

JACKIE GRANT

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Tape #1

Interview by Micheal L Minthorn

Transcribed by Micheal L Minthorn

Side A

I: This is an oral history interview with Jacqueline Leno Grant, uh, who is the former Director of the Native American program at Eastern Oregon University. Could you tell me your full name, where and when you were born and that sort of thing?

JG: Uh, my full name is Jacqueline Colleen Leno Grant. I was born in Portland, Oregon in 1953, April 12th. Um, I was the- am the oldest of five children and, um, my father is, um, an enrolled member of Grande Ronde. We are of Rogue River-Umpqua Band of Indians. And my mother is Norwegian.

I: Um, um, now we'll go into this later but, um, at the time you were born was the Grand Ronde tribe already, um, terminated by the government?

JG: Let's see. They were terminated officially in 1954, but, um, when I went to live, my father when he found out about me, um, married my mom in December of, uh, '53. Then we went to the Grand Ronde reservation. And, it was always considered a reservation even though, um, shortly after that it became, you know, that was the termination time. They were going through that right at that time.

I: So, uh, you lived on the reservation then, as you were growing up?

JG: Um-hm. That's where I grew up. Um-hm.

I: And where did you go to school your, uh, in your, uh, your formal education?

JG: Formal education, um, elementary and secondary was at, um, the Grand Ronde Elementary School. Was the same school that my dad had gone to, and, it was an old two- uh, two-story schoolhouse. And then we moved to Tillamook, Oregon, so I did some of my junior high, high school there. And then graduated, uh, from Portland. Went back to Portland and actually graduated from Reynolds District-high school district.

I: Then, um, what, what- how did- you graduated from Eastern Oregon University?

JG: Um-hm. Um-hm.

I: Uh, tell us briefly about your, your college, um, background then.

JG: Well, I- I wasn't really- I wasn't prepared for college. And so, I didn't really know that I'd ever be a college student. Um, but my husband, uh, he was a really good mentor, and he was college student. And so, really, when I met him, he kind of urged me to think about college. And so I tried out a summer term at Mt. Hood Community College, and then I tried out a fall term at Central Oregon Community College where I had a Native American advisor. His name was Pete Azure. He was an Alaskan Native man. And, Pete wondered- came down and found me, and said, "you know, your grades are good enough, you need to either decide to go to a four-year university or a college, or, you know, do something because, you know, ___ (38). That he knew that I would do well if I moved on, after that one term at that place. That was interesting. So, I came to Eastern. And Steve was transferring to Eastern Oregon University. I think it was Eastern Oregon State College at the time. And, um, he starts Eastern school right away; he started in the fall- he started winter 1973. And had transferred from Southern Oregon University. And then, I started in '74, and just spent that one year, um at Eastern, and had a ___ (46). Again, I wasn't- I didn't have a really good high school education. I wasn't college material, I don't think. People didn't really see me as college material, and so, I didn't really take the challenging courses that I should have took. So, when I got to Eastern I had a wonderful, um, teacher-mentor. Her name was Lenora Hugg. And, um, I think she's a Union country, um, resident ___. (51) She coached me and helped me learn how to read at the college level. Um, do college- you know, all the tricks that students learned to be a good college student. So, um, I just, um, that's kinda' how it started. But after that year one then I left the program, um, I must, because I- my husband graduated and I really wasn't connected in with any particular group or club or- hadn't really connected with the college, I guess you would say.

I: When did you return to college and finish that degree?

JG: Um, it was 1986. It was 11 years later- um, gone. We were living in Wallowa County, and had been up there, and- went to Wallowa County just because, um, our little savings couldn't get us a house in Union county at the time. And so we took out nest egg and bought a house in Wallowa County. And um, had three children and our youngest son, Jack- he moved- our youngest Jack, he was two and a half when I came back to school, and decided I'm gonna' be- finish that degree! So, 1986.

I: What- what is your degree in?

JG: It's uh, psychology and it's in business- I never did finish the business minor, but I had- I did take some business classes, and...

I: When did you graduate?

JG: In 1989.

I: Now, tell us about your husband Steve, briefly. You, you met him before you came to Eastern Oregon, you said? So, uh, give us a rundown on your husband.

JG: Um-hm. Yeah, I met Steve in Tillamook, actually. He was- he- he was paying his own way through college, so he would go two terms, and- winter and spring. And he worked two terms. And, summer and fall. So, he- it took him six years to complete his degree. But, he was at Southern (SOU) when I met him, and um... So I met him in Tillamook because that's where his dad was building houses. And, I was back there working. Um, and then when he, uh, left to go back to Southern Oregon, uh, he asked me to go down there with him. And so I did, and so I- I really just kind of followed him around, I think, because of that, "Oh, this might be the- this might be the real thing here." And, uh, we did. We ended coming to Eastern together, and eastern Oregon. But, like I said the winter of 1973, and we stayed- I think he was takin' a year off here and there throughout that time, but we always keep returning to, to La Grande and to Union county.

I: Did you marry him after you came to LaGrande, or, were you married before you came to Union county?

JG: Um-hm. Yeah. We got married in, uh 1972 after we'd been in La Grande for- I think we together for almost four years before we got married. Oh yeah, it was after we- I think- we got married in Weiser, Idaho just because we- we didn't like Oregon's rules on- we wanted to do something special, and in Oregon, we had to wait. So we just drove to Idaho and, and got married in Weiser one weekend. And then had a big party later.

I: I see. Now, um, your husband still has a business here in Union county? Can you tell us, uh, a little but about that? The name of the business, what it's about, and- your husband's name, do tell us that.

JG: Mm-hm. Yes, um, yes, my husband's name is Steve Grant. And, he's from central Oregon. Grew up in Madras, Oregon. Um, yes, he was, um, he is a college graduate. Graduated from Eastern Oregon in- Eastern Oregon State College in 1975. Um, with a science degree. Science-mathematics degree. Um, his ___ Grant (98) dad did not want him to be a builder. But, low and behold, when ya' gotta' pay the bills you, you go back to what you know. And, so, he's always done odd jobs and then we decided to do this business, and, it's JLG, the initials JLG, and actually they are my initials, but they are actually Steve's ___ (103) initials as well. And um, we go the business going in La Grande and, um, that's what job that our family now do in Union county all these years. And it's um, our son's in the business, and Joaquin, and so it's a- it's a long-term kind of thing. It's what kept- kept all of us here, I think. And in Union county is that- is that building business.

I: And it's JLG?

JG: Mm-hm. It's a home construction, home, uh, contracting business, yeah. So, he has his own remodeling and- 'course during the hard times in eastern Oregon and Wallowa County particularly, you know, he had to do that on the side and then have another job. Because, you know, people don't have the money to even remodel. So, yeah.

I: But when did that business begin?

JG: I think we were- (tape stopped for carillon bell)

I: - we were talking about when the business began.

JG: I think we got our business license and all our ___ (117) in about, uh, (tape artifact), I wanna' say 19- hm, it's about 30 years, so what's 30 years from now?

I: Oh, prob'ly about '76-

JG: -'76 or somewhere, yeah, we got married in '76, so I think it was right about that same time. '75-76, about there.

I: And uh, what is your, uh function with the business? What do you do with the business now other than lend your initials and your father in-law's initials.

JG: <chuckle> When it first started out I actually helped with the work. You know, lifting, work, clean-up work, was learning a little bit about the trade. Um, but now, uh, after children I- after having the kids I didn't really like takin' 'em out on the job site. And it wasn't always the safest place for little kids to be running around, so, um I just did the books. And keep track of all the, you know, do the paperwork part. And, um-hm...

I: Then, um, you periodically return to Union county now? But, you're living in La Gran- er, Grand Ronde now, but, uh, how often do you come back then and, and what do you do when- are you dealing in the business when you come back?

JG: Um-hm. Yes. Um, I prob'ly come back, uh, once every couple of weeks. Yeah. Pay the bills. Try to keep the books up. I'm not doing the greatest job because it's at a distance- you don't do as, as well, but I just help out where I can. Um, our son's building a house now and so we, we, we've got our- a job going in Imbler right now. Steve and Joaquin are on that job. And then, they've got a house job up here by the campus on 5th Street- off of 5th Street.

I: So, does your husband still, uh, does he stay here longer, um, because of this business? Is he actually living here?

JG: Um-hm. Yeah. Yeah, he- he lives here and I live down there. So we have this, um, yeah- sometimes he'll come down there if he can, but, summertime's a busy time for the building business. So he doesn't get away as much as I can get away. So, yeah, we're doing the long distance, uh, commute-thing.

I: Does JLG have an office of its own, or does it operate out of a home?

JG: It operates out of a home. Yeah. We're a small, just family business. So, yeah.

I: Okay, the next are I wanna' talk about with you is, um, the, uh, uh, your involvement with the Native American program as a student, or before you, uh, uh, became the director of that program. What was your involvement then?

JG: Uh, when I started as a student, uh, in 1986, um, I also got a half-time job. As a secretary assistant with the Native American program. And I didn't really intend for that to happen, but, um, the current- the person that was in the position Lorena Thompson, who, um, from Umatilla. She was in her senior year, and she had told, um, her boss and then my boss Joan Jackson that she really wanted to concentrate her senior year and do her- uh, do- make sure everything was in order with her grades. And she was a very good student and she really wanted to just dedicate herself to her studies. So, this opening, half-time job came open. And as a secretary for the program then, you know, you had an opportunity- at that time the secretary took notes for the Speel-ya Club. And, Speel-ya Club had, um a lot of ___ (171) and, there was just a lot of interaction between the program and the club. And we almost, you know, then was, they were very much connected. So that- I got involved with the club in that way. And I served one year as the President of the Speel-ya Club. Uh, again, when I was going to school. So, I worked, uh, half-time, and um, went to school full-time. And um, did that all through the summer. Three straight years, summer included, so I could get done. Basically.

I: What other things did you do out- tell us about Speel-ya.

JG: Oh, it was a great, uh, a great club. They went- there wasn't a large, um, enrollment in the club at that time. Or, a large enrollment of students that could be identified as Native Americans. And um, at Eastern Oregon State College at that time. I think- I wanna' say there one- between 36 and 42 students that we could actually identify. And so- and I would say, maybe, 6 to- 6 to 8 of those students were really, um, involved in the club. They ___ (188), they did the spring pow-wow. It used to be called the Spring Root Feast. Um, um, it- later it went to the, to the Spring Pow-Wow. Its name changed. They did events on campus for cultural awareness. Uh, talks. Went out to elementary and secondary schools and did, you know, presentations for young- young kids. Um, they were very, just, a very good active organization. And on of Eastern Oregon State College's oldest. Um, clubs

and organization. Uh, I think the Radio Club was another one that had maybe been formed around the same time.

I: Its my understanding that Speel-ya, or the Native American program is also one of the oldest, uh, programs maybe on the west coast, or, or in the United States.

JG: Mm-hm. Um-hm.

I: Um, now, we're talking about when you worked for this program. That prob'ly would have been in the 80's then?

JG: Yes.

I: Were you involved with Speel-ya or Native American program in the- in the brief time you here in the 70s?

JG: The 70s. I wasn't. I did not, for some reason I didn't get connected in, Number one, I couldn't find there office. And, um, I wasn't sure. No one really directed me to look them up, or, you know, kind of connect in there. And, so, I didn't get involved. Although I saw a few brown faces on campus at the time and was kind of curious about over where are they- where do they go? But I could never really find 'em. So, um, I didn't get involved in the 70s.

I: Okay. Who was the program director when you worked for, uh, Native American program?

JG: Her name is, uh, Joan Jackson. Um, she was a professor at Eastern Oregon University. Or Eastern Oregon Sate College. And she also, um, directed the counseling program and, I think she had testing and testing services, counseling program, and the Native American program.

I: Um, you said maybe about 30 people were involved at that time?

JG: Mm-hm.

I: What, what tribes did they come from?

JG: Uh, the wonderful things about Eastern Oregon State College, I think, for the Native students, and prob'ly all students. But, they came from everywhere because- one of the reasons, we didn't have out-of-state tuition. And so, we had Alaskan Native students, we had students- most of the largest population of students came from Umatilla, um, just over the hill. Um, Yakama students and Warm Springs students. (226) And in fact, probably when the program- in the 70s- they- the hope of the enrollment was like a hundred students going to school at Eastern Oregon State College in the 70s.

I: A hundred Native American students?

JG: Uh-huh. Yes. And most of those students came from those three reservations. Uh, the Warm Springs, the Umatilla, and uh, Yakama. So, uh...

I: Then how long did you hold this position, uh, as the secretary of the program?

JG: Well, I- then I graduated in 1989. I left the position, and- it was because of my experience that I got in the- at Eastern. Um, and in the Native American program. Uh, I landed my first job at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. And- to develop a program. And so, I applied and got an interview, and, and got the job. Um, so, the- we kind of trenched over there. We were there for one year. And, would have liked to have stayed longer, but, at that time my husband's- he had this building business and was very much connected to Union county. And so, then he's making, um, twice a week trips. So, he would come home on Wednesday night. Come to Lewiston. And on Wednesday night. And then go back to work over here by Wallowa County on Thursday. And then come back home to Lewiston on Friday. And so, we did that for one year and, uh- all of our kids, of course- we had the youngest in daycare and the other tow in school. And then, after school programs. And I was trying to hold down this new job. I was kind of had most of the chartering, you know, uh work. So, we decided after a year. Well, maybe that was a little too much to bite off and then- so, we came back to Union county.

I: I see. So, you were saying that originally the, the annual event that uh, Speel-ya put on was, uh, Spring Root Feast?

JG: Um-hm.

I: What did that involve? What was that about?

JG: It was, it was a wonderful program of- Steve and I just got to attend it- we didn't- again, we weren't going to school here, we just came up for the program. But, what I understand was elders from the Umatilla tribe and possibly from the Warm Springs tribe and Yakama tribes would come over. Students actually went out and dug the roots. They helped- they showed 'em, you know, how to dig the roots and some of the students obviously knew. ____ (269) But there's a- everyone was invited to come and get- and pull the roots. There's pictures in our office in the old, um, Native American program office, but had the students have all the roots out there. And, it was very traditional. It, you know, like you would do at a longhouse on a reservation. And, so, there was- yes, the- lots of ceremonies. And, and the blessings of the first foods and the first roots and, and how things were lined up. And it was a, it was a wonderful way for Native culture to be, um, to be happening on a college campus. And I think it was probably one of the first in Oregon to be doing something like that.

- I: How many people would attend that?
- JG: Oh, my gosh, it was up in the- in the student center that we used to call Hoke Center, on the second floor. And uh, the year we attended there was hardly room to even dance. The drums, and the people and, it was just jam packed.
- I: There was- they began with like, a grand entry? Or, yeah and then into the feasting portion itself. The ceremony- did they do drumming and singing?
- JG: Um-hm. Um-hm. There were drums. Um-hm.
- I: There was a- before the meal?
- JG: Yes, they did drumming, and they did- you know, the prayer, uh, the prayer and the drum song before the meal. They would have the meal and then they went into the, um, the dancing. And, uh- I don't know how much of a competition. Eastern- it- this spring pow-wow has not ever been a huge competition because ___ had a lot money (296). You know, connected with it. But it was a kind of a pow-wow, I think where people came to honor, number one, the culture. As Native people. And it was a diverse group, because you'd have Alaska Native students, a lot of the students came from Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon. And, they were from all different tribes. Um, so there was that sharing of cultures, but they would follow kind of the traditions of the high plateau peoples that are in this area. The Yakama and Nez Perce, uh, the Warm Springs, Umatillas. So, um, I think that, you know- they would have dancing competitions and you might get a little prize money. But, uh- and then they would, of course, have the grand entry and then, 'course they retired the flags. It was pretty much, you know, kind of traditional as how they do pow-wows now.
- I: Has this been going on for awhile before you came into it?
- JG: You know, I think they got the program- three professors actually wrote the grant to get the Native American program. It was called the Indian Education Institute at that time. In 1969, three professors at, uh, Eastern, Eastern wrote this grant. And, um, to get this program going. And when the grant was awarded, probably about '69-70 year. Or '70-71. So, it, it went- I think we only came to the root feast a couple of years. But I'm not sure- I'm supposing that it went on. When I came back in '86 it had changed from the Root Feast, in the, in the 70s to, in the 80s it was just the Spring Pow-Wow. Uh, didn't have- we didn't go out and dig the roots, and uh, prepare the roots. Or, or about- I'm not sure why that change took place. Um, but I- we could probably ask some people and find out. But, I don't- I do know a change took place.
- I: Now, did you participate in this festival at that time? Or you said you and your husband maybe came and, and went to the feast?

JG: Yeah, we went to the feast and watched the drumming and dancing. Uh, where I grew up, uh, in a terminated tribe we didn't really practice the, the drumming and dancing part of what is a part of Native culture. What people would normally think of as maybe native culture? We were more, um; I don't want to say underground with our Indian-ness, if you will. But maybe that's part of that- um, certain things you did practice. Story time telling, um, you know, um, value belief systems. Um, value systems, you know- those, something that the government couldn't, um, take away. 'Cause there were things you hold inside of yourself. But they just, they- external display of Indian-ness, or what people wanna'- can sometimes associate with Indian-ness. Um, so I hadn't seen a lot of dancing, and drumming, and I found it pretty fascinating at the time, I think. At the time, but didn't dance, um, you know I wouldn't consider myself a dancer. Although I know a few things to know how to do. The social dancing and the welcome round dance and things like that.

I: Let's talk about, um when you came in to the directorship of the Native American program. When did that take place?

JG: Um, the summer of, uh, 19- no, let's see. I was in Lewiston for one year, so '89-90-91. And, then, um, Dick Stenard, my uh, he was the Dean of Students when I left Eastern. Perhaps he became the Dean of Students shortly after I came in 1986. And we became pretty close, uh, friends. And, so when I left he was very happy for me to go to Lewiston and kind of spread my wings and get some more experience. But when he heard I was coming back, they actually called and offered me the directorship because in that interim my supervisor Joan Jackson had gone back. Actually, my senior year I ran the whole program, uh, because she left and took a sabbatical to go to, uh, get her doctorate. And finish up her doctorate work. And, which was a wonderful opportunity for her. It was great opportunity for me because I got- I didn't- I didn't get the pay that she got to do the program. But I really, didn't really care about that. But I thought this will be a great opportunity to, you know, actually run a program, do the budgeting, all of that. In my senior year I was finishing up as senior, and, and doing the program. Um, kind of curve, or interim director, if you will. And then, um, gave me a chance, I think, for Dick Stenard to kind of see my- what I could do. And so when he heard I was coming back to La Grande, and Steve and I were moving our family back to Union county, um, then he called and said, "This opening we want you to apply." For the directorship.

I: Now, is it still called the Institute then, or were they already-

JG: -no. It would- they made it into the Native American program. Let's see, it, it changed, uh, in 1986. They had changed the name from the Na- uh, Indian Education Institute a year or two before I arrived in '86. I wanna' say '84 to 86, is, right in there they changed the name.

I: So, basically- before that time, uh, the program was not, um directed by a Native American. It was sort of a faculty, um, duty?

JG: Um-hm. Um-hm.

I: To offer this program?

JG: Right. Right. And I think, um, I think they really wanted it to be more academic focused in nature and actually have a degree in Native American studies, or Indian studies or something like that. I think that was an original attempt, but, uh, intent of the, of the faculty who were involved. And then what happened was, as with state institutions when budgets get cut, or something needs to be cut- that, uh, these kinds of programs that are maybe more targeted and to, um, um, special populations, you know, they seem to kind of go first. I don't know why that is, but I think- and that may not have- I mean I don't know the politics and what happened back then. But, that may have, uh; it didn't end up being that. It ended up being- when it was the Native American program it was really a student support services program. Helping students with, um, academic advising, course-selecting the right courses. Um, trying to get them involved in, you know, not only Speel-ya. But maybe other things that they would rather- hook them into the university life. And, and, give them a place. The program became kind of a "home away from home" a little bit. So, um, I think- prob'ly some people were saddened that it lost its academic focus to be a- a minor perhaps. And what, to them on the students services side. But, those things happen.

I: Right. So, you took the helm of that program then after you spent a year in Lewiston?

JG: Mm-hm.

I: And, uh, you held that until this last- a year ago?

JG: No. Up until a year ago, 2005. I retired at- I so- um, well I actually didn't retire, I put my resignation in. I think it was around, uh, June of, of 2005. Yeah. After 18 years here and, um, it was a wonderful experience. A lot of growing- I did a lot of growing and learning, and it was a good time. After I took the helm, though, in, um '90-91 we were really able- and under Dick Stenard, you know the Dean of Students. Um, he would put money towards the program, and he supported the program. And we got the student population- enrollment went back up to, oh 90, let's see- I think one- a couple years we'd had almost 90 students. Between '90 and '95 enrolled students. Some of them are distance education students who maybe, uh, didn't always come to campus. But our program- we would try to stay in touch with them and send them newsletters and- just kind of keep them in the loop. Um, so we did really well when we had financial support and that backing from the Dean of Students. We really, uh, the program did really well.

I: Um, the Native American program- does that director have faculty rank?

JG: It has instructor rank. And so I was able to hang on to that instructor rank. Although some faculty by that time. New faculty questioned why that was the case. And, um, you know. It was that way in the beginning and I- I fought to keep that in the- in that position because I think that it gave, you know, it gave that person, um some, some clout, if you will. To try to- to me, personally rather than being- you know I don't have a real huge ego to feed. But, to me it meant that I could work with faculty one on one for the success of the Native student. Just like I could work with the Dean of Students one on- you know, one on one for the success of the- of the student. And help, you know, kind of bridge those two very different schools. Academic, you know the faculty and the student side. So, I felt it was real important.

I: Did you have any teaching responsibilities during the time you were here? Did you teach anything?

JG: Um, the only classes that I taught- I didn't have, like- like a regular professor- 'cause I don't have the PHD. Um, or even the Masters. Um, the classes that I taught were classes like success- college success classes---

End of Side A

Side B

I: We were talking about, uh, teaching cultural courses or things like that?

JG: Yes, yeah. Um, cultural kind of awareness classes and student, uh, student skill-building classes. Those kinds of things. Um, we often, uh, I felt very honored to be invited after people got- some of the faculty got to know me in the nursing department. Um, and the anthropology department. Uh, would go in and do class presentation kinds of things, for, you know, uh, different faculty on campus. So, that was- it was a good way to just, again, bridge, um, and keep the lines of communication open. Uh, for the benefit of the Native students.

I: How many Native students were on campus when you left? Well, what- was it larger-?

JG: -it was smaller. We- after, uh, Dick Stenard's death. Um- I'm trying to think of the year that he passed away- we could look that up. But it was- I'm gonna' say 1993 or '4, but I'm not sure on that date. Um, but after his passing, um, the program really began to struggle because I didn't have the support. Well, we had an interim, and I don't know that I could say that any one person _____. (20) But, when you have an interim, um folks coming in you have to re-educate people about your program and about the importance and about its history and where it's been and how far it's come. Um, that's all very- I think people like that and they honor that and they'll listen. But when it comes down to dollars, and at the same time the state of Oregon began really spiraling downhill, um, into a downward spiral. It had been going on but it was accelerating for just monies. So again, not as much money could come into the program. Um, the budgets would get shorter, so you wouldn't be able to go out and do the recruiting that you needed to do. And, so there were as host of things, so, I would say there was probably- I don't know...I'm guessing maybe around 55 students when I left. There are five that identified in- and the club was- has been struggling without (?) (32) leadership. Um, still putting on the annual- you know, the annual, uh, pow-wow. And just not as, um, of a close-knit group or a group as committed and dedicated to carry on the activities of Speel-ya, so that's going- you know that had been going through a, um- just a down- a down cycle rather than an up cycle.

I: In terms of participation?

JG: Yeah, and that had actually been happening several years before I left. And- you try as a director- try to figure out, "Why are these things happening?" And you try to figure out, you know, getting new people in. But, we kind of also have to- it has a life of its own. And so you have to kind of step back and let things happen, too. And let things evolve. Um, because you can't interfere too much.

I: So, your recruiting duties, uh, where would you recruit students? And I assume you were recruiting Native American students for campus? How did that work?

JG: It worked- uh, we had a great- gosh; you'd go all over Oregon. I concentrated on Oregon, uh, Washington, and Idaho. And, again, would just go to Career Fairs. Uh, reservation, um, schools. Um, we went down to Chemawa a couple of times. That- well more than a couple of times, but at Chemawa it was more about, um, just go and try to just be there for the students. Or, just try to get to know them because they, um, it changed now. But at the time I was going down there they didn't even support the students to have enough math, for example, to get into a four-year school. So, we'd talk about two-year schools. And, you know, building their skills and trying to make it- have students make that transition from a two-year school to a four-year school. But it- it didn't work the same. At the same time, um, you know so recruiting was good in those lots of, um- and the tribes now- the Oregon tribes and uh, Yakama, I know does a great career fair. The uh, um, the Nez Perce does a nice career, uh, college and career fair. But, we just try to go to those events and get students. I would try to go, um, take a staff member. I always try to take a student. It would be best to take a student from- Burns, for example, if you were going to Burns. Or from Umatilla. And um, they could talk to students.

I: Did you find, uh, recruiting methods to be successful? Were there direct ties, or direct admissions that came out of that?

JG: I think- yes, uh, at the- especially the early years. There was- you know when we came back in those early 90's. I think they were very successful and the program was strong. The campus support was strong. Um, but when things started to change at Eastern- different faculty came on, um, not every one knew the history of the program. Or the history of even where they had moved to. There- the Native people. Um, in eastern Oregon. And um, so I think students too just- in the later 90's in- you know it didn't seem like all recruiting efforts were as, uh, plausible- or, as fruitful. And, you know, I don't know really the reason for that. I'm not sure- I think it's- the program has pretty much tried to offer the same services. Um, but people had left. Old faculty had left who really kind of "got it," if you will. New faculty came in that, "Ehh, eeh," maybe not quite as aware of, of the environment and where they were, and, maybe you didn't have the sensitivities.

I: Did the, um, did the program- the Native American program, did you have to eventually take on other programs as well as NAP?

JG: Um-hm. Yeah.

I: Tell us about that.

JG: That, uh, a directive from, I believe one of, um- uh, even the interim started introducing that, and, um, then, that last, um, uh, Student Affairs Vice President had sent- uh, the success of the native American program was really good even if we didn't have a lot of students. We were getting graduates out of the class. When I graduated in 1989 I was one of 3. And the year before they had- didn't have any. And then the year before they two. So, it went like that for a long time, probably through the late 70s and early 80s. They'd get one or two or three. And, um. The 80s and the early 90s, we were having 7, 8, uh, graduates. And so the program was really doing its job. It was really being- the students were being successful and the program could take- at least all or part of that. I think faculty also owned a part of that because there was a lot of faculty who would call me and say, "You know what? I haven't seen so-and-so in class for a couple of days. Can you follow up and see if they're okay?" And so, if I hadn't seen 'em in the office that was a real red flag. So, I'd go and call them at their home and try to run by and, you know, just check on 'em. Sometimes they had to leave to go home for unexpected business. And just couldn't tell anybody. So, you know. Faculty did that in those, in those years. Um... When we had to- I think what Eastern wanted was they wanted success for all of the minority students. And so we took on the Hispanic- uh, first it was the Hispanic students. And I tried to tell the university leaders that this is great. I support the idea, I support education for students. But I said there's some differences between Native students and Hispanic students and I don't know if we can lump 'em all together. The Micronesian students were another group- Pacific Islanders were another group. Um, I think the Native students had more in common, if you will with some of the Pacific Islanders and the Micronesian students, and, um, I'm all for building cultural competency across groups of people. But, these- the university never took my advice to give each group kind of their own little space so that people could feel autonomous and come together when they wanted to come together. Not be forced together into a place. And they never- either there wasn't enough money, or there wasn't enough space, or something. And, you know, I was asked again and again why this was proposal for that was... And I- pretty soon I just got tired of recycling the proposal because it just wasn't gonna' happen. And I...

I: Now, did this, uh, this- seems like additional responsibility to your main job.

JG: Um-hm.

I: Did this come about because of the budget cuts that were coming? Didn't they have their own directors?

JG: Well, no, it was- I did take on the extra responsibility. I got- I got some raises and promotions along that time. You know, cost of living kinds of things and got some promotions- raises to do that. So that part was, you know- that part was okay. But the funding to actually have enough space for the students, more students. Or more computers for the students where you could kind of have them in a central location where the students might wanna' join. I think it was a- I think

it's a goal of Easterns to do that, but they don't come across with the money. It's a lot of talk, and, you know, the funds weren't there. Um, actually student government were- I think that student government was a big push of that- we got the Multicultural Student center over in Hoke. And that was really helpful. Because that became, um, a spot- a little bit larger. People could come and go. They didn't feel- they could have meetings there. It was kind of open. Um, and really it was student government who helped get that space for all of the groups. And, uh, Speel-ya could have- just kind of was happy to kind of help spearhead that along I think and, and see that happen. But like- did they have an office or did they have their own director or coordinator? I suggested it and, and urged the university to do that but they just couldn't find the funding to do that, I suppose.

I: Um, how- what, what things did you, uh do in your leadership to help, uh, Speel-ya with the annual pow-wow when it- when you became the director? And then, of course it was a responsibility of yours. Of the program.

JG: Um-hm. Um-hm. Of the program. Um-hm. I think, um, early on when we had good club participation and strong leadership. President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer. We- the program and the club worked really closely together. And uh, gosh, we would help with all the technical assistance. All of the funding to mail out letters of invitation. Make the flyers. Um, you know, keep he data base. So you had a mailing of folks, and, help advertise and market, um, which is always a weak area. But, we- that was one of the ways I think we did try to help with that. And then just cooking the meal and being there and, you know, doing- helping, um... The last year I- two years before I helped the Speel-ya President, we actually did write a grant to the Wildhorse Foundation together. And that was funded. And then- 'course the students move on and so when the report came time to come that was the director's job to make sure that report got done on time and that things were- the monies were spent how we told 'em we were gonna' spend 'em. So, kind of oversight in that way. Um...

I: My perception is that, uh, the pow-wow here at Eastern was actually a well known event, uh, around the state.

JG: It is.

I: On other campuses and uh, most of the tribes I've been involved with know about it. Uh, that's actually kind of the loop for them. You know for Eastern Oregon University is that pow-wow. So, uh, do you see, uh your Native American alumni from Eastern at this? Are there regular people that you must know from Eastern over the years?

JG: Uh, yes. There are people who return every year. And alumni who can get up here. People who've supported it, went to school here. And it is well known across the state fro those reasons because we have students who've moved to different places. So, it is, um a time to get together. I think it's- just from a-

because I came back this last year and, um, I think we need to build that more as alumni. I- more alums need to get involved in, um- maybe build that up. And I'm not sure exactly how that will- how that will evolve. But, I know there's a core group of people who would probably support that idea. I have to say just- I think there's prob'ly some things I could have done better as the director to get more alumni involved. But just having too many responsibilities, and maybe not enough time to cultivate that more when I was in that position. Is- that's probably a regret that I would have. But, um, I think it could still be done if people wanted to do it.

I: How do you get the drummers and singers and uh, emcee and the other people who play very vital roles during the pow-wow?

JG: We, um- Umatilla has been our- because they are our closest reservation and group of tribal people. We usually try to get our emcee identified and then our emcee will help us with those other components of- the drummers and, um, the lead singers. Sometimes we know lead- men and dancers, and women dancers that will ask. Sometimes it'll be alum. But, uh, we do depend on our emcee to help us with that. Um, when I came- uh, there's different individuals have done that. Most recently Fred Hill has been, uh, emceeing for the pow-wow. And he's wonderful. And really does go out of his way to help us. And our host drum- you know, um, this last year Howtme Singers (Ed: various spellings of this name, but Howtme is the Indian name for a place on the south reservation known as McKay Creek.) they were wonderful. And they- I think they helped to just- just kind of promote and they usually have a nice turnout of drum, uh, at the pow-wow. And lots of young dancers which I'm just so thrilled with because, um, one of the things I think about that we've tried to do it- um, the years that I was at Eastern and the years before I came is to marry the idea of, "Yes, you need a formal education in today's world. But you also need your cultural education." And you need to be culturally knowledgeable. Not all of us know about our rituals, our ceremonies. And I think that piece is really important. Indian people need those components, I think. Whether they wanna' go out and start dancing, or- that's a personal choice. But they need to understand the importance of both of those things because for- I think Indian people who succeed at- in different environments at the university are strong in themselves as Indian people first. So, when I see the young people out there dancing and learning and practicing their traditions, you know, hopefully they'll all be college students someday. Or be in a ___ (229) program where they are doing something that they'll have that cultural piece. So I think to me that's- that was a unique thing about the pow-wow, uh, at Eastern is- and the people who came here was- parents that were students who came here, you know. Elderly people who have sent their children here and Eastern took really good care of their children while they were here. And they were, you know, "giving back", actually to the university. I don't know if the university "gets back," but the Indian people get it! So, um...

- I: So that's been- uh, actually that program is a great ambassador for Eastern whether the administration knows it or not?
- JG: Exactly. You asked me about recruiting earlier, and I forgot to mention that we always, um, treated our pow-wow like a show. We were- I mean, we wanted people to come and, and uh, see our materials and look over Eastern and have a good time and, we really wanted- some of the faculty would come and participate and, and be involved. Um, but towards the later years- the administration didn't really kind of ever make that connection. That- the importance of being there and, and um, going around and meeting the people. You know, introducing themselves and shaking their hands, and, you know, meeting the people. Um, but just customs in the home. Any home. Any reservation.
- I: So, no administrators really attend then on a formal basis then?
- JG: Not, not recently. Not recently. So-
- I: Is there a particular format for the pow-wow? Uh, a program or something-
- JG: No, no, but generally, um, some- some years the students were ambitious and they wanted to do two-day pow-wows, or two grand entries, and they tried those. We always- always really tried to let the students learn as they went along. And, and tried not to discourage any of their ideas. So, we tried those things, but we went back to, uh- this year they went back to the old format, which is a one grand entry at 7 in the evening and we'd always have the meal at 5. And, um, so that's be a community meal that- salmon. Umatilla tribe- the fisheries department has been donating salmon for years. Before that, I've gone to the elders, um elders um, program and they donated salmon. Elzie and Emma Farrow went the first year to run that then. They, uh, Elzie told me, he said, "You come over to the elders and ask for fish for your pow-wow." And they supported the education program here for years and years. Like many of the elders, um, did. And especially- I got to know the ones from Umatilla a little bit better than Yakama and Nez Perce country just because of the location. I could travel there easy.
- I: Well Emma Farrow and I were on the Umatilla Tribal Education Board- she chaired that board for years. I know, uh, and they had- she had children who came to Eastern.
- JG: Yeah. She did.
- I: Uh, Mike and uh, his wife Lou-
- JG: Uh-huh, Lou.
- I: And so, how about some success stories. You know, of uh, some of the Natives, you know we're not looking for particular names or anything like that. But maybe

talking in general about, um, what are the successes of the program? And the things that, um, we know the pow-wow-

JG: -yes definitely that.

I: -that this is something they do well. It's a perpetual event. Doesn't seem like it's gonna' die off anytime soon.

JG: No. No. I don't think so. I think maybe people who come in and stay involved with that. So. Success stories, oh my gosh. I could- I mean there's been a lot of success stories, I think. Um, students who have received their degrees and uh, teaching. I've got- well, that I know of, uh, from my tenure there. There's about three in Alaska and different places teaching. And we had, of course Lorena Thompson- she was in this program and she's done wonderful. She's back to Uma- back home and-

I: Yeah, she's the HR Director for Wildhorse Casino.

JG: It's hard to say the successes I get without the names, but, um, there's just- even the students who didn't maybe quite complete their degree have gone back to their reservations, a lot of them. And are working in, and uh, holding down good jobs. Uh, and helping to be good leaders in their tribal communities. Um, so, one of the, you know, we've got a teacher- one young man who I just met when I came, and he was- I can't remember if we were both new in 1986. But, he's a lot younger than me. And um, he, um he- I really had to do a lot of guiding with him because he was just- he was over here kind of away from Nez Perce country. Kind of homesick, and but a very bright young man. He came over to play baseball and did very well. But then realized, well, "I'm not gonna' make a major league." You know, go in to the majors, so he ended up he wanted to go into teaching. And uh, he didn't finish at Eastern but he did finish over at, um, I think at LCSC. Lewis Clark State College. And then went on to get a masters and he's teaching over in Nez Perce country. And so- I'm always really happy to have those teachers- Native teacher folks out there. Because there aren't enough of them and yeah, we really need them. Our young people. Not just our Native young people, but our Anglo young people need them in the classrooms. They need to build those relationships with native teachers and Native people so they can have better cultural understanding as well. But uh, lots and lots of success stories I think. Students um, then we had students who still support this. It just- a month ago I ran into Michael Clements from Warm Springs. And him and his brother Rudy Clements were both at Eastern Oregon University, Eastern Oregon- EOC, I think Eastern Oregon College at that time. Rudy had passed away, um, just this past year.

I: I remember that.

JG: Yeah. And um, Michael- I ran into him at Grand Ronde and we had a nice chat. And I- Michael and I got to know each other through the program. He was at Eastern when I came on. I could- uh, the unique thing about being a part of the Native American program and the history is that you can get on the phone and ask people for help. And ask folks, "What should I do? How should I go about this?" And people who have been here and I did a lot of that. Going back to those folks and, um, Emma Farrow, Elzie Farrow, uh, just, Lewis Spino, uh, gosh- the Craigs'. Priscilla Craig and uh, Fermoore Craig. I mean I could just name- I haven't named them all, but there's too many to name. Uh, those people really helped during those early years to kind of- what do the students need? What was it for the Indian community? And so, when I- when we talk about successes we can't ignore the fact of how those elders played such a key role in those student successes. Even the students who went off to Alaska, you know, who didn't know any Umatilla people. Those Umatilla people are those people who have really contributed to their success. So, I think it's a- when I think about success I think about the people who started the program and who supported all those years. And, uh, and then the students. Uh, yeah.

I: Let's talk a little bit about the Native American Mentoring program. That got started during your tenure here. What is it about, first of all?

JG: Well, we just- we really realized we needed to be recruiting, a community recruiting effort. And uh, we got this um, you know- the way that the Admissions Office, and I think it was the Admissions Office would go out and talk to the seniors. And the juniors and the seniors. And I would say, "Well, that's no gonna' work with our community. We've gotta' go talk to the younger kids." And so we started at the middle school level. We realized middle school- in fact, it was Michael Clements- and I've been involved with other organizations. I chair the Oregon Indian Coalition for Post Secondary Ed. And uh, through that organization got involved with the Oregon Indian Education Association. Um, the Northwest, um uh, Northwest uh, the Affiliated Tribes have an education piece. The National Indian Education Association. By getting involved with these different groups and associations, um, we realized- Native people realized we've got to get our kids at the middle school level. 'Cause, if we don't we might lose 'em as them as they go through- make that transition from middle school to high school. And that happens- or what's been happening is they get to- they start falling behind in their credits for whatever reason. Then by the time they are legal age of dropping out of school, sometimes there'll just be no hope that- too many credits gone by- "I can never catch up, so I'll just drop out." So we would have, you know, a drop-out, high drop-out rate. So, that's what this recruiting effort- the mentoring program was designed to work with those younger kids. And at first it was just Native college students with Native, um middle school students at uh, Sunridge.

I: Over in Pendleton?

JG: Over in Pendleton. And, uh-

I: -Sunridge Middle School?

JG: -Sunridge Middle School in Pendleton, Oregon. And uh, the principal there- I wish I could think of his name. Right now he's down in Idaho, but he was a big supporter of that. And let us into his school, and the tribe supported us. And the college supported us. So, we had three organizations working together, um, and I convinced them this was a good thing to do. And we'd gotten a grant, um, our first grant was from the, um Oregon- Jim ___helped write that first grant. And it was from the Oregon Juvenile Advisory Board. They- it has a longer name than that, but, from a state organization. And that program is just designed to be a mentor to a elementary- er, excuse me, a middle school Native student. But it's grown on Eastern's side because then we had- it was so successful we had students wanting to be mentors to these kids. And uh, so we wrote for more money, we got money- we got a federal grant. Um, so, I think that is a great- the program is a good concept. And, if we can find- track these kids through- the whole idea- stay connected...

I: Now, you are still working with just Native American middle school students? Or, have you branched out into other cultures?

JG: Well, I think- I'm not sure what they did last year when I left. It was just the Native American middle schools students. But, that doesn't mean- I think we were trying to branch out to the high school. We wanted to go- we wanted to get- uh, program going at the Nixyaawi Community School, the charter school on the reservation as well as at the Pendleton High School. And, the Pendleton High School- they really were a tougher cookie to crack in a lot of ways. But, I still think it's worth trying to, you know, bring 'em along. And sell the idea that it'd be good. But if we can't then, you know, I think they- and I'm not sure what they did this last year because I was gone for that year.

I: My understanding is they did make connections with Nixyaawi, uh, in the charter school.

JG: Oh good!

I: So, what are the- what do the mentors do when they spend time- what's the routine? They spend a specific amount of time with a Native American student over there? What are they expected to do?

JG: Well, that is, um- when I was here we would travel over there and- once every two weeks. For an onsite visit. And we'd all meet in the cafeteria. And we would try to do some ice breakers at the beginning to- kind of group things. And then, kind of let the students go off, you know, in a little area that- at the cafeteria. And sometimes they'd be visiting. Sometimes they would be working in homework.

We try to encourage at least some of our visits to be academic focused, so that the students, you know, had that experience. We did crafts, sometimes we'd do crafts. We always tried to share ___ (486). Um, but the mentor's job was to be a friend. You know, listen. Um, be non-judgmental. We did a lot of training of our mentors so that they could- especially, now we didn't have to train so much the Native mentors, but we certainly realized our training need to pick up when we got international students and their mentors- they needed more support from us to work with native students. Because they- their heart was in the right place but sometimes they were afraid, you know, of my mentee, or you know- "I'm gonna' do my very best job." And so, the most dedicated group of students I've worked with for a long time is that mentor group. Um, but yeah they were just expected to be a friend and to be there and just make- I always wanted it to be a weekly contact and I don't know, they may have done it this year. But, the onsite visits, and every two weeks with an e-mail and a telephone call or something on the off-week. But the off-week has been harder to manage and, and work out because- I don't know, it just---

End of Side B
End of Tape # 1

JACKIE GRANT
July 21, 2006
Tape #2
Interview by Micheal L Minthorn
Transcribed by Micheal L Minthorn

Side A

I: So, we're talking about the native American Mentoring program now. They meet every other week. Uh, at school. They try to have a contact during the off week. And it's been very successful. How many- uh, just round numbers, you know, it's grown is my understanding because I've met people around campus that I wouldn't have expected to be in that. They are just excited about it.

JG: Yes, they are. It- it has grown. We started out with eight mentors. Um, when we, uh, I wish I could re- I think we are in our fourth or fifth year. I think it's in its fifth year. And maybe sixth year coming up. Anyway, started out with eight. And I think they've had over twenty. Um, the last year I was here we had about 22, I believe. So it has grown, and it's been- the neat thing about a mentoring program like this is that it is a win-win for everybody. Because the college student gets- anyone who becomes a mentor for someone, um, gets way more back than they

ever put in, in terms of time. Just because it's so satisfying and, um, you learn about- in some cases you're learning about another culture. You're building a friendship. Um, and you now you really are making a difference in as young person's life. And, young people need- they- they certainly need their parents and they need their grandparents and all their family. They also need other caring adults who are willing to spend extra time with them, and have fun, and, go bowling or whatever.

I: It's a tough period. Um, and um- that's a tough school, that Sunridge Middle School.

JG: It is.

I: There are a lot of Native parents who would rather not see their children go there at all.

JG: Yes.

I: Uh, how do you measure success for something like that? Are there milestones you can tell that this is working? Uh, obviously, the principal continues to have you back.

JG: Right. Exactly.

I: And I know possibly there has been, uh, very- um, in favor of the program. They may have seen success in their students over it.

JG: Yes. Well, we're hoping- you're right. We're hoping that, uh, the success we can measure it by more students going on to high school that are prepared and doing better in high school. That's gonna' take somebody to look at the data. Um, and which I don't know if anyone's done that yet. But, um, my guess would be- my kind of anecdotal guess is that, yeah, we prob'ly do have some students who are going on. We are- but uh, keep 'em out of trouble. We don't want 'em to have principal referrals or juvenile authorities referrals. Um, we want them to go into high school, uh, feeling a little more confident in their abilities to be a good student. Um, and the last year that I was in the program and got to really be hands on with the mentoring program; those mentees- there were over 80% of them that were involved in extra-curricular activities. Um, sports, theatre, music. Maybe they were doing dancing in their community. I mean- so they were- these kids were involved in- any parent knows or adult knows that kids who are involved or connected stay out of trouble. Maybe they might experiment with, you know, alcohol and drugs and those kinds of things. But they don't stay there long. They'll move on and, you know kind of get their- keep their bearings. And...

I: Now, this has been going on five or six, uh, years or more. Have we seen anybody, uh, in college now? From the first year? Do you know?

JG: You know, I don't know that but I do know that when I've gone over to Umatilla to do some college presentations, I would have students in that presentation that probably wouldn't have been there if they hadn't been in the mentoring program. They told me that. "I was in the mentoring program." "I learned about college in the mentoring program." And, "I'm going to college." And that is- I guess that's- you can measure some success there. Now-

I: -that's a milestone.

JG: -that's a milestone. I think, um, what would be great to find out is: are they in college? And if so, where and how are they doing? And um, you know, maybe getting them involved to be a mentor.

I: Well, wouldn't that have been a checkmark milestone? Because if the goal was to get them through high school to get to college...

JG: Exactly. Yeah.

I: ...then maybe that succeeded.

JG: That succeeded. Yeah.

I: Now those students come to campus, uh, I toured them through the theatre year before last.

JG: Yes. Um-hm. Um-hm. We have a, uh, Eastern has a Native American Higher Education & Career Awareness Day which we invite Native students to come to campus and we really try to get faculty and different departments involved in that. Because we want the kids who come for that day to see what a campus is about. And to see people like yourself. Like, "Oh, wow! He's a Native student going to school. And they're showing me around this campus and they're doing, I guess I can do this, too!"

I: I have more than 15 nieces and nephews, and that Sunridge group was almost 45, 50 students that day.

JG: It was huge. Yeah.

I: And tons of them walking by me: "Hi Uncle Mike."

JG: Yeah! That's great. That's powerful. That is so powerful for those young students to see, um, to see other Native people on a college campus in particular. I think it's really critical. Because, sometimes we forget that- we just don't, you know we just don't- that we are really there. You know...

I: When I was directing my senior show at that time. And so we had set pieces- it wasn't just the boring tour to the theatre. You were-

JG: Oh.

I: -and we did have a mask making class in the afternoon for some of them to come to.

JG: Oh, that's wonderful.

I: Uh, most people ___ (79)

JG: Yes. I'm sure they're picking up stuff. Um-hm.

I: Do- does this mentoring program- do they do, uh, cultural activities with those students? Do they do any pow-wowing, or, have any traditional activities or cultural activities on their, uh-

JG: We, we did try to ___ (83) some of those like- for the pow-wow we tried- the mentors would be here for the pow-wow and meet up with their mentees. It- I don't know how well that worked. And we tried to also do an event over in their community. And I would encourage- get the list of the events going on over in Umatilla, for example. Say, "Okay, here's this weekend. You know- root feast, or this weekend-" just, you know. "Go over there. You know, you'll see- might see your- your mentee. I'd make- call and make a contact and see if it's okay to meet up over there." So we tried that. I don't know if there's any, um- it may have been developed more firmly this past year. Um, I think, I've been away, but, I think that is a nice, um, a nice component to that. Again, just kind of building those relationships.

I: How about your peers in, uh, Native America education around the state or the area? What kind of relationships did you develop with other college level professionals who were working toward the same goals as you were?

JG: I think, um, I've got a lot of good contacts around the state. Um, and I'm chair of the coalition. Uh, there's a lot of college folks come to those, uh, meetings, and we try to work- you know, recruitment and retention of Native students. And, advocates for Native staff on campuses. So, um, have been very fortunate to get to know people that way. And so, you know, there's a contact at OSU or more than one. And, U of O, and Lane Community College and Southern Oregon University, and uh, Bend. We're trying to- Bend, uh, Central Oregon Community's, uh- College, I mean community college. It's funny. I'm not picking on Bend, but you know, if you lose your person there. If you only have one contact and you lose that person and the institution doesn't get somebody back in there then it's hard. You just kind of start back at square one. But, I think that's, uh, true with anything. So-

- I: -do these people or groups meet on a regular basis?
- JG: Yeah. The coalition- the Oregon Indian Coalition- we meet on a quarterly basis. And we try to meet on- we've been- we try to meet on college campuses. But that doesn't always work out. Um, but we do try to get around, um, you know, right-lately we've been in the metropolitan area. Uh, Portland, Salem, and Eugene area. But we've met in Bend, um... As the chair, I can sit on and join the, uh, government-to-government, um, education cluster. Which is the nine tribes and the state meet. Uh, they meet about- uh, nine Oregon tribes. They meet on a formal basis about, I think between four and six times a year. And so as the coalition chair I can join in and just sit in on those meetings. Um, sometimes I'll take agenda items or topics for input or help, or whatever. Uh, um, it's a good connection. So there's a lot of- it's a good way to kind of keep the state connected. For Indian students.
- I: Let's talk about the old Indian Festival of the Arts. First of all, was that going on when you first moved to town? It seemed that was still going in the early 70s.
- JG: Yes, and we actually just- one day we were walking downtown and we kind of stumbled- we had missed the big parade, Steve and I. And we'd stumbled onto the arts and crafts. And, we realized what it was. And it was like, oh my goodness. We couldn't believe that we had actually- so we did attend that one year without kind of even knowing what it was. It was a wonderful event. Um-
- I: -that wasn't held on campus during that time?
- JG: It wasn't held on campus. And-
- I: Where'd they have it?
- JG: They had- well downtown. They had- did, uh, the parade went down downtown and they did a lot of the arts and crafts and the vendor set-ups were all downtown. But, the camp- the encampment was at the old middle school, which is about two blocks to our west of Eastern Oregon State College campus. And it was in the middle school, uh, area. Uh, just in this nice grassy area. It was big. And they had, um, I think- I'm not sure why they changed that area. But it was a very nice place for them to set their encampment up.
- I: Uh-huh.
- JG: And, um, we- I never saw the encampment 'cause we didn't know- you know, it was there. But, did do the arts and crafts program.
- I: Was it a weekend, uh, two days? Three days? Was that-

JG: You know, I think they actually- I think it was actually a two or three day event. And, and it was huge. It brought in- the organizers- I am only familiar with one organizer. Her name is June Poitress. She's now deceased. She was the mother of Diane Walker, who lives in Union. And she's also been a Union county resident for many, many years. Came to Eastern, um, in the early years. Was very instrumental in forming the club and being a part of the club. And did the root feast and all of that. She-

I: Were they of Native background?

JG: Yes. She is a member of the Klamath tribe. Her husband I do not believe is Native. And- they have six children, I think. And um, so yeah, her mother- Diane's mother June Poitress was one of the initial organizers of the Indian Festival of Arts. And, it was outstanding program. Brought in big name people. Um, I should- I'm- it's my memory that I can't think of them right now. But some very famous kinds of people. Um, the Indian actor- was there an Indian actor that played on um, um- I wanna' say Tonto, but I'm not sure if that was the show-

I: Um, Jay Silverheels.

JG: Yeah, Jay Silverheels.

I: Played on the Lone Ranger.

JG: Yeah, the Lone Ranger. He, he was an- a guest-

I: He came to Oregon a lot.

JG: Yeah. I didn't know all of this. Um, but, some just some big names. And the neat thing about the Indian Festival of Arts was- the whole community of La Grande. And probably Union, and maybe the smaller towns around- Cove, and the- they were all involved in it. And, um, when I- I'm trying to think if it was- I think it was the 80s where I had a few townspeople ask me, "Can we bring this back?" You know, "We'd like to revive this, and how would we go about doing that." And, of course my advice was, "Well, I think that's a great idea. Let's go talk to the tribes, you know, let's go talk to the Umatilla tribe. Let's go talk to-" But it never- you know, never made that next step. But, I think, you know, I think there's a desire to bring that back.

I: Because they didn't go to the tribes? Or because nobody took the ____ (183).

JG: Nobody took the initiative to just to get- you know, get it headed up. Yeah. To head it up. That might be it.

I: Did you, uh, well, what else do you know about that? You know a lot more than I thought.

JG: Yeah. Okay, let's see, I know, I know some of the townspeople who went to that festival. Um- I'm having a hard time. Mrs. Lester. Oh, my gosh, what is Mrs. Lester's name? She's an elderly lady here in La Grande. I'll think of her first name. Um, a very nice lady. And she- she came to the festival every year, and just spoke highly of- just the wonderful things that it did. Not only for the community and economy of eastern Oregon, or this part of eastern Oregon, but also just for building relationships between Native and Anglo people. And, um, she actually gave me a couple of the necklaces. She goes, "I bought these, and I love these but I don't wear them. And they're so beautiful. They need to be worn." And she gave me a couple of her necklaces that she bought. And, and...

I: Well, this would be helpful for the Native economy as well. Weren't they, did they not sell their crafts and art? And things like that?

JG: Yes, they did.

I: What could you find there?

JG: Oh, my gosh. There was, um, beaded- uh, beaded items. Uh, I'm just- pottery items, leather item. Um, just-

I: -pretty much the gamut of things that could be found at a pow-wow?

JG: All the pow-wows. Yeah.

I: Uh-huh.

JG: Yeah. Yeah. It seems we stumbled on- Steve and I actually stumbled on it. And I do remember. It- we- it was the last day of the festival. And I wanna' say it- they told us it was like a three day festival. And we must have not been in town, or, we didn't live here at that time. Or we were away or something. Maybe that was when we were just kind of checking eastern Oregon out. But, we did stumble upon it. And so some of the vendors had left. Um, but, you're right, um; the Native people could sell their crafts as well. And it was- it was open to anyone. And, it had different ____ (215).

I: Was there drumming and singing? Or, pow wowing, or?

JG: Yes. And they did that up at the middle school. In, in this- I don't know if that happened in the evenings because we didn't go up there, um, to- to see the encampment or weren't a part of that. Diane Walker could give us- could give you a lot of good information about, about that as well as the, um, the late Mrs. Lester. She prob'ly could, too.

I: Um, was that done by the time you came to work for Native American program?

JG: It was. It was- so, I'm not sure which year it, it uh faded out. I was at eastern- the last time I saw Mrs., uh, June Poitress was at Grand Ronde Pow-Wow. I think one of the very first pow-wows at Grand Ronde. And, I saw her there. And, introduced, um, myself to her and she recognized me. And my dad, uh, knew her from early days. I'm not sure how they knew one another, but Indian country is pretty small. Um, so, um, then it was- thankfully for Diane's input. You know, she goes, "And my mom was a big organ- you know one of the main..." I think they had a board of, made up of Native people and, uh, non-native people. The townspeople. I'm not sure how much the college was involved with it at that time. They may not have been very involved, I don't know. And, June served on this board. Mrs. Poitress served on this board.

I: But then, that means that it was still going on when you moved to town in '7_ (240).

JG: It, yeah, it must have just been going out at that time. Or maybe that was one of the last years. That's a good- I've never thought about that. That way.

I: Um, it'll be interesting to get the- those photo albums and the video to my sister and get those copied because we should be able to identify a lot of Natives. A lot of those people are gone.

JG: Are gone now. Yeah, and I've- I wish I knew what was on those, um reel-to-reels. And I was always gonna' just sit and watch and go to the library. And of course I just never took the time to do that. But maybe that can be something for the future. But, I'm hoping there's some footage on there about the- about the Indian Festival of Arts, or some early history of the program and students. Because, you're right. There's, there's a lot of people that were involved who are no longer with us. So...

I: Did you have any, uh, involvement of knowledge of other Native Americans living in the community? Just as a community member? Or, are almost all of your contacts academic?

JG: No. There was- I didn't really have a lot of knowledge of other Native American families living in Union county. Or the Grande Ronde Valley. And, a lot of our contacts were with Anglos through our business, I suppose. Through my husband. He's Anglo, so- and through the business. So we made, you know, made connections that way. Once in a while, uh, when we lived in Wallowa County there was, um, one family. And she was Native, but not of Oregon. And so we would get together and our kids would do play group. And we kind of got together. And, but, yeah coming to eastern Oregon and living in La Grande and in Wallowa county both when you saw another brown face you, all of a sudden, you'd, "Okay, everything is okay with the world!"

I: I know about that.

JG: You know that feeling, don't you?

I: Right.

JG: It's a real- yeah; it's just that familiar. And it's- and you don't even have to know each other. But there's just that familiarity. So, I can remember being kind of very homesick, um when we first came back from the- you know, from my home at Grand Ronde. Up to Wallowa county and Union county, it was like, you know. Of course I kind of like- you know, knew Umatilla was close by and that was kind of ___ (283) 'cause we went over there to the clinic before we had, you know, insurance or anything. We could go to the clinic and I could take the kids- the little kids to the clinic. They were all small then.

I: You're talking about Yellowhawk Clinic?

JG: Yes at Yellowhawk. Um-hm. Yeah. So we could receive, you know, services. Once our tribe was restored and um- which- 1980-...I should know this by heart! I should know. It's either, I think it's '83. I think it's '83, but it might, is, uh '86 stands out, too. So, you'll have to, um...

I: Memory on that.

JG: Well, I should-

I: -We know you're back!

JG: Yes.

I: Your tribe is back. That's what counts.

JG: Yes. It is. Yes. So, once that happened then we could get services at Yellowhawk. So...

I: Then, uh, finally I guess: what stole you away from Eastern?

JG: <chuckle> Yeah.

I: Although, of course, you know we see you here every couple of weeks. Uh, what brings you back to the Grand Ronde Valley every now- er; I'm sorry- what took you back to Grand Ronde?

JG: My home. Um, my- a position opened up as the, uh division manager for the education department. And, they have a really big education department. Uh, we have programs, uh, preschool, Head Start through graduate-level scholarship

programs for our tribal members. So, the- I'd always wanted to work for my tribe. And, um, that was an opportunity that came up and- it was a good time for me to be there. Just some things personally that happened in my family. I lost my mother last year. Um, and being the oldest of five you are kind of, uh- at least in my family, you know, it's the oldest one who kind of makes sure things get done.

I: I know about that, too.

JG: Make sure things stay together. Things get- people get what they need. And so, I kind of had that responsibility. But, um- the job opened up. And so I applied and got the interview. And I thought, "Wow, this is good!" 'Cause I've applied for other jobs there and hadn't gotten interviewed, or gotten an interview. And turned the job down. But, I actually accepted their offer. They really wanted- they wanted me to come and- it was- it was time to leave Eastern. I was hoping, um that Eastern needed to, you know, to have some new, new ideas and, and new, uh blood, if you will. I was hoping maybe they would maybe- it was felt like I'd kind of come to the end of my support at Eastern. And so, the- things just kind of worked out that way. Um, and that's- you know, working for your tribe is a really- it's a good experience for me. It's been a very great experience. The job is great. The staff is really good. Um, I'm certainly- you can always go back to your home but, now I have- now I have two homes. Because I miss eastern Oregon. I mean eastern Oregon has- the land- after I spent about- I think it was in my second year in eastern Oregon where, um I really began to understand more about the land. And really just fell in love with the land. And then, 'course, the Native people are so intricately connected to the land that- then got to know the people and learned- you know- so now I just tell people, "I have two homes. You know, I've got an eastern Oregon home and a western Oregon home." So, uh-

I: Are you a member or actively involved in the Eastern Alumni Association?

JG: Um, let's see- I think I'm- I am a member. I don't know how active I've- I don't know if like if they have dues or anything like that.

I: Yeah, I think they're all members, but-

JG: They're all members. I don't know active- I would say I'm probably not active right now. And- but- I think, you know they just- if they ask me to do something I probably would help 'em do something. Yeah. So...

I: Anything we're forgetting to talk about? Any, uh, you know-

JG: No. Gosh.

I: I've covered the major areas that I--

(break)

- I: We have a few more things to talk about. Um, the last couple of things we should talk about are- um, there was a Native American administrator here at the school. Tell me about him.
- JG: Mm-hm. That was Dr. Jerry Branch. And he was a Dr. Jerry Branch. Um, he was our director of college relations. So he was, uh, administrator at the time. And he was a member of the Choctaw Nation in rural Choctaw. So he really took, um- I received a lot of- the Native American program and the students- Speel-ya received a lot of support from him and his wife, Doris who was, uh elementary-middle school music teacher. Over at the middle school here in La Grande. And they would have- we'd have Speel-ya potlucks out there at their house. And uh, he, uh, edited or compiled a book called THE NATIVE AMERICAN READER. And he took royalties from that book to start, um, a Native American scholarship called the First Citizens Award. And, myself, Jerry, Jack Johnson who was the Director of Financial Aid at the time. Uh, Kelly- Kelly ___ (387) who was also the- Kelly was the director of the Student Alumni, or kind of grant- you know, out there for grants, getting grants and things. And um, we might have a student on that panel. Anyway, there was panel of us and we got the scholarship going. And- with Jerry's relatives. And- they gave it-
- I: That was endowed?
- JG: Endowed, it's an endowed scholarship. And, um, at the time Dave Gilbert, uh, was the President at Eastern and he was also a very big supporter of the Native American program. And, he was a faculty in his early days of the Indian Education Institute and taught several Umatilla students. He was a physics- and he had several Native students in his physics classes. Mike Farrow took, took- oh; I could name more of them!
- I: The late Mike Farrow.
- JG: Yes. The late Mike Farrow. And so he, um, Dave was a real supporter, but- this endowed scholarship- faculty could, um, contribute to it, of course. Uh, we got- we'd get what we call "Crayola" money. And, I think the university would get money from Crayola Foundation for- for whatever. Well Dave Gilbert actually, a few years in a row gave us that money. I don't know if it was \$10,000 pieces at a time. And then we got our biggest, um, donation from Union Pacific Railroad. And I was always wanting to go back and ask them for another donation for the scholarship. Um, but they were so supportive and, I mean it was- I wanna' say \$50,000, uh, to get that going. It is an endowed scholarship. It's for Native students who can prove- they do have to have documentation. But the documentation can be a tribal ID card. If they're from a possibly a terminated tribe, or a tribe maybe that- records can't- if we can get a letter stating that they can be descended from an enrolled member. So- and the unique thing about this endowed scholarship is that- they'll get it in their first year. If they continue

through their second year- the student and they're doing well. 2.5 GPA and is making satisfactory progress. Um, meeting all the criteria they get a bump up each year they get the scholarship. It increases by anywhere's from three to five hundred dollars. And, the whole idea that Jerry had behind that- uh, making it bump up like that was to- he really felt it was critical for students to finish their degree. And so he- it's- the money is an incentive each year for the student to actually be- you know, complete that degree. And um, it's a very good scholarship program and Eastern- you know, that's- Pacific scholarship for Native students at Eastern.

I: What's your awareness about how many students did that support? Before you left?

JG: Before I left, um, I would say it probably supported anywhere's from eight to ten students. And I believe the graduates that I can just think about on my- in my head- I think we've had probably five graduates. That were on that scholarship. So, um, I think it just needs to be maybe possibly better advertised. Um, and better-

I: The public and alumni can, uh contribute to that endowment, can't they?

JG: They can donate. Um-hm, they can contribute to the endowment and we would send out letters asking alumni, uh, Native alumni to, um, to contribute and people would send checks in any amount is always welcomed. And we'd send out thank yous and-

I: Are you aware of any other, uh, Native American specific endowments or scholarships on this campus?

JG: Um, not that specifically. I know there's other scholarships for minority students. But that is the only one that I am aware of for, um, the Native students. We have a Taz- we have a Connor Emergency Fund.

I: Taz Conner?

JG: Well we- we didn't name it- we named it after Taz, of course. But we didn't give it- we just called it the Connor Fund. Um, Leah Conner and her sister- uh, I should know this! Oh...

I: Doris? Uh, well her sister! Uh-huh.

JG: Her sister! Yeah. Her sister. They- after Taz's passing they gave the program- excuse me. When we named Alikut Hall- at the naming- it was named after Connor Family relation. Um, Alikut. They gave gifts, of course, and um, the gift that was to the program was, uh, from funds that they had collected. And so we started the Connor Emergency Fund. And so students can access that. It's a short-

term loan, really. They can access that if they need to go home. Or, uh, child care. Whatever. Pay the light bill, whatever. And, we just would have 'em sign a little contract that they could- would pay us back, so we'd always have money. Kind of a little bit of money in there. And that, that was, you know, I think we- again, that could be advertised more. And we could probably get more money in----

End of Side A
Side B

I: So, uh, those are the two items that students could access directly of Native American descent. Um, one other item that I'd like to discuss with you is the, um the set aside in Pierce Library for the Native American Collection. How did that happen?

JG: That actually happened through, um, Mark Shadle. Who is a faculty on this campus. Uh, and, probably some other faculty. Patty Cutright who was Native American herself. She's no longer here. She's back in New York. She was the director of the library at the time. And Mark and Patty got together, and- 'course, I- I facilitated a little bit and just supported that. But they got together and- the Native American program itself had a large volume of books on Native American topics. And so-

I: You mean they had this already?

JG: We had it already. And it was in our office, and we'd had to move to a smaller office and I did not want the books to not be, um- we needed a place for the books. So Patty found a place in the basement of the library to start this Native American collection. So it started with the program- the Native American program's collection. And they- the library cataloged them all and keyed them all in to the system. And did all that work. And, uh, we just donated the books over to them. And then Mark Shadle took that another step further by, uh, he teaches a Native American Lit class. Upper division lit class, I believe. Every year. And he took it a step further and has been adding to the collection. I don't know if he got grant money or something. But he- so it's a nice collection down there. We were always gonna' do some sort of dedication and kick-off and it just never happened.

Um, but people are using it and I just noticed the sign's still up. So the books are still there. We donated- the program donated some furniture. Like I said, we got- when we moved to a smaller space- I don't know how this happened. We moved to a smaller space and got more responsibility for more students. Not sure how that happened but we did that. And so the- that's when that collection-

I: Couldn't be due to the funding downsizing, or anything like that?

JG: Yeah, it was that funding downsizing. That was what- that's what it was. Downsizing. So- but that's a great resource for, um, Union county and the campus. Um, it's got a lot of really good, good books in it. So...

I: Well, I want to thank you for sharing your, your um, stories and experiences with us today.

JG: Thank you, Micheal.

End of Side B

End of Tape #2