

**Ted Guerrero**  
**Narrator**

**Abner Arauza**  
**Interviewer**

**April 19, 2010**  
**Moorhead, Minnesota**

Ted Guerrero           - **TG**  
Abner Arauza           - **AA**

**AA:** April 19, 2010. I'm interviewing Ted Guerrero. Ted, since I don't have the interview release form, I want to ask you verbally to confirm that you authorize the Minnesota Historical Society to use this interview for either oral or print publication.

**TG:** Yes, I agree to that.

**AA:** Your name?

**TG:** My name is Ted Guerrero.

**AA:** We'll go through the questions, Ted, and go as fast as slow as you want. What I want, I guess, is as much information as you can provide.

**TG:** Okay.

**AA:** Don't worry about how long it's taking you. You've told me your name. Next is your age and your date of birth.

**TG:** My date of birth is April 28, 1951. Presently, I'm fifty-eight years old. I will be fifty-nine next week.

**AA:** Happy Birthday. [Chuckles] You were born in?

**TG:** I was born in Saint John's, Michigan, while my parents were migrant farm workers picking cherries in Michigan.

**AA:** And your education level?

**TG:** My educational level is bachelor's degree from Moorhead State University in guidance and counseling. I did some graduate work at NDSU [North Dakota State University] in guidance and counseling, but did not finish my master's.

**AA:** You don't have a spouse?

**TG:** No.

**AA:** So let's go to your children. Number of children?

**TG:** I have five boys.

**AA:** And their names?

**TG:** The oldest being Eddie Guerrero who lives in Hollywood, California. Second oldest is Joey Guerrero who lives in Las Vegas, Nevada. Third oldest is Mike Guerrero who lives in Seattle, Washington. The fourth oldest is Jaime Guerrero who lives here in Moorhead, Minnesota. And my youngest is Kevin Guerrero who lives in Moorhead also.

**AA:** That's good that you can remember all of that. [Chuckles] Let me ask you some more. Their educations and occupations?

**TG:** Of all of those?

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** Eddie got a bachelor's degree in film and audio technology from Columbia [College] in Chicago, and presently works as editor/producer for the SPEED channel in Hollywood. Second oldest son is a bartender at a casino in Vegas. The third oldest son, Michael, is a sheet metal worker in Seattle, works in construction. My fourth son is Jaime Guerrero. He works as a roofer installing insulation, tile, etcetera. My youngest one is a chef here Moorhead. It works at the Snapdragon Restaurant as a chef. As far as the college education, only my oldest went to college and the other four did not go to college, just have high school diplomas.

**AA:** What year did your family settle in the area? That means if you came in with your family and then you married off or if you were already married family, you and your spouse.

**TG:** The first year that I remember coming to Minnesota was in 1965. We came to work for a farmer up in the Kragnes, Minnesota, area in 1965. Then, once I graduated from high school, which was in 1969 . . . Between then, every summer, we would come up here from 1965 all the way to 1969. I finished high school, and then that summer of 1969, I was approached by a recruiter at our farmhouse about staying here in Minnesota for college. I had applied for the University of Texas [UT] and was accepted at UT in Austin for the fall of 1969. But then when the recruiter showed me the opportunities here in Minnesota, especially at Moorhead State University, for migrant students or Hispanic students or minority students, they were pretty favorable. They offered me a very good financial aid package. With the package at Moorhead State, I did not need to take out student loans, versus if I stayed in Austin I would have to take out student loans. So, just

because of that, we decided to stay here in Minnesota. That was in 1970 when we decided to stay in Minnesota. 1970.

**AA:** Who was doing the recruiting at that time?

**TG:** God, that's so far back. Oh god, I'm trying to remember who the recruiter was. I can't remember. I can't remember his name.

**AA:** But the name of the agency was . . . ?

**TG:** He worked for Moorhead State, but I can't remember what program or project he was working with.

**AA:** David Beauchamp?

**TG:** Dave Beauchamp was my financial aid counselor. There was another Dave . . . Anderson who worked at financial aid.

**AA:** Yes, Dave Anderson.

**TG:** Then I also worked with John Tandberg. God, it was a Hispanic recruiter, but I . . . I totally am blanking it out.

**AA:** Was it Roberto Treviño?

**TG:** No, Roberto was working for the Minnesota Migrant Council, which was a separate entity at that time. God, I can't remember who the recruiter was.

**AA:** What factors influenced your family's decision to settle in the area?

**TG:** Basically, it was monetary, the monetary factor. Plus, we also were familiar with the area since we had come here the past five or six years for summers. The only thing that we were fearful of was the winters, because we had heard just horrible stories about how cold it got here in Minnesota, you know, twenty below zero, thirty below zero, forty below zero, etcetera. So we were a little bit nervous about deciding to stay here. The only thing that kind of bothered us a little was the coming winter. Then, that first winter that we stayed here, they must have had like four or five different blizzards that winter. [Chuckles] It was terrible. We were almost tempted to . . . We went back home for Christmas break, I remember, and we were tempted to stay back there in Texas. We were *so* tempted. But I said, "No. We've got to go back. I've got to finish college. I've got to go back." So then we came back and stuck it out.

**AA:** And when you finished college, you stayed anyway?

**TG:** Yes, even when I finished college, we stayed. Because during my senior year at Moorhead State, I was offered a job with the Minnesota Migrant Council working with

Roberto Treviño. Then, for the summer, I worked as a migrant outreach worker during my senior year at Moorhead State.

Then, after the summer was over, Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council out of Moorhead, Minnesota, was a non-profit organization, and they had just received a grant to deliver an education program for migrant students in the FM area, basically on the Minnesota side in the Moorhead area. I was approached by the executive director, Dennis Heitkamp, at that time. I had known him because I had served on a couple of different boards of directors for Dollars for Scholars and I was also on the board of Minnesota Migrant Health and also on the board for the Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council. So I was familiar with him. I knew him. He got a hold of that money. He called me into his office one day and said, "Ted, would you like to work for us?" I said, "Doing what?" He said, "Coordinating this project for helping migrants resettle out in the area." I said, "Well, I worked with the Migrant Council for one summer, but I don't know if I'm qualified enough." He said, "Oh, I'm pretty confident you can do the job. You can start working in September, if you want." That was my first full time job right out of college. I hadn't finished college, so I kept going part time until I finished my four-year degree at Moorhead State.

After working for Clay Wilkin for two years, the grant was dissolved. There was no more funding after the second year. Then, I was approached by the director of the technical college at that time, Mr. Oscar Bergos. He said, "Hey, we're looking for a recruiter for minority students for the college. Since you're familiar with our system and you've worked with the Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council . . ." It was a subdivision of Rural Minnesota CEP [Concentrated Employment Program]. He said, "You know your way around the school and the programs and all that stuff." I said, "Well, what do I have to do? Do I need a résumé?" I was walking down the hallway here in front of the cafeteria here one day and he said, "You got the job! I'm the boss. You don't need to do an application. You don't need a résumé. You don't need nothing. I'm telling you, you're hired. Do you want to work for us?"

**AA:** [Laughter]

**TG:** I said, "Sure." And that was thirty-five years ago, and I've been here since then.

**AA:** It sounds like it was meant to be.

**TG:** I guess.

**AA:** That's good. So then it was kind of circumstances that one rolled into another?

**TG:** Yes, one rolled into another and into another.

**AA:** Wow. That's great.

**TG:** Once I started working at the college, I knew I had to work on my master's degree, so then I enrolled at NDSU in the master's program, I believe in 1985. I took about half of the graduate work. Then I went through a divorce, had to withdraw from NDSU, from the graduate program. Couldn't afford it; I was financially strapped. I just dropped the whole master's program and just kept working and never went back to NDSU to finish up.

**AA:** Your credits got too old after that or—?

**TG:** I could have [gone back]. But then I started getting involved with bands and playing and all that stuff, so that took up most of my time, and then working at the school full time.

**AA:** Were there any adjustments your family made when they first settled in the area?

**TG:** Hmmm . . . Well, the adjustment was trying to adjust to the winter climate. My kids all grew up here, so they were used to it. They grew up here.

**AA:** Were you married by this time when you decided to stay here?

**TG:** Yes, I was married and my oldest son was like a year old when we decided to stay here. They grew up in this type of climate and environment, so they got used to that. They were on the wrestling teams. They were on the hockey teams. They would do all the winter activities that were available.

The only other adjustment that we had to make was I was used to listening to Hispanic music, and being a former musician from Texas, I wanted to hear Mexican music, which was non-existent around here: Mexican programs, Mexican TV, Spanish TV, etcetera. When we would go back to Texas or something for visits, for vacations, etcetera, I would buy albums, CDs, cassettes or whatever of current music, or even just record stuff. I remember going back to Texas and I would take a box of cassettes and just let the tape player just record by itself, tape after tape, and then bring them back.

**AA:** On the radio?

**TG:** On the radio, and just listen to those cassettes, you know, until they got worn out. [Chuckles] That's the only music we could listen to.

**AA:** Yes. Cassettes were the big deal then.

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** Any other adjustments that your family made in the community, the family structure?

**TG:** The only adjustment that I perceive as negative, and my sons have also indicated this, is that they wish—*they wish*—that they would have kept the Hispanic’s language. All of them understand it, but they don’t speak it as much. Like I said, the only negative thing that my sons have told me is that they wish they would have learned or practiced more speaking Spanish. They understand it and they can speak it a little bit, but it’s more with an Anglicized accent, like kids growing up here, like the Anglo kids growing up here.

**AA:** Sure.

**TG:** All of their buddies that they had in school were all Anglos, so naturally, that’s all they spoke. But at home we would always speak Spanish one hundred percent of the time.

**AA:** So you and your wife spoke Spanish to them?

**TG:** Right. We spoke Spanish to them when we were at home. Once the kids finished high school and were older, they said, “Dad, we wish . . .” I didn’t want to impound it on them. I didn’t want to impose it. “I want you guys to learn Spanish all the time . . .” Da, da, da, da, dah. I said that it’s up to them to decide which language they want to go for. But at home we would speak Spanish all the time. So now they kind of regret it and say, “Dad, we wish we would have practiced more. We wish we would have practiced more.” My oldest son in Hollywood, he’s taking, now, some Spanish classes to get a little bit better, even though he’s in California where everything is in Spanish or whatever. His name is Eddie Guerrero, like the famous wrestler that passed away a couple years ago or something. When he would correspond with people, “Well, my name is Eddie Guerrero,” they always thought he was the wrestler guy, but he’s not. [Chuckles]

**TG:** Most of my boys were pretty happy growing up here in Fargo/Moorhead. They liked the area, but they had opportunities elsewhere. One moved to Vegas. One moved to Seattle, and my oldest to Hollywood. The two youngest are still here, and they’re thinking of just staying and living here.

**AA:** What are a couple of experiences that your family had in transitioning from Crystal City [Texas] to Moorhead?

**TG:** Positive? Negative? I don’t get your question. Experiences?

**AA:** Positive. Negative. Just memorable.

**TG:** You know, the social activities were kind of lacking when we stayed here. Like in Crystal City where I’m from, I mean, every weekend there are social activities. There’s *bailes* (dances). There’s *quinceañeras* (debut, introduction to society, formal celebration for 15-year-old Latinas). There’s *bodas* (weddings), free dances at the *placita* (little plaza, town square). You know, you turn your radio on and there’s announcements about these festivals here and all this going on. Then you move to a white society where none

of this Hispanic interaction exists. So we tended to seek out other Hispanics in the community to kind of form a little group of social interactions, you know. So there was other students that stayed at the same time we stayed here, so we kind of formed a little clique together. We would get together on occasions at somebody's house or at our house or whatever and play our Mexican music and eat Mexican food and partake in speaking Spanish and having *piñatas* (figurines made from formed/shaped paper and filled with candy; they are broken at parties by hitting them with a stick while blindfolded and partygoers gather and keep the candies as treats) and *cascarones* (egg shells filled with confetti) at Easter and all that stuff to maintain kind of our little culture. But it was negative, you know, not having all those things accessible.

**AA:** What was the size of the Latino community at that time?

**TG:** At that time, twenty different families, maybe, existed in Fargo/Moorhead, including our family. That was in the mid-1970s. Now there's tons more Hispanic population.

**AA:** Sure. Among the twenty families or so, you used to network pretty socially?

**TG:** Right. We reached a point where—I can't remember the first time our band played—being I was a former musician of Tejano music down in Texas, we decided to form a Tejano band. I've been playing so long. I'm thinking that our band [*Esquina*] started somewhere in the mid-1980s, so we've been playing to the Hispanic community since probably the mid-1980s to bring back some of that culture that's missing from down in Texas.

We're still playing. In fact, we just played for UMC, Crookston [University of Minnesota, Crookston] just this past Saturday for their unity conference thing that they have.

**AA:** Yes. Among the experiences, you said that you would like have cookouts and parties, *piñatas*, and that sort of thing.

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** Somebody must have brought those from Texas?

**TG:** Well, our first trip . . . We'd never been to Minneapolis. I think it was like the second year or third year we stayed here, we said, "Hey, let's take a drive to Minneapolis. We've heard Minneapolis is a cool place," ta, da, da, da, dah. "A huge place . . . there's some type of a Hispanic community there especially in West Side Saint Paul," which is where we had heard that most of the Hispanic community lived. At that time, the late 1970s, there was one Mexican store that we were aware of in Saint Paul, and that was Morgan's, but it was Morgan's Mexican Lebanese [Foods] store [at 736 Robert Street South].

**AA:** I remember it.

**TG:** We would go there to buy Mexican pastries and Mexican spices that we couldn't find here in the Fargo/Moorhead area. They sold *piñatas*, and they sold *quinceañera* dresses and they sold cultural things that you needed to maintain . . . about these baptism gowns and all that. So once we knew about Minneapolis, we would try to take a drive there maybe once a month, once every two months. We'd stock up on supplies and put in the freezer like *chorizo* (Mexican sausage) and all that stuff that was non-existent here.

After Morgan's, then in Saint Paul, the whole Concord and Robert Street where Boca Chica is and where Burrito Market used to be when it first started, now, there's *tons* of Mexican commerce there. Now, in Minneapolis, they have the *Mercado* (shopping center) in Minneapolis, tons of little boutiques and stores and whatever.

**AA:** Do you still go?

**TG:** Oh, yes, we go like once every month still to get stuff.

**AA:** So you found a way to make do.

**TG:** Oh, yes, to maintain sanity in the Fargo/Moorhead area. [Laughter]

**AA:** You said that when you first came here, it wasn't to Fargo/Moorhead. How many years in Fargo/Moorhead?

**TG:** When we first came here, we came to work in Kragnes, which is in 1965. Then, after I graduated from high school in 1969, then in 1970, we decided to stay here, and we lived right off of Twentieth Street here, right down the block here in rented apartments there. Then, once my oldest son I think was a freshman, we decided to build a home here. So we built a home, and, then, after a few years, we got divorced. My ex-wife still lives in that home we had built.

**AA:** How long have you been at the same address that you live in now?

**TG:** Well, I've always lived in Moorhead, except for like five years ago, I decided to move to Fargo. Because I was a single person, the taxes on the Minnesota side were just eating me up. Just by moving to Fargo, my paycheck rose like two hundred bucks a week . . .

**AA:** Wow.

**TG:** Just by moving to Fargo . . . comparing the Minnesota tax rate versus the North Dakota tax rates. So it was a plus, you know. I'm an outdoors guy; I love fishing. The only drawback is that I still have my boat registered in Minnesota. I still get my license from Minnesota, even though it costs me like a hundred dollars just for a fishing license in Minnesota, versus ten dollars in North Dakota.

**AA:** So there goes your two hundred dollars.

**TG:** There goes my two hundred bucks that I save. [Laughter] It's more peaceful. I don't know. There's less services in North Dakota, but I like living in Fargo for some reason.

**AA:** Good. The next question . . . The answer is obvious, but I want to hear you say it and how it came to be.

**TG:** Sure.

**AA:** The question is: did you perceive your stay in Moorhead as temporary or permanent?

**TG:** Do you mean at that time?

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** At that time, we thought when we settled in Moorhead, you know what, I'll go to college, get my four-year degree, move back to either San Antonio, San Marcos, Austin, that area at that time. But once I was offered that job at Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council as the migrant program director, it was kind of like, well, if I take this job that means that maybe we're going to stay here. The money was good. I thought, well, maybe I might progress, and, eventually, maybe I'll move up the ladder and get some type of upper level job and just stay here. I worked there for two years, started working at the technical college two years later. At that point, we knew we were going to stay here, once I got the job here at the college. But, initially, no, it wasn't a long term thing. We were just going to get my education and go back to the culture and the *musica* and all that stuff.

**AA:** So, man, that's so typical. That's what a lot of people do. They come here and intend to stay for a while and go back, and then they stay.

**TG:** They end up staying, yes.

**AA:** What is it about it?

**TG:** I love the educational system in Minnesota. My kids got the best education. Minnesota schools are excellent schools. The opportunities here in Minnesota . . . When my oldest son went to college, he got the Minnesota state grant. Both me and my wife were working at the time, so he wasn't eligible for a lot of financial aid, but, yet, the Minnesota state grant for Minnesota students kicked in for him in lieu of the Pell Grant [Program], so that helped him quite a bit. The K through 12 system, I don't know of any other system that's better than the Minnesota system.

**AA:** That's a good reason.

Now, Crystal City was your home.

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** Have you kept in contact or have you maintained contact with your home area? If so, how and how often?

**TG:** Not a lot. We would go back to Texas, like around every Christmas, make a yearly trip, maybe at Christmas. But, other than that . . . It was just basically Christmas and calling people, calling my dad. A few years after we stayed here—it must have been five years—my mom passed away. She must have passed away, oh, I would say, in 1978, 1979. So there was less contact going back to Texas at that time.

[knock on the door – break in the interview]

**AA:** Has contact been maintained with your home area? If so, how and how often?

**TG:** Like I said, we used to go there during Christmas. Then, once my mom passed away, we didn't do that often, because my dad would still come up here to work in the sugar beets. So even though we wouldn't go there every summer, my dad would come up here and we'd go see him at the farms or if it rained or something he'd come visit us at the house, etcetera. So the contact was, maybe, phone calls every now and then, but not a lot of contact.

**AA:** How about your sons? Did they ever say, "Let's go see grandpa?"

**TG:** Not really, because the only time we would go there was during Christmas. They were glad to go down there just to get out of the cold. "Hey, Dad, let's go to Texas. Christmas is coming up," ta, da, da, duh. They knew it was going to be warm like forty, fifty degrees, warm compared to like twenty below, thirty below up here. [Chuckles]

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** They didn't grow up with the Mexican culture. They didn't grow up with listening to the media in Spanish all this like we had, so they didn't miss that. But it was fun for them because it was warm. They ate real Mexican food. They got to see their grandparents, whatever, you know, and partake in some of the activities. But they didn't miss it because they grew up here.

**AA:** Was your wife from Crystal City also?

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** So they would see both grandparents?

**TG:** Right. Her parents came to work up in Kindred [Minnesota], so we would see my parents and we would see her parents every summer.

**AA:** Okay. Now, today, is there contact with your extended family or relatives? If so, how often?

**TG:** My dad, I talk to him maybe like once every two weeks or something. That's about it. I talk to my sister. I've got a sister in Austin, a brother in San Antonio. We talk maybe once a month. I haven't been down in Texas now in like five years.

**AA:** Hmmm.

**TG:** That was the last time I was down there. Not a lot of physical contact, no.

**AA:** Why?

**TG:** Why. I don't know why. It's just that they're so far away. It's expensive to go down there. At my age, I'm thinking more of retirement, so I'm thinking of saving my money for the final retirement move instead of going back and forth, back and forth. So the yearly trips, like I said, I haven't been down to Texas like in five years.

**AA:** You told me earlier that you used to speak Spanish to your sons at home all the time.

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** How about when you were outside the house? What would you speak to them?

**TG:** Do you mean in our yard or whatever? It would still be Spanish.

**AA:** At the mall?

**TG:** Oh, at the mall? It would still be Spanish.

**AA:** Wherever you were, you always spoke Spanish?

**TG:** Yes. Like if we went to Hornbacher's, me and my wife would always speak Spanish. What are we going to buy? Should we take some of this? Should we take some of that?" da, da, da, duh, etcetera. They would just tag along. We spoke Spanish when we were out fishing, when we were out to the parks, or whatever.

**AA:** Spanish was the language you spoke all the time?

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** How about if you ran into another Latino family while you were grocery shopping?

**TG:** Oh, it was always Spanish. It was always Spanish, because that was an opportunity to converse with somebody else, you know, other than you or your wife, whatever. So, of course, yes.

**AA:** What do you consider Latino cultural traditions? How do you define them?

**TG:** Latino cultural traditions, probably I would consider, like for example, one of the main things in Hispanic culture, Hispanic culture, Mexican American culture, is Easter. You probably are familiar with this. Everybody starts saving *cascarones*. I don't know if you want me to go into detail what *cascarones* are?

**AA:** Sure.

**TG:** At Easter, it's a big thing, because most Hispanic families go to the park, have a big cookout, go to church first, go to the Mass, go to the park. Sometimes it would be Garner State Park, which is near Uvalde, which is like thirty miles from our home town, or any park, have a huge cook out, and break what are known as *cascarones*. *Cascarones* are empty egg shells that are colored and filled with confetti with a little tissue cover on the open part of the egg shell to keep the confetti in. The custom or the tradition is to sneak up on people and break these shells on people's heads. [Chuckles] Everybody did it. Ever since I remember growing up in Crystal City, kids would look forward to the *cascarones*. Easter's coming; Easter's coming. I remember my mom would save dozens and dozens. We would have, I don't know, twenty dozen, thirty dozen *cascarones* made for Easter.

**AA:** [Laughter]

**TG:** Each kid would get like three or four boxes, three or four dozen and just go break them. You could see the parks *just filled* with confetti all throughout Texas.

**AA:** I remember that, yes.

**TG:** It's even on YouTube. If you do "*cascarones*" on YouTube, it's on there.

**AA:** Oh, is that right?

**TG:** There's people breaking them in the tradition of *cascarones*. We kept that tradition. I remember we got in trouble one time. Remember, I told you the first apartment we lived in was on Twentieth Street?

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** So the first Easter that we spent here, we made *cascarones*, but, then, Easter that year was cold. [Laughter] I think there was still snow that first year. It was some time in April. We couldn't break them outside, because it was too cold. So, then, the kids ran in the hallway, outside of the apartment in the hallway, breaking *cascarones*. I got a call from the landlady. [Laughter] She says, "Your kids are making a big mess," da, da, da,

da, dah. I said, "I'm sorry, but it's a tradition. It's a custom that we do." "Well, this custom doesn't fly here, because you're making a huge mess. We have to vacuum all this stuff up." I said, "I'll tell you what. I'll vacuum the hallways for you. It's a tradition that we grew up with," da, da, da, da, dah, etcetera. So after that, we never broke them inside the apartment building. [Laughter] We'd go outside. Once we built our own home, then we did it in our own home, in our own yard, and all that stuff.

**AA:** With no problem.

**TG:** There was a little friction that first time here in Moorhead. That's one of the things. The *bautismo* (baptismals), you know . . . the majority of Hispanics are Catholic, as you know. Going to the *bautismos*, having a little celebration for the *bautismo* where all the families, relatives, aunts and uncles, and friends, and whatever celebrate this festivity, the communion or the baptism. Those are strong. Normally, there's music involved. Either somebody brings tapes or cassettes or CDs or there's a band playing, whatever.

Now, our band is hired for *bautismos*. Sometimes, we're hired for a communion. Sometimes, we're hired just for families to get together. There's a big Hispanic population in Pelican Rapids [Minnesota]. Every now and then, they hire us to do some type of a dance down there. Like I said, it didn't exist twenty years ago. Our band was just starting twenty years ago, but, since then, we've played up and down the Red River Valley from Wahpeton to Cavalier to Minto to Grafton to Crookston to Grand Forks. We've been playing all over the place trying to bring a little bit of the culture back into the community.

**AA:** Did your sons . . . did you do the birth . . . the *bautismos*?

**TG:** No. [Laughter] Because . . . I don't know how to say this. We were a non-traditional Hispanic family where we are *not* Catholic.

**AA:** Okay.

**TG:** I'm Pentecostal, so I don't practice the Catholic faith. My ex-wife, at that time, didn't think favorably of the Catholic Church, even though she grew up Catholic. No, we didn't partake in a lot of the Catholic festivities, but we had friends that were Catholic and we'd partake with them, just as friends.

**AA:** As a festivity, not a religious . . .

**TG:** Right, not a religious festivity, but more of a social festivity.

**AA:** Yes. Good. What other cultural traditions do you remember, at the time?

**TG:** Oh, god. Getting together with families to play Bingo . . .

**AA:** Oh, yes.

**TG:** . . . Mexican Bingo, which is different from regular Bingo. Abner, you're probably familiar with it. In our cards, we have pictures of things and you try to match in a vertical line or a vertical row or horizontal line pictures like the *guitarra* (guitar). We use playing cards, so each playing card has a picture of something. They flip over the *guitarra* and if on your card you a *guitarra*, you put . . . We used to use pinto beans to put our markers, right, pinto beans or pennies or rocks or whatever you could find.

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** Everybody would put in like maybe two cents per card or a nickel a card or whatever. There would be ten people playing. Oh, that's fifty cents. That's a lot of money.

**AA:** [Chuckles]

**TG:** So we'd spent big bucks. Yes, that was cool.

God, other traditional things . . . We'd get in the sugar beets every summer. [Laughter] Ohhh . . . Listening to music is, basically, my main thing.

**AA:** Have you retained any of those traditions?

**TG:** With the grandkids—I have grandkids now—we still do the *cascarones*. They still do it here in Fargo/Moorhead. My grandkids are growing up Catholic so they're going through baptisms. They're going through communions. They're having their social activities, etcetera. The two sons that I have that are married . . . Two of them are married. I have three, four, five, six grandkids.

**AA:** Wow.

**TG:** They're growing up Catholic because the girls that they married were Catholic, so they're following that tradition, the religion. So they're doing the baptisms and the communions and the confirmations and all of that. They're doing the festivities and getting people together and all that. The *cascarones*, they love to do that. Little kids love the *cascarones* thing.

**AA:** Are their spouses Latinas?

**TG:** The one that lives in Seattle, his wife is Anglo. The one that lives in Moorhead, his wife is Hispanic.

**AA:** You answered a question that I was going to ask and that was were any of these cultural traditions transferred to your children, but you said they transferred even to your grandchildren.

**TG:** Oh, yes, right, even to the grandchildren.

**AA:** Was that deliberate or did that just happen?

**TG:** I think it just happened, because my boys experienced something unique when they did the *cascarones* things, you know. It was something that you looked forward to every year. Like I said, in Hispanic families, once Easter is over, at that point, you start collecting shells for the next year. [Laughter] I know families that would have collected a hundred dozen *cascarones*. I know families with fifty dozen *cascarones*, that are collecting now for the next Easter that is coming up. Yes.

**AA:** That's interesting. In the neighborhood or in the community, what type of relationship did your family, as Latinos, have with the neighbors?

**TG:** Ummm . . . When we built our home, we built it over in the Village Green area. When we built, it was predominately just white families. The cool thing was that across the street from us was my oldest son's best friend who lived there. My oldest son's best friend had younger brothers that related to his younger brothers, also. So they all played together. They grew up together.

They would love to come over to our house, because we were the only Mexican American family in that area at that time. [Chuckles] When we would cook, well, of course, we would cook mostly Mexican food, and they wanted to come over and have a taco of this and a taco of that and breakfast tacos and lunch tacos and supper tacos, whatever. So they were always around our house. My main hobby is music, playing in a band, but my second hobby is cooking. I love to cook for people. I develop recipes, etcetera. I love to cook, so any time his buddies were around, "Hey, you guys want to eat something? Let me make something for you guys," da, da, da, da, duh. My wife, at that time, worked at American Crystal Sugar and American Crystal has those weird shifts where one week was from eight to four in the afternoon. Another week was four in the afternoon to midnight, and another week was midnight to eight in the morning. So most of the time, I was the main caretaker, because she was working. I would work at that school, get home at four-thirty, and if she was working from four-thirty to midnight, the kids wouldn't see her. When she worked graveyard, twelve to eight, she'd get home at eight, but, then, she'd go to sleep to get ready to work for the next time. So I was kind of like the main caretaker and the main cook at the house, so I learned how to develop recipes and do this and do that. So I maintained most of our Mexican cooking, because I kept it in there. My boys love Mexican food, and they incorporate some of my recipes. They still call me every now and . . . "Dad, I forgot how to make this," da, da, da, da, duh. "Tell me real quick how to make *frijoles borrachos*" (a style of baking pinto beans) and whatever, etcetera.

**AA:** Yes.

Same question: what type of relationship did your family have, but with your neighbors?

**TG:** The neighbor on the left side of the house, he is Ken [Martin] who owns Trading Liquidation [Centers, Inc].

**AA:** Oh, sure.

**TG:** The first time when we moved in there—the house was built—they welcomed us. I maintain a really good relationship. The guy across the street was the dad of my son's best friend . . . excellent relationship. The Haney's, Jim Haney, who owned Haney's Photography in Moorhead, was on my other side. He played guitar, so he knew that I played guitar. So, every now and then, we'd would jam and play together guitar, have a couple of beers. So we got along well within our neighborhood. I had excellent neighbors. I never had any problems with any of my neighbors, never ever.

**AA:** How about with employers?

**TG:** Employers as far as like here at the school?

**AA:** Wherever. Your wife's, your children's?

**TG:** Mmmm . . . We would always get invited to . . . American Crystal . . . it's like a little family. They tend to care for each other. They're all union, kind of like here; we're all union. So American Crystal would have an annual picnic where we would meet all other families of the American Crystal workers. Here, we have the same thing where it's all union. You kind of tend to look out for each other, one another, going to the union meetings.

I was very much involved with the union. I'm *very* pro union. I was for many, many years involved with the union. I was president of the Teacher's Union here at the campus. I was president of the Hispanic Caucus of Minnesota Education Association [MEA] for, god, five, six years in Saint Paul where we drove initiatives or resolutions to promote bilingual education, to address ESL [English as a Second Language] issues, etcetera.

The faculty here kind of respected the fact that I was a minority, and I was a Hispanic, and I spoke Spanish, and I was looking out for people of my culture. So I've never had any conflicts here at school with faculty, staff, etcetera.

**AA:** At church?

**TG:** At church? No. I belong to First Assembly [of God]. They liked the fact that I spoke Spanish, because, sometimes, they would get members from Spanish-speaking countries as they started moving into the area. So, sometimes, they would call me or ask me to intervene on behalf of a new family that came in, and try to accept them into the community, etcetera.

**AA:** How about the schools?

**TG:** K-12? Well, most of the faculty at K-12 Moorhead knew who I was, since I used to be a president of the MEA here in Moorhead, so I knew a lot of teachers. Whenever a teacher had one of my sons in class, they kind of knew that's Ted's kid or this is another of Ted's kid. Sometimes, it would be a benefit, because, during conferences, they would be a little bit more open to me, "Well, I think he needs to concentrate on this." He's having difficulty with this area." But most of my kids did well in school; I mean not a lot of problems.

Not a lot of problems, except for the time when my second oldest son got involved with gangs in West Fargo. That was the only detriment. My son was tied in with a group of kids that committed that murder in West Fargo, the [Cherryl] Tendeland murder. He was the youngest kid in the car with the kids that shot that lady. That was the only detriment. Even when the faculty members here knew of my situation, they were very comforting. They were very supportive. "We know what you're going through, Ted." "Sometimes, things happen, and kids get involved and kids get into trouble." That was the only time where I kind of felt down because my kid had been a part of that.

**AA:** When you decided to stay here, did the possibility that you would be accepted or not accepted as a Latino affect your decision at all?

**TG:** In my philosophy, it's not how I grew up. My philosophy was not that it's up to them to accept me. My philosophy is I am here. If you want to accept me, fine; if you don't want to accept me, fine. I'm here to do my job as best as I can and serve the students as best as I can, and if you don't agree with some of the things that I do, that's your right, you know.

There was a teacher one time in Crystal City. I'm thinking he's the guy that convinced me to go to college. His name was Mr. Avila. He taught Spanish. He was the son-in-law of my dad's neighbor. Okay? One weekend, I was home and I think I was washing my car. I think I was like a senior or a junior or whatever. He was at his in-law's home, which is our neighbor, and I think he was washing his car, also. I had never talked to the teacher outside of a school setting, outside of the high school. He walked over and he said, "What are you going to do now that you're going to finish high school, now that you graduate?" Maybe it was during my junior year. I don't think it was my senior year, because I don't think I had decided yet. I said, "Well, I'm thinking I'm going to go to college. I don't know where, but I know that I want to go to college. I know I don't want to be a migrant farm worker the rest of my life, like my dad is." He said, "You've got a good plan there, but you've got to plan ahead. You've got to plan ahead. You've got to take hard classes and college prep classes, etcetera, to get better prepared for once you go into college." He said one thing that kind of stayed with me. He said, "Don't let the white people put you down. Don't accept the fact if a white person tells you, 'You can't do that because you're Hispanic.' That doesn't exist.

I'm going to show you something. Follow me over here." There was a wall. I can't remember; I think it was next to the garage or we had like a carport but one side was a wall. He said, "Stand by the wall." I said, "Okay." I stood in front of the wall. This is

what he said, “If you ever get shit thrown at you, move out of the way, and let the shit hit the wall. If you stay there”—by shit, he meant like if a white person tells you, ‘You can’t do that because you’re Hispanic’—“and absorb what that person is telling you, whatever negative thing it is, and let it soak in, you will start to believe that. But if you move out of the way and let the words hit the wall, it doesn’t affect you. You can go about doing your own business. He can scream at the wall or accuse the wall or throw shit at you, but if you don’t soak it in, it’s not going to affect you.” Then, another thing he said . . . “White people and Hispanic people, we all wear clothes. We put on our pants the same way.” [Chuckles] “We put on you shoes the same way, one foot at a time,” da, da, da, da, duh. “Don’t let white people tell you how to decide your life. Remember, if you get shit thrown at you, move out of the way.”

That’s been my philosophy. If I run into students or people that are negative, they have a right to their negativity, but I have the right not to accept that. That’s, basically, my philosophy that I grew up with.

**AA:** You seem to feel part of the larger community. Why? How does that fit and how do you fit into what the larger community is?

**TG:** From my point of view?

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** I believe . . . . And I don’t know how . . . this comes into play and I don’t know where I got this from, but, to me, I was put on this earth to serve a purpose. When I first started at Moorhead State, I was going to be a computer science major. So I decided to take a whole bunch of . . . . because computers, at the time, was the way to go. If you wanted to make tons of money, go to computers, concentrate on computer science, be a programmer, be a systems analyst, be a developer, etcetera, and you needed a math minor for that. So I started taking as much math as possible, all the computer classes that I could take. Once I reached my junior year at Moorhead State, I was taking all these math and computer science classes, but I hadn’t taken any general classes. So I needed electives. I needed some generals, some gen eds.

When I met with my advisor, he said, “Why don’t take some, god, I don’t know, sociology classes? Why don’t you take some psychology classes? Take some Minority Group Studies classes.” I remember taking my first sociology classes with Joel Charon, Intro to Sociology. That guy, to me, was like the best teacher I had ever had a class with. [Chuckles] He would move around the class and jump up and down and he would spit, whatever. The way that he taught, he would spit. He would go like this.

**AA:** [Laughter]

**TG:** He would wipe his . . . I’m sorry to spit on you guys. I remember Joel to this day! He said, “Sociology is about the study of people.” God! that was a cool class. Then, I took Majority/Minority Relations. What the hell was that about? Majority/Minority

Relations. Sociology . . . I think it was the second level or the third level. That was people with power/people without power. Majority, of course, was the white society. Minority relations were the black people, Hispanics, Asians, etcetera. He described why there was this difference between people with power and people that don't have power and the whole struggle. The people with power want more power. The people that don't have power want some of the power, but, yet, these people don't let them have the power. They went through institutional racism and all that stuff and how people live in poverty and why poverty exists and these programs and all that stuff.

Then, I started working for the Migrant Council that summer. So this stuff kind of tied into my job with the Migrant Council, helping people without power try to get some power, trying to advocate for them to get health services, to get Social Services to help them with this or that or jobs or training or college or whatever. Then, after that, you know what? I don't think I want to be a computer programmer or a computer systems analyst. I want to help people. I think my calling is to help people. So that's why I decided to go into that field. As far as why? For some reason, I have a thing that says, "That's what God wants you to be, to help people."

**AA:** Wow. What is the ethnic composition of the Latino community in Fargo/Moorhead?

**TG:** I'm out of the loop on that one, but I would say we have like a ten percent population, maybe. No. Less than that. Five percent in the Fargo/Moorhead area?

**AA:** Probably.

**TG:** Probably five percent. But when I was here, it was .05 percent [laughter] when I moved up here.

**AA:** Is it changing and how?

**TG:** There's more Hispanics. There's people in businesses. There's people that own businesses that are Hispanic. There's Hispanics all over the place.

Last summer, I was fishing up in Staples, Minnesota. We ran out of bait, so we went to this little bait shop that was right out of Staples. A Fed-Ex guy pulls up, or whatever. His complexion was kind of dark, in Staples, Minnesota, way out in the sticks. I was with my fishing buddy who is Hispanic, also. We looked at his name tag, the Fed-Ex guy. I thought it was like Pedro. Let's talk with him. I said, "Hey, do you speak Spanish?" "Yes," he said. "I speak Spanish. I'm from San Antonio originally." "What the hell are you doing here in Staples, Minnesota?" "I work," I thought he said, "out of Saint Cloud," or a bigger town, Alexandria, maybe. So we started talking. He said, "Yes, I miss all that stuff, also." He was a Chicano (Mexican American), too, and he missed all the music. He said, "But Fed-Ex pays me good money. That's the reason I stay." I think he was from Alexandria. So we had a nice little chat for about a half an hour. He said, "Hey, I'm glad I talked to you guys. I haven't talked Spanish in a while."

You find people like that all over the place. More and more Hispanics now.

**AA:** So we're taking over the world.

**TG:** Yes. [Laughter]

**AA:** In the past, what issues did you see in the community that affect Latinos?

**TG:** Housing is still a big issue. Housing is a big issue, but, now, *economics* is driving that. It used to be .... I used to help students try to locate housing, students that wanted to resettle in the area, and I would have a heck of a time trying to deal with landlords to rent to people of color— you know, not just Hispanics but I dealt mostly with Hispanics.

As an example, you would call up. Let's say you're looking at the form, and there's an apartment for rent. Da, da, da, da, duh. So I'd make the call. I don't have that Hispanic accent, so I'd make the call. I'd say, "I'm looking at the apartment . . ." whatever it is. "Can we come over and take a look at it?" So, "Yes. It's still open." So, then, I'd go with the students or we'd drive together, whatever. As soon as they saw the students and their complexion and their color was not white, you could see their faces. You could see something change, you know. So, then, as we inquired about the apartment, "Ohhh. Yes, you're the guy that just called?" "Yes." "Well, somebody just came over and we just rented it. It's not for rent anymore." So, then, I'd go back to the office and call again. It was still available.

**AA:** [Chuckles] Oh, oh.

**TG:** You know, you don't want to live there. You could pursue it. There was legal action you could take, but during those times, you know, in the 1970s and 1980s, human rights in Minnesota was just starting. The lag time for them to hear your case was six months, nine months. So it was not worth the hassle of pursuing any legal action, because students couldn't wait six months to get a decision. "Well, you have to rent to this kid," or whatever. So I'd just keep going, keep nicking away, nicking till we found something. We'd find a landlord that wasn't a racist or didn't think bad about people of color and would rent. Now, things are changing. Now, because of the economy and the surplus of apartments all over the place, they just want somebody to rent their apartments. [Chuckles] That problem doesn't exist any longer in the Fargo/Moorhead area, because they're looking at the dollars now. They're looking at the green money. They don't look at the color of your face. They look at the color of your money. As long as you've got green money, they'll rent to you. But back then, it was totally different. It was totally different.

**AA:** So housing was a big deal?

**TG:** Housing was a big deal.

**AA:** Has that changed?

**TG:** Like I said, with the surplus and with the sales of homes, people moving into the area . . . Where I live, I live on Tenth Street. I live a block south of Fargo North on Tenth Street on the one way. I was driving out of my driveway the other day, and just a block west of me—I don't think there's any Hispanics that I know to the north, to the south, just west of me—there's a little house. I thought, god, that guy looks Hispanic. He's like half a block from where I am at. I stopped by there just to chat with the guy. He said, "Yes, I'm from McAllen [Texas]." "Did you buy this place?" "Yes," he said, "We just bought it this past summer. My wife is a nurse. We moved from McAllen," da, da, da, da, duh. His wife is white; she's Anglo. I said, "Hey, I live just down the block. Whenever you want to come on over . . ." whatever. So he's come over sometimes and we've gone over there. It's cool, you know. Now, you run into Hispanics that are buying up houses and relocating in the area, when, like I said, twenty years ago, that never existed.

**AA:** That wasn't happening?

**TG:** No.

**AA:** Which issues that affected Latinos in the past continue? Are there others that you can identify?

**TG:** The issues that students deal with most are the newer immigrants, the newer immigrants that are not familiar with the English language, let's say recent immigrants from Mexico that have been here, maybe, three or four years, and they're not up to par as far as our level of English or the general population. So *those* students seem to struggle more, not because of their skin color, but because of the language issue, the newer immigrants.

I'm the director of the learning center where we provide services, and we also provide accommodations for students with disabilities. ESL is not a disability. Okay? So students come in and try to get services from us. The only thing we can do is provide tutoring services to them, but I can't give those kids like extended time for tests, like I do somebody that has dyslexia or somebody that has a learning or psychological disability, ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder], etcetera. So, sometimes, those students are at a disadvantage because ESL is not a protected class, like black, Asian, Hispanic, lower income, or religion status. ESL is not one of these protected classes, so ESL students are not covered by our learning center. So when we try to go above and beyond to get them services, we're not allowed to. We can't. We can't go above and beyond for these guys. So, sometimes, these students struggle. As far as the mainstream students, like for example students that have grown up here, Hispanics that are familiar with the language and are not as limited as the newer immigrants, those kids seem to do fairly well, you know, but it's your newer immigrants that are still struggling. That has been, god! ever since I can remember.

**AA:** That difference between U.S. students or American students and newly arrived immigrants, is that between like white and newly arrived immigrants or like, let's say, between American Latino and Latino immigrants?

**TG:** No, it's ESL students. You could be from Germany and moved here two years ago, and if you don't practice English, your English is going to be limited. So you're going to struggle in classes. The color has hardly anything to do with it. It's mostly the immersion of . . . You're thrown into the English society, but your main language is not English. It has nothing to do with color or culture, etcetera. It's the whole English attitude.

**AA:** Describe the relationship of the Latino community to the majority community.

**TG:** It's getting better. It's not as bad as it used to be where migrants, when we first came here, had this stereotype that we were dirty people, uneducated, the only thing we knew how to do was field work, Hispanics tend to drink a lot, Hispanics tend to be violent, not trustworthy, etcetera, were not accepted in the community. The farmers accepted them because they needed them to boost their economic status. As long as you stayed on the farm, you were okay, you know. [Chuckles] But don't come into town, start a ruckus, or whatever. Now, with the whole advent of the 1970s, 1980s, diversity, diversity, and this, there's a little bit more openness, less stereotypes, less discrimination exists than back then. Now, with the election of President [Barack] Obama, things are getting a little bit better.

The economy though, the way the economy is functioning now though, with job cutbacks and layoffs and plants closing and all that stuff, it is more a feeling of maybe the Hispanics that are moving into the area are taking over some of these jobs that used to be ours but, now, these guys are taking because they're willing to work for a lower wage. Okay? If a company wants to make money, they need to hire the least wage earners for their profits to come up. The Hispanics, we are hardworking individuals. Our main priority is to protect our family, to provide for our family. It doesn't matter if I have to dig ditches or clean out a sewer or whatever, as long as I make some money to put food on the table, to put a house . . . to pay for rent, transportation, etcetera. We are hard workers, but, at the same time, we undercut some of the people in the community. We undercut unions which I'm a strong member of, you know. But it's survival of the fittest. At the same time that the Hispanics are trying to make a living for themselves, white society sees that as a detriment, because they're taking jobs away from us. Well, they're trying to survive the same way that these guys are trying to survive. So it's kind of a detriment.

**AA:** Tell me about the community organizations that in any way touch the lives of Latinos.

**TG:** Like Centro Cultural?

**AA:** That would be one.

**TG:** Well, I served on their Board of Directors for a few years, and they have done some positive things, tons of positive things. They're a part of the community. I love the programs that they provide for kids, the mentorship programs, the career exploration programs that they have, the arts, and the festivities, the maintaining of the culture. They do the *quinceañera* things, the *Quinceañera* Club. They promote speaking Spanish. It's not bad to speak Spanish. [Chuckles] It's like I wish that would have existed when my kids were growing up, because I could have taken them to some of those activities, but it didn't exist back then. It's a positive impact on the community, and, at the same time, white society, the whites in the community, are invited to participate in some of the activities, so they're learning about the customs, traditions, culture of the Hispanic communities, and they try to promote a positive aspect, a positive spin on it, not a negative thing. Whites in the community are looking . . . you know, that's not a bad custom or tradition or whatever. They're learning about us and our traditions and customs, etcetera. I think it's a good program.

**AA:** So it's an opportunity to create awareness of the positive?

**TG:** Yes.

**AA:** Are there Latinos involved in political activity? How and can you cite any successes or achievements?

**TG:** Oh, there's tons. I mean, there's tons. Centro Cultural is probably the main impact for Hispanics in the F-M (Fargo-Moorhead) area. But, statewide, there are organizations. Back then, it was a struggle to serve on boards, because you would have to sweet talk people into voting for you to get on this, to get on that. It's politics. It's politics. I was on the Minnesota State Board of Health under Governor Rudy Perpich, and I served on their board for like four years. But the way that I got on the Minnesota State Board of Health as just the Hispanic community representative is because of my involvement with the teacher's union, with the Minnesota Education Association. And I was president of the Minnesota caucus of the Hispanic branch of educators. That's how I got my appointment to get onto the state board. Once I got onto the state board, once you're in a state position, it's easy to drop down to other leadership types of positions, because if they know that you are on a state board of something, you have credentials or you have knowledge of something.

Well, once I was on the state board, then I was on the West Central Minnesota Initiative Board. I was on the Dollars for Scholars Fargo/Moorhead Board. I was on the Minnesota Migrant Health Board. God! I've been involved with so many organizations countless years. That's where my start was, with the State Board of Health. I was part of the Board of Directors for the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council for a couple of years.

You have to do the politics. It's like anything else. It's all politics. If you know the right politics, which is what I learned from Joel's class, Majority/Minority Relations, Intro to Sociology from Joel, and you never give up and keep that drive. If you don't help the people, they won't be able to help themselves. They have to have a spokesman. They

have to have somebody to back them up, somebody with knowledge of how institutions run based on institutional racism and how to do away with institutional racism by using little tactics that you learn from those classes.

**AA:** Talk to me about the state or condition of Latino education here in the Fargo/Moorhead area.

**TG:** I think it's good, but what is lacking in the Fargo/Moorhead area are more educators like myself and yourself in the system, in the institutions. Yolanda [Arauz] is a positive aspect. You are a positive aspect. I am a positive aspect. Other than that, like in K-12, very few Hispanics, very, very few, especially teachers. We need to convince more Hispanic teachers to move to Fargo/Moorhead to take some of these positions to establish role models for the kids. But, it's tough to try to convince a guy that went to the University of Texas at Austin, graduated there, "Hey, why don't you move to Fargo? We're at seventy degrees below zero. You can get a good job teaching."

**AA:** [Chuckles]

**TG:** Mmmm . . . Most of them are going to say, "I don't think so, Otis." It's tough because of the environment, basically, and the lack of culture here. Like I said, it's growing a little bit, but it'd be easier to convince them to move to Minneapolis/Saint Paul where there's a bigger population than to Fargo/Moorhead. I was on the Moorhead School District personnel—god, what was it?—the Independent School District Personnel Committee, where we would try to encourage minority applicants for teaching positions in the Moorhead School District, but it was tough. We would advertise in Texas newspapers. We would advertise in California newspapers. It was tough to try to get people to apply to move from the south to the north. [Laughter] A lot of it had to do with the climate, you know.

**AA:** So how does that affect the condition of Latino education in the area? Where does that leave us?

**TG:** Now that you've retired and I'm probably going to be retiring in a year or two . . .

**AA:** [Chuckles]

**TG:** . . . there's nobody here in a Hispanic position. Yolanda is still over at Moorhead State. But without people, without young people, young Hispanic people as educators, as leaders out there, kids don't see the opportunities.

I remember one kid coming into my office, a Hispanic kid, and I asked him, "We've got like forty different majors here at the college. What kind of job do you want to end up getting?" He pointed to me and he said, "I want a job like yours where you just sit down and talk to people and make tons of money." I said, "Well, it's not as easy as that." [Laughter]

**TG:** I said, “You have to go to college four years, at the minimum four years, to get a job similar to this. It’s not something that in a week or you’re going to get it in a year. You have to invest four years of your time in order to get a position like this one.” He kind of made me laugh. I said, “Well, that’s cool that you want to be like me, but this is a community college. We don’t offer that kind of a degree. For that, you have to go over to Moorhead State. You have to go talk with Abner about pursuing the four-year degree to become a professional.” We’re lacking those types of individuals.

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** See, I don’t know that much about the stats over at Moorhead State. I know we have Hispanics that graduate year after year, but do they end up staying here? Or do they tend to go back down South? I don’t know. Once they survive one of our winters, most of them go, “Whoa! What the hell am I doing here,” kind of like the first year I was here.

**AA:** They’re counting down the days. [Laughter]

**TG:** Yes. We need more Hispanic educators in the system, but I don’t know how to tackle that problem. Provide incentives. One thing, maybe, would be for the district to provide incentives for minority teachers to come into the area and, let’s say, will knock out some of your student loans if you work in Moorhead for a year or two or something. But, now, with the conditions of the economy and school districts and referendums being shut down, that’s a detriment, also. Districts are losing money, are short of money. Money is lacking in almost all areas. So how can you provide an incentive for minorities, and, yet, the majority of the people here are white? They’re going to knock that down like that. [Mr. Guerrero snaps his fingers.]

**AA:** Yes. Earlier, you talked about new people coming in and the others don’t want them to come in because they might take jobs. So it’s the same situation?

**TG:** Same situation there. We need to hire more minority or Hispanic teachers, but, yet, if you come over here and take a position from a regular citizen of Fargo/Moorhead, it’s just going to be “flack” there.

**AA:** Are there situations that call attention to delivery or acceptance of public services that you are aware of?

**TG:** Do you mean like for the students that I deal with?

**AA:** Anybody in the community, but, sure, students also.

**TG:** It goes back to who you know. I use a tactic here at school that’s called cashing in my chips. I’ve been here thirty-five years. In those thirty-five years, I’ve accumulated tons of chips from people, from a lot of white people, that I have done favors for. Sometimes, I reverse it, and I go back to them, and I say, “Now, it’s your turn to give me some chips.” “Well, what do you need? What do you want?” “Well, I’ve got this kid

that's looking for a job. I heard you guys have an opening, and, remember that time when I helped you?" Da, da, da, da, dah. "You owe me a favor." "Okay, who is the kid?" So throughout the community, I have all these chips saved. I don't know how I do it, but they are up here, and I manage to cash in my chips, and they'll cash them for me by doing favors here. Again, politics. You scratch my back; I'll scratch your back.

**AA:** [Laughter]

**TG:** But knowing about having all these contacts, whatever . . . It's like the counselors here at school. They say, "Ted, you're the guy with all the answers. I've got a kid that can't afford to pay his rent. Who can we call?" Well, first of all, I have to find out where does he live. Fargo? Moorhead? West Fargo? Dilworth, etcetera? Because there's chips depending on the town, you know. Okay, he lives in Fargo. The Presentation Sisters will pay his rent. The Salvation Army would pay his rent. Does he have a disability? Voc Rehab [Vocational Rehabilitation Services] will pay his rent. Is he unemployed? Job Service will pay his rent. Then, there's contacts in each of those. I've got names of people in here, here, here, here that I call. "Hey, I've got a kid who needs help." I've got contacts in churches. If I exhaust all my agency contacts, I've got contacts, ministers, reverends, priests, that will come in. "Hey, I've got one for you, a kid that's hurting." "Okay. Just send him over. Tell him to see Father 'Whatever' at Saint Mary's (or Saint Joe's, or Saint Francis, or whatever)." So you establish all these connections with these people out there, and you work together, basically. They need something from you, from the school . . . For example, let's say, I get a church that calls in. "You know what? We need a sign," or "We need something printed," or "We need something built by the carpentry department." So then I go sweet talk the carpentry guys. "Hey, I've got this agency that needs something built, a big sign, two by four. Do you have a scrap lumber?" "Oh, yes, yes. We can do something for you, Ted." At the same time, when the carpentry department is hurting for numbers—let's say they don't have enough students for their program—I do my best to try to build that program, because he gave me something at one time, and, now, it's time for me to give him back something. So it's give and take. It's cashing in chips, and chips, and chips, and chips, and chips. [Chuckles]

**AA:** Networking.

**TG:** Networking. Yes, I guess you can call it networking.

**AA:** Describe the realities of integrating a long established community, whether it is Latinos that have been here many, many, many years, decades, or a white community with more recent arrivals from Texas and Mexico?

**TG:** Like I said earlier, the only drawback is that the newer immigrants are limited in English. Sometimes, those folks need *more* intervention from people like us to help them get an apartment, to help them find a job, to help them do this, do that, etcetera. Those people tend to need more services than the ones that were raised here, like my boys, or whatever.

My boys, by knowing that I was their dad, they knew that dad has connections. I need this. To this day, they call me. Like my boy was laid off this summer and he said, "Dad, I don't know how to file for unemployment." I said, "Well, there's a job service." "Job service? I've never filed for unemployment." "Well, here's what you do. This is the first step. This is the second step." So I get on the Internet; I use the Internet a lot. I get on the Internet, look for the job service office in my boy's hometown, contact person. Who is the contact person?" Da, da, da, dah. So, now, I know the name of the guy, the phone number. You're supposed to ask this, this, this, this to get your unemployment. This is the guy, Dan Jones in his office in whatever. So I use the Internet *a lot* for this networking thing that you're talking about.

Oh! I forgot the question. [Laughter]

**AA:** I'll start over. Describe the realities of integrating the new arrivals from Texas and Mexico.

**TG:** Then, I go back to my network and try to help these people. I have students that are known as prospects. Prospects are students that are not enrolled but are thinking of coming. Yet, they've got all these issues before even enrolling. They don't have a place to live. They don't have finances to go to school. They've got health situations. Maybe they have a psychological problem. They may have chemical dependency problems. So, sometimes, I counsel these students, "You know what? You're not ready for school yet. You're not ready. First, you've got to take care of a house. You've got to take care of your health issues. You've got to enroll your kids in school. You've got to do this, do that." Once we get these things under control, now, we can talk about college. Okay?

**AA:** Yes.

**TG:** So, let's work on these things, even though they're not a student. "Well, let's find you a place to live. Let's find you a part time job. Let's do this. Let's get your kids enrolled in school. Let's do all that stuff, before we even think about going to school." So, then I'm trying to cash chips for these services. Once we've got that done, okay, now we're ready to go to school. But for the new immigrant, it's more leg work that you've got to do versus the normal kids.

**AA:** I'm done.

**TG:** Cool. I'm done at three thirty, which is like in ten minutes.

[End of the Interview]