

## **INTERVIEW WITH MARY ALICE WEBER**

**IVR** What do you recall about schools when you were young?

**IVE** I have been involved in education for almost 34 years now. I came here as a freshman in high school, and at that time of course, the school was set up on I guess, a 6-2-4 basis. You know, six grades in the elementary, and you had two in Junior High and four in the High School. And I believe at that time there were still some of these outlying schools like the Dripping Springs School and the Peter Moore School out there. Athena, I don't believe had come into existence. I'm almost certain that it hadn't. Sunrise hadn't started. Dripping Springs and Peter Moore were small schools. Most of the small schools were disappearing and youngsters were coming in here to De Soto. We didn't run, oh, maybe one school bus. It seems to me that I can remember just one real old school bus that they ran, and perhaps brought in forty to fifty students. Practically everybody lived within the town. Now all of the Ware Schools had closed down. The old Third Ward School and the, what is it, the First Ward over on the East side?

**IVR** East side?

**IVR** And there had been one over on the North side, I believe the North Ward School was what it was called. Everything was closed down, so it was all centered over on that hill on Third Street, where they had three buildings. The one school was used for the first, second, third and fourth grades I believe. And we had that building, and the old Junior High Building and then we had the upper four grades in the High School. I went in High School, sometime they bought a big white frame structure next to the high school and used it from some time for Industrial Arts, and they had band over there for some time and did some other musical work over there. We didn't have anything else after 1943, anyway.

Mr. Caldwell was principle in 1942. Of course you know he retired in 1973, so he was just beginning a long career as principal and Mr. Poole was the Superintendent, and the overall administrator. But he also was very involved in the total school program. He was involved in some of the disciplinary practices that went on in the school. He got into classes and observed teachers. Of course, being right there on the same campus, you know, with all the buildings there together, it wasn't too difficult to get around to that. He knew all the teachers, and we didn't have many. I hesitate to say how many we had in High School then, but it seems to me

that we had maybe 12 to 15 teachers. We had two Social Studies teachers, Miss Fitch and Miss Clyde. Then we had two or three English Teachers and a Mathematics teacher. One was all we needed. I suppose we had , maybe three hundred people in High School the year I was a Freshman. Of course, it's increased in size a little bit, but not a lot during those high school years.

As I said, the course offerings were very limited. You had English 1, English 2, English 3 and Civics, World History and American History. I guess we had Government. We had three or four m Math classes and a couple of Science classes. We had a little music and some art, but nothing extensive. I can't remember any separate arts programs, but there was some art work done in the school.

Athletics were the first year I was here, I think we may have played one game of football, and then the war caught up with us. It wasn't that, it was the matter of traveling from place to place, so we just dropped football. We didn't go back to it again until 1946, I believe it was. That was the first year we went back to playing basketball, but didn't run any buses. Ball players and coaches took the ball players in their cars. Tournaments were played on Fridays and Saturdays, and you might play a man in two or three games on Saturday. That was most of our extracurricular activities.

During the war years, we participated in things like bond drives and patriotic parades. We had at least one big scrap iron drive when I was in high school. The school really got involved in that. Well, then of course, after the war was over, the total program expanded somewhat, but not a great deal. The program here at De Soto really has expanded rather slowly up until we took in the Athena District just a couple of years ago. And we just, you know, as population of the county grew, why the Athena District developed out there. We picked up a few more students here and there, but really didn't show any great gain over that period of time. Gradually over the years of course, we were able to offer a much broader variety of programs. We were able to introduce more industrial arts into the program, and more art into the program as well as various music offerings. I think today we offer something like forty-four or forty-five different course programs.

Now that includes a lot of different English Classes that we've developed in the last two or three years, through more or less demand on the part of the students. Business department over here as gone from one typing class and today we have two full time typing teachers, which means we have at least 12 typing classes every day. We have a Secretarial

Practice Program; Shorthand, Bookkeeping, Advertising, something in business organization, business law, the General Business Program I suppose overall we must have 25-30 business classes that prepare youngsters to go out of here and prepare various functions in a business world.

We have about one, two, three.. maybe five math teachers who are teaching full or part time in the math field. We have about four Science Teachers. We have one, two, three.. I think about six full time Industrial Arts Teachers. We have two full time Art Teachers. We have two full-time Art Teachers in this building, , and a part-time and full-time in Building One over here. We have about ten or twelve Social Studies, and about the same number of English Teachers. I could go on and on, our staff here in De Soto has grown about 35 or 40 to almost 200. That means just faculty members. So you can see how much we've grown.

We graduate, graduated last year something like 192 students. Probably this year we'll graduate about, I think, 225, 230. So with the addition of Athena a few years ago, we've going to have a sudden increase in enrollment and of course, in class sizes. From the buildings on one campus, you know we've got that campus still. One building has been removed. The Vineland campus out here, which houses the Kindergarten and the First Grade, and the Administrative Offices. This campus (Third Street) which has Senior High One, which is Freshmen and Sophomores. Senior High II has Juniors and Seniors. Then there is the Junior High down at the other end which has Seventh and Eighth Grades. Then there is the Athena Campus and the Cruise School that we took in; and I didn't realize it but we have the Blackwell School that we took in, and how many are down there right now I don't have any idea

**IVR:** Is it still open?

**IVE:** As far as I know it is still open. It was, they may have closed it, but it was still open. We get students here from Grandview. They come in here when they reach the ninth grade. And also from Sunrise, but most of our students today live here in the District. We get some few from the K-14 Cruise District.

Ivr: Sunrise is not in this district?

Ive: No, Sunrise has their own separate school district. It comes all the way in over here to Berry Dairy Road, yeah.

Ivr: Berry Dairy Road there doesn't?

Ive: Yeah, all the way in to Berry Dairy Road. Those youngsters that live on Berry Dairy Road out there have to get on a bus and go.

Ivr: I just assumed they were in our district.

Ive: What?

Ivr: I just assumed they were in our district.

Ive: I would too and you know I probably shouldn't say this, but looking at all the changes that have been made, unless they get a windfall some place some time maybe in the next ten or fifteen years and maybe earlier, they may ask to be annexed. Of course, they're very small so it really wouldn't change the whole program over that much.

Ivr: Yeah, I would imagine that if Summer Set Lake really caught on why they would be hard pressed.

Ive: Yes, it would make a difference. Well, we have a teacher right here, two teachers here in the school, a man and his wife who live at Summer Set and they have a child who will be ready for kintergarden next year but she said it's going to present a problem for them and course that's just a personal thing. But getting her on the bus to go to school at one time and then when she comes home in the afternoon maybe nobody being there you know, getting her to the babysitter and all of that. So unless things really develop, I wouldn't be surprised to see them annexed some time. And of course education here in the county I guess when I, well I shouldn't say when I came

here but when I started teaching here Festus and Crystal and DeSoto and Herky and Hillsboro--Festus, Crystal, DeSoto, Herky and Hillsboro--and that was just about all the schools we had. And then since that time of course R-7 which is an elementary school, course Grandview was out here, the Ware School. Since that time Northwest has been created and the Fox district and the Windsor district up at Imperial, the Antonia district has been annexed by the Fox School district and the Pevely district has been annexed by Herculaneum, The Dunklin district. So there's been some shift that way. Course Fox and Northwest are, take in that whole northern end of the county and by far the largest schools but it's changed that way also in the last 20-25 years. Education is a big business in Jefferson County. I think somebody said the other day, our budget here in DeSoto runs something like three or four million dollars a year. And that includes all of your salaries and facilities. You know, the buildings and the personnel, all of that. So it's become quite a big business in the space of 20 or 25, 30 years.

Ivr: How long has the Catholic College been out here, you know?

Ive: Well now that, you mean how long?

Ivr: Well I know we've only had the school for four or five years.

Ive: Well about, about five I guess.

Ivr: Five, something like that.

Ive: Now the college was there for I'd guess as long as I've been here and I'm sure much longer. I don't remember, I don't remember that college until really I began teaching

here. And we used to see those boys go down to the blood mobile to give blood or we'd see them out running up and down the road. Course I think that was known as their Year of Denial, here at this college and they had very little outside contact. And they did all their own gardening up there, took care of most of their own needs for a long time. Now the college building burned in the summer of 1966. We had summer school that summer. I think that's the first summer we had a summer school program. We came by some government monies that year and so we set up a program--didn't have very many students--but we did run a summer program. And either the last day or the next to the last day, that building burned in July of '66. I had a boy in class he was doing some, finishing up some credits so he could graduate and he came in that morning and he said I'm sorry I'm not, I can't stay. I said where you going? He said I'm going out to the fire. It was Gary Filkins was who it was, and they tell me that Gary went out there and got up there on that building and crawled all over that place moving hoses and everything the day that happened. And I mean it was a big fire.

Ivr: Well, they've built the building in a new building?

Ive: The new building was there and then.

Ivr: Oh, it was there before it burned?

Ive: Yes, it was all there and they saved that. Well, then they couldn't operate because they didn't have the facilities to handle it. So they closed that down almost

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immediately. I think that a few priests were left out there for a little while after the building burned. And then the school district bought that, I guess just about five years ago. And they bought that, passed a bond issue, and it was, as I remember it the first bond issue that we had passed in this district that didn't raise taxes. We'd come along far enough and financial affairs were in good enough order that we could go ahead and make that purchase and they wouldn't have to increase taxes.

Ivr: Just keep them the same for a few more years?

Ive: Well then in addition to that now, we built this addition right back here which consists of two art rooms and about three classrooms behind this.

Ivr: I don't think I've ever been in there.

Ive: Well, I've been in it about three times. You just, you know, you just never get around there. We put in the library of course put in the cafeteria down there. I guess you were in school when we did that weren't you?

Ivr: Yes.

Ive: Put in the cafeteria down there and I believe built the Junior High School. Built it without any increase in taxes. Now the Building I over here which used to be the junior high got the bond issue, but everything else that's been done since then has been done without any increase in taxes. Course the next big thing that they are anticipating right now I think is possibly a fieldhouse.

Ivr: Yeah, I know about that.

Ive: Something like them and that's what they're talking about buying.

Ivr: We've been worried about down at little league you know, what's going to happen to our fields. I don't know if they've made up their minds yet or not where they're going to put it.

Ive: Well I don't know where it's to go, I don't have any idea. Somebody said it may go on down there at the other end of this building. The thing that we, we question is if it's going to be a facility to serve all three buildings particularly this one and this one, then if they put it clear down there you're going to spend all your time going back and forth between classes trying to get to your P. E. classes.

Ivr: Well the last time I heard them, they were still talking about maybe putting it on the hill and saving all the athletic fields down there.

Ive: And then well I think they will try to.

Ivr: Sure it will cost quite a bit of money.

Ive: Well they're talking now in terms of a million dollar project. Which will include a fieldhouse supposedly and some sort of fine arts center where they can present the plays without having all the acoustics for the basketball league and so on like that--put on musical productions and you know, if you looked in down there tonight when you came in Russ Boyd is trying to have a.

Ivr: Christmas show?

Ive: Christmas concert and he gets and builds all that shell



around there and that does provide fairly good acoustics but things just bounce all over those walls because that was built for basketball. But we question how much longer elementary students should be going to school in three-story buildings that are anywhere from fifty to a hundred years old some of it. We think maybe we need more elementary space.

Ivr: I guess the old high school there is about that old?

Ive: Oh yes I think 1925-26 it was built over there and then that other building must be at least 25 years older than that, maybe that and maybe older, so you know 50-75-80 years, no matter how much you do for them it won't get the job done. It doesn't get the job done, but there's been quite a few changes. I hope we're kind of leveled off now. Personally, as far as I'm concerned, I like things the way they used to be. I hope that's not a sign of my age. I hope that's not a sign of my conservatism but there are lots of youngsters today that I don't know. I see young people in the hall every day and I wonder who is that? Where'd he come from? How long's he been here? And it's probably somebody that's grown up right here in this school system. I stood out down there last year at graduation at baccalaureate and I saw youngsters coming through that door that I'd never seen up here.

Ivr: I suppose even when I was going to school you knew everybody, just about everybody?

Ive: Yes we did, we did up until three or four years ago.

Ivr: Course if you're graduating with 220-230 you're almost double what it was.

ive: And I have only about twenty seniors every day. Now I have three classes of juniors so that helps some. I get to know those youngsters and then I just know a few more of them in their senior years. But there's not the personal relationship that I think is necessary for a good school program. Course now in addition to the regular offerings, we have in the time I've been here teaching, added special education. We have special education in high school, it's a vocational type program, and Mr. Fowler tries to get employment for these youngsters. Some work in the lunchroom, some have jobs within some businesses. Course during the economic situation right now, it's kind of hard to get jobs. One boy down, works down at Brown's right now that was in this program up here. Does a fine job down there and has been there I guess he's been there four or five years now, since he graduated from high school. He has a responsible position there, does a good job. We have that and we have learning disabilities. We have a speech therapist. We have several speech therapists in the school. What other specials do we have? I don't know, course our big drug program several years ago. The value education idea that when you teach youngsters to respect themselves and be concerned about their own well being that maybe some day they won't have to resort to some artificial support items such as drugs or alcohol or that sort of thing. They'll learn to be tolerant in their use of them. We started a new program up here this year and I guess it's new to us, but it's probably the old homeroom type of program except we stick it right in the middle of the day.

And sometimes from between about 10:55 and 12:45 every youngster in this school from the seventh grade through the twelfth has about a twenty-five minute period in a class situation but an unstructured class situation, where they can do pretty much what they want. We've run trivia contests, ping pong contests, spades contests. They're all planning Christmas parties I think next week. They're in a group, there's an opportunity for a teacher to get to know those fifteen or twenty students and most of us have only about twenty. Some have maybe thirteen or fourteen and few twenty-two or twenty-three, but you have that time you can sit down and talk to them. You can work on some sort of value program, listen to any complaints that they may have. It's a time now that we're running our student council for the most part. Trying so that these youngsters will come out of advisory period instead of out of classes for the most part. But it's, it's just a period in the day where they can just forget about it and have a good time, do what they want to and then they go right back into the rest of the day. For some of them it comes before their fourth hour and for some of them it comes after their fourth hour but it doesn't really make any difference. And there'd be the three or four classes before or three or four classes, two or three classes after. They just, you know, let the hair down maybe let off a little steam and then they go back into the afternoon session with a little different atmosphere.

Ivr: I imagine discipline has changed quite a bit, hasn't it?  
I can remember getting sent home from high school for wearing tennis shoes.

Ive: That's right, yes. Well you know that goes back to this very liberal attitude that has been adopted by the court that you have all of these civil rights and that in no way can you interfere with them. Again I, I kind of have the idea that we're sending young people out to live in a world that might not be as tolerant as we are of them up here. We have a good disciplinary situation right now but it still is rather loose. And I guess it ought to be loose to a certain extent. And it oughtn't to be just so highly restrictive you know that they can't function.

Ivr: It used to be that way.

Ive: Yeah, it used to be that way but we got away with it. I think we've all learned a lot of things since then but they're allowed to smoke up here. We did get a directive today that told them they better stay behind the buildings if they're going to smoke during their lunch hour cause if they didn't why they were going to go home. And we do have a suspension policy and it's you know you'd get sent home to change your tennis shoes and come right back. We have a suspension policy today that will send them home not for something like that but for three days, five days, two week If they don't attend school and they have so many unexcused absences, why they get to go home for a while and think about it. They don't wander in the halls. That was never a problem with you all though, cause we had so few of you really. I mean it seemed like a lot but they, they never still.

Ivr: If anybody was wandering the halls, somebody was going to ask you what for.

Ive: That's right, somebody was out there. What are you doing

out here? And we kind of gotten rid of that again. We had a, a situation in the last few years where some of these kids around here spent more time in the halls than in their classes and so we put a stop to that. But discipline is a whole lot less rigid and yet I think probably we get a pretty good job done. Probably not what we ought to. I sometimes I feel sorry for some of these youngsters because as I said, the world is not going to be nearly as tolerant of them as we are. And I told one of them last week I said he said something about I got a job to go to. And I said well, I hope that the first time you put your head on your work bench and go to sleep your employer will be as tolerant as I am. And he'll say well he's tired. Cause I'm afraid he won't, you know. But I, you know, over the years we haven't turned out very many young people who haven't succeeded. They're not all millionaires and they're not all going to be extremely wealthy, but most of them will be like you. They're going to own a house and have a family pay the grocery bill and drive a car and take a vacation now and then, work hard every day for the rest of their lives or until they're sixty or sixty-five and I suppose that's all they're supposed to be doing.

Ive: Sixty-one, course then again I shouldn't say that but I remember the year that, well put it this way, the year they were getting ready to vote this bond issue and they came around and they asked all the student councils in the county to work on this plan. Try to get out to vote and had to, all they had to do was get the people to approve the bond issue, or approve the junior college idea initially. It seems to me it didn't even involve any money, didn't involve

any tax increase, it was just to ok the bond issue. Then they came back later and I think the first tax was something like 20¢ per hundred dollars evaluation. I believe that's what it was, it was a very, very minimal amount. But the youngsters here and in Festus and Hillsboro particularly and Crystal and Herky all worked together in helping to get people out. They went around and hauled people to the polling places so that they would approve this. And then the junior college was set up the first year out here in Hillsboro High School and that's where the classes met. And then after that, or in addition to that, they played all their basketball games around the county and just used the public facilities in the county. Then of course they built their own buildings. The first buildings that were built out there were the student center and the academic building. And of course you know how it's grown since then with the technical arts building and industrial technology, I guess that's it. And the library and the fine arts building and the gymnasium or the fieldhouse and all of that. To me it's probably one of the best things that the people in Jefferson County have ever done was approving that. There were some dissension at the time that it was finally passed because the people over in Festus and Crystal wanted it located there and they felt that well, that being the biggest commercial center at the time in the county and I suppose still the biggest industrial and commercial center, they felt that they had the biggest population. But then the powers that be decided that a more central location would be out here. In addition to that, a man here in the county donated all the land for the college in this

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to decide on a good location. But I think that's probably the biggest thing that people in Jefferson County have ever done was to approve that bond, or approve that junior college program. Because it has allowed countless young people, countless adults here in the county to get an Associate of Arts degree. Or to take just a few hours to work in the adult education program, to work in this GED program that's run through the high schools and all the other adult education. People who left high school for one reason or another and who need that high school diploma in today's economic society and they have the opportunity to go back. And in addition to that, course a lot of high school people who can't get jobs or they don't want to work I tell some of them sometimes that he just don't want to go to work but they get a chance to go on and get two years out there at a minimum cost. Then with the instructors that are out there, they've been able to guide them into other schools around the area. And these people are going on and gotten education or whatever and have gone back into teaching, they've gone into business, into the various fine arts programs. Most of the instructors who are out there, this was a concern at the time the college was being considered, a lot of high schools in the county, or the schools in the county thought well they'll come in here and they'll milk our systems of all the good faculty members. And then weaken us and they'll always you know reach out and draw in people from the high schools or the elementary schools, depending on their qualifications. But they've been really good about that. They've they have sought out topnotch

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administrators. Doctor McClain was excellent and Doctor Henry now is really a fine, I think a fine administrator. They've brought in I think probably the best aggregation of faculty members. I know a number of them personally and have known them over the years. They are people who appear to be dedicated to the job that they're doing. They put in long, hard hours and then like teachers every place, probably don't get paid enough but it's in the field of education and they really have I think done a very very capable, qualified job out there. I think it's just been an excellent program. Other communities in the state of Missouri and other areas have not had the success that Jefferson College has had and I, I would give a good portion of the credit to the administration. But I think an awful lot of it goes to the faculty members. These are the people who I said who work hard. They're dedicated people and they've opened up education in Jefferson County to a lot of people who never would have gotten a high school diploma, never been given an opportunity to develop any individual talents that they might have. You know--art, music, technical arts. A lot of boys have gone out there and gone into automotive repair, business machine repair. They have a vocational program connected with the high schools and we send I suppose fifty-seventy-five youngsters out there every day.

Ivr: We send that many?

Ive: It's probably that many. I don't know exactly, but we send a pretty good group in the morning and then we send another one in the afternoon. And they're involved in all kinds of programs. And they finish in, you know, when they finish

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high school then if they want to go on there are other advance programs that they can take out there. Pick up another year or two years and they become qualified, well-skilled people in their particular field. In electronics as I said business machine repair and technology, business classes, food preparation. There's a lot of things and again, these are youngsters a lot of them who just have difficulty fitting into the high school program. They still must complete their requirements but they are a whole lot happier and a whole lot better off out there learning how to put an automobile engine together, take it apart and put it back. Or how to prepare food, or you know, do things like that. Than sitting in a classroom over here taking courses that mean absolutely nothing to them. So I really think that, that junior college has been a fine addition to the educational program here in Jefferson County.

Ivr: Before you were, you know, you were talking about a couple of small outlying schools. Was there just not so many people lived in Athena area or Sunrise area?

Ive: Well, it didn't build up, we had the Dripping Springs School was out here on.

Ivr: I don't believe I've ever heard of that one.

Ive: Well, you know and I don't think it was open when we, we came out here. But it was out here off of V, you remember where Paul Mallery lived out there?

Ivr: Yeah.

Ive: It was out in that area some place, I'm not sure just where. But it was just a little one-room country school.

Ivr: Yeah, I went out to Mammoth for my first two years.

Ive: Well see it was the same type of school. Peter Moore School

was out here in the Peter Moore Lane area. As the area built up around here, out here at Dripping Springs, why of course I should, I guess I should say first of all there wasn't enough money during the war years probably to continue to support those schools and they brought the youngsters in here. Well then as that built up there was a need for both Sunrise and Athena. Of course Athena School was considerably larger than Sunrise. Peter Moore out here shut down for the same reason. They couldn't offer the same type of program and didn't have the money. And you know, this is what happened to a lot of these small one-room schools. In addition to that, the state of Missouri provided for a redistricting, the reorganization plan in the 1940's and that eliminated a lot of these schools. So it was a combination of factors and they just said, all right, you're here and you're here and you're here. There's no since in running one, two, three schools when you can send them all in here. When I first started teaching here in 1954 I guess we had what six, seven busses. Probably not many more than that and today I counted one day just the busses I could see in front and I knew what was back here you know and was figuring and I figured they had between twenty-five and thirty busses.

Ivr: And half of them must go passed my house every day.

Ive: Yeah, I bet that half of them do. I bet half of them do. Maybe all of them but we have that many and they make two runs every day, they make two runs. They run early in the morning and bring the high school people in, junior high and high school and then they go back and bring all the elementary in. And then they run at 2:30 in the afternoon and

take these people home and then they run an hour later. It was, this program was instituted two or three years ago because it was either do that or buy all those new busses. So we have not really a shift situation but we have secondary on one schedule and elementary on another about thirty-five or forty minutes apart. Long enough to make the bus runs.

Ivr: How long have they had a summer school program here?

Ive: 1966.

Ivr: Was that the first year?

Ive: I think that was the first year, that's the first year that I can remember. Now.

Ivr: Before that you didn't have an opportunity to make up that grade you just?

Ive: No, you.

Ivr: If you didn't make it, you just did it over again?

Ive: And we don't run a high school summer school program. We've only run that a couple of times. Technically, you're supposed to be able to offer this with no fees, no charge whatsoever and it hasn't been feasible to do that with the small number of students that enroll and so I think they charged a minimum fee last year. Now they've run the elementary, they've run the elementary school every summer since 1966. And they run special reading classes or something of that sort.

Ivr: It sure seems like I can remember a summer school program when I was in school but I can't remember for sure, maybe not though.

Ive: Well now it seems to me that here in DeSoto.

Ivr: It never was a threat.

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Ive: If you wanted it, there might have been. If you wanted a summer school program you went over to Crystal or maybe to Festus but Crystal ran a summer school program for a number of years but you paid a fee. Again, state law in recent years has changed and interpretations have been handed down to the extent that fundamentally we're not supposed to be able to charge these kids for anything. We're not supposed to be able to charge them for the wood they use down in the shop, charge them for the material they use in home ec.

Ivr: Charged me on night school.

Ive: I know they did but you're not, you're not free public education. But that's the way it's supposed to be. We charge a book fee. It is a repair fee, ten dollars a year I think that's what it is now. We used to give most of it back. If they lose a book then they have to pay for a book. But we charge a ten dollar fee and that takes care of repairing books, buying additional books each year. We charge I think five dollars for a new book or for a lost book. Well, you don't buy an American history book for anything under nine or ten dollars today. So if you lose ten books and make fifty dollars and it costs you a hundred dollars to buy ten new ones the next year. And we try to use a book four, maybe five years so we get the most use out of them. Some classes you can use them longer than that. Other classes why you have to change because history changes. English classes use more paperbacks, then after two or three years those are torn up and you have to go out and buy new ones. But you're not supposed to be able to charge youngsters for anything. Again interpretation and I can't get into it too much, I don't

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really understand. But a year or so ago they came out of course with this ruling by the Supreme Court that you may not suspend a student from school without giving him a hearing. I think technically I'm not supposed to suspend a student, remove him from my class without giving him a hearing. Now exactly what constitutes a hearing has been left up pretty much to the schools. It may mean taking the youngster into the principal's office down there and saying now John do you understand that you used the wrong kind of language to this teacher or that you violated rules by smoking in the restroom? Or whatever the violation might be and that you understood what the rule was and you broke the rule and now we're suspending you. That may be a hearing. That also gives parents the right to come up here and we can explain the same thing. We may take it to the school board and the school board may choose to give a hearing which again, back to civil rights and back to a lot of the interpretations why a relaxed disciplinary procedure.

Ivr: Speaking of civil rights, we used to have segregated school systems you know. Didn't they used to?

Ive: Yes, yes, we integrated in 1954.

Ivr: I didn't have any idea when it was.

Ive: Well that's when the ruling went into effect and we integrated I know the high school that year. And I think they closed down the Negro School over there on the east side at the same time.'

Ivr: Douglass was the name of it.

Ive: Douglass?

Ivr: Douglass.

Ive: I'm not sure whether that, it wasn't Douglass over here, that

was in Festus.

Ivr: That was in Festus, well there was one in DeSoto?

Ive: Yes, over there.

Ivr: Oh, that on Flucom Road there, that brick building I guess that was it.

Ive: Yeah, back up in there.

Ivr: I didn't, I didn't know that's what it was.

Ive: Well that's what it was. And I think back in 1954 we just told them all you know, you belong in the public schools of DeSoto. Course in DeSoto it amounted to what twenty-five or thirty people. I think we've never had more than thirty Negroes in the public schools all the way through.

Ivr: I don't think there was more than half a dozen when I graduated.

Ive: Oh I don't have a one in class this year. Now we have some in high school, I don't know how many but I bet we don't have more than ten or twelve. If we have that many. We have two or three seniors, probably two or three in each class. We have one boy on the basketball, the varsity basketball team and there's one on the B Team and there may be one or two on the ninth grade; I don't know. I haven't gotten down, haven't seen any of their games. I don't know whether we had any that played.

Ivr: Was it, it wasn't a problem though when we integrated was it

Ive: No, never been a problem. They tell me that when the time came to do that, the parents of the Negro youngsters here in town and the parents of some of the white youngsters just sat down and told their kids now this is the way it's going to be and you're not going to cause trouble up there. They made it very clear on both sides. Course the Negro-White



situation in DeSoto has never in any way indicated any trouble, there's never been any dissension. They, course they've lived over there on the east side. I don't know, maybe they choose to. They've never made any real effort to live anywhere else. I think there used to be a few families that lived.

Ivr: Yeah, on St. Louis Street.

Ive: Right up there on St. Louis but most of them live over there. I don't know what would happen if any of them wanted to move over here. There's a certain amount of security in living among your own people. I don't think that, I hope I'm not making excuses, I don't, I don't mean to be but for some reason they've never moved over. They are a relatively small group of people--what a hundred maybe a hundred and a half.

Ivr: I really don't know.

Ive: One hundred twenty-five or one hundred and fifty.

Ivr: Not more than that, I'm sure.

Ive: Any one of those Negro youngsters that has come into school over here who has had any talent, any ability at all who has personality characteristics that would allow him to stand out have done so. I mean you've got kids like you remember Gary Cason.

Ivr: John Price's boy.

Ive: What?

Ivr: John Price's boy.

Ive: John Price's boy, Mitch Price. Both of the, those Price boys and what was the younger one, there was a younger one there? I see, he comes down ever so often. I see him at church but Gary Cason, Anita Jamison, Mary Jane Jamison

right now, Phillip Weaver and we go right on down the line naming these youngsters. They have good personalities, they've participated in athletics, they've participated in music, they've been good students, they've been allowed just like any other youngster to fit right into the program and if they can succeed fine. We'd just as soon have a Negro in the lead of the play down here if they want to do it and we've had that. We've had some Negro youngsters in the plays from time to time in dramatics. They're as I said in Music and athletics. There's never been any problems.

Ivr: I don't think we've ever thought it.

Ive: We used to say that any problem we've ever had with a Negro boy or a Negro girl was no different than any problem we would have had with a white boy or a girl. Didn't have anything to do with color. It had to do with boys and girls and it seems to me that a Negro can be just as mischievous and just as onry, can get into just as much meanness as a white boy and he doesn't, around here doesn't cause any more. And that a Negro girl and a white girl, now it doesn't have a thing to do with the color of the skin. It has to do with the personality make up or general nature of the person, rather than racial. It just don't have any, Mary Jane Jamison right now is governor of Missouri Girls' State. Went up there this past summer and of course if you don't know Mary Jane, why you wouldn't understand, but she's a heavy-set girl. She has a bubbling personality. She knows everybody in this school and everybody knows Mary Jane. She's a pretty good student, could be much better but she's a good student.

Ivr: That's the way for all of us.



Ive: She plays in the band, she sings in the choir, she you know she's just involved in things. She went up there to Columbia this summer as our, one of our Girls' State representatives. We send four to Girls' State and two Boys' State representatives each year. But she went up there and got herself elected governor. And don't you think she doesn't let us know every once in a while that she's governor of the Girls' State. But it doesn't have anything to do with, she'll tell you, I'm the first girl from DeSoto High School to be elected and I'm the first Negro ever in the state of Missouri to be elected governor of Girls' State. But I think that it wasn't racial with Mary Jane. It was personality. Mary Jane had as I said, she has this bubbling personality. She gets along well with everybody, she knows how to work well with people. She's just that kind of a person. And I, from the girls that I've talked to who were up there with her, they worked hard for Mary Jane because Mary Jane wanted to be governor. And there was, there was no problem from the, there was no concern as to whether she was a Negro or a white girl. She just had what it took.

Ivr: The school system never has had a big discipline problem has it, of any kind really? Well I know we have some.

Ive: Yeah, I suppose.

Ivr: Heavy vandalism for instance?

Ive: No, I suppose in the last two or three years and this is part of this whole era we've lived in where people have vented their anger with violence of one sort or another. We've had more last year, I don't know how many times they broke out the, the front doors up here. They threw rocks through it, but no, we've never had any really serious problems.

Ivr: has most of that been of late, the last few years? Or do you remember we always had?

Ive: Yeah, it started about '69 or '70. You know, the same time it started on the college campuses--a little bit later.

Ivr: I can remember having to sandblast, not me personally, but having to come in and sandblast because people wrote things on the walls.

Ive: And that's been done, yeah, that's been done a couple of times since then. I think one of the things that has concerned me most about that is that originally we always had the idea it was somebody from another school that came in and did it. And, and maybe it wasn't. In the last few years we know that it's youngsters from this school, the kids from this school. And, but I think it's frustration. It's lack of some kind of security. It's the whole element of unrest in society. It's carry-over from the, let's see, college demonstrations and anti-Viet Nam War demonstrations or whatever. When things begin on the, we've talked about this in contemporary issues, and we've talked about it among ourselves as faculty members. Things start on the West Coast or the East Coast and they just sort of gradually filter down to us. And beginning about 1969 or 1970 why we had some kids who did everything that was wrong. Well I mean everything, they didn't miss a trick. There was vandalism, they were rude, they were disrespectful. But when you think back to it, they were only doing what they were being taught by television or at movies or what have you. Other than that I think young people today are just about the same as they were twenty years ago or fifteen years ago. They're just about as good. We have the bad ones and we'll always have

them. Every segment of society has good people, bad people. And I think basically as I said before when, when these people graduate and go out and get jobs and get married and have families and buy houses and keep communities going and most of them will do that. And I guess that's what we've been, we can expect to have happen. And if we can accomplish that, then maybe we're doing our jobs. But we don't have any real problems and never have had.

Ivr: Are kids brighter now than they used to be?

Ive: Oh, I used to think they were and I think the good students has a much broader range of knowledge today. In other words, he's if he's better equipped in math and science and his English and his social studies. We have, and maybe we're going through a cycle here, I don't know. But we have a number of students in school right now who are not performing up to what they're capable of performing. You know, when you were in school you knew if you took home I's and F's that you might just as well not go over there. You might just as well go some place to live for a while until it's settled down. That middle group has sort of sagged I think. And we have a lot more students it seems who are content with just barely getting by and they'll tell you that. Well, made an I- didn't I, that's passing. If you do sixty percent of the work on a job, you know, it's the lesson they'll have to learn. But I don't think they're really any brighter. The good students have just taken advantage. We have a lot more down here in this library. We have a lot more materials in the way of textbooks, library books, overhead projectors, film strips, records, magazines, fictions, biographies,

information.

Ivr: Maybe, maybe knowledgeable is a better word than brighter.

Ive: Yeah, they're much, yeah, they're more knowledgeable rather than brighter. The, and the good student takes advantage of every opportunity. A lot of the, I don't like the word mediocre, but the middle group takes advantage of a lot of that. There's a lot more I think independent activities in a lot of classes. They're more on their own.

Conclusion of interview.