Oral History Introduction

DENNIS MILLER: Welcome to Mansfield University Voices, an Oral History Project. I’m Dennis Miller, director of public relations and a 1971 Mansfield graduate. I’d like to give you some background to help you get maximum benefit from these interviews.

In 1973 history professor Dr. Paul O’Rourke conducted a series of interviews with individuals with close connections to Mansfield. In the 1980s history professor Dr. Robert Unger conducted the same type of in-depth interviews with other persons intimately involved with the development and daily history of the University.

The O’Rourke interviews were stored in the Mansfield University archives in their original audio cassette format. Dr. Unger generously offered us use of the interviews that he had saved for two decades. In total we amassed a collection of nearly 40 interviews ranging in length from 60-120 minutes each. We assembled a team of University students to convert the audio cassettes to digital format. Editing was limited to taking out long pauses and background noise where possible. We were careful to preserve the interview in its entirety.

As you listen to the interviews, remember that they were conducted with the technology of the time and in different environments. Audio quality will vary, but the content, the words, the information are invaluable to our campus and town history. We’ve broken the interviews as much as possible into 20-25 minute segments, to make downloading more efficient. These interviews are not copyrighted. In fact, we encourage students, faculty and other individuals to use the interviews, and the information in them, in your own history projects.

This had been an enormous undertaking. And I’d like to acknowledge those who made it possible. They include Drs. O’Rourke and Unger, archivist Les Aki, researcher Steve Warner, former Vice President for Student Affairs Joe Moresko, our IT professional Suzanne Murphy and John Mazler, and our students Eden Harwell, Sirnalia Kanode, Kim Hoslander and Matt Cupage. As always, we’re glad to have any feedback or information that you would like to share.