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Interview with John Marshall and Judge James Collins, Marquette, Michigan, January 15, 1997.

JC: I think that the significant role that he plays in the community involvement and particularly his participation with the Lake Superior Jobs Coalition. He is one of the vice-chairs and John is one of the vice-chairs and as they were...as the group got together to help the county to make some decisions and to help the county find money to operate the transition to take over the base facilities. I think that he played a very important role and John can tell you about those things because John participated with him.

JM: I think the time had come a private group needed to step up and try to encourage the county to take the responsibility to help redevelop the K.I. Sawyer Air Base and the ambassador's and the Ishpeming/Negaunee diplomats were working in sort of co-committees that I think it was Bill's pushing and talking to Father Cappo saying why don't we activate Lake Superior Jobs Coalition which of course Bill was not a part of back in the early 80s when it was first formed because of Cleveland Cliffs problems at that time, but knew of it. Talking with Father Cappo said why don't we get this thing going and I really think that it was his thrust that said let's broaden out the groups and try to get a group representing all of the county together through the Lake Superior Jobs Coalition and encourage the county commissioners and our federal officials and our state officials in doing what is necessary to redevelop K.I. Sawyer. I really feel that Bill was the guiding light, the primary thrust behind doing that. As Jim said in community redevelopment efforts I mean he has guided that as vice-chair but he has helped to provide places to hold meetings even though we are paying for it he is providing secretarial services, he is kind of the guy whose hands keep moving this thing along. The other aspect, I think, he has by his position of president of the university the visibility with both the federal folks and the state folks and he knows a lot of these people and so he has the ability to reach out and touch the nerve where it has to be touched. I think that it is very important that somebody in his position to pick up that cause.

JC: When AMR decided to move out of the area there was a commission or a group that was appointed to be an advisory committee to the county and their negotiations. It was at one point he played a very candid role in getting the proper people at AMR at the table. They had people negotiating at the table but I don't think there was a decision at the table. Father Cappo was very influential in getting the governor's interest in things because of his association with the governor and Dr. Vandament was influential in getting some of those key people to the table for those negotiations. And as a result we resolved

that problem and AMR is here and employing a lot of people.

RM: AMR refers to?

JM: American Eagle. American Eagle-AMR which is the parent company.

JC: United Airlines is owned by AMR.

JM: American Airlines.

JC: Then there is AMR-Eagle. So AMR is the overall umbrella under which the rest of these companies have been formed. There is AMR-Eagle which was Simmons Airline back in 1988. Simmons Airline was a good company it was still a corporation and Simmons Airlines was operating as AMR-Eagle. AMR-Eagle is a company that kind of umbrellas all of the commuter airlines or regional airlines that American has purchased. The company now that is operating at the base is a maintenance facility it is not AMR-Eagle.

JM: No, it is a brand new company, a subsidiary that they have formed.

JC: It is...I had it written down some place. But anyway it is all the same operation except that if you keep Simmons as Simmons Airlines then it had its own union negotiations then you would get into problems with American Airlines and their units. So if you kept the company's separate all the company's had their own entities, their own contracts it is a lot easier then merging massive things when you do that. When Republic and NorthWest merged, NorthWest took over, totally Republic. So with places like Detroit you had mechanics on one pay scale working for Republic Airlines and then another scale working side by side with Republic people working for NorthWest at another pay scale and that made a lot of problems.

JM: There were a lot of lost bags at that time in and out of Detroit because there were different pay scales.

JC: So you can see what they did of course they didn't merge anything the airline was kept in tack. Simmons Airlines was still Simmons afterward.

JM: You mentioned the union aspect of it and I think that Bill had a hand in during that AMR negotiations in getting the folks from AMR, the AMR union involved because he brought in along with Father Cappo the union president Bill Hendrickson, Henderson? Anyway, he brought the union president from AMR-Eagle to the Lake Superior Jobs Coalition and they were very supportive. Their members went to various county commission meetings and sat on some of those committees I think that it

helped focus public attention but I think Bill is to be credited with doing some of that too.

JC: These are the things that the community doesn't really see. I mean there is a few people that see it working because we have been involved in a foundation but the university doesn't see it, but you see us out to lunch sometimes by that little room by the food court but these are...

JM: But the one thing about Bill you can't say the same about his predecessors and you and I have been around and not that they haven't been good people but Bill and Marg have always been since they arrived here been involved in the community not just with the Jobs Coalition but they have been involved in a whole variety of social events that normally promote some cause whether it be the Special Olympics or ...

RM: Now they are going to have this weekend, Pine Mountain.

JM: Yeah, the Pine Mountain Music Festival is that this weekend or next weekend? But they have always been involved in the community that is just one thing that is great about them as a couple. Bill even more so because he stepped in to the economic development overall.

JC: and without fanfare.

JM: Yeah, right. Real low key.

JC: There is no ego out there saying look at what I am doing.

JM: He is approachable, he and I often converse when we are trying to schedule a meeting for the Jobs Coalition or we got various assignments to do and you can call up there and you can get through to him just like that. Normally you don't do that that easy with a university president. Like you said there is a awful lot that he has done for this community by begin involved in it that a lot of people don't even see.

RM: Are there any other activities that he is involved in other then this Jobs Coalition thing?

JM: Were probably not the right people to ask, you gotta be asking his secretary because Jim and I involved because of the Jobs Coalition it has been our main involvement.

JC: That would be a good idea to ask his secretary. However does his scheduling you should ask if.....

RM: Yes, Jackie Snyder.

JM: Jackie Snyder is the gal that I deal with all the time, she would be the gal to talk too.

RM: Now you are saying...Well I guess do you feel this is I sort of almost have the answer. I guess do you feel that, there are two parts to the question. Number one, do you feel that the university president should do you know in terms of being involved in the community. I might be reiterating something you've already said, that is kind of the first part of it. The other part is, did his predecessors get involved in the community with the maybe the intensity that he did? When we finally come out I will modify, I am not going to put a bad line on them.

JM: Answer to your first question is yes, and to your second question is no.

JC: And that is not negative as far as any of the predecessors are concerned. They all played different roles and did different things and you just can't compare one to the other. I mean the university had prospered under all its presidents and they all have done good things. Harden built it up in numbers, Jamrich built a lot of buildings, Appleberry raised standards, he got a lot of national recognition for the university, and Vandament has been caught with a financial problem and he has bailed it out.

RM: Sort of the other thing is you didn't have the Sawyer problem facing the other..

JM/JC: That is correct.

RM: they were honored and involved with the air base.

JM: I think one of the reasons that Bill got involved not only to try and help the community out of Marquette County but also to help the university community because there were a number of Northern Michigan attenders, there were a number of jobs for Northern Michigan professors and instructors because of the air base. With the air base going away it had a pretty significant impact on Northern Michigan University. By his willing to get involved in the redevelopment and the reestablishment of jobs out at the air base is going to have a material benefit for the people that work at Northern Michigan University. Whether it be professors or staff people or whomever the jobs are going to bring new people into the area which in the long term will benefit the university. He was trying to help the university community as well as the Marquette County community by getting involved in redevelopment interest.

He does things so low key that if you didn't know that the guy was the university president, he just has a very different personality then a lot of people in that position. He makes it very easy to work with him no matter who you are.

RM: How many people and who are the people are on this Jobs Coalition?

JM: We can get you a membership list but we have got people from all parts of the county, all different businesses and

professions.

JC: Father Cappo is the chairman and John and Vandament are co-vice chairmen.

JM: Co-vice-chairmen I guess it is. We all do what we have to do.

JC: We pay dues out of our pockets so we can do this, to raise money.

JM: We raise money from some of the corporations in the area.

JC: We allocated up to \$10,000 to help the county while Shaw was available, I don't know how much we spent but we hired Lyle to audit all of these programs and fund sources so the county had some sort of idea what cause problems. Cause the county board understaffed sat here petrified at the prospect in having to take over that base because where is the money coming from, are there any deficits? They have been cutting back every year, cut back, cut back, they are always wanting to lay people off. I have to go out and find revenue services to save my people sometimes. That helped the county, find the money, get it organized to where it was, know where we had to apply, for Lyle that was a great job. But that was the product of the Jobs Coalition. Our result, we want the county to be successful in what they are doing and there is no recognition to our members of the Jobs Coalition, but that is not what we are there for.

JM: We are out....

JC: Make the county work for us...

JM: Yes, that is right. In a sense the Jobs Coalition has been holding the elective representatives feet to the fire whether they be the national, state, or the county to try to do what is necessary to get an airport moved and encourage Sawyer Lumber and encourage AMR and to take over the operations at the base out there. Trying to help get them together with the people that can provide the funds that are necessary, and demonstrate to them that it is possible to run that base. We just felt that, all of us, that they weren't doing their job that needed to be done in the county. I think that we have been very successful at it.

JC: They did not have anybody that could do what Lyle did and whether they had the money to hire somebody to do it. The results of Lyle's efforts I think are going to be good....

JM: ????, they needed a group like the Lake Superior Jobs Coalition to demonstrate to them there was support out there for their actions and taking some of the risks that they had to take to help the redevelopment.

RM: Now you said that this Lake Superior Jobs Coalition. This

went back to a previous organization that kind of went into dormancy.

JM: The Lake Superior Jobs Coalition was formed probably back in the early 80s when the county was losing a lot of jobs Cleveland Cliffs, the biggest employer at the time was really having... the whole steel industry was in trouble and when the steel industry is in trouble so is the iron ore industry. This group formed during this time to try too help bring the suppliers of Cleveland Cliffs together with Cleveland Cliffs to what could be done to make the mines more competitive and try to be generally support of the iron ore industry. They did some good things, then the group was allowed to go into dormancy because there was not a need at the time that the county started to come back and when this air base closure came up it was probably almost a year after that it was time to get this group reorganized again and Bill had a big hand.

RM: Were you in the original?

JM: No I was not. I made some reports to the original. I was working at Cliffs at the time so I was closely associated with some of the things that. But other people besides Jim and I and Bill, Dr. Vandament, you to Jim Reeves of the Mining Journal, Brad Vanslighters from the television station, you've got Rex Beucombach who is the general manager of Bresnan Communications. You've got Walt Sayer from First of America Bank, you've got Mike Skytta from First of America Bank, you've got Helen Mattson who is the head of the conversion authority, and Ellwood Mattson formerly of MFC. Ron Katers, help me out, from Snyder Drug.

JC: We have a couple of people that aren't really members that are from the county board of commissioners that attended. Carlan ????,

JM: Greg Seppinen, and Steve Powers who is the new county executive, Jay Peterso, Marquette City Manager, Phyllis Maki who is a member of the Marquette Ambassadors, she is from Public Serive Garage, she is the business manager for Public Service Garage. See all of us sitting around a table, who is the guy...Mike, I can never pronounce his last name, he is a photographer from Gwinn, big guy. ?????? anyway, I can get you a copy of everyone that is on it.

RM: So this was kind of a....

JC: Ad hoc

RM: Ad hoc public concern group that came together.

JM: I personally think that the university is going to have a hell of a time trying to replace him.

JC: You don't replace him you just get a new president. Each

one of them is so different from the others that you...

JM: There are many of us in the community that hope that as they replace him, you can't replace him you hire a new president. When they hire a new president that he has some of the traits in terms of working with the community that Bill has.

JC: I think maybe a trombone player this time.

RM: Yes, because I am on the search committee.

JM: Yes, I have a little bio in my office and when I give you the copy of Lake Superior Jobs Coalition I give you that to, I don't see you having to transcribe it twice.

JC: I don't have one. But I graduated from law school in 1958, I practiced law in Saginaw for about eight years before moving to Marquette. While I have been in Marquette I was on the Board of Controls of Northern Michigan University for eight years from 1983 to 1991 and I was chairman from July 87 to June 30, 1989. I have been a judge since I was elected in 1984 and I just started my third term of six years.

RM: Your a judge, what is your....

JC: I am judge of the 96th District Court. There are two judges in that court.

RM: Where did you go to law school?

JC: Wayne State University and my undergraduates degree is from Michigan State.

JM: We get representation from the west end to Don Ryan from Cleveland Cliffs is on it and Ken Saari from Michigan Gas is on it....

JC: Tom Mogash is on it

JM: Tom Mogash from WMQT there is a number and there is a number from the west end.

RM: So it is basically a group of people that your politicians and elective representatives so on, are gonna turn and listen to.

JM: We would hope so, yeah. That was the purpose of putting it together.

RM: Who was the driving force to revive the organization?

JM: I think it was a group of people but I think Bill had a hand in that. When the K.I. Sawyer thing first started, the ambassadors, which Jim and I are a member of, and the Ishperming-

Negaunee Diplomats, which is another business advocacy group from the west end which is associated with their chamber of commerce had a committee. And I had to be chairman of that committee. Ken Saari was my counterpart or co-chairman from the Ishperming Negaunee Diplomats. And we, as those two groups started to try to work with our federal officials and with the conversion authority and with the county commission and we did as ambassadors and diplomats, I do recall, did some testimony at county commission meetings. And made some suggestions and it was probably last March that this Bill called and said "???" and I have been talking and we really think that we ought to, would you be interested in your committee or at least several members of your committee and several members of the Ishperming-Negaunee Diplomats coming on this Lake superior Jobs Coalition cause we think we need to form a bigger group. And we said Yeah, that's great. Lets get it on there because we had a whole bunch of people doing a lot, Richard Anderson, Northern Initiatives was a member. We had a whole pile of people who were trying to do a lot for Sawyer but there wasn't a lot of coordination. And the jobs coalition allowed that coordination and you got one group that represents all the other groups and represents the county basically. The county community in trying to make this thing go forward.

JC: There is no pressure on us. We don't have any obligation other than our own. So that puts us in a better position to do things because there is nothing looking over our shoulder saying why didn't you get that done.

JM: There's a few members of the coalition I think that probably have, I think, they don't take it as a vested interest, but they have a vested interest in seeing Sawyer redevelop, the gas company, for example, in K.I. Sawyer. You can knock on the cable company, because that is more business for them. The banks, because.... But that isn't the purpose of them being. The railroad doesn't get any more customers. We've got two major customers.

JC: You may get people and I may get people but we don't get working people.

JM: Were hoping that we don't attract the kind of customers that you have. I think Bill working with Father Cople. I don't know who's idea it was. That would be interesting. You might want to talk to Father Cople. That would be somebody you oughta have a conversation with. He could in more detail give you an idea of how this thing got started. And I got to believe that Vandement was involved. He wasn't involved with the ambassadors or diplomats but he had been involved on the side, again interested from Northern Michigans perspective and from the communities perspective. But Father Cople could, and I am sure he will share it with you, it would kind of give you an idea of how this started.

RM: That won't be a problem. You said this started in

JM: I'd have to go back and look.

JC: March or early 96?

JM: I think it was late 95. I can't remember now. The years go by so fast.

JC: I've only been on the ambassadors for about a year, last October. And it was in the Spring. It was in 96.

JM: I think it was in the Spring. I can tell ya . I have got meeting minutes. I'll write you a little note on the fax I send ya to tell ya who was ??? because the ambassadors committee has been active basically since the base shut down. Because actually, it was may of 95, where we got together and we took that group out to Washington to meet with Lebon and Stupak and Abraham and that was ??? and myself and Ken Saari and Chuck Bergaw and Jerry Corken and Barry Barnem and Herb Parcenson. And we went out and met with them And that was as the ambassadors and diplomats actually sponsored that trip. So it would have been... I think your right. I think it would have been early Spring of 96 that the coalition kind of swung in. Cause we were still doing testimonies. Ambassadors and Diplomats in October and November of last year trying to get them to make the commission to vote to move the airport. Which they did late fall of...

RM: It was last Spring, 96 that you went to Washington.

JM: Yep.

RM: So then you could actually say with all of this that a very short amount of time, a relatively small group of people have been able to see some very positive results. Because, I mean, as a outside observer, and from what I read in the paper, it's like chaos, that nobody was gonna do this.

JM: That's why we got together.

JC: That was exactly the problem. All of the parts were there. But nobody knew what was coming from what and who was doing what. And the jobs coalition that, and particularly, I think the hiring of Lyle, was the big ???. And getting it coordinated so you could see where all the pieces were. And so now the county is taking it over but they are taking it over with a great deal more comfort than they did before because their fear was that all of the sudden they were gonna have several million dollars of obligation that they couldn't afford. But nobody would ever write down, they wanted something in writing that would say " yes, if you do this you will get this" . And but none of the people that were gonna do this were gonna say it until you did this. So they wanted ...

JM: A catch 22 with Public Service, and I?

JC: Yeah, and so somebody had to sit down and see if it was there. Once we saw that it was there, then they were able to put their fingers on it and it's coming into shape.

JM: I think the jobs coalition had a hand and formatted by the time the vote was taken by the airport move and then the ambassadors and diplomats started that but basically the jobs coalition was the thrust behind getting that done. One of the other areas we were disturbed about was getting the townships and the counties to sit down and start working out the governments. And we, if you recall, facilitated some meetings. Bill and I did that and Father Copple and I did that. And got the township representatives and the county representatives to sit down outside of the open meetings act, just four or five different, so that they didn't have a quarrel. They try to talk back and forth about how they were gonna try to, they were talking in circles. Nobody wanted to talk and nobody wanted to step up and take the responsibility. As its worked out now the townships are gonna be involved but they're not gonna be part of it. The overall governments, the county is gonna take that over, which really should have probably happened in the first place. But the township started that. And both are very influential in getting those parties together. He and Father Copple had several meetings with Mr. ??? of ??? township who tends to be somewhat instructional.

JC: Don't quote that.

RM: Well keep it more general-against overwhelming odds.

JC: No that's true. The other two township supervisors have fallen into line and cooperated and been helpful.

JM: Barry's been at the forefront of trying to make sure that the base is, even though he doesn't have a big piece of it he likes see it be redeveloped.

JC: yep. Juliani was the township supervisor and ??? up until November. And he even got on ??? and generally Joe is obstinate person but Manelli is replacing him and Manelli is on the county board of commissioners so she understands the problem and he's...

JM: And he's been a supporter of the air base redevelopment. Well, it's in his district. He's lost a lot out there in Guinn.

RM: ??? always is looking out for Sands township but sometimes he doesn't look beyond the borders of Sands township to see what impact it may have on the rest of them. We like to say Marquette County Community, not just Marquette, or not Guinn or not ???.

He has a hard time looking beyond the border.

JM: They took , I think, 290 of the 1600 housing units. Bill

Perry , formerly with Public Service, and ???

JC: ???

JM: Oh, he retired last October.

JC: Oh, I didn't realize that.

JM: He and Ray Atmon, the former conversion authority director, have put in a proposal to the conversion authority, quote-unquote, but I think Bill's got the investment there to lease another 700 or 800 units from the conversion authority. In turn sub-lease those to whoever wants to... But that would put them back on tax rolls and create some more use of the water treatment facility out there and require some maintenance and I understand there is another fellow, and I don't know where he is from but he another area who has done this with several bases, has put in a bit also to try to lease some of those. But I think that they are holding off now trying to get the county to take that over and??? will do their own but I think there is potential for use of???

RM: There was some ??? in the paper about putting a high speed highway through there and maybe south into Wisconsin?

JC: Menominee to Marquette? That's been in the discussion for quite a while.

JM: ??? Cause we got one of my guys that is sitting in that group. They've met once and I think the next meeting is tomorrow night. Phillips sits on that group, too. And they are trying to fraud the state department of transportation into creating that and your gonna have any kind of business in sawyer at all, you gotta have some transportation. ???. That north-south link has been on the ambassador and the diplomats agenda for four or five years.

JC: One thing they might do is reroute 41 through 35. One thing they could do is run 41 into 35 and come up where 35 is, so it will be close to the base. Or no, it was run 35 down 553. That's right , switch with 553. Otherwise when you get to that intersection at 35, you turn right and go right by the base.

JM: Which is highway improvements in general. I think everybody's come to the realization that there is no way were gonna get a four lane super highway. But if they put the right passing lanes in and do some of the ???, the north south corner are certainly gonna improve.

RM: ??? is gonna generate a hell of a lot of traffic.

JM: They're talking a pretty good size liberation and they're gonna be bringing raw materials in and they're gonna be sizing them and cutting them and they're gonna get raw materials out. Some may go by rail but I would guess most of it is gonna go by

truck. The other thing that is kind of interesting is Bill Pasola and his red fox in development got the bowling alley and I think they are trying to get rights to some of the physical education facilities and they've got at least an application in for lease for the officers club and for several of those Barreks that they would convert to hotels. He is working with Frank, that's the other guy that is on the coalition, it's Frank G???, whose one of the co-leasers of Red Fox Run Golf Course. He's also part of jobs coalition. He has been working with Frank and his partner to put together sort of a resort so it would be sort of a summer/winter resort. They have dreams of people storing their snowmobiles for example out there and calling up from Chicago or Detroit or where ever and saying we'll be up this weekend and they would have their own bungalow or their own place to live, and put the snowmobiles out, get the snowmobile trails criss-crossing back and forth across the base and in the summer time they're looking into golf and some type of summer activities, a swimming pool and so they've got some big dreams. So far it has been stifled from the leases of the jobs commission hasn't been coming through.

JC: The Air Force is a big problem, too.

RM: Now the coalition is solving some of these problems, like with the leases and all or is that another...

JM: I think we've had some influence on trying to get the jobs commission, which would be the step up and take some responsibility for getting some of these leases solved.

JC: We lean a little bit on the ??? at times because that's his ???. The jobs coalition, and of coarse Father Copple has been pretty ??? to that. But president Vandement is well acquainted with that.

JM: Well , he can call some of our Northern Michigan representatives, like Don Quaves our ????????. The bureaucracies of both the federal government and the state government.

RM: It's amazing you can get anything done.

JC: Yep, ??? are the victims, ya know? The department of commerce or the jobs commission. These are all victims and you get somebody in charge.

JM: I am glad that the state did step in and take over. I think they needed to do that. They brought Story in despite the bad reputation he's got with some people. I think Jim did a good job of getting things organized.

RM: He did a good job in every thing that I've seen.

JM: I agree. But now its time for them to step aside and let the

county get in. I mean there were people trying to get leases out there. Ramrod's a good example, I mean it took him nine months to get the airforce conversion authority. I mean you send a lease out to Washington and it disappears. Now, you're a business. You don't have nine months to determine whether you're gonna get a lease, and what restrictions the various parts of the lease are gonna be. I remember we went on work with them, they were Buzzy Johnson. They were trying to, the air force was trying to charge him three dollars and fifty seven cents a square foot for heat or something like that because they gave the numbers that they based their heating cost on or the numbers that the air force used and the use that the air force put that building to and the building that he had was a maintenance mobile equipment ??? so they used to run all winter long with the doors wide open.

JC: He wasn't using it for that and he said why am I paying so much money for... but that was the air forces thought process. This is what it is costing us so this is what we're gonna charge you.

RM: No wonder nothing got done.

JC: Well, Too, the air force would tell you one thing and do something else, and ya know they gave us lots of boosts and encouragement and ???. And then they really try to ??? about everything they buy.

JM: Well, they're charged with, ya know, getting out of the bases that they are closing down and spending the least amount a month. With the pullback in the federal government, they are in the same position. A lot of people are, they are not the ??? to deal with.

JC: ??? At one point , out secretary of the air force would make a decision and some subordinate would say well what are we gonna do with it? We get the civil service people that feel the power.

RM: So, it's part of the problem here, I'm thinking they hadn't done it before but they closed bases before. But that wasn't really their job. So they were in a new area of activity that was turned into chaos.

JM: Well, they've done it before, but I think one of the things that created a chaos here was that

RM: I've gotta get to work. You guys can stay and talk.

JM: Well, I gotta get back too, but just for your information, the thing on the ????, almost all the other military facilities, to our knowledge were owned by the federal government. So what they were doing was taking their land then and turning it back to a state or a county. However, it didn't work

out. In this case, when the air base came in, x number of years ago, in 1956, what, 2000 of the 5000 acres out there were state land. The state had a lease with the air force that said if the air force no longer needs use of this land they will put it back to its original condition which was a blueberry patch. And the federal government, their estimates, excluding the environmental clean up, the estimates of construction or destruction costs for part of the air field that's on state land and some buildings of like 90 to 100 million dollars. Take all that out and put it back. The states been trying to negotiate with the federal government and the air force conversion authority and said you give us this much money so we can operate this base and get these jobs in and make the ??? improvement. and we'll??? from this???. And the air force is saying were just gonna give you the same as we gave every body else, which was some, what, 2 and a half million dollars.

JC: The governor really wants to settle also.