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Interviewer: Donna

Camera: Don Bouzek

JC: I'm actually an immigrant woman, which is not reflected I don't think in how I speak, because I obviously don't have an accent from the land of my birth. But I am an immigrant. I came to Canada when I was five years old in 1966. We left Kenya at that time because of the unrest that was growing there between the ruling British population and the indigenous people of that country. I am of Indian ancestry. So my family had been in East Africa for decades. My parents were born in East Africa. My grandparents, at least three out of four grandparents, were born in East Africa as well. As a family, we had been in East Africa and in India back and forth across the Indian Ocean for many, many decades. Because of the political situation, my dad decided to emigrate. He came first in 1965. He landed in Montreal and he was working there. My parents are both teachers. Then my mom and my sister and I followed the following summer.

Q: You all lived in Montreal?

JC: We all lived in Montreal for a short time, for a few months. This is very interesting for me, because my dad just passed away in January. So, as a result of doing dad's eulogy, we discovered a lot of information from talking to family and friends, going through papers and photographs and documents. That's why I can speak with a bit more confidence about what brought us to Alberta. My dad had a very good friend, a childhood friend, who was working at the Blood reserve school in Southern Alberta; that's eight miles north of Cardston, Alberta. He was somebody that was part of our community in East Africa, had emigrated prior. He said to my dad, if you're interested, I know I can help you get employment with the federal government as teachers to work at that school, a residential school. So my parents took up that opportunity and we all moved to the Blood reserve. I remember coming out on the train and then there was a breakdown with the train and then we were on a bus for some time. Those are my recollections of traveling across Canada from Montreal to Calgary and then to the Blood reserve. [removes earrings]. So that's how we came to Alberta. My parents worked at that school for... So my parents worked for three years at that school. My sister and I attended that

school. We lived on the reserve, just what would be the equivalent of about half a block or so from the residence and then from the school. We were there for three years.

Q: Was it called Blood Reserve?

JC: Yeah, at that time it was known as the Blood Reserve. The school was called St. Mary's School.

Q: So you went to a Catholic school on a reserve?

JC: Yeah, on a reserve. We stayed there for three years. Then my dad, parents, decided to look for other opportunities. We ended up moving to Taber, which is a small community at that time of about 6,000. It was there that I spent the rest of my primary and secondary education, in Taber, which was a rural farming community.

Q: When was this?

JC: That was in 1969 that we moved to Taber. Dad was employed at St. Mary's High School in Taber and mom at St. Patrick's Elementary School. Then, the following year, they both lost their jobs. But it was very kind. There were some brothers of Our Lady of Lords who were employed at the school, and one of them actually gave up his position. He said, listen, this man just moved himself and his family to Taber; you can't lay them both off. That's a terrible thing to do. So one of them gave up his position so my dad could continue employment. My mom lost her employment and for the next three years she was substitute teaching and that kind of stuff. My mom actually returned to working for the federal service three years later, and worked there until her retirement—so, another 20 years. She ended up working at the reserve up by Fort McLeod, in that school, in Brocket.

Q: Was St. Mary's School where your father worked also a residential school?

JC: No, in Taber there were no residential schools.

Q: Just in Fort McLeod?

JC: No, there was no residential school there either. The only residential school experience we had was with St. Mary's School on the Blood reserve.

Q: What brought you to Edmonton?

JC: School. I came to Edmonton to go to University of Alberta, to go into sciences and graduate from University of Alberta. Then I got employment with University of Alberta, totally by happenstance. I had a student friend who just happened to tell me about, I believe his name was Simon Fuller, who was quite a well known geneticist. That was the degree I had, and I was actually pursuing computing science qualifications and TAing in one of the undergraduate labs. Sabina Creshe was her name. She said, hey Joy, there's this talk, Simon Fuller. We went. As we were sitting there waiting for him to come she said, oh and by the way, Department of Genetics is looking for a tech, a staff member that's already got their degree, because they have a vacancy in the lab. That was to prepare materials for student labs. So I applied. I got the job, even though I apparently wasn't the preferred candidate by the professor for that lab course. He actually wanted his technician to get the job, but she hadn't completed her degree yet; she was still at least a year out. So, according to the department administration, I was the preferred candidate, and that's how I started. In two heartbeats I met one of the most influential union activist women in my life, Effie Woloshyn. At that time I think I was just over 22 years old when I started with the University of Alberta as a staff member. Totally naïve about unions, even though, get this, my parents as teachers, one in the provincial service and one in federal service, were in two of the most powerful unions in this province – the ATA, the Alberta Teachers Association for my dad, and my mom was part of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Neither of them had any solid connection with their union. As I reflect on it, neither of them when they had issues with their employer reached out to their unions for representation. I just shake my head at that now as I realize how they struggled through those issues.

Q: Did it have to do with their status as immigrants?

JC: Absolutely, because I don't think they were unionized back in Kenya. That wasn't how things were done. I did actually talk to my dad, because he had a couple of unfortunate things that happened during his employment. I remember the second one, because I think at that time I had been working already for a short time. I said, dad, why don't you go to the ATA and ask for help? Oh no, I'll just deal with it on my own.

Q: What was his concept of unionism at the time?

JC: Well it's kind of funny, because my best friend growing up, her mother was actually the rep for the ATA for their local. I was a little bit shocked that dad wouldn't have reached out to Kay to say, hey I'm going through something. But I don't know if it was the comfort with doing that or the fact that he was a bit proud that way. When I talked to him once about some of the struggles that some of his coworkers had had in terms of issues that they had faced in employment, not one of them went to the ATA. Every single one of them should've had representation. One was being discriminated against; one was accused of conduct that drew discipline. Those were all things that we or I commonly now acknowledge is the role for the union to represent the member in those issues. My mom was being harassed by her acting principal. That should've gone to PSAC. It never did; she managed it on her own. I saw the letter that my dad helped her write to the superintendent of schools complaining about this woman's behaviour and the false allegations she put in her evaluation. But there was no sign of either union in any of those employment issues, which is truly unfortunate as I reflect back now. I don't know if it would've changed the outcome.

Q: Sometimes immigrants doubt that there's equality in the services.

JC: There's also that reverence or maybe coming from a commonwealth country and colonial kind of thinking that it was around the acceptance of authority more. I don't know. That would've been my mom more so than my dad. My dad was a rebel against whoever he felt didn't live up to his standards, his principles. He would have had an issue. My mom would've dealt with it very much differently.

Q: Where were you living when you were working at U of A?

JC: First I was living in a house in North Garneau, university housing, because I was a student just before getting that job. I managed to maintain that residency for another five months, and then I ended up moving into an apartment; I think it's called Garneau Towers or Campus Towers. No, Campus Towers is on 87th and 112. It's just in behind Newton Place, whatever that building is, and I was there for a while. Then in 1984, with my mom's help, I bought a home in the Mayfield neighbourhood on the west end of the city. I've been there ever since.

Q: You're not in Jasper Place anymore?

JC: Never was in Jasper Place.

Q: Your address is very close to there.

JC: Yes, very close. I know that Jasper Place was a community of its own at home. Effie lived in Glenora; her dad had built that home. So she was telling me a little bit about that community. In fact, her dad came over to help my husband replace some tile in our bathroom; so he was telling Kerry about that neighbourhood, Mayfield, and how when he first moved to Edmonton that was all swamp. It was infill land and I think there was an airport there, the famous Wop May, for whom Mayfield is named. He was a pilot, I think a bush pilot, who flew up to the north quite a bit. So that's the community that we lived in.

Q: Is that within the boundary of what's called Jasper Place?

JC: Yes.

Q: Do you currently know it as Jasper Place, or still as Mayfield?

JC: No, we always called it Mayfield. . . . I don't think I ever understood it as being part of Jasper Place. But now that you say that, that makes perfect sense to me that it would be considered part of Jasper Place. I always just call it the old west end, and I include all that area kind of west of 149th Street. But it strikes me that you should talk to my friend Shawn Peterson, who is a retired teacher out of Jasper Place High School, who grew up at about 93rd or 92nd Avenue and 150th or 151st Street. So he was a Jasper Place resident. He actually retired from teaching at JP School. He's a Social Studies teacher. So history he would know very well. I'll talk to him first. I'm sure he would love to chat. Anyway, so we were talking about the neighbourhood. Isn't it just funny enough? One of my dad's colleagues, a fellow teacher, actually did his degree at University of Alberta at the time when Mayfield was being built. Mayfield's claim to fame, I came to learn from Mr. Shozak, is that Mayfield was the first ever developer-built neighbourhood in Edmonton. It was just kind of odd that Carl was here at U of A doing his Education degree, I believe. So when he found out where we were living, he shared that information with me. I thought it was just kind of a small world that brings you back into that same circle.

Q: How long have you been at your current residence?

JC: Since 1984-- so almost 40 years; 38 years.

Q: And you've raised a family in this neighbourhood?

JC: Yes. My boys were born at that house, well born at the Misericordia and brought back to that house.

Q: Did they attend school in that neighbourhood?

JC: They attended Holy Cross School. That was a K to 9 school. It was just in Canora, just kind of a kitty-corner neighbourhood just a little bit south and east. That was a French immersion school, and I wanted them to have another language.

Q: How has the neighbourhood developed over the 40 years you've been here?

JC: It's changed quite a bit, the neighbourhood has. When I first came, most of my neighbours had been there many years, the original purchasers of those homes. A lot of them have passed on now.

Q: What kind of neighbours did you have then?

JC: The neighbourhood was also very monotone, not a lot of diversity. Lots of Eastern European families, I would say. There were a couple of Ukrainian families down the block from me. Mike, behind me, he was Polish and she was of British extraction. Ralph was a war veteran and his wife was Dutch; he'd met her in Europe in the Second World War. Lots were people that had bought those homes when they were first built. That was in the beginning when we first came there. Lovely people. Very good sense of neighbourhood, which I loved about the neighbourhood. I think because we had that sound wall that goes around Mayfield Road on the west and north of us, there's only three or four entrances into the neighbourhood. So it really gave it...And I think it's smaller too in land area, so the number of homes was smaller. You really had a sense of community, like a small town. It also had quite a vibrant community league, so there's always things that were going on. Of course there are two schools there, primary schools, from both Edmonton School Board and Edmonton Catholic School Board. They're just a stone's throw away.

Q: Did you meet with any discrimination from any of your neighbours?

JC: My mom had a really interesting conversation with my neighbour. He was talking about, they're Dutch and part of the Christian Reform Church. At that time the school was just being built or expanded in, not High Park, but the next neighbourhood over, which I can't remember the name of right now. Anyway, his children were there and he was a little distressed because as the school was expanding they were having children from outside their community attending, lots of different races of children attending. He was quite worried because his eldest daughter might connect with somebody from outside their race. So he was having this conversation with

my mom. For context for people that don't know, my husband is a WASP, of Scottish and English ancestry. But he was very worried for his daughter because, you know, mixed marriages, they don't always work. That's what he was saying to mom. I thought, okay Sid, you're obviously not paying attention to who you're talking to.

Q: Did you have any direct experiences with discrimination?

JC: No. I think I've always had sort of these kind of around me conversations. I remember once a friend of mine that lived by Southgate and I used to go visit her quite regularly, and someone made a comment about the fact that I was this Indian coming to visit her. She just kind of looked at them I guess and said, oh I never really realized that about you. I think it's because I grew up here. I'm so well assimilated, if that's the word. Over the phone, you're not going to know that I'm an immigrant woman. Probably my mannerisms, my world view, really aren't very different from the norm, or at least not a first glance.

Q: Did you have any neighbours who were Indigenous?

JC: Absolutely, there were some families in the neighbourhood. My sons played hockey. The older one played hockey longer; so he had a couple of young Native brothers that were a part of his hockey team. Because I was part of the community league, I met some of the other families. In fact, the fellow that was the financial officer for Enoch Nation, his family – I think he was estranged from his wife – so his ex-wife and children lived in Mayfield across from the community league. Those kids all played hockey.

Q: Were there different nationalities within your community?

JC: Over the years it was very welcoming. Nobody I don't think ever...

Q: When you first moved there in '84?

JC: I don't know about 1984, Donna, because until my kids were born and involved in community activities I wasn't involved with the community much. Later on in the later '80s and early '90s was the height of my involvement. There were some Chinese families, a couple maybe, not a ton. The community over time has become more and more diverse. I think several years ago, maybe five or ten, you would notice a couple Black persons walking down the street to get the bus or whatever. That was a bit unusual because I don't remember that in the first few decades of living there we ever saw a black person in the neighbourhood. Behind us now where Ralph and Ruth used to live there's a Filipino family there. Around the corner there's, I don't know her actual nationality, but she's somebody that comes to volunteer. My husband is never at the casinos because she volunteers there regularly. Connie is her name. But we see her walking, and she's from some East Asian country, but I couldn't tell you which one.

Q: Are you still active in your community?

JC: No, not really. Kerry does. He goes to volunteer at the casinos.

Q: Have you seen evolution in your community?

JC: Evolution in what way?

Q: Some people regard the area as a place where newcomers stay for a while before they move on.

JC: I will tell you that I think in our neighbourhood, when people buy there they tend to stay a very long time. At the end of my block there's an Indian family there. They've been in that home at least 20 years, since the mid to late '90s.

Q: And your other neighbours?

JC: The other neighbours have basically either died from their homes or they've gotten sick and had to leave their homes and find other kinds of housing. It's pretty stable. I wouldn't say it's a

high transient population, I think because it's mostly single family dwellings. There's four or five apartment buildings but they're just three-storey walk-ups. So they're not huge. Then there was a little bit of a townhouse development across the street from the community league. But those were rentals at one time, straight rentals, and now they've turned, some years ago they put them up for sale. What I see is people have pride of place and people take ownership. Even the apartment buildings, most of them have turned into condominiums, so those apartments are for sale as opposed to simply rental.

Q: Was there any significant industry in the neighbourhood? Did any of your neighbours actually work in the neighbourhood?

JC: Our neighbourhood I would say is a high percentage of civil servants, whether it's provincial or federal. Lots of teachers and nurses and those kinds of helping professions there. Then there's a huge proportion of small business people. My neighbour across the street, he works in H-vac systems. My next door neighbour, he and his brother run a landscaping company, and that kind of thing. We've got quite a few, across the street is a hairdresser and his family. So there's lots, not necessarily all run out of the neighbourhood, though some of them have started in the neighbourhood and then they've moved out. Like my neighbour across the street for sure, his HVAC business basically started out of his garage and now he's got a relatively large company in comparison to that.

Q: Would you say that the income level in your neighbourhood is moving up?

JC: I think it's pretty middle class. There was a couple of homes that have been renovated beyond what I'd say is the neighbourhood style, but for the most part it's been pretty simple.

Q: Do you intend to continue living there?

JC: Yes, for as long as it's still suitable. Those homes were not huge and the investment wasn't great to buy into that neighbourhood over the years. I would say it's at average or lower than average prices for Edmonton. It's so convenient. It's 15 minutes to downtown, it's five or ten

minutes from West Edmonton Mall, ten minutes from Westmount Mall. When Meadowlark used to be something other than a medical centre, that was also another five minutes. What's now Mayfield Common, again all those kinds of things are pretty close at hand. So it was pretty convenient. And you didn't have the same cost of living as in Glenora, and the little bit more land you'd get if you were on the other side of Groat Road, for example.

Q: Do you no longer see Indigenous families taking a stroll in the neighbourhood? Has it transitioned into other nationalities?

JC: I don't think I ever saw Indigenous families taking a stroll, Donna. Frankly, I wouldn't even hazard a guess whether people are Indigenous or not, because I have no kind of sense, unless somebody's almost overtly Indigenous. I remember when I was going to school on the Blood Reserve, one of my classmates, who's an Indigenous person, had red hair. That's not common. There's such a diversity of how people look, and you can't always know just by looking at people where they're from. Some people, yeah it's easier to tell. I think there's still a number of immigrant families that moved to the community because the price point is decent, the houses are 1,000 square feet, and there's a little bit of a yard. It's not a huge investment to buy something that's fairly reasonable in terms of space, if you're trying to get on your feet. And we have had people that have been there for five to ten years and then moved on to bigger homes or other neighbourhoods. But they're not that common say between six or eight houses on either side of me and across the street that I know of. Most of those people have come to stay. So it's been really lovely, because you never know who's going to move in, because you have no control over who's buying next to you. . . .

I was going to say, now that I think about it, I think the house at the end of our alley, I don't know if it was owned by what's now Indigenous Affairs, and it was used to house Indigenous families. So we've seen a little bit of turnover in terms of who was living there. Not people that I've ever met that I know of in the neighbourhood. I just notice it because it's where I turn to access the alley into my garage. But I don't know if it's still owned by the department or not.

Q: Did they have a housing program in the neighbourhood?

JC: I have really no idea. I have really no idea.

Q: It could have been because of the proximity to the Camsell Hospital, that it might have been a place for families to stay.

JC: I don't think so, because it seems to me people lived there for multiple years. But I don't know that they lived there multiple decades, for example.

Q: So you saw a transition?

JC: I feel like I have. I'm thinking about how well the yard was maintained or not maintained, depending on who was living there, and things of that nature, sometimes the cars that were out front and that kind of thing. I just never really paid attention. We were very confined to our little short stretch of homes on either side of us and across the street, because we formed such a tight community. If I would walk by there or drive by there I did notice, but not really otherwise.

Q: Like in my neighbourhood, you just know the people around you.

JC: Yes, in your short close proximity kind of thing. Or other people that you met through the community league activities or whatever. I think Mayfield is only 800 families or so. I knew more of them when I was more active in the community league, because I was the registrar for the sports. So I got to meet a lot more people. But not so much now that I'm quite distant from it.

Q: How did you get involved in NASA?

JC: As I was saying, it was almost from the get-go that I got involved with NASA, because my coworker, the lady that was training me, Effie Woloshyn, was such a strong and involved, active member of NASA. I started December 6th of 1982 and I'm sure I went to a reps council meeting not in December but in January.

Q: Tell me about Reps Council.

JC: Reps Council at that time was such a different committee or body of NASA than it evolved into shortly before its suspension in 2012 or '10 or whatever it was. At that time there was the executive and then there was council. There wasn't really other bodies of NASA for members to get involved with. The executive seemed like such a far reach for a young person and somebody new to NASA, whereas council was much more accessible if you wanted to get involved. It had various committees. There were people that were involved in writing a newsletter, there were people involved in creating social activities for members. There were people involved in, now that I think about it as kind of member engagement, or sorry, member education. It was a great place because after meetings we would go to the Power Plant and have a beer and chat and talk about political issues. For me, as a pretty politically naïve 22-year-old, I learned a lot from people that had been active in social issues, in the feminist movement, in social justice, and all of those kinds of things. I had done that in some ways as a young person through my church, but never out in a non-religious-based kind of approach to those kinds of issues. So it was really very interesting for me and I learned a lot. There are the Effie Woloshyns and the Judy Lederers and the Kevin Warners. Even Peter Matalainan, God bless him, who was often challenging, but had their own way and certainly introduced me to that other way of being involved, that sort of more active, pressing forward.

Q: What were the issues at that time?

JC: At that time? I think it was around member representation and it was about more grassroots involvement of the members in decision-making by NASA, by the board. There was a liaison person, like the Reps Council Chair sat on the Board, and the Business Manager always attended council meetings. So we used to get updates about what was going on in terms of grievances and that kind of stuff, and information in terms of what the board was doing. But I think it was really more focused on member engagement, like socials and education and those kinds of things.

Q: So the structure remained executive and council for a number of years?

JC: Decades.

Q: Were there any major issues involving activity with the employer?

JC: In 1985 the president of the University decided he wanted to implement pay equity. That's where he wanted to bring in the Aiken Plan. I was involved with that for some time back in its very exploratory phase, and then I was on maternity leave and that kind of broke my involvement. But that wasn't implemented until 1989. That whole transition, because part of that we had a job classification system in the collective agreement.

Q: You had a collective agreement?

JC: Oh yeah we had a collective agreement always. We had a collective agreement since at least 1977, maybe even prior to that. I'd have to look at the certification. I feel like I want to say '67, because I think the certification says '67; but I'm not 100 percent sure about that. That was very well laid out and the University was moving to an evaluation system. Basically it was, does the union get on board and try to shepherd this in a way that is least impactful on members, or leave it to the employer? Under PSERA we didn't really have a leg to stand on to fight, except where it would affect people's pay. If they chose an evaluation system, they could choose that and the only fight we would have is what was the pay. The decision was made by NASA at the time to engage with the employer, to participate in guiding. Nothing of the University is ever bought off the shelf and implemented as is; it's always customized. The Aiken Plan got customized. So we had input into that customization.

Q: What is the Aiken Plan?

JC: The Aiken Plan is a way of evaluating jobs based on a number of factors, to rank them in order of, I don't want to say importance, I hate that word, but it's kind of like value. Really it's about valuing the job. Where's its place in terms of how much every job or set of tasks contributes to the organization? It was based on things like the complexity of judgment to do the work, the skills you had to have, the knowledge you would need. At what level were the

contacts that you had? If they were external, that was seen as more impactful potentially on the University than if they were largely internal. Things of that nature. There was some minor recognition of any safety risks you might be exposed to as part of your job, and there was also some valuation of supervision, whether you supervised and what was that supervision like.

Q: So the union was engaged in this?

JC: Yeah, engaged in the customization of the plan and then the implementation of it. The person really to ask about that whole process, because he took over and has way more information about that, is Kevin Warner.

Q: So those were impactful years for you as a union activist.

JC: They were and they weren't, because in '85 I had my first child and in '89 I had my second child. So I kind of took a bit of a break from NASA at that time. I would say I had a bit of a hiatus period in that time.

Q: Were there any other unions on campus?

JC: No, no other unions on campus. AASUA, the academic staff association, was an association at that time. I'm not even sure there was a GSA; I can't recall. There was certainly SU but of course Students Union was all over the place, depending on the student leader.

Q: So the administration of the university was mainly in the hands of University of Alberta?

JC: For sure, absolutely.

Q: What about tradesmen who had membership in NASA – were they in any other union?

JC: Many of them. A lot of those trades organizations allowed people to maintain their membership. We had members who were no longer working in their trade that still maintained

their membership with their trade union. I know a former president of NASA, Russel Eccles still maintained his IBEW membership until the day he retired.

Q: Any others?

JC: Not that I know of directly. That's the one example that I'm confident of.

Q: So they had dual trade union recognition.

JC: Yeah, exactly.

Q: Were there any major economic issues that NASA got involved in?

JC: Oh for sure. Every time healthcare has been threatened, we've been there to support organizations like Friends of Medicare and participated with other unions through the Alberta Federation of Labour, who have been very kind to NASA over the decades before we affiliated with them a few years ago to allow us to participate jointly with other labour unions throughout the province. When they had activities and were pulling people together, we were not forgotten, luckily. I wouldn't say that was pre '96, '97. I think up until then NASA was pretty isolated and a bit insular. I think there was a sense, because part of it is back in the early days we were part of the CSA. I think that when AUPE was formed we actually broke away from them to go on our own. CSA eventually I think became AUPE, and we had broken away. I think the members have always had a bit of a pride in being limited to here, closed shop within the University of Alberta and stand alone. I will say that NASA has been, for whatever reason, sufficiently strong; I'm not quite sure that's the right word. But we have been able to have good gains in our collective agreement. In bargaining, we've done pretty well there. I think we've set the tone at times for others. We've been successful over the years in some of the things that we've done at the WCB. It was through the work of one of the LROs at NASA that the first recognition of radiation-induced illness was recognized by WCB. For a little union, we have set a precedent on a number of issues. The other key issue was the recognition of employees paid from grants and endowments as employees of the University of Alberta – the Trust employees,

as they're called here. We got certification for them under the Labour Board in 1996 or '97. It took University of Calgary AUPE local another ten years to get it. We got our trust employees into the PSVP at that time. Calgary had to fight to get them recognized under the PSVP. So we've sort of been a little bit precedent setting.

Q: When did privatization come on campus?

JC: Privatization has been a conversation, contracting out, for as long as I've been an active member of NASA. There was discussion about Printing Services being contracted out, and that would've been in the late '80s or '90s. Certainly the whole of Tech Services, because there used to be all these shops that were run out of Facilities and Operations: a carpentry shop, a metal shop, an electronic shop, microscope services. All of those kinds of things used to be available as facilities that the University ran to do that kind of service work for the labs and departments at the University. Over the years, all of that work is no longer within the campus community – it's largely outsourced. We've seen that kind of discussion, but the first big one was Printing Services. Then of course Food Services went out in '99ish. That was purely a Board of Governors project. The staff at Food Services were given the thought that if they could turn a profit then they would leave the Food Services in. That year they contributed \$1 million to the University's bottom line. So they raised \$1 million for the University and the University still contracted out Food Services. It was really funny because I remember in about 2012 or 2011 we had this discussion with the VP Finance, and the University was \$12 million in the hole. I just reminded her that if you would've kept Food Services in you would've been even, maybe in the black. Who knows? It could've leveraged their ability to generate a profit.

Q: What about Cleaning Services?

JC: That whole situation started around 2000 or 2002. They wanted to actually at that time send out or contract out all of Cleaning Services. I think for about a month or two they may have done that, and then they had to pull back hugely because the clinical spaces, the labs, were in such a disarray they were nonhygienic and not suitable for the activities that need to go

on in those places. So they ended up retracting it and limiting it to classrooms and admin spaces and the libraries, because the cleaning contractor could not maintain the spaces.

Q: Who was the cleaning contractor?

JC: I think it was Bee Clean. It's always been Bee Clean. It's been expanded to the point where now they have taken over. All the cleaning is out now; that went out in the summer of 2021. Technically, October 8th of 2021.

Q: Did you say it started in the '90s?

JC: No, I think it's 2000 or 2002. Maybe the conversation started in 2000. We actually looked at, NASA actually formed a company, Varsity Enterprises, where we looked at whether or not we could; so that would allow us to bid on the contract. Then after that, when that failed, we actually ran a bit of a campaign to try to organize the staff of Bee Clean.

Q: Tell me about that.

JC: I don't actually have a super good handle on that, Donna. The person to talk to is Barbara Surdykowski about that, because she was the Business Manager at the time. I think Barb is the one that brought, I think his name was Mark Whittan, on board to organize. Until then, NASA had never actively organized, never organized its own members let alone gone out to organize new employees of any organization.

Q: How did that impact the members of NASA?

JC: I don't believe there was equivalent pay. I don't think there was equal working conditions. I don't believe that Bee Clean – because they didn't have to, they didn't have a collective agreement, they were a private entity – treated those people in terms of remuneration anywhere close to how our members were being treated. The most terrible part I think, and I think this is about the University too, that University has lost touch with its place in Alberta and

in Edmonton society. It's a public institution but the public good it can do is beyond the education it provides to students and the research it does. It's a public institution; it has public monies. What it did at one point is hire a lot of marginalized workers, whether they were people with disabilities or what we now call new Canadians, immigrants. After the issues in the former Yugoslavia, there were a ton of people hired for whom English was not their first, second, third or fourth language, who came here and were able to find decent employment for them to get on their feet and raise their families. Same with marginalized workers, people with disabilities, whether it was hearing loss, maybe intellectually challenged. We had a number of people that had physical limitations. But they were able to find work, whether it was in grounds or building services or whatever where they could work and look after themselves and have a life that wasn't so different from others. If you look at it over the years, those positions... And parking services is another area. You didn't need a lot of higher education or even a lot of education in order to do that work. Those positions are all gone from the University. Grounds has stayed, but even that has changed so much.

Q: What do you mean by gone?

JC: Those positions are not necessarily outsourced... Well, Building Services was outsourced, contracted out. But Parking Services they moved too, like they don't have the booths anymore. To be a booth attendant you needed to be able to make change, you needed to be personable, you needed to manage a little bit of potentially distraught people, that kind of thing. But you didn't need to have a lot of skills. So if you were a little bit intellectually challenged, you could learn that work. You could have a normal paycheck and a normal shift, a life not very different from many others. We saw that as part of our community. We saw the diversity amongst the staff of people that were differently abled, and they were just members of staff; it was not a big deal. That has all gone, from what I can see. It's kind of a funny thing. As we learn more about the duty to accommodate and the University develops their processes for accommodation, that employment of differently abled people from the get-go, where is it? That's gone. The positions that would allow for less skilled workers to have employment at the University is gone.

Q: Tell me more about the Building Services outsourcing. It impacted NASA to a large extent, right?

JC: It was mostly NASA, if not completely NASA, yes.

Q: The workers were replaced by Bee Clean workers?

JC: Bee Clean workers, yeah.

Q: Was there a campaign to get them in a union equivalent to NASA?

JC: I think there was on the first outsourcing, the partial outsourcing, what became the partial outsourcing event. But there just was not an ability to do that with this last one. We just didn't have the resources, because we were in the middle of bargaining.

Q: NASA was doing the unionizing?

JC: The organizing of the cleaning contractor employees was at the initial outsourcing a NASA-led initiative. As I said, I just have a vague recollection, and Barbara would be the better person to talk to about that. But we just couldn't take that on at this time to do that.

Q: Did the workers want to come into NASA?

JC: No.

Q: So it was to set up a parallel union for them?

JC: I think we had conversations, because I thought there had been somebody from outside of Alberta that had tried to organize them subsequent to our organizing attempts. It just failed. Bee Clean would quickly shift people around out of dislocation or whatever the various tactics that employers take to prevent unionization. The last thing we wanted to do, because part of

the outsourcing was that if any university employees wanted to seek employment with Bee Clean, that was an offer that Bee Clean would consider. Well I'm so grateful, you'll consider me for probably a minimum wage rate employment and no benefits and no sick days and no pension.

Q: Those were the working conditions?

JC: Yeah, as far as I know. I don't know that for a fact, I'm surmising.

Q: So administratively Bee Clean now has most of the cleaning?

JC: The entire campus.

Q: The entire campus, wherever U of A is?

JC: Yea. What happened is all the frontline staff were let go. Some of the lead hands and what were the area supervisors were maintained as liaison people with the Bee Clean contractor and also to do some quality assurance work.

Q: Is that still the case?

JC: That's still the case to this day. Probably a dozen have been retained, and 80 or 90 people lost employment.

Q: You mentioned Mark Whitton. He was involved in this drive?

JC: Yeah, I think he was brought on by NASA to do some organizing back in the early 2000s.

Q: Did you ever meet him?

JC: Yes, once maybe. I'm not sure.

Q: He was an independent organizer?

JC: Yes, that NASA hired.

Q: Is he attached to any union?

JC: He might've been, but I'm not sure about that.

Q: How have the economic measures imposed in the last years impacted NASA?

JC: Oh huge. We lost about I think by headcount probably about 1,000 members in the last 2-1/2 years with the government's direct attack against the University of Alberta by allotting it an unequal share of budget reductions from the operating grant. I'm not 100 percent sure why they are so focused on bringing the University of Alberta down to or in line with the University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge in terms of expenditures and space per capita and all of that kind of stuff. But that's the pressure. Even the footprint, apparently, of the campus, is too big; so let's sell Michener Park to a developer. I've heard rumours of them selling University Terrace. They've shut down the Humanities building. Are they going to sell it? I don't know.

Q: So they've shut the Leadership College and all of that?

JC: Well the Leadership College got shuttered a year and a half or two years ago. They invested all that money in it, and it never did produce. They never did get the interest from people, from the business community, to use that facility to develop their people. It makes you wonder how they make decisions. Supposedly these people are trained in business. Anybody can go out there and check to see what the demand would be before you went and spent I don't know how many zillions on a building that's kitted out really nicely. Except in that building of four or five floors there's one non-binary washroom in it. Not even one per floor – one in the whole building. In this day and age, how do you do that? How short-sighted are you? But that's the

University of Alberta these days. They talk EDI and that would've been such an easy thing to do, make all of the washrooms non-binary.

Q: Are these buildings occupied?

JC: Well they are now, there's residences in them. So there's students in there. But I don't know about the rest of the facility.

Q: What's driving this agenda to shrink the University of Alberta?

JC: That's around somehow meeting the government's expectations that we will only have x number. There's a huge research program here. Apparently, from my understanding from senior administration, it's not around the research space, it's around the amount of space given up for administration. I said, what, they want all the staff to be in cubicle farms? Maybe that works for government services. It doesn't work if you have to do student advising. People want a little bit of privacy. The comparison to Calgary and Lethbridge is there all the time. I don't think Lethbridge is a good comparator. Lethbridge is much smaller; the program isn't so diverse. It certainly doesn't have, neither of them has the same student population and diversity of activity. Calgary is much younger; it's built in a different time.

Q: So previously the plan was that we would be a cutting edge institution, and now it's the reverse?

JC: Yeah, we're being cut. I have to laugh when you use the term cutting edge institution. I have to tell you, I've always had this bone to pick with the University. Cutting edge institution, you want to be innovative in research, you want to be on the front line of discovery, front line of innovation. How about being a front line of how you treat your people and how human resources is managed here? How about that? They just look at me like I'm talking some foreign language they don't understand.

Q: Tell me more about your transition from union activist to staff. Are you still a NASA member?

JC: Absolutely. In fact, when I first became a staff member it was, so here again these impactful women that have been in my life. When I became president, which I only became president by happenstance.

Q: When did you become president?

JC: In 2002. I had no thought of running for president. I was the chair of the bargaining advisory committee at the time. What happened is that our Reps Council had gotten kind of off the track and they had convinced the then secretary of NASA that she should issue a bargaining update to the members. Well it hadn't gone through the Advisory Committee. At the time, I was the one that was writing all the updates. We had made, based on our discussions with the bargaining team, a decision not to issue any update at that time, because the team felt it would be not beneficial. It was kind of a tricky time of the negotiations and it was better just to be silent. Anyway, she acquiesced to that pressure. I had gone to then President Art Clark and explained. I just said to him, I don't know what to do about this. It's a problem, especially if she's going to become president. She was being groomed to become the president. Poor Art, I think he was beside himself that he had misjudged her so badly. He said, well no, we've got to deal with this and I want you to think about running. That's how I became president, Donna.

Q: You were elected?

JC: I was elected. I ran against her. I was duly elected. I had obviously a lot of support from people that had influence. I had been Chair of the Bargaining Advisory Committee for quite a while. I had been involved with the Trust negotiations in the mid '90s and worked with Barb at the time, Barb and Effie. It was so hard to get a Trust employee to work with us, because they needed to have release time. Because we worked beside the Trust employees and we were technicians, which was the large majority of Trust employees at that time, we felt like at least we could give them kind of a second-hand voice. So we did do that work, so working with Barb, and then as President I worked with Barb as well. She's the one that said, Joy, what about

thinking about doing LRO work? Because otherwise I would never have thought of it, Donna. It wasn't in my mind to become a staff member.

Q: What does a labour relations officer do?

JC: Labour relations officer, I think, has one of the best jobs in the world to work with the members, to help them deal with issues that are going on in employment, and try to find a way to resolve them. That resolution takes very many forms. Sometimes it's about giving them a way out, sometimes it's about correcting what's going on in the workplace and finding a path for them to continue with employment at the University. But yeah, it really is a lot of providing information and just kind of guidance to members. The collective agreement has some principles in it that include trying to resolve issues at the lowest possible level. So try to help members find a way to deal with things on their own, because when we get involved right away it kind of makes the issue much bigger. We get involved; then HR has to get involved. All of a sudden, instead of a conversation between two people it's a committee having a discussion about somebody's issue, which isn't always a good thing. It's kind of nice if we can get members comfortable to have that conversation with a supervisor, manager, or coworker about whatever is going on for them. Then we do member education more formally, and participate in events as required by the employer. Those kinds of things. File grievances if we have to. NASA is not well known for filing grievances until the last couple of years. How many years was I LRO? From 2007 until a year and a half or two years ago now; so until 2020. I think I filed two or three grievances. Probably during those years if we had one or two grievances, three grievances was a big year for us, because we were very successful at resolving things through informal resolution processes. Lots of conversations. Lots of, what's the right thing to do here? Sometimes the collective agreement gives you an answer; sometimes it just kind of gives you some guidance about what should work or needs to be done. We had also, luckily, representatives of the employer who were willing to engage with us in that way. That is not really the case right now at University of Alberta. There's been such a wholesale changeover of administrators and their approach to human resource matters, that I don't think...

Q: Is it more confrontational?

JC: It is a more traditional approach to HR where a union is involved. We have some still little pockets of individuals that are willing to have those conversations and engage the same way. It's still a very unknown environment for us right now. But I know we filed four policy grievances this year, we have filed a number of individual grievances, and we're set to file another couple of individual grievances.

Q: Do you find it's quite different now?

JC: It's quite different.

Q: As compared to the Klein years?

JC: No, not the Klein years. I think NASA was grievance averse in those years. There were grievances filed but there weren't a ton of them. There was a lot of conversation. Some people will say we acquiesced to the employer quite a bit. I don't know that that's true. I was not in the thick of things to understand that. There was probably not a steady state in terms of the filing of grievances until recently. I think NASA had a different view of what it was supposed to do for its members back in the '80s and '90s. We had a business manager in George Walker who was kind of more, well let me put it this way. George was in the middle of doing his MBA, and I'm not sure that that's appropriate for a union person. But I don't know that, because I've met other very strong union people that have their MBAs.

Q: So it might've been a personal thing?

JC: It may have been a personal thing, because when he left here he went to work for the Edmonton Public School Board. George was also a very quiet person. His father was a professor at the university. I think his approach, I don't think he liked confrontation.

Q: So it's no longer wall to wall unionized for NASA.

JC: Right. Then we have other unions now that have been formed by the Post-Secondary Learning Act. AASUA is recognized as a bargaining agent. The PDFA, Post Doctoral Fellows Association, is recognized as a bargaining agent. The GSA is recognized as a bargaining agent. So we have other unions on campus which, luckily, understand their role as unions to be representing their members and advocating for their members.

Q: Is NASA still an independent union?

JC: Yes. We're not affiliated with anybody. We are part of the Alberta Federation of Labour but we are not affiliated with another union.

Q: Has your level of union engagement gone up?

JC: Yes for sure.

Q: Has it impacted you positively?

JC: The union? Absolutely. I think we have had more opportunities to network with others and we've been able to be earlier involved where others are leading activities; we've been able to participate in those. So that's been good.

Q: So you're more part of the labour community?

JC: The labour community in Alberta, for sure. We have a board that is highly interested in maintaining that level of activity and connectivity with the Labour Movement. So that's been a huge change. When I started, Donna, there were people here who couldn't even say the word union. We have to thank Barbara Surdykowski for making that commonplace. Any time the employer said association, she would say union. When stewards first went into the collective agreement, they were workplace representatives. Oh my god forbid that we would use the word steward, because that's such a union term. But within the next round of bargaining, it was steward.

Q: Was the employer trying to send a message?

JC: I just think in this setting the employer saw themselves outside of that. Maybe they thought union was too common; I don't know. But you know what I mean? It was declass  and this is an institution of higher learning; we're above those things. Back then the NASA members were not really interested in being a strong union, because I think they equated union with militancy: on the picket line, protesting, rallies. Association was more professional, because they were all professionals, and professionals don't rabble rouse and strike and picket and all those kinds of things. They were civil servants but working at this lauded facility, lauded institution. So they were above the sort of activities of the common worker.

Q: How do they see themselves now?

JC: I think our workers see themselves as workers. They see themselves as workers with rights and a voice, and they will use it if need be. We've come a long way. Funnily enough, this gang of rabblers that started out in council back in the '80s and '90s was pushing for that. For a short time we were all on the board, I think for one term of two years. We did move the union a little bit, and then it kind of swung back with the next round of board members. Then with Barb coming on board to be business manager, and I think because Barb had been, well she was a nurse, so right away she had strong UNA ties and then as staff she was still part of the United Steelworkers. So she had a very strong network into the labour community, and NASA benefitted from that. She brought lots of resources in terms of networking and conversations to NASA. She brought it to me for sure. I've had really incredible experiences under her mentorship. She helped grow NASA, then the people that came forward after that. Maybe not so much with Art Clark as President, because Art was still the gentleman president and still that kind of very diplomatic approach to advocacy for the members. A very strong advocate for the members, there's no doubt about that. He would take every opportunity, but he had a very gentle approach. Barb less so. So they were a good counterbalance to each other. Then I come behind him, and I'm quite a bit more na ve and maybe say things, because I just say them. I always had the excuse that I was an alumnus, so this is my school; this is my institution. I'm

really proud of what you guys do. I told them, I've had times when I wanted to take my degree out to the quad and burn it; so quit that. Think about it, and the fact that how many of the staff here, the NASA members, are alumni. There's a huge percentage. You want us to work for an institution that educated us, and you want us to contribute in a way that is adding value. You really want us to go above and beyond, technically, because of the way you've structured the darn place so it's understaffed and you're demanding more from people. But you need to think about how you're going to keep them of the mindset where they want to keep contributing to their alma mater, and not destroy that connection by angering them to the point where they want to go and burn their degrees in the quad. As I said Donna, this is around the evolution of NASA. When Rod came on board he took it to the next level, bringing stewards on to get to one level. Rod, because of his very activism and people engagement focus and his activity around that, brought NASA to another level of those activities, and just set us on this path that we're at now. But it started really from those early pushes by that little core of council back in the '80s. It took a long time to reap certain rewards; it really did. It took us 25 years to get the no discrimination harassment language into the collective agreement. It's crazy how long some things take around here.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add before I ask Don what he'd like to ask?

JC: I just think that we're kind of like the little engine that could. We don't crow a lot about ourselves, Donna, not often. But this little union sitting over here by itself kind of quietly in the weeds at times, but now a little bit more to the forefront because of our engagement with the Fed and the PDLC, I think that we have proven we can hold our own.

Q: Do you find that more NASA members are more activist to take a greater role in NASA?

JC: Absolutely. We have a slightly bigger board than we did back in the day, because we've grown it by two. We have a steward body that's not at full capacity but it's currently at pretty much the largest size it's been since its inception.

Q: How many?

JC: About 35. We have a president that's actively actively actively reaching out to members all the time. She makes it a priority; she meets with people. Of course we have an organizer too, and that doesn't hurt; so we have somebody focused on that. We have what's called a membership action team. There's about 30 members there that are ready and willing and wanting to be engaged in doing things and reaching out to members in their areas. So there's a lot of activity going on. There are seven standing committees of the board that are also working for the betterment of the union and for the members. So lots of work going on, lots of work going on.

Q: Will you be staying on in Jasper Place as you will be staying on at NASA?

JC: Yeah, this is home. As somebody said, I kind of grew up at NASA. Sorry, I remember this comment I was going to make. When I made the transition, sorry, when I took the employment at NASA, it was a little bit difficult of a transition. But I saw it as a way of advocating for the members, to continue advocating for the members. As president, I advocated on one level; as labour relations officer, more one on one. But still advocating for the members, still trying to help members and make sure that their needs were met.

Q: How long have you been with NASA?

JC: Since 2007, so 15 years. This July 23rd will be 15 years at NASA.

Q: A member of NASA?

JC: No, as NASA staff. I started as a NASA member in '82, so this year is my 40th anniversary with NASA, probably somewhere in December.

Q: And you've been NASA staff since when?

JC: 2007, and Director of Operations formally is a year today or tomorrow that I was appointed as Director of Operations. I acted for almost a year before that, about nine months.

Q: What are the most significant battles that you've been a part of?

JC: I think the recognition that, like working on that first ever Trust Agreement in '97 was huge, getting a collective agreement for the Trust employees. There's one situation I worked with around accommodation, and really the fight that I pressed for I think to recognize that once the employer has information they have the information and they have a duty to accommodate. It doesn't matter how many jobs the person moves to, that duty to accommodate goes with the person. That's the law, but the University didn't want to acknowledge that. I've pressed for variations or variances to the application or administration of the LTD plan and tried to recognize progressive illness prior to somebody being off work for two years. I've done some work with the benefits committee. It's not just me, but trying to find ways to sustain that benefit plan and not cost the members and still maintain the scope of it. We are one of the few employee groups that don't copay benefits in this whole province. I don't believe we're the only contract – I think there's one either firefighter or municipal contract that still has 100 percent employer paid premiums. In this day and age, that's pretty big. But again, we don't say that too loud, because there are board members that would lose their mind. You can't push that in people's faces. So that's part of the challenge. You have successes but you have to be careful how you share them or talk about them, because you don't want a backlash because somebody gets offended that you had a success. So that's the unfortunate thing about this business: we share the successes amongst each other but not publicly. Unfortunately, even our members don't get to know about them, unfortunately.

Q: Three things I want to follow up on. What was the breadth of the membership in the early days, with cleaners, lab techs, etc.?

JC: It's even broader than that, Don. The bargaining unit, except for the cleaners, had people of such diverse skills. We have a glassblower; they're not a dime a dozen. We have microscopists, a number of them that are working with really complicated machinery that's high magnification,

electron microscopy, whether they're doing it with students or in research. We have people that are doing, in terms of technical staff... The technicians are not technicians are not technicians; they're across every discipline; they're so highly skilled in their area of research or the equipment that they use. We have people that are working in cell biology and the anatomy of cells, and then we have people that are working with rocks and the anatomy of a rock, and geological material and asteroids. We have people that create machinery and gizmos and whatever for researchers, that are particular to their area of research. They're not only using their carpentry or millwright skills or whatever, they're also having to understand what is the data you're trying to gather and how does what I'm creating for you help you gather that. There's one of the staff in physics who, the experiments he runs for the researcher are run out of that underground bunker in Switzerland, because they have a zero gravity facility there so they can look at particles. He designs the equipment that captures the information about how the atoms are moving in that facility based on whatever the experimental conditions are. I think he's actually an electronics tech, but he designs cameras or some kind of monitoring equipment. Then we have pharmacists and nurses and social workers as well as all different kinds of administrative staff and student advising. And holding the hands of academics as they assume their leadership positions as deans and chairs, to guide them through the role, because it's not very well defined always, and how they access things. We have people that help with purchasing and we have people that help with getting rid of all the garbage. I'm not talking about BSWs, but our people in environmental health and safety dealing with radiation waste and biological waste and all of those kinds of things. We used to have people that fed us, too. Not so much anymore. It's all outsourced, except at Augustana, where we still have people that feed us; they make lovely food. We have people that help students access materials in the library, whether it's physical materials or electronic. People that archive stuff, people that help with collections to document them and research them and add them to the database properly. So the work of NASA members is far reaching, as far reaching as all the activities of the professors on this campus and in some ways even further, because they are having to bring skills in multiple kinds of disciplines to play in order to support work. I have had colleagues, because I was in Biological Sciences for 25 years. So some of my technical colleagues there wrote chapters of books for the professors that they worked with on the various studies that were being done in the lab. I have had colleagues that wrote grants for equipment, for those million-dollar

microscopes. I've had colleagues that designed research facilities or parts of them in order to make sure, this was aquatics research, that it would actually serve the needs of the researchers. We even had members that installed the Italian marble stones that were brought over in the walkways, and designed and maintained the perennial gardens that used to be on this campus that are gone now, sadly. They were gardeners, not landscape maintenance people. That whole thing about the University bringing itself down to some common denominator, that's the impact of it. The University of Alberta used to have an incredible perennial collection; perennials of Alberta were all here. We have specimen trees now, we have the trees of Alberta, but not the flowering plants, sadly.

Q: What about the water features?

JC: The water features are there because they've replaced them and become common, Donna; they're common plants. They're not the collection of the perennials, because that takes maintenance. You have to know what you're doing; you have to know when it's time to cultivate them. We have members that are responsible for all the horticultural collections that are in greenhouses, and the maintenance of those. We have members that are assisting with marketing, assisting with social media campaigns, developing social media campaigns for the University, promoting safety awareness. Dr. Francescutti used to be the director of that unit, the guy that said we've got to have a helmet law for bicycle helmets in this province, we're doing such damage to children. It's our members that are involved with creating, maybe not creating the commercial, but the concept for the commercial. Our members are working at so many different levels. A NASA employee is not a NASA employee is not a NASA employee.

Q: There seems to be a progression of devaluing or deskilling by the University that doesn't acknowledge what you've just talked about.

JC: Right. The University has never recognized the breadth of the NASA membership. We have members with PhDs who could be faculty. In fact, a number of my colleagues became what is called faculty service officers because they have PhDs; so they were allowed to teach. But they don't have the same commitment from the University in terms of a faculty member. Again,

people that are highly talented and highly knowledgeable that know so much about the subject matter and are experts in their own right. I can't tell you how many NASA members managed research programs because their professor was off in the world connecting with other researchers, making pitches for money, for grants or research funds or whatever, creating network opportunities for his students, grad students, and graduating students. But back at the lab, it was a NASA member guiding the research program. There's so much of all of that that is not recognized in terms of value of the members.

Q: One thing that I wanted to add to what we said earlier, we now have several collective agreements – Trust Employees...

JC: No, kind of less so. It's all one agreement and there's a common section and then there's two pieces that are particular to people who are paid from operating grants and people paid from non-operating grants. We have every bargaining round moved more and more into common, to the point, Donna, where it's a conscious effort. Truly, but for the source of funds, how do you distinguish one from the other? It's not like I wear a badge that says I'm a Trust employee or I'm an operating employee. We all wear the same lab coat, as techs.

Q: That must've added to the complexity of bargaining for NASA over the years.

JC: Yeah, it was very bad when they were more distinct. But over the years we've just said, listen, there's so much more that's common and it makes it so much easier to administer. AASUA has gone the other way. They have defined very clearly APOs and FSOs and librarians and trust research academics. I think that that's more divisive. They're very happy about Bill 17 and the fact that the deigning of AASUA as the sole bargaining agent for the academics of this institution is extended, doesn't expire June 30th. Because it means their members can't choose to leave, they can't go their own way. There's no freedom of association in this province, apparently, at least for academic institutions, or sorry, the staff, the people that work at academic institutions, postsecondary. I think it's horrible, truly. I think in some ways it's good because they're protected because they have a recognized bargaining agent, but it's not really... Sorry, I guess I should fill in. NASA has a service contract with a wide representation of

bargaining services for the postdoctoral fellows at the University of Alberta. In fact, on Friday we just got them their first ever collective agreement. We're a couple of years behind Calgary, I will in admit. They're called PDAC in Calgary, the post doctoral association. They got their agreement a couple of years ago. But we got a few gains on them.

Q: The second area I wanted to touch on is some of the issues that repeatedly come up. Some of the employees work outside of the teaching hours, such as cleaners working at night. There must be some inherent danger in that.

JC: You know what, Don, I'm dealing with a file so related in some ways to this. Everybody knows and has heard of that incident that happened at Hub Mall, where those security guards were killed. Do you know what hit the radio for our Campus Security at the time it was called; now it's called UAPS, University of Alberta Protective Services. Man down. No, sorry, I was told the words were, man in a uniform shot. Our campus security officers wear uniforms; that's what's on the radio. That was at night or late evening. All our UAPS that are on campus on shift, all of our building service workers at that time, were on radio. They didn't even know it was Hub Mall. They didn't even know what was going on. At least the UAPS was kept apprised, but our building service workers were never told during that night where it was and that it was contained. At that time, they had reduced the number of staff working so much that you were lucky if you had two people in a building. When I first started working at the University of Alberta in '82 our BSWs only worked part time. They used to come on at 7 and leave at 11. There were two women to a floor where I worked. They would basically come in and say, what are you still doing here; go home. They'd clean the lab, make sure the coffee pot was unplugged, and then shoo us out the door and lock the door behind them and shut the lights off. So they actually cleared the buildings as they worked. By 11 o'clock at night Campus Security knew the buildings were secure. They had roving patrols at night anyway at that time, but still they basically checked the doors and didn't enter the buildings, because they knew the buildings were empty. Those BSWs, that's what they did at night.

Q: The buildings are far apart, if you consider it's nighttime.

JC: Yeah, but when you're working two to a floor, Donna, it wasn't so bad. At least you're within shouting distance of someone. You think of Atmospheric Sciences, it's not a huge building, only five or six floors.

Q: Or 12 floors or...

JC: Yeah. I don't know how many people were in that building at the end before they contracted out. Interestingly, Bee Clean puts a lot more staff on shift, because they pay them less and they can afford to. Their cost per person or per square footage is less because they're not compensated the same way. Now they're also doing a different job. The job has changed over time from cleaning the lab, emptying the garbage, sweeping and mopping the floor every day, cleaning the sinks out every day, emptying our ashtrays back in the day when we used to be able to smoke in the lab, a lab that had ether in it, but whatever.

Q: Are the Bee Clean employees unionized?

JC: No, they're not unionized. That's part of it. So they've gone to that now where I think if you're in an administrative office they empty your garbage once a week. If you really want your garbage emptied, there's a big bin by the elevator in the foyer where you can go and dump it yourself. I don't know if they actually sweep the floors or offices anymore; maybe it's once a month. So what a difference. The hygiene levels have just deteriorated, just deteriorated. Even the stairwells, things like that, where it needs to be clean. I guess they were really lucky they never had a slip and fall in a stairwell because of sand or dirt or whatever.

Q: The other thing I wanted to follow up on is in a number of these contexts you're dealing with hazardous materials. Can you talk about some of these health and safety concerns?

JC: Look at the diversity of the University. We have labs that have, like the lab that I worked in had chemicals, corrosives, flammables, radiation. All of those things were in use in that lab. If you didn't know that this marking meant stay out of here and don't care how dirty the floor is, that's not an area you have to clean, and if you see this symbol it's stuff you don't touch; you're

at risk for getting hurt on the job. One of these ladies who used to shoo me out the door ended up working over here at the Zeidler Centre, and those are clinical spaces. When she wasn't there and one of her colleagues stepped in, because the level of hygiene of the clinical rooms, patient examining rooms, and that kind of stuff, has got to be to a certain standard. The University, frankly, was good at educating their staff about the standards, about the hazards. The WHMIS training was done to that. They fell in with the regulations in terms of making sure people were educated and oriented, even if English was not their first language. They made sure. I don't know that Bee Clean does the same thing. I haven't really talked to anybody that works for Bee Clean in terms of the level of education they get or not. But Facilities and Operations, I think because of their approach working with tradespeople and that kind of environment, there's a different kind of commitment to health and safety. It's part of their trades orientation. It's that whole thing about go to work but go home at the end of the day in one piece--go home with your health. I don't know that I ever heard that focus. My safety education, yes I learned WHMIS, yes I learned chemical safety, yes I learned biosafety, yes I learned radiation safety as I did that work. But it wasn't around leaving to go home at the end of the day healthy and unexposed to any of those things. It was just learn this safety stuff because you have to learn it. Oh my god, the professors. When that field research training came on board, that you had to attend this field research training before you let people loose out in the back and beyond of Alberta or B.C. or wherever, they lost their minds. What, you mean I have to send people for training for a week? Yeah, because you'd sure like them to come home, wouldn't you? You'd like them to bring their research back with them, at least your research data. But it's a liability. If somebody gets hurt in the field, they have to know how to manage it. Some of them are in pretty remote locations. One of my colleagues was digging fossils on a bank of the Red Deer River with a faculty member. One side of the Red Deer River is okay, the other side is full of rattlers. The Red Deer River is the dividing line between rattler zone and rattler-free in Alberta. I thought, oh you're pretty brave living out there in tents on the ground. But he did it for years and years. He loved it, he loved that fossil hunting. It was pretty amazing. That's the breadth of the work here and the dedication of the staff members. Dr. Wilson had, I think she was still getting paid as a casual employee, she worked a couple of mornings a week to come in and clean fossils. She was 90 years old. But it was her way of contributing. Dr. Axel was over 80 and still coming in to the University two or three mornings a week for the longest time.

He was a population biologist and then in his retirement he started writing mathematical theory papers, still producing, and in different languages. He's from Turkey and he spoke 10 or 12 languages. Such interesting people that work at the University, such a diversity of people.

Q: Anything else you'd like to talk about?

JC: I think NASA is a very different kind of animal, a very different kind of union. I think being small and wall to wall we're not as cut up. Even Calgary, I think there's a couple of unions that represent the support staff, and I don't know about Lethbridge. I think because of that, we've always had a real challenge in representing all the interests of our members. Sometimes what's important to one is not at all important to another. But I think it's a challenge we've met relatively successfully. It's been interesting as I look over the years. I think about where I started out coming from a small town in Southern Alberta and going into Science, never thinking about anywhere near close to doing this kind of work and kind of where I ended up. I think about the people that have influenced my life so greatly, largely women I would say: my mom, who always made service an important part of what you had to return to humanity and your community; Effie, who introduced me to the union and to this whole advocacy for the members and fighting for the little guy and reaching out and helping; and then Barbara, who really pushed me into thinking about this line of work. I think about women like Louise Rogers and Grace Stickow that also have such interesting lives. Grace is a heck of a woman and so non-self affirming. She's gone back to AUPE but done lots of work in WCB appeals and things of that nature. Really knowledgeable and such a giving person with her knowledge and skills. So self-effacing.

Q: Has your family been supportive of your union activities?

JC: Oh yeah, largely I would say. There were times the kids kind of were, oh mom, another union thing. But I dragged them. They came and helped at the breakfasts, they came and helped at the Labour Day barbecue. That's just how it is – get involved. It's kind of important to give back to your community.

[END]

