

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown YMCA Project

West Federal Branch

O. H. 411

THOMAS FRANKLIN

Interviewed

by

Jeffery Collier

on

August 4, 1975

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INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS FRANKLIN

INTERVIEWER: Jeffery Collier

SUBJECT: Personal Background, West Federal Branch from
1970 to 1971, YMCA Experiences, Campaigns,
Blacks in the YMCA

DATE: August 4, 1975

C: This is Jeff Collier and I'm sitting with Mr. Tom Franklin in his office at Youngstown State University on Wick Avenue. Today's date is Monday, August 4, 1975, and the time is approximately 5:10 p.m. I will be talking to Tom about the Youngstown YMCA and about the West Federal YMCA and its development.

Tom is a former branch executive of the YMCA, and I will let him bring us up-to-date as to what he is doing presently. Tom, could you give me a description, if you will, of your present position, your education, where you were born and raised, your college education, and how you became involved in the YMCA?

F: I guess it would go all the way back to the day that I came into being. I was born January 17, 1947, in Youngstown, Ohio. I spent all of my formative years in Girard, Ohio, which I'm sure you know, Jeff, is not too far from here. A note on that: Jeff and I were in high school together so we have known each other quite a long time. I was raised in the Park Wick section of Girard and went to Tod Woods Elementary School. I then went on to Girard High School. I graduated there in 1965. I had a very active career in sports and school activities, as much total involvement as I could with my existence here at the Y. I came out of Girard in 1965 and came to Youngstown. My first quarter here, I wasn't on a football scholarship, which is a long story. I played football for four years in high school, but I didn't actually have a scholarship when I first came to Youngstown in the fall of 1965. That was for a whole lot of reasons.

It was not until January of 1966 that I actually got a football scholarship. I was told that the reason was because the coaches said they didn't know I was here until I walked in the office; they thought I was going to Hiram or someplace like that.

For the next four years, I was here at Youngstown. I graduated in September of 1970. At that time, I was working at General Motors in Lordstown. I was a product of going to school full-time, playing football, being married, and working at General Motors. I was hustling around without being dragged in. I knew while I was at General Motors that I didn't want to stay there. My degree was in marketing and business administration. I guess the ideal situation for me then would have been to go into management with General Motors, but I didn't feel that that's where my goal ran. So I started searching for other jobs, and I really didn't know what that job would be. I took a couple of interviews with insurance companies, but nothing that really turned me on as far as interview processing. One day--I haven't thought about it in awhile--I was working at General Motors and I was at the YMCA because I was playing basketball. I never will forget it because the whole situation is really comical against all the rules of the interview processing job. I had the day off from General Motors and I was playing basketball. I was leaving the Y around 4:00. I was dressed as any other typical man going through the Y on any ordinary day with my athletic jacket, jeans, and sweatshirt; I had not shaven the whole day. I had an idea to stop in and see the director at the Y. I stopped at the membership director's office, who was Ed McDonald at that time. I just wanted some information on a part-time job. After talking with Ed for about ten minutes, he then took me to Dick Bennett.

Dick and I were talking. I was just talking about any part-time work that might be available in the gym area or someplace within the Y. I really don't know what I was talking about; I just wanted to know if there were any jobs available. After talking to Dick for another fifteen minutes, he told me that there was a possibility that something might come about. He said that he wanted to take me up to the executive director's office. I was trying to figure out what he meant. If he was taking me up for an interview, I wanted to get myself together. I was in the worst shape to go to the executive director of anything to be interviewed for a job. But I said what the hell because Dick was so persistent.

We went up the elevator to Sweet Hunneke's office and that was the first time I met Sweet Hunneke. He brought me in and talked to me. He told me that they had an opening

at the West Federal Branch YMCA. I was familiar with the Y because as a kid I grew up there. I remember swimming, playing ball, and being involved with people there. I knew of the director, Jimmy Smith. I didn't know him personally, but I knew that he was the director of the branch from going up here. I was really interested in what they were telling me because they said that they had a position. At that time, what they were talking about was someone who did programming. Someone to try to get programs together at West Federal because Jimmy--they--needed help. I didn't know at that time how serious the situation was. I really was turned on to it, and I left the office feeling good. I was to come down the next day to talk to a few other people. So that walk-in type of an interview is how I got involved with coming to the YMCA.

It was about three weeks later--just before Christmas--I found out that I was going to be hired. I was offered a position of associate director at West Federal Street YMCA. I had no YMCA experience with any type of membership campaigns. My only experience at that date at the Y had been as a member at West Federal. I hadn't been involved actively in the YMCA program while I was in college or anything. At that time, I was thinking that my job and responsibilities were going to be working in the gym area and help program some activities, although I was getting the title of associate director. That's when I started at West Federal YMCA.

After I got started, I began to find out what the whole situation was. At that time Jimmy Smith, the executive director, had been ill for five, six, seven months. I guess it was known at that time that he was dying. But I didn't know it when I actually started there. About a month and a half after I started, Jimmy died. Thereupon I was promoted in the position of executive director of West Federal YMCA.

C: What would have been the date there?

F: That would have been March of 1971. I started working in January of 1971 for the Y. In March of 1971, I was named executive director of the West Federal Branch. So that's how I came to be executive director of West Federal Branch YMCA. At that time, I guess I was one of the youngest executive branch directors in the country. I was twenty-four years old. It was unheard of in the Y to be twenty-four and the executive director of the branch responsible for the entire operation. I came to find this out after I **got** involved with some other dealings

and operations of the YMCA's in other parts of the country. So there I was. It was my job to try and pull together a branch that was dying. It was dying facilitywise, budgetwise, and activitywise, which proved the whole thing. I was the only full-time staff person.

After being named branch director and finding out that I was the youngest, I really tried to see what I could do to make the total program come together. It was frightening because I didn't know where I was going to start. I just sat back and said, "Well, let me try picking up from my environment and what else I can to put together how to run this particular program because we are in serious trouble." Like I said, I was the only full-time staff person. I had a full-time secretary; her salary was really terrible. When I found out what the income was that she was making, I was really amazed. Her name was Mrs. Helen Suber and she was the mainstay behind the West Federal YMCA--not only at the time I became executive director, but for a long time. She knew the total operation of that building. She was one of the people I had to depend on to get all the background material of really what the situation was there and how and why things had developed. Helen was to me just a gem and a half. She was my full-time secretary.

We had people on the janitorial staff. But as far as program membership, or any of the other activities that we needed someone to direct that particular program, there weren't [full-time employees]. The only way that I could operate was on the part-time help from kids who were in college, or through community programs like community action corps. They would have summer workers and I would get kids from that. It was really an out-of-pocket type operation as far as staff. That's what I had to contend with.

I had been trying to develop a youth program at the branch where youth programs had been dying out and nonexistent for year and years. This was not because of any fault from the directors. [Jimmy Smith] was a brilliant individual and was simply caught up in the time where he couldn't move along at the rate the times and the communities were changing, because there wasn't enough money for staff. So to him, cutting corners was a way of handling the budget but it was killing the program. He just lost all of his support--things that any branch director should have in order to make something happen. He was getting older in years, and when you get older, you slow down.

I guess what the Y needed at that time, and I'm not saying it because I was that person, was someone who could become involved not only emotionally with the program but physically because of all the time, effort, money and any other different demand. It was a very demanding job. I really got involved

with it. I am the type of person that when I set out to do a specific job or goal, I just like to put my whole self into it. So I went about trying to raise money and that was an experience, because I had never gone out to raise any large amounts of money.

My first experience was from my training and the skills that I had learned from doing my college work because my major was business administration. Now I was a salesman. I had to go out and sell the YMCA and collect some money. That was really a challenge for me. It was a good thing for me because it taught me a lot. I learned from those experiences. I was talking to banks and companies. The first membership campaign that I got involved in, I guess we made something like seven or eight--almost eight thousand dollars. It may not sound like a lot of money for a membership campaign, but it was almost twice as much as what had been raised in the last ten years from that branch. We had a pretty productive membership campaign. Then I moved from there to any other activity that I could put together. There are all kinds of interesting stories that have happened around the YMCA.

I remember shortly after I had gotten appointed as executive director, I went to a conference. I was really excited because I had tried to do a lot of reasearch and background about the Y, so that I could get to this conference and really meet people at a national level who were involved with things. I was really excited about this first conference that I was going to. I got there--it was in Washington, D.C.--and went through registration. They gave you a little package and name tag. I approached the registration table and they asked me my name. I initially said, "Franklin," giving my last name first. Suddenly, he typed it out. Then I said, "Thomas," meaning Thomas Franklin. But he wrote it down, Franklin Thomas. Well, I didn't think anything of it. I thought they were putting last names first. I checked into my room. The next morning I'm going into the main session and on the elevator coming down, I'm noticing that I am getting comments from individuals who I don't know. They are mentioning, "That report was really nice that you put together," or "What are you going to get into as far as the structure of this or that." I was trying to play it off because I'm thinking that these were things that I should really know about being executive director of a branch. So I'm trying to play the whole situation off by responding to these things that I know absolutely nothing about. In their minds, what they were talking about were programs that I was supposed to be presenting, as I came to find out when I got into the big convention hall. As soon as I walked in someone came over and said, "Franklin," and shook my hand, "I haven't had a chance to meet you. But I read your . . ." And he

is escorting me down the aisle. I ended up in the front of the auditorium and was being introduced as Franklin Thomas. I realized that I was being confused with another individual in the Y whose name was Franklin Thomas. My name is Thomas Franklin, but I had my badge on as Franklin Thomas. These people who had never met Franklin Thomas were assuming that I was the man. I almost got put up on the stage where I would have had to have gotten up and responded to a whole workshop that I knew nothing about. Franklin Thomas hadn't arrived yet, you see.

C: How did it come about that they finally found out?

F: We finally met each other. He came in late. It didn't get to the point where I was put in front of the whole audience; there was only a small group of people who were there and thought I was Franklin Thomas. He finally came in and knew right where to go when he arrived. He came right to the group--I don't know why he did--that I was in and introduced himself as Franklin Thomas. Then everybody looked and I knew exactly what had happened. I looked at him and said, "I am sure glad to see you! Now I can relax." I told him the story and he just . . . in fact, he used it. He had to do one of those sessions and he opened up by telling the story. It was really a great experience for me because I stayed close to him during that conference. I asked him some things about YMCA and a lot of questions I needed answered. At that time, I believe that he was in New York City. Since then, he left the Y and has an administrative position in the city government in Atlanta, Georgia.

I came back to Youngstown then and really was just trying to get as much programming as I could into the Y, and to do as many things as I could because I knew--I always had a feeling in the back of my mind--that West Federal didn't have too much longer. It was a dying ship. I didn't know how long it would go, if it would be one year, two years, ten years, or whatever, but I knew. It was just based on simple economics. We couldn't go too much further because we were coming up fifteen, sixteen, seventeen thousand dollars in the red and it was just too much.

C: At the time that you had your first fund raiser, were you having your own individual drives or were you having a drive in conjunction with the Central Branch of the YMCA?

F: It was in conjunction with the Central Branch. That's one thing that was a big plus factor for what I was able to get done and for what West Federal had been able to get done, say, in the last ten years. It wasn't always like that. It used to be a separate campaign. I believe about eight or so years before I started there, back in the

- early 1960's, they started having joint membership campaigns. When West Federal started that's about the time when they lost staff people and they couldn't handle it anymore. So the Central Branch made the membership campaigns all in one. West Federal Branch still had its own worker and chairmen, and things like that, but the membership campaign was one, and that was a big plus factor. It helped us get exposure and it always meant that a certain amount of money was coming in. At that time, the biggest source of income was from companies' and businesses' donations.
- C: When you came to the Y you said that moneywise, membership-wise, et cetera, that the Y was in essence, dying. If you would have had x amount of dollars, do you think the Y could have been maintained?
- F: Yes, I do.
- C: Were the majority of the people who were members of the Y black kids?
- F: Yes. I would say 99% were, but I can't exactly recall the number.
- C: Dave Fleming mentioned to me that the YMCA was built here as a black YMCA. Any members that were there, of course, were automatically transferred downtown. He had mentioned that he was quite concerned that some of the people might not have transportation downtown or that some people would not have enough money to renew their membership when it expired because of the fact that a new membership was higher. However, it hasn't turned out that way.
- F: I know that this was a concern of his.
- C: How many members would you say that there were when you came there?
- F: We'll have to split that up. Do you mean members and all the donors that I had or . . . I would say as far as active members--someone who buys a membership and uses it--who were kids, it was almost a hundred percent. There were a few adults and by adults, I mean, fellows my age. They were personal friends of mine who bought a membership to West Federal to come and play basketball at the Y. As far as the older crowd, twenty-five and over, they would basically go off on Pete's program. Pete started a boxing program for a number of years. If they weren't in Pete's boxing program, we would make them buy a membership. My kids, sixteen and under, I would say were almost a hundred percent. Even when I got the job there, the membership was only fifteen or sixteen dollars . . .

C: Sixteen dollars per year?

F: Yes. Still for a YMCA membership that's cheap.

C: Dirt Cheap!

F: I was even able to drop it down to ten.

The way that I got the kids to use the programs and the Y . . . it was almost like a walk-in basis; if you came to the Y from a project area, you were never turned away because you didn't have a membership. We have all of these rules about sharing a membership card. What we had to realize was that we were trying to do something for kids for which it was relatively impossible for them to have a membership. So we sort of had to extend it a little. If a kid came and didn't have a membership and he was interested, I would give him a little job in the recreation room or give him some responsibility. He would come on a Saturday and earn the membership.

I would get a bus of kids and they would wash cars and raise a few nickels and dimes. If I could shuffle things around in the budget to come up with another fifty, sixty, or a hundred bucks to charter a bus, they would pay a dollar a head and we would all go down to the Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, or something like that. This was my program and the way that I coached it. The kids were involved and they did it. They had a chance to go and a chance to do it in an organized fashion. I was doing it so that I could relate the whole program to them. The two guys that I had helping me in the program were very sensitive to the kids' needs. The kids knew how to relate to them and vice versa. The whole program really worked out.

I remember people telling me when I first took the job that it was a stupid move. I've never had that experience at all. I just loved it and I loved the kids.

C: Were all of the people who lived in the YMCA residence black?

F: At times. Of the ones who were the twenty-five year residents and lived there as their home, they were all black. The whites that I had living there were transient.

C: The reason I asked that was because Dave Fleming pointed out to me that the YMCA was built as a black YMCA but that it was integrated. I doesn't seem to me that there were many white people that went to the Y, except for the people that Tomez brought there for boxing. They were pretty proud of it.

- F: I can remember when I was growing up and going there, at about thirteen or fourteen years of age, that there were more white kids than black ones who participated.
- C: It sounds like there were two contributing factors. First of all, I would think that the Youngstown YMCA, the Central Branch, had the facilities. You didn't have the newer facilities there [at West Federal Branch]. In addition, the Westlake project went from white to black.
- F: There were more whites moving out of Westlake and it was becoming more black. That was one of the reasons. Once whites would move out of that particular vicinity, it would be ridiculous for them--they wouldn't even consider it--to come down to the West Federal Branch. That's a matter of fact. The Y was practically all black.
- C: Would you say that the people in the membership, whether it be a donor membership or one who would take and pay . . . what percentage of those kids would come from the project?
- F: There were from 250 to 300 kids who were from the projects. There were about 600 YMCA members; half of these were kids. Ninety percent of the kids were from the Westlake project and from there on up the north side. Very few blacks came from the south or east side.
- C: Was there any other facility in that area where kids could go to play?
- F: Yes. They had the Hagstrom House, which was a community center within the Westlake project area. Most of the kids who became involved in my program joined it because of the YMCA's pool.
- C: The Hagstrom House didn't have a pool, only a basketball court?
- F: Yes. I would get the younger kids using the branch's basketball facilities. Those were the two facilities that they used the most, the basketball court and the pool. Of the two, I would say that the pool got the most use.
- C: What other facilities did you have there?
- F: We had a weight room that was twenty-five percent adequate. We had a game room where we had Ping-Pong and shuffleboard. The biggest thing in that room was Ping-Pong.

As to the physical facilities, the building itself was beautiful. But because the construction had deteriorated, it needed touched up, as with anything old. The building was also well constructed. However, the locker room was

was inadequate. Of all the lockers that I had, I would say that 25% of them were new. All the rest were so rusted that you couldn't open them up.

Now of the active members, there were very few girls or women.

C: You didn't actually solicit them, or did they just not come?

F: They were actively solicited in all of the campaigns . . . there was no women's programs. That's strange because they had a very active Mother's Council. These ladies had been meeting almost since the beginning of the Y. They were all older ladies; I would say that the average of the group was around fifty. I could see that out of those twenty-five or thirty ladies there were maybe sixteen or seventeen who had been members for twenty years in Mother's Council. Back in the 1930's and 1940's when they were young, they had done a whole hell of a lot. There was something going on all of the time. This was because the people were young. Here in 1970 when the directors were around fifty-eight years of age and people who had done fund raisers were also all up in age, there was no young blood coming in behind. That's why the programs and activities were dying out. Because with any YMCA you have to have strong double participation. You need adults to direct the fund raisers and other activities. The kids have to be organized and led. That was what was lacking: We didn't have any vital adult participation.

C: Did the women's organization meet at the Y?

F: Yes, they met at the Y. Their biggest project was what they called a Princess Ball. That was one of the two fund raisers that they had. They had a Princess Ball and they had a Mother/Daughter Banquet. These were their two fund raising events of the year which made money to pay for their yearly convention trip. That was a big thing in their lives. I could see why. This was a thing that they really enjoyed because of where they were in their lives. So that was the thing they put all of their work into. However, the membership campaign really wasn't that turned on to them because it didn't benefit the club any. At that time, they couldn't see any connection. That was another job I had to do. I had to get them coordinated in and really work for the program.

I even had, what I call, a women's leader group. So there were a lot of factors in different areas which were really significant. In order to get the thing going, we needed another \$50, which would have given the director at least enough to maintain what he had and implement a little bit more. I found the struggle to be just to meet the budget,

- and not to be able to do any future programming.
- C: Even if you would have had another \$50,000, could you have brought in more people?
- F: With the additional money, the first thing I would have done was to hire more staff--more good staff.
- C: Would that have allowed you to initiate more programs?
- F: That would have released the executive director, me, of worrying about programming, and discipline. It would have let me worry instead about funding. If I could have had enough money to hire even one or two more staff people that would have been in charge of physical programming and aquatic programming . . . I don't mean someone who would have done it on a part-time basis, but someone who would have done it as their full-time job. That was what they had to concentrate on. They could, in turn, run their own programs. Time-wise, that right there would have released . . . so that that time could be put into other productive areas to get federal funding or things like that. I just couldn't do that because I didn't have time since I was involved with all of these different areas all of the time. So what could I get done? I had to do a swimming program, and a physical program. I also had to worry about discipline and housing. Compare that to the Central operation where they have different persons in charge of swimming, gymnastics, young men's, and membership. Everybody there does their job. I'm not saying that I would have needed eight or ten staff people, if it would have been just one more person. If enough money could have been put in the budget to hire another full-time person whose job would have been to do whatever, at least that would have split the responsibilities. I could have really heavily gotten into some other things. These were some of the key points.

Like I said, I had my own arguments, but again I was faced at that time with my inexperience. I didn't know how many feathers I would be ruffling; I didn't want to sound militant. That was a time, in the early 1970's, if you were black and you were involved in anything, you could be classified as militant and I am not a militant person. You know that; we went to school together. I wasn't a militant person but I still wanted to get my point across. So I had to be very careful because I couldn't cut off the funds that I had coming in by ruffling somebody's feathers by what I would do or say. I had to really step easy because I didn't want to destroy what I had, but yet I wanted to move on.

I learned a lot from the people who assisted me, like

your dad, Dick Bennett, and Pete McDonald. Although I didn't get a lot of assistance from many, those who helped me taught me many things about the YMCA. I learned what direction to go in and how to do certain things, so I was able to coordinate. I got all the assistance that I could possibly want from the Central Branch as far as utilizing resources there and staff people. I almost had an open hand; I really could get anything done that I wanted to get done without being hassled about it. That really was a beneficial situation because a lot of branches in other parts of the country didn't have that type of cooperation. I was a branch executive at a ghetto branch, yet I would go down to the Central Branch and tell the aquatic guy that I would like to have my branch on Thursday so he could help me run this program--that was unheard of. I could go down to Bob Zajack and we could set that up and there would be no problem. All that assistance was beautiful, and because of all that I was able to get a lot of things done. Those were the things that the community didn't know about. There was a lot of ill feeling especially from the black community when we were raising money. They asked why we should give anything when Central had all of the money. They were expanding while West Federal was dying; Central Branch wouldn't put the money into the branch. After I found out things, I knew what could be done and what wouldn't be done or what couldn't be done. So things that I got and the help that I got from staff people at Central Branch were things that couldn't be seen or noticed.

C: Did you leave the Y before it closed up?

F: Yes.

C: How long after you left did it close?

F: About two years.

C: Would you say that the Central Branch YMCA was looking toward closing the West Federal Branch?

F: I think that thought was in the back of the minds of the board and executive directors. It had never really come out in an official statement: Yes, I would like to close it. But that thought had to be there; it couldn't help but be, based on simple economics. I think that Sweet did pursue a lot of avenues in order to keep it open. I would say that because he had to know way before he hired me that Jimmy Smith might die in the near future. If he had it strictly in his mind that he was going to close the branch, he would have done it then instead of hiring me. But he didn't do that; he went in another direction because he was sensitive to the fact that the closing of the West

Federal would be a big conflict, but that would all come about. It would really have to be handled in the most apropos way just so it wouldn't ruffle a lot of feathers and cause a lot more disturbance. So he did try.

C: Of course, there was a lot of talk on both sides when the West Federal Branch closed. I know a lot of blacks said that they wanted to go downtown and a lot of whites said that a lot of kids would be coming down who wouldn't be able to pay their way. There was a lot of, like you said, behind the scenes things. I know the people who were involved, like Dave Fleming, were concerned that the people from West Federal wouldn't utilize the Central Y and he felt that the West Federal was a good thing, even if it was only utilized by 200 kids.

F: Yes, I felt the same way. I think everybody was involved with the Y program. Unfortunately, we weren't in the position of really having some power. Because if we would have been, we could have pounded a few fists and got up and got somewhere.

I would say that we did have a board with some good YMCA people. Again, I just don't think that it was a board that was a fighting board as compared to some of the other ones that I know of. If I would have been in Chicago or Pittsburgh, it wouldn't have happened. It just wouldn't have happened. I don't want to belittle the boards because they were a great board. The power just wasn't there, but the heart, the heart was there.

When I was offered a job at the university, I wasn't out looking for a job. I had the title of executive director, but the income of director. It wasn't ideal for me, but still I was happy in doing what I was doing. When I got the job offer to come to the university, I really had to think about it. I didn't want it to seem like I was running out. It wasn't because of that. I saw this as a move for my own career. I was tipped off on that. But it took me awhile and I almost didn't accept it. But then in the end I did.

C: Who followed you at the Y, do you have any idea?

F: Helen Suber. When I left, I didn't have any power of decision on who was getting the job, but I gave Helen Suber a very high recommendation. At that time, I don't think that there were any women executive branch directors of YMCA's in the country. I recommended her to Sweet Hunneke. I said that if he was going to continue the Y, Helen Suber was qualified. She couldn't go in the men's locker room but she could run the West Federal YMCA.

C: Did she run it by herself then?

F: She ran it by herself.

C: There was no secretary hired or anything to take . . .

F: The girl who was working part-time, Bernie Brown, was kept on as Helen's secretary. The two people that I had working from the university, Elrod and Billy Ellis--Billy was in charge of the aquatic program and Elrod was in charge of the youth program--stayed on. But Helen, two college students, and Bernie Brown were the four people who ran the West Federal Y for the next year and a half to two years, until it closed down. Helen was given the title of acting branch director until the time it closed down. She did a fantastic job. Again, as far as the administrative part of the building, she could run it because she had been doing it.

C: Was she active then in the physical part of it? Did she run gym classes?

F: No. Those programs were run by the guys, Bill and Elrod. Helen was strictly administrative. She manned the membership campaigns and all the other activities, like fund raising things, that I had also got involved in. She did one hell of a job for the interim. The operation certainly didn't lose anything because she did a hell of a job. I think she did a tremendous job. If I would have had anything to say about it, I would have given her an adequate salary. She was just highly underpaid. When I started there in 1971 and became executive director, Helen was only making \$3,200. I was able to get her a raise of about \$4,000.

C: The YMCA has never been noted as a big payer, that's for sure.

F: Right. But this was after twenty-three years. For the work that she did and the responsibility that she had, that was her salary. It was just ridiculous. If I would have had anything to do with it, I would have given her a \$12,000 a year salary. But that would have been the ideal situation.

She was the one who came after I left. She's certainly in the class with Jim Lottier and the whole gang. She was there the whole time. She knows everything. I've only had the experience of having Helen as my secretary. Helen would put down my thoughts and ten minutes later would come back with a letter of all my thoughts down there in black and white. She was an excellent, excellent secretary, and that was a big help to me.

Because this was my first administrative job coming out of college, in which I was in charge of a \$75,000 a year budget, I was running back to the university and getting all of my books on accounting, business letters, and things to try to make my part good. I just didn't know it because I hadn't had any experience. It was one hell of a learning thing for me and having someone like Helen was tremendous. She was too great and taught me a lot. She taught me a hell of a lot. I always told her, and I would tell her today that if it hadn't been for her, I wouldn't have made it the year and a half that I was there. She was the backbone.

C: Is there anything that you would like to add? Any stories over the year and a half that you would like to relate?

F: There probably are but I would have to think about it for awhile.

C: Let me ask you one final question in terms of fund raising. When you mentioned that you worked in conjunction with the Central Branch at fund raising time, would you go out and solicit black businesses mostly or would you go to companies like U.S. Steel, saying that you were from the West Federal Branch and trying to raise money?

F: I used both approaches. The most productive black businesses in the community were the funeral homes. That was one of sources in the black community as far as the businesses, especially in my immediate area. I hit those individuals and got support from them. But the money that I got from banks, all these organizations were white because that was where this type of money was available. I knew no matter which black businesses I went to, I couldn't get any more than a couple hundred bucks at the most. I wasn't one to go to U.S. Steel and get a thousand or something like that. I did go to all of the businesses and they donated on small scales. For large amounts of money, I would go to banks or some corporations. I didn't go to U.S. Steel or Sheet & Tube because most of these were hit in the campaign by another division. I hit the banks and a lot of businesses in Girard. I raised a lot of money in Girard; I think it was because I was from Girard. I got some nice sums of money. For example, Mr. Slavin at First National Bank gave me a donation of \$400. Federal Savings and Loan on the corner of Wilson and State gave me a couple hundred. With Baglier Ford and all of those people back in there, I was able to raise a nice sum of the money from Girard. As far as the black community, money came from funeral homes, barber shops and a few doctors, all of those ones that I did hit. There just wasn't large sums of money in the black community available to sustain the whole entire program. If we

were in a place like Atlanta, Cleveland, or Chicago, we would have larger businesses that we could have gone to.

- C: Everything was by division, and you had a particular area that you worked, is that correct?
- F: Yes. Our division was the West Federal Division; our whole branch was a division in itself. Under our setup, we had it divided. We had a general chairman for our division and under him were all of the workers. One of the most productive men every year was Jack Trammer, who was good for \$11,000 to \$12,000 himself every year. He was just a salesman. He was tremendous. Jack was the type of man that you gave him his kit and you wouldn't see him again until the final report day. He would then come in with \$12,000. He was just that type of individual. The overall division had the same setup as the general setup.
- C: Did you usually reach your goal?
- F: No.
- C: What would be your goal in campaigning?
- F: Our goal the first time was \$25,000, which was utterly ridiculous. I knew that we would not even touch that. That's the year we raised \$7,800. The next year was a two campaigner. At the next campaign, we dropped it to about \$15,000; we raised something like \$8,000 or \$8,500. So we made more money than the year before, but we didn't reach our goal. The money that we did raise was good money, but it still wasn't enough to meet our needs.
- C: A \$75,000 budget, for instance.
- F: Right. A big key at that time was our community chest donation. We got something like \$110,000 from the community chest and of that total allotment about \$22,000 went to West Federal. That was one of my main areas of attack: Trying to get more money from the community chest into our budget, especially just enough to get another staff member. That was my biggest fight and I never won. We never did get any of the money. When we came out in the red, the Central Branch would take our budget and absorb it into theirs and try to make the whole thing balance out. This was one argument that I tried to pursue: If we are eventually going to do this in the end, why don't you give me the money in the beginning and let me hire a staff person to try and alleviate being in the red.

This is what I wanted to do. I knew that if we were going to get any additional monies that was our first source. From there, there would have to be some type of federal or state program. The Central Branch really didn't want to get involved with the federal funding programs. So that cut me out of trying to get monies because we were part of the central metropolitan system. If we would have been entirely separate, then I could have pursued that on my own. But I couldn't do it because any final decision that was made on monies or budget had to go through the Central administration, even though we were a separate branch. But because we were part of the metropolitan system, that was the chain of command. All budget decisions had to go through Sweet, so that's why we didn't pursue any type of federal programming at all. At least that was one way tha we stayed out of the red for a number of years that we were absorbed by Central. We never did get any extra funds like the community chest.

C: Tom, I would like to thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

F: I hope it was worth your while.

END OF INTERVIEW