Transcription completed 04/05/2023

**Keith Davison**
**Narrator**

**Miranda Jennings**
**Interviewer**

**December 7, 2022**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| MJ: | 00:00:01 | All right. So if you'd like to state your name and how you spell it. So I'm with Keith Davison. |
| KD: | 00:00:13 | That's right. |
| MJ: | 00:00:16 | And then spelled—your last name is spelled D-A-V-I-S-O-N? |
| KD: | 00:00:22 | That's correct. |
| MJ: | 00:00:23 | All righty. So what can you tell me about some background info about your life? |
| KD: | 00:00:30 | Well, I was—I lived in Western Minnesota all my life, except when I was in the service. Anyhow, I was born in Wahpeton, North Dakota, although my parents lived in Tintah, if you've ever heard of it. Tintah is a very small town along the railroad. And I lived in Tintah until I went through the fifth grade in this tiny town. And then I moved to Wheaton for the sixth grade, and lived in Wheaton for one year, and then we moved to Morris, and we lived here for two years. And then we moved to St. Cloud, and we lived there for three years. And then I went to Minneapolis and I graduated from high school in Minneapolis. |
| | 00:01:31 | That's my educational trip through the 12th grade, I was in five different school districts. Usually, I was a new kid. And so from the tiniest town through the Twin Cities. And my father was a—well, he started out, he was the youngest of six children, and he's the only one that went past high school and got some additional formal education. But his father was a very successful farmer, had six children, and he figured that they should all be farmers because that's just about what it was. If you're a female, you're limited to a very few different skills. You could be a teacher or a nurse, or a housewife or a secretary, and that was about it. |
| | 00:03:01 | So anyhow, he became a farmer, or first he was a—he worked in a bank for a while, and then he became a farmer, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | and then the depression hit, and also the dry years and the dust storms and all that terrible stuff. And so he made a deal with one of his brothers about taking over his part of the farm. And then he became a civil servant and he worked for all these relief agencies like the WPA, PWA, and ERA, and these are all for those programs like—well, the CCC was Civil Conservation Corps, and that was for young men. And they had camps for them, and they went away and they worked on these camps, and the money went to back to their families so to speak. |
| | 00:04:15 | And they had all—WPA was Works Project Administration, and they built things. They built the dam in Morris, and they built the stone schoolhouse that's on 28 going over to Glenwood, the stone—it's a stone schoolhouse built by Fieldstone where it's now a part of a wild area nursery. They built—they grow things for plants from the—that they're—they build them for long highways and things like that where they're trying to recreate some of the soil conditions and so on from history. Anyhow, that's what WPA did, they built—and CCC, which was for young men, that was— |
| MJ: | 00:05:25 | What are some things, some background information about you though? |
| KD: | 00:05:29 | Well, I was born on May 13, 1923, and I started first grade in 1929, which was the—I didn't know it at the time, but that's the date of the big market crash of 1929. And that was the era of when Lindberg flew over the Atlantic and things like that happened in those times. And Herbert Hoover was the president until 1932, I believe, and that's when Franklin Roosevelt defeated him. And then Roosevelt was here for all those terms, all through World War II. |
| | 00:06:33 | So I went to school in all these little towns and ended up in Minneapolis. And so I'm familiar with Western Minnesota. When I—well, I went into service after I graduated, which was Pearl Harbor, which is today, incidentally. Anyhow, Pearl Harbor happened when I was a freshman at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. And I tried to get in the Navy, I couldn't get in because of my eyes, I couldn't get in the Air Force because of my eyes. The Air Force was part of the Army at that time. But I got in the Army, and I served for three years in World War II. |

00:07:34 I first became a cannoneer in the field artillery within the—unfortunately for me, they picked out two people from our whole battalion. I don't know how many people are in a battalion, but they sent two of us to college to become electrical engineers, and they put me in the second year, and it sent me to the University of Arkansas. And I went to school there for a year, but they put me in the second year of electrical engineering, which resulted I'm studying chemistry two while I didn't have chemistry one, same way with physics.

00:08:38 But anyhow, I was there as long—and the program lasted for a year. And then they had enough electrical engineers, so then they sent me to code school, and I learned the Morse Code and how to type. Because when I went through high school, boys didn't take typing. Girls took typing in shorthand at those days, the boys took shop, and that was just the way it was. Anyhow—and the girls were really at a disadvantage that way, so many ways. But then I went over to New Guinea and the Philippine Islands, that's where I was during the war itself when I was in the warzone, that's where it was.

00:09:41 And I did a lot of things over there that were what you do when you're in a war. Anyhow, but I was a high-speed radio operator, which gave me some special skills. And so first of all, when I got over there, I started to do all kinds of odd jobs, like guard duty and things like that. And I saw the—let's say I was 19, I guess when I went in the Army, 19 or going on 20 or—yeah, I guess that's where it was. Anyhow, and I was on New Guinea for quite a while. I did a lot of guard duties there.

00:10:48 They used to ship over Jeeps, shipload of Jeeps. And the Jeeps were—they're the real army Jeep, kind of a rectangular little vehicle with—and they came in crates. And they'd come on a crate and all you had to do is take off the crate and put the wheels on, and they were all gassed up, ready to go. And so they delivered a whole shipload of them there, right on the beach. And on New Guinea, the troops, the Americans had already—when I got there, they had captured the whole perimeter. It's just a big island is what it is in the tropics.

00:11:43 But they just took the perimeter, and the Japanese all went into the jungle, and they were there. So when they delivered this load of ships, I mean, those Jeeps from the

ship, I got the job of guarding them. And guard duty is, you sit there with a loaded gun ready to—because the Japanese are right there, and they don't want them to get any Jeeps, of course. And so you sit there and do nothing, except you have a gun. And I didn't have to shoot anybody while I was there, but I mean, you just guard all this equipment, big piles of it, and that's so boring.

00:12:45 And so while I was there—I'm telling you the story of my life here. While I was there, I decided I had to figure out what I wanted to be when I got home. Because when I went to school, I always wanted to be an engineer, that is build something, that way. And I took the courses like that, all kinds of math and science and stuff as you get in high school. And I didn't take anything for law school because I never wanted to be a lawyer. But I decided I had to figure out what I wanted to be. And I knew after I had a second year of electrical engineering that I wasn't going to go any farther in math than differential and integral calculus. I went through them and passed them.

00:13:45 But by that time, it was getting to where I really was beyond my—certainly beyond my interest, and also probably beyond my capabilities to really understand what was behind these theoretical mathematics problems. Anyhow, so I got a hold of a University of Minnesota Bulletin because my parents lived right by the university, they lived over in what's known as Prospect Park if you're familiar with Minneapolis.

MJ: 00:14:25 No, sir.

KD: 00:14:26 It's southeast by the university. And I'd been going to the university when I went into the Army. And so I got their bulletin and I started looking at all the different courses that you could take at the University of Minnesota. So I started with teaching and medical school and dental school, and all these various things that you could take. And somehow in the process, I had a question. I cannot remember to this day what the question was, but it must have been about law school because I mailed this letter to the University of Minnesota care of the President's Office because I didn't know who could answer the question. I don't remember what the question was of all stupid things.

00:15:26 But anyhow, so I—and nothing happened because mail had to go by ship in those days from where we were in the war,

they went by ship, it didn't fly, it went by ship. So several months later, I get a letter from the dean of the law school and he said, I checked your records and you qualify, so I signed you up for law school. And I thought, geez, I don't want to be a lawyer, I never wanted to be a lawyer. But I thought, well, what the heck? I don't know what I want to be. So he told me, just stop in there when you get back from the war. Because I was always confident I was coming back. I don't know why, but I was.

00:16:18 Anyhow, and I did come back. And so I went over to law school and picking up my books and became a lawyer. And that was part of—my lifetime has always been that way that I may decide I want to do something, and somebody else decided I should do something else. At that time, I always thought those were coincidences, but I don't believe it anymore because everything that happened in that kind of a way, all aimed at certain things that resulted from it. For instance, when I was a kid, I was—I'm a tuba player, and tuba players are a little different. It's a got a big horn, which you probably don't own because it's too expensive.

00:17:22 But anyhow, I was fortunate when I got to Minneapolis in my senior year, I was playing in a high school band. I'd been playing in a high school band since I was in junior high, and I was fortunate at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan was a nonprofit private organization that had a—they had a camp for junior high and below, and a camp for high school, and a camp for college. And it was run by two gentlemen, one was T.P. Giddings who was a head of the Public School Music in Minneapolis. And the other one was Joseph Mattie, who was an instructor in the University of Michigan.

00:18:34 And Interlochen is in Northern Michigan, and it's now part of the University of Michigan, and it's called the Interlochen Center for the Arts or something like that, but it's a regular part of the University of Michigan. But at that time when I was in high school, it was very expensive because you had to pay for it, your parents had to pay for it or somebody had to pay for it. And they had an instructor on each instrument in the symphony orchestra, and the instructor was a member of one of the primary symphony orchestras in the world. And so, I mean, this is hot stuff.

00:19:30 So anyhow, they couldn't get enough tuba players to play because, first place, we're in the depression, and this was in

1941 before the war started. And so they sent me there, I got a scholarship that covered everything, food, transportation to get there, and you had to wear a uniform while you were there. And I got the uniform, I had everything except my laundry. That cost me for the whole summer, $7 for my laundry. And so first place, who's fortunate enough to have that happen to you as a tuba player? Nobody—I think there were two or three in the whole country that got that, and I was one of them.

00:20:38 Well, I didn't think too much about that. I thought, this is nice. But when I went back the second year and they hired me as a swimming teacher and in charge of the pool in the high school area, and also as a cabin counselor in the high school. Now, I was only a—I finished my freshman at the university, and I had high school boys as my cabin for kids to take care of. And I'm only a year older than they are, but they don't know that. Well, the first night, all hell broke loose. These guys, these kids are all probably the first night away from home, they're high school kids.

00:21:39 And I said, at 10:00 the lights are off. And I said, now, everybody shut up. And they started—as soon as the lights went out, they started wrestling around and fooling around and so on, and I knew I had to do something. And one guy got out of bed, he was on the second bunk. I had 10 kids, I guess, something like that. And he got out of bed, and I'm not a huge guy, but I picked the kid up and threw him back on his bunk, and he hit the other wall with a big crash. And I said, who's next? And from then on, no problem, no problem at all. I said, you do this, they did that. Because they heard him and hit that wall and it was just right.

00:22:49 But anyhow, after that—the second year of that, I hitchhiked to the East Coast with a guy from—he was a drum major of the Northwestern University Marching Band, the marching band from Northwestern out there in the lake by Chicago. Anyhow, we hitchhiked to the East Coast. And when I got to Bridgeport, Connecticut, that was where he was going, he was from Chicago, of course, and I was from Minneapolis. Well, I got into Boston and I didn't know how to get out. I'm really a roob kid from Minneapolis, and I'm on the East Coast. I heard the ocean beaming. First time I'd ever seen the ocean.

00:23:59 And all I had, I was going to see a friend, and I had his address, and that was all. He was in a little town in Maine.

And I'm in Chicago—I mean, I'm in Boston, and I don't know where I—I don't know how to get out of Boston. So I could've never been anywhere near there. So I bought a bus ticket to this little town, which was only 30 miles apart, and those states are so small out there and close together. And so I bought a bus ticket, which didn't cost me hardly anything because I had no money of any—I think I had a few dollars.

00:24:47 So then I got on this bus and I landed in this little town right on the Coast of Maine, and all I could hear is the doggone motion of oceans going—anyhow, and it was about midnight, so there's nobody on the street. And I have this address, it just says such and such a number, Wild Rose Lane, and that I remember very well. I had that written on a little card, and that's where I'm supposed to go. Well, I didn't know where Wild Rose Lane was, I didn't even know where the town was until I got there. And it was—anyhow, I got to there and I started a walk, carrying a bag of some kind, it had my clothes in it, some kind of a cheap little suitcase or something. I don't even remember what it was.

00:25:52 And I thought, well, I started to walk, I got into a residential area, and then I thought, I don't know what I'm doing here because I have no idea which way to go. But there was a street light there, and so I went over to the street light, sat down on my suitcase and pulled out this address, and it says such and such a number, Wild Rose Lane. And I said, well, where the heck is Wild Rose Lane? That doesn't mean anything to me. And there's nobody to ask, and I'm out here in the State of Maine where I've never been anywhere near it.

00:26:37 And I looked up at the streetlight and here's a sign, Wild Rose Lane. Now, I thought at the time, what a coincidence. But of course, then I found my place. And everybody was sound asleep, of course, so I just put my bag down and I walked back up town thinking, there's no place to sleep here or anything. And by that time, it was somewhere between 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. And of course in this little town, we don't know it, but there always are police walking around, you don't see them. When you drive through these towns in Minnesota, you never see the cops at night, but they see you.

00:27:32 So here's this kid walking down to the main street, and of course, right away I meet a cop. And he listens to my story

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | and he must have believed it because he said, well, I'll take you down to the theater and you can—I'll let you go in the theater, and they got some soft seats in there, and you can sleep there for the rest of the night. And then when you get up, go over to these people at Wild Rose Lane, which I did. And I thought at the time, what a lucky break was that I saw that sign and that I was sitting right there. |
| | 00:28:21 | But then as I looked at all these things that have happened to me, they all tied together through ways that after I became judge, for instance, I found that there were hardly any people that had any engineering ability or education in the law business. They all wanted to be lawyers when they were kids or most of them, and they studied foreign languages and things like that. And I was studying, I mean, physics, chemistry and things—all kinds of mathematic things. |
| | 00:29:26 | And so when they began to use expert witnesses in court, I was probably one of the very few people that had studied any kind of natural sciences like chemistry or any of these things, but especially electric things because I was going to be an electrical engineer, and I was being trained to be an electrical engineer. And when you were in high school or below, did you ever hear of Ohm's Law? |
| MJ: | 00:30:13 | No. |
| KD: | 00:30:14 | O-H-M-S. Ohm's Law is a basic law, I mean, electrical thing. It says that when you have an electric circle, I mean a complete circuit, wherever the resistance is, that's where the heat is. Have you ever heard of that part? |
| MJ: | 00:30:39 | I believe so. |
| KD: | 00:30:40 | Yeah. Well, that's Ohm's Law. And I had a guy on the witness stand who was a professor in the engineering school at my alma mater, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and he was a expert witness called by one of the parties in a case—they were trying to determine where a fire started, that was the big issue. And it involved lots of money as to who was at fault and all this sort of thing, because there were serious personal injuries by people that were injured by this fire. |
| | 00:31:33 | And this guy, this witness got on the stand and he said that if there's resistance in the circuit here, that it could cause a |

fire over here, which is completely bassackwards he'll say. It was wherever the resistance is, that's where your electric stove is, that's where your lights are and all these things, and that's where you get light and heat is where the resistance is. The resistance is what causes the heat to come off the electricity. And this guy was on the witness stand, and I was convinced that he knew better, and that—but he didn't know that I knew.

00:32:24 And so he testified and came to the conclusion as to where the fire started. And then they—and the attorney that cross-examined him didn't understand it either, I don't think anybody did, what he was doing except me. And so I'm the judge and I can't let this stand. And I was able to say, did you ever hear of Ohm's Law? And when he knew that I knew what Ohm's Law was, his face dropped. And then I said, and when I was in engineering school, Ohm's Law was—and then I sighted what it was. And I said, is that the correct interpretation? And he had to say, yes.

00:33:22 And then I just told the jury that they should absolutely disregard everything that this witness says because he's lying and he's lying in court. And that destroyed him for a witness. Probably didn't help him down at the university either, but he should have been—he's lying in court, and I'm a judge. And when I know they're lying, that's not good. That's not good for them. But anyhow, things like that kept happening.

00:34:02 Now, if I hadn't gone down to engineering school, I wouldn't—I might've known that because I learned it in the seventh grade first time, but I might not—a lot of kids didn't, they weren't interested in that, but I just happened to be. And then I had this background, and nobody challenged me on that because I think I was probably the only one in the courtroom that knew what Ohm's Law was. But there'd be a few guys that would know that by law, they'd know the name, but most people wouldn't have any idea about the name of that thing, Ohm's Law.

00:34:49 And it's not a legal law, it's a physical fact, that's the way electricity handles. And most people know that part, they know that where you have an appliance, if you want to take power off it, you put a resistance in there to get light or heat or both, and that's just the way it is. And nobody can change that, at least nobody yet.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 00:35:22 | So anyhow, I went to law school and I got my—actually, you were supposed to have a baccalaureate degree by the you're going in. I had all kinds of credits, but I didn't have a degree, and so what they did is they added a year to my law school. So normally, law school is three years, I went through four years, but I did it in three years because I went the summertime, too. So I had four years in law school, four school years, whereas most people just have three. So even that was to my advantage because I didn't spend my time learning about something else, I spent all those three years, all year in law school, which was good. |
| | 00:36:26 | Anyhow, so then I went to law school and I graduated, and I didn't know any place down there where I could get a job, and I got a job out in the country and came out here and practiced law for 25 years and became a judge, stayed there until I was 70. And at 70, they retire you automatically, so I've been retired since I was 70, which is a long time. Now, that's the story of my life. Oh, that's about—but that's not—the important part, of course, is that I met my wife and we were married and we had three children. |
| | 00:37:10 | And my wife died six years ago, we were together for 66 years, which is most unusual. And there aren't very many people that are married for 66 years. So that's the story of my life. |
| MJ: | 00:37:40 | What can you tell me about your time as part of the West Central School of Development? |
| KD: | 00:37:47 | As part of what? |
| MJ: | 00:37:48 | The West Central Development? |
| KD: | 00:37:51 | Oh, yeah, the West Central, yeah, that was an organization that was set up. I don't know who idea it was, I don't know who—I knew all these people. I did not live in Morris at that time, I was practicing law in Wheaton, but I was a member of that. And it was active—first of all, we were having a contest as to whether UMM was going to come to Morris or Montevideo. And that group chartered a train, a passenger train, and brought the whole legislature to Morris to show them what we had and why we thought it should be here. |
| | 00:38:46 | And at that stage, I was mostly just contributing money to that program because I was convinced that it should be here |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | because this is my area. Anyhow, but we continued after we got them here, and that group continued and was promoting things at university. And the last one that was a big project was when they were trying to get money for the science building, that was built in the '70s or somewhere about, I suppose. |
| | 00:39:35 | Anyhow, we went down to the legislature and campaigned. And particularly, I remember, we—the legislature decided that they would hold some meetings out state, and they were holding a meeting in Willmar, and we advanced on—we took a big part of our membership and went down to Willmar to argue for getting money for this science building. And since that time, it hasn't been—now I don't remember anybody that's still alive except Mrs. Ed Morrison that belonged to that. |
| | 00:40:33 | There are some people that are alive, but not many, they all either moved away or died or something, they're not here. But I was in that. And that was a good organization, they accomplished things that were—and it was—that business of hiring a train to bring out the legislature, which was a novelty for them, and they—most of them came, was free, and they got on the train. And when they got here, then they entertained them royally. And of course, our own senator and representatives were entirely convinced that we were right. Anyhow, that's my experience with the—what do they call it, West Central— |
| MJ: | 00:41:32 | School of Development from the founding of UMM. |
| KD: | 00:41:36 | Yeah. Anyhow, I was involved in that that way. And it was purely political to get the legislature to come here instead of go to Montevideo, which wouldn't have done us any good. |
| MJ: | 00:42:02 | I read that you also got your pilot's license? |
| KD: | 00:42:05 | Got my what? |
| MJ: | 00:42:06 | Your pilot's license? |
| KD: | 00:42:07 | Oh, yeah. I flew for 50 years. I flew until I was 90. And I have a certificate over there that says that I'm a, what do they call it? I have to look. What am I supposed to be here? That's issued by the Federal Aviation Administration. It's called, oh, Wright Brothers Senior Pilot. And it's supposed to be the highest award that you can get from the FAA, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | apparently. But anyhow, you have to be one of the basic things, you have to have over 50 years of flying without any kind of an accident, which I accomplished. I didn't crack up anything. |
| MJ: | 00:43:19 | Well, that's good. |
| KD: | 00:43:24 | So I was—I flew for until I was 90 years old. And my wife said, nobody wants to ride in an airplane flown by a 90-year-old pilot. And I don't think that the doctor would've passed my physical when I was that old. Because I had to take tests every year and stuff like that. Any other questions? |
| MJ: | 00:43:57 | Yeah. A few more. I read that you still like jazz music. Are you still playing your tuba? |
| KD: | 00:44:07 | Oh, yeah. I played in dance bands also until I was 90. I played in different kinds. I also play bass guitar, and I have also played drums in—dance band drums. But my basic instruments are the tuba and bass guitar. I used to play string bass when I was a kid in dance bands. And when I was at Interlochen, where I took two years of teaching students, I was a student for two years in the summer, all summer from a guy that played first desk string bass in Toscanini's NBC Symphony, and I took lessons from him for two years. I should be better than I am because I had the best instruction you could possibly get in how to play those instruments. |
| | 00:45:34 | But yes, I played in—well, I played of course in a university band, I played in the university marching band, and I played in the university concert band. And one of the things that I—I didn't think anything about it at the time, but when I played in the football band, it was all men, girls couldn't play in it, they didn't let them play in it. Isn't that ridiculous? |
| MJ: | 00:46:04 | Yeah. |
| KD: | 00:46:05 | I thought you might agree. Anyhow, and I also played in, and I still play in a couple community bands. I played in seven parades last year with the Morris Community Band. I think it was seven. Anyhow, I played all the parades that they had, and that's a great hobby for me. Well, I have to have help with my horn now that's so big and heavy, and I'm not the kid I used to be. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 00:46:44 | And so my family cooperates and they come—whenever I go to play for a parade, they come and haul my horn, help me get it up on the and all that sort of thing. I don't march anymore in a marching band. But our community band has a trailer that's just built for a band and that's really a good one. You could go around the corner and continue to play while you're going around the corner. There aren't many of them that are that smooth operating. Are you a musician? |
| MJ: | 00:47:34 | Yeah. I did marching band for five years. |
| KD: | 00:47:36 | What do you play? |
| MJ: | 00:47:37 | Alto sax. |
| KD: | 00:47:40 | Alto sax? |
| MJ: | 00:47:41 | Um-hum. |
| KD: | 00:47:41 | Oh, great. Yeah. You've been playing that since you were high school? |
| MJ: | 00:47:49 | Yeah. I started when I was in fifth grade and then moved up and kept going in high school. |
| KD: | 00:47:57 | Alto sax. Well, that's nice. You have a set of horns? |
| MJ: | 00:48:04 | Yeah. |
| KD: | 00:48:06 | You have a tenor? |
| MJ: | 00:48:08 | I know how to play the tenor. I only play that in jazz band though. |
| KD: | 00:48:11 | Yeah. Because the tenors in jazz, they get some great solos. So you're a sophomore so you wouldn't know who the [inaudible 00:48:32] are, but they were musician family here. And I played with all these bands from around here, and I love real jazz. We had a group called Southeast Jazz, it was people from around this area. We had always—we had six people in this. And when one would dire or retire, we'd replace them. But it got down to where we couldn't get enough experienced people when some of the critical ones would die and we couldn't replace them. So we haven't played now since I was—well, I was in my 90s when I played that. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 00:49:35 | We haven't played that—I haven't been able to get enough people together for about five years or so. But we still—that was a fun thing in that we didn't use any music, we would agree on what we were going to play and what key we were going to start it in, and then we just start playing and everybody could feel where you're going to go. We never used a music sheet or no prayer music at all, didn't have any as a group. |
| | 00:50:24 | And somebody would bring a piece of music and play some of it to show us what it was like and how it worked, and—but we could play—we used to meet once a month just for our own entertainment, and then we'd play in the public once in a while when we were asked to, but, yeah, I really enjoyed jazz. And in that group, it was—we had six people, they were all people that had years of playing jazz. And we would meet, we would agree when we were going to have the next meeting. We didn't meet unless we could all be there. And so then you were expected to be there unless you were sick. |
| | 00:51:34 | And so we used to—and then we spent a whole evening playing just what we wanted to play. And you can imagine, because—especially the tenor guy, he could always—they could—well, actually we had different people on sax, but we had one that he had them—he had—he didn't have a bari sax, but he had a tenor and alto and soprano and a clarinet and he was good on all of them. And he could just play, it just naturally came to him. |
| | 00:52:29 | And we had the best drummer in Minnesota. He was from Benson, Minnesota. And he was always in the band as a drummer, but he didn't—it didn't pay enough to—so that he did it fulltime, but he could have easily—he did a lot of cruises and things like that, but they used to have the big bands like Tommy Dorsey, you heard of Tommy Dorsey? |
| MJ: | 00:53:09 | Um-hum. |
| KD: | 00:53:09 | And Jimmy Dorsey. And those guys used to do—they used to go through the country doing one-night stands. They'd come to—they'd be in the Twin Cities for maybe four or five nights, and then they'd come out to Glenwood for one night, and then they'd go to Fargo for two nights, and then they'd go wherever. And one of these bands, I don't remember what it was, it was one of the big bands, these are all in those—the heyday of the big band days. The |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | bands were a lot of times 15 people, and they played this Glen Miller stuff that is so nice, big thumping bass. |
| | 00:54:06 | And the drummer got sick, and so they called the Musicians Union to get a substitute for him for the night to play in Glenwood. And so they sent this guy from Benson over there and he played the job, and he was so much better than anybody that they had they wanted to hire him right then. And he said, no, I can't—he said, "I got a business to run." And they said, "What is your business?" And he said, "Well, I run a feed store." And this guy looks at him and he's from Manhattan, of course, and he said, "What in the heck is a feed store?" |
| | 00:55:00 | Of course, it was a—he was selling—he had a store in Benson that was selling seed corn and things like that, and all kinds of different seeds and also stuff to raise for the seeds for every kind of livestock feed. But anyhow, that was— |
| MJ: | 00:55:38 | So when you were a lawyer, how did that transition go to you being a judge? |
| KD: | 00:55:46 | The transition is different in that you have different skills involved, and also, your stress is different. They're both stressful jobs because when you're dealing—when you're a guy's lawyer, you're oftentimes—he's often in serious trouble one way or another and he needs help. And then when you're on the bench, then you're dealing with people's lives, you're sending people to jail or to the prison, or you're handling the transactions involving lots of money. So you're affecting people's lives in such a way that this—well, a certain amount of stress because you don't always know if you're right. You have to determine what's really the truth. |
| MJ: | 00:57:19 | What made you want to be a judge, or was that something— |
| KD: | 00:57:24 | Well, it wasn't the money because the judges make less money than I made as a lawyer. I mean, when I was a lawyer, I was practicing law in this tiny town, 2,000 people, but I had clients all over the country. I had clients on both the East Coast and the West Coast coming to Wheaton to see me as their lawyer, and all kinds of other—I was so busy. I never learned to play golf for sour apples because I didn't have time. When I started out, I was busy, I worked |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | seven days a week. I'd go to church and then when I'd go home, have dinner, we'd always had dinner at noon on Sunday, and then I'd go back to the office and work on Sunday afternoon. |
| | 00:58:25 | Until my wife said, you got to come home at 8:00 every night, you got to be home so you know who your kids are. And so that's what I did. And we used to meet—we used to have office hours even on Saturday, and so I really had to work hard in it, but it was lucrative more so than being a judge. And so I—the third time—I was offered the judgeship three times. And the third time, I really took it. I remember, I got a call from the governor's office asking if I wanted to be a judge, and I called my wife and she wanted to know how much it paid, which I'm sure she knew, but she told me how much it was. And then they hired me for their family. |
| | 00:59:43 | But anyhow, it was a different kind of stress. And I became judge for a couple things, there were some things going on in my practice that it was easier to become judge than it was to start a lawsuit, to break a thing up, because everybody knew I was going to go then or accept the job. And secondly, it was a different structure and a different way of living than what I had. I still played in dance bands when I was a judge. I didn't always play where you would expect to find a judge, but I was there. And my fellow musicians used to take care of me. Just a second, I got to—what are the rest of your questions? |
| MJ: | 01:00:56 | In 2017, you built a swimming pool for the neighborhood kids? |
| KD: | 01:01:00 | Yes, I did. |
| MJ: | 01:01:01 | What made you—what brought up this idea? |
| KD: | 01:01:04 | Well, my wife died in 2016, and we've been married for 66 years, and I've missed her so badly. And I was in this house, I always figured this was her house, and she's on every wall. I mean, she's—you look at that wall, obviously, she picked out that painting and put those things up there. And at Christmas time, they have entirely different things that go there, but it's like that all over the house. But it was like a mausoleum when she's gone. And so I had to do something. |

01:01:55 And I thought about it and thought about it and talked to my kids about it, and I said, I think I want to build a pool and invite all the kids that want to come, and all my neighbors and my friends to come and use my pool. And my kids thought it was a good idea, and so there it is. And it's state of the art, it's got everything in it that you can have in a pool. It's got a 16 by 32, has a deep end with a springboard, and it has a shallow end with a little ropey thing that shows where it's shallow so the little kids stay on the side of that rope.

01:02:58 And then I have a series of rules. I'm a lawyer, so I knew all about writing rules, and I require that for little kids, that they have either a parent or a grandparent there with them. I can approve other people, but I mean, if they have a parent or a grandparent, that's the best you can get. Because I didn't want a 15-year-old girl who's working on her tan, I mean, I wanted people that would be watching these kids because I'm not a lifeguard anymore, and I—but anyhow, I built it and they came.

01:03:50 And what happened is I got a call from a guy that was in the Netherlands, and he said, I understand you're building a pool. And I said, yes. And he said, "Well, would you mind if we sent a photographer over there to watch them build your pool?" I couldn't think of no reason why not, so I said, "Well, if you want to take pictures, that's fine." So then the guy came and he was from Channel 11, and he was a photographer, and he took pictures for a whole day while they were—and they reached a point where they were pouring the concrete for the decking, and that was all done by local people.

01:04:46 The pool was built by this pool company from Hopkins, but they hired locally people to—well, they hired people that dug the hole, that was a excavation company from here. And it had to be done very carefully because everything on it is automatic. And I don't have to go out there and roll up a cover or anything like that, which I used to do with my first pool. I had a pool before in my backyard. But this pool, if I want to open the pool, it's a button and the top rolls off and hides itself. And then—I have had to clean it once or twice, that is where I did the vacuuming myself. But normally, I have a pool cleaner that just does that.

01:06:04 And most I have to do is check the water regularly for the—see it has the right amount of chemicals in it, and now

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | my oldest boy is pretty well taking over on that chore, so I don't have to do much of anything on it. And we get a lot of people, especially when it gets really hot. And I carry the pool at 86, the temperature's always 86. And so they all can agree on that. They like that it's warm enough so a little kid doesn't turn blue, they can stay in the water as long as they want to and so can an adult. But— |
| MJ: | 01:07:05 | Well, what have you been up to in recent years? You retired about almost 30 years ago when you were 70, but— |
| KD: | 01:07:18 | Yeah. And I—well, I go to warm places during the winter, and I try to—I don't know where I'm going to go this year, because the last couple years, COVID has shut down so much that I couldn't do much of anything. But just before COVID shut everything down, I went to Florida for two weeks with a friend of mine. And then the next week, I went on a cruise and took a family of friends and my own family, went on a cruise. And that was great. |
| | 01:08:13 | And now this year, I don't know what we're going to do. We've done the cruise already and we—so I don't know what we're going to do, but we'll be doing something and we plan to go to Florida, but I'm not so sure about that because there's been so much damage down there where we used to go. We used to always go to—in the Fort—we'd go in the Fort Myers area. We would also go to Madeira Beach for a week or so be before we went down to Sanibel. And there's a lot of damage from this last tornado, and so I don't know if we're going to—or what we're going to do. We're discussing that with my family. |
| MJ: | 01:09:22 | Well, that's all the questions that I had. |
| KD: | 01:09:24 | Pardon? |
| MJ: | 01:09:25 | That's all the questions that I had. Thank you for chatting with me. |
| KD: | 01:09:30 | Well, it's—I'm really interested in UMM, and I'm also interested in this idea, we have something that's most unusual, really. We're in cow country as you know. I mean, this—I can't believe how big this Riverview Farms. Did you realize that they were—I asked one of their owners who lives across the street from me. I asked him, how many animals do you have? And he said, well, that's a |

loaded question, he said, but I can tell you that every day, we milk 250,000 cows twice a day, 250,000 cows.

01:10:39 They've got—they have these units that they have scattered all throughout Minnesota, of course, and in the Dakotas and all the way out in the west, and they're one of the biggest dairy operations around. It depends on how you count them, there's one in California that on some respects is bigger, and other respects not as big. But you count—depends on how—what's your count. But there are 250,000 cows that they're milking. Now, that's a lot of cows. And that's right on Morris, their headquarters are five miles out in the country here.

01:11:31 And then we have one of their—we have superior manufacturing, which make heavy stuff. They make dirt conveyors, and things like that. They make conveyors that they use for loading ships and for binding, they use them in mines. And they used to use them—originally when they started building them, they were used for road construction. They don't use them as that much for road construction anymore, but that's a big deal. And they have subsidiaries all over the United States, and they got some in Canada, and now they've got—they're just moving into South America, and that's all run from right over here.

01:12:36 And then they have their—one of their subsidiaries is this one, the tank operation here. They build tanks for semis, and they, have people that want a new truck, buy a new truck, and they send a truck over there with nothing but just a truck. And they'll make it into whatever you want it for any kind of petroleum use or milk, whatever you want for that. And then we got—and that's a big deal—oh, there's my therapist. He's—so then that's that. Anyhow—so anyhow—