ping pong table down there and every square inch of that house was used.

**JL:** You mentioned finishing the upper level, was that an attic?

**TO:** It was too big to be an attic. I think they were referred to those types of house expansion bungalows and they weren't necessarily built out for starts, but there were two Dormers in the back. One of them was in the bathroom and the other was in the hallway all there. Then the bathroom wasn't there: my dad finished that out. We had a border when we moved in, so the bedroom that was Bob's had a linoleum floor with a kitchen sink and a stove. So, there was a lady named Lillian [Geary 16:16] who lived up there as a boarder, she was a schoolteacher. When we were little kids there was a time when we needed that space and so it was a very nice house for nine kids. There were 10 kids, but my youngest brother Steven was a Down Syndrome kid, and he was born in 1969 and in those years a lot a lot of times to the Down syndrome kids didn't get to come home, and they went to foster homes because it was felt that they would cause a problem in the family but that annoyed us all, because in retrospect, we think we could've taken care of him. Down Spectrum kids are just lovely people and we tried to keep him as part of our lives, but we overwhelmed him at the time and so we really couldn't connect with him, and it just didn't really work out and it kind of broke our hearts. The year that he was born my dad died and so that would have been impossible to even get him home. I always thought that his being born had a huge effect on my dad's life. It broke his heart to have a kid that he couldn't take care of.

**JL:** Wow, that's a lot in a year.

**TO:** Yeah, it was a big year. And that year my brother went off to the Army and ended up in Vietnam and I went into the Navy.

**JL:** Wow, a lot of changes. How safe was your neighborhood when you lived there and what factors do you think made it that way?

Well, there really wasn't any crime there, it was very safe. We could be outside. I mean when we were young enough, we were outside until dark. So, in the summer months, we were outside until it got dark; in the winter months we wanted to be outside, and as we got older, we wanted to be out of the house, and so even in the cold months we were outside playing. We played football in the dark, there were streetlights, and we'd shoot baskets in the dark and we stayed out as long as we could, that's just the way it was. All the kids did that. There were in every house, and they lined up with the from the other houses: and so, they were kids my age and there were kids from the Middle Ages and the younger kids, and they all lined up and to this day they're all really good friends and are there are families that we consider part of our family. There was the [Mitchell 19:25] family and those kids all lined up with our kids and their parents are still alive and we just love those.

**TO:** people because they were part of our family. As so it was really nice. And it was that way up and down the street across all those neighborhoods. I have friends that from a mile away then went to Immaculate Heart of Mary, they were raised in similar situations.

**JL:** You mentioned children running around a lot and being in the street. Did that ever cause problems for traffic?

**TO:** Well, the cars had to slow down. There was a crabby old lady across the street that called the cops on us all the time and she was probably going senile, and so, we moved down the street, or she'd fall asleep, and we'd go out and play. The cops would come by and say "Well, somebody complained, and you guys aren't really supposed to be playing in the streets", and they wouldn't wink at us or anything, but they had better things to do, and they would go away, and we would go back to playing in the streets. And when we got older, where we could actually go over to Immaculate Heart of Mary or go to the playgrounds, we would do that. So, we snuck onto Macalester College all the time. Macalester's much bigger now than it was then, and so I don't know if you remember the layout, but they just built a gigantic new athletic building and before that, there was a field house. There was a time where the last building was the gymnasium pool, and then the rest of that was open land all the way down to Sergeant. And at Sergeant there were a bunch of Quonset huts where there was student housing and so that was all an open field until you got to the Quonset huts, and we could sneak on there and play baseball or football. They had a hockey rink there and when the Macalester kids weren't using them, we were. And so, we would get thrown off all the time. And go away and come back. And the guy that watched that property lived on the corner of Fairmont and Snelling. And he'd come over and throw us off and we'd leave and be respectful, and then a half hour later, we were back. And so, we watched that property get built out over the years. They built the field house, and then they had some tennis courts, and then the stadium, that goes all the way down to St. Clair. There were houses on the west side of Macalester Street, and that became part of the campus. Bob and I had a St. Paul paper route, and we delved papers on Lincoln, Goodridge, and Fairmount, and then we had Macalester College. We lived there almost. It was really good for us although they didn't really like us being there, and they were concerned about us getting hurt, for insurance purposes, and we just wanted a place to play.

**JL:** You mentioned Quonset huts. Is that for the students at Macalester?

**TO:** You know, there were Quonset huts all over the place. Before we moved to our house, we lived in Quonset huts that were down on Milton and Jefferson. My dad was a WWII guy and I presume that got him into those Quonset huts. But there were Quonset huts at Macalester, and I don't know who qualified for those. It might've been just Macalester, but it might've been kids from other colleges too, because St. Paul has all those colleges, all over. And there were Quonset huts at Macalester, and there were Quonset huts at St Thomas. There were Quonset huts I think by Hamline, but I don't really remember that was kind of too far for me at that age. But I don't know who qualifies for what. But it was a good deal, and I remember living in the Quonset huts.

**JL:** Can you talk about that a little more? What that was like?

**TO:** Well, they were these kinds of tubular buildings, which isn't exactly right. At one end they look like half a circle. They were however long they were, and I remember the windows were really high in there. So, I remember a birthday there, because I was 3 when we moved to the Fairmont house, and I remember our cake being in the window. I remember my dad working really hard to build a fence to keep my brother Bob and I in the front yard. He finished and he let us out, it was probably on a Saturday. He sat down on a chair to read the paper, and the first thing that happened was that I jumped over the fence. The fence didn't keep me in the yard for even one minute. And then we had to run on the street, even though we were little. Jefferson wasn't a busy street then, and about Jefferson, there was a gravel pit, where people go to get sand and gravel. Across the street, there were two houses - Leitner's house and the [Stroebel's 25:15] house - on the whole north side of the street, those were the only houses there in that area. So now where our Quonset hut was, the 35E bridge over Jefferson goes right over where our house was. So, you would know that that was there, and the 35E bridge freeway goes right through the gravel pit that was there, and it's really

interesting, what that freeway did. It took forever to build that freeway. They started to put that freeway in in 1970, and it stopped at 7th street when it came across Lexington Avenue bridge, as they put the

**TO:** infrastructure below in, and they put the sand on top waiting for the cement, and then they never went in for years and years. They finally completed it, maybe to Kellogg 25 years later.

**JL:** What do you think held it up so long?

**TO:** The people that owned the property up on the Hill Summit and Grand were against the noise of a freeway and so they charged it a lawsuit. It was called RIP 35, and that stopped that, and it was in federal court all those years. Finally, it was completed as a 45-mph roadway, and it got completed to Kellogg - you could get off on Kellogg - and eventually, it went past the hospitals and the history center - that weren't there. There was a Charles T. Miller Hospital down there, and they had to do a bunch of blasting to get to 94, and they did that and finally it goes through the way it does now. The speed limit is still 45 mph by a federal court agreement that sets that speed limit. And of course, the actual speed limit is 60, but the posted speed limit is 45.

**JL:** Next, I'd like to learn about the values shared by your family and your neighbors. Values: our principles are standards that guide behavior. So, what memories come to mind that demonstrate what their values were for your family and the people you lived by?

**TO:** Virtually everybody had the same values. You were expected to go to school and stay out of trouble, and the value was that you could get yourself to the point where you could get yourself through school and get a job and get on with your life and virtually everybody did that. The kids that got into trouble - because they had more guts than the rest of us - a lot of those kids, if they got in trouble with the law, were essentially pushed into the military. If your kids got into big trouble, they were given choices: you could either go to jail, or you could join. Kids joined, they left. Of course, the draft then came along where they really needed bodies for the Vietnam War. That was kind of the driving thing that drove kids either to join or to go to college. That was a huge factor in what people did, my age.

**JK:** The kids that were in trouble and were led to the military because of it, do you know how they turned out afterwards? In other words, was it helpful and useful, or not?

**TO:** I think it was when you went into the military you grew up pretty fast. They had ways of making you behave there. They had the physical force to cause that to happen, and so kids got some structure whether they liked it or not. And then they got paid and could use their money to do whatever they wanted to, and most of the kids I grew up with. Their goal was to grow up and run their own lives, and so I didn't really hang out with the kids that got forced to go into the military. The ones that went into the military voluntarily wanted to make themselves into something. So, the kids that were the troublemakers - the unusual kids - the kids that went into the military out of my high school wanted to be there, and they did well. Most of the kids my age went to college. I have really good friends that went into the military and did well, and they came out and went into the occupations

**TO:** that they picked themselves.

**JL:** How similar or different do you feel the values are held in the neighborhood today by people that live there?

**TO:** I don't really live there anymore. I grew up just east of Macalester College. I raised my kids just south of Macalester, so I raised my kids at 1751 Stanford - Stanford and Wheeler - and the big Catholic school was the draw for me to go there, because it was a nativity. It was the Nativity of my Lord, or something like that, in 1900 Stanford Ave. I moved into that area, the housing was similar to where I was raised, but it was a different Catholic school, it was a big school, and they had good sports. Immaculate Heart of Mary was a school that was carved out of 4 other parishes, and it had a school building and no church and no athletic

facilities. So, the church was the gym part of the school that was built, and it was used as the church for mass for all of the years the O'Connell family was there. When my brother John - who was the youngest of the older 9 of us - when he was through with Immaculate Heart of Mary, they actually took the church out of the gym, and they put it in the cafeteria down below and they use the gym as a gym. So, I never shot a basket in that gym, even though I lived in that parish for all those years. So, the big schools around Immaculate Heart of Mary were St Luke's, St. Marks, Nativity, and Holy Spirit, and they had better athletic stuff, they had better teams. We had the same teams, but we didn't have any facilities. They were the big schools, and we were a little school, so we played other little schools in the Catholic Athletic Association. We didn't suffer for any of that. I'm not complaining, because we went to small schools so a lot of us had the chance to play sports. We might not have been able to in the bigger schools, we might not have been good enough. Although, Immaculate Heart of Mary had really good baseball teams. A lot of us - for my age - went on to play high school baseball at Cretin or St. Thomas Academy, or Central. We weren't held back in any particular way, although it would've been really nice to have coaches and better facilities.

**JL:** So, we're kind of already talking about this, you dipped into it just now a little bit and before, but I'm going to ask the official question, is about leisure time. Describe some of the ways in which you, your family, and others engaged in leisure time when you were growing up, if you can think of anything else to expand on, that'd be great.

**TO:** We had all of these pick-up sports, so we played everything. We played football, basketball, baseball, and hockey. We did that, and we played golf. When we got to grade school - 12, 13, 14 - we could play golf in the summer for \$0.50 on a card that you can get from the city of Saint Paul. We could play at Highland, Como, and Phalen. So, we had to get on buses to get to Phalen and Como. You could play almost every day of the week, so a lot of us were good golfers eventually. Not that you could make money at it, but we could do it. And for leisure, when we got old enough to play organized sports, some of us did that. There was something that my dad and the other parents created was the Highland HGRA - Highland Grove Recreation Association, and they put that together and some of the parents - my dad was involved in that, a friend named Tom Moore who played football for the University of Iowa, Jim [Sheely] had a bunch of kids, Jim [Sheely] the younger was my age and he was a really outstanding athlete - they put together this HGRA, and we played football out of that. They put the teams together and it was great fun. You could play baseball out of that, and then that recreation went on for the players that were good enough to play, and we came out of that program, and we could play in high school: you could play for grade school, and you could play for high school. There was a theater in the area - there were several theaters - but the St. Clair theater was the one that we went to in our neighborhood, but there were other ones. You could go see a movie for \$0.12 or \$0.15, and we did. So, Saturday's we'd do that, and other leisure stuff, it was mostly just sports. You could go to the libraries; there was something downtown called the CYC - Catholic of Youth Center - you could jump on a bus and go down there, and they could teach you how to swim, although my family had a cottage. So, we had a cottage on Lake Minnewaska which is west of Minneapolis, it's about 150 miles away. It was more of a shack on the lake, and we spent our summers up there. And so, my grandfather bought the first lot there, and then his sister bought the next one, and then somebody else bought the one after that. Then there was a farm field, and eventually my uncle Todd bought that farm field and built a bunch of other buildings. So, we were lucky enough to go to this lake all summer, and so we would get out of school, pack the car, go to the lake and we wouldn't come back till Memorial Day. And we did that because of the finances: it was cheap to have us at the lake, because all you had to do is feed us, and we had electricity, and we had a community well, and an outhouse and everybody had their own outhouses and stuff like that. Eventually it got better out there, but as we got older, it wasn't

**TO:** great to go to the lake, it was more of a sentence than anything else because you were stuck. You'd have rather been in town, however I was really lucky because I can play ball and I could hitchhike into the little town that was closest called [Starbuck 38:30], and I could play baseball all day and eventually got to play some legion ball, so I was really lucky because I could play. But not all my brothers and sisters got that opportunity. The sisters didn't get that opportunity at all, my sisters were all really good athletes, and if there would've been girl sports then, they all would've been able to play, and they all would've been really good, but that didn't exist then. My sister Patty was the youngest girl, and when she came along, she got to play some. I don't know if she got to play at Immaculate Heart, but she got to play at Derham-Hall, that's where she went. My sisters could've been really good athletes.

**JL:** Alright, now let's discuss your experience with schooling again. You did mention this a little bit earlier, but the official question is please described what it was like going to school as a child.

**TO:** Well, it was just structured. It was the same class after class, year after year, you get up and, in our case, we pretty much got up and fed ourselves. We dressed ourselves and got ourselves out the door, because mom was busy with the babies then. We were capable, we knew how to clean, we could do our chores, we could do them: we'd get ourselves off to school. We'd get to school somewhere at 8:15am or something, and you come home for lunch. You'd have those morning classes and recess was the big thing in the morning and the afternoon. When we came home at lunchtime, mom cooked lunch, but then we had chores. So, one of us did the dishes; at some point we got a dishwasher, which was more of a dish dryer, because we would wash the dishes and put them in the dishwasher, and that kid had to do that and wipe off all the counters and sweep the floors and take the papers out and burn it. The other kid dusted the front room dining room, sun porch, and then vacuumed that, and the third kid put the babies to bed. So, we were busy at lunch, and then we went back to school. If you could get back to the playground early, you could play I think until a quarter to one. I think we got out of school at about three. I remember we were really lucky; we had all the same classes as everyone else had, and we were really lucky when the World Series was on, that we might be able to hear the game at the end. We were all kind of into sports, so when the World Series was on, we'd run home, and I think the World Series game started in New York at one o'clock, so we could start watching it at noon. We didn't always have TV's then; we got our first TV because my mom wanted to watch I Love Lucy. I want to say that that was like 1952, or something like that. Watching TV was a big deal in our house growing up. My dad would come home, and he'd watch TV, so he controlled the TV. The school was just regular stuff. We had nuns at the school. Let me tell you about the nuns. We had Benedictine nuns. I just love these women, they were outstanding people, and some of them were really young. They would come out of this convent and some of them, I don't think, had finished college. They came into these classrooms and these classes were big: there were 50 kids in my class. We had nuns for every single grade, except the kindergarten teacher was a [lay 43:07] lady, Miss Shay. Then we had Sister [Lordean 43:13] who was really tough. She'd whack you with a ruler and keep you in line. At every level we had nuns, and some of them were quite elderly, and some of them were very young. Some of them were incredibly talented. We had Sister Paul - we all loved Sister Paul - and she was a really great teacher and she made us all love math. It was a great place to be, and when I see former nuns - they gave up being nuns and came out, and some of them married priests and things - whenever I see them, I thank them for raising me and all my buddies and all of the girls, we stand on their shoulders. I'm crazy about them - I bet you can tell - [they were] outstanding people, and they did it for free. Hardly anything we paid in tuition, in all those years. They helped raise us all across St. Paul, and there were plenty of parishes in Minneapolis, and I think that was true



across the country, but particularly true in St. Paul. When I got to Cretin, they had Christian Brothers - which were the male, former nuns - and they were terrific too.

**JL:** What role in the school did the Brothers play?

**TO:** They were the teachers. Brothers were in high school, and the nuns were in grade school. We had Benedictine nuns at Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the other schools had - like the Sisters of St. Joseph - the bigger schools, the Benedictines had their convent on Summit, and they eventually started a high school called Archbishop Brady on the east side of St. Paul, in one of the suburbs. So [Hill and Brady 45:19], and it was Cretin, and Derham Hall, and Visitation was another girl's school, and [unclear 45:27] was a high school. The Catholic kids all hung out together. We wanted to deal with the non-Catholic kids, but it just didn't happen. We'd encourage it, but they avoided us like we were Kryptonite or something.

**JL:** Did you go to school with girls, or was your school only boys?

**TO:** In grade school it was boys and girls. In high school, it was just boys. There were 4 girl schools. And Derham Hall was the -

**JL:** And Derham was a boys' school?

**TO:** We would have mixers; the boys and girls from the Catholic schools would come dance together. Originally there were 2 boys' schools: Cretin and St. Thomas, and eventually there was Hill, and then Brady high school. I misspoke, the school that the Benedictine nuns started wasn't Brady, it was Murray, and then Murray merged with Hill and became Hill-Murray. Brady was a high school too, it was named after one of the Archbishops, and that was built kind of in the west St. Paul area.

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

**TO:** As a little kid, WWII had ended, and that was the big deal. The men and women that came out of that war were our parents, and they had a really solid foundation in their own lives, and those guys that fought in the war and all the women that were part of the war effort, that was a collective thing. They essentially drove the world because of that war. The benefits of that war have lasted until modern times now, and that's now falling apart. Early on, that kind of drove everything, and I would say that the people that came out of that war understood the collective cooperative of people drove everything: it drove religion, the economy, you name it, that did that. So, the people that started the companies, that employed everybody, those men understood - it was mostly men - that people had to get a living wage, so that they could raise their family and educate them, and they all got that done. That all changed probably starting in the 70's, so in the 50's and 60's when most of my family came along, that made us all prosperous. Then that started to change. Then for people my age, the Vietnam War came along, and then that kind of drove everything because that started in the 60's, not the actual war part, but we had advisors over there. Then as it grew and grew and grew, Linden Johnson decided to go fight that war, and the draft came along, and that drove everything. That was the big thing that came to my mind, education was good. I was at the U, and I wasn't paying much attention to the Vietnam War, I knew it was there, but I come from a military family because my dad fought in WWII, and he was in the Naval Reserves, and from the 50's on until almost the time he died, he retired as a full commander in the Navy. My uncle Todd, who became my law partner, retired as a commander in the Navy, so I didn't know what to think of the Vietnam War. I was going to go fight if I had to, and eventually I did go in the Navy. But I was watching the anti-war rallies, and as a matter-of-fact, when I was at the U, I remember in '68, there was a big rally in Minneapolis, and I was at - now they would call it the Carlson School of Management - but that didn't exist then, but I was at the business college there, and my teacher said "You're certainly welcome to go to these rallies if

you want, but we're teaching these classes and you're going to be responsible for the material". So, there was no way I was going to go, because I could just barely get through college on my own, because I worked so many hours myself. I didn't know what to think of that. I formed an opinion after that, that never should have happened, we never should've been there. We didn't go to win, so we lost, and so we we're paying the price of that ever since. It was a crying shame. Let me tell you this, there's 58,000 kids on the wall in Washington D.C., and there's many more that have died from Agent Orange since then. One of my best friends just died, and I've lost 2 of them to Agent Orange, and they're still dying, and they're going to continue to die, and I think as many people from suicide from that, so that they could build 2 more walls and they could put 58,000 more names on each of those **TO:** [unclear 52:29] walls, and so that was a huge impact on my generation. I do have my opinions on that. And I'm an able veteran.

**JL:** So, what do you think are the biggest local or global issues today in that neighborhood? It could still be global, but the people that live there now, what do they face?

**TO:** Well, I think they face the same thing across the country, we don't pay enough wages to have people have their houses and feed their families and educate their kids. We have people that get fabulously rich because we let them, we created - maybe they in fact - created the government we have that runs things, and it doesn't pay enough people money. We have to change that, and so the people at the top can't get all of the fruits of the labors of the people below them, and it has to stop, so that has to change. That neighborhood is doing just fine, but there's many more neighborhoods that aren't doing so well. Was that a middle-class neighborhood when I grew up? I would have to say it would be considered so, but we weren't rich. Eventually, maybe everybody had two cars and most of the kids went to school, but most of those kids earned the money to pay their way through school because the families couldn't come up with it. Unless they had hardly any kids. You could get a job that would get you enough money to pay the tuition, or people whose dads die - if they were small enough - there was social security, which helped kids get through school, and that was really helpful. We have the same problem across the entire country, including the Macalester Groveland area. So, I would consider - when you say the neighborhood I grew up in - I grew up as a little kid through grade school in the Macalester Groveland area, but then my horizons had widened and became the Mac-Groveland/Highland area. And then it got bigger yet, and then it became that area and the University of Minnesota, and then after that it became the world. Although, St. Paul kids growing up in St. Paul, we didn't go to Minneapolis. There was a big fight between the cities, and the kids from Minneapolis didn't cross the Mississippi to come to St. Paul, and the St. Paul kids didn't cross the Mississippi to go to Minneapolis until the Twins and Vikings came. That kind of changed things a little bit.

**JL:** What were the biggest reasons for that?

**TO:** There was a huge rivalry between Minneapolis and St. Paul. The big money was in Minneapolis, and St. Paul was kind of an afterthought. Even though we were the capital. That's the way I saw it, and I think it was true., because the legislature watched out more for Minneapolis because that's where the big companies were, and St. Paul was kind of an afterthought. St. Paul is unusual in that it was an older city; it was more of a European-type thing, and Minneapolis was the modern place, or that's the way people saw it. The main business of the city of St. Paul is government and education, and that's true today and it was then. In St. Paul, I think it'd be considered a Catholic town. It was then, you know people would say, "Oh, there's a Catholic school on every street corner", which wasn't exactly true, but it was pretty true. If you're from St. Paul in my era, you didn't say what neighborhood you were from, you'd say what parish you were from. "Where are you from?" "Oh, I'm from Immaculate Heart." "Where are you from?" "The Blessed Sacrament, or St. Pascal's" all of St. Paul it was like that. It was pretty interesting... You knew what neighborhood you were

from; you knew what other schools were there, you knew what you were talking about. Kids from all over knew our side of town: there was the West Side and the West End, and Mac Groveland, you name it. I could name all of the neighborhoods. And as you got older, your horizons expanded and so you actually might talk about the neighborhoods by the baseball teams, the legion teams, that came out of those areas. I'm sure you're talking to people from other neighborhoods that are saying the same thing, only they came from those other neighborhoods.

**JL:** This is the end of our interview, so thank you so much. Your responses are really valuable, and I appreciate that you took the time.

**TO:** Well, it was fun.