

1 ORAL HISTORY OF: Oscar Feldman  
2 INTERVIEWED BY: James Grey  
3 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Tuesday, June 29, 2004  
4 LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Jewish Federation  
5 SUBJECT MATTER: Jewish life, family history,  
6 community life

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8 MR. GREY: This is Jim Grey, speaking, and I'm  
9 involved with the oral history project of the Jewish  
10 Federation of Metro Detroit. The purpose of the interview  
11 today, is one of many interviews, to accumulate information  
12 for the community's history. And all the information will be  
13 used confidentially by Federation people for whatever purpose  
14 they need. It's not to be sold or marketed and it's really to  
15 accumulate history for our local people. And you agree to the  
16 interview?

17 MR. FELDMAN: Of course.

18 MR. GREY: Tell us a little about yourself, where  
19 you were born and so on.

20 MR. FELDMAN: You asked me to go back to my birth.  
21 I was born and raised in Poughkeepsie, New York, which is  
22 halfway between New York City and Albany, New York, on the  
23 Hudson River. My dad was a Yeshivah. <sup>"boocher"</sup> Came over here, lost  
24 his parents early on, and he didn't have enough money to bring  
25 my mother over. So he preceded her by three years and when he

1 finally saved up enough money to bring her over, she came  
2 over, I think, in about 1909. I was born on August 18th,  
3 1921, which was about 11 years after my mother arrived, which  
4 was almost 10 years to the day that my brother was born. I  
5 only had one sibling.

6 I graduated from high school in Poughkeepsie, and I  
7 applied to the University of Michigan, and that was the  
8 beginnings, really, with the state of Michigan. The reason I  
9 applied, even though I didn't know anybody here, was that I  
10 was interested in music and I was hopeful I could play in the  
11 marching and concert band and the orchestra at Michigan, which  
12 had a great reputation. So I came with my trumpet in hand in  
13 1939. Didn't know a soul.

14 I met Bill Davidson probably in about 1941. Bill  
15 has been a great influence on my course of action I took over  
16 the years, which will become evident as I reveal how our  
17 association developed. We remained friends throughout our  
18 college career. I had acquired my bachelor's degree before I  
19 had to go off to war. Bill had not yet completed his program  
20 for his degree. He went into the V12 program.

21 I was an ROTC student. With the intervention of the  
22 war, I was unable to get my commission until I went through  
23 OCS, which I did do at Fort Benning, Georgia, and finally got  
24 my commission in December of 1943. I was assigned to the  
25 famous 69th Infantry Division. I was an infantry officer.

1           Soon thereafter, I was shipped overseas as an  
2 infantry officer replacement, but I was assigned, strangely  
3 enough, to an engineer company, which was called an engineer-  
4 life pontoon company. When I heard pontoon, I thought, my  
5 god, that means crossing the water. D Day coming off and was  
6 I going to be involved in that. Sure enough, it was in an  
7 outfit involved in water tactics and assault crossings of  
8 rivers. I found out when I reported to the company to which I  
9 was assigned that there was a mistake. They needed an  
10 engineer officer. But to make a long story short, I served  
11 out the entire year with this company and I ultimately learned  
12 enough about engineering that I became the company commander.

13           I was released from the Army just about three days  
14 before Christmas of 1945. They offered me a ranking of major  
15 to stay in. I said I was not a professional soldier. I was  
16 going to go on with furthering my education.

17           I decided to come back to Michigan to pursue a  
18 masters degree in business administration. Fortunately, Bill  
19 came back after the war and we renewed our friendship. He  
20 came back to complete his studies for his bachelor's degree in  
21 business. We took some courses together and became better  
22 friends as a result of that association. I graduated in  
23 January of 1947. Bill got his bachelor's about the same time,  
24 as I recall. He went on to law school at Wayne State in  
25 Detroit. I went on to Columbia Law School.

1           We stayed in touch. I'm telling you about my  
2 association with Bill, because it's going to become apparent  
3 how I wound up in Michigan permanently. In any event, Bill  
4 stayed on and got his law degree in 1949 at Wayne State. I  
5 got my degree at Columbia in 1949. Bill then went into the  
6 practice of law. Probably not too many people realize this.  
7 I stayed on teaching at Columbia Law School, because the Dean  
8 promised me that the position I wanted with the chief  
9 counsel's office of Internal Revenue down in Washington, he  
10 would guarantee it if I stayed on teaching a year. I grabbed  
11 his hand and told him he had a bargain. I joined the chief  
12 counsel's office in Washington about June of 1950.

13           Then one fateful day in 1951, I received a call from  
14 Bill Davidson on a Thursday night in February, saying that he  
15 was apprised of a company that was in bankruptcy that he  
16 thought was a good buy. I asked him why he was calling me.  
17 He said, I'd like you to come up and take a look at it and  
18 give me the benefit of your advice concerning the tax  
19 situation and financial situation. I said, Bill, I didn't  
20 spend all these years to become a tax attorney. He said, just  
21 come up and we'll have an opportunity to visit with our mutual  
22 friends. That was the real selling point because I had been  
23 away from Michigan for four, five years.

24           Next morning, I came up spent two days looking over  
25 this company. Bill was trying to talk me into joining him.

1 He said, I'll put a group together to buy this company if  
2 you'll come up. The very day he was going to take me back to  
3 the airport so I could fly back to Washington, we visited our  
4 mutual friend, Merv Pregelman. Merv was Bill's roommate as a  
5 freshman and who was one of my close friends also. I think I  
6 may have met Bill through Merv. Merv was an all-American  
7 football player, one of the few Jewish football players at the  
8 University of Michigan. He subsequently was drafted by the  
9 Green Bay Packers and then traded to the Detroit Lions.

10 So Bill and I had lunch with him in Lansing. That's  
11 where his roots were. Before we said our goodbyes to Merv and  
12 wife, Helen, Helen's sister-in-law, Merv's sister, were  
13 whispering in the corner and I asked them what they were  
14 whispering about. They said, if you decide to come to Detroit  
15 -- they were aware that Bill was trying to talk me into  
16 joining them here -- they had a date for me. By the time Bill  
17 got me back to the airport, he convinced me to join him.

18 He had a law office established already and the real  
19 selling point to me was he wanted to put a group together to  
20 buy this business, and then when he got on his feet after a  
21 year or two, we would hit the town for the practice of law. I  
22 felt with Bill's family background in the city, that it  
23 provided a great entre into the practice of law with the kind  
24 of clientele that you'd really be looking for. By the time we  
25 got to the airport, I said I was coming.

1 Bill said, well, look, if we're going to be working  
2 so hard after we acquire this business, he said why don't we  
3 take a vacation now. I said, sounds good to me. Let's call  
4 our other buddy, Jake Crumholtz (ph. sp.), and let's see if  
5 Jake, who was also a bachelor, as Bill and I were, see if they  
6 would join us also for a vacation.

7 So when we got to the airport, I called Jake and  
8 said, "Jake, you're never going to believe this." He said,  
9 "What?" I said, "Bill has talked me into joining him in a  
10 business venture here." He says, "Go on." I says, "It's the  
11 truth, but that's not the purpose of the call. We're going to  
12 take a vacation and we're leaving next week for Florida. What  
13 about joining us?" He said, "Where will I meet you?" So Jake  
14 joined us and we had a great week or ten days in Florida.

15 I gave the chief counsel's office two weeks notice  
16 when I got back to Washington that I was leaving and going to  
17 Detroit.

18 I arrived in Detroit the first week of March of  
19 1951. Bill had put the group together for which I was one to  
20 buy this wholesale drug company out of bankruptcy. He had his  
21 law office. He hired somebody from the appellate division of  
22 the Internal Revenue here in Detroit to keep the office open  
23 while we were operating the company. I planned actually to  
24 spend one day a week in the law office to keep abreast of the  
25 developments in the law, particularly in tax law, which was my

1 field of expertise.

2           It was just three, four months later when I made a  
3 telephone call to this young lady that Merv's wife and sister  
4 said they had a date for me. To make that long story short, I  
5 proposed to her two months after we first dated and I married  
6 her two months later.

7           In the meantime, when I first came to Detroit, I  
8 heard they were looking for somebody to teach tax law at Wayne  
9 State Law School, the school Bill had graduated from, so I  
10 went up there and they hired me on the spot. So I was a part-  
11 time teacher at Wayne Law School starting almost immediately.  
12 So here I was working 10 hours a day with Bill in this  
13 wholesale drug company, teaching law at eight o'clock in the  
14 morning or six o'clock in the afternoon, getting married,  
15 going on honeymoon, correcting papers, et cetera.

16           A year and a half after I arrived here and we  
17 purchased the business, I told Bill that I thought the  
18 business was stable but I didn't think his niche was really in  
19 the practice of law and suggested that he disband his law  
20 office and I was going out on my own. And that's exactly what  
21 I did. And he did disband his law office.

22           Thereafter, I decided that I wasn't very happy  
23 geographically with Detroit and thought I wanted to leave.  
24 I'd made an appointment with the chancellor at the University  
25 of Denver, who had been the provost of Columbia University and

1 one of my professors, to see if I could get an appointment to  
2 teach in Denver, which was a great climate to practice tax  
3 law. But before I got on the plane, my wife's father, who was  
4 a practicing lawyer had a massive heart attack and I was asked  
5 by the family to step in and take over his practice, although  
6 it was not my type of law. I did that, and as a result of  
7 which I never did get on the plane to go to Denver. I was  
8 approached by several firms about joining them and I did join  
9 one. In the meantime, I was representing Bill in whatever  
10 legal affairs that he had. They started to burgeon and they  
11 were of varied interests.

12           Guardian Industries, which today is Bill's flagship,  
13 actually, for all of his activities, which at that time was a  
14 glass fabricating company, not original glass but it did  
15 fabricate glass after it purchased the flat glass from other  
16 sources. It behooved the eldest member of the oldest  
17 generation of the Wetsman family, Bill Wetsman, who's been  
18 very active in the Federation, it was his father and he  
19 oversaw the business which was left by Billy Wetsman's uncle,  
20 Bill Davidson's uncle, and who died prematurely. The business  
21 was basically left to the Wetsman family. In 1956, Billy  
22 Wetsman's father, Frank Wetsman, died in May.

23           Now it behooved Bill Davidson, as the oldest member  
24 of the Wetsman clan, his mother was a Wetsman, to now monitor  
25 the operations of what was then the Guardian Glass Company,



1 Incorporated. As with all of Bill's enterprises, I stepped in  
2 with him also, and we found out it was in very bad financial  
3 condition. It was soon thereafter we decided that Guardian  
4 Glass had to go into bankruptcy, it was in such bad shape.

5 After three and a half years I worked out an  
6 arrangement with the creditors which permitted us to pay them  
7 off 5 cents in cash and another 28 cents based upon a sharing  
8 of profits on a 50-50 basis. So after we worked out this plan  
9 of only 33 cents on the dollar, 28 cents of which was going to  
10 paid on an if-come basis as the company made profits, Bill  
11 called me at the office and said, "Come on, we're going to the  
12 bank." I said, "What for?" He said, "We're going to borrow a  
13 million dollars to pay off the creditors 100 cents on the  
14 dollar." I said, "You crazy? Bill, we don't have enough  
15 assets in Guardian to warrant a million dollar loan from the  
16 bank." He says, "I'm going to pledge all of the family  
17 wealth."

18 So we went to the bank, and sure enough, personal  
19 assets were pledged and we borrowed the million dollars and  
20 paid off the creditors 100 cents on the dollar. It bought us  
21 tremendous goodwill with the creditors. We basically saved  
22 the creditors \$700,000. It cost us an additional over  
23 \$700,000 by paying them off 100 cents on a dollar rather than  
24 33 cents on the dollar.

25 Well, then Guardian began expanding. New wholesale

1 facilities were established through Bill's efforts. I was  
2 involved in the financial end of Guardian with Bill. Whenever  
3 we made acquisitions, we made it together and we always  
4 determined independently of one another what we thought the  
5 acquisition was worth and then we would compare notes. It was  
6 rare that we were ever too far apart.

7           In 1968 Bill made a decision that we were going to  
8 go public. He suggested we put together Guardian Glass,  
9 Incorporated, which was a fabricating company, together with a  
10 Guardian Photo Company which was developed and I failed to  
11 mention earlier, back in 1955 it was a natural adjunct of the  
12 business of the wholesale drug company to have a photo  
13 developing company where people would bring their film for  
14 development into a drug store. Here, with this company was  
15 then called ABC Photo Finishing and Supplies. Our chief  
16 operating officer was Warren Coville (ph. sp.), a stalwart  
17 philanthropist and just honored last week by the Federation  
18 for his contribution to the community, both financially and in  
19 terms of his services. So that company was organized in 1955  
20 as an adjunct to the wholesale drug company. Then in 1968,  
21 when we decided we were going to go public, we put together  
22 the photo company and the glass company and went public.

23           I think most people know the success of Guardian  
24 Glass which ultimately became Guardian Industries. We  
25 actually took the company private in 1985 and Bill became the

1 sole owner of the company at that time. Guardian had been  
2 such a successful venture that the banks were vying to loan  
3 Guardian the money to effect the buyout and make the company  
4 public. Some banks were very unhappy with the fact that they  
5 couldn't participate.

6           Going back to Bill's and my relationship in sports,  
7 Bill and I were always athletically inclined. We engaged in  
8 sports. I in basketball, track, tennis. Bill in football,  
9 tennis and basketball. We always talked about the possibility  
10 of owning a professional team. In 1974 we were made aware of  
11 the fact that the Tampa Bay Buccaneers football team franchise  
12 was going to be offered by the National Football League. Bill  
13 contacted Schmidt, who had been a player and coach of the  
14 Detroit Lions, to be our agent to pursue that possibility.

15           It wasn't much later, maybe two months, three  
16 months, that we were apprised of the fact that the Detroit  
17 Pistons may be up for sale. As a result, I made an inquiry of  
18 the manager of the Pistons here locally, Ed Koyle. He said,  
19 yes, Mr. Zolner was considering selling the business. So I  
20 made arrangements for us to visit Mr. Zolner and it turned out  
21 very fortuitously that he had a home in Golden Beach, Florida,  
22 the very place where Bill's family also owned a home on the  
23 beach. Mr. Zolner was also the mayor of Golden Beach.

24           He liked us and within two months we shook hands on  
25 the deal to buy the Pistons. Bill put together a group of 11

1 who were going to buying the Pistons. We actually closed in  
2 August of 1974, which was only a couple months after we were  
3 first apprised of the availability of the Pistons franchise.

4           But when I did my due diligence in Fort Wayne -- and  
5 the name Piston comes from the fact that Fred Zolner had a  
6 manufacturing company that manufactured pistons for the  
7 original equipment market. I did my due diligence and when I  
8 came back and I told Bill, "We're not buying the Pistons." He  
9 said, "what do you mean?" I said, "I did my due diligence  
10 and, Bill, this is going to be a financial disaster for us."  
11 He said, "Come on, we've talked about this all these years.  
12 We're going to go through with it." I said, "Bill, I'll put  
13 the deal together but I don't want any part of it." He says,  
14 "Ah, come on. I want you to buy a piece of it so you'll look  
15 after the store." So I bought a little piece and we closed  
16 the deal in August of 1974. We're celebrating our 30th year  
17 in 2004.

18           What I predicted came true. We lost substantially  
19 for 10 years. We had to feed it additional capital to keep it  
20 alive. But then it started turning around probably about the  
21 11th year. I think everyone is aware of the fact that we then  
22 won the championships in 1989 and 1990, which were our two  
23 most successful years. Now, here we've won another  
24 championship just this year and we're looking forward to  
25 further championships.

1           So much for Bill's and my association as partners.  
2 Not only was I a partner with the Pistons, but I also became a  
3 partner of all the Wetsman grandchildren. Bill asked me if I  
4 wanted to buy into the company back in 1959 and I said I did.  
5 That was a fortuitous circumstance for me. I think everybody  
6 knows of the success of Guardian Industries. Today it's  
7 vying for being the second largest flat glass company in the  
8 world. It came from being a small fabricating company back  
9 when we first entered in 1956, generating revenues of perhaps  
10 a million dollars, and today its revenues exceed \$4 billion.  
11 It's been a great success story.

12           A good part of my life in Detroit has been my  
13 involvement with the Jewish Community. I don't know how I  
14 first became involved. Of course most of my friends were  
15 involved and I was asked back in the early '80s to join the  
16 Federation board. Before that, I'd taken my family to Israel  
17 in 1971. I had always been involved in the synagogue. I feel  
18 the salvation of our Jewish people, internationally, depends  
19 upon the Federation's involvement, the Jewish Foundation's  
20 involvement on the local level, and synagogues and temples  
21 throughout the world in terms of sustaining our Jewish  
22 identity.

23           As a result of construction of the Palace, where the  
24 Pistons played its first year in the season of '88-89, that  
25 Bill and I became better acquainted with David <sup>Hermelin</sup>~~Hermelin~~, who

1 had been very active in the Jewish Community. David and Bob  
2 Sosnick became active with Bill in the construction of the  
3 Palace. As a result of that I became closer acquainted David  
4 and Doreen and we became very, very close friends. I would  
5 say David and Bill have had a great influence on myself and my  
6 wife, Dee Dee, and our family, relative to our involvement in  
7 the Jewish affairs.

8           Knowing David, the more you knew him, the more you  
9 knew you were going to be involved. The highlight was perhaps  
10 when David came to me and asked me to be chairman of the  
11 drive, the annual drive, in 1997, but which starts really in  
12 1996. I was reluctant to undertake that task. I was busy  
13 enough in my practice. I had been practicing all of these  
14 years. By the way, even though I was involved with Bill and  
15 all these business operations, but initially particularly with  
16 Guardian, where I'd spend upwards of 60 to 70 percent of my  
17 time.

18           As Guardian got larger, it became necessary for me  
19 to start building a legal staff at Guardian where we now have  
20 upwards of 10 or 11 attorneys with paralegals, which reduced  
21 my load and permitted me actually to edge out of my daily  
22 involvement with Guardian. So I was able to spend much more  
23 time in my philanthropic activities, which I've done over the  
24 past many years.

25           I was reluctant to accept the chairmanship of that

1 drive and David said, "Come on, I'll be co-chair with you.  
2 This will be a great year." He came up with the idea of  
3 hiring a private plane where we'd have a special mission to  
4 Israel to kick off the campaign. That's exactly what we did.  
5 We hired an MGM plane and the condition of going on the trip  
6 was you had them pledge a minimum of \$100,000. We went after  
7 a lot of people who gave joint gifts among family members.  
8 For example, if they gave 150,000 between them, they would  
9 claim they're over the 100. I said, "That won't pass for this  
10 venture. If you want to go, it means each individual family  
11 has to contribute 100."

12 We called it the William Davidson Mission, because  
13 Bill had underwritten at that point the antiquity dig right to  
14 the Western Wall. That was one of the first dedications that  
15 we have in Bill's name at that very mission. Well, it was the  
16 most successful mission of all time and we raised more money  
17 under the moon and stars. It coincided with my birthday and  
18 everybody got up and in addition to their regular pledges they  
19 were going to give another \$5,000, \$10,000 in celebration of  
20 my birthday. I was very taken by that.

21 I had been very active in missions and I chaired  
22 smaller missions to Israel. I've been there probably in the  
23 last eight years, I've been there at least seven times. I've  
24 gone over in connection with dedications of projects that Bill  
25 had undertaken, not only at the Western Wall, but there was a

1 building that was put up in the name of his children, Marla  
2 and Ethan. An incredible facility which incorporates also a  
3 video describing the temple days and the characters were both  
4 dressed in the garb of Temple days and then transformed into  
5 the garb of modern times where they made the contrast. That  
6 was two years in the making.

7           So many people know Bill has been an underwriter of  
8 the Weizman Institute, of the Technological Institute, you  
9 name it. I think Bill could properly characterized as being  
10 the greatest philanthropist in the Diaspora for the benefit of  
11 the state of Israel. I think many people recognize that.

12           I've been involved with my synagogue, which I think  
13 is so important, as I indicated earlier, really to the  
14 preservation of the Jewish identity. We are the only  
15 synagogue or temple in the world that was successful in the  
16 raising of an endowment for sustaining operations of the  
17 synagogue for times to come. We raised successfully \$10  
18 million and I acted for several years as chairman of the  
19 endowment. I still continue to be involved with the  
20 endowment. I've served on many committees of the Federation  
21 throughout the years. I still serve on the investment  
22 committee.

23           In addition to my involvement in Jewish  
24 philanthropy, I've also been involved very extensively in non-  
25 Jewish philanthropies, and I felt it was my responsibility to



1 give back to the community. Not only the Jewish community but  
2 outside the Jewish community, where I made my success. I've  
3 been active in the Detroit Medical Center, where from time to  
4 time I was chairman of the board of Hutzel Hospital, I was on  
5 the board of the parent company of the Detroit Medical Center.  
6 I'm the executive committee chairman of their audit committee.  
7 I was on the boards of Detroit Receiving Hospital, Karmanos  
8 Cancer Institute, where I was also chairman of the audit  
9 committee. I resigned from all of these positions, actually,  
10 only as recently as a year and a half ago. This was after  
11 some 27, 28 years of service to that center.

12 I've been involved in not-for-profit organizations,  
13 I'm presently co-chair of the American Red Cross, the  
14 Southeastern Michigan Chapter. I've been involved with the  
15 University of Michigan for many years. Served on their  
16 advisory committee that was appointed by the president of the  
17 university. I'm still involved in the medical circles in that  
18 I'm chairman of the Board of Visitors for Wayne State  
19 University Medical Center. Also involved with Wayne State  
20 University. There are others that I can't even think of at  
21 the moment.

22 At present I devote more time to my philanthropies  
23 than I do actually to my practice of law. Doing a lot more  
24 traveling with my wife. In fact, we're visiting China for the  
25 first time in 20 years. We're anxious to see what changes

1 have taken place in the country which I know have been quite  
2 extensive.

3           It's been brought to my attention that so many  
4 people involved in these philanthropic activities, both for  
5 the Jewish and non-Jewish community, are advanced in years.  
6 In my case, I'm going on 83. Very proud of the fact. I know  
7 this to be a fact that Shaarey Zedek, well over half of our  
8 congregants are well over age 60 and perhaps over 70. The  
9 question has been asked that in view of the advanced years of  
10 these people, what do I see as the prospect for the future of  
11 Jewish community and of leadership, generally. Well, my  
12 answer to that is I think so many of us who are advanced in  
13 years are taking care of our bodies, we're very active in the  
14 community to this day. In my own case, I try to work out  
15 three days a week for about an hour and 20 minutes at the  
16 Piston practice facility. I particularly enjoy that because  
17 it gives me an opportunity to get better acquainted with the  
18 Piston players and to learn about their families. But more  
19 importantly, it keeps my body in good shape.

20           I play tennis a lot. Even though I had a hip  
21 replaced several years ago, and many of my partners are  
22 thinking of having the operation, claiming that if it can do  
23 for them what it did for me and my tennis game, they're  
24 prepared to have it even though they don't need it. So that  
25 augers well for the future.

1 Bill Davidson does the same thing. He works out  
2 almost daily at the Piston practice facility. Even if we  
3 didn't stay in as good a shape as we have, I've seen in our  
4 Jewish Community how our younger people have progressed in  
5 terms of assuming leadership roles within the community that I  
6 have no fear really of a successful succession of leadership  
7 within our community. I'm really amazed at that, because  
8 we're talking about young people in their late 20s, 30s, 40s.  
9 This is the future of our community. If you talk to any  
10 leaders in the community of my age, I think they would express  
11 the same opinion that we are successful, and Detroit has the  
12 reputation of being the leaders within the world Jewry, that  
13 has been so important really to the survival of the state of  
14 Israel and the Jewish activities within the state of Michigan.

15 MR. GREY: Thank you for your time. You have been  
16 most enlightening.

17 MR. FELDMAN: My pleasure.

18 MR. GREY: I'm sure future historians will look back  
19 at this tape and say, wow, how do you do all this? There are  
20 only so many hours in a day.

21 MR. FELDMAN: Let me add something. I shouldn't  
22 avoid it if my children see this tape and say, how come you  
23 didn't mention us. That was an oversight. Both of our  
24 children, while they don't live in this community, our  
25 daughter lives in Chicago and very active in the Jewish

1 community. She's actually taken to the study of Hebrew. And  
2 our son, who is in Los Angeles, is less active in the  
3 community but getting more active and we're encouraging him to  
4 do that. So we're hoping that the fruit doesn't fall far from  
5 the tree and in their case that they'll become community  
6 leaders also, wherever they are.

7 **MR. GREY:** Are you a grandfather yet?

8 **MR. FELDMAN:** Oh, yes. I've got two grandsons, age  
9 14 and 18. Matter of fact, our older one is going to be  
10 matriculating at the University of Michigan, starting in  
11 September. We're looking forward to seeing more of our  
12 daughter's family as a result of that matriculation. In our  
13 son's case, Richard's case, either he has to visit us or we  
14 have to visit him out there, which we try to do at least three  
15 or four times a year.

16 I should also mention my wife, Dee Dee, is active in  
17 the community, perhaps as active as I am. She's been active  
18 in the Jewish Community, spends half of her daylight hours  
19 with the Detroit Institute of Arts where she's been a member  
20 of the Board of Trustees for the past 30 years. She's active  
21 with the Jewish Women's Foundation, Cranbrook. I can't keep  
22 track of all the activities to which she has devoted her time  
23 over these many years and continues to do so. I'm glad I  
24 mentioned Dee Dee, because again, if she had seen this video  
25 and I hadn't mentioned her other than the fact when I met her

1 and when we were married, but fortunately we're celebrating  
2 our 53rd anniversary this year. It's been a wonderful life  
3 for both of us.

4           **MR. GREY:** Going back to your military service. Was  
5 there anybody there that was influential in heading you in a  
6 direction that you didn't plan to go into?

7           **MR. FELDMAN:** No. I don't think so. When I was  
8 just about graduating at the University of Michigan, the  
9 colonel who was in charge of our corps of cadets called me in  
10 and said, "Feldman, I've got good news for you." I said,  
11 "What's that, sir?" He says, "I'm recommending you for a  
12 direct commission in the U.S. Army. You're going to have the  
13 status of a graduate of West Point and you don't have to go to  
14 Officers Candidate School." I said, "Colonel, I'm really  
15 flattered, but what kind of a commitment would this take on my  
16 part to accept that appointment?" He said, "Just four years."  
17 I said, "Colonel, with all due deference, I'm not a  
18 professional soldier, I don't intend to be, and I humbly  
19 decline." But in terms of influence of the military on my  
20 career, I left in 1945, although I stayed in the reserve for a  
21 limited period until I became disenchanted with our reserve  
22 status, which I finally resigned from, that was the completion  
23 of my military service.

24           **MR. GREY:** Of all your careers and professions,  
25 which did you enjoy the most between teaching, practicing law,

1 corporate work, community work?

2 MR. FELDMAN: Well, I taught for eight years at  
3 Wayne State Law School. I thought perhaps in retirement I  
4 would go back to teaching. The long and short of it is, I'm  
5 not going to retire, so I'm not going back to teaching. But  
6 I've enjoyed the practice of law. I'm often asked that same  
7 question. If I had to do it all over again, I'd do it the  
8 same way. I wouldn't slight any of my law practice, my  
9 involvement with Bill. And all the philanthropies that I've  
10 been involved with, I don't regret any of them. A very  
11 rewarding life and I'm very, very fortunate. Most fortunate  
12 in my good health, because unlike anybody at my age, I don't  
13 take any medications. Hopefully that augers well for my  
14 future.

15 MR. GREY: I see you're wearing a special ring on  
16 your right hand.

17 MR. FELDMAN: The ring I'm wearing is actually a  
18 Detroit Piston's championship ring, the first one we won in  
19 1989. Then we also secured a ring for 1990 and we'll be  
20 getting another one now for 2004.

21 MR. GREY: You're not going to retire until --

22 MR. FELDMAN: And wait a minute. We also have a  
23 ring for the Shock, because the Pistons own the Shock team  
24 also. So now we have four rings. I don't think it would be  
25 too circumspect, really, to be wearing four rings on one hand.

1 MR. GREY: What about hockey?

2 MR. FELDMAN: I'm vice-chairman of the Palace and  
3 I'm not sure if Bill is intending for me to get one of the  
4 hockey -- because the Palace owns the hockey team, the Tampa  
5 Bay Lightning. As vice-chairman, I suppose I should be  
6 entitled to it. I'll have five rings then. Okay.

7 MR. GREY: And the Vipers won the Turner Cup in  
8 1997.

9 MR. FELDMAN: Yeah, but that was an international  
10 league.

11 MR. GREY: That doesn't count.

12 MR. FELDMAN: That's not on the same level of play  
13 as the National Hockey League or NBA.

14 MR. GREY: The Palace advertising has the number one  
15 attendance of all NBA teams the last two years in a row. You  
16 should be proud of that fact.

17 MR. FELDMAN: Very much so.

18 MR. GREY: The Palace, for events going on during  
19 the year, is amongst the top or number two to Madison Square  
20 Garden. Isn't that attributable to you and the staff, and  
21 everyone --

22 MR. FELDMAN: We have a great staff at the Palace.  
23 Several years in a row we've been voted by Variety as the best  
24 facility for holding of concerts in the country. We're very  
25 proud of that. It's great as fare for us too as families,

1 going to all these events and having them available to us. We  
2 are so fortunate. Particularly people of my generation, you  
3 know, we can expect with the next decade that a few of us are  
4 going to be passing on. But as long as we're enjoying good  
5 health, we're hopeful. I was so hopeful that I took out my  
6 first life insurance policy last year. It was not my first,  
7 but the first probably in the last 20, 30 years. That's the  
8 only policy I own. That was the result of my optimism in  
9 terms of my future on this good earth.

10           **MR. GREY:** Again, thank you. We hope future  
11 historians get a lot out of this and that you can record your  
12 story again in another 20 years when you have more things to  
13 add to it.

14           **MR. FELDMAN:** Hopefully. Absolutely. Just call me.  
15 I'll be here.