

Grant MacEwan Community College Oral History Project

Interviewee: Mark Lund

Interviewer: Valla McLean

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VM: This is an interview for the Grant MacEwan Community College Oral History project on February 26, 2019, with Mark Lund in Edmonton, Alberta. This is Valla McLean, University Archivist. The first question I'm going to ask you is what you made you decide to come to Grant MacEwan Community College, and do you remember what year that would have been?

ML: [Laughter] Some things you don't forget [laughter]. I had been at the U of A. I had an extended undergraduate career with a couple of breaks. When I finished my Phys. ed. degree, I went straight into grad school. I had a teaching assistantship there and then moved into a sessional position for five or six years. Every year the good dean would say, Mark, I'm hiring you on soft money, and it's getting harder and harder to find; you had better find a real job [laughter]. After about 30 applications, I was hired at Grant MacEwan.

VM: Did you mention what year that was?

ML: 1984.

VM: 1984 you came -

ML: The 1st of August.

VM: And what courses did you teach?

ML: When I came to MacEwan, the Phys. ed. program was a service program. My understanding is when MacEwan had started, it was mostly; it was all one and two-year

certificates or diplomas. The liberal arts education was that every student had an elective each term so four electives in a 2-year diploma. One of the elective offerings was from - I was working for the Academic Services division because we provided - Phys. ed. was all electives. When I started, the science department could have fit in this room with leftover chairs [laughter]. There was five or six of us max. including all of the term employees. Us folk in Science/Phys. ed. we taught all of the anatomy and physiology for the nurses. I didn't do much of that. We had a mathematician who did the math courses and actually Mansoor Waljee was hired about the same time as me. He was both the math and computing guy and was probably the first computing guy - well now my boss Bill Mucklow had done some computer training and was teaching some computer stuff too, and, Gail Shaw was actually a large animal physiologist that had been hired to teach physiology for the equine program (gone before I arrived).

VM: Right.

ML: We had an equine program. By the time I got there, she (Gail) was mostly doing anatomy and physiology for the nurses, and Bill also did some of the anatomy and physiology for the nurses. I was hired to teach this elective Phys. ed. program on each of the - well, really two campuses. When I got to MacEwan in [19]84, we had the Mill Woods Campus, which had a fine gym, and Jasper Place had a more modest gym. I mostly alternated between those two locations. We still had the Cromdale Campus at the time. They had a - it was kind of a small gym I think it was the size of two badminton courts. We never actually taught Phys. ed. over there in my time.

VM: At the Cromdale -

ML: At Cromdale. I inherited two smorgasbord courses. One was called team activities, and one was called individual activities. I quickly, in the first year, shook out the individual activities course to make it kind of an honest health and fitness course. The next year I shook out the team course down to-an intro. to neighborhood kind of coaching course. Before I was actually hired - before I got there, all of the Phys. ed. courses were taught by coaches whose primary job was coaching. The selection committee that hired me was quite a high-powered crew (A Watson, B Mucklow, D Ryks, B. Cowan). When I applied for the position, it was a coaching and teaching position. The crew decided after they interviewed me, they didn't really want me to take on a major team and just teach and step up the academic component of the Phys. ed. courses which we did. The health and fitness course became very popular to the point that the old police and security program virtually made it a requirement. In part because in my time at the U of A, I had got to know the exercise physiologist who became the city police exercise physiologist, and everybody going into either the Edmonton City police or the RCMP had to pass the physical and we could work on that for them. So that was a very popular course for many years.

VM: And did you have a favorite one over the years that you -

ML: Well I created - my time at the U of A - you know I was primarily an outdoor education specialist and actually ran the outdoor centre at the U of A. The last thing I had done at the U of A was bring in Bill March to look at building a climbing wall which my colleagues continued after I left. I would like to say I had a bit of a hand in starting the whole climbing program at the U of A, but I'm primarily a paddler and skier - Nordic

Skier. At MacEwan, not only did I have the health and fitness course, and then this team course, I actually got mixed up with the national coaching certification program so that we could give everybody - in those days the NCCP program had three levels for citizen coaches. Each one had a theory component, so I gave them their level one theory, which they could apply to any of the sport coaching courses that they were interested in. The NCCP program has evolved over the years, but that Team sport course was quite a popular course. Because of my background, I created a wilderness adventure course, which we modified depending on which term it was offered in. We would do some weekend trips, but it was most popular for a series of spring terms. - We had a bunch of programs, well, especially in the business area, where the 2-year diplomas were condensed to sixteen months. In the summer term - the four-month summer term - was when they held their electives, and the students got to choose collectively, you know the whole program had to choose an elective for their program. For about three or four years, I would get the whole cohort. I did at this least twice for micro computer management program. We would build it into the term, and they would get to go on a week-long outdoor adventure, usually a canoe trip. So that was quite a popular course. After I had been at MacEwan for four years, I tried a term as an administrator because academic services provided all these arts and sciences courses to all of the satellites. Our dean went on sabbatical and the guy (Karl Holmann) who was running the off-campus extension stuff for all of these other sites like Blue Quills and Yellowhead Tribal Council and Maskwacis - well Hobbema in those days, he became dean. I got to do his job for a year, but I only did it 80%. I still taught a course each term.

VM: And did you like being an administrator?

ML: No. Then when I got out of that because I had been at the U of A, which was probably one of the reasons they hired me to start with - I was asked to negotiate approval for us to develop a B.P.E. transfer program, we were just starting the whole university transfer programming.

VM: What year was that do you remember?

ML: Well, let's see it would be about [19]80, let's see [19]84 or [19]85-86, [19]86-87, [19]87-88. So about [19]87-88, when I was administrating, I opened up the discussion with the U of A Phys. ed. about doing a transfer Phys. ed. program. I think we had our first class in [19]89-90. Then we started offering all of the first-year Phys.ed. program, including activity courses. This was the first big growth spurt in Phys. ed. We hired two or three people to do that.

VM: Now, you mentioned the campuses that you were at. You mentioned Cromdale had the small gym -

ML: Yes.

VM: And Mill Woods and Jasper.

ML: Yes.

VM: What do you remember about those campuses? Anything that stood out?

ML: Well, you know when I first started, I had an office at both Mill Woods and Jasper Place. I actually spent - well, I guess I spent Tuesdays and Thursdays at Jasper Place, and that campus was very full, in fact, they were renting - the second year we started to rent space across the alley and put in four classrooms over there. Then, of course, the

next years, that would be [19]84, [19]85, [19]86 or so we opened up downtown. Then I was at all three campuses. What we did generally was the courses I taught at Mill Woods were Monday morning and afternoon for three hours, and by that time, I was doing an environmental biology course out there. I did that occasionally. I did a few rounds of it and downtown.

VM: Yes.

ML: So, you remember the gym that let's see I forget exactly what floor. If I can get this in the right order -

VM: This is Seventh Street Plaza?

ML: Yes, Seventh Street Plaza. The library was on the 6th.

VM: I think, yes.

ML: And floor 7 was the cafeteria and the weight room.

VM: [Laughter].

ML: And we had to put in Hydro-Gym equipment because anything else was too noisy being above the library.

VM: [Laughter].

ML: We rented the space down the way at the YWCA. We were able to run the health and fitness course activities down there.

VM: That was a lot of commuting for you from campus to campus.

ML: You know, generally, the schedule was set up, so I was only ever on one campus one day.

VM: Okay.

ML: Until we got the Phys. ed. program, which had to run five days a week. I had classes that had to fit in, so then I was getting paid to travel from campus to campus on a regular basis.

VM: What do you remember about the student body when you first arrived and how that evolved over your career?

ML: From my perspective, electives were supposed to be a good time.

VM: [Laughter].

ML: There was a little bit of a conflict with trying to make them more academic in the early days. Then, of course, the health and fitness course when I had a section that had lots of the police and security students, they were keen. They were good to work with. The spring program I was talking about where the students selected the elective, they were keen. Once we got the Phys. ed. program, we very quickly became the number one choice for Phys. ed. students in the Edmonton area. Anybody who had parents that recognized a smaller college was a better place to start - I taught many of my own classmates' kids at MacEwan, a good many of them. Even later, I was teaching the sons and daughters of students I taught in Phys. ed. well certainly from the time I'd been at the U of A. They were keen, smart, good students generally.

VM: You spoke about some of the faculty that you worked with when you first came. Do you remember any of the administrators that stood out during those years?

ML: I missed John Haar. Just his ghost walked the halls. I used to hear stories about him. President Gerry Kelly, of course, was a physical educator, so he and I got along quite well, in part because one of his classmates, had been my department chair from the U of A. So you know we all did - Gerry was - well even before we had the downtown campus I was taking students to the Kinsmen pool. He was a dedicated swimmer. He swam all the time. And of course, my dean at the start, well I don't even think we called them deans at the start was Alan Watson. He ran the library and then he ran Arts and Science or Academic Services. Bill Mucklow, of course, was my direct supervisor virtually the whole time until the last few years, and that was interesting because his wife had been my dance instructor at Red Deer College.

VM: [Laughter] Did you attend any staff events that stand out? Any memorable, significant moments - more the social side with the college?

ML: I was always reasonably active both in the faculty association - I probably spent twelve to fifteen years on the faculty association executive. - Do you remember Fred Socca (Sawka)? Well, Arts and Science or Academic Services and - can't think of his name the old guy (Peter Brown) who's been there from the beginning who is still there in computing support primarily. What the hell is his name? Anyways he and Fred ran a computer outreach program. His office and mine were about as close as you and I are. The first thing Fred taught me was the most important thing about MacEwan never miss a free lunch.

VM: [Laughter].

ML: I mean, there were lots of things happening over the years. In the early days in our Phys. ed. program, we always had a series of socials through the years. I think they still are. We always did a fall evening games night and then heading out to a local drinking establishment. That was always a little interesting because we'd always have one or two new students who were still only seventeen. In the winter term, we would have a little curling spiel. Then at the end of the term, we would have all the students for a barbecue - sometimes we went out to Mucklow's, often we were right here (at the Lunds). That one kind of fell along the wayside a—awhile ago... mostly due to liability concerns being that the event was on private property.

VM: Did you continue those - because you came to City Centre campus. You worked there for many years as well. Did those social events continue on at City Centre campus or did you -

ML: Most of those ones were tied to the Phys. ed. program. We started at Mill Woods, and then we moved downtown and, yes, those programs - those social activities with the phys. ed. program I still think the fall social and the curling spiel are going although I'm not 100% sure because they haven't invited me.

VM: [Laughter].

ML: You'd have to ask Kato that.

VM: I will ask him that, absolutely.

ML: And of course, you know in the faculty, well Shirley Kniazky - her brother - have to think of his name - Jim. I don't know if you remember, but Jim was a NAIT graduate, and his first job was working for our caterer at the downtown city - at 7th Street Plaza campus. Remember the cinnamon buns on 7th? Those were Jim's. And then Jim struck out on his own and ran a restaurant up on 118th avenue until his partner ran off with all the money. Then he had a truck stop out along the Yellowhead on 170th Street for a number of years.

ML: You must remember Dolf Ryks. He was president of the Faculty Association, and Dolf was on my hiring committee. I had a high-power hiring committee. There was Watson, the Academic Services boss, Mucklow, Bob Cowan, who was Student Services because it was going to be a coaching position when I applied and Dolf Ryks. All hired me, and then Dolf and I - actually my first office at MacEwan, we had an adjacent wall. I had to walk the long way around to get to his office. I got to know Dolf quite well. We actually even played some squash and did some running together over the years, and a bit of paddling.

VM: When you look back at your career at the community college, what are some of your proudest moments?

ML: In my thirty years at MacEwan, I coached for twenty-seven teams in twenty-three years. I didn't get to coach my first year at MacEwan, but by the fall of [19]85, I put together a canoe team. Then the next year, we also added a cross-country ski team. That was all volunteer work for me. Canoe season was only two months long, and the ski season was about, well we'd start after canoeing so it would be another four or five months. Then I gave up on those after a while because my canoeing colleagues - I

mean I started out paddling at Red Deer College in [19]69 and the canoeing had actually been started by a couple of cross running coaches who had too many runners. They said we need another fall sport. Two of them were old paddlers, so they started this canoeing competition. It was really designed to eat up lots of people. To be successful, you had to have twelve. You had to have a minimum of twelve paddlers ideally eighteen because there was a - they were all tandems, so pairs. There was 3 X 2 for a men's relay, a women's relay, and a mixed relay. You could get by with six, but then your best three men and best three ladies had to paddle mixed after they had just finished. The races were about ten-minute loops, depending on where you were. I could never get that many paddlers out. I often showed up with less than a dozen paddlers, so we weren't competitive. They weren't interested in changing. I had way too many practices where me and my dog or my kid were the only ones that showed up. Athletics would never buy good skiing gear so we could be semi-competitive at skiing. That was right at the transition in the late [19]80s, [19]90s when skiing went from just being a classic event to a freestyle event where you could skate, and we never had appropriate gear. Then in [19]94, I wasn't going to coach, and some runners came along and said Mr. Lund, you're the only guy who knows anything about aerobic activity on the trails because I was a cross country ski coach and they asked if I would ~~you~~ coach running. So, I coached running for fourteen years. Probably the best thing we did there - and I just had a small hand in it, my colleague, down at Red Deer College, and another one at NAIT had been coaching running forever. I met the NAIT coach in [19]69 when I was - because in the early days, the cross-country running teams and the canoe teams always traveled together. The competitions were at the same time. I'd actually coached

at NAIT for a couple of years, and I taught at NAIT when I was just a poor student, broke too. Brian at Red Deer and [chair creaking] John Reid at NAIT had been working on trying to get cross-country as a national competition. For years even before I started, they had a dual meet at the end of each season and would send some runners to B.C. usually to Okanagan for a dual meet with the B.C. schools. We actually grew that into a national competition. We hosted the first one in Red Deer in 2006. I don't even remember - my son Hans he worked, he started out in Academic Services division or Arts and Science in those days. Then he worked for a year out of the library. He came and helped with the timing and scoring for our national and provincial championships if I had a hand in the hosting.

And being presented the MacEwan Medallion by the daughter of Grant MacEwan would have to rank very high as a lifetime achievement.

VM: Oh, really.

ML: Downtown.

VM: What year would that have been, do you remember?

ML: Let's see, that would have been Hans - around 2010, 2009, 2010, (more likely 2006 – 2008) yes. There were a lot of unhappy people in IT in those days, and he decided to do something different.

VM: What was going on in IT that was -

ML: One of the reasons he left was that it was a temporary position with minimal benefits. It wasn't full time continuing, and shifts kept changing.

I also negotiated two and a half of the contracts for the Faculty Association, maybe the slowest negotiations we ever had because our HR director in those days was even slower than me.

VM: And what years were you negotiating?

ML: Be about 2006, [200]7 through to about 2010 or maybe a little earlier than that.

VM: What was your interest in becoming involved in the Faculty Association. You spent a lot of time -

ML: I'm a big advocate of collective support. Seems to me that the only way faculty look after themselves is by being organized.

VM: And what positions did you hold on the executive while you were there?

ML: I had a variety. I was certainly secretary, communications, negotiations, and faculty welfare at various times.

VM: Was there one particular role you enjoyed more than others?

ML: Finishing a contract was kind of satisfying. The faculty welfare was a good one and the communications. I helped set up the first website for the Faculty Association.

VM: Just to wrap up, is there anything that I failed to ask you that you'd really wanted to share, but I just haven't given you the opportunity to?

ML: Oh, I don't know. You know thirty years is - and you know really – one of the things that I figured when I was negotiating, especially the first round, I kind of thought we're going to lose our bridge. So, I signed on quickly. It's still there, I think.

VM: Yes, I think so.

ML: I started the bridge in [20]07 and got paid out in [20]09. Then I continued as a sessional to the fall of [20]15. That was, I thought one of the best benefits [phone rings] that we probably had at the end of one's career. It makes for a nice easy transition [phone rings], and you can kind of hang on as long as you want.

VM: So, you appreciated having that bridge?

ML: Yes. The Faculty Association and the other one you know I sat on Academic Council or whatever at the time -

VM: Yes, AGC now.

ML: That whole transition to being a university, I was negotiating in those. I was the first guy to negotiate a reduction of workload. Well, we as a crew. We had a good crew. We got a little release time for some of the work we did on the Faculty Association. That was always appreciated, especially when I was coaching because it was a big load.

VM: Okay. I would just like to thank you very much for your time and sharing your experiences and your stories.

[End of interview]

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