William Virgo: Grad School in his First Grade Classroom

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Campus School and WMU Alum William Virgo

Friday, Jan. 27, 2023 at 2:30 PM

In-Person at Heritage Hall

Cassie: All right, well, if you have any questions, let me know. I’m recording now. So, we’ll just have you start with introducing yourself, and spelling your last name for us.

Bill: OK, my name is William Virgo. Most people call me Bill. The last name is spelled V-I-R-G-O. I have quite a few connections to Western. If you wanna start there.

Cassie: Yes, please.

Bill: I’ve got basically my entire education on this hill. I started in kindergarten.

Cassie: At campus school?

Bill: At the old campus school. And don’t ask me what year that was, probably about 1953 and, I went all the way through high school.

And then, entered Western, and I graduated from University High in 1966 and that was the last graduating class.

Cassie: Right.

Bill: And entered Western that fall and got my degree in advertising in 1970, took me 4 and a half years cuz I couldn’t quite decide what I wanted to do.

And then, took the summer off and I couldn't find a real job. I was working in a sporting goods store, it was the employment market was pretty tough then in 1970. So, I decided I’d enroll in grad school. So I enrolled in grad school and then I ended up getting a job in September and I started my new job and grad school the same week.

Cassie: Wow.

Bill: So, the funny story about grad school was, it was in this building my first class well, actually my first class at Western was in this building because the high school closed, and my first class at Western in the fall of ’66 was upstairs in what used to be the elementary school library. And it was a college writing course, so I felt like I never got out from home.

Cassie: Yeah, great. Came right back to the same building that you just graduated from.

Bill: I did live in town, I was a commuter student, I did not live on campus. And, so, that was my first class, college class was In this building and several others because I ended up being a business major and there was no Hayworth College of Business at the time.
So, a lot of my classes were in North Hall, several were in here. And then, when I went to grad school, my first grad school class, of all things, was in my first grade classroom.

Cassie: Really?

Bill: In the elementary building.

Cassie: Wow.

Bill: It was a management class and we had to talk about ourselves.

So, that night it was an evening class and the professor said tell us a little bit about yourself and I said well, I'm just shaking my head and I said that this room is very familiar to me, but the chairs are a little bigger. And he says what do you mean?

I said this is my first grade classroom. And he says, "Boy, you've come a long way, haven't you?" (Both laugh)

Cassie: You don't hear that very often.

Bill: So, yeah, those are some of the things that I like to tell people, is if basically got my entire education here, and I have a fondness in my heart for Western and my mom went to University High what was called State High at the time, and she also went to Western, she met my dad there. I tried to get my kids to go but they had other ideas, so…

But anyways, lots of stories, lots of memories, and things like that.

Cassie: Western was really ingrained in your family then, if your parents met here. Your mom went here?

Bill: My mom lived on Davis Street, so.

Cassie: Wow, right down there.

Bill: She walked right up the hill every day, or took the trolley, the trolley used to run back in those days.

The trolley was never active as I can recall. My first, I actually was, when I was born, I lived in that house for three years, but I was not old enough to go to school, so, we moved to the south side of Kalamazoo. My dad worked downtown, so he dropped us off at school every day.

And I have an older sister that graduated from university high, and she never went to Western, she went on to business school. And I have a couple of younger siblings that stayed with it for a while until the rumors came into school was gonna close. And, so they departed for Portage public school, so.

Cassie: That was a big transition probably.
Bill: It probably was but, I was the second oldest of six and the next next one was 4 years younger and I probably didn't think to ask him how much he meant adjustment was.

Cassie: You probably didn't have to adjust very much, you stayed in the same place.

Bill: Well, it was interesting because the fall of '66 or fall of '65 was my senior year starting, and Portage Northern High School opened up that same fall. And I had a lot of friends because I lived in the neighborhood of the Portage School District and a lot of friends that were going to Portage.

And I really thought about it, I thought, “Do I open up a new school or do I closed down an old one?” And I decided to close down the old one and I don't regret that decision.

Cassie: Right.

Bill: Yeah.

Cassie: So, and you still live in the area correct?

Bill: Yeah, yeah, never left. I mean I've traveled a lot for business and stuff, but I never lived anywhere but Kalamazoo County.

Cassie: Wow. So, how would you summarize your relationship with Western?

Bill: Well, I'm not sure how to answer that.

Cassie: It's complex, it's a challenging question.

Bill: Well, we still attend some sporting events and things like that. I have given them some money in the past, so they have a good spot in my heart. I think Western has been a tremendous asset to this community. Yeah. And, I was a little taken aback when they tore down all these buildings up here, but I think they did a pretty decent job with Heritage Hall.

And I think they've kept a lot of the essence of it. We had our graduating high school class had our 50th reunion here upstairs.

Cassie: Right.

Bill: And so, that was kinda neat, and a lot of folks came from out of town and I think most people were pretty impressed. There was some people that thought it was a little too antiseptic and sanitized and modernized a little bit too much but the place was falling apart. So I mean…

Cassie: Yeah, there is a difference.

Bill: I'm glad that they kept this as a landmark.

Cassie: Yeah. So, were you at the recent reunion as well that they had this past summer?
Bill: That was not my class. I think it was another, well, I’m not sure. I know… wait yeah, that was an all-school one.

Cassie: That was an all-school one.

Bill: That was an all-school one, yeah. I was out of town, I was on vacation. I was in touch with the people that put it together. And I have our class list and stuff, and so I know there were a handful of people from our class that came, but I wasn’t able to make it, so.

Cassie: So, what are some of your earliest memories of campus school, going all the way back?

Bill: Well, I just remember that we had a… My mom and I had the same kindergarten teacher, which was kinda funny.

Cassie: Really? Do you remember her name?

Bill: Yeah, Beth Stinson and her name is on a hall in North Valley.

Cassie: Yes.

Bill: And there’s a lot of people who I knew in my life or my mom knew whose names are on buildings all over Western campus. I went to school with a kid named Bill Fonts and his dad was Dale Fonts and my wife ended up working for him and his name is on the building/Hall, so.

But elementary school, I remember we had music and art. And my first grade teacher was probably one of my favorite teachers of all time.

Cassie: Who was that?

Bill: Her name was Ruth Walker. And we had Christmas festivals in what was called the rotunda. Yeah, you know quite a bit about it.

Cassie: Mm-hm.

Bill: And when we got a little bit older, we had May festivals down in the gymnasium, and parents came for that kind of thing. And you rehearsed and stuff for that all the time. And we used to go, I think on Good Friday, we walked over to Kanley Chapel, and had a church service.

They just don't do these things. But I’ve been in several teachers' homes, they used to invite kids over. We made field trips in third grade, we went to post-serials in third grade. I think it was a real enriching experience. I like music, and so I ended up joining a church choir when I was a kid, a boys choir.

And so, I always liked to have music and art. I wasn't very good at art, but it was a nice diversion.
Cassie: It sounds like it was a community, too.

Bill: Yeah, it really was. We came back here at night for cub scouts.

Cassie: Wow, really?

Bill: Yeah, met here or else in somebody's home. If we had a pack meeting, which was all the individual troops and what not, we'd have a pack meeting here. But my dad ended up on PTA for one or two semesters, so my parents were quite involved. I had trouble getting away with anything.

Cassie: Yeah, I bet.

Bill: I had a sister that was probably a little better behaved than I was, and she blazed the way for me. So a lot of teachers said, you're nothing like your sister– But I was a boy, so that's how it goes. But, yeah, I can't think of a lot of specific memories, but I do remember all my teachers' names, and I remember probably a little something about each of them.

Cassie: So why was your first grade teacher your favorite?

Bill: I don't know, she just seemed to be probably one of the nicer dispositions. Everyone that taught at the Campus School and University High had to have a master's degree, which I thought was pretty cool because they're training teachers as well. And so that's exactly what it's all about.

But some of them were spinsters, a little older. And God bless them that they stayed around and they love teaching that much, but it's just hard for a young kid to relate to someone like that. She, Mrs Walker I think was a little younger, a little more hip.

But I don't know, it's just the vibe was better, I guess.

Cassie: Do you remember any of the student teachers standing around in class?

Bill: I really don't.

Cassie: Interesting.

Bill: I remember them being around but I don't remember names or anything like that.

Cassie: Right, right.

Bill: But, we always had a student teacher. But they were always there. We also had a teacher come in several days a week and taught French for a half-hour.

And, so I think from first to fifth or sixth grade we have a half-hour French several days a week, it might have been every day, I don't think it was, but it might have seemed like it was.

And then we had someone from the theater department come in and teach creative dramas, and so we used to do improv stuff and whatnot. It was kind of fun.
So, it was a very interesting environment.

**Cassie:** Yeah.

**Bill:** I have a couple of friends that I'm still really close to that I graduated high school with, and the rest of the people I'm friendly with but I just, I'm not in touch with or anything like that, so.

**Cassie:** Right, so then what about high school? Do you have any early memories of coming into high school here in the building?

**Bill:** Well, we had... I was on the football team and we’d practice down below. And they used to make us run the hill, which wasn’t a lot of fun.

And we had what they called two-a-day workouts in August. So the first two weeks, or the last two weeks of August before school started, we had football practice at 9 to 11. And then you got to break for lunch, and then you could go do what you wanted, and then you had to be back on the field I think 2 to 4 or something like that.

But some days it was really hot. But it was good too, when I entered, I mean I knew each time you went through a progression, like in K through 6, there was probably around 30 people on our class. So it was real small, really intimate. Everybody really knew everyone.

7th grade they added about 30 more. And so, and then in 9th grade they added about 30, roughly 30 more, so there was around 90 or so. So what was interesting is when you went to your first football practice you got to meet some of the new kids and we'll get to know some of them a couple weeks before school started.

So that was good, I liked high school a lot. We had a bookstore here on the main floor, I'll come and get a candy bar.

We weren't supposed to go over to Wallwood Union, but we did. We went over there for lunch a lot.

**Cassie:** They have good food over there?

**Bill:** It was burgers, it was a grill. But if you didn't want to cut, anything was better than, although the cafeteria food here wasn't too bad. But I went on, I just, I kind of took a college prep class, so I took four years of math, four years of science and all that kind of stuff cuz I really wanted to make sure that I got into college, and was well prepared for it.

**Cassie:** Right.

**Bill:** I took a couple years of Latin, which I hated.

**Cassie:** Was that the class that was above the old gym over there, was that that class?
**Bill:** No, it wasn’t there, but it was at the end of the hall towards where the gym started, it was upstairs.

**Cassie:** Gotcha, right.

**Bill:** The teacher was a good guy, but I just, he didn’t click with me. The only thing that I think it really helped with was vocabulary. There was a lot of words that have a Latin derivation.

Yeah. We had science classes across the driveway in the old science building, too, and we had a high school-

**Cassie:** That was West Hall, right?

**Bill:** They, I don’t think those names came into vogue. We didn’t call them anything.

**Cassie:** You just knew.

**Bill:** When the school closed in ’66 and I came back that fall, then they all had names on them, East Hall, West Hall, North Hall.

**Cassie:** Really?

**Bill:** The North Hall was the old school’s business library, and then West Hall was just the science building.

**Cassie:** Right.

**Bill:** That’s what everybody called it. And there was also a little health center or something on the other side. We didn’t have anything to do with that.

There was nothing, there was no high school activities in there. But we discovered there’s a tunnel, there’s a utility tunnel that runs from this building over to the science building. And in the wintertime we weren’t supposed to do this either, but we snuck in and walked in the tunnel.

So we didn’t have to put our coats and boots and put that on to go to the science building.

**Cassie:** Did you ever get caught doing that?

**Bill:** Yeah, but they tried to lock it, but they couldn’t lock it cuz I think the janitor wanted access to it or whatever, so they just told us we weren’t supposed to be in there, but we did. But it was a very social group. I mean, like I said, it was small enough. And as rumors came that the school was gonna close, people started dropping off and going into the Kalamazoo Public School System and stuff because they just didn’t know when it was gonna close or what it was gonna do and they just wanted to find their fame and fortune somewhere else. So I think our graduating class was something like 75-77 kids.

So, we lost a few. I don’t know what else to tell you.
Cassie: Do you feel like you got an adequate education here?

Bill: Absolutely. Yeah, I think it was a great preparation, I really do. It was good foundation.

Cassie: What was that like then, going from U High to Western? Did you see any of the same people too? Because I think some teachers at U High were also professors, were they not?

Bill: Some were but I never had any.

Cassie: Okay.

Bill: I'm not sure how many kids from our class went on to Western. I know of a couple two or three, there could have been more that I used to run into and stuff, but I don't think… I can't think of a teacher that… they might have stayed on and moved to another department or something, but I never ran into any of them.

I mean, I'd see them somewhere around the community and stuff once in a while.

Cassie: Right, so how would you summarize your undergrad experience at Western?

Bill: It started out kind of slow. For me, I knew I wanted to be in college, I knew I had to be in college cuz everybody put that in your head that if you wanna make something yourself, you really gotta go to college.

Cassie: Yeah.

Bill: And so I bought into that, but I had a tough time with distractions because I had never had that much freedom and structure. And so, there was some of the required courses that everybody hated, like western civilization and freshman reading. I think, freshman reading you had to read four books the first half of the semester and then take an exam, and then you had to read four more books the second half and take an exam.

I read three books out of four in the first half and I got like a C on the exam. And then the second half, I didn’t read any of the books, and I think it was multiple choice and I think I got a D on the exam. So I passed it, but I hated it.

And then I had some, I don't know, like a lot of young people I had a lot of indecision about what I was gonna do. I couldn't pick a major and I kept floating around on different things. I started out wanting to be a pre-med course and so I started taking math and science and then calculus practically ate me alive, so I didn't do that any longer.

And I took two science classes the first semester, I really made a big mistake. Took two science classes, one math class, one writing class, and you had to have phys ed. So I had 17 hours my first semester. So I learned that lesson pretty quickly. I never picked up that kind of load again.
In my sophomore year, I broke up with this girl that I had been dating, and I was kind of depressed. And I went through a summer where I pushed a lawn mower around gravestones for the City of Kalamazoo. I just thought “Do I really wanna be doing this the rest of my life?”

So I actually went down to the recruiting office and I tried to enlist in the Navy because my dad was a Navy vet. And I wanted to go specifically to Naval Officer Candidate School, NROTC. Western didn’t have a program. And so that’s what I really wanted to do and they told me that they didn’t have any openings or they didn’t want me or whatever. I got a Dear John.

So I said, time to suck it up and go back to school. So, I fell on… that was when the Vietnam War was going on and the draft was very much in evidence and you had to keep an average but I fell into academic probation, so my draft status got moved up to 1A, so I decided “Hey, I’ve gotta… better wise up.”

So I improved my grades and got back off academic probation. Finally just selected business as a major or advertising and the rest is so-called history. I graduated with a good enough grade point to get into grad school and I went and got a master’s in marketing, so.

**Cassie:** Okay, so what did you go into after you got your masters?

**Bill:** Well, I actually went into advertising before I even got into grad school. So I worked for an industrial company in Kalamazoo, the company is now part of a company called Flosser, but it was called Dura Metallic at the time and I was in their advertising department.

And I had visions that I had an advertising degree I’d be working on Colgate toothpaste or something like on Madison Avenue. I had no idea that the industrial world had advertising too, but ended up doing that. I worked for that company for 26 years and that’s all I did the rest of my career.

I worked for two other companies and I did all their marketing, sales, literature brochures, trade shows, web, that kind of stuff. So that’s what I ended up doing in my career. And so.

**Cassie:** So do you feel like the masters was worthwhile for you?

**Bill:** Well, yes and no. I think it's something I wanted to do just to have that credential basically, nobody calls you a professor or a master or whatever when you're in the business world.

**Cassie:** Yeah.

**Bill:** And I got mixed results and mixed reactions on that. I went to our company finance guy and I said, do you have any kind of education assistance, I'm working on my master’s.

They were really old school and they basically said, no, we don't do that because we're afraid if you get your masters you're going to leave us. Well, I didn't leave them, I worked for them for 26 years.
But then I had another boss who was also old school and very chauvinistic, misogynistic, whatever. He said, “Bill, you got your master’s degree, I’ll give you a $10 a week raise.” Or, “Bill, you got married, I’m gonna give you another $10 a week raise.” It was a thinking that some of these old guys had which was very different. But, again, no regrets, just some interesting experiences from that standpoint.

**Cassie:** Yeah, do you remember anything about the buildings during your time on East Campus? On this hill?

**Bill:** Well, I remember a lot about them. I remember… I could walk upstairs and probably tell you what every classroom was at the time. But, I mean, the elementary school had the rotunda and had a stage in front and our class painted a mural and there are people like Alice in Wonderland and Tweedledum and Tweedle-dee and all that kind of stuff, my class painted the front of the stage. I remember the open balcony and I remember the first time I went up there I was scared to death that I was gonna fall over.

And there was a big fireplace on the main floor in the elementary school building. This part of the high school building, the college used it for most of our time here in the last couple of years. It was sort of a resource area or library of some kind.

And we couldn’t go in, it was part of the college. And then they moved out, and I think our senior year it kind of became a lounge area for us and so we were able to come in-

**Cassie:** So it was a hangout area?

**Bill:** Came in and relax, yeah.

**Cassie:** Nice.

**Bill:** I think that might have only been our senior year but-

**Cassie:** Some perks of being the last class, I guess.

**Bill:** Yeah, a lot of change was going on at that time.

**Cassie:** Right.

**Bill:** But yeah, I remember the hallways. My locker was in the basement, it was so dark down there. And that’s where the men’s restroom was, the only men’s restroom was down in the basement.

**Cassie:** Really?

**Bill:** The women’s was up on the second floor.

**Cassie:** Oh, so if you had classes on either one, you’d have to walk all the up or down to…

**Bill:** You got to work it in your schedule. Yeah. Five minutes between classes. But yeah, I remember a lot about it. Those steps, we hung out at the top of the steps in the morning
before class started. And then the first classroom to the right of the steps was the typing room, that’s where I learned.

I’m glad, that was something I was really glad about. They call it keyboarding now but I took typing in high school and that was great, I still can touch type, so.

**Cassie:** Good, it prepared you for a lifetime.

**Bill:** Who knew!

**Cassie:** You probably wouldn’t have known it, yeah.

**Bill:** You would have never known about computers back then or cell phones or anything else. It’s a very different world, but…

**Cassie:** Yeah, so you talked a little bit about the rumors, but when did you find out for sure that the school was closing?

**Bill:** I couldn’t tell you for sure exactly. But I think, probably sophomore year, a couple years before it closed. It was pretty imminent that my parents knew about it or they told us about so.

**Cassie:** Did the school announce it to the students or did most people just find out through the parents?

**Bill:** I don’t know, I don’t remember any formal announcement where someone or somebody came in and said, “This is a bomb we are dropping.” I think everybody kinda knew about it and I don’t know if they heard it on the media or whether it was through some letter that the parents got or something, I honestly don’t know.

**Cassie:** Right, what was it like though being the last graduating class?

**Bill:** I think it was kind of cool, I think it was pretty special. We even joked about it when we went, our graduation ceremony was at the student center at Western, cuz we got to use a lot of Western facilities.

They wouldn’t let us play football at Waldo Stadium, no but it was funny because we played on Kalamazoo Colleges field, it was our field. But the governor, they invited the governor to come and he was too busy but he sent his wife and so Mrs. Milliken, Governor Milliken’s wife at the time, gave the address and that was kind of special to have the governor’s wife there.

And my friend, one of my best friends still from high school, his name was Bill Yankee and we went alphabetically so he was physically the last kid to graduate from U High.

**Cassie:** Wow.

**Bill:** And I was probably fifth or sixth from last. Anyway that was something that, we thought it was kind of neat.
**Cassie:** Yeah!

**Bill:** Some people in the community, you probably heard this, they didn't look too finely upon the school and they called it snob hill.

I never really liked that description cuz I didn't think it was that apt. I think there were a lot of wealthy families that sent their kids here.

Well, I knew a lot of those kids and a lot of those, they’re household names around the Kalamazoo community. And most of them were wonderful, really super nice, not snobby at all.

**Cassie:** Not snobby, yeah.

**Bill:** And a lot of professors kids came here.

**Cassie:** Right, yes, I think I heard they were called, faculty brats or something.

**Bill:** I've never heard them called anything that could well be, but I don't remember that. But they could have been, or else I've forgotten. Which I've never forgotten anything, right? (Both laugh) But, so and then the rest were just people like me, I guess I would be called a legacy kid but I never thought of that at the time.

I just ended up here cuz my parents wanted me to come here, if it was still alive I would have sent my kids here.

**Cassie:** Yeah, right. Were your parents happy with your decision to go to Western too?

**Bill:** I think they were happy because they didn't have a lot of money and I basically financed myself. With six kids they just were probably seeing dollar signs.

I applied to Michigan State, I got accepted at Michigan State, but I just couldn't afford to go there. And so Western was really, it was almost automatic. If you went to U High and you had decent grades, Western wasn't gonna turn you down.

So it wasn't anything special to be accepted by Western, but at least you had a place to land. And I'm not unhappy with that, I was very happy with that decision. It was really the only one I could have made at the time, so.

**Cassie:** Yeah, right. And what was it like having all those things that you weren't allowed to do when you were in high school, that now you're allowed to do as a college student?

**Bill:** Well, as I said, it almost cost me going to Vietnam.

**Cassie:** Right, yeah.

**Bill:** Until I wised up, but I think all the education you get isn't always in the classroom. The world kind of hands you some things here and there too, if you're smart enough to listen for them and what not.
Cassie: You talked about your favorite teacher. Did you have a favorite professor during your undergrad or your grad?

Bill: Yeah, probably Dr. Trader who was in the business school, he was the marketing professor, was one of my favorites, and he was probably one of the last. I think he taught what they called them a Capstone class in grad school last one year here.

And there was a marketing one of some kind, I don’t remember which one. And then my advertising professor was Zayn Canon and he was really great, I always liked him. And years later he found out I was working on advertising in the community and Pfizer had an agricultural division called Asgrow that developed seeds or what not. And they had some kind of a competition for advertising and he invited me to come and judge it with him. And so I thought that was kind of nice. So those are people I remember, a lot of them, some of the classes you never saw your professor because there were TV classes.

Cassie: Really?

Bill: Western civilization you went to this big classroom in Sangren Hall and they had black and white TV monitors hanging from the ceiling and all over the place. And that, I mean, everybody just basically uses that as a time to sleep because really, nobody was monitoring you.

You were just watching a taped lecture and you had a book to follow along with and stuff like that, but I thought that was really impersonal and awful.

Cassie: Yeah. That is strange.

Bill: So I don’t know if they still do that kind of thing or not.

Cassie: I don’t think so, but well with COVID and virtual…

Bill: Yeah, I get that with you guys, it’s kinda live.

Cassie: That’s a bit different than going into a classroom.

Bill: These were taped, they were probably… they probably ran the same tapes every year.

Cassie: They were older too, right? Yeah, right. That’s interesting. And you were on this campus for so long, so you probably knew this campus really well.

I’m wondering are there any places that were your favorite spots on campus or any places that you still remember really vividly?

Bill: Well, I met my wife at the student union, the Bernhard Center. She did not go to Western, she grew up north and then she went to school in Grand Rapids.

And then she got a secretarial job in Sangren Hall working for Dr. Fonts. And my best friend, his wife worked in… he was my best friend at Western and I knew him in high school cuz he
and I had a summer job together… She worked down the hall from my future wife and so they were good buddies and I was looking around for somebody to date.

He says, Linda, his wife, Linda, she hangs out with this girl maybe you’d like to meet her. I said sure, why not? So they arranged a coke date and we met in the student union and my wife tells me, I don’t know if this is true or just lip service, but she says when she met me, she knew I was the guy she was going to marry.

**Cassie:** Aww. Did you say the same to her?

**Bill:** I did not say the same to her. (Both laugh) Like I said, I was indecisive on a lot of things at that time, but we’ve been married 50 years, so.

**Cassie:** She was right.

**Bill:** She was right.

**Cassie:** Yeah.

**Bill:** Yeah, she’s always right. (Both chuckle)

**Cassie:** And so what do you think, you were here for so long, but what do you think impacted you the most during your time on this hill, on this at all or at Western in general?

**Bill:** There’s just so many things, I mean, I would hard to pick out a single moment. I had a couple of friends that lived really close by, with U-High, kids came from all over the city.

**Cassie:** Right.

**Bill:** There was no school district. But I had a couple of friends that live really close by on Short road, which is three blocks from here or whatever.

And I used to come and visit this one guy on the weekend and we’d walk up here and wander around. And the science building at the time was open and they had a silo alongside of it, which was actually a spiral fire escape. And it was attached to where all the labs were and all that stuff, and so he told me, he said, this is really fun, you can go and ride this thing.

They had a door on the third, second, third floor, whatever the highest floor was. And you got in this thing and it went round and round and round you came out at the bottom, It was really cool until somebody caught us that day.

**Cassie:** Oh no.

**Bill:** But so that was kind of fun and special but I mean the physical Buildings and scenery and everything else are kind of ingrained in your mind. I don’t know what impacted me the most, there’s lots of different impacts.

**Cassie:** Right, yeah, and how do you feel about WMU now versus when you were a student here?
**Bill:** Well, I don’t wanna say it’s bigger because it really isn’t. When I was a student here there was 25,000 kids here, so there isn’t that many now, right? I don’t think there is.

**Cassie:** I don’t know. It dropped off during COVID, I think it’s picking back up now.

**Bill:** Yeah, but that was, again, the height of the Vietnam War, and a lot of people wanted to go to college get away.

**Cassie:** To escape the draft, right.

**Bill:** But Western has evolved so much, and it’s such a modern university, and I think it’s all good. Their facilities for sports and stuff are so much better than what they were and they began to talk about venues or buildings or places on campus. First few years at Western they had concerts at Reed Fieldhouse and went to a ton of those.

And tickets were really cheap because I think they were subsidized by the university but you pay a buck and a half to see the Four Seasons and Chuck Berry or something like that.

**Cassie:** Wow, nice.

**Bill:** On the same bill The Love and Spoonful, you name it. I mean, the people that were the hot acts at the time, almost everybody came to see.

And that was something that was fun to do. And then some of the acts came to Miller Auditorium. What was really funny was Grand Funk Railroad. Do you know who they are?

**Cassie:** No.

**Bill:** They’re a heavy metal band. They were three or four piece heavy metal band. They played Miller Auditorium, and the acoustics in there are so perfect that it was just unbelievably loud. And that was the wrong venue for Grand Funk.

**Cassie:** To put the heavy metal band in, yeah. (Both laugh)

**Bill:** So anyway, that was more like a orchestra type of place or a Broadway show type of place.

**Cassie:** So I just have one more question but if you have any memories or any stories you want to share, go ahead. That’s basically … my question is do you have any last memories that you wanted to share, anything that we didn’t touch on that you wanted to talk about?

**Bill:** No, they’ve kinda come up one by one. There is one I thought about that I was gonna do this, I thought about some of these little stories, and I think I’ve related most of them to you, though, as far as the memories. There’s nothing that comes to mind, I’ll probably on the way home I’ll think of something.

**Cassie:** Think of a few, well if you do, feel free to send them over too, and I’ll still include them, yeah.
Bill: Okay.

Cassie: But yeah, well thank you so much for meeting with me and talking to me today then. I'm glad that we could fit it in.

Bill: It's my pleasure.

Cassie: Yeah

Bill: I'm glad we could finally find you and figure out where you were.

Cassie: Yes. Hopefully it wasn't too hard.

Bill: No, it wasn't.