

Pittsburgh Oral Histories
Pennsylvania Department
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh



JM

Interviewed by Barry Chad

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Interviewer's Note

This man has my absolute admiration! What a driven, self-directed, intelligent, savvy guy—who knows people, knows kids, knows “the system,” who knows the world.

Interview

bc: It was suggested that I speak with you by one of the other interviewees.

JM: She used to be a secretary in the School District. She knew me from my days as a principal.... I've known her for at least ten years, off and on.

bc: You worked at Homewood Montessori? You were the principal there.

JM: Yes, I was the principal there for ten years.

Should I describe what kind of school it is?

bc: Yes, because my sense of Montessori is just a few sentences and even those may not be accurate.

JM: First of all, it was one of the earlier “magnet schools” in the Pittsburgh School District which meant that the population was supposed to be 50 percent Caucasian, 50 percent African-American; but, the whole concept behind the school was built on the beliefs and theories of Dr. Maria Montessori—that is, kids can learn at their own [rate of] progress. They don't necessarily have to be in whole group direct instruction. Once they learn the skills, they can move on to smaller groups. The environment is pretty much open for them to go from one activity to the other activity. It's based on a multi-grade concept too where you have one or two grade levels in the same classroom. In some cases you have three. So, in the event that the kid who is in second grade can do third grade work, they can go ahead and do it—providing they master the tasks that have been set up by the teacher. During the ten years that I was there, we were number one or two—as far as the top academic program in the elementary school programs. The last five years I was there we won State awards for outstanding academic programs.

bc: The Pittsburgh School District was responsive and open to this kind of a school?

JM: Yes. The school had been in existence before I went there. I went there to revamp it and bring it back to its pure Montessori flavor. In the '80s, when the government said we need to integrate more schools, the parents went to the Board and said, We want a Montessori program. And that's when it first developed. So the Board, yes, was open to that, but you still had to meet the

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standards of what the State was saying in terms of academic progress as far as passing the regular standardized examinations. It wasn't just a free-for-all. Parents wanted that. All the teachers were trained in that model. And, when they brought me in to take over, the program was not doing as well. They wanted, in essence, to heighten the concept of Montessori and to bring more Caucasian parents into the school from around the city. When I went there, it was almost 75 percent African-American and it really needed to be 50/50 in order for the District to say they had a bona-fide magnet Montessori program. And it was in Homewood: so a lot of the African-American kids came from around the Homewood area, but they all came from across the city because we had roughly about fifteen buses.

bc: Did, whatever was learned at Homewood Montessori, impact other schools in the School District?

JM: Well, I guess it did in some way. There were other schools that came through visiting because we wanted the school to be open. They could pick up some of the models that we were using there. The only impact that may have been very strong was the fact that this school of white and Black kids and largely a lot of kids that were not from upper middle class backgrounds—that they could do well academically in an environment that was supposed to be unsafe. (At that time there were a lot of shootings and parents were coming from all over the city because we had a strong academic program and we were doing well.) Colleagues of mine from other schools would come through and they would see different educational models we were trying and they would want to try and implement that same concept in their schools. But we did the full Montessori program.

bc: Aside from the mixing of grades, what else is distinctive about Montessori?

JM: For instance, there are no desks. [Rather] tables—like we're sitting at now. Kids work in groups. You have a "contract" that you are to perform these many Math concepts or these number of Math problems this period. Now, if you finish all ten or twelve of your practice exercises, you've done the task that has been laid out for you in that part of the lesson. [JM emphasizes each of the previous words by punctuating the tabletop with his finger.] And the teacher checks it. Then you are able to go to a learning station and go somewhere else in the room and find some Math supplements to work with for the rest of the period. Or, if you don't want to do that, you're allowed to go over and do some Social Studies work. It wasn't like—if you finished the work, you sit at your desk until the teacher's ready.

bc: This may be a funny question. It's a "contract" between the teacher and the student, right? I got into a special program at college which was accelerated, but I went in the opposite direction and worked more slowly. You gave the example of twelve Math questions; suppose the student said, I'd like to do five?

JM: Well that kid can't go to the next task. The process was an "openness" within certain tasks that you had to perform. In other words, if your prescription on your folder said, "Today, from nine to ten you are to do this Math lesson; you are to do this Social Studies lesson; you are to do these supplemental activities, then you'll have your independent work that you can do within the environment." But, before you can go to any of those other tasks, you have to take your task folder to your teacher and he or she checks off what you've completed before you move on.

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bc: This is an elementary school, right?

JM: Yes, it went to eighth grade.

bc: Are these the same types of terms you would use with the students: like “tasks,” “contracts”? Without talking down to the students, how did you explain what was expected of them? With the exact same words that you just used?

JM: I'll give you two examples. Kids that came to us in the middle of their intermediate school years had a tough time following this process. Kids who came in from the kindergarten, who started early learning what the process was, they knew by grade level as they moved through the system—how easy it was and what was expected of them. In kindergarten and first grade combination classroom, they were told, but they were walked through every step with the teacher so that they knew what they were to do when they went to the primary grades and when they went on to the middle school grades.

bc: There was a school in England and there was a book based on their experience....

JM: Summerhill?

bc: Summerhill.

JM: [Homewood was] nothing like Summerhill. Summerhill was much more of a free-for-all: you pretty much could “do your thing” on the steps, in the hallway, whatever.... If you don't feel like learning something, you don't have to do it. And there used to be another school here...the teacher didn't show you anything; when you felt like learning something, you'd learn it.... But Montessori's concept was—because she started her school in a very low-poverty community in Italy—she wanted to work with kids that came from dysfunctional families, slum families. Her belief was: we will guide you through the environment, through the learning environment, but you must finish the task that we set before you. (It's not like a free-for-all: we just turn you loose in the classroom and you run from table to table.)

bc: Less structure than in a normal classroom...

JM: Most certainly.

bc: ...but more structure than in a Summerhill-type environment.

JM: Most certainly. “Creativity within a lot of structure.” Basically, that's what it is. “We'll allow you to be creative, but we want you to get the skills that you need to survive in the world.” I would have meetings with teachers regularly—as a matter of fact, more than I was supposed to—to keep reminding them of the concept, keep reminding them of what we are all about, keep reminding them that we don't pass out a lot of “dittos” in this school, we don't pass out a lot of worksheets.

bc: In your tenure there how many students were there and how many teachers?

JM: When I left, it was about 246 kids [and] roughly 14 or 15 teachers. Then we had a lot of auxiliary people coming in and out.

bc: How did you become familiar with the Montessori approach towards education?

JM: For 14 years I was at the Falk University Laboratory School at the University of Pittsburgh, near the [old Pitt football] Stadium on Alliquippa Drive in front of the Veterans Hospital. There's a big school up there; it's part of the Educational

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Research Department of the University. That is a school where a lot of very bright children come. (Their parents are professors or their parents are in the medical center.) At that school we used a lot of different research concepts in teaching those kids: we used various models. The primary grades were based largely on the Montessori concept. I taught in all the grades and I was the team leader for the primary grades for a number of years. We implemented a lot of the multi-age grouping, continuous-progress, hands-on, independent activities, which were all based on the Frobellian and Montessori concepts.

I was going to leave the school district and take another job; parents knew about my work. (They needed a new principal at Montessori: the principal that they were going to put there, the parents didn't want.) The parents went to the "front office" and said, We know the work of this individual. We would like you to bring him in and talk to him about being the principal at the Montessori program. So, the parents called me, took me to lunch, talked to me, put pressure on the front office. (I turned down the other job I had and decided to stay and revamp the school.) These were very powerful, influential professional parents who wanted a good program for their school. I remember the night I got the phone call from them. The person who called me was one of the editors of the *Post-Gazette*. His kids went there. He asked me to meet with him and they put pressure.... And I would have the opportunity to do things with the school that I had learned at Falk. I could really make it comparable for kids that didn't have that opportunity to go to a fancy private school.

bc: I have two questions: How did you get into education? And where are you from originally?

JM: I'm from Philadelphia.

I did not intend to be a teacher: my first love was architecture and design. And that was what I wanted to do.

When I graduated from college, I went to work in publishing in New York for Prentiss-Hall publishers. I worked there for seven years in the art and design department working with textbooks, working at universities, working with authors, developing their manuscripts to publish with Prentiss-Hall.

Then I got married.

I was doing an enormous amount of traveling. I would visit ten to 15 colleges as well as my office work.

I always wanted to go back to school.

So, when I got married, my wife said, All this traveling...!

One day I was here in Pittsburgh and getting ready to go back to New York, working with people here at the University of Pittsburgh.... I just walked down to the Education Department and said, What do I have to do to get into teaching? And they told me about the University teacher core training program.

I got into that, finished in two years. I quit my publishing job: used some of my severance money to start all over again. I was about 28 at that time, went back and got my Ph.D. I ended up at Falk School.

I had tried to get into the school district: they said they didn't have any jobs at that time. One of my advisors recommended me for a job at Falk School. (I'm so

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glad I was there because it met the kinds of needs I had—a kind of creative, open look at education, different from the way it was functioning. I'm not a traditional, convergent thinker: I'm more of a divergent thinker; I'm always looking for how things can be done better, how they're changing.) Those years I spent at Falk were wonderful years of learning all kinds of concepts and models and theories about education. [I was] given the free opportunity to practice them and make them work and write about them and share ideas with colleagues, work late on curriculum meetings. It was the same as [what I had been] doing in publishing—the whole business of books and learning and people talking about new ideas. If I had been in a traditional classroom, I'd have been fired.

I was training people at Falk because we trained a lot of student teachers and graduate students who were going into the school district.

I [myself] applied three times and yet they kept telling me there were no openings. Then, some people saw me give a workshop and they told the Superintendent about it, and they said, Why isn't he in the school district? Next thing I know I was called and asked to help them start a new program: I wrote the curriculum and that was it. I was in the Pittsburgh School District roughly 20 years—from that position to vice-principal, administrative intern, principal, director, senior program officer.

It was a road of headaches too....

What happens—when you have an iconoclast like me in a basically, heavy, convergent, traditional community such as school districts...you're always, as the great Orson Welles would say, you're always the maverick; people don't see how you see things. For instance, when I was a vice-principal, I was always in battle with the head principal because she thought I was too progressive. I was put there to help with a new program that was going to be heavily-funded by *National Geographic* and The Audubon Society. It was a new program that was dealing largely with geography and the environment. It was thought that the kids didn't know enough about—and they don't—still today—about the geography of the world. It was supposed to be a totally interdisciplinary program.

I was sent there at the last minute because the person they needed for the coordinator to really help them get the program started—they couldn't find anybody who could really do what they needed. So I was sent because I had this background: I knew what interdisciplinary teaching was all about, the whole concept of thematic teaching—how you take a theme and branch that out to other areas. So, the first couple of meetings I went to I could see how everybody was dragging their feet, the principal was dragging her feet. They weren't really coming up with anything that was innovative. (Here it was: getting closer and closer to when this new program was going to open: and they had nothing.) Because I was new there...I offered a few ideas...but...I could see the principal was getting upset because they were listening to my ideas. Finally, nothing was on the table—just a lot of stuff on the board, but nothing really. We had a three-day-long break at that time: so I sat down over the three days and I wrote the framework of what the curriculum should be. I showed how each subject area could be infused with the other subject areas, the supplemental activities, the resources to use...the

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whole bit. I wrote it up. Then, when we came back to school the next week, and they had the first meeting, I passed it out to everybody and the principal went wild. Everybody loved it, they just loved it. And the principal almost had a heart-attack. And everybody was raving about it. They could not believe that I could do this in just three days: Here it is! It's all done! And the principal says, We can't use it, can't use it; we're not going to use it, not going to use it....

bc: Was your suggestion implemented?

JM: It wasn't implemented right away. I worked on it more and more and then I saw in one of my journals [that] they were looking for new concepts in curriculum design around interdisciplinary [programs]. I sent it in and I won an award. They published it. [JM laughs.]

And they eventually had to use it.

'Cause finally it got to the Deputy Superintendent.

Then the funders—the funders said, Use it; use it.

Then I wrote this big thematic thing on Christopher Columbus...and **that** won an award. So then I became the key person there. I was there two years.

I then applied elsewhere to take another job and that's when, as I told you earlier, the parents came to me.... They knew I was leaving and the parents came to me and asked me to come and take over the Montessori program. As a matter of fact, the Columbus thematic curriculum was published and put on display at a teacher seminar in the Smithsonian.

When I took over Montessori, like any change in any situation, [nobody's] sure how things are going to go; and they weren't sure what I was going to do to change the school.

I told them in the first meeting,

Let's all think as "zero." We all see one another right now as "zero." We're all starting out at this point: I don't know totally what **you** can do; you don't know totally what **I** can do. If you're as smart as I think you should be, you've already inquired what I can do. So I would hope you have some idea that I'm very fair. I will tell you, we will make this a top school.

And the first two years were tough. There were certain parents who didn't like my rules about discipline and there were certain teachers who felt I was putting too much pressure on them. No, I was not putting too much pressure on them. It was democracy within an autocracy: you can do better than what you're doing—and that was what I wanted. I wanted [the teachers] to have a school that [they would be] proud of. "I want all of you to think that you're coming in here every day teaching your own kid. If you think that way, this will be a good school."

The first two years I suspended over 40-some kids, but I had to suspend them because there were kids there that were taking over: they were running wild.

bc: Please talk about the discipline issues and how you handled that.

JM: First of all, I set up a discipline committee—two or three teachers in the school. We talked over things that we needed to try. One thing I developed was called "the peace document." We only want to suspend and send you home if you do something that is so unbelievably bad.... If you get in a fight that's a minor

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fight, we're going to then put you in counseling where you can read "the peace document" and understand what it is to keep your temper down, what it takes to be diplomatic in trying to solve your problems with your classmates. The rule was, You get one warning; you get time in the outer office next to me if it's the second time; the third time we send you home maybe one day. If you do something that's totally outrageous, we call your parents right away: they have to come get you. We try not to send you home for long periods of time. We had a crew that used to help wipe tables off: they hated that. And then I had another group—they would wipe lunchroom tables off. But that's part of the Montessori concept: that you help to clean the environment to make the environment beautiful. You want a peaceful environment. You want a peaceful environment because you understand what others have done to work for peace. We had a lot of little books around by Gandhi and Ralph Bunche, the United Nations.... The kids could read about those concepts that people use to get along when they were in conflict. I also had an "encyclopedia club" that was in my office and that's where I had an old set of encyclopedias. Whenever a kid was disruptive to or called the teacher a name,

"Oh you mean b----!" or something like that...that kid was brought in my office and they had to explain to me,

What do you mean by "b----"?

They couldn't explain...I'd say,

Go over and find the "B" encyclopedia, alright?

Now you look it up.

What does it say?

Read it to me.

Is that what your teacher is?!

Well, guess what: this is what you're going to do: everything that's in that paragraph, you're going to copy it down, word-for-word, and then you will take it to your classroom, read it to your teacher and apologize. And then I will decide whether or not you will be on lunchroom duty.

Now kids—they hated that.

Another way I tried to prevent sending them home was to have the older kids work with the younger kid on their Math.

bc: That's Montessori.

JM: Yes, that's Montessori right there.

I had a rule with teachers: Don't send kids to me if the kid doesn't have a pencil. When you send a kid to my office it's because the kid was unbelievably rude to you and didn't have their homework or....

Kids hated to spend an afternoon with me walking around the school...

[bc can be heard chuckling in the background.]

Those were the tricks I just had to kind of work out. Like playground time, when it was time to go to recess, I didn't keep them inside. They went outside with me at recess, but they stayed with me. They saw their buddies running all over the place, but they couldn't go.

I learned the first year: when you start sending home a lot—especially tough

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kids—they like being home. They're not even at home anyhow; they're out in the street running around. So you have to give them something at school, that you can keep your eye on them and that they needed to be doing.

bc: You wanted to go into architecture and design. You wound up in publishing. And then you wound up in education. I don't understand. In education you obviously have such a vision of what you want education to accomplish. How would you have brought that sense of human vision to architecture or how did you bring it to publishing?

JM: In high school I was very talented, artistically. Everybody said you should be in design or architecture—not realizing that, in the '50s, I'm African-American...that architecture firms aren't going to be hiring me. They aren't going to be hiring me as a draughtsman, let alone.... (I didn't know that then.)

bc: People who were telling you, they didn't see that as an obstacle?

JM: No, they just saw me as a nice kid with a lot of talent who had a lot of brains. They would never say, You're not going to be...blah blah blah....

I went to school on Saturdays. I went to the museum design schools. And I thought: That's really what I want to do: based on what counselors were saying and based on the things I had done in school. When I got out of high school, I then went to the College of Art and Design in Philadelphia [today the University of the Arts, at Broad and Pine], but, after one year there...a year-and-a-half.... One summer I took my drawings around to architecture firms on Chestnut and Walnut, trying to get summertime work as a kid.... No no no.

I just said, I don't know what I'm going to do; I had no idea.... So, I quit. I quit college for a whole year and went to work in the garment district in Philadelphia delivering yarn...down on Second and Spruce...all around there...the factories and stuff. And I was very active in my church: they had two scholarships they gave a year. By that time I was close to 19 and I got one of the scholarships to go to Bloomfield College and that's where I went and continued to major in design and fine arts. And, in my senior year, I met one of the publishing people who had come to the campus. He was sitting in the student union and I walked over and I got to talking to him. I said,

I'm graduating in a couple of months and I asked him what he did and he said that he was a publishing representative for Prentiss-Hall.

And he said, You ought to think about coming to work in publishing.

I said, That sounds pretty neat.

He said, This is my card, send me your resume.

So I did. They called me in to take tests. I went in and took a battery of tests, aptitude tests. A few months later they called me in, put me in the publishing training program for about four months. And then, from there, I was on the move. And I loved it, I loved it. It was working with a lot of books and art. But, my mother kept saying, We always dreamt of you being in education.... 'Cause I was the only African-American working at Prentiss-Hall...gigantic Prentiss-Hall!...I was the only African-American working in the whole company in the whole college textbook division! And I probably would have stayed until I was a senior editor [but] the thing that changed was getting married. And I felt that my marriage was going down the drain if I continued to keep this kind of traveling

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going. I needed to do something else. I thought maybe I'd teach and get my Ph.D. and teach at a university. When I got into teaching, I found that I liked it and I could do it well. Same thing about book publishing: I loved working in publishing with some of the most creative people, talented people.

bc: All of this energy and throwing yourself into work and projects—is this centered in your family?

JM: Yes, I grew up in a family where my father never took off. I don't ever remember my father ever taking off until he had a heart-attack. He worked non-stop. My mother didn't work, but she made sure that we had everything. I had the greatest parents: my parents were just so sweet. We lived in North Philadelphia, tough North Philadelphia. I lived right near Temple [University]. 13th and Oxford. The reason we moved to Germantown was because Temple bought our house and converted all of that into dorms and whatever else. And I was a good athlete. I played a lot of sports. I ran track, played basketball. But the thing is, North Philadelphia, at the time I was growing up, was just beginning to get very tough, very tough. Of all the guys I grew up with—there were eight of us that palled around together—I was the only one that made it out of there. I was the only one that made it out of Comac Street and Oxford. Two of them died from drugs. One spent most of his life in prison. The rest have menial jobs there now.

I remember I went back to a funeral there about 15 years ago or longer, my wife and I, and my mother and sisters. And I saw one of my closest friends when I was a kid. We palled around together, played sports together.

I said to him,

“Let's get together. I'm going to be here three or four days. Let's get together. And laugh a little bit, have a beer.”

“Johnny,” he said, “you know, we had some great times together when we were kids, but I don't even know anything about what you do now. If you told me, I wouldn't know anything about it. We're in two different worlds.”

That kind of broke my heart, you know.

He didn't want to see me.

This is a guy—we went to movies together, we did a lot of different things, but he just saw me in a different world.

And people used to say, How did you make it out of North Philadelphia?

Good parents and some very good teachers.

bc: What did your father do for a living?

JM: Worked for the Post Office.

High school: I went to Overbrook High School. Now that's all the way from—can you imagine—where I lived, at that time, to the other side of the city. I had to go down to Girard Avenue. I would take the Girard Avenue trolley car all the way out to 56th and Media—somewhere out there—and then I would catch a bus to the school. Because my parents wanted me to go to a decent high school. The only two high schools (Simon Gratz and Ben Franklin) in North Philadelphia were not very good schools.

With all the stuff going on around me, I had schedules to keep and my parents wanted those schedules kept. I went to church on Sunday, sang in the choir. I was

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in the Boy Scouts. (I was embarrassed to walk down the street past [some of my old friends].) [JM laughs.] I played on all the local baseball teams and basketball teams. So the kids knew I was pretty tough. But I was not the kind of kid that hung out on the corners.

There was something in me that didn't want to break my parents' heart. To see my Dad go to work every day and to know what he's doing it for—I didn't want to get into any crime or drugs or drinking or any of that stuff to break his heart. Do you follow what I'm saying? And I just loved him to death. And I did practically anything they asked me to do: when my father said, Be home at ten o'clock, I was home at ten o'clock. No if's, and's or but's. I worked in [Lipschitz] Pharmacy on the weekends at 12th and Oxford. My junior year in high school the coach got us jobs working for Western Union and I worked out of the Western Union office at Broad and Montgomery right across from Temple University delivering telegrams all over North Philadelphia 'cause I was a hurdler—that's how my legs got powerful: I road a bicycle. At the main office they'd give you a list:

Broad and Norris;

then you'd go out to Diamond;

then you'd go up to Susquehanna;

then back down Susquehanna;

all around delivering telegrams;

10th and Susquehanna;

11th and Norris.

Street gangs would say, We don't know why you're locking that bike.

[JM laughs.]

I used to do the projects at 25th and Diamond.

I played in a basketball league up there, but also I used to deliver telegrams.

Then, when I was in college, I was a lifeguard. My freshman year I was a lifeguard at a real tough pool at 19th and Brown. That's the heart of North Philadelphia. You know where Girard College is? It was on the back of Girard College. It was a big pool back there, Francisville they called it. It was death row. [In my second year at school] I worked at 22nd and Huntington: Shibe Park—where the baseball park was. There was a big pool there. The next year I took a water safety instructor exam and I got to work at the great Kelly pool in Fairmount Park and I worked there three summers. It was a great pool, a beautiful pool.

bc: Are you working on an autobiography?

JM: No no. I'm working on a book about principals: in essence, some of my ideas that I used that'll help principals be better principals and what you need to do as a new principal—'cause sometimes they stick you in a school, you have no idea what to do. What do you need to learn about budget? What do you need to learn about policy? What do you need to learn about discipline codes? Even if you're a vice principal, sometimes you don't learn all that. I'm just mapping it out: how you go about learning it and throwing in some little techniques on thinking out of the box—all of that.

bc: You were growing up just as North Philly was changing.

JM: The gangs were there, but it was really beginning to get bad because the "migration" had started: a huge migration of people from South Philadelphia start moving into North Philadelphia.

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The first wave of African-Americans after the Second World War settled around South Philadelphia.... And then, in the middle '50s, late '50s, they started moving further on the other side of Market Street heading north. The private homes in that part of North Philly I lived in were being converted to apartments. And when you start that, you start really causing major problems.

bc: What ethnic groups were originally in North Philly?

JM: They were Irish and German. A lot of factory workers. Caucasian. Then, as the migration of African-Americans from the South, that population started moving to Tioga: the tip of North Philadelphia up around Erie Avenue, Allegheny Avenue. The whole time I lived in that lower part of North Philadelphia, you didn't go up there: you didn't go anywhere on Erie or Allegheny Avenue or any of those places....

Having been a principal, [I can say] a principal's job is very tough. After I was a principal, I was promoted to the central office to head a division: in charge of the career and technical education division. And then I was in charge of a new division which was called Career Development. I was to set up new programs in the high schools that would prepare kids for the various changing job markets developing in Pittsburgh—the medical fields and the technology fields. That required a lot of research and writing of new programs which I enjoyed. I helped design new programs in high schools and in the middle schools...I worked two more years and then I retired. I wasn't retired two months before the new superintendent called me and asked me to come work for him. School Board members told him about me; and other people told him about me. I worked for him for almost a year as a consultant. He asked me to help him redesign the school district, which I did. He asked me to stay full-time and I said, I really want to enjoy some part of my life and I've been in education 34 years.... I left for three months and then he called me back again and asked me would I write the school district's empowerment plan, which I did. It took me a good while—three months to work on that with another colleague.

bc: When did you finally settle in Pittsburgh?

JM: Either '72 or '73.

bc: How has the city changed?

JM: I never intended to stay here. My wife is from Melbourne, Australia, so she's used to a big cosmopolitan city. We thought we'd stay long enough for me to get my doctorate. We had our first kid and the city just kept growing on us. It just kept growing because all Philadelphians think of Pittsburgh as some rusty little smoky town and it's way in the middle of nowhere; but the people were just very very friendly from the beginning when we first came here. We went to the theater quite a bit. There were only a couple of theaters [then]. There are loads of theaters now. We went to the ballet regularly. The city has ended up being a much bigger sports city than I thought it would be....

Every city goes through all kinds of changes....

On the whole, Pittsburgh has been very good to us.... It's been good for our children. They grew up here and now they're grown. [We live in Squirrel Hill and] I only got to know the other parts of the city through my work with the school

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district: by visiting other schools. Ordinarily I would not venture out of Squirrel Hill and, even when I used to go back to Philadelphia, and I'd see relatives of mine or friends, they'd say, You're still in Pittsburgh!?! I thought you'd moved to San Francisco! No no no, I'd say, I'm still out there. My sisters came here once and swore they'd never come back. They didn't like it. They thought it was kind of weird that Pittsburgh didn't have a subway when they came. Sometimes I was very sad I didn't go back to Philadelphia because I had a lot of connections there and could have moved rapidly in the school district after I got my doctorate, but I chose to stay. The best experience I had in Pittsburgh was at Falk School. It challenged my brain.