Michael Guion, by Julie M. Luker

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Minnesota

JL: Julie Luker
MG: Michael Guion

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 Thursday, August 3rd, 2023, and I'm here with Michael Guion. My name is Julie Luker, and I am an assistant professor of psychology at Concordia University in St. Paul. Today I'll be talking to Michael 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 purpose of this interview, we've defined "childhood" as birth through 17 years of age.

To begin, please restate and spell your full name.

MG: My name is Michael Frederick Guion, spelled G-U-I-O-N.

JL: Thank you. Please identify your race and gender.

MG: I would be a Caucasian, and what else would you like to know?

JL: Gender.

MG: I am a male.

JL: Thanks. Please state your date of birth.

MG: I was born April 12th, 1951.

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

MG: I grew up in what is known as the Linwood neighborhood. Our address was 187 South Oxford, which is on the corner of Oxford and Osceola.

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

MG: I was born—my family was living in Roseville. Shortly after, they moved to a little north of the Twin Cities, a suburb called Circle Pines, where we lived until I was about six years old. The grade school, which was called Lovell, did not have a grade school—or they had a grade school, they didn't have a kindergarten, so I wasn't allowed to go to kindergarten. It started in first grade.

When it came time, or we were going to move, my parents put myself, my two older brothers, my two younger sisters, and we drove around looking at places. So we looked at a number of places, so when we were finally moving to our final destination, I remember as we turned the corner off of Fairmount onto Oxford, I remembered, and my exact words were, "Aw, this joint?" I was very enthusiastic.

So we got there, it was in an apartment building. We were in a basement of an apartment building, where the owners had actually lived in the basement, and now they were moving upstairs to one room. Right next to their room, they ran a small grocery store called [Gradisky's?], so our living space was—you'd walk downstairs, and you were in the kitchen immediately. There was a door that went out to a basement. If you were in the kitchen and headed out toward the living room, it was a living room and dining room combination with knotty pine walls, and for some reason which we never knew, in the upper left hand corner of the wall facing north, it was a perfectly square hole. So that hole, you could look either from my parent's bedroom out to the living room, or from the living room into my parent's bedroom. And quite often there was a pillow stuffed in there, for privacy on both sides.

It was a three-bedroom apartment, there was a bathroom with no shower, no ventilation, no window. On either side there was bedrooms. One bedroom was shared by myself, where I had one bed, and my two older brothers who, unfortunately, had to sleep together all through grade school and high school. And the other end of the hallway was where my two sisters had their bedroom. So it was a very cramped situation, but it didn't feel cramped. It just felt like our home.

My parents stayed there until 1976, and when they moved out, I moved back in. When they moved in, rent was $135 a month, no utilities. When I moved back in, the new owners said, "Well, your parents, because they'd been here so long were paying very little for rent, and we're going to have to put your rent up," and I said, "Well, that's okay." I said, "What's it going to be?" They said, "$195." I was paying over $250 to live on the East Side in a smaller apartment, so I did move back home.

I loved the neighborhood, we had a school called Linwood School, right across the street. And we didn't go to that school, we went to St. Luke's. We were Catholic, so we walked up the four or five blocks to Summit Avenue and Oxford, where there was St. Luke's grade school. We were called "Lukers." Kitty-corner from the school was the nun's convent, which was one of the more spooky places you could go into, and eventually the nuns moved across the street, they built a much nicer facility. One of the more notorious people in political history in St. Paul moved into the nun's convent, she was Rosalie Butler, she was the terror of the St. Paul City Council.

JL: Really?

MG: Yes. Yeah, she was very interesting history herself. My neighborhood had a lot of different mayors in my early years. We had a fellow named Tom Dobney, he was a mayor. We had George Vavoulis, he was a mayor. And we also had the notorious super-mayor, Charlie McCarthy, who just lived on Lexington, off of Fairmount. It wasn't unusual to see him walking out to start his car in the middle of the winter in just a t-shirt and a cup of coffee.

JL: Could you describe in more detail the people that you lived with?

MG: My immediate family, I had an older brother, two older brothers, Tom, who was born in 1948, Jim, who was born in 1949, they were just a few months apart. Then I had a younger sister named Lynn, who right now, I believe she is 69 years old. Then our younger sister was Jean, and she is 68 years old. Then along came my youngest brother, who I believe – well, I know he was born in 1962, I think he was one of those, "We're going to have another baby whether we like it or not." So he came along.

My older brother, Tom, stayed at home until he got draft—well, he actually enlisted into the military. He was going to be drafted, so he and another fellow from St. Paul Central went in on what they called the "buddy system." And the buddy system, they were supposed to be guaranteed to stay their entire time in the service together. So they both went to Vietnam, and they were supposed to stay together, but once they got to Vietnam, my brother was stuck in a mailroom, and the other fellow, named Bruce Truhler, was put out into the field, and he died within 10 days. He tripped a mine, and he died.

We had had a party for them the night before they left, so it was not even three weeks after that party, he was on his way back.

JL: Oh, that's terrible!

MG: It was. It was just—I mean, it devastated my parents, because their oldest son was now by himself over there, and they were just praying that he wasn't going to have to go out into the field also, and he never did. That's where he always was.

JL: Wow. That's really traumatic. Gosh.

MG: Well, the entire sixties, starting on November 22nd, 1963, was pretty traumatic.

JL: I imagine.

MG: Actually, in October of '62, our sixth grade nun, this was the night President Kennedy was going to give his speech on the blockade of Cuba, our nun, who was named Sister James, the last thing she said to us before she dismissed us was, "President Kennedy's going to give a speech tonight. I don't know if you guys are coming back to school again. There might be a nuclear war." That's how she sent us home that night.

JL: That's really heavy. My gosh.

MG: Yeah, sixth graders.

JL: Yeah, no doubt. Well, I'd like to explore that further in a moment. I have a couple more questions, just about your family, if you don't mind.

MG: Sure.

JL: What, or how, were household chores divided between members of your family?

MG: We were pretty much just asked to keep our own living space clean. It was very much a *Leave it to Beaver* experience, and for anybody watching this or listening to it in the future, look it up—very typical American at the time. My mom stayed home, my dad worked every day, sometimes two jobs, and he always stayed in the Military Reserves, he was an Army Reservist. As far as the chores would go, because it was such a small environment, wasn't a lot of room for clutter, and there was, you know, sufficient—the closet space, so if you had to make a mess, you were expected to clean it up. You know, you were—it was a lot more disciplined type world we

lived in at that point, especially, like, when your parents grew up with probably very strict parents themselves.

JL: Mm-hmm. Well actually, this is a really good segue, because next, I'd like to learn more about your socioeconomic status in childhood. Could you describe some of that, including maybe what your father did for a living?

MG: Yes. My dad had an older brother and a younger brother that had successful careers. My dad tried very hard to be a salesperson. He worked for Mutual of Omaha, was trying to sell insurance. He was a car salesman. He also, at one point, decided—there used to be things at the back of magazines where there'd be, like, a little sketch of a person, and said, "Draw Me," and you would draw that character, send it in to see if you had talent to become an artist, if you would buy into the program they were advertising. My dad was actually one of the guys that drove around to small communities, with no GPS, trying to find whoever it was who had sent this particular drawing in to the company. He did that for a short period of time, it wasn't working out for him.

He did take what they called the Dale Carnegie course, to try to improve his sales. After that, he always referred to himself, because of that program, by his full name, Lyle F. Guion. So he was introducing himself, he was Lyle F. Guion, and he really carried the salesman mantra. He could sell himself pretty well. But whatever he was trying to sell sometimes just didn't work out too well.

Eventually he took what you would call a "cigarette route" where he bought a dock truck, and he got hooked up with a fellow that gave him an assignment each day to deliver cigarettes to either cigarette machines in various locations, or to different stores around the Twin Cities. And occasionally we would ride with him, going to work with dad, riding in the truck. So the first stop every morning was, like, a distributor over in Southeast Minneapolis, and you'd walk in there and there'd be the smell of tobacco and bubble gum, because they also distributed things like bubble gums, you know, things that they'd sell at stores cheaply.

He worked very hard, he was a hardworking, nice guy, just never really clicked for him until 1976 when the Army contacted him and said, "You're one of the longest-term reservists in the United States. How would you like to bring you and your wife out to Washington, D.C. during the bicentennial summer and work as an honorary Army recruiter? You'll be in the Pentagon, and when the groups come through, you'll talk to them, try to see if you can generate any interest in most reservists."

Nineteen seventy-six, they vacated 187 South Oxford. I still had one sister living there. At the end of the summer, they made him an offer he couldn't refuse, they said, "We would like you to

re-up at pretty much full military commission until your retirement age," which at that point was only about eight or nine years away. He and my mom had never really had a lot of adventures, you know, because money was so tight, so they decided, okay, they'll do it. There was only my 15-year-old—my brother was 14 at the time, my youngest brother. He was going to have to move away from St. Paul and go out there, but he was up for the adventure, he liked it. They got a place to live in Arlington, Virginia, and it was the first time that they have had a house since way back in the late '50s in Circle Pines.

For six years, he was stationed in the Pentagon. Actually, they asked him if he would consider writing new manuals for reservist, which was right up his alley. He did that. He had actually put out some ideas of his when he was there, probably one of the ideas he said, you know one of the reasons they decided to bring him full-time. They stayed there for about six years, then the last couple of years they were there, they transferred him down to the Southern part of Virginia, Hampton area. That's where they stayed until he retired, and then they moved back and lived with his parents, took care of his parents until his mom passed away. I think they thought my grampa was going to pass away probably shortly after. But he lasted another eight or so years. He was 96 when he passed away.

JL: That's a good, long life.

MG: A lot of longevity in our family at both sides, so that's why I continue to work. I'm going to be around a while, I think. Both my parents last—my dad passed away in 2021 at the age of 95, my mom died almost a year later, at 96. They stayed out in Virginia for a certain amount of time, came back here, decided to retire down in Florida, because they thought if they're close to Disneyworld, then people would come to visit them. Didn't really work out that way. In meantime, my sister had moved out—my younger sister had moved out to Virginia, more or less to escape a crazy boyfriend. My younger brother was still there. When my parents moved back to Minnesota then back to Florida, my brother and sister continued to live out in Virginia, got married, they both started families. When my parents were down in Florida, they were thinking, well, we've got this new batch of grandkids coming in Virginia where we still have friends. Why don't we move back to Virginia? They did that, then the last couple of years of their lives they kind of came back to Minnesota, where there was more people that could tend to their needs.

JL: Sure. That makes a lot of sense. Thank you for that information. Now I'd like to know about your experiences with religion, and I think you did discuss this a bit, but if you could go into, again, more detail, describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

MG: My mom had converted. She was brought up as a Lutheran. I don't think her dad was much of a church going guy. She had a stepmom who was pretty strict. Her stepmom had grown up in

North Dakota, didn't speak English until she was about six, seven years old when she started going to school in North Dakota, she only spoke German. Pretty strict woman, and my mom had an older brother, so she and her older brother, when he parents got divorced, the two kids were sent down to my grandfather's sister's house in Lamberton, Minnesota until he found a new woman to be married to. That was probably five or six years until that happened.

My mom grew up in an area of St. Paul, which is now, I guess, considered the "Frog Town area." It was Iglehart and Fisk, and over the years it became more of an African American area. But my grandparents, my mom's parents, stayed in the area until about 1962, and they moved after their next door neighbor crawled over and died on their back stoop with a knife in his stomach. He had been murdered by whoever he was living with. My grandmother decided, "We're not living here any longer."

They moved over to the East Side, and it was funny, because that particular block, Iglehart and Fisk, it was the Southeast corner. I worked for a short period of time for Metro Mobility, and they had turned that—they had torn the house down, which was a beautiful house, but they turned it into a facility for people with physical disabilities. I actually had to go right to that specific location and pick a woman up one time that was going someplace on an appointment, so it was kind of interesting just to be back over there.

But my mom converted to Catholicism when she got married so they could get married in a church, and she was a pretty hard-core Catholic for most of her—well, most of the time that we went to grade school. Kind of waned after we were no longer sending kids to St. Luke's. we were church going kids every Sunday until we got to about seventh or eighth grade, and then it was, okay, you can go by yourself. I'd go with my older brothers. Then usually about the time they were doing communion was the time we ducked out of the church and went about our way.

But my grandparents, my dad's parents, who lived on Oxford and Minnehaha, they were every day—not every day, but every Sunday church goers. A lot of times I would go up there and meet them, and then we would go to eat someplace. They had a favorite place to go on Sundays, on East 7th and St. Paul, it was called Chino's, very wonderful Italian restaurant. One time we went in there, and it was the Sunday after JFK had been assassinated, and we didn't know anything about what had happened to Lee Harvey Oswald. We walked in there and started seeing replays of his being shot, as we were eating our Sunday meal.

As far as our Catholic upbringing, St. Luke's had a program at one time where they would like one family a week to host every one of the priests on Saturday for Saturday dinner. When it came our turn, this really nice priest named Father Slattery came over, and he had also been military, so he and my dad had plenty to talk about after the dinner. It was interesting just to actually have a priest coming to your home, and have to be on your best behavior, and then

wonder what was going to happen, just to see the priest actually be a regular guy, drinking coffee, talking to my dad about the military experience was pretty interesting.

My first two years, I had to start in first grade in my school, because I was too old for kindergarten, so I started out in first grade. I walked into the school just in a sea of faces that I didn't know, everybody was taller than me. Somehow, luckily, I walked up to the nun who was going to be my teacher. She went by the name of Sister [Jean D'Arc?], her real name was Roberta Kennedy. I walked up and I remember, I had a little piece of paper with my name on it, and I said, "Are you supposed to have a kid named Mikey Guion in this classroom?" She looked at her list, and she goes, "Yes. Yes." Our class had over 50 kids, there were three different first grades, and each one had almost 50 kids in it. In my room alone, there were 52 of us, and there were 7 guys named Mike. I was one of seven.

My second grade year, I was in a split class, it was half second graders, my group, and then half first graders. These nuns all seemed remarkably tall, you know, probably by the time I was in eighth grade I was taller than all of them, but yeah, my second grade nun was named Sister [Katherine Trace?]. First through third grade—or first through second grade, I had nuns, then third, fourth and fifth, I had what they called at the time "lay teachers," these were regular women that were teachers.

For fourth grade, or third grade, I had a woman named Miss [Bayer?], fifth grade I had—or fourth grade, I had Mrs. Hermanson 24:22, who was way too nice to me. Then fifth grade, I had what I look back and was just a very unhappy person named Miss [Shrance?] who was still living with her parents right on Lexington, off of Saint Clair. She was the first teacher I did not get along with, and my grades dramatically dropped from what they had—she tended to cater to the whole school administration.

A lot of it had to do with how much your family contributed to the church or the school, those were the kids that got on the sports teams a little bit more easily, unless you were super-talented. It was a very interesting dynamic that, you know, if you were considered sort of the lower rung, and I'm guessing my family was, I'm sure they got some financial aid to send five kids through that school. But we were all the better for it. I mean, I know when I went to ninth grade, it was considerably easier to get better grades in public school than it was in the Catholic school. I went from Cs and Ds to As and Bs, without seemingly working much harder.

JL: It sounds like you had quite an extensive connection, then, in your childhood church in some way. I'm curious, as an adult, has religion played an important role for you, or not?

MG: Not religion per se, no. No. There's just too much stuff that's been revealed that went on in the Catholic Church. Never experienced any of it myself, thankfully, but it wasn't unusual for at

least once a week a priest to come over and address the class, the role of religious training. There were a lot of alcoholic priests. There was on in particular, who I won't name, who came to our classroom one day, and he was clearly inebriated, and he was using the blackboard for support to stand up. When he pulled his hand away, there was a very sweaty palm print with moisture running down the blackboard, which everyone seemed to get a kick out of, except for him.

There was one particular young guy that apparently he really didn't care for, and he took his belt off and he whacked the kid a couple of times with it, which wasn't exactly unusual. There was a nun they had to remove from the school because she just—we had an expression back then, "she went ape" on them. This was in my oldest brother's classroom. She took a ruler and basically shredded the back of a kid's shirt, just whacking him with it, from what I've told. Sometimes there would be humorous things. My oldest brother's class, you know, you would go assigned times to the restrooms, so if you were in there too long, the nuns might decide to take a visit. Apparently one time, when my oldest brother's class was on their bathroom break, and one particular fellow hadn't come out for a while, the nun walked in there and grabbed him by the shoulder while he was standing at the urinal and spun him around, and she was showered. There was interesting things at that school. You know, it was a very, very strict upbringing in that particular place. I recall one day when I was allowed to be the kid that held the flag so that the kids could cross from one side of Summer to the other, and some young girls dropped a catechism—like a little religious book, it wasn't like a bible, it was just kind of a little study guide, and I ran out and I picked it up and I flung it back to her, and there was a nun standing right there, and boy did she lit into me! She goes, "How could you throw a religious book like that, so haphazardly?" I'm thinking, really? I mean, I'm trying to get it back to her. I don't think God's going to be mad at me, but boy, she took her business seriously.

We kept up with our church going probably until seventh or eighth grade, then it just kind of dwindled out. Then my parents stopped going. It was something we had to do early on, and then we were given our own leeway for quite a while, then it just kind of sputtered out. I don't recall the last time I went to a church service, I don't think I did after eighth grade. But it was fun when they'd had midnight mass, you know, we'd get dressed up and you might hang out with some of your friends at their house, if they lived close. We did that.

There was a family on Lincoln Avenue, right in between Lexington and Oxford. It was two girls that were around our age. They didn't do to that school, they went to Linwood School. But they were all our friends. It was a very tight-knit group of people that hung out on Grand Avenue, or just behind Grand Avenue in the alley. We hung out there a couple of times when we were killing time to go to midnight mass, listening to the early Rolling Stones or the Beatles or the Byrds, then heading up there. Of course, for some reason, we all got really—we wore ties, and everything. I think it was just more, we got to stay out late on our own. Then the mass actually started at midnight. I think now, it starts around 6:00 in the evening so families can go home.

JL: Probably. Let's jump back into the neighborhood topic, and of which you've really done great to expand on these already for me. I'm just going to actually ask you some of the prompts that I have, because again, I think you answered the main question about the neighborhood. Could you talk about, for example, how well the residents in your neighborhood knew each other, and what some of those relationships were like? Not just for kids, perhaps also the adults, whatever direction you'd like to go with that.

MG: Once you were in that neighborhood, everybody knew each other. You knew who the parents were, they knew who you were, who is responsible for you. It was interesting, because we had our immediate neighborhood where the kids—and the kids were plentiful—were like your brothers and sisters. Just a couple of blocks away, you knew the kids, but they were more like your cousins. You didn't hang out with them as often. You knew what they were all about. But the kids in your immediate neighborhood, who you hung out with morning, noon and night during summer vacation or any free time, they were like your brothers and sisters. The parents would discipline you, not physically, but if you were doing something you weren't supposed to, you'd hear about it. It was an interesting dynamic, because there was a lot of people my parents' age, not too many younger, a handful. Then there were also a lot of older, like grandparent type people. They knew who you were.

The building where I grew up, immediately behind it was a place that eventually became called the St. Paul Tennis Club, it was a dirt tennis court which, in the wintertime, they would remove the posts that held the nets, and then they would flood it and it would become a skating rink. But you had to join, you had to be part of that. It was expensive, and we didn't have the money for that. But in the summertime, you would wake up in the morning hearing tennis balls being hit back and forth, and late at night in the winter, 9:00, 10:00, you would hear people skating because the neighborhood guys, who were a little older, would have hockey games. Eventually they built a swimming pool in addition to the tennis court, and then the new owners of the tennis court, the original family, was named Dwyer, and they eventually sold it to a group that were the ones responsible for putting in the swimming pool. Then they also changed it to a clay court. No longer did they flood it in the wintertime, it was quiet at night.

It was very, very interesting because so often, people playing tennis would hit their brand new tennis balls up on the roof of the apartment we lived on, and maybe about once a month, my dad would go up on the roof and toss the tennis balls down to us, and we had all these nice tennis balls to play with.

Right in our immediate neighborhood, because Linwood School was directly across the street. It looked so different than it does now, I mean, they've done so much work on the building, expanding it. But it was a big, black top playground with the monkey bars and a jungle gym, and

I believe there was a teeter totter. But there was two separate backstops, so if there was going to be two baseball games going on, and in the summertime there was always a baseball game going on, we would get up in the morning, go play baseball, come home for lunch, go back, play baseball, eat supper, go back and play baseball until it got dark. That's how it was every day of the week, except for me on Saturdays, when I would forego the Saturday night baseball game, because I wanted to stay in and watch what was called *Dick Clark's Beechnut Show*.

He had American Bandstand during the weekdays, but on Saturday night, he would have people actually play live, and I couldn't get enough of that rock and roll. I would stay home on Saturday nights and watch that show until—you know, it was an hour-long show, so maybe I'd go out afterwards. In the early days there, we would actually use a real baseball to have our baseball games. Then when people started getting older and hitting the ball through windows, or off of residents' homes, then we had to switch to a softball. Then when they got the softball flying over the fence, we switched over to tennis balls. We were really good at configuring different things. Sometimes we'd reverse the field and we would back from second base and use a wiffle ball. The backstop would be, you know, like, the batter's line. If you hit it over the fence, then it was a home run. Or we take another part of the school and play Home Run Derby, where if you hit a tennis ball over the fence—you know, you'd play this for hours. The school itself, the facade of the school that faced Oxford, was extremely tall, and I would go over there on a daily basis and just constantly throw the ball off the wall, either so it came back to me as a ground ball, or a fly ball if I threw it up here. It was just—there was always something to do, just because that playground was there.

Unfortunately, a couple of weeks before school started for Linwood, they would always have somebody come in and lay down new tar, new blacktop, and then they would cover that with sand. You really couldn't plan it, we didn't know that immediately. Our family was always scraping to get by, and my mom had found my older brother and I some pants to wear for when we were going to go back to school. St. Luke's at the time didn't have uniforms, that wasn't until my eighth grade year. But I recall, we had just gotten these pants that my mom had gotten us, and we went over on the playground, we're riding our bikes, and we came back—well, I came back first, and there was splatters of tar all over the legs of the pants. My mom was just more devastated that I just got these, now they're wrecked, and then my older brother came in, and his were the same. First time I ever saw my mom break down and cry. She was just devastated. It was, like, boy, you can't feel more low when you've made your mom cry about something.

She was a tough woman. I mean, she was very loving, but she really didn't take a whole lot of nonsense. That came from her dad and her stepmom. But she was probably a whole lot more understanding than her dad and her stepmom had been. I saw her one time, when the upstairs part of the building we lived in, there were two very tiny apartments, and I mean tiny, just barely a kitchen, barely a living room, barely a living room and bathroom. There was, like, constant

movement with people moving in and out of there, because the rent was so low. Sometimes people were just getting married, they live up there.

But then the two bigger parts of the upstairs, which faced Osceola, one was turned into a beauty shop, and it was called Tabby O'Leary's. Tabby O'Leary was, more or less, the beautician of the place. If you wanted to get rid of your garbage bag in those days, you either had a large incinerator barrel, or inside your home you might have an incinerator of some kind that you'd throw stuff in, and it didn't matter what it was, and then you'd light it on fire. Smoke would go up through the chimney. The first day Tabby O'Leary had cut hair up there at his beauty shop, he took a big bag of hair, threw it in the incinerator and lit it. Then my mom had to go upstairs and explain to him that he couldn't do that anymore, he'd have to find something else to do with hair, because the just God-awful smell of burnt hair just got all through the building. Just permeated the entire building. That was the last time he did that.

Luckily for us kids, next door to the beauty shop, this couple named Bill and Nancy Mason, they were proudly in their mid to late-20s, opened up a place they called *The Parlor*. It was an ice cream parlor. The invested a lot of money in it, they actually had the first espresso machine in the Twin Cities there, and they had just all sorts of ice cream treats. Every time they would hire somebody new, either Bill or Nancy would come down, knock on our basement door and say, "We have to train somebody in. We're going to take orders for you guys." They were just being really nice to our family. You could order anything on their ice cream menu, and we would get it for free. They would go back up, tell the people they were working with, you know, okay, here's five kids' orders, so fill the orders. It didn't matter if it was a turtle sundae or malt, or whatever—just the greatest. It was the first time I was ever exposed to something I'm still addicted to, but it's hard to find—cinnamon ice cream, just wonderful!

But The Parlor lasted for probably not more than five years. Did great, they had a jukebox, pinball machine, and at some point, Bill and Nancy were no longer married, and The Parlor disappeared. That place sat empty for a number of years until a dentist moved his operation in there. I think he might—well, he's not still there, but I think it might still be a dental office. After that, you had to be a little more quiet in the basement, if you went out there and wanted to play records and blast them there. I had a punching bag, it was right underneath, apparently, where—and it hung from the rafters. You'd go out there and hit the bag, and he'd come down and say, "You've got to stop hitting the bag. It's shaking the whole floor, I can't do work on people's mouths if the floor is moving." [Audio cuts out 00:41:48]

JL: Earlier, you—and throughout this really good interview today, you've been talking about some of the values that you had been instilled through your school, your church, your family, your extended family. I'm curious if you felt those values were shared by other people in your

neighborhood? In other words, was everyone the same in that way? Or were there values that your family held that were different?

MG: I'd have to say, because I'd say about close to 85 percent of the kids in the neighborhood and the families were people that went to St. Luke's. Some of them went to Linwood, and the older folks in the neighborhood, they grew up in a different time where you were taught to be respectful. That was still a big part of our generation, was you didn't smart off, or you'd be told you had a smart mouth. You just—I mean, respect for authority, respect for adults was mandatory. You didn't mess around. You weren't threatened necessarily, but it was just instilled in you growing up, this is the proper way to behave, this is how you conduct yourself as a decent human being.

There were a number of St. Paul policemen in our neighborhood, or our immediate area. One policeman in particular named Roger Conway got together with the dads in the neighborhood and some of his police brothers, and they started a baseball league for us kids. They had the backing of the mayor because his son, George Vavoulis, was the mayor at the time—his son was going to be one of the players on one of the teams. There were a whole lot of kids back then that wanted to play baseball, enough so, so that they had what they call the "Majors," and then Minor A and Minor B, so that everybody in your family got to participate, no matter what their age was, as long as you were a male. No girls allowed, apparently.

The first year, we played at Linwood Park—yeah, Linwood Park, which was on Saint Clair, and some people called it "Saint Clair Park," but we always called it Linwood Park, it's walking distance from our homes. We were provided with uniforms, but we had to go out and collect funds to pay for the uniforms. Then every uniform, there was a patch that you had to have sewn on your uniform, which was who your sponsor was. Luckily for me, I had a funeral parlor, O'Halloran and Murphy's was my sponsor on my team, which was called The Hornets. The Hornets, I had at least five or six guys on the team that I was friends with from grade school or the neighborhood, and the dads were the coaches, and sometimes older brothers were coaches, or uncles were coaches, or the police guys were the coaches.

Well, after the first year, there was a deal worked out where we were allowed to move down the hill for what we were told was going to be five years we were going to get to use a particular plot of land, for five years. But then the freeway was going to come through there. They had planned to put 35E going through the exact place where our field was, but for two years, we did get to have two fields, which were immaculately taken care of by players, dads, some city folks had to come in there and do a little construction, and whatnot. It was just fabulous, this was great. If you were on a major league team, the major league uniforms actually were replicas of the actual major league uniforms—hats, uniforms, it was just beautiful. I actually have home movies my dad took of the parade. We marched the entire participants, marched from the Linwood

playground down to the new playground where the mayor was there, there was all sorts of stuff, and they named the field after Roger Conway, who had started all this, just the most wonderful, nice man there was. But it was called Conway field.

After five years, we were all kind of growing up and away from it, and the freeway never went through there. They switched where it was going to go, and they said, okay, you're not going to go back and use the field anymore—well, we were all told anyway—they wound up putting an ice arena in there for a while, and I don't think that's there any longer, either. It was kind of bounded by an area where Jefferson and Saint Clair and Pleasant Avenue all kind of converged. But for a couple of years, it was just great.

JL: Did you ever interact—you mentioned girls and boys were never playing, obviously, baseball. Were there any activities where you did interact with girls?

MG: There were girls who would come around Linwood School and hang out, they were our friends. My particular group, I saw my brothers and my sisters go through different groups of friends. My situation was so unique, I still have a big number of friends that I've known since first grade that I talk to on a regular basis, and we just stayed together. Our meeting place was an alley just off of Grand and Oxford, it was in between Oxford and Lexington, because some of the friends of ours, female, lived right on Lincoln. There was a family called [Heitzman?], the oldest brother was my oldest brother's friend. There was a daughter, Janet, who was my second oldest brother's age.

Then there was a girl named Ginny, who was my age, so it was our meeting place, all the kids that were my age or just a year younger, year older, would converge eventually when we got just past high school age. That was our meeting place, was right behind—there was a Clark's Gas Station. It was right behind the Clark's Gas Station. The [Heitzman?] family, right at the lip of their alley, there was a brick structure that we just called "the wall." We'd meet at "the wall." I'm going to meet you at the wall at such-and-such a time. Eventually, we started adding people on, but there was always this core group of about 8 or 10 of us. Some people would come, some people would go, and then there were some that came that stayed, all the way through our early 20s.

It was kind of a very unique—it's one of the reasons why I didn't move away. I actually had gone to Brown Institute for Broadcasting, and when I graduated, it was summertime, and they wanted to give me a job right away. I said, "No, I want to spend the rest of the summer with my friends," and they kind of looked at me like, "Well, okay," and they actually did call me a week later and say, "We've got a job that you might not want to pass up," which was in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. I got to the radio station, I was there for—well, let's see, I started at 8:00, went to lunch at 12:00, was told I wasn't going to be working there, well, 1:00 in the afternoon because

they had rehired somebody that had worked there previously that had a good local following. So I moved away from St. Paul for one day. I went to Lake Geneva overnight. I came back, it was funny, because when I came back, I immediately—I mean, I had my car full of my stereo equipment, all my clothes—my parents knew I was coming back. I called them before I left. But I immediately drove back to where the wall was, and there was a group of about seven or eight people, "What are you doing here?" "It's a long story, I'll come in and dump my stuff, and I'll come back and tell you." One of my buddies hopped in, because he was going to help me carry all the stuff back into the house and all that. Yeah, we would hang out on Grand Avenue, watched it evolve over the years. Then when we were in high school and we had our cars, we would drive up to Porky's up on University and Fairview, hang out there and then get our onion rings, and whatever, come back and hang out behind Grand Avenue. But hanging out at Grand Avenue is—you could make a movie out of it, or a miniseries, it was just the most unbelievable situation. In between Lexington and Oxford, you had The Lexington Restaurant on one end, on the south side of Grand Avenue, and then at the other end was a restaurant called Ports. For some reason, over the doorway, going into Ports, there was a large plastic horse's head, which I never understood. It was appetizing. But it was a very popular restaurant.

Directly across the street from Ports, there was a, kind of call a variety store, a general store, where what we looked at is some really old women working there. They were probably in their 50s at the most, but to us, they were old women. You'd go in there, and you'd buy all these little different things that were popular at the time, monster cards, things called Wacky Plaks, which you can look up on Google Images, they have that. The best part was, we had our own movie theatre, the Uptown Theatre in St. Paul, which was eventually torn down so they could put a bank in there, U.S. Bank. But you could go to the kiddy matinee on Saturdays, it was 35 cents. If you had 15 more cents, you could get a couple of different candy items. But you'd go there, you'd hand out, watch the movies and go home, and have a great Saturday. Sundays was the same thing.

Then eventually next door, this guy named Don [Bulger?], who was the pharmacist, opened up his own drugstore where he had his kids and his wife working. They had a soda fountain, wonderful soda fountain, burgers, malts. Across the street was the Clark's Gas Station. Next to that was a small bank. Right next to that was a small grocery store called Swanson's. Next to that was a place that I wish was still there, it's where Wuollet's Bakery is now, but at the time was called the Bungalow Bakery, where I became addicted to glazed donuts. Next to that was Regina's Candies. Then you had The Lexington, where it was very interesting. But it wasn't unusual, even in the '70s, to see whoever was the governor at the time, once they started using the Governor's Mansion, Wendell Anderson, I saw him and his wife pushing a baby stroller, walking another one of their kids. They had stopped at the Baskin-Robbins, 31 flavors ice cream, to get some ice cream. You'd see the mayors, you'd see sometimes—we thought one time we saw the actor, Richard Widmark walking into The Lexington. Richard Widmark was a well-known

actor in the '50s and '60s, not sure if it was really him or not. But here's my AA story on the hanging out at the Clark Station—they wouldn't let us actually hang out at the gas station. One of my best friend's brothers was working there, so me and one other fellow, this was the fall of 1968, were standing outside the Clark Station, when two big school busses pulled out in front of the Uptown Movie Theatre, and they were showing *The Thomas Crown Affair*, starring Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway. All these hulking fellows got off of the school bus, but they were all in suits and ties. I thought, I betcha I know who that is.

So two hours later when the movie was done, all these guys started coming out. I said to my buddy, "Let's go over there, I want to show you something," because I was pretty confident about who these people were. I started looking around, and I saw the fellow I was looking for. I walked up to him and I stuck my hand out, and I said, "Hi, O. J., how are you doing?" It was O. J. Simpson and the USC football team that were going to be playing The Gophers at Memorial Stadium the next day afternoon. O. J. was already well-known, because he was now a senior, but his junior year, he had this spectacular college year, he had gone to a junior college for freshmen and sophomores, junior year burst onto the scene. Everybody knew who he was primarily, because it was in California, in L.A.

But there he was, standing on Grand Avenue, everybody's new hero. Shook hands with him, I didn't bother to ask for an autograph. Somebody from the St. Paul paper, the *Pioneer Press*, because we were still operating with the *Pioneer Press* in the morning, they dispatch in the afternoon, had—somebody from the *Pioneer Press* had been alerted. They took a picture, which I still have, black and white photo, where it's O. J. signing an autograph for a couple of little kids, and in the background, you can see me from about the nose, up.

JL: Oh, my gosh! What a great story.

MG: Very interesting to look back on it after circumstances changed in O. J.'s life. If you went down Grand from Lexington to Dale, every other corner had a pharmacy, and most of them had a soda fountain. There was a pizza place called Earl's Mister Pizza, which was a great hangout. They had a great jukebox, which is very important. Car dealership, at least one of those, a few different restaurants. But just an incredible place to hang out.

Our neighborhood, like I was saying earlier, the immediate neighborhood, the kids, which were plentiful, were your brothers and sisters. The ones just a little bit off, a couple of blocks away, they were more like cousins. There was a uniqueness to each one of those. Our neighborhood was a baseball neighborhood. A couple of blocks over, they were hockey. Different area—that was more of a basketball thing. It was just quite fascinating.

JL: That is fascinating. Well, I'm looking at the rest of my questions, and truly, you've answered everything in such wonderful detail, so this is really it, this is the end of our interview. I want to thank you so much for participating.

MG: I can tell you one other little tidbit. I was a paperboy for nine months, and most of my time was during the winter. But it was also right when Beatlemania hit. One of the apartments that I delivered to, which was on Dunlop and St. Clair, the building still exists, there's three of them. They were brand new. There was one young guy who was from England that lived in that apartment. One day, I showed up to deliver the paper in the afternoon, and there were two girls waiting for him. They didn't know who he was, they just heard there was a guy from England that lived there, and they were huge Beatle fans, they were just totally enthralled with the British Invasion. They wanted to talk to somebody from England.

He was probably, like, early 20s. I know his wife wasn't more than 19 years old. I was infatuated with her. But, boy, it was an interesting period, right there. That little neighborhood off of Saint Clair and Lexington, there was a one-block street called Oak Grove, and I always wanted to live on Oak Grove. One side, it's very small houses, the other side, it's more family-sized houses. Pat Kessler, who used to work at CCO, lives in one of those homes now, right across on Saint Clair, Professor Schultz, the law professor from Hamline lives on one of those. But yeah, you would get to know everybody through your paper route, or just because you were there for so long, and everybody knew each other, you know? It was a very unique situation.

JL: Well, thank you so much.