

Fort Hays State University

FHSU Scholars Repository

College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse
Oral Histories

Archives Online

3-4-1992

Interview with Master Teacher Frank Evans

Jim Mapel

Fort Hays State University

Tamie Preston

Fort Hays State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ors>

Content Disclaimer

The primary source materials contained in the Fort Hays State University Special Collections and Archives have been placed there for research purposes, preservation of the historical record, and as reflections of a past belonging to all members of society. Because this material reflects the expressions of an ongoing culture, some items in the collections may be sensitive in nature and may not represent the attitudes, beliefs, or ideas of their creators, persons named in the collections, or the position of Fort Hays State University.

Recommended Citation

Mapel, Jim and Preston, Tamie, "Interview with Master Teacher Frank Evans" (1992). *College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse Oral Histories*. 224.

<https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ors/224>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives Online at FHSU Scholars Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of FHSU Scholars Repository.

PAGE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

Page

INTERVIEW WITH MASTER TEACHER

FRANK EVANS

Fort Hays State University

by

Jim Mapel and Tamie Preston

4 March 1992

CHAPTER II

TRANSCRIPT

JM:

Today is Saturday, April 11, 1992. We're here to interview Frank Evans, Master Teacher 1986. My name is Jim Mapel and my partner is Tamie Preston. First of all, Mr. Evans, just give us kind of a run down of your chronological experience as a teacher and where you went to college.

FE:

I went to school at Dodge City Community College (in those days it was Dodge City Junior College), Northern Colorado University (that's in Greeley), Fort Hays, and have taken classes through several other schools, but my degree schools were Northern Colorado for the bachelors and Fort Hays for the masters degree and have taught 39 years here in Dodge City.

JM:

Where did you teach in Dodge?

FE:

I taught one year at Lincoln school-worked with third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders and taught 12 years at the junior high school and 12 years at the senior high school and was the junior high school principal for 17 years.

JM:

Just kind of an overall question. How has education changed from when you began to close to when you retired?

FE:

Generally speaking, the kids are pretty much the same. The equipment they have to work with has changed quite a bit. Television has come in. When I first started out here, the only people who had televisions were the ones who had the big high antennas and watched Wichita through the snow. Television was not a factor in the schools at all and neither were computers. As a matter of fact, the hand held calculators were not even. . . those were the product of the last 15, between 15 and 20 years and so things have changed quite a bit in so far as the materials the kids have to work with is concerned. The kids themselves are pretty much the same.

JM:

Do you agree with the changes? Do you think the changes have been pretty good technologically?

FE:

I think technologically, the changes are good. The way we've handled them in some cases has not been quite as good. Television, and I'm not advocating that we get rid of television or anything like that, but in a whole great many cases, television has not been a good influence on some of the kids. In some cases it has been over done. In some cases it has made spectators out of too many people. People who might otherwise have been involved in something, just sit around and watch and

they get used to just sitting around and watching and they become spectators in the classroom and spectators in life.

JM:

Just kind of give a description if you can of the building you taught in back when you started at Lincoln or the Junior High as compared with today.

FE:

The building, the Lincoln school building was pretty much the same as it is now. It hasn't changed much over the 40 years since then. The Junior High school building, of course, there's a new building now. When I first started we had about 700 students in the old Junior High school, which is now the Central Administration Building and the new Middle School. It's called the middle school. Now-it was called the junior high school a good, nice modern building. Of course, I think the high school plant now is too, even though it is spread out a little bit, it's still a good plant. But Lincoln school is about the way it was.

JM:

Do you think-and we've had some controversies, as you know, the last ten years or whatever with the space available-do you think this will continue to be a problem in USD 443?

FE:

Yes, I do. Of course, that depends on a lot of things. What happens with our industries and stuff. If we have one or two of our big industries move out, it might change things. It could also change in the other direction. My guess would be

that it will remain a problem, although for the present we seem to be in fairly decent shape.

JM:

How about your paycheck as compared to when you started? What was the pay scale?

FE:

When I started, my paycheck contract was \$2,900 a year and in those days you got \$400 extra for being the head of the family. It didn't matter if you were a man or a woman, if you were supporting the family you got \$400 extra, as if that would make a difference. But I remember they used to pay us. We'd get ten checks of \$290 dollars and then we'd get a \$400 check the eleventh month, and nothing the twelfth month. So it's changed quite a bit, needless to say.

JM:

How about the textbooks? Have there been any changes in the textbooks when you started as compared to when you were finishing up?

FE:

Well, textbooks in those days were more like manuals, instructional manuals and stuff like that. They were pretty factual and not too many pictures and not too colorful and not too appealing. They're not like they are now. I've seen your government book and your American history book and both are very appealing publications. Hopefully, it helps the kids enjoy the reading of them more. I don't know.

JM:

How about when you were an administrator as compared with a teacher? How do you explain the difference with that and the changes you went through with that, changing from teacher to becoming an administrator and vice versa?

FE:

Being an administrator, of course, you're not tied to the classroom for so many periods a day like the teacher is. The teacher, at 10:30 every morning, they have to be in a certain specific place where as the administrator doesn't. They're freer to move around but the responsibility of being in charge of everything-being responsible for everything that happens- is kind of mind boggling. However, I think that a teacher who is really trying to do his or her job works just about as hard as an administrator. Physically, the work, the work load is about the same, but from the standpoint of being held responsible for everything that happens, that's the biggest difference rather than just being responsible for what happens in your own area of the building.

JM:

Is there any particular reason you changed when you became an administrator?

FE:

I became an administrator at the time that I went back to school to work on an advanced degree. Administration was an appealing thing, and I did enjoy the seventeen years. There was kind of an overlap there, where for four years I was a teacher and

administrator both, that's why the total years don't add up to 39. When push came to shove, I became strictly an administrator for 13 years and went back to the classroom simply because I missed the classroom teaching and the association with the kids. That's about the size of it.

JM:

Did you feel like the association was just a lot less with the kids being an administrator as compared with a classroom teacher?

FE:

Very much less, in my opinion.

JM:

Name for me, if you can, three major problems in education when you started as a teacher.

FE:

Classroom size-not classroom size-but class size was a problem. The first year that I taught American history at the junior high school I had 180 students in five classes, with an average of 37 to 38 per class. That was pretty well the way it was throughout the building, and so that was kind of tough. Another one was simply the technological assistance that we had. We didn't even have copy machines. We had a couple of these things that you turned. You turned the crank and if you were lucky, your copy came out. And if you weren't lucky, it wrinkled up your original copy. There were no computers at all, no calculators, no classroom television. We were lucky if we were able to get a movie projector. You had to apply for it. And then if it would happen to be working during the

day when you were lucky enough to get it, and if you got through five classes without it breaking down, why you counted that as a good day. There was no such thing as being able to get your hands on a video tape of something that you could show the kids and so on. They had about maybe thirty or forty films available in the Central Film Library and that's about it.

JM:

That's two-class size and technological assistance. Is there another problem that you can think of?

FE:

Teachers weren't as prepared. There were non-degree teachers when I started. People who had just completed just two years of college and were certified to go on but just had to go ahead and work every year and get so many hours of preparation a year and so on. There were a lot of people teaching who were not really even certified, only provisionally.

JM:

Jumping ahead, and we're talking in the first section about changes in education, what do you foresee as three major problems today?

FE:

Well, the break-up of the family has got to be a problem that affects us. We deal with so many kids who don't have a family at home. They have the single parent, if they're lucky. Some of them don't have any parents. Another problem is some of them that do have parents, don't have those parents at home and they aren't available to them like they ought to be. The

family life, the break-up of the family kind of spills out. Also, the quality of life in impacted areas, and we have impacted areas here in Kansas, like in Wichita, with the gangs and so on. I just think that so many of the big cities and so on where they have grown so fast that they have just become so impacted that the quality of life simply isn't there. That's another big problem.

JM:

Do you have any suggestions or solutions? How are we going to handle these things?

Fe:

I think eventually-this doesn't have a whole lot to do with education I guess, although I kind of think it does-I think eventually, people are going to have to start paying a little bit more heed to what those ZPG people were expressing back twenty or thirty years ago. And that is to try to achieve zero population growth or cut down on population growth somewhat. Eventually, that's what it's going to take. How? I don't know. I don't have any idea. The biggest problem, the biggest problem that society has to contend with, in my opinion, is simply excessive and disorganized growth in population because you can trace every problem we have to that. Too many people in one place at one time.

JM:

One more thing before we move on to the next section and I guess this is a change. The closing of Saint Mary of the Plains, just your thoughts on that.

FE:

That's mind-boggling. I still can't believe that it's happened. I don't think any of us were ready for that and I know some of the people up there. We live just a block south and my wife and I spend a lot of time up there on the campus, and we know a lot of the people on the staff up there, and it's been a big shock to them too. I think for this community, it's going to be a bad deal. I still hope that some way or another something happens that will create a situation where we can have Saint Mary's or some replacement there. I think it's going to hurt the community a great deal. How many teachers do we have in our system who went to school at Saint Mary's?

JM:

More than we know, I bet. I was one of them.

FE:

And it was a good school.

JM:

Our next section talks about student motivation and when I'm in the school today I still have students come talk to me and your name will come up and they say, "Boy, he was a great teacher and I sure miss having him there." And I miss having you there too. What did you do to motivate these students? Obviously, you motivated a many number of them.

FE:

Well, I don't know. The teacher's biggest job is to influence. It doesn't make any difference how much you know. If you can't

influence the people who are in that classroom with you then you are not going to get your knowledge across to them. Somehow or another, you have to strive for a situation where not only are you in charge of the classroom, but you're also on good terms with the students. There are a lot of teachers now in our high school who do a good job with both of those. I think we have a great many master teachers in our school building. I see it being done. It's very tough to be in charge of a group of people and also be on good terms with them. But there is no question about it, that's what you have to do. Being in charge is not enough. Drawing out a behavior code and simply enforcing it, that's not the answer or it would be easy. There wouldn't be anything hard at all about teaching. Parenting is the same deal. Somehow or another you have to be in charge and you also have to be on good terms with them. You really have to walk a tightrope-where you're on the brink of falling one way or the other, and any good teacher or parent is a pretty good user of this brinkmanship that we talk about. In my opinion, if you're going to influence somebody, you have to be on good terms with them. You aren't going to influence them unless you attempt to frighten them. There are times when you have to sacrifice your rapport with them and not be on the good terms for a while. But your objective should be to eventually regain the situation where not only are you on good terms with them but you're also in charge. I'm not suggesting that you achieve this rapport that you're supposed to have with the kids by appeasement either. Parents and teachers have found out

that this doesn't work. You have to achieve it some way other than that. Something that is of substance instead of just bribing them.

JM:

Flexibility keeps coming up. You're talking about flexibility, aren't you?

FE:

Yes.

JM:

You kind of touched on discipline. What type of discipline did you use? Was it just this?

FE:

I would say firm, but not rigid. Firm, but not rigid. You have to let the kids know what you expect of them, and they have to know what to expect of you if they don't do that. A bunch of kids are going to make you draw lines, and if you don't, then they are going to take advantage of you. Even your Honors American History class. You have to tell them, exactly what you expect of them and what's going to happen if they don't, and they have to feel that you're acting on their behalf-that the only reason you're doing this is to try to help them. If they get the notion that you're simply trying to control them, or give them a hard time, then you lose the battle. If you can convince them that everything that you're doing, you're doing in their behalf, and if they know what to expect from you. I've substituted in classrooms this year. I've been in classrooms where the kids know what to expect, and they know

what the teacher expects of them and so on, and it just makes a big difference.

JM:

This question-being a history teacher myself and you teaching history. Did the attitude or level of motivation for students, did it change during historical periods such as the Vietnam War, or Watergate, or something like that? Was there any major changes depending on what was going on with our country?

FE:

Well, with some of them, when the upper maybe 25% of the students, not very much. There have been times, like for instance during the Vietnamese War, where all these demonstrations were going on, and where people were being taken advantage of by the government and so on. There were people who thought that sounded like a pretty good deal and decided they would go along with them, and it encouraged different people to question authority of all kinds. Because any large movement that takes place, that questions the authority of the government to do this, that, or the other thing, encourages other people to question people who are in authority of other types and so on. A little bit along that line, but for the most part generally speaking, not really.

Kids are pretty much the same now as they were 30 or 40 years ago, except for the equipment. The ones who decide to be uncooperative now are better equipped to do so than they used

what the teacher expects of them and so on, and it just makes a big difference.

JM:

This question-being a history teacher myself and you teaching history. Did the attitude or level of motivation for students, did it change during historical periods such as the Vietnam War, or Watergate, or something like that? Was there any major changes depending on what was going on with our country?

FE:

Well, with some of them, when the upper maybe 25% of the students, not very much. There have been times, like for instance during the Vietnamese War, where all these demonstrations were going on, and where people were being taken advantage of by the government and so on. There were people who thought that sounded like a pretty good deal and decided they would go along with them, and it encouraged different people to question authority of all kinds. Because any large movement that takes place, that questions the authority of the government to do this, that, or the other thing, encourages other people to question people who are in authority of other types and so on. A little bit along that line, but for the most part generally speaking, not really.

Kids are pretty much the same now as they were 30 or 40 years ago, except for the equipment. The ones who decide to be uncooperative now are better equipped to do so than they used to be.

JM:

How did you motivate yourself?

FE:

I don't know. I can remember being in high school. I was interested in being a teacher. That was never a problem, it really wasn't. There are times when the going gets tough in the classroom and anybody going into teaching needs to understand that things are not going to always go smoothly. There may be very few days when everything goes smoothly. You simply have to ride that out and just keep on keeping on. But that's the case in almost any area.

JM:

Teacher burn-out, that was never a problem. Do you believe in teacher burn-out or is that a myth?

FE:

Yes. No I don't think it is a myth. I believe in it. Particularly, if a teacher cares. If a teacher doesn't care too much, then it's not going to affect them all that much. But one who really cares and does everything they can to do the best possible job for the kids, is going to have a lot of anxiety. Because if you really care then the problems that kids are having are going to affect you more than it would if you don't care. I think teacher burn-out is a very real thing. That's the reason why teachers need good leadership and even counseling once in a while.

JM:

Decision making. Were decisions harder for you when you were an administrator as compared with being a teacher?

Fe:

I don't know. I never thought about it. I don't think so.

As a classroom teacher, I've seen presentations on this. A classroom teacher makes many decisions every day. Every class period he has to make decision after decision after decision. It behooves you to make the majority of them right. They're not all going to be right. The administrative decisions are maybe on. . . I started to say on a higher plain. I'm not sure that that's the case at all. They might affect a few more people, but I think administrators and teachers both make lots of decisions every day. And you want to try to be as consistent as you possibly can in your decision making. But, I don't know. I don't see a lot of difference except for maybe the administrator's decisions affect a few more people than the teachers.

JM:

When you look at an administrator, any administrator, what do you like to see in an administrator? What qualities? What characteristics?

FE:

I like to see a person who can relate to people, who can relate to kids and teachers both, and people who obviously care. Now, Dr. Colvin comes to mind here. He's still pretty visible with

the kids. They know how he is and they're not afraid to talk to him. He needs to be accessible and he needs to be approachable. In other words, if a student wants to talk to him, he needs to not be afraid to walk up to him. If a student wants to see the principal and there doesn't appear to be any way he can get into see him, then he's not accessible. So someone that cares enough to be accessible and approachable both, and be visible so that kids see him and know him, him or her.

JM:

What characteristics don't you like to see in an administrator?

FE:

I hate to. . . and we've had some administrators who I felt just wanted the position. Being an administrator is a job, not a position. It's a heck of a job. I've known some administrators who I felt were in it simply because they wanted the position. They didn't want any of the job that went along with it. I'd rather see someone who is interested in the people that he is working with, and is willing to do the work, and doesn't want to just pass all of his work on and responsibilities onto somebody else.

JM:

When you made decisions as a teacher, did you ever confer with your fellow teachers?

FE:

A great many of times. Especially the last ten years in the math department at the high school. We just seemed to have

a pretty good working relationship and we checked with each other about a great many things. Even to the point of using common tests in some cases, and making out common objectives, and checking with each other in regard to the progress we're making, and trying to make sure we were covering the same thing and so on. Teachers, teachers work together better now than they use to. They are better coordinated.

JM:

Toughest decision. Was there ever a toughest decision that you had to make in teaching or administration?

FE:

I would say the toughest decision I ever made was the decision to go back to the classroom because I really wrestled with that for a long time. I enjoyed being the administrator, but I enjoy being a teacher more, I think, and I don't regret having done it.

JM:

So you were glad you made that decision?

FE:

Yes.

JM:

What is the best decision you ever made? Was that it or was there another decision that you could say, "Well, that was one of the best decisions that I ever made in education?"

FE:

I think the decision to. . . it started when I went to college originally. I was a social studies and P.E. major, a double major. I picked up a few courses in math, and one year the junior high school principal wanted me to teach a class of general math-eighth grade general math-and I enjoyed it so much that I decided to go back and pick up a teaching field in math. And I think that was the best decision I ever made because I have thoroughly enjoyed the mathematics.

JM:

Our fourth section has to do with leadership qualities and I know we've talked about this and without being repetitive, what techniques does a good leader use in the classroom?

FE:

As a teacher?

JM:

As a teacher.

Fe:

Well, you don't talk down to students, and you don't put them down, and you don't correct them in such a way that it's demeaning to them. You also, though on the other hand, you also need to be demanding of the students in a reasonable way. They need to understand that you expect them to tend to their business but they also need to understand that as long as they do that, there is no way that they're going to have any problems with you, as long as they're trying to tend to their business. If they-the message that they need to receive from you-is that

everything you're doing, you're doing in their behalf. You can't just tell them that because the things that you do speak so loudly that they don't really listen to what you say if it seems to conflict with the way you go about your business. The message that they get from you, most of them, they have to get-not by you telling them-but by you showing them, by your behavior. I don't know. Leadership is quite a subject. Most good leaders that I've had seem to have those qualities.

JM:

Can you name for me three great leaders that you were around during your educational years?

FE:

I think Ed Lauber who used to be the principal at the junior high. Did you ever know him? He used to be the principal at the junior high school and Frank Toalson used to be the superintendent of schools here in town. I think he was a great leader, mostly because he was involved and visible. He was right down on the same plane with the employees. Then, I also think that about Dr. Mac McKinney, who used to be the principal at the high school. I think he was a great educational leader.

JM:

I know you did some coaching. How important was coaching to you?

FE:

It was very important because I think that athletics are a fantastic outlet for the kids. In the days when I was coaching, we wouldn't have the comprehensive athletic program that we

have now. Especially for the girls. That's proof to me that it's important. The fact that the girls' athletic program has come as far as it has. We now have a full and varied program for the girls and I think it's tremendous. Winning is not the only thing either. And I think maybe it helps the kids learn to face the fact that when two people play, one of them is going to be a winner and the other one is going to be a loser. And they don't have to both necessarily be failures. I think it's a very important part of the educational, overall educational program. I think we're doing a pretty decent job with it right now. As long as we don't have too much pressure from community groups to win, too much unreasonable pressure anyway. Winning is important, but it's not the only thing.

JM:

Do you have a greatest experience as a coach? Can you think of one or two incidents that just really stick in your mind?

FE:

There are quite a few of them. But maybe the greatest experience was in 1963 when Marvin Marsh and I were coaching the Demon basketball team. We won the regional tournament and went to the state. That was a good experience. Another good experience was when I first came back to the high school. They asked me if I would coach girls basketball and so I was the assistant girls basketball coach for two or three years. It was a fantastic experience to find out that those girls were willing to work as hard as they were. They were serious about it and

they were willing to work at it, and that was tremendous to get to work with them.

JM:

One other thing under leadership qualities. I remember you. You know when you go through education, you go through your school years. You remember certain things and certain people, and I remember you were my principal at the junior high. I always remember you were always so positive. You were always friendly and had a smile on your face. Have you always been happy teaching and being an administrator?

FE:

Yes. Because I knew when I was a student in high school that was what I wanted to do. I have no idea when I had first decided that. That's all I can remember that I ever wanted to do and so that's why I was happy and content with it.

JM:

In the final section we're going to talk about teaching philosophy and here again I know we've touched on some things. But once again without being repetitive, what is your overall teaching philosophy as a teacher?

FE:

Well, I think a teacher has to be positive and has to maintain a very positive, very upbeat-and by the way I see lots of teachers now a days doing this-very up beat atmosphere in the classroom. It has to be an atmosphere of business-like proportions, where in some ways a teacher has to be business-like and organized, but yet they have to be also humane and

positive with the kids. Somehow or another, as we've said before, you have to reach the point where you're in charge of what's going on, and you're very demanding of the kids, but you're also on good terms with them. That's still the hardest thing for a teacher to do is to be in charge and be on good terms at the same time. You have to be task oriented. You can't just let the kids now. . .like for instance we used to have a teacher where we knew if we could get him to talking about something else, he'd talk about it for the rest of the period. Well, he was losing sight of his objectives. And to be nice and positive is one thing, but to let people take advantage of you is something completely different than that. So you have to be business-like and task-oriented, but also you have to be on good terms with them and you have to compromise with these things. As I mentioned before, the teachers biggest job is not to teach information but the teachers biggest job is to influence. If you can influence a kid to want to make something out of himself, all you have to do then is point them in the right direction. That's a tremendous task to influence another human being who doesn't particularly care to want to make something out of himself.

JM:

Would you change anything about going back through the years? If you could make a change, would you change anything about your teaching or your administration?

FE:

I don't think so. Most of the time, I mean maybe things could

a pretty good working relationship and we checked with each other about a great many things. Even to the point of using common tests in some cases, and making out common objectives, and checking with each other in regard to the progress we're making, and trying to make sure we were covering the same thing and so on.

Teachers, teachers work together better now than they use to. They are better coordinated.

JM:

Toughest decision. Was there ever a toughest decision that you had to make in teaching or administration?

FE:

I would say the toughest decision I ever made was the decision to go back to the classroom because I really wrestled with that for a long time. I enjoyed being the administrator, but I enjoy being a teacher more, I think, and I don't regret having done it.

JM:

So you were glad you made that decision?

FE:

Yes.

JM:

What is the best decision you ever made? Was that it or was there another decision that you could say, "Well, that was one of the best decisions that I ever made in education?"

FE:

I think the decision to. . . it started when I went to college originally. I was a social studies and P.E. major, a double major. I picked up a few courses in math, and one year the junior high school principal wanted me to teach a class of general math-eighth grade general math-and I enjoyed it so much that I decided to go back and pick up a teaching field in math. And I think that was the best decision I ever made because I have thoroughly enjoyed the mathematics.

JM:

Our fourth section has to do with leadership qualities and I know we've talked about this and without being repetitive, what techniques does a good leader use in the classroom?

FE:

As a teacher?

JM:

As a teacher.

Fe:

Well, you don't talk down to students, and you don't put them down, and you don't correct them in such a way that it's demeaning to them. You also, though on the other hand, you also need to be demanding of the students in a reasonable way. They need to understand that you expect them to tend to their business but they also need to understand that as long as they do that, there is no way that they're going to have any problems with you, as long as they're trying to tend to their business. If they-the message that they need to receive from you-is that

everything you're doing, you're doing in their behalf. You can't just tell them that because the things that you do speak so loudly that they don't really listen to what you say if it seems to conflict with the way you go about your business. The message that they get from you, most of them, they have to get-not by you telling them-but by you showing them, by your behavior. I don't know. Leadership is quite a subject. Most good leaders that I've had seem to have those qualities.

JM:

Can you name for me three great leaders that you were around during your educational years?

FE:

I think Ed Lauber who used to be the principal at the junior high. Did you ever know him? He used to be the principal at the junior high school and Frank Toalson used to be the superintendent of schools here in town. I think he was a great leader, mostly because he was involved and visible. He was right down on the same plane with the employees. Then, I also think that about Dr. Mac McKinney, who used to be the principal at the high school. I think he was a great educational leader.

JM:

I know you did some coaching. How important was coaching to you?

FE:

It was very important because I think that athletics are a fantastic outlet for the kids. In the days when I was coaching, we wouldn't have the comprehensive athletic program that we

have now. Especially for the girls. That's proof to me that it's important. The fact that the girls' athletic program has come as far as it has. We now have a full and varied program for the girls and I think it's tremendous. Winning is not the only thing either. And I think maybe it helps the kids learn to face the fact that when two people play, one of them is going to be a winner and the other one is going to be a loser. And they don't have to both necessarily be failures. I think it's a very important part of the educational, overall educational program. I think we're doing a pretty decent job with it right now. As long as we don't have too much pressure from community groups to win, too much unreasonable pressure anyway. Winning is important, but it's not the only thing.

JM:

Do you have a greatest experience as a coach? Can you think of one or two incidents that just really stick in your mind?

FE:

There are quite a few of them. But maybe the greatest experience was in 1963 when Marvin Marsh and I were coaching the Demon basketball team. We won the regional tournament and went to the state. That was a good experience. Another good experience was when I first came back to the high school. They asked me if I would coach girls basketball and so I was the assistant girls basketball coach for two or three years. It was a fantastic experience to find out that those girls were willing to work as hard as they were. They were serious about it and

they were willing to work at it, and that was tremendous to get to work with them.

JM:

One other thing under leadership qualities. I remember you. You know when you go through education, you go through your school years. You remember certain things and certain people, and I remember you were my principal at the junior high. I always remember you were always so positive. You were always friendly and had a smile on your face. Have you always been happy teaching and being an administrator?

FE:

Yes. Because I knew when I was a student in high school that was what I wanted to do. I have no idea when I had first decided that. That's all I can remember that I ever wanted to do and so that's why I was happy and content with it.

JM:

In the final section we're going to talk about teaching philosophy and here again I know we've touched on some things. But once again without being repetitive, what is your overall teaching philosophy as a teacher?

FE:

Well, I think a teacher has to be positive and has to maintain a very positive, very upbeat-and by the way I see lots of teachers now a days doing this-very up beat atmosphere in the classroom. It has to be an atmosphere of business-like proportions, where in some ways a teacher has to be business-like and organized, but yet they have to be also humane and

positive with the kids. Somehow or another, as we've said before, you have to reach the point where you're in charge of what's going on, and you're very demanding of the kids, but you're also on good terms with them. That's still the hardest thing for a teacher to do is to be in charge and be on good terms at the same time. You have to be task oriented. You can't just let the kids now. . .like for instance we used to have a teacher where we knew if we could get him to talking about something else, he'd talk about it for the rest of the period. Well, he was losing sight of his objectives. And to be nice and positive is one thing, but to let people take advantage of you is something completely different than that. So you have to be business-like and task-oriented, but also you have to be on good terms with them and you have to compromise with these things. As I mentioned before, the teachers biggest job is not to teach information but the teachers biggest job is to influence. If you can influence a kid to want to make something out of himself, all you have to do then is point them in the right direction. That's a tremendous task to influence another human being who doesn't particularly care to want to make something out of himself.

JM:

Would you change anything about going back through the years? If you could make a change, would you change anything about your teaching or your administration?

FE:

I don't think so. Most of the time, I mean maybe things could

have been better. I think probably they could have. Most of the time your hindsight is always a lot better than your foresight. Most of the time, my decisions were based on thinking things over and doing what I thought was the best thing to do so I don't have any regrets about it. No.

JM:

Tell me about a humorous situation or two that you can tell me about.

FE:

When I was principal at the junior high school we used to have a boy. You know you guys can relate to people like this. He was habitually late to school in the mornings. He couldn't seem to get organized and get around and get to school. So we had already reached the point where he knew every time he was late he was going to have to stay after school and make up the time and pay the penalty and so on. So he came in one morning and he was all hot and bothered and he was about 15 minutes late and I said, "O.K. What's your reason?" "Well, now Mr. Evans. I know you didn't want me to be late to school and all that." So he said, "I was hurrying real fast and I was running." And he said, "I was looking around and I heard a noise behind me, so I looked around and I ran right into a tree and it knocked me unconscious, and I'd been laying there. I'm not sure how long I'd been laying there, but as soon as I woke up I came to school."

JM:

Did you laugh?

FE:

I couldn't help it. I couldn't help it. And you always have things like that happen. I don't think they stopped then either.

JM:

Any favorite students that you can think of or a group of students or anything that sticks out in your mind?

FE:

Not really because every year we had great kids. People who think that kids are not as good as they used to be are not correct because they are. There are more of them and they're more varied and Dodge City has become quite a cosmopolitan community. We have oriental people, we have Hispanic people, we have the black people, the Anglo-American and all that. For the most, it's kind of an interesting mix. The kids might be a little bit different from that standpoint, but they're still good kids, and they still accomplish in mathematics anyway. Some of the things students are taking now in Algebra II, we never ever thought about covering when we were in Algebra II in high school. I think I've always worked with good kids so I can't pick out one group as being a favorite.

JM:

Do you miss teaching?

FE:

Yes, but I've substituted quite a bit this year and I kind of enjoy being able to do it. This is the first time since I was five years old that I haven't either been teaching school or going to school and that includes the year around. It's kind

of neat to be able to do more or less what I've wanted to do for the past year. I've never been able to do that.

JM:

So you like still staying in touch through substituting and things like that?

FE:

I kind of enjoy that, yes.

JM:

What do you remember most about teaching? Is there something when you think back about my teaching career?

FE:

Oh, the business. I can remember getting so used to bringing things home every night that if I started to leave the school building and wouldn't have my hands full of stuff, I knew something was wrong, because there was something to bring home every night. There's something to do all day long, and all evening long, and I can remember the business and also working with the kids, and that's been pleasant every year. There have been problems too. There have been some kids that have not been all that pleasant to work with, but those don't stand out.

JM:

I want to end this up with a word association type thing. I've watched Barbara Walters on TV before and so I'm going to give you a word and just tell me what comes to mind. Dodge City High School?

FE:

About 12 years of teaching there and pleasant experiences.

I think Dodge City High School is a good school.

JM:

Parents?

FE:

Well, those are the people that the students you work with report home to, hopefully and most of them have been cooperative. Most of my experiences with parents have been pleasant.

JM:

Success?

FE:

That's something you try to influence the kids to want to have is success.

JM:

United States of America?

FE:

Freedom. We have problems but compare that to the problems that Fidel Castro's going to have one of these days and they're coming for him too. And the problems that the Soviet Union has had. I have to think about what Winston Churchill said, being a social studies major, you'd remember that, but he said, "Democracy is the worst kind of government there is except for all the others." So there isn't any that's perfect.

JM:

Finally, life?

FE:

It's good. It's good. I relish it. That's the thing we want to try to influence the kids to feel too. It's to feel that

life is good and they relish it and they want to do something with it.

JM:

Thank you very much sir.

FE:

Thank you.