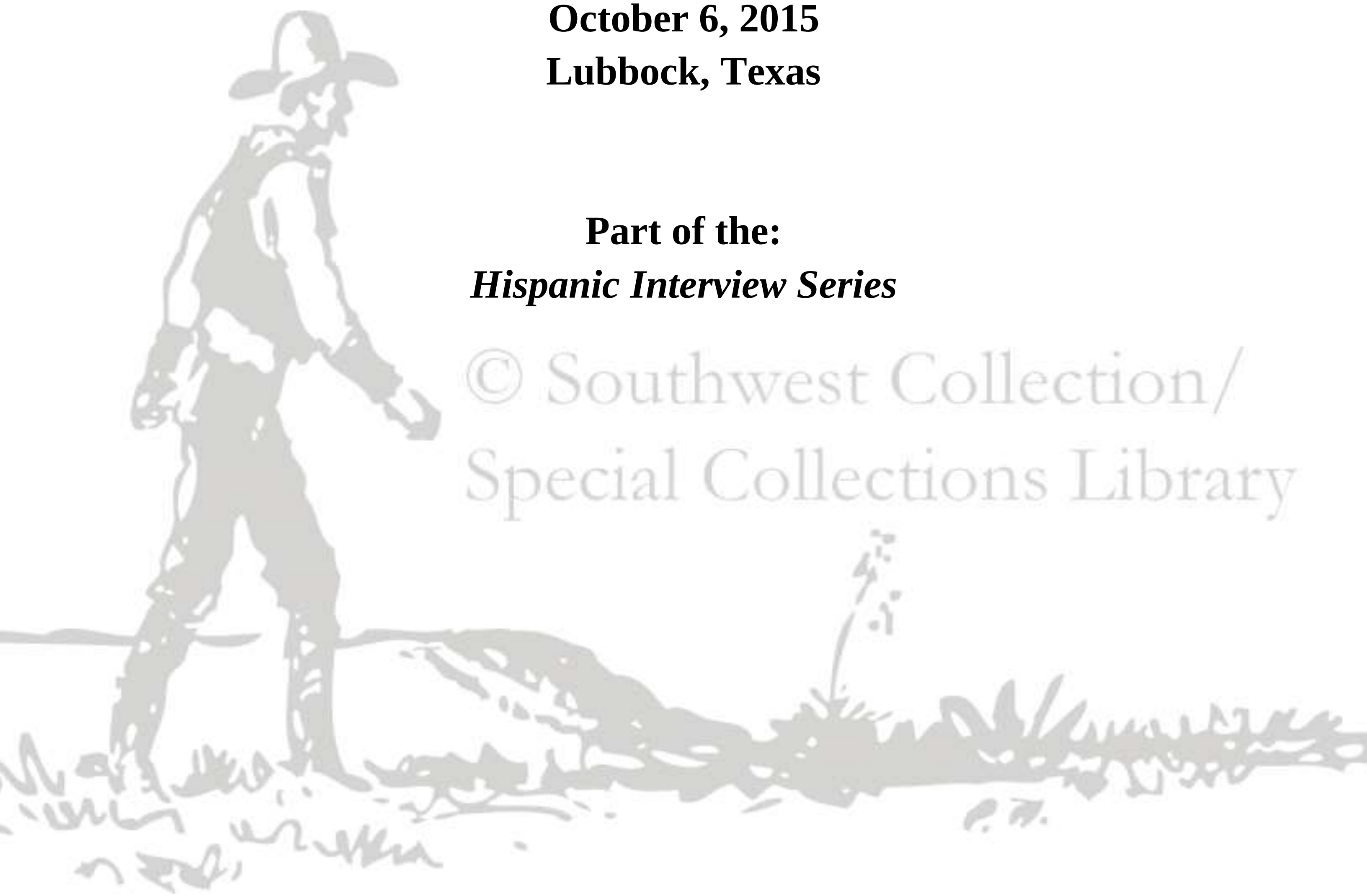
Oral History Interview of
Alfredo H. Benavides

Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
October 6, 2015
Lubbock, Texas

Part of the:
Hispanic Interview Series



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | http://swco.ttu.edu

Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Alfredo H. Benavides on September 28, 2015. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

Preferred Citation for this Document:

Benavides, Alfredo H. Oral History Interview, October 6, 2015. Interview by Daniel Sanchez, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses over 6,300 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.

The transcribers and editors of this document strove to create an accurate and faithful transcription of this oral history interview. However, this document may still contain mistakes. Spellings of proper nouns and places were researched thoroughly, but readers may still find inaccuracies, inaudible passages, homophones, and possible malapropisms. Any words followed by "[?]" notates our staff's best faith efforts. We encourage researchers to compare the transcript to the original recording if there are any questions. Please contact the SWC/SCL Reference department for access information. Any corrections or further clarifications may be sent to the A/V Unit Manager.

Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff. Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.
http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php

Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio
Digitization Details: N/A
Audio Metadata: 96kHz/ 24bit WAV file
Further Access Restrictions: N/A
Related Interviews:

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: Daniel Sanchez
Audio Editor: N/A
Transcription: Laura Warner
Editor(s): Kayci Rush

Interview Series Background:

The Hispanic Oral History Project documents the diverse perspectives of the Hispanic people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11th 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

Transcript Overview:

This is the second in a series of interviews featuring Alfredo Benavides. In this interview, Benavides recounts his doctoral research, his employment at different universities, and programs/initiatives he set up in those universities to benefit the Chicano community.

Length of Interview: 01:59:00

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Doctoral research over the Chicano community in Muskegon, Michigan	5	00:02:31
Research and reasoning behind Chicano children dropping out of school	10	00:19:57
Serving on the Spanish Speaking Peoples' Commission	14	00:35:36
Creating a study abroad in the Yucatan program at Iowa State	17	00:45:45
Moving to Arizona State University	21	01:03:47
Important initiatives that he wanted for Arizona State	24	01:18:05
Difference between the University Hispanic Convocation at ASU and TTU	27	01:30:14
Political landscape at ASU	30	01:39:22
His daughter and her studies at the University of Arizona	33	01:53:07

Keywords
Mexican-American Communities, Education, Ethnic Minorities

Daniel Sanchez (DS):
My name is Daniel Sanchez. Today's date is October the 6th, 2015. I'm on the campus of Texas Tech University, and this is the second in a series of interviews with Alfredo Benavides.

Alfredo Benavides (AB):
—doing my doctoral work at Michigan State, and I had bumped into a fellow who was an anthropologist from South Texas. He was from Donna, Texas, I think. Looking at him you'd never think he was Hispanic, but he was very Hispanic. Last name Benítez, but he didn't go by Benítez, he went by the more famous name, Spielberg. [Laughter] We don't know who Spielberg was in those days really. The funny thing is we met kind of—I was singing in a night club and he just got totally thrilled that I was singing in Spanish. So anyway, he invited me to the house and we just became very, very good friends. But I had taught—I had been teaching there at Michigan State for about three and half years or so, and over that amount of time, I think I counted up that I had taught about twenty four sections, classes of interpersonal communication skills that we used in teaching. So basically, we were focused a lot on the affective domain. I don't know, I think that the affective domain, if you really understand it, makes you a much, much better teacher. But that's not what we're going to talk about right now. So there I was, I had just started the doctoral program, maybe I was a year into it, and Spielberg asked me if I was interested in working with him one summer on this project that he was doing in a small—well it wasn't that small, it was a community on the banks of Lake Michigan. Over in western Michigan. We were going to be looking at community organizations, and I really didn't understand everything, but we wound up with a 4-H extension office. I think maybe the Ag people had given the money. You know, it was a grant. But I was introduced to Muskegon, Michigan. That's where this thing took place. About several months later, I sort of approached Joe and I said, "You know, this community is really interesting, you know? It's got a lot of history of Hispanics in this community, Chicanos, and they've been here for a long, long time. I think it would be really interesting to look at the patterns of interaction between the institutions that Chicano think are important, and the institutions that actually exist in the community." So he said, "Yeah, that would make a great dissertation, even though you are in education," he kept throwing that in my face. He wanted me to change to anthropology, and I didn't want to do that. So what we did is we took my advisor from education and I introduced him to Joe, and they both became co-advisors of my dissertation study. [Coughs] And what the study really was, was I wanted to find out what kind of patterns of interaction existed between the Chicano community in Muskegon, and the Anglo-dominated service agencies that worked there, including the schools. Just from talking to some people in the community, I knew that they didn't like their schools. They didn't like what the schools were doing. This was 1974-75, and none of it was involved in a teacher education or bilingual education or anything like that. So I thought, Okay, this would make a really good study. The way I—there weren't any books that I could go to say, "How do I do this?" Oh, except maybe Margaret Mead, you know, go to a little island somewhere and observe the natives, which is basically what I wound up doing. I went to this community and I made

friends with some people, and I would talk to them, and then I'd furiously write notes after my conversations. I would be very observant, and I would observe who was doing what with whom, and when, and where, and all that kind of stuff. So I got to know this community over the next couple of years really well. I actually I had a bunch of—what was it—Neighborhood Youth Corps kids. You know these are fifteen, sixteen, maybe seventeen year old kids who are—they've had problems in school. They weren't your valedictorians or anything like that. It was just a program to help them do better in school and stuff like that. So I hired some of these kids through NYC as people who could help me get the interviews done that I needed. I wanted to interview every household—every Hispanic household—in Muskegon, Michigan. And I did. Well, I don't know. We had three hundred and sixty-five on paper interviews, and so that was basically everyone. I taught them how to interview. I thought that it was a win-win. I got a lot of data, which I'll tell you about later, but I got a lot of data and I got a lot of kids who thought they could never do anything like that, and yet they were successful. And I learned a lot. I learned a lot about the kids, I learned a lot about their families, I learned a lot about how these kids interacted in that kind of community. I'll give you a "for example." I went to the County Extension Office where they had services for everything from like pregnancy screening, family planning, all kinds of stuff for families. So I went there and I was asked to wait in the waiting room. As I'm sitting there I'm looking at—the office is kind of big. The waiting room was kind of large—and they have this big wall. They had a huge display of contraceptive methods, you know, on this wall. They had this like three or four foot fake prophylactic on the wall. And I thought, [Laughter] "This is kind of weird." I was embarrassed by this prophylactic that was up there on the wall, and I thought—knowing my people I said, "The women that come in here, and the men, too, if the men come, they would be very embarrassed by seeing some of this." So I said, "There must be a little disconnect here about some things you talk about and some things you know are talked about quietly, and not so publicly." So I finally was ushered into the director's office, and I was having a conversation with the director. She was very—she didn't have to be prompted at all with questions, she was like, "Oh I know this. I know the Mexican community here very well," and this and that. She says, "We have a big problem with them in terms of V.D. Venereal diseases." I thought, Hmm this is interesting. She said, "Yeah, you know, in the Mexican culture it's very traditional and very acceptable for the men to go out and sow their wild oats," or whatever. I don't know how she put it. But to go out and screw around, I guess. "And the wives accept this. So when they come here they're doing the same thing, and the wives don't say anything. And the men—they're not going to come in and talk. We don't know who they've been with, or whatever. So we have a big V.D. problem." And I was thinking, I can hardly wait to leave so I can write all this thing down. And I did, I wrote it down almost verbatim. I could not erase it out of my mind. And I'm thinking she's saying all Mexicans are against—crazy, over sex, and that they're very promiscuous, and they all have V.D. and they won't talk about it, and they won't tell anybody about it. And I thought—and then she wonders why they don't come into the office. So if you've got all these attitudes, maybe you need to check them out. I don't know. But that was just one little incident, you know, instance. But I had a lot of interviews with a lot of different—everything from the United Way to these people, and to people who did a lot of hiring in the community. For example, the—I think it was called the M.S.—Michigan Services Unemployment—you know, the unemployment office for the whole state. They have offices in every major city and whatnot. And when you're unemployed you go there and you apply for unemployment benefits and stuff like that. [Coughs] Excuse me. And one of the things that I found out through my data was that in the heart of the Chicano community there was a few square blocks of every house was Mexican. I discovered that while Michigan in general was in a depression—not a depression, but a what do you call it? You know, "economic hard times." And the overall unemployment rate in the state of Michigan was like 14 percent, which is pretty high. But in this small area of the community it was 36 percent. Thirty-six point something percent. And I thought, "That's a little higher? How come I don't see--" and the numbers weren't telling me that all these Mexican-Americans were coming in and asking for benefits. I mean I saw people in there, if they're unemployed one day they're in there asking for benefits. The Mexican community, on the other hand, they've been unemployed, chronically unemployed, and they had a huge, high rate of unemployment—they were not represented in the numbers in terms of who's coming in seeking services. You know, to me that was—it wasn't an eye opener. I think I understood why. But it was an eye opener to the people that I pointed it out to, like the directors of the unemployment office. They said, "Wow, gee, we don't know why they don't come in," you know, blah-blah-blah. And I thought, Well they have a lot of pride, number one. They have a lot of pride, and so they feel that they can get around it by doing odd jobs here and there and maybe they don't show up in terms of—I mean how many people who cut your grass show up as "unemployed" or "employed" or whatever. Who knows? So they were doing, I think, a lot of those kind of things. But it took me about three years to do the study, and that was just the observation. I worked, I took a job, actually, in a community center that had just started there. They paid me and my deal with them was, "When I'm done, I will share the data with you, and that way you can provide better services." And we did. It worked out fairly well. But it also brought me into contact with a lot of people in the community. People who had been in the migrant stream and were no longer in the migrant stream. One guy that worked with me very closely he was the employment guy. He was the guy that went out and tried to arrange jobs for people. If you could find employers to hire, and he would find people that were hirable. And he had been a former migrant. He was young. He was maybe in his twenties—late twenties, maybe. But then there were the families that every summer they'd go back into the migrant stream, and they would work the fields in and around Muskegon. Then when the crops were done they were no longer migrants. They were stabilized citizens, I guess. But I learned a lot from that particular study, and I didn't know—I mean I was kind of green in so many things. I later learned—much later, like this was 1975-76, and in 1988 I met a guy at Arizona State. We had come into Arizona State together as new faculty. And when I was introduced to him he says, "Oh, you're Alfredo Benavides?" And I said, "Yeah?" I mean, I was, you know, like—he says, "Were you the guy that did that study in Michigan?" And I said, "Yeah." And he says, "Oh my God. I'm so glad to meet you. You're all over the sociology literature." Which is really strange, because I was looking for me in the education literature and I wasn't there. Oh yeah, but in anthropology and sociology I was all over that. I should have listened to Spielberg. [laughter] But I thought that was interesting. At that time it was the only ethnography of a Chicano community in Michigan or in the Midwest in general. However, I didn't know that. It made me feel pretty good. And then also about six years ago, five, six years ago, a telephone rings here, and there is this lady on the phone from Muskegon and she asked me if I was who I was. I said, "I'm am. I'm that Benavides." She says, "My daughter was at Michigan State finishing her master's. She was at the library and she found a dissertation. Did you write a dissertation about Muskegon?" And I said, "I did." She says, "Oh this is great. I'm so glad to meet you." She said, "I'm working with a professor from the community college, and we're writing a history of this area," you know, the Mexican-American community in Muskegon—"And we'd like to know if we could use your book as a source." And I said, "Oh sure. Just cite me and give me credit." And they did. It's right there behind you. I'll show it to you. You know, the thing was that I didn't know that it was the only source of—this is a book that they put together. They invited me to keynote a conference that they held when they rolled out the book. So I went to Michigan. By the way, I normally will not charge people, like, I didn't get any money for this when I went. I was happy to stand in front of this crowd of people that I hadn't seen and didn't recognize anymore. Hadn't seen them in so many years. And you know after twenty-five or so years, thirty—no, God, thirty-five years—the community has changed, physically has changed. So I know. I enjoyed doing it, and it made me want to do more. But, of course, our need for speed, as they say, here in colleges of education is to get studies done and to get other kind of publications done. These kinds of studies that anthropologists do—sociologists, they really take a lot more time. Ethnography is very pain-staking. It takes forever and you have to develop your contacts, and all your sources and all that. It wasn't like, "Oh here, do this survey and I'm going to write it up by the end of the week. I have all the data ready." No, it wasn't quite that way. Yeah, that's a pretty nice comprehensive history. And they did use my dissertation quite a lot. I didn't think they'd use it as much as they did, but it's okay.

DS:
You know, did you donate all your material there? Like all the field notes that you took? Or do you still have any of that?

AB:
Oh, let me tell you what happened to a lot of my information. After I graduated—well, no—before I graduated, because I left Michigan State ABD [**All But Dissertation**], and I went to Iowa. I had this really nice office in Iowa. It was big because it had been a—the college was located in a place where it had been an old hotel. The old Jefferson Hotel in downtown Iowa City. So I had this room that was as big as a hotel room, okay? No bathroom, though. They took out all the bathrooms. I don't know why. So I had all this space, and I had a box of data that I still had. All the three hundred and sixty-five interviews that were conducted were in that box,

plus a whole bunch of other notes and things like that, notebooks. And the thing was that I used just enough of the data to write the dissertation, and I figured I had enough data in there to continue writing for another few years, at least. Well one day I came into the office and I thought, "Something looks out of place." I looked around, and the box of information—data, was gone. What had happened is that a janitor had come in—a new janitor or something—he thought it was just a box of junk that needed to be thrown away, so he threw it away.

DS:
Wow.

AB:
Yeah. "Wow" is right. I probably should have run back to Muskegon, taken pictures, or talked to people or something. But I said, "Well it's in the past." And you just let it sit there. Until this. This was kind of interesting.

DS:
Yeah, you never know what's going to happen. You know you talk about trash; we had somebody that he called one of our guys in our building about some medical records from NASA that he had run across. So the conversation went through, "Well how did you come across these?" He goes, "Well I saw somebody throwing some stuff out and I asked what they were, and they told me." It was the medical records for the original Apollo crews.

AB:
You're kidding.

DS:
And so they wound up in our building because somebody asked. Because it had been cleared to throw away, so they just donated them to us. But it was like, "Whoa."

AB:
Those are really achievable. That's achievable data.

DS:
You know it's just like—but people sometimes don't know. You always hear these stories about, "Oh my dad had stuff that I threw away." It's like, we're not thinking of those things. Especially you. That is was being used in a different field than what you had planned to use it in.

AB:
Yeah, I had basically planned to use it in education, because I got really close to one of the elementary schools, and I saw this huge need for something. And in the dissertation itself, I have

charts in there about this particular school. All the names have been changed to protect the guilty and all of that. And so I did all that, and I used pseudonyms for everyone that I had contact with, and I used pseudonyms for schools and places of business and things. But in this particular school they had—I forget the number now, I'd have to look it up in one of those things up there. But they had a lot of Chicano students there, and a lot of them in what I was able to—what I used to call "age-grade retardation." What that meant, in anthropology terms anyway, was that these kids were held back in school. So they were retarded in their growth. So in other words, I found—I did a chart with them—I found that the average child in that particular school—a Mexican-American child—was two to two and a half years behind what they normally should have been in. Like for example, if they were twelve years old they should have been in seventh grade, let's say. They were in fourth or fifth. You know that's a lot. That's a lot of being held back. So it's easy for these kids, then, to grow a little older and all of the sudden their interest is not in all the little songs that are being sung in the elementary grades. These kids are already older. They want to move on. And then these teachers wonder why we can keep them in school. Well, there's nothing there for them. That's another thing that I used in Iowa when I was offered an assistant professorship at Iowa. I went for an interview and it was like the CIA and the FBI ganging up on a person of interest. It was like twenty people interviewing me at the same time, all talking. It was this long conference table and I was in the hot seat at the end. There was this gentleman that was very—he was just really excited about something very demonstrative. He was just angry. He said, "I don't understand these kids. We can't keep them in school. All they want to do is turn sixteen, buy a pickup truck, and go work for Louis Rich," you know, the turkey processing plant. He says, "Why don't they want to go to school? What is it about them-"he's talking about the Chicano kids in this little community that was about fifteen miles from Iowa City. Well, he looked at me like desperately, and he says, "Can you tell me what's wrong?" And I don't know where I get the stupidity [?] to say things like this. I said, "Yes, I can." I'm pretty green, you know. I'm twenty-eight years old and I'm being interviewed for my first professorship, and I said, "Yeah, I can tell you what's wrong." And so I just looked at him and I said, "Your school doesn't have anything to offer them." He said, "What?" And I said, "Trust me. If they were really happy in their school, and they felt really good about themselves, and your school was really helping them a lot, they would want to be there. No fifteen or sixteen year-old wants to be somewhere where his friends are not, or where he has to work hard or something." I said, "They want to be there learning and experiencing life and whatnot." And I said, "No, your school doesn't have anything to offer them, so they look at the world around them and they say, 'Well I'll make some money, buy a truck, be a man.' All this other stuff." And that's exactly what was happening. The kids were all dropping out at sixteen. The day they turned sixteen they didn't go back to school. [Coughs] And I think that's—when I've thought about it I think that's pretty universal when you see minority kids dropping out. I had a young woman—I didn't know this when I first started working with her at Arizona State—she was the daughter of a colleague of mine who was in Idaho at the time. He was a professor in Idaho. Here I am, I've got his daughter in class. She wrote a paper for me, she was doing her master's at the time, she wrote a paper, and the paper was on high school dropouts, on minority dropouts, Chicano dropouts. So I read the paper, and she was like, "Oh God. I don't think it's very good." She was really down on herself. I said, "Are you kidding? This is a great paper. The potential in here is really super. You've identified kids, you've talked to kids, and they're telling you why they didn't go back to school, or they didn't want to go to school. Just think of the opportunity here to really find out what's going on in their minds and what you can do with this." Well she eventually got her doctorate. She eventually wrote a dissertation. I think it had to do with dropouts—the same kind of thing—but I wasn't there. I left. I had already left by that time, so I don't know. Then I had another student at Arizona State who also did a study on immigrant kids. She followed these kids around with a tape recorder and note pad for like almost three years. These were like junior high kids, sixth, seventh, eighth graders, something like that. She interfaced with the families, she went to their schools, and found out that some of our bilingual teachers were the worst teachers in the world in terms of treating the kids like human beings. There were just a lot of issues that we generally overlook. Some of these kids would get up at four in the morning and go and put in four hours of work at a butcher shop. I mean you're talking about thirteen year olds, you know, chopping up meat and stuff, and then going to school. Or going out with their fathers early, early in the morning, three o'clock, four o'clock in the morning, and they go up and open the irrigation ditches, and they put the water—they get the water flowing into fields and into orchards and things like that, and then they go to school. And then we wonder why by noon they're falling asleep. Because they're tired! I mean they work, they work hard. And very few people understand those kinds of issues, and very few people want to actually get involved in doing the kind of research that is going to demonstrate that there are reasons why people get in trouble, why people don't stay in school, et cetera, et cetera. So the older I get the more determined I become. The more important, I think, it is to see that you and I can't quit. I really can't quit. Not with so much work to do. And not with so many people not doing it.

DS:
Now going back to that early study that you did. You mentioned the "retardation" between grade levels. How much of that was, like, an institutionalized retardation?

AB:
No, I'm not saying—well—

DS:
You know like you're talking about your experience when you were younger where all kids have to learn English. How much was that into the system itself, as far as, "We didn't expect you to hit this bar, so we're keeping you back," or whatever?

AB:
I think that—yeah? [Knocking. A woman enters the room]

Unknown Speaker (US):
Can we have ten seconds so that you can put your password on the computer? I don't know it. So that you can access my new laptop or email.

AB:
Do you want my password?

(US):
No. C'mon, put it on.

DS:
Let's go put it in.

AB:
Ah, okay.

DS:
I'll hit pause. [Pause in recording] [laughter] "Ten seconds."

AB:
That was a heck of a ten second break. Where were we?

DS:
Oh, I had just asked about—you had been talking about the grade level retardation. I was just wondering how much of that was by the institution as opposed to really that's what it should have been?

AB:
Right. Well, you know, [long pause] I don't know if Mexican American parents—back in the fifties, sixties, seventies, even today—really know anything about how school really functions. Unless you've been in the school here in the United States and you know how it functions and all that, you really may not know. Okay? So when I was in Muskegon in 1974 or '75 I'm not sure that the parents—they were fairly low income, hard-working people. Didn't take handouts, obviously, since 36 percent were unemployed and they didn't show up at the unemployment office—they send their kids to school and they expect the school to do the right thing and to take care of their kids. By "doing the right thing," I mean you're supposed to teach them. The school oftentimes doesn't know how. They don't have the language capability many times. Their idea of

language capability means, "You don't speak English, so come back when you can speak English." And I mean I've heard that said by administrators and whatnot. "Go home, and when you learn English come back." That's kind of dumb, but—so they didn't used to see any kind of responsibility on the school's part to help these children be all that they could be. So I think a lot of kids got kind of screwed up that way, and the parents have been screwed up that way. So the parents think it's just the schools. Was it done maliciously? I don't think so, necessarily. I don't want to think that way, either. But I don't think age grade retardation is something that you can put on the parents or the kids or anything like that. The kids are just kids, they just come to school. If we, as adults and professionals, don't know how to get to these kids that's on us. That's our fault. They're not the teachers. They're not the ones that spent four years in college learning how to teach. So that's our fault. And if we don't know how we should be big enough to admit it, and say, "Okay, how do I found out? How do I make myself better?" Isn't that the way we do everything? If you don't know something and you really need to know it, whether it's for your job or for whatever, you go out and find out, and say, "Hey. Help me with this. I don't know what I'm doing, or I don't know what I should do." So that is on us, but very few people would look at it that way. And remember schools have always been, even today, been completely underfunded. It's very difficult to look at schools and say, "Oh, you're to blame." And they are to blame, but there are a lot of reasons for that blame. There are a lot of reasons why schools are not functioning the way they should be. I don't know. It's just the way I see things. Anyway, I spent those—from 1976 to 1988 at the University of Iowa. Those were really happy times. The football team was crappy when I got there, and in two years they had Hayden Fry from somewhere in Texas.

DS:
SMU [**Southern Methodist University**].

AB:
Yeah, he was at SMU, I think, and he was at UNT, University of North Texas at one time.

DS:
Yeah, he went there after SMU.

AB:
Okay. The reason I know that is not because of his pedigree or anything, but I drove a university car from Iowa to—I think it was Fort Worth. I had some student teachers down here, and they were coming to visit, and so we drove a university car. We stopped on the way back—we stopped in Denton at a gas station, just to get a full tank of gas. The guy comes out and he says, "Are you from Iowa?" And I said, "Yes!" He says, "Well can you say hello to Hayden Fry for us? Tell him we miss him." I thought, Sure! I see him every day. [Laughter] It was interesting. But the funny thing was I did. I sent him a note through campus mail—I don't even think we had

email in those days—I sent him a note through campus mail, and a few weeks later—he was busy, it was fall. But a few weeks later he actually responded and sent me a poster of the hot guy that I gave to my son. But he responded. He was obviously very touched. He says, "Yes, I remember—" because the person had given me his name, and I said, "So-and-so says hello. I was going through Denton the other day." He was touched that people in Denton still remembered him fondly. Yeah, it was nice. It was a happy time, like I said, at Iowa. I was the only Mexican-American basically—I was the only one in the college of education. I was probably one of a very, very few at the university, period. I don't remember. One of my students worked for Central Administration. She was one of my doctoral students. She was there, but she was a student still. Well, now she's a university president, so you know.

DS:
You did good.

AB:
I did good. I knew other people like that. To say that Iowa was knocking down the doors to bring in Hispanic professionals or anything? No, it wasn't happening. We could capture a few students, because Iowa did have a Hispanic population. Not a big one, maybe forty thousand people statewide, which is nothing compared to what it is today. Today it's four hundred thousand. [Coughs] But it was interesting. I was there in Iowa City and I got a notice from the Governor's Office. That's kind of scary. It was a letter asking if I would be willing to serve on a commission that had been set—I think it was already existent at the time. It was called the Spanish Speaking Peoples' Commission. I thought, sure, because this other guy also called me and he says, "Hey, did you get this letter from the governor?" And I said, "Yes." He says, "Well we really want you to serve," and on and on and on. So, "Okay." So you serve. I served ten years. Five two-year terms—appointments—from—first it was Governor Ray, Robert Ray, I think it was, and then Governor Branstad. So two different governors. Same commission. Same problems. But I met other Hispanic professionals around the state, and it was enjoyable. It was enjoyable to be able to do that. To at least lend an ear to some people, and give an earful to other people. So it was okay.

DS:
So what were some of the issues that were going on at the time that raised to the level of the commission?

AB:
The same thing that we normally do. For example, not enough kids graduating high schools, not enough kids being—not enough school districts who understood kids, and understood the needs that they had. For example, the language issue was huge. Along with the cultural issues. But the language is probably even more important, because it's up in your face all the time. So that was

an issue. Then of course some of us thought, Yeah, and the universities aren't doing a whole lot either. Although we did have—even at Iowa, which was kind of nuts when you think about it—we had the Chicano Native American Center. So we had Native Americans along with Mexican-Americans in this one sponsored house center that was paid for by the university. And the Indian students really weren't that many, to tell you the truth. A lot of them came from the Meskwaki settlement, but I can't remember, like, when I went to Arizona and there were a lot of Native American students. Not so in Iowa. But there were a lot more Hispanics students. Hispanic students have a long history in Iowa, even though Iowa doesn't recognize it or realize it. There were Hispanic settlements in like Fort Madison, Iowa way back in 1895, for example. Somewhere in my junky office I have the back of a flyer that showed a family all dressed all up in their garb—a Hispanic family. A lot of these families came here through railroads—on the railroad. They were being brought up to Chicago, to the stockyards. A lot of them settled out. They'd say, "Hey, this looks like a nice place." They settle out, and they do farm work and things like that. It was always a low profile for these families. Some of them have done really well. One of my former students—I think her name Tina Villanueva [?] [0:39:11.7]—she got her Ph.D. at the University of New Mexico not too many years ago. She was writing and just enjoying the heck out of herself, and she thought enough about me I guess to send me a, "Hey guess what? I'm Dr. Tina." I look back at some of these kids and I think, "Wow." I got an email from this real feisty redhead from Boston. "You remember me?" You know, like, "I'm the one that was always talking out." And I said, "How can I forget?" She was Anglo, but she was—in my bilingual classes in Iowa—let's just put it up on the table—I would say nine out of ten kids were Anglos. They were the finest kids I've ever worked with. They didn't know what prejudice was, they didn't know what discrimination was, they just knew that there were kids in trouble, kids that needed help, and they wanted to help. So these kids like Paula became very strident advocates, and that's what she was telling me in this email. She's saying, "Hey, I'm still talking out, and I'm still talking back, and I'm still—" and I said, "Yeah, that's you. How can I forget you?" So some of these kids did some really wonderful things. I had a colleague from the University of Illinois, when I met him he said, "Do you know So-and-So? She used to be at Iowa." And I said, "Yeah, I do." He said, "Well she couldn't stop talking about you. Every time we were talking or doing whatever she'd say, 'Well Dr. Benavides always used to say this.'" And then, "Okay?" "'I'm supposed to say hello to you because Dr. Benavides always used to remind us that we had to do this.'" And I'm thinking, you know I must have been a real—I don't know—terrible person to have my students think that I'm telling them what to do all the time. I don't think that's what was meant there, but it's nice to be remembered in a positive way as opposed to, "Man, what a jerk," or something like that. [Coughs]

DS:
In a sense, that was kind of your role when you were teaching. I mean, because you had the nine to one ratio. You had to teach them about where *Mexicanos* were coming from.

AB:
Yeah. Yes. That is true. I used to teach a lot about language and culture and on and on. I remember I had a student who went down to the Valley to do student teaching, and she was from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was just twenty-five miles north of Iowa City. One day she was on break or something and she came to the university to say hello, and she says, "Hello," we were talking, and she says, "Now you didn't tell us everything we needed to know." I said, "What did I leave out? What could I have possibly have—I mean, nobody knows everything." And she says, "No, you didn't tell us about the guys." I said, "What do you mean, 'the guys?'" She says, "Well they're always coming up asking for a date," they were sort of super—not aggressive, but you know like—and it didn't matter that you had a boyfriend. They still wanted to date. I said, "Well I'm sorry I forgot to tell you about the guys. I think, maybe, that's something that you should handle, not me." It was funny, but these kids—going back to my students in Iowa. I have pictures, as a matter of fact, see the one right there next to the pool with a group? Right there, that one on the left. That's a group of students that I had at Iowa, and the guy who's sitting down next to me, the guy with the beard, he was another graduate student of mine. He is now the Vice President for Research at a major university. So I did well again. But most of—if you look at those kids, I think all of them are Anglo. I found one in Milwaukee—we were doing a YouTube search in one of my classes for dual language programs, and all the sudden this program opens up, "Milwaukee, Wisconsin!" I said, "Oh wow, that's Evette!" Thirty years—or twenty years later, but it's Evette. And sure enough it was. It was one of my students from there—from that picture. She was now the principal at this elementary school. She had started there as a—I had sent her there as a student teacher. She stayed. She taught for ten years, or twelve years, something like that. And then she became a principal. And here she was twenty five years later, still going strong. So when you see things like that you feel really good about what you've done. And sometimes it's your fault that you did them, and sometimes it's just by accident. But it's good. Did I make mistakes? Everybody makes mistakes. I'm sure I did. I'll give you a "for example." I think I mentioned it early when I had a student from a foreign country that had—I guess the family was down on their luck and whatnot. He came to me and he said, "I need to do something. I don't have any money." I said, "Well, when we don't have money we go to work. Why don't you get a job here on campus, and you can help yourself out until this situation at home gets straightened out." He was totally shocked that I would suggest that a person of his stature would actually perform menial labor or get a job in the dorm washing dishes, or whatever. I don't know. I had no clue. I worked all the way through school.

DS:
I was going to say, he's lucky you didn't say, "Here's my guitar. You can use it." [laughter]

AB:
Yeah, that could be. [Coughs] But anyway I started a program at Iowa that I thought was pretty neat. I think that the—I don't know how other schools used to do their programs. I know that

today they're very fancy formalized exchange—not just exchange programs, but study abroad programs. I was asked about, "Do you think it would be possible to do a study abroad program in Yucatán?" I said, "Yeah, sure. Why not?" I didn't know anybody there, but I met some people and then they met some other people and we started a real small program. I think the first year maybe twelve students went. Then after that it was fifteen, twenty. And the way—sometimes exchange programs or study abroad programs can get kind of expensive. I know the one that we have here is kind of—you pay all the tuition, and then you pay your way there, and then you pay for the housing, and then—it'll wind up costing several thousand dollars. At Iowa, what I did, is I went to the main administration—the Provost, the VP for Academic Affairs, and I said, "Look, I would like to start this program down in Mexico." And I said, "I don't want it to cost—I've known a lot of programs where the kids will go for a semester, and they come home with three hours to show for it, or six hours, maybe. That's a lot of time to spend for nothing. For very few rewards." So I said, "Well, what I'd like to do is offer a full semester abroad. I want to send a number of students down there, and it's not just every major—that way—" no, no, no, I said, "I want to concentrate it into the major in education and bilingual education or multicultural education. And then all the courses that they take—they'll be taking three courses from University of Iowa faculty. One from me and two other faculty members that will go down during the course of the semester. And I'll pay them a salary, because it's extra work, and I'll pay for their hotel and all of that. I'm going to hire a Spanish teacher from the University of Yucatán, and I'm going to hire a social studies person. You know, someone who can teach like the Mayan Indian civilization, and then the other course would be—" so in other words they were taking two courses from the University of Yucatán, which counted at the University of Iowa. One was Spanish, well that counts, and the other one is Mayan Civilization, or History, or something like that, and that would also count as one of their general ed. requirements. And then the three courses that were offered by our faculty, they would count. So there's fifteen hours. Right there. And then I threw in another three hours of practicum experience to go out and look at some of the schools in the communities that they were going to be living in. Up to eighteen hours, no less than twelve. I said, "And you pay full tuition." But the way I sold it to administration was I said, "I want the money. If I bring in twenty students, let's say, and they're all paying a thousand dollars' tuition, I don't want you to take that money and run off with it. I want that twenty thousand dollars,"—or however much tuition was—"I want it set aside in a special account, and that'll be the 'Study Abroad in Yucatán' account, or whatever you want to call it. And out of that money I pay the two teachers from the University of Yucatán." I mean, they were really hardworking teachers. They wanted to teach every day, because that's the way they do it over there. I said, "No, no, no. We kind of do it like Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Tuesday, Thursday. Like so many hours." No, they were teaching more hours than we were as Iowa faculty. I think I paid—I don't remember exactly—seven hundred dollars for the entire course was a lot of money for them. Because they wanted to get the same as the Iowa ones. I said, "No problem." I mean, seven hundred bucks for the Iowa ones? They had parity. So the Spanish teacher was very happy with seven hundred dollars, and the history teacher was very happy, and my faculty was very happy, because it was the middle of winter and here I am sending them to paradise for three weeks, four weeks. So what they wound up doing is they would go, for example, and I stuttered the start dates and end dates. Like for example the first class would maybe meet—the first class would start on a Monday, and they'd go Monday, Friday, Monday, Friday, Monday, Friday. Three weeks and you're done, and then we'd have a four day weekend. Have Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and classes would resume on Wednesday. In that time another person would come down. They'd come down a day or two early to get ready and acclimate and whatnot. But the other faculty members, their families would come in the last week of their—while they were teaching. Maybe they'd bring their wife or their kids even, and they would tour Yucatán. Yucatán is maybe an hour north of the Uxmal Mayan ruins. It's about two hours from Chichen Itza which was the Mayan capital at the time, and it's about four and a half hours from Cancun. So they could do all of that in just a few days, and just really relax and have a great time. So I always had faculty that wanted to go on the program. The program was totally paid for out of the tuition that was drawn on those students. Families didn't have to pay extra, or anything like that, except for they had to get there. But they stayed with families, and the families were very kind. In those days, I think they paid like two hundred dollars a month, and that was for three squares a day and your own room and everything like that. [Coughs] It was a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun for those kids. I did the program for about four years with them before I quit.

DS:
And you just quit doing the program, or is that when you moved down?

AB:
No, I moved. I moved to Iowa. So I don't know exactly what happened afterward, but I'm sure there were a couple of guys that were really interested in the program, because they had a lot of fun doing it. So they went. [Coughs] Excuse me. But anyway like I said I was having a great time in Iowa. I was maybe—maybe I was kind of a novice at a lot of things, and I just didn't think that anything was really bad—anything bad was really happening. Even now I look back and I don't think anything bad really ever happened. I was asked to produce a multicultural ed. program, and what that really meant was, "Can you put together a series of courses?" Like a specialization. And the specializations there would run from eighteen to twenty four hours course work that was related to whatever the kids wanted to specialize in. Some of them wanted to specialize in reading, some wanted math, science, all the content areas. And then I put in a specialization in multicultural ed., twenty four semester hours, and I went around the university and talked to people, and said, "I'm starting this up. I'd like to know if we could count on you to teach this course more than just occasionally." And it worked. Then in the process of doing that I found that we could actually offer a bilingual program to prepare teachers for bilingual classrooms. I went to my department chair, and I asked, "Hey, is it okay if I do this? You didn't ask me to do bilingual, but it's a doable." He said, "Really? You think you can do it?" And I

said, "Yeah.", "Well, will it take any more resources?" I said, "I don't think so." And this was the kind of spirit that I found there. I went to the Department of Spanish, which I normally would not do because my experience with Spanish departments has always been pretty bad. [Coughs] Spanish departments, for the most part, are in to peninsular Spanish from Spain, and they don't know anything about the border, they don't know anything about Mexico, or anything about Texas, or the Southwest, for that matter, even though they may work there. So I went to the Spanish department. There was a guy there that wanted to help a lot, but he left. I don't think he made tenure or something. He left and then a young woman came in. A Puerto Rican girl from—I think she was from New York. But she was a wonderful asset, I think. I said, "Can you do this? Can you do that? Can you teach this?" And she said, "Yes, I can do that." So I wrote a grant, and got funded and I put her into the grant. So I went to her chair one day and I said, "I have a buyout for you." And he said, "What's that?" I said, "Well, Dr. Velez is going to be teaching a couple of courses over at—like one course each semester, for us every year, and I want to buy out of her contract." So the first year I think I bought out a third of her contract—33 percent or something like—35 percent, 35 percent the first year. And then 25 percent the second year, and 20percent the last year. [Coughs] The Spanish department guy was just so thrilled. They'd never had any money. I always felt bad for them, because they didn't have like extra paper, paperclips, things that you would ordinarily have in an office they didn't have. They were very poor in that way. He says, "What do I do with this?" I said, "I don't know. Buy some paperclips. Buy some pencils and stuff so you can hand out to your faculty." He was excited. So bilingual education really got established in the Spanish department, and then of course in the College of Education I went to the head Psych people, and there was young woman—I mean, a woman. I don't know how young she was, but she said, "I have some experience working with Latino kids." And I said, "Really?" She says, "Yes, I teach a course on reading. The psychology of reading." And I thought, "Well this would be interesting." So she was teaching the psychology of reading. I went to a buddy of mine that came in about the same time that I did, and he was a school psychologist. I said, "Okay. One of the biggest problems that we have in the whole country is assessment issues. How do we assess children? How do we assess their language? How do we assess whether they can do the job of a fourth grader or a fifth grader, or whatever." He says, "Yeah, I can develop a whole course on assessment of bilingual children." And I thought, "Damn. I've never heard of a course like that." In the whole country I'd never heard of—of course, I'm not privy to everything going on in the whole county, but I've just never heard of it. So Stuart Eley developed this course for us and the rest is history. Basically, it was a twenty four hour major or specialization, and of course I was way ahead of the state. The state didn't have any recognition—they didn't have a certificate, they didn't have anything. So somewhere in a box I have certificates. [Laughter] I created, with the little money that I got from the first grant, I created a certificate. So every kid that graduated had their name put in calligraphy, like a diploma. "This is to certify that So-and-So has taken all the courses at the University of Iowa in Bilingual Education, blah, blah, blah," you know. So it's nothing from the state. It was from the College of Education, which is true. I had the dean sign, the department chair sign, the associate dean, I think, signed, and I signed. So there were four very whacky looking signatures, but it worked and the kids were real proud of it. They could always take that and say, "I have a certificate from the University that says that I took courses," and that worked. And these kids were really in demand. There's a whole bunch of them all over the state of Texas. I don't know where they are now. Everywhere from Brownsville to McAllen to—where else? North Texas, here, Fort Worth, Dallas. I can't even tell you. San Antonio, I'm sure. Corpus Christie—places—Houston. So they enjoyed it, and I enjoyed doing it, too. I even got to go and visit them sometimes. I remember going to the Valley once, and then I was going to fly back and I had a layover stop in Houston. So I have this huge—it was not a—it was a bag. It wasn't a suitcase with hard sides, but it was one of those duffel bag type things that everybody makes now. It was heavy and this gentleman came up to me—this black gentleman came up—and says, "Can I help you with that?" And I said, "Sure." And so he grabbed it and he started walking with me to where I was sitting, and he says, "What do you have in here?" And I said, "You really want to see?" And he said, "Yeah, really." He probably thought I was hauling drugs or something. So I unzipped it and I opened it up. The whole thing was packed with tortillas. [Laughter] Bags and bags and bags of tortillas. And he says, "Oh my God!" I says, "You want one? You can take a bag. It's okay. You can put it in your suitcase or something." This was way before Homeland Security and all that stuff. I was going through an airport smuggling tortillas back to Iowa because in those days you couldn't find any Mexican food anywhere. My wife was Lithuanian, she wasn't about to make tortillas because it didn't work out very well. [Laughter] It was fun. It was fun. And then eventually I went to a conference in Tempe, Arizona put on by some friends of mine. I thought—I went to conferences every year. That was one of the nice things about being at Iowa. I was the only Chicano there. I was the only one in bilingual ed. I was blah-blah-blah, the only—when I had the grant it was great. I could travel on the grant, and I would use the money—don't tell anyone—but I'd use the money a little—I was a little devious in how I used the money. I would say to someone, "You know I overbooked myself, and I can't go to San Francisco. We have a meeting there—a bilingual education meeting—a conference. Could you go and just find out what's going on? Maybe just give me a report when you get back." You know, an oral report. And I would send somebody, like "Okay." It cost me in those days less than a thousand dollars to send somebody for two, three days. They'd come back the biggest advocates of bilingual education. "Man, I had fun, and I did this, and I did that. Oh yeah, and I went to the meetings," and they would fill me in on what was going on. So I did that several times. So I used the money to pay for some travel. I even had money for student travel so the students could go to some of these. I took students to Chicago once. They went to Washington, D.C. So these kinds of experiences really helped them see what was going on at the national level. A lot of networking takes place, so they met a lot of people from all over. It wasn't just Texas and Arizona and New Mexico. No, it was New York, and Michigan, and the entire Midwest. Those were the real boom days for Mexican American population growth. So we did that. Then when I went to a small conference in Tempe—it was held on the campus, as a matter of fact. A real good friend of mine was speaking. I had a lot of friends—I just realized—I had a lot of friends at Arizona State. So when I got there one of them came up to me and put his arm around me. He says, "Come here. I need to talk to you." He sat down and he said, "Our directorship here in the center is available, and you should apply." And I said, "What?" You know, I had just built a house, a new house, in Iowa City, and all the sudden being asked to come to Arizona, and I'm going, "No. You're nuts." So I flew back to Iowa City—true story here—flew back to Iowa City, landed in Denver—at Old Stapleton. Stapleton was weird. You had to go over the mountain and then drop down and land on a pin head. So it was kind of scary. But it was snowing like you wouldn't believe. It was just snowing and snowing and snowing. And the pilot says, "Well we're going to be able to fly out of here. This storm is moving east, so we'll be able to get there. From there we're going to Cedar Rapids. We'll be able to get to Cedar Rapids ahead of the storm." I said, "Okay. Fine." So I keep looking out the window, and they're de-icing the wings and the whole thing. Finally we did take off, even though there was a Continental plane that skidded off the runaway. We sort of—as we taxied to our take-off—I said, "Hmm, there's a plane there that's kind of the in the middle of a field." And we took off, and we did—we landed in Cedar Rapids. It was about an hour or two ahead of this fantastic little blizzard that we just were getting. The next day I woke up to about twenty four inches of snow. That was a lot of snow considering it was Iowa and not Michigan or something. So it took me until three o'clock to sort of dig out. I couldn't use the car because I lived down—I don't know, I was in this little knuckety-muckety area where it was a lot of hills, and it's sort of like, "I'm not going to be trying to climb these hills with a two wheel drive car." So I walked up the hills—falling, slipping—and I took a bus. I took a bus into the office, got there about three, three-thirty. Completely wet from my shoes, my socks, everything. So I get to the office, and I sat there, and I thought, "I better go to Arizona." And so I called Arizona, and I said, "I'm here. You'll be hearing from me." So I applied for a position there. I got a job—not as a director. They wanted somebody else, actually, and they were trying very hard. I was the wrong sex, put it that way, for the position. But the dean there was very accommodating. She said, "I want you to come anyway as a faculty member." They offered me tenure. Of course, I already had tenure, but they just transferred my tenure, and gave me a huge raise from what I was getting at Iowa, and the next summer I was in Phoenix, Arizona. I actually lived in Ahwatukee, which is a little suburb of Phoenix in between Tempe and south Phoenix. I was just like marveling at I was in this big city. Here I come from the middle of a corn field, and all of the sudden this huge metropolis of four million people. It was great. I enjoyed my time at Arizona State, too.

DS:
And you mentioned you already had friends there. So I guess it didn't take too long for you to acclimate and start doing your stuff.

AB:
It really didn't. Like I said, one of the first days that I was there, there was a guy named Ray Padilla, and Ray was the director of the Hispanic Research Center. I had known Ray since we

were students. He was at the University of Michigan, and I was at Michigan State. He went on to Berkley and I stayed at Michigan State to do my doctorate. He came back and started working in the state of Michigan in the State Department, and then at Eastern Michigan. In 1981-'82, right in there, '81, he left to go to Arizona State. So he was at Arizona State all through the eighties there, and I got there in '88, so I knew Ray really well for many years, and his wife. I had even been there when his daughter was born, their daughter. And so it Ray that brought this guy, a sociologist to me. He says, "We're going to have lunch. I want you to meet So-and-So." And I said, "Hi." I introduced myself. That's the guy that says, "Oh really? You're the one that did the study in Michigan?" I said, "Should I say yes or no?" I didn't know. I said, "Yeah!" And then Arizona was strange. One of the first days in the office we were right next door to the Native American Center and the director was this woman—I don't remember where she was from. She later went on to be president of Haskell. I think it's Haskell Community College, and it's basically a Native American school. Swisher was her name. Anyway, she comes in, and I'm just kind of like in the main office there—everyone has their own cubby holes. I was there in the office, and someone said, "This is a new faculty member," and they introduced me. She looked at me and she says, "Are you Alfredo Benavides who wrote that—" the ethnography again. And I said, "Yes." And she just put her arms out like this and she said, "I love you!" I thought, This is a weird place. [Laughter] So she comes up and gives me this big hug. She says, "You know, if it hadn't have been for you and your dissertation I would have never finished mine. I used it for this and that." I said, "Okay. Great." So I felt very welcomed, you know. I went to teach my first class, it was a night class, an evening class, it was graduate students, and those were days when we had really huge classes for graduate classes. I must have had thirty-five students in the class. So I lectured the first day. I did my thing on why we were there, what we were doing, what I expected of them, all of this and that. I stopped—it was three hour class—and I stopped, and all of the sudden the entire class burst into applause. I don't know if it was like, "Okay, it's time to go," or whatever, but I thought, "Okay, is this normal?" They said, "No it's not normal. This is really great. You really touched us with what you've said." I said, "Okay." So again I felt really good about—I didn't expect to be given a standing ovation every time I taught a class, but it was a nice beginning. It felt good. So then I started meeting people like Louis Olivas, who's still there. He's retired now, but he's the president of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, AAHHE. Another buddy of mine, Frank Hidalgo, who retired from there. He was an assistant VP for Community Relations. He always involved us in his projects. "Hey, we've got to go out to the community and do this and that." So we'd go out into the community. So he had all these professors trucking around south Phoenix knocking on doors or welcoming bus loads of kids from little Mexican American communities everywhere, and selling them on becoming Little Devils. Their parents would probably say, "They're already devils." [Coughs] But I would talk to kids and say, "This school belongs to you. Your parents pay for it. This is your school." So their numbers really went up in those days. There was a lot of—to me it was a huge difference in terms of how we did things in Iowa and how we did things at Arizona State. Arizona State had lots of Hispano, Latino faculty, and they had a lot of staff, of course. We had an organization—the Chicano Faculty and Staff Association, and they were very active. But they were very active in a very smart kind of way. They were not confrontational. I think in the old days they used to be confrontational, and they said—one of my friends said, "We used to come and get before the cameras on TV and bang on this and bang on that." He said, "That never got us anywhere, so we started doing things differently. We started thinking about things." One of the things that came out of that group, for me, was they said—or our consensus was, "If these folks knew what to do, they would do it." Because it makes good sense to do it. If it's good for us, it's going to be good for the university. So that was what I took away. Never proposed anything to the university administration or university president or anything if it's not going to benefit everyone. So when Chicanos got together and we said, "We need this. We need that. We want you to do this. This is how it's going to benefit the institution. This is how it will benefit African Americans, women, Hispanics, of course." On and on and on. We were never denied that—anything. Everything was not—everything is of course dependent on money, and you can't just say, "I want this and I want that," because money does not grow on trees. But I sat face to face with Lattie Coor, who was president at the time and Dr. Coor said to me—well he didn't say it to me, he said it to our group, because one of the things that we did—we never met with the president of the institution alone. We always had a group. You never want to be betrayed by anyone. But we put together a list of forty initiatives. Forty. Things have to change. We had sent it to him ahead of time, and he had looked it over, and we sat down. He said, "You know there isn't one single thing here that I would not approve. Everything here is wonderful. These are all good initiatives. I just don't have an armored truck in my office with a lot of money in it. So why don't you tell me which ten things you would like to see done first and in what order, and then we'll get together again and talk some more." We got together and we started saying, "Okay, what do we want? What do we need to do?" That was the thing: it's not what we want so much as what needs to be done. They have a school now called the School of Transborder Studies. That began as Chicano Studies. That was the first initiative. We got eight faculty lines along with that. When you think about it, eight faculty lines are not easy to get. I don't care where you're at. And yet we got a program, we got eight faculty lines, and that was just number one out of the top ten. A lot of changes occurred because of our group there. When I go back—now I do, I go back occasionally just to [sniffs] smell the fruits of the labor, you know? It's phenomenal. It's really a great place to—you feel good being there. And you feel good that you were part of the system that changed a lot of things. We brought a Hispanic dean, never had had one before. He's now retired. You know, just the Hispanic Research Center grew and grew and grew. It's all over the place now. But we doubled, tripled, I don't know, a lot of females came in, faculty. White women, black women, brown women, I mean every color imaginable we brought them in under the rubric of Chicano Faculty and Staff. So everybody was a winner. Everybody was a winner. And that's what you need. That's the only way to get things done, I think, in higher ed. You can't just be confrontational, because first of all you don't have any marbles. They have all the marbles. They can just pick them up and go home. So you go and you have to be smart, too. You can't just go and say, "I demand this." Well who the hell are you to demand? So you get some smart people with you and you go and present a good case, and people will say, "Wow, that's a great idea." So that was Arizona State in a nutshell.

DS:
Well you mentioned—In a nutshell. I want to kind of expand a little bit. You mentioned that number one initiative. What were the next couple of initiatives?

AB:
Oh, I'm trying to think. Oh, well we wanted to hire more faculty, generally. We increased the number of Hispanic faculty there from about ninety, I think, or eighty-five when I got there. Eighty-five. When I left we had about a hundred and twenty. So if you think thirty-five faculty hires, Hispanic hires, on top of all the African American hires, the female hires, the—I'm trying to think of who else—there were some other groups. Native Americans, you know. We brought in a guy. A special assistant to the president for Native Americans. He had been a chief of the Navajo tribe. Actually, they don't call them chiefs. He was the President of the Navajo Nation. So it makes you wonder: How come there's so many Native Americans in Arizona, and yet we had assistants to the president who were Hispanic and this and that, and they never had an Indian guy? So all of the sudden, we said, "Here it is. Bring in somebody." And they did. So we worked very well with the Indian Center, with the African American group, and they had their own group, and they had their own thing, and they did their own thing, but we had that. And the Chicano Studies thing. That started out as Chicano Studies, but then it grew to become—like you knew we had like border issues, you know? And what that was, was you could major in anything you wanted as an undergraduate, and you could add border studies to it, and that qualified a lot of kids to go to business, to go to work for service agencies, just a lot of stuff there that I thought should have been done a long time ago.

DS:
What time frame was this?

AB:
Huh?

DS:
What time frame was that?

AB:
Time frame? This basically happened from '88—well, no. I'm going to go back before I got there. I would say it started at about '86, and it went through—I left in 2002, and this thing kept all the way up through 2002. We usually had a faculty member who was president of the association, because I think we understand that if the president has a doctorate and the vice

president has a doctorate, then the president of the association should have a doctorate, or should be a faculty member. Because sometimes you have people who don't have terminal degrees, and they don't get treated with the same kind of respect—or admiration, should I say—that others do. Which is unfortunate, but it used to happen in the old days. But I think we changed the paradigm. Also, we established things like Hispanic graduation. We had an Indian community—Indian Mexican community—on the edge of Tempe by the name of Guadalupe. Guadalupe was a very poor Indian community. High poverty, high dropout rates, they had Frank Elementary School right in the middle of the community. It's only a few blocks by another few blocks, so it's not a big place, but they had this like—well we called it *tianguis*, okay? And *tianguis* was a little business enclave, you might say. Like, for example, it was open in the middle—open air in the middle—but all on the outskirts, on the outside like that, you had all these shops. A little restaurant and shops, and people could go and buy whatever kind of things that they wanted. Starting in that *tianguis* with twenty-five graduates we had the first Arizona State University Hispanic Convocation. That started before I got there. I don't want to take credit for that. That started about 1985, I think. [Coughs] They had modeled it after a USC. One of the things about working in an institution, you develop friendships and connections with other institutions and people at other institutions. So we noticed that USC was doing something like this, so my friends at Arizona State said, "We are going to be doing something like that." But it takes a lot to get it off the ground. But it is extremely successful. I mean it started in the middle of nowhere, this little bitty community, and the people would come. We'd sit in the audience. Twenty-five kids would walk across the stage. But the representative of the district would be there. I think one year they even had John McCain at one of them. I don't know which one, but McCain was not impervious to coming down and meeting with us. But the president of the university, some of the VP's of the university, the deans of many of the colleges in the university, and on and on. All of these people came for the Hispanic convocation, even when it was little, but it grew. Now it services four hundred plus kids every semester. So you get four hundred in May, and then another four hundred in December. This thing just grew and grew and grew. The faculty, we put on our regalia, we go and we go to the Student Services building. We started out in *tianguis*. From there we moved to a little place downtown that was called the—oh God—the Mercado. It was a development by a former governor of the state of Arizona—Symington. J. Fife Symington. He was a developer and he developed this for the university because they were going to use it for—or no, he just developed it on his own. It was supposed to have stores and all this, but it never took off so the university actually bailed him out by buying this whole thing. That now is the Downtown Center. It is ASU Downtown. But we actually held convocation there—Hispanic convocation—there at least twice that I remember. One time when Caesar Chavez came to speak and he went to the Hispanic convocation and we had—I gave him an honorary doctorate at the big university down at the big convocation for all the university on campus. But then he died I think about a year later. Just passed away in his sleep. So we started there, and then we went to the Frank Lloyd Wright building which is the opera house and the—not a colosseum—it's where we do all of plays and all of the big events that take place on campus. That's where we do it. So we were there for—and the thing is, it hosts ten thousand people or more, and the thing would fill up with parents. They want to see their kids graduate. So all the parents and their grandmothers and grandfathers and everything. And, again, so much support from the administration. The president, he wouldn't miss a thing like that. The president would come, the VP's would come, unless somebody was dying or something they couldn't come, but this was very well attended. And the faculty would come. You'd have fifty, sixty faculty in garb. We would walk from across the street, we would meet, and we had cookies and milk, or whatever, punch in the Student Services Building, which is this beautiful glass building. We'd go in there and get into our robes and everything, and then get in line. The ASU Mariachi, which I was a part of for a while, the ASU Mariachi would lead us across the street blaring one of the marches, or something. We would march into the colosseum—it's not the colosseum—the whatever it was. I forget the title of it. You know every—well this place doesn't have one. [Laughter] We had one. We really don't. We don't. But it's a place where people congregate to do things. So we congregated there. Like ten thousand people congregated. I saw *Phantom of the Opera* there, and all these other plays and stuff. So we had all these faculty sitting on the stage, and then we came in and the students came in behind us. We sort of led them in. And then the students had assigned seating, and they would sit. Then they would put these little cards together, like, "I would like to thank my Nana," and all this stuff. Who they want to thank, and all this. It was really, really fun. The president would speak for two or three minutes. The VP, maybe. And the master of ceremonies was always—always when I was there—was Jose Ronstadt. Ronstadt was Linda Ronstadt's cousin, and this guy was so beautifully bilingual. It was incredible. Perfect Spanish, perfect English. And he had to read four hundred little things, because every kid we gave them their ten seconds of glory, or whatever. They'd come across the stage and all faculty were able to, you know, if this was one of your students you would be able to get up and give them a hug or whatever and they'd be looking for you. Jose would read the thing and they would come across, and everybody would—you know, the whole place was going wild applauding for each individual child. They're not childs. They're not children. They're big people. And so it was just a glory day. Then we'd all go out and celebrate afterwards. That was a glorious, glorious thing. And here I don't understand—we brought it here—my wife and I—brought that convocation idea here, but it just—there doesn't seem to be very much institutional support for it. It's just like, "Eh, we meet at the Merket Center, okay." I mean the first time we had it was—

DS:
I was going to ask why ours was so similar, but now I know why. As far as the setup.

AB:
But I'd like to see—We had what, a hundred and twenty kids, maybe? A hundred kids go through it. We should have more. We really should have several hundred. I'm pretty sure we have that many graduates every semester, so we should have several hundred. Somehow we're not getting the word out. And then we should be in a venue that's big enough to support a few

thousand parents who want to see their kids actually graduate. Because I think some of the parents say, "You're not really graduating, are you?" And they say, "Yeah, Mom, you've got to come." So they would thank their parents, and their grandparents, and the ones who helped them, and they would thank their professors, which I've never heard that here. I've never heard someone say, "And I'd like to thank Dr. Benavides," or someone like that. No, they just say, "I want to thank God." So they thank God. That's good, you know, if God helped them, wonderful. But over there we had a lot of fun with it, and—

DS:
I was going to ask, you mentioned—and you might have already touched on it, because you said administration, what do you think it was that made that one in Arizona grow, and then this one's just kind of like--?

AB:
Hanging in there?

DS:
Yeah, exactly.

AB:
[Whispers] It's not *tianguis* [?]. [Normal volume] Well, Frank, Frank Hidalgo, the guy that I mentioned who was the community relations and all that. He was in charge. You know, if it's not worth doing right, don't do it. That was our motto. If you're going to do it, do it right. If you can't do it right, just forget about it because it's going to look stupid. So Frank was in charge of it. He would get student workers and other people to help out with this and that. Frank also knew all the beer distributorships in town, and whenever we had an occasion, we would get together and they would donate the beer. He also knew all the Coca-Cola places and all that. So he would have all the refreshments for families, and we had bakeries, and people would donate things, so it didn't cost us a whole lot. But he had a budget. He had a budget. He would pay for the speaker, for example, and other things. The faculty is free. You just have to have enough in you to say, "I want to go and participate. No, I'm not going to charge you anything," or "I don't expect to be compensated for this. This is part of the commitment that we make as Chicano faculty." But I don't see the same commitment here. And I didn't see it from some people over there, but there were a lot of people who showed up. And not everybody was brown. There were a lot of white folks who showed up in their regalia, because let's face it, our students were their students, too. That's the whole thing. When I was a counselor in high school, and they said—they told me not to work with the white students. I told them, "No. I don't work that way. I work with any student that walks in my door and asks to talk to me. I'm not going to say no." They didn't like that, but it was 1970. What the hell, you know? This is not 1970. This is 1990 something. I just think that we need to get the Hispanic Association here that we have on campus that has to get behind it. I

don't see any of those people participating in the thing. So we have to get in there and support. Support the students, support the people that are trying to put it together. Get some more involvement from our administrators. Get those people to just do more than give you ten bucks or whatever they give you to have cookies and punch. Get them really actively involved. Get them in uniform.

DS:
I think that's kind of a disconnect that you mentioned there, because over there it was done by the faculty, staff. Here it's done by Alumni Chapter. So that's a little different group.

AB:
Very different.

DS:
Where y'all were already engaged and invested and being faculty. Here they're reaching out trying to get faculty. I don't know if they're asking the right questions of like, "What is it we need to do better to make y'all engage in this?"

AB:
I think—are there student groups here that meet? Hispano groups that meet regularly somewhere?

DS:
Unidos Por Un Mismo Idioma [united by the same language] usually meets every Friday, I think.

AB:
Really? And, what, five kids show up?

DS:
I have no idea. That group is mainly not Mexican Americans.

AB:
One of my students started that group. José Lopez. He started that group. Maybe that's a place to start. Start getting—at Arizona State it was the Hispanic Business Student Association, so all the kids in business that were Hispanic, or who wanted to be, in the HBSA, they were there. One of our guys left from Arizona—an advisor here—he left a little over a year ago. No? Yeah, he was. Almost two years ago. He left. He asked me about Arizona State. Totally quizzed me. Like, "Would I be happy there?" And all this. I told him, "Yeah, you would. Why not? It's a great place." So he goes. I told him who talk to, Lula Leva, Frank Hidalgo, Alfredo de Los Santos [?] [01:34:44] from the community college who still has attachments to the university, Gary Keller

at the Hispanic Research Center. Yeah, doesn't sound Hispano, right? But he is. [Laughter] And doesn't look it either, by the way. So I guided him in terms of who to ask and who to—And at first I kept his emails, "I don't know if I can make it, man. This is really weird. It's really hard." He was afraid of the Arizona newspaper fame, "Arizona kicks out immigrants! Arizona does this. Arizona does that." I said, "You know what? We had all those issues when I was there, and we just didn't let it get to us. We outsmarted everyone. So be smart." So now I just got a note. Look at this. I'll just show you. This was the other day. Let me see, where is—the hell was his name? Oh wait a minute, wait a minute. No, no, no, no. Okay, hold on. I've got to get to phone, got to contacts. Guadalupe Enceña and—All right. Now. There we go. Check this out. Oh, c'mon. The caption on this picture says, "From the *barillos* of Mathis to the Rose Bowl." And there he is. He went to the Rose Bowl game last Saturday where ASU was playing UCLA. So I sent him a note back. I said—he says, "From the *barillos* of Mathis to the Rose Bowl." I said, "You've come a long way, baby. Don't stop now." He said, "I'm tailgating with—" somebody from here—"laughing out loud. Just kidding." I said, "Why not? Haven't you heard that goat ropers need love to?" [Laughter] So, you know. The thing is I feel great that—I feel good that this is a kid that wasn't sure of himself. He didn't feel very well appreciated here. He felt unappreciated, underpaid, under everything. He said, "What do you think Arizona could do for me?" He wanted a degree in higher Ed. Now he's working in the Dean's Office in one of the community colleges there. I said, "Go. Go find out. You're twenty five, twenty six years old. Go! What the hell are you doing here?" So he went. The last time I saw him was last spring. He wanted to be—he wanted to know if he could room with me at the Yacqui [?] [01:38:20] Conference. I said, "Sure." I wound up not taking any money from him. I just paid for it. I know that he didn't have that much and this and that, so I said, "Don't worry about it." He never said anything like, "I know I owe you." No, he just let it go.

DS:
Just let it go. You'll be paid back, not to you, to somebody else, right?

AB:
Yeah, pay it forward. I've been very lucky. A lot of people helped me, I think, when I looked back. Other people took the time to talk to me, and said, "No, you're going down the wrong path," or whatever, and helped me see what I should be doing. So I try to pay it back. Pay it forward a little bit.

DS:
This is kind of an aside, but we're here right now and you mentioned about it already and this young man going back there, but what was the political landscape like when you were at ASU? You mentioned that it was very similar?

AB:
It wasn't the divisiveness that is there now, or that was just a couple of years ago. It wasn't this—I think what happened in Arizona is what you see in the Trump campaign when he talks about immigration issues. I knew a lot of illegals in Arizona. They were everywhere. I made a big joke of it one day coming to teach an undergraduate class, because they'd had a raid and they raided—there was this guy from San Diego, I guess, California who did a whole bunch of little taco stands all over in San Diego. They became hugely popular, so he transported himself to Phoenix and he had a whole bunch of Filibertos, you know. You could get a burrito that big for two bucks. It was a phenomenal lunch. One day they had a big immigration raid and they closed down a whole bunch of Filibertos because those are the guys that do the cooking. So I walked in and everybody was—you know, undergraduates having a good time, and I said, "All right people. How many of you have read about or heard about this immigration raid?" And a couple of them hadn't. Undergraduates are really uninformed about a lot of things. So I said, "This is really terrible. Who the hell is going to cook my burritos now? Are you guys good cooks?" So I was asking them, "Are you a good cook? Are you a good cook?" It was funny. Somehow it went from funny like that to very serious and the whole time I was in Arizona they had tried to make English the official language. And they did, but then a woman took them to court because she worked for the government—the state government—in Arizona, and she needed to use Spanish in her job. So that was a real contradictory kind of law. So they went all the way to the Supreme Court, and right before the Supreme Court ruled that she was right the lady died, so the whole point became moot anyway. And then there was a young kindergarten kid in Nogales whose parents sued because they felt that the state of Arizona was not providing enough funds to teach her child. The child needed bilingual education, and they just provided very little. Eighteen dollars a student. The law had said that that you had to provide something like a hundred dollars per student, or something like that, beyond—you give the school the normal whatever it is per student, and then if you're an English Language Learner, then they would give you an extra fifty bucks or a hundred bucks or whatever it was. Well they weren't giving them anything. So she sued. Two or three times the courts—the appellate courts—approved. They went to the appellate court and the appellate court said, "You have to pay more." But the state of Arizona just wouldn't. They were very obstinate. "I'm not going to pay." There was no enforcement. If you don't pay, what happens? Well, obviously nothing. So finally I think the thing is at the Supreme Court, but the kid has already graduated from high school, so what difference? Or she's no longer in school. I think she graduated already. But the thing is these kind of things take a lot of time and they take a lot of effort. Faculty doesn't have the kind of time that something like this requires. We can do the research, which we were very good at that at ASU. We did a lot of writing, and a lot of research. We had a lot of people that were very good. It wasn't just Hispanics. I mean, David Berliner, one of the brightest, brightest people I've ever met. I mean this guy could take statistics from Ed Psych and mumbo jumbo and—boom—he comes out with policy in the implementation stage that really makes sense to people and people understand it. The person that can do that, I mean—You get a person who understands numbers and not

understands what it means to the regular teacher, but a person who can do numbers and understand what it means to the regular teacher and explain it to a regular teacher and the regular teacher can put it into policy in the classroom, there's your golden boy, right there. So he and his wife ____Casanova [?] [01:44:08] were phenomenal friends, phenomenal people. He still—He may be a Regus professor emeritus, but he's still _______[01:44:20], as they say. He's still striking a blow for equality. When Teach For America first came out and everybody—You know everybody's looking for an easy solution in education. "Oh, Teach For America, a new program, it's going to do wonders." When you start looking at what it's doing, it's not wonders at all. It's very different. When you start looking at all of the—I think this is where we started this conversation earlier today—when we started talking about, "What does it mean to be a teacher?" Everybody wants good teachers. Nobody wants bad teachers. All of our kids are affected by this, and our future is affected by it, but we disagree on how. Some people want certain kinds of schools because they don't want to be thrown in with black kids, or brown kids, or Indian kids, or kids that are different religions, or something like that. In Arizona some of the charter schools that first started out, they got sided because they were just doing nothing but LDLS, and you can't just be a Mormon school. You have to be a school for everyone if you're taking public money. The Catholic schools? Okay, they have a—they say, "We're Catholic and this is what we're going to teach," and whatnot, and when you get into that you know that ahead of time. But you don't expect Catholic schools to be any different. So anyway, so when the charter school movement started everybody expected them to up the ante and to really make schools accountable and really good. Some people were running off with the money. [Laughter] They would take all the tuition money or whatever money was being given to them by the state and they would actually just take off with it. That happened several times while I was in Arizona. Somebody was telling me here that they had a pastor here at a church that took off with three hundred and fifty thousand dollars of the church's money.

DS:
Whoa. It happens everywhere.

AB:
Yeah, it's not just Arizona. It's a lot of places. I think that there are fewer Hispanics in Arizona. There are fewer Hispanics in Arizona, and I think that they didn't have the representation, et cetera. They had a larger illegal population than, let's say, Texas. Texas has been here forever and ever and ever. Longer than Arizona in the sense of its history and whatnot. Tucson was established in 1776, but it was just an outpost. 1776 San Antonio was celebrating almost a hundred years, or seventy five years, or thereabouts. So you see Texas has a long—had more people, number one. More Hispanics. And a longer tradition than some of these other places. And New Mexico is even longer than that and even more diverse, with the Indian populations and whatnot. As a matter of fact, I was reading here a book—it's right over there, the one that's laying flat. Yeah. Just looking up things like [coughs]—I was just interested in the name

Benavides. Turns out that one of the people here in New Mexico in the early sixteen hundreds was a Franciscan brother by the name of Alonzo de Benavides. Well, to me, it's good to know these things. Other people would like to know where McCarthy came from, and where Jones came from, and stuff like that. [Coughs] But then you get people like what happened this morning. I don't know if you saw the news this morning?

DS:
No, I didn't see it.

AB:
Hmm, very interesting. A woman sued—a young woman sued, I think it was McGraw Hill? Their new Social Studies textbooks that are in use in, I don't know how many tons of thousands of schools. The book said that—referred to black people as—what was the title?—Like "immigrants," okay? They were here as "illegal immigrants" instead of saying, "They were slaves." You're not telling it like it is. Call it like—when we see things like this happening, and you're referred to as a footnote or something when we actually established the history of where we live, et cetera. You know like when I was doing that study in Michigan. One of the things I went to was the census records. I started looking for Hispanic names in Muskegon, Michigan. I went back to the 1890s and found Hispanic names in Muskegon, Michigan. Living there, working in the logging industry, and all kinds of stuff in Michigan in those days. Nobody would have ever thought that. "Oh you guys are migrant workers and you come and pick the tomatoes and the cucumbers and the lettuce and stuff.", "No, we're more than that." And the cherries. Don't forget the cherries. I never was a migrant worker. I volunteered my services to my grandfather once, because he was a trucker. I volunteered to work—I wanted to work—in the watermelon fields in South Texas. My father was totally, totally against it. I said, "Dad, I want to know what this is like. I want to be able to say that I did this." And I did. I did it for two seasons. Two years. I got sunburned, and I was hanging around guys who knew a lot more than I did, but I learned how to throw a watermelon. I learned how to catch one that was even spinning. So I have those skills in case you want to throw some watermelons around. [Laughter]

DS:
When we have a watermelon toss, we'll tell you.

AB:
Yeah, really. I mean they throw cow patties around here, so we can have a watermelon toss, maybe. But I had a lot of fun working for my grandfather. It established a respect—a mutual kind of respect—because I knew that he was—I respected my grandfather quite a bit. But he didn't know—I was the one that lived a hundred miles away, so he really wasn't sure who I really was on a daily basis. But when I showed up to work every morning at five thirty or whatever, and when I was able to throw with the best and catch with the best, and not give up.

When you work from sunup to sundown, and then go to the depot—the train depot down there, and load a couple more trucks or freight cars with watermelons from the trucks, he has to say, "Damn. You're a real man." So that was important. That was important at fourteen years old. Instead of me messing around at the Whataburger or something in my hometown I was out in the fields. Sometimes I worked for fifty cents an hour, but not for my grandfather. My grandfather paid the highest wage—a dollar an hour. But I did work a couple of times when we didn't have anything to do in his fields, or whatever. I would hire out on a consultant basis, maybe. I would go and work for another guy, and he'd pay us fifty cents an hour. And then they'd get ticked off at us because the truck broke down, and we're all sitting around. We'd joke with the guy, and say, "Hey, man. We're still on time here. You're still paying us." He'd get all angry, because it's not my fault that your truck broke down. But I think we walked off the job that day. We just decided to walk home about six miles.

DS:
You know we've been going at this for about, what, an hour? Almost two hours, I bet.

AB:
Yeah, we had a little break in between to go check the computer next door. [Laughs]

DS:
You want to stop here and then pick up when you left Arizona and came to Tech?

AB:
Yeah, that's a natural place to stop. Maybe I should just say about Arizona that my daughter is at the University of Arizona now. She feels like—she felt like belonged in Arizona. Always. I don't know why she was always drawn back to Arizona. It's really interesting because she graduated second in her class, and she had offers—the way they count over there is kind of weird, but she had like two hundred and thirty thousand dollars' worth of scholarship money offered to her. None of it from Texas Tech, might I add. And none of it from UT. Texas schools are a little chintzy. Arizona State not only offered her a scholarship—thirty some odd thousand dollars, but the president of the university, Michael Crow, signed her acceptance letter himself. In the acceptance letter he said, "I want you to come. I've chosen you as one of thirty incoming freshmen to work with me on a global initiatives project, and we will see this project through together." And she said no! God, I couldn't believe it. I said, "The president invites you and you say no?" She says, "Yeah, but U of A gave me more money." And that's right. The University of Arizona gave her enough money as an out of state student it'll be like me sending her in-state here. So she wanted to go there. They also have her major, which at the undergraduate level is difficult to find. Her major is in neuroscience and cognitive science, so she's just starting. I just saw something interesting in the news. That they had these huge colonies of fire ants in all the flooding that's going on in the Carolinas, and you see these things and they look like huge lily

pads but they're red. They're all ants. And evidently they put the queen ant on the top and they float around. So it's a security method for them to keep the queen alive. When the water recedes they go and land somewhere, and they can do that for weeks without having to eat or anything. So she's just starting a job—an internship, should I say. It's not a job. She's not getting paid. She's starting an internship working with fire ants. She's actually going to be dissecting the ants. I said, "How big are these things?" I expect a little ant. No, some of these are a little bit bigger. She's going to be—there's something about fire ants and their brains, and they're going to be looking at that. More—what is it?—News at eleven, or whatever they say. I'll find out more about it, but it sounds really interesting. So she's at the University of Arizona in a dormitory that's named *árbol de la vida* [tree of life]. She's in the honors program. She loves her major. She's got nice roommates—you know, a bunch of kids. She keeps going to church, which makes us very happy. She goes to mass with another one of her buddies from Phoenix who also went to a Catholic school. I think she's happy, even though sometimes it's hard. She went to her stat class yesterday—I guess last night—she was not too thrilled because the TA told them that, "If you've done a big study already you can be exempt from this one." So she called us. She said, "Send me all of my work on soil samples and filtration systems." So she had done a Part 1 and a Part 2 of filtration, water filtration. The first one was the household filters that you use at home, and she did a study on that. She won a science regional thing here—the Regional Science Fair. And then this last one she did was soils. How soils filter the water and is the water good after that. She did different samples from all around this area and A&M—we went up there and got a soil from A&M, and we got soil from west Texas, and soil from El Paso—that area—and soil from Arizona, and New Mexico. And then she did that. I mean, she knows her way around the lab. She was using the gas chromatography machine to do her samples and whatnot. She was all excited. She said, "They said if I did it I don't have to do it." So she took it all last night to her, and the professor said no. "You already did this, so you have to do another one." So she was like, "Argh!" So she'll do it. She's a good kid. She'll do it. So she goes back to Arizona, and now I find myself like trekking. She wants us to go the U of A and ASU game, and I said, "Well you know we're going to wear Arizona State colors?" She said, "You can't do that!" I said, "Yes I can. You can wear Wildcat colors. We'll just wear Devil colors." So I wrote to Olivas, I said, "Hey, can you find me some tickets?" I'm about to go over there. It's right around—right before Thanksgiving. So maybe it'll be a good deal. So who knows? But anyway, yeah, It'd be a good place to stop. And she can pick it up—I can pick it—we can pick it up here.

DS:
We'll pick it up. Sounds good. Thank you.

AB:
All right.

[End of recording]