

PAUL FOLINO

1988

Mr. Folino, would you tell us about your background?

My name is Paul Folino. I was born right here in Northville. In fact, I was born on East Main Street, above the building that was owned by Manufactures National Bank, actually above the Paul Johnston Real Estate office. My folks lived there with a great aunt of mine for several years until they bought their first home. My parents' names were Lois and Josephine Folino. My wife's name is Maggie, and her former name was deLiero. She is originally from the Garden City area. She was born in Highland Park. I have two daughters, one daughter, the oldest one, Terresa Anne, she is now 28, sorry 29. My youngest daughter, Paula Maria, 22.

Where did you move from the location on East Main Street, do you recall?

Sure, we moved to 353 East Cady Street, that's where we lived for many years until, as a matter of fact, 1936 is when dad bought a home on South Center Street, 254 South Center, until, of course, I was married, that was 1950, and for just a few months after marriage, we rented a place in Garden City until an apartment here in Northville was ready, and then my wife and I moved into the apartment here in Northville, which was at 132 East Main, above the Northville Drug Store. We lived there for approximately, let's see, until 1953, then we bought a home at 353 East Cady Street, we lived there until 1964, and we purchased a home on South Center Street, that was at 210, that house is now gone, and the city bought that property for the parking lot there. I moved that house out to Portis Road, near the corner of Five Mile Road and it still remains out there.

What was the purpose of moving that house?

I did not want to see that old beautiful home destroyed. I didn't want to see a bulldozer hit that one. So I bought a piece of property out there and at that time is when the consideration of the township and the city merging and that didn't turn out, so I eventually sold that home because it was in the Township and I was then on City Council, and I had to remain in City limits or else give up my Council seat. There, we lived there at 210 South Center until 1970, yes since I was elected to City Council in '69. So in 1970 we built our new home which we are presently living in at 20556 Clement, in the City of Northville.

One thing we didn't ask was what year were you born?

Oh, I'm sorry. I was born February 8, 1929.

Where did you go to school?

Right here in Northville. This is kinda hard I guess, I've been in every building in Northville School System. The present grade school was built in 1936 or 1939. I used to read it all the time it was right on front of the building, I used to read it all the time, I believe it 1936. That was the one on Main Street that was referred to as Grade School. That came to as a result because our former grade school building burned down about two or three years earlier.

And where was that one located?

That was located directly in back of what is now the Board of Education Office or the Old High School on Main Street. The grade school actually faced Cady Street and after that building burned down, then for two or three years, until they were able to construct a new grade school, we had classes in different places in Northville. One of the places we had classes was in the old Lapham State Bank, which was on the corner of Main and Center, which is now where Orin Jewelers is housed. That was one of the places, I could remember the big walk-in safe that was in that building. I don't know, it might still be in there, in the back being used by Orin Jewelers. We also went to classes in what used to be three homes that sat to the west of what is now City Hall properties or the fire house and what is the community building presently sets. One of them, I can still remember as being the Brockway home. Those three homes, and there was another, the Jarvis. I remember because she was one of our first grade teachers and she lived in one of those homes. Those houses were either rented or purchased by the school for classrooms, and we had our classes there. For one short period of time, we had another vacant building in town, and I believe it was on the South side of Main Street. That was used for just one year only, that I can remember. But the bank was used and the homes were used, until the new school was built, and then we moved into that.

That's very interesting, I haven't heard anyone tell about that or referred to a school burning down.

Oh gosh, that was real big thing that happened in town, and that was a major catastrophe when our school burned down. Everybody was devastated by the burning of our grade school and what's going to happen to the children's education.

That must have been a frame building.

No, it wasn't, it was a brick building. As a matter of fact, it was almost identical to the present Board of Education building. And I can also remember the old fire escapes, that the fire escapes which were also on the high school, where they used to have these big tubes, they would go up the side of the building, and they had a little doors inside of the classrooms, and in the event of a fire, just jump in the tube and slide to the ground from the second story, it had those on that building. I can remember two of them for sure, one on each side of the building, because the ones that were on the back of the high school,

and the ones that were on the back of the grade school building were close, maybe thirty feet apart, because of the size of the building that was back there. I remember that because we used to have fire drills and we'd love that, inside toboggan slides.

After the school was built and you were in the new building, how long were you there, was that K-8?

No, that was K-6. And then, at that time, we had a junior high which was then in the former high school building, which was for seventh and eighth grade. And for as many years as I can remember, Ida B. Cooke was the Junior High School teacher. She was the principal of the Junior High also. She taught math classes. She was just an absolute angel, she was good, she was firm, and let me tell ya', everybody loved her and we all miss her from the day she passed away.

That's interesting. And then for high school?

Then for high school, was in the same building for 9-12 and I graduated with the class of 1947. As a matter of fact, last year in '87, was the first class reunion we've had, it was the fortieth class reunion.

Did you have a good turnout?

Yes, as a matter of fact, we located and had almost 80% turn out of our former classmates. We had lost, I believe, seven of our classmates. And talking to many of the chairmen of other class reunions, and they were just absolutely shocked that we had that big a turnout. There were only three or four people that we totally could not locate.

That's remarkable. So, what you're telling me is that a fair number of those people stayed around here. Are many of them still here in Northville?

No, very few of them are still remaining in Northville, several of them moved for job transfers, one couple came from California, Wisconsin, Florida, Texas, they came from all around, they came from Northville to all the way to the UP. We have another one that lived down in the Monroe area, I'd say that a good many of them live within driving range of Northville. We have some that live in Livonia and back in should I say, "our days," part of Livonia, from Merriman Rd west came to our high school 'cause Livonia had no schools at that time. Several of those people who came from the Merriman/Farmington Road area still remain in Livonia. Now that group really stayed close to home.

Who can you recall who stayed in Northville proper?

Let's start out with some of the fellows that I ran around with. David Schultz lives up on East Street, Dean Itzle lives up around South Ely, Lorraine Weaver married... name was

Stiener, Betty Eash Sutton. The ones that most recently moved from Northville after retirement was the Ruten twins, and they live out in the Whitmore Lake and South Lyon area. Charles Freydl, who was the Freydl stores in Northville, gee, it's hard to remember them.

What did you participate in, in High School? Did you participate in sports?

I was very limited in the participation of sport. The first three years of High School I could not because between junior high and senior high, I had an accident, I was horseback riding and out at Seven Mile and Orchard Drive, the horse shied and went across the road and we were hit by a car. My right leg was under the horse when we went sliding across the pavement. And to make a long story short, I ended up with a very serious infection in my right leg, and was hospitalized and had the top of my knee carved out. It took almost three years for it to heal to the point where I could do things. Dr. Russell Atchison was my doctor at that time and has been since I was born. He's the greatest man who ever lived, I'll tell you, he's just absolutely wonderful, not only as a doctor, but as a person, and very caring and concerned doctor from the old school. His patients always came first to him. But anyway, I was not able to play any sports until the last few weeks of my Junior High, and then, of course, I tried out for basketball. I was never really good at basketball, there seemed to be a bit of a problem between the floor and the top of my head, and that was weight. But the last few weeks I tried out for the football team of course, but I was not able to engage in very strenuous man to man engagements. I was kicking, I could do the kick off and the extra point, but I had to turn go away to avoid getting hit, to avoid breaking up the scar tissue on my leg there. It did happen once, and it was quite a serious thing, so I had to be careful. But by my senior year, I was able to play football full time, so I played my last year, high school football, and basketball, I had fun.

Given your history of involvement in the community, I wonder if you engaged in any political activity within the high school. For example, student congress, or run for any offices of any clubs, things of that nature that would kind of prepare you for the community service that you have?

No, but I did engage in some political activity. When Jean Steinof was running for the Queen and I was a very staunch supporter. Several of us formed a campaign committee and went around signs and handed out, should I say, resumes, and we were successful in doing that. So she was the Queen for the school that year. I still remember the slogan I came up with that year, and it was, "Don't be a bean, Vote for Jean." I guess that kind of carried over because when I was running for city council, my slogan was, "Get on the ball, and Vote for Paul" or "I'm for you, Vote for me."

One of the things I was interested in material, in the material you gave us was your involvement in the building of Allen Terrace, the Senior Citizens' Apartment up on High Street. Would you like to tell us about the beginning of that, how it came about, how it started, and then, of course, the fusion it's been up for about ten years, I think, just ten years?

Yes, as a matter of fact, last night, we went up for the tenth year anniversary party. I first elected to the city council in 1969. My first involvement with city politics was when I ran unsuccessfully in 1961 for a council seat, they said I was just a young punk and really didn't know what I was talking about to become a city councilman. But I learned, and ever since, I turned 21, I have voted in every election, except one school board election, that I missed out on when I was out of town that day, I did not get back on time. I feel bad to this day that I missed out on an election. I had to go up into the thumb area that day, and my work at that time took longer than I expected, and by the time I got back, it was 8:30, so it was too late to vote and felt real bad. I made no comments about the running of the school system that year, for that two year period, until the next election, because I felt that if I didn't vote, I didn't have the right to criticize. You can compliment, but don't criticize, because you didn't vote. I've always had that philosophy and I've never stayed with it ever since. After I was elected to council, seem some senior citizen housing being built in Gaylord and Kalkaska, because at that time, we were going up into that area, we had a little summer place in Kalkaska, and we used to take quite a few drives around the area, and it was interesting once I seen the housing being built in Gaylord, so that summer especially, we drove up there several times. I went in and talked to the city officials there as to how they were building it and how they were funding and things of this nature. That was being funded through the United States, really via Federal Government. They build senior citizens complex in Kalkaska, and again, I was very interested in that. So I went and talked, as a matter of fact, I talked to the man who was the chairman of that building complex, who was Foster McNeil up in Kalkaska. We had several conversations about that. They were getting almost 100% funding for those buildings at that time. So I came back to our council and said, "Hey, I think that there's something going on out there that we may not be aware of." So I explained the program, I brought pictures, back of the complexes being built and explained to them, I had all my notes at that time from there. The council was not favorable at all towards the project, as a matter of fact, I got some very nasty comments made to me. "We don't need it," "We don't want it. Our citizens here are fluent enough that we don't need a Senior Citizen's Complex." So I kept pressing the issue. Finally, after about two years to shut me up, I guess, because that was the comment that was made, "Well we'll shut you up and get a committee going." That was a housing commission that you had to form first of all, and it was thought then who were to apply for the federal funding, and what have you. Out of the seven members I believe, five were people that I had asked to serve on that commission because nobody else was interested in asking some of their people to serve. So we finally got it, but by the time we formed the commission, and got underway,

during that year, that it took us to do this, the federal funding became... well I guess you might say the pan dried up real good. By this time, enough interest had occurred, especially with the members of the housing commission, they were very enthused about this project. So they kept pressing the issue also, and to make a long story short, we ended up funding Allen Terrace from our own local government. So the City of Northville is who funded Allen Terrace. We did not receive any State or Federal funding so we could set our own rules and regulations for Allen Terrace. As it turns out, it's been a very, very nice project. Last night when I was up there for the tenth anniversary, some of those people who have been there all that time just swear by the place, they just tell me how wonderful it was, and several of them commented, "Paul, you really did a lot of work on getting this building." But like I told him, I says, "It takes more than one person." It finally took the council and the housing commission to get together and if you have cooperation, you can accomplish a lot.

Would you recall for us the other people serving on that commission?

I remember there was John Stewart, Nancy Schultz, boy oh boy, isn't this terrible, I should be able to name every one of those, but it seems that time has taken a little bit of memory, ah well. I could look them up, that would be no problem, I could look up the original member of that...

Tell us, then, about you were able to get funds from what was it... a bond issue?

Yes, it was a bond issue that the city was able to get passed by the State of Michigan Municipal Finance Commission. We sold the bonds and this is how we were able to build the present structure. And we, of course, plan to add onto it. They have about 120 residents, although there is one hundred rooms, because some are couples. Total capacity is about 120, but gosh, we could fill another hundred units right away. If we had 100 units available right now today, we could fill them.

I feel sure that's true and I live in Northville Township, and I'm not eligible for this...

You're eligible for this, but you're low on the priority list. First criteria is City residence, and then the longevity of those persons that have been here the longest, move higher up the ladder. Consequently, this is how we filled it. Now, when we first started, of course, we did not have that many people in the City that wanted to move in there, so were able to open it up to other residents other than City. It has gotten to the point where there are so many city residents be in there, that the other categories are kind of low on the priority list.

It certainly has been very successful and it's had a fine director. I spent 200 hours there one summer, volunteering as part of a degree requirement in Gerontology. I worked closely with Fran Milken.

Yes, we're very pleased with her. Been pleased with her since the day she come to Allen Terrace.

You said in here that you are on the original beautification committee, would you like to talk about that?

Oh, I did one of the projects, I was never on the Commission.

So what project did you do?

That was the planting of the oak barrels in Northville City with the evergreen trees. That was a project I started, I contacted a liquor company out of New York and they had a warehouse here in Detroit, and I was able to obtain the oak whiskey barrels from them, and they donated all the whiskey barrels for the project. I would go down to Detroit with my car and trailer, and bring the barrels out here, and at first, I was cutting them up myself, but that got to be a pretty big project. So I went to the high school, and talked to the shop teacher, and they thought it would be a great project for the younger students. So I took the first barrel up there, showed them just basically cut them in half and try to keep them as even as possible. Then we stained them a red wood stain, and they also did that for me. This became a class project for them for which school gave them credits on doing the barrels and helped me to beautify the city streets. Then I went out to Greenridge Nursery and said, "Hey, I got to have little evergreen trees that will fit in these barrels and how much will you charge me for these trees which will be distributed in the city." Well, it turned out that an old barrel filled with dirt, because we filled the barrel right there at the Nursery. John Miller was very enthused about the project and he was right out there with a shovel with me, shoving dirt into the barrels. We put the evergreen trees into the barrels and I believe the little trees were about thirteen dollars. No, I'm sorry, the very first year we were able to do that, we were able to sell the barrels complete to the tree, and I would deliver them to the merchants again with my own car and trailer, with the help of John Miller to load them. They were \$13.50 for the merchant. By the time we finished uptown the next year, the cost of the trees had gone up and the cost of the barrels was about \$16.50 or seventeen dollars. The merchants were very pleased with having them out in front there and of course stressing the fact that they had to be watered, and if you don't water them, they're going to die. I, of course, cut in bottom of the barrels and some stones in the bottom to keep moisture down there, and keep them from being over-watered, in case of severe rain. That was a very worthwhile project. I enjoyed it, it took a lot of time, a lot of work. At that time, my daughter used to go with me to dig and do what she could to help. She used to take a shovel and do what she could. She was quite small. Twenty years ago, she was eight or nine years old, but she had her little shovel there and she was shoveling dirt. That was Teresa, my oldest daughter. With the help of John Miller and Greenridge Nursery, John has done quite a number of projects in the Northville at a very reasonable cost to help beautify the City of Northville. So, we got the

job done, the extra cost of course, was the redwood stain and some paint brushes, which of course, I bought for the school, and that was all figured into the total cost of the barrel. As a matter of fact, here's the... no... that's not the one... right here... this is the letter from Bea Carolson, who was the first chairman of the beautification committee here in Northville sent me.

That's very nice, I'm sure you're very proud of that.

Oh yes, very much so, that's the reason I keep it right here on the wall, in front of my desk, because I thought it was very nice of her to send me that letter.

One of the things you mentioned is that you have worked for Northville Downs for a long time. Would you like to talk about that?

Well, Northville Downs started in 1944, and I've worked there ever since.

Is that right?

Yep.

In what capacity?

I first started out, I worked during the day time, for the sports service, taking and going through the grandstand, picking up empty bottles from the, you know, the beer and pop that they sold. Back then, there was no such thing as serving them in cups, if you ordered one, that's what you got. So I used to just pick up the bottles because the Downs had, you know, their own sweepers, and they would do the rest of it. Then I would have to stack them. My next job was cleaning out the refreshment stands and loading the tanks up with beer and pop for that next evening sale. I, of course, would ice them down. Well then after that would be going back into the commons area and getting all the hot dogs and hot dog buns. We used to have to do it in steps, because there were so many things that we had to do to get ready for the day, so we would do it in steps like that. By the time we got to the early afternoon, we have all the bottles picked up, stacked, and put up on what you might call shelves. The refreshment stand all set up for the next night. Well then, by that time we would be all through, so I'd go down to the program department and they would supply me with close to a hundred programs, and I used to go down to the barns and sell them to the horsemen so they could see what was going on that night. I was paid a commission of five cents a program. That kept me busy.

You must have been pretty young to be satisfied with that.

Well, date back 44 years, that puts me into the category of thirteen or fourteen years old at that time. So, after I got through selling my programs, I'd come home and have dinner, and then I'd come back at night to the parking lot, parking cars. So that again would keep



me busy throughout the early evening. Well, by the time I got through parking cars, I was pretty tired, because I'd have to be down at the sports service at 7:00 in the morning. There wasn't much time between 11:00 at night and 7:00 in the morning. During the summer... the summer months, except Sundays, of course, I was pretty well occupied working, because I actually had three different jobs that I did those first few years. Well then, I eventually, I moved to work full time, during race time in the parking lot and the line. I gave up the sports service work, but I still did the programs for an extra couple of years. Then I was put out on one of the parking lot gates handling and collecting for the parking. I think I was either fifteen or sixteen when I was collecting money at the gates. I stayed on that job for several years and then they moved me from there to a gate job, which was a job which was a gate leading to the barn area into the paddock area, at night, which you might call a security job. Checking people for their passes, and making sure undesirables were not permitted through into the barns or into the paddock area. The drivers, once they came back out, I had to be sure they removed their colors, just things of that nature. I was on that job quite a few years and enjoyed it tremendously. Then they moved me to another gate when things were changed around, which was fine, that was a gate between the grandstand area and the paddock area. I remained on that job in the admissions department up until now, although I have not worked in a booth for close to ten years now. Now, I handle the box seat reservations and sales, the box seat season tickets and I handle the daily sales each night. I have really enjoyed doing that. It's a change of pace from my day work, but if I get appointments to go out on insurance sales, or if I have a City council meetings or anything like that, I of course, do not work that evening at the track, because my insurance job is my bread and butter job. The other job is a fun job, I've enjoyed it. I've seen the operation of this race track go from where they said they hoped that they hoped they could get it up to a \$25,000 a night handle. Of course, today it is several hundred thousand dollars per night handle. So I've seen it grow from total infancy to what the racing industry is today. Back at that time, there was only the old Detroit race course which had the runners and Northville Downs, which had the standard breed trotter and pacers. Other than that, the only place you could see trotters and pacers was at the county fair, where there were no stakes like today. That has become a multi-million dollar business with the amount of tracks we have here in the state of Michigan.

Do you follow racing generally out-state and around the country?

I enjoy reading about them, you know, in the newspapers and, of course, the big races, like the Hamiltonian, and Falafraternities, and the Michigan Fraternity Stakes. I enjoy reading about those and the horses that are coming up. I always love to see the two and three year old colts race. Because they are the future of the racing industry, just as our children are the future of our nation. So I always enjoy watching the babies and how they do the year after and the year after and how some of them become the grand champions.

A lot of people here have had real good horses. Some of them say today that Sunny Fortune, who the Spreccers had, was a tremendous horse. Les Alfred, out of Flint, had some good horses. Some of the best raced up in New York State. Perry Williams out of Birmingham had excellent horses. So the Michigan area has been well-represented throughout the whole country.

That's very interesting. You mentioned in here that you have been past president and Board member of the Northville Community Chamber of Commerce.

Yes.

When were you president?

I was president of the chamber for two years. The year of 1979 and the year of 1980. Prior to that, I was a board member appointed to fill an open position of one of the Board members who had to leave in 1978. We had the International Festival at Northville Downs back in those days. They asked me to, how I got on the Board was, they had come to me and asked me to handle the concessions at the festival. My wife and me had been known to put on a few dinners and cater a few banquets because of what you might call my cooking history from my Sweet Shop days. So we did it, turned out to be a profitable food commission year, which it had not been in previous years, with other people running the food concessions. The following year, the chamber elected me president. At that time, the chamber really was not recognized. One guy says, "It's not much more than a formality to go to the meetings and have the president say well I did this and I did that and now I need your approval." At the first meeting, I said that this is a board with seven different members, with seven different ideas, and there will be seven different speeches at the meetings. I was just like the other members, only I presided over the meetings. I wanted ideas, I wanted thought, I wanted work from the other six members also. I think we had a very good working board. They were all very enthused. I was very pleased with the members and we started out to become a very viable part of the community. When the Main Street '78 was rejected by the voters in Northville, I went to the City Council on behalf of the chamber board and asked if we could take over that project. At that time I was not on the city council, I had been prior to that, Main Street '78 came about from the fact that when I was on city council, they asked me to sit. We had a few boarded up buildings, some business that were failing in town. The business people were very concerned. So, being a liaison between the business community and the city council, we set out to try to do something. We, at that time, did not know what that was going to be, and the Main Street '78 project came up where we were going to try to use the capital taxes under the 1978 capital tax act. It was turned down by the voters, and on behalf of the chamber board, I went to the city council and asked them if we could have that project to see if we couldn't get it passed. The business community felt that we needed something like that to boost business in the city. So they said sure, they couldn't do

anything with it, so sure, go ahead. They kinda chuckled at time, but that I believe, they felt that how could we do it if they couldn't. Again, like I say, as the president of the chamber, I had a good board. Without a board such as that, nobody can accomplish anything. It was seven of us, not one who accomplished the feat. Those seven people went out, and we formed committees, and we had people in the community, business people, citizens interested in the future of the downtown area. By the time we went all through, we had gone door to door, passed out leaflets, explaining the program, explaining city property, the property was owned by the city residents, people that are in by the citizens of the community owned the property that we were going to renovate and fix over. We must have had fifty or sixty people who went door to door and explained this program to all the citizens. When the city council did it, it was defeated by a 3 ½ to 1 margin. After our chamber got through with it, and we held a special election, and that special election was not a cost to the city because we do that, we got all of the city election workers to handle the polls for the day. So this is how the enthusiasm built up. It passed by better than a three to one margin. That was accomplished within a four month period. That's how we came about with our Main Street '78 project. I was complimented by the mayor at that time. He said, "Paul, you did a wonderful job. If it had not been for you, this would not have come about." I said, "Mr. Mayor, I will take that as a compliment to the Chamber Board," and I did at the next meeting and told them we had a compliment from the mayor. So again, like I say, I couldn't do these things alone, there's nobody that could do those things alone.

The mayor at that time was who?

Paul Graham, as a matter of fact, I was not on City Council at that time, because I ran for mayor at that time, and he beat me out. That's how I was initially tapped for the Chamber position, but still working for the City, although I was not on City Council at that time. The cooperation that we had throughout the Chamber, the City Council, they were just overwhelmed by the change of the community on this project. The business men were just in their glory, they just couldn't believe how things had changed. Again, like I said, it takes cooperation, it took the Chamber, the City Council, the business, the citizens, everybody put their best foot forward and worked for something that has become a part of the community. I would believe that without that happening... I would believe that without that happening... that we would have been in some serious trouble in Northville, because of a lack of a good downtown business section. If you have a strong business section, you have a strong community.

You said that you have been involved in many church activities, would you like to tell us about that?

Well, of course, I belong to Our Lady of Victory here in Northville, I've been there all my life. I became involved in some of their projects. Well, let's go back to the beginning

when I was small. I started out of course being an altar boy at the church there. I started out at the time when Father Woodstock was here. He organized the baseball games and the activities which I participated in. I helped in a way, us older high school students would help Father on how to play the game and how to bat and things of that nature. It was just a real fun thing to do to help the church, because it was just something, we couldn't do these things in school. This became a second sports activity. There were several years, of course, in which I was not able to participate in sports because of my knee, this gave me a good outlet to involve myself in the sports field. I was able to do a few things like this to help out. Then after that, when Father Headat became the pastor up here, I became very involved, I became an extraordinary Minister at our church.

Could we interject a note that means that you are a communion Minister?

Yes right. Then Father Haybad was a great believer in families to have them together at different things. So he had them together at different activities putting on parties at the church. Well, I became very involved with Father Haybad and helped to organize these different activities and parties, along with other members of the congregation. I was just a small part of the picture. Like I say cooperation, if you get two people that have an idea, that's fine, but if you have five people that have that idea, you can carry it out. That is what we did, it was almost like a spider web, we'd start out small, but before you know, everyone was involved. We had some very successful get-togethers. We started the Annual Church Picnic, which is still carried on today. Father Dustin, the singing, banjo playing priest, we had him out with Elma Santer, who was a great accordionist. We had them out several times for get-togethers. My wife and I became the cooks for the big spaghetti dinners that we had at our church. These were also fund raisers to help pay for activities that actually went on and were a cost to the church. We couldn't dig into their treasury because they didn't have any for this sort of thing. We had to have little fund raisers for this sort of thing, and this is how we did it. So this is how our involvement was with the church for many years. My wife and I participated in many of these activities. After Father Haybad left, we unfortunately didn't have that many things going on. And younger people coming in all the time, and it was better for them to take over than us older folks. If something came up at the church, I was most happy to help participate in those things again. It's been fun, it's been good, it's been very educational, it's been very friendly and nice, meeting many of the younger new people coming into the church that continue these sort of things, because it takes that sort of thing to keep the church together.

Now you are a past president of the parents' council at Eastern Michigan University. How did that come about?

Well, back when my oldest daughter, Teresa, went to Eastern for her first year at college and they had a parents' day. My wife and I went to the parents' day that they had for the

new students and the parents. During one of the sessions they said that under the law, that the students were now eighteen and they would send the report cards and any information or anything about them to the students themselves. They could tell the parents this. Well, that upset me a little bit. And I said, "Wait, are you telling me that you're not going to tell me what daughter is doing here at school?" He said no. I said, "I think you're wrong." He said, "No, not according to law." I said, "Well, wait a minute, let's go back a little bit, Mom and Dad is footing the bill." So I says, "Somewhere along the line," I says, "In the Federal Government IRS income tax form, it says in there you are contributing more than 50% of a child's care and upbringing, education, and whether it may be," I says, "We have the right to deduct them as a dependent." I said, "Now second," I says, "It also says that when they go to vote," I says, "The criteria for voting is where is their address. Where is their address? It's at home. Where is their driver's license? It's at home. So if home is their home for all of these things which gives them the right and gives me the right to claim a dependent and them the right to vote at home locally, and State and Federal." I says, "And them," I says, "In my business insurance," I says, "Our criteria for charging students is, where is their home register? What is their Post Office mailing and dependents of their parents. So if this all allowed by the government, Federal and the State, they set up the rules for charging the student insurance and what have you not. The parents' responsibility, under the present laws," I says, "if this person is a person away at college and they are away at college, and they have an automobile accident, the other person can still come back and sue mother and father." I says, "That's been proven in the courts already. So are you telling me that you won't tell me anything about my daughter over here?" I says, "I think that's wrong." I says, "I challenge that." Well, they were all taken back, you might say, about my statement. They said that we have several hours before the visit day is over, how about we send it over to the school attorney and have him look into it? So about two hours later, when we had another sit down orientation, they came back and said, "Mr. Folino, you were right. You do have the right to your report cards, and information from the school, because what you stated was right." So this is how that came about, and I guess it kinda set a precedent throughout the country, because the parents then had a right to obtain this information from the school. I then asked them, "I want this stuff mailed to me." So this is how that came about, and this is when they asked my wife and me to sit on the parents' council because they were just starting the parent council. I think that year was the year they started it. That was a council that would eliminate some of the red tape that students would have to go through on different things. We also had fundraisers to pay for that Eastern... we sent one of the college teachers out to Texas for a seminar in a new course. We had some grants for some of the students and things of this nature. And I remained on that council, my wife had to drop out because of her illness at that time, she just couldn't physically handle some of the things. But I remained on there for about five years. It was a lot of fun. It was a rewarding experience to go through to see what some of the students have to go through

and to see what they have to put up for. And how in sense politics really, they really, they would try to do something or they would go to a counselor or go to the administration and say they're having a problem with this. And they says that they'll look into it and it would be weeks before they hear anything. But a phone call to me, or another member of the council, the problem would be cleared up by that afternoon. I had one case, that a student knew me called, and said, "I have a very bad problem in my dorm. I have been after them to change me. I have been after them for weeks because one of these students is smoking pot and I don't want to be involved or anywheres near it." She had several weeks of trying to get changed. I called over there that afternoon and that evening she was sleeping in another dorm. And this is the type of thing the parents' council can accomplish and was set up for. It was a very rewarding experience.

I'd like to go back to something that went on from 1954 to 58, Paul's Sweet Shop, where was that located, and could you tell us something about that?

Okay, that was a real sweet shop. It was a dairy bar. We had light lunches, you know hamburgers, grill meals.

Where was that?

Well, we started out at 168 East Main Street and then the address was changed to 170. They had a new building being built next door and then all of the addresses had to be changed. But it's where the present Main Street Barber is today. I believe the current address is today, is 170 East Main Street. That was kinda a model, how that came about, my grandpa, in Rochester, Michigan at that time up until the time he was unable to operate the store. He had a confectionate store. He had ice cream and a soda bar, he had of course, bread, milk, candies, and that time, tobaccos were a big thing in those confectionery stores. And then, my Uncle Patsy, my mother's brother, had the same type of store up in Holland, Michigan. Only in Holland, he made his own candies, he cooked his own chocolates. His big thing there was fruit, because his oldest son was in the produce business. I went to my grandfather's every summer over in Rochester and spent two to three weeks, spending my summer vacation with him and putzing around in the store, although Grandpa was kinda a funny guy. He wanted to do everything himself, he wouldn't let you do anything. I guess the only thing I could do without having to press him into a corner was go get the broom and sweep. But, I can remember, he used to have a cart that he would push in front of the store every morning, and at one end of this great big machine he roasted peanuts, and at the other end he popped popcorn. I used to sell the bags to people walking up and down the street during the summer months. That was a great thrill for me. That was my main job while I was there. He took the inside and I took the outside. But that was fun. And then, Uncle Patsy, he made his own chocolate, and he made his own ice cream. Which, for many years, was a big hit when people were into homemade ice cream. Well, it started out that the two drug stores that we had at the time,

which was Gunsell Rexall's Drugs and Northville Drugs, they both took out there soda fountains. Leland Smith, who operated the EMB food market, which stood for Edward M. Bogart, he was the one who started that store, that's where Genittis is presently today. The Genittis bought it from the chain of owners from Bogart Leland Smith to Ray Jerad and on up. So Smitty, as everybody knew him as, he was also the post master in Northville, and I were talking and I always wanted to start my own business, because I figured that if I could make money for somebody else that I could make money for me. So we had many a talks and the one thing that we came up with which was more his idea than mine, was that if a few soda fountains go out of business, then why can't one survive. The only other place you buy ice cream or Sundays was at the Cloverdales dairy. We felt that there could be a successful second dairy store in town. That's when I rented the building that I was in from Don McDonald. And then bought the equipment from Gunsell's Rexall's Drugs, and got (????) ice cream in, which I felt was one of the best ice creams. And we set up shop, and that became known as Paul's Sweet Shop. Well, we operated that, it was a successful venture we went into. It was hard work. We opened at 10:00 a.m. and closed at 10:00 p.m. and you were lucky if you got out of there by midnight after you finished mopping, especially during the winter. Then in 1952, I put some pizza ovens in and had the first pizza place in Western Wayne County. My cousin who owned one called Mount Joy Pizzeria over on Joy Road and Mount Street, he came out and taught me how to make pizzas.

What was his name?

Stanley Penguary. My homemade chocolate business came about, my Uncle Patsy Filiano from Holland came down and showed me how to melt down the ten pound slabs of chocolate and mix peanuts, raisins, whatever you wanted to make and with the chocolate melted down, you could make all of these different candies. He showed me how to do that. That became a very successful part of my business because by the time I had left the sweet shop, I had seven other outlets that I would sell my candy to because we boxed our candies. So we had some very nice stores. One of our biggest accounts was over in Walled Lake Buckmyer's Supermarket. They sold a lot of our candy. Then we had Guernsey Farm Dairy, had a couple of outlets sold our candies. Then the old Farmcrest Farms Dairy, they had about five places, and they sold our candies in there. So, we had a very successful candy business. In 1958, I then sold out and went to work for an uncle of mine, Frank Pobiano in Buchanan, Michigan, and he took over the distributorship of the Rockola Coin Operated Music Boxes or Jukeboxes for the state of Michigan. When he first opened his new office in Detroit, he wanted my wife to work for him, and then as soon as he got set up, then I would come in. That worked out well, because at that time, I had someone that wanted to buy out my Sweet Shop. So that's how I went from the Sweet Shop business to the jukebox business.

Did you enjoy that?

Yes, that was very interesting. That was still in the days of the jukebox industry. There was still a few incidents where jukeboxes were smashed up and one place got bombed. A competitor of ours at that time, Seaburg Distributorship, and there were a few things like that. When I say bombed, I mean somebody threw a molotov cocktail through the window and newspaper came out, "Jukebox Center Bombed."

What was the basis of that war?

Just competition. One guy would be jealous of the other and they would try to steal his stop and get the owner to put in his jukebox instead of the other guy's jukebox. Then they'd become mad at one another. There was a lot of stories of the Mafia being involved, owning some of the routes. Which I'm sure there probably was, there are some people out to make a fast buck. I'm sure that some of the unscrupulous business people were involved in this. Unions were involved in it. The unions tried to unionize all the workers and keep them from fighting one another and try to cooperate a little bit more. It wasn't as bad as what the unions played it up to be. Could be that some of those things that happened, would be a guy would buy a machine, and he probably bought a Seaburg Machine, and the thing gave him a lot of trouble. So he got mad and threw a cocktail bottle through the front window. That would be a one-time incident. People buy a car today, and it turns out to be a lemon. There was that one incident several years ago when that one guy bought a car, and it turned out to be a lemon and ended up throwing rocks through the front window. It's no different really. That was a good business, but I got seriously injured when I was lifting a machine when I really shouldn't have been and I hurt my back in 1959. I ended up at University Hospital and was supposed to be there for ten days to find out why I was hurting so bad. They have me a myogram, a five inch needle that they poke in your back. They hit the wrong spot and I became paralyzed from the waist down for the next two years. I laid on my back the whole time and with the hard work of my wife, she would rub my back and rub my legs trying to get the circulation back into them. I spent from December to the following April, until I finally got out. Then I came home, and my dad and my brother, his name is Steve, he is the oldest of the three of us children, and carried me out one arm over each shoulder. I just couldn't stay at the hospital any longer. My cousin and Will Weston, my next door neighbors, Earl Paterson and his son Clarence, better known as Pat and Stan Johnson, used to come down. My cousin Monroe used to come down on Friday nights to take me up to the football games or basketball games and they'd get a chair set on the end of the bleachers for me. My dad and brother would come over every night and pick me up and try to get me to move my legs, and so would my next door neighbors Earl and Clarence, they would also do that. That is what eventually helped me to get back on my feet to walk again. My daughter was only five months old at the time and I didn't want to lay on my back and watch her grow up.

You did it on drive and desire, didn't you?



Yep, and Dr. Westernburg at University Hospital, I told her that I had to go home because she wasn't doing me any good there, and that I had to go home and try this myself. She didn't want me to go. My wife was working at that time, she had to work in order for us to survive. Folks would take care of our daughter and I'd be at home crawling around on my hands and knees trying to exercise myself. Then stand up using the kitchen chair, using it as a crutch to lean on. It took about two years and at that time, I went back to University Hospital. I walked into Dr. Westernburg's office and needless to say, she was very shocked. I told her that someday I was going to golf again and I was going to bowl again. I couldn't get near the same scores I did before. I bowl in the 190's and I golf in the mid to high 70's. Today, whatever score I achieve is an accomplishment, because the Doctor said I would never do that again.

Well, now you're hunting, so you must do a lot of walking to do that.

I do a lot of tracking and a lot of seeking through the woods, looking for deer. I guess I waited about seven years to play golf again and after about seven holes, I had to quit. I had to come in because I was hurting so bad, I could hardly swing a club. I wore a plaster cast from my waist up over my shoulders for two years, and I wore a steel brace for about eight to ten years after that. I still have trouble today with my back. But I've learned to cope with it and do some of the things that help to relieve some of the pressure on it. I still doctor it. At times, I've had to consume a lot of aspirin to help ease the pain. But it's something I've learned to live with.

It was probably in 1958, around right when you came out of the hospital when you started your insurance business?

I got at the insurance business in 1961. I had to look for something that I no longer had to do hard physical labor. I could have gone back into the jukebox business and taking and traveling around the state, but that would be a very hard thing because I'd have to take the machine with me to demonstrate the thing to the operators. Trying to take that thing in and out of a station wagon would be a bit hard and most of the times, it would be by myself. That's when I seen an ad in the paper and that's what led me to what is now my State Farm Insurance agency.

It now looks like you've been very successful. You've been in it for about 27 years.

Twenty-seven and a half years. It's like any other business, though, you only get out of it what you put into it. It was the same thing as the Sweet Shop. If I wasn't there every day, I couldn't make a goal. If I'm not here working at my insurance business, I couldn't make the goal.

It's a very competitive business.

Very competitive, and normal turnover of your clientele, just from the standpoint of people moving into the community will consume 50% of your business a year. Other factors, families have two or three cars, competition, rate-wise, quite often takes some of your business. Moves--people transferring jobs, you lose their business. You lose a family who has five cars, a home, a snowmobile, a cottage, a motorcycle, and all of a sudden, the guy gets transferred to Wisconsin. So you have to write a lot of new business to offset that. I guess 20% is a pretty average loss of business per year. So you have to work hard to replace that, and if you don't, you have to work backwards and this is one business you can't do that in.

Do either of your daughters work for you?

My daughter, Paula, works for me. She is a student at U of M, so she only works part time and, depending on her schedule, she may come back midweek or on the weekends. So she is over here working. Well, I guess you could say that both my daughters started working for me when they were six or seven years old. They learned how to file and so they were my file clerks for all the years they grew up. My oldest daughter is a claim representative for State Farm out of the claims office in Pontiac. So she has stayed with State Farm. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Paula doesn't do the same thing, although music is her major. She loves the music industry and she does a lot of singing, so I would not be surprised if she pursues a musical background.

You certainly have been a mover and shaker in Northville, you've been a great interview. It took just a few questions and now I have lots of great material for the historical society and the library.

Well, remember, it's been wonderful living in Northville. I've had several opportunities over the years to leave Northville, but I just never felt like I wanted to leave. I can remember in the winter time, when it used to get real icy. Starting out on the East Lawn San Hills, East Lawn Sanitarium is where Allen Terrace is now. We used to slide down from the top of that hill High Street all the way to Main Street on our sleds, turn left on Main Street, onto South Center Street, all the way down to Seven Mile, cut off at Edward Hines Drive and Center Street.

In one run.

In one run.

You didn't have to be a skier.

Oh no. We used to ski Baldwin's Hill, which is the hill that goes up Sheldon Road. And the first hill was Baldwin Hill. So we'd ski that, and sled East Lawn Hill. Those were the days. This is what a lot of the entertainment was during the winter months. A lot of the

kids didn't have the money to go to the shows every night and recreation departments were unheard of at that time. The only other activities were those of the school, and those were the sports, which were football, basketball, and baseball. So we had to find our own entertainment and those were some of the things that we did.

That's great. I see so many children being passive these days. Spending their time in front of a TV or these Nintendos and things like that.

The only thing we had in those days was being able to listen to a radio. The only time we could do that was when our parents weren't listening to the news, and then we could only listen to certain programs. But I could remember my oldest brother Steve, of course, and older sister Jenny, who still lives in Northville, her married name today is Waltzen. She and my brother and I would walk to school. We were in different buildings at that time. We'd walk to school at that time with our neighbor's children, who were walking with their brothers and sisters. Which was common then, but not today. There were no buses then, and the people out in the country would bus themselves in. That went on over the years. I was involved in a whole retail merchants' association. I helped the city too, but some of the properties that we did back then. My grandfather's home, over in Rochester, was eventually bought out by the City of Rochester for parking. We suggested that for the Council, because we didn't have enough parking. Then, for several years, when business was bad, at that time I was on City Council, that they were going to recall us out of office because we bought so many parking lots that were never filled. Now today, we don't have enough parking today. So I've seen our community go from best to the worst, to the best, to the worst, to whatever you want to call it. But it seems it's gone in cycles. But it's been a very good community. The cooperation here in town has just been tremendous, because without it, we would not have what we have today, here in Northville.

I've been here eleven years and I have just really enjoyed it.

That's the reason I never left.

Okay, we're running out of tape here and I would just really like to thank you on behalf of the library and the Historical Society and there will be copies of this tape in the archives of...