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JH: Testing 1 2 Jim Henderson Interviewing Dr. Lewis Peters.
Dr. when did you first come to NMU?

LP: I came about, I came in the fall of 1961 so I have been here, I am now on my 26th year, just about 26 this is here at Northern.

JH: Was this your first teaching position?

LP: No, I had taught for three years before that in Lacrosse Wisconsin. At that time it was called Wisconsin State College at Lacrosse and now it is one of most ??? of the universities in this ????

JH: What university did you attend?

LP: Well I did my undergraduate work at Depauw university, that is Depauw not the ??? college, although they do have a very excellent NCAA three basketball team, in fact they have been in the top four in the nation for the last couple years. These people don't know about that because it is NCAA three. That is where I did my undergraduate work in ?? Indiana and then from there I went to ??? university and did my masters and PhD work there at ????

JH: Why did you choose Northern Michigan University?

LP: To teach at well that is kind of interesting. Well I went to Depauw I really didn't know much about some of the outdoor sports and students there got me interested in two of them first of all ??? I learned how to canoe, they taught me how to canoe and I bought a canoe and we went on a local trip and some overnight trips and also occasional I would go on camping trips with a group of students and then when the weather got colder they asked me if I would accompany them on ski trips and I had never skied and so I did after a little hesitation and then I learned how to ski. Well in LaCrosse the ski hill is almost completely composed of artificial snow and I got interested in what real snow or lots of real snow would be like. So I came to the porcupine mountains one weekend and a few weekends later ??? in Marquette it is not called ??? anymore it is called Marquette Mountain and that was a day, it was in early March, and it was a day of tremendous amount of snow, maybe in February, there was probably fifteen to sixteen inches of snow that time and I thought that was typical of Marquette so I thought boy this would be a nice place to live and ??? and it just turns out that that year there was a opening at Northern, it was called Northern Michigan College then, and I informally talked with a couple of the professors including Dr. West who was then the department head. And he recommended or suggested that I apply for the position and subsequently I was interviewed officially and later employed. So that is how I happened to come here, through the

ski trip which turned into a opportunity of employment here and I skied for about two years when I came, after coming I skied pretty regularly and then my skis broke. I made friends with Mike Potenski? he introduced me to ice fishing, I got snow shoes, I learned how to do other things and I have never gone back to down hill skiing although I enjoy cross country skiing sometimes.

JH: Do you still snow shoe?

LP: Oh yes, I enjoy snow shoeing and cross country, I like snow shoeing because often I will take a pond along with me and on some of my palm trees that I have, I got a forty acre plot that around by pond and winter is usually a good time to do the pruning on those. So that is one activity that I enjoy doing.

JH: Have you seen many changes at Northern over the years, since you have been here?

LP: Well, oh yeah there have been all kinds of changes. Northern had really just undergone a big population explosion at the time that I came, there was about 2000 students here. It had really, that was considered by everybody around here as having really grow. The projections that it might have reached 4000 or even more. But in Peter White Hall, I almost forgot the name of the building the Hall where I worked the first five years. Well the hallways and stairways were very crowded, it took a lot of pushing and shoving to get from one side to the other. So that was one difference. All of the buildings were connected except for the university center. You could walk from one building through corridors to every other building. And that is no longer the case. That is actually not a bad idea for us to have passage ways, these were not underground they were above ground, connecting the buildings. And that way people didn't have to put on hats and coats to go from one building to the next.

JH: Especially in the winters up here that would help.

LP: Yeah that would be a good thing I would think.

JH: Have the courses offered changed much?

LP: Well there is a lot more variety within probably every department. In the biology department for example we didn't even have a course in ecology and now there are hundreds of students every year who ecology courses. And that could just be multiplied over and over again in terms of, now a few years before I did arrive when they had maybe 800 to 1000 students when Dr. Popenski? was a student as a freshmen he showed me one time the class schedule that was available and the entire class schedule filled up two pages of the Northern News but it would be equivalent of the North Wind and so

two sheets showed everything. You would look at it and it would say maybe at eight o'clock they would offer zoology, U.S. history, and sophomore english and at nine o'clock; yeah all the departments of the university were offered on one list. So yes in terms of course offerings there are a tremendous number of changes. Eventually ??? along the social line, student dances always had chaperons for the first year that I came, ?? a new person, and I got married in November of my first year here and so my new wife and I were often asked to chaperon and we I guess it was kind of an obligation although it wasn't written down anywhere to do that ???? and after a few semesters as I kind of didn't have to do that as much anymore, although we didn't mind and also the rules became a little bit more liberal so that the chaperons were maybe optional and in fact I haven't heard of a chaperon at a student dance for twenty years now, have you?

JH: No I haven't except on the high school level now but ???

LP: High school yeah but what about college?

JH: Well to tell you the truth I haven't been to a dance in college for years myself?

LP: OK

JH: How about changes in the students and lets say for example their direct and ?returance? and

LP: Well people say that the 1960s was sometimes people think of the 1960s as a time of ??? student turmoil and ??? but that is only true in my recollection beginning in about 1968-69, very late 60s. And from 1961-68 students were very quote well behaved unquote, ???? was ??? and almost all the guys and myself and most of the faculty had crew cuts and ??? would be the flat top or a quarter inch ?? or a half inch ?? and some of the older faculty you might have a half or a fourth inch ??? but you couldn't tell whether a person had curly hair or wavy hair or straight hair because it was too short to tell. And I would say I was impressed by, I noticed the difference on the ???? the apparel is on I have noted ???? I think there are more ??? shirts like hunting type shirts, jeans a lot more blue jeans have been worn. Those changes may have occurred in these other places too, I am not sure whether it is ?functional? geography or functional ???

JH: Have you seen a change back now recently with

LP: Well within the last year or so it seems that haircuts are starting to get shorter and my younger son who is now thirteen a month or two ago said he was going to do something wild and different and he hoped that I approved and he got a real ?? top haircut. I didn't act like I cared one way or another, I guess I really don't but the fact that he ??

JH: The West Science building here was named after Luther West, is there anything you can tell me about Luther West?

LP: There is a little problem, I guess I could come up with a lot of things about Luther West. Very few people, and myself included, very few people would call him Luther West he was always Dr. West and only one person ever called him by his first name to his face and that was Mrs. West and she called him Luth L-U-T-H and she would refer to him in that way to anybody. But to everybody else he was Dr. West including faculty members, there were only four. I was probably a little freier with him in my association with him than the other faculty members. At least two of the other faculty members in the department had been his students and well I think that they felt even more if that is the right word to him perhaps than I did but I think we all felt pretty respectful toward him. And possibly I saw him without a tie and a white shirt but if so that would have been a very rare occasion. He may have had a colored shirt or a striped shirt but he was always formal dresses and that was typical of the times. I can remember in my first year, even when I came on campus ?? even on a saturday I got dressed up because that was just the way that people were on campus and so that wasn't Dr. West only. But he was extremely agonized in his time, he would arrange his classes so that he would be free at eleven o'clock in the morning and at one o'clock and he would leave from home about twenty minutes to twelve, avoiding the noon twelve as he put it and take his lunch which Mrs. West had all ????? for him and then take about a twenty minute nap, he would loosen his tie and lie down for about twenty minutes which completely would rejuvenate him for the activities of the afternoon and he would speak in that kind of formal way. And then he would proceed home for his evening meal, which he might call it, at such a time to avoid the worst of the traffic and so in that way that is just one example of how he would agonize his life. In preparation for his laboratory his assistants would have everything ready just to the minute so it was very well I was told by one of his former assistants how was at, many years ago, an undergraduate student and that assistant had forgotten or failed to take a few items out on the laboratory demonstration table ??? rubber bands rulers or something like that, and that assistant was called out of class, he was attending some other class like a history class or so and a messenger was sent to that class asking for that student to come that Dr. West wanted to see him right away and Dr. West called that student out of class and said sir you have failed to prepare for the laboratory and I need this material immediately and the materials were in a drawer right in that room and Dr. West knew where they were and he could have much more easily gotten them himself but this was his way of training the students to do the right job and to be responsible.

JH:????

LP: I don't think he did it to put the students out or to criticize the students but to emphasize the importance of being absolutely sure that the job is done.

JH: Fulfilling his obligations to

LP: Exactly, to be responsible. His responsibility was very important to Dr. West.

JH: What do you see in the future of Northern Michigan University? Do you see it growing or staying about the same level as we have now?

LP: Well that is a little hard to say. I propose that it should continue to change in order to fit the needs of the time, to keep up with the times and also to be something of a leader into new teams where the faculty and the administration should have with help from the outside should have some concept making a good as a tradition as they can so that the future needs will be and be somewhat of a leader into the future whether it ??? new kind of curriculum, new kind of employment's needs and how to prepare students for future jobs whether it be innovating on the kinds of equipment that will be used and the research or new media of the arts and I think I see that. I think when I was a kid growing up I liked painting and sketches, well now and ?? sculptures out of marble so ?? create a sculpture out of marble. But now there are many other media that are used, different three dimensional pieces of art which are certainly not oil paintings or sketches or water colors or neither are they traditional statues and there are all kinds of things inbetween. Well I think that the people in the field of art at the university are really up on those things. And I think that is true in the sciences. When I first came Dr. ?May? was very much ??? about ???ography and a ?tramatograph? on tramatograph chambers for producing ???ography where it was way beyond the budget of the university and so he built one with students and then he built one which was not good enough for publishing the pictures ??? but it was certainly good enough for teaching the principles of ?tomography? could teach. A few years after that he got interested in television as a means of ?inception? and while this is so common now we watch not only northern television stations but others that are available on cable, but educational television ??? is well it is taken advantage of pretty much. Dr. May was really innovative, he hooked together microscopes and television monitors and he operated the tv to ??? in class. It didn't work real well, it lasted only for a year or two but he did this but by that time he was on into the next thing and so I would say that Dr. May was a person who ??? opened the eyes a little ??? to using ??? and if he were still living today and here today I am sure that he would continue that work because he had an inquiring mind. It is kind of interesting to compare Dr. West and Dr. May and to think that both passed on now and I have a lot of respect for both of them

yet they were quite a bit opposite. Dr. May was he tended to look more to the future, Dr. West was more interested in the past. Dr. West's research was very much ?compiling? the literature of the past rather than projecting and planning new ways that he would ???? cutting edge of future developments. So Dr. May tended to be ??? in the future, Dr. West in the past. Dr. May his office was the messiest office in the department, probably the messiest office in the university; slides and dirty glassware, and half eaten sandwiches and books and papers and so on scattered in every direction and he wasn't all that good at finding what he was looking for either, it would take him a while just to find it. Dr. West was extremely organized, he knew just how many pages of notes with what applied to each lecture that he would deliver, he had them arranged in exactly the right sections so that he could find any piece of paper in his office, he could find any item of ??? that he would ever use. Everything would follow so that it made ??? and so in that sense they were quite a bit different.

JH: It is nice to have a contract.

LP: Yeah, us younger people in the department was, it provided an inspired us indirectly. I don't know how much time you have here but Dr. West organized some of ours, and he did a lot to make ???? no, no ??? Dr. West organized seminars in a way to keep us challenged as though we were at a major, large university. So at five o'clock on monday afternoon we had our advanced ??? for the staff and we took turns presenting seminars to each other. And there were a few graduate students in the department, maybe two or so and the graduate students would also participate in the seminars. Now prior to the afternoon was not a time that everybody is wide awake and I know would give my seminars and the graduate students said the same thing that they would notice first of all that Dr. West would nod off and his head would tilt forward after about five minutes, five or ten minutes into the seminar and Dr. Mary would last a few minutes later and then his head would tilt back and you wondered which one would, ?? typical joke you know, we would say which one would break their neck you know, ??? falling asleep during the seminar. I suppose if it would have been at three in the afternoon or if we would have had coffee with it or something I suppose that would have been a little bit a better experience but I remember those seminars. Is this the kind of stuff that you want?

JH: Oh yes, this is very good

LP: ??? read them the letter, this was in 1961-62 and 62-63 in those two years specifically ??? and my wife taught a laboratory, she was one of the few graduate students and she taught a laboratory that began at seven o'clock at night on mondays, so we would have between six and seven to eat and Dr. ?Quapenski? was also a young instructor so the three of us would often go, would

often have pizza during that hour and we went to a Marquette place which one little ??? in Marquette where we used to go and buy pizza, and that was called Bimbos, B-I-M-B-O and it is the same place that is now occupied by Vango's but it was totally different. The ceiling was probably twice as high as the current Vango's, it had a white ceiling with neon lights, not neon but florescent bulb lights so it was very light and I can't remember a lot of the lights but they were probably painted all PG or something as I call and the place had absolutely no atmosphere there. But it was a place where people could go and get pizza in Marquette. And probably the strongest beverage to drink with the pizza was coffee.

JH: Oh, OK.

LP: Marquette also had a hamburger place. When I first came I was interested in going out to get something to eat. I remember I arrived at about nine thirty or ten at night and it was just after I checked into the hotel there was, I hadn't eaten supper so I asked if there was a hamburger place in town, this is a friday night probably ??? and they checked the ??? and he said hamburger heaven was certainly be closed by ten and so there wasn't any place. But they did come up for a place I could go where they were still serving meals it is one of the taverns in Harvey, the Harvey Inn, it is still operating. And so the people at the hotel said if I didn't mind going to a tavern that they would still be serving some kind of food but the hotel wasn't serving food anymore, it was so late at night and that was a friday night. I think times have changed, you know I think if someone came to Marquette on a friday night about ten o'clock I am sure that they would have a lot of reasonable places where they could go out and

JH: Have you enjoyed the Marquette area?

LP: Oh yeah, certainly. People predicted that I wouldn't stay more than a year, two at the very most but I like it a lot. But I like the ?? the ??? is very kind place to ??? very cultural events lots of activities and I had a group of friends there and I got along well with the students and so on, but I enjoyed Marquette just as much, in some ways more.

JH: I want to thank you for this interview Dr. Peters.

LP: OK

JH: and I hope you stay in the Marquette area and enjoy yourself.

LP: Thank you much sir.