

1 ORAL HISTORY OF: David Page  
2 INTERVIEWED BY: Susan Citrin  
3 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Wednesday, June 22, 2005  
4 LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Jewish Federation  
5 SUBJECT MATTER: Jewish life, role as a community  
6 leader, personal and professional  
7 history

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9 MS. CITRIN: I'm Susie Citrin. This is June 22,  
10 2005. I'm here with David Page. David, do we have your  
11 permission to use this information for educational or research  
12 purposes of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives?

13 MR. PAGE: You do.

14 MS. CITRIN: Thank you. Welcome. I guess we want  
15 to start at the very beginning and talk a little about your  
16 early years and how involved you were. I know in your later  
17 years you've been involved with Temple Beth-El, but what were  
18 the early years of David Page like?

19 MR. PAGE: I was born 7 pounds 14 ounces. No. In  
20 the community, right, my early years in the community?

21 MS. CITRIN: No. Just really your early years.  
22 Where did you go to school, what was your family like?

23 MR. PAGE: My mom was a teacher. I was born in  
24 Detroit. My father's family was like a third or fourth  
25 generation Detroiter. My grandfather was the clerk of the

1 City of Detroit Treasurer's Office. My mother came from a  
2 large family all of whom but her were born in Hungary. She  
3 was born in the United States. My father and mother met each  
4 other in Detroit. I have a sister, Nedra, passed away several  
5 years ago.

6 I lived here for the first 10 years of my life from  
7 '33 to '43, went to Halley School. I remember being involved  
8 in the paper drives during the war at Halley. Turns out that  
9 my wife Andrea, who's nine years younger than I, lived just a  
10 couple blocks away and also went to Halley School but we never  
11 met.

12 My father got a job in Youngstown, Ohio, so my  
13 family moved and that's where I went to sixth grade, junior  
14 high and high school. Then I went to college at Dartmouth,  
15 and while I was there my family moved back to Detroit and they  
16 and I have been here ever since.

17 I graduated from Dartmouth in 1955 and went to  
18 Harvard Law School for the next three years. Then I took a  
19 Fulbright Scholarship at the London School of Economics,  
20 studying corporate law. When that was over, I returned to  
21 Detroit. I had already been hired by the Honigman, Miller &  
22 Schwartz law firm.

23 After my first year of law school -- and nobody  
24 clerked after their first year of law school -- I clerked for  
25 Sam and Ron Greenberg. Ron was married to a cousin of mine,

1 so he was kind enough to give me a job and I worked on  
2 abstracts of title for American Savings & Loan, giving title  
3 opinions. My second year I worked for Butzel, Levin, Winston  
4 & Quinn. Irwin Simon. I had a wonderful experience there.  
5 Backing up, I had met Alan Schwartz at the time that I was  
6 considering where to go to law school. I had a small  
7 scholarship to Harvard Law School and a huge scholarship to  
8 NYU called a Rutilden Fellowship that paid all tuitions, all  
9 expenses, books, housing and everything.

10 **MS. CITRIN:** You must have been a pretty good  
11 student.

12 **MR. PAGE:** Yeah I was a good student.

13 **MS. CITRIN:** You can brag on this tape.

14 **MR. PAGE:** Well, I had decided that I was going to  
15 go to NYU because my parents had put me through college and I  
16 knew it was a burden on them. They really wanted me to go to  
17 Harvard and I didn't think that would be fair to them. They  
18 said, why don't you talk to a lawyer? I said, I don't know  
19 any lawyers, which I didn't. My father didn't either, but he  
20 knew Judge Will Friedman from Friedman, Meyers & Keyes. So we  
21 went down to see him. He was older at the time. I'm going on  
22 72, so I think he probably was in his 70s, but he struck me as  
23 a very old man. He said, I'm so far removed from the law  
24 school environment, I don't really think I could give you good  
25 advice but there's a young man by the name of Alan Schwartz,

1 who went to Harvard Law School, who practiced in New York for  
2 a while, and just joined Jason Honigman and Jack Miller and  
3 maybe he would willing to talk to you. So he called Alan,  
4 Alan said, sure, come on over. So my father and I went over  
5 and we talked to Alan. He said, essentially, there's no  
6 choice, you should go to Harvard. So that's what I did. I  
7 kept in touch with their firm and ultimately I was very  
8 impressed with the firm, it was very small.

9 **MS. CITRIN:** What was it like to go to Harvard in  
10 those days especially as a young Jewish man?

11 **MR. PAGE:** There was disproportionate number of Jews  
12 in the class, very few women. It was a great experience. I  
13 loved my experience at Harvard Law School. I ended up  
14 chairing the board of student advisors, which was the moot  
15 court competition. And then I got on Law Review. So I was  
16 really involved in a lot of things in the school and it was  
17 great.

18 But back to Detroit. I was very impressed with  
19 Alan, Jason and Jack and they had visions of building a major  
20 Wall Street type firm in Detroit. I joined the firm in 1958,  
21 but I started the same day that Morrey Minkow started, who was  
22 a year ahead of me at Harvard, but who had been my advisor at  
23 moot court. I didn't know him prior to that.

24 **MS. CITRIN:** Did you know what type of law you  
25 wanted to do?

1           **MR. PAGE:** Yes. I wanted to be a business lawyer,  
2 although I did a lot of labor law in the beginning because  
3 there was no one else to do it and I had taken a course in  
4 labor law, so I knew more labor law than anyone else in the  
5 firm. So I was the fifth lawyer in the firm. That was 1958.  
6 Now we're 225 or something like that. I've been there ever  
7 since. I haven't moved around a lot.

8           **MS. CITRIN:** And you're still downtown?

9           **MR. PAGE:** Still downtown.

10          **MS. CITRIN:** And I understand you have an antique  
11 collection in your office as well as at home?

12          **MR. PAGE:** You've been checking up on me. Yes. I  
13 like English antiques. I developed an interest in them when I  
14 was in London for that year, so I have an antique English  
15 partner's desk and grandfather's clock and some other things  
16 in my office that I think make a comfortable environment. We  
17 do have a lot of antiques in our home as well.

18          **MS. CITRIN:** I don't know what your early upbringing  
19 was like, but I know in something that I read about you it  
20 says that you saw Alan Schwartz volunteering and others  
21 getting involved. Is that how you got involved?

22          **MR. PAGE:** How I first started getting involved with  
23 the Jewish community? I don't remember exactly but my guess  
24 is the first thing I did in the community was Detroit Men's  
25 ORT. Harry Platt, who was the founder along with Bill Haber

1 of Detroit Men's ORT. Harry was a friend of my family. He  
2 asked me to get involved so I got involved. I met Conrad  
3 Giles and David Hermelin and a number of other people that  
4 were involved at that time. Jerry Hirsch. My guess is that  
5 was my first involvement, and probably from that I got  
6 involved in the Young Leadership Cabinet at Federation. I was  
7 involved early on at Temple Beth-El as well. So those are  
8 probably my first three.

9 **MS. CITRIN:** Were your family members involved?

10 **MR. PAGE:** My family were third generation at that  
11 time members of Temple Beth-El. My father's father was and  
12 his family were at Beth-El.

13 **MS. CITRIN:** So your family has history with Leo  
14 Franklin.

15 **MR. PAGE:** Oh, yes. Leo Franklin married my  
16 parents.

17 **MS. CITRIN:** You're still a member there.

18 **MR. PAGE:** I am.

19 **MS. CITRIN:** I know you were past-president of  
20 Temple Beth-El.

21 **MR. PAGE:** I think those were the first things I did  
22 and everything sort of grew from there. When the Federation  
23 gets under your skin, it never leaves you.

24 **MS. CITRIN:** What's amazing to me is that you got  
25 involved in a lot of different other organizations. Hospital

1 organizations, Boy Scouts, you want me to list them for you?

2           **MR. PAGE:** No. I've been involved in a lot of non-  
3 Jewish organizations, principally the Children's Hospital. My  
4 oldest son had a very severe asthmatic condition and was in  
5 the hospital a lot when he was young and so I really cared  
6 about that institution and was invited to go on its board in  
7 the early '70s, I think. I've been involved there ever since.  
8 I was chairman of the board for about nine years, and I'm  
9 still on the board.

10           From there I got involved in the Detroit Medical  
11 Center, Karmanos Cancer Institute and all these things sort of  
12 build on each other. You mentioned the Boy Scouts. I was on  
13 a huge board for the Boy Scouts but I never did much with  
14 them. Ultimately I resigned from that because I didn't like  
15 their policy on gays, so I resigned several years ago from  
16 that.

17           **MS. CITRIN:** That's interesting.

18           **MR. PAGE:** Outside the Jewish community I think my  
19 principal involvements have been at Children's Hospital, the  
20 Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, I was one of  
21 the founding members of that. I've been on the board of the  
22 Kresge Foundation. I'm chairman of the Investment Committee  
23 but I'm on the board of the Foundation. I'm currently it's  
24 longest serving member. It has a mandatory retirement age of  
25 72 so I am stepping down this September.

1           **MS. CITRIN:** That has a global reach to it.

2           **MR. PAGE:** It does, yeah. We make grants across the  
3 country and a number of international grants as well. But in  
4 the last 10 years we have developed a focus on Detroit. We  
5 have something called the Detroit Initiative. We've done a  
6 number of major projects in Detroit, the most significant of  
7 which is the Detroit River Front Conservancy, which we have  
8 made the largest grant in the foundation's history as a series  
9 of grants that aggregate \$50 million. It's intended to help  
10 stimulate the redevelopment of the east riverfront. It's been  
11 going now for a couple of years. With the Kresge money we've  
12 now raised over \$80 million. We still have a long way to go.  
13 I'm the vice-chairman of the conservancy. I think it's the  
14 transformation project in Detroit that will reclaim for the  
15 first time in several hundred years our riverfront.

16           The cement silos are going to come down this year, a  
17 lot of the old buildings have been demolished. We're building  
18 a greenway for three and a half miles from Hart Plaza to  
19 beyond the Belle Isle Bridge. People will be able to run and  
20 bike and walk and link with various parks along the way.

21           **MS. CITRIN:** So obviously you think there's hope for  
22 the city of Detroit when there are nay-sayers.

23           **MR. PAGE:** There are a lot of nay-sayers. There has  
24 to be hope for the city of Detroit. It's the core of this  
25 region and we can't let the core rot and think that it won't



1 affect the ring around the core. I don't have a lot of  
2 tolerance for the people who say they never would go into  
3 Detroit. I've been doing it for 47 years every day. I'm  
4 still here.

5 **MS. CITRIN:** Do you still have the same office?

6 **MR. PAGE:** Actually I've had two offices in the 47  
7 years. First one was a very nice office that Jason had  
8 vacated when we expanded a little bit. So I was in that for  
9 probably 20 years. Then when Avern Cohn went on the federal  
10 bench, I took over his office and I've been in that office now  
11 for maybe 25 years.

12 **MS. CITRIN:** If you go down every day, obviously you  
13 see changes in the city as well. I don't go down as often but  
14 it's remarkable what they are doing now in preparation for  
15 Super Bowl.

16 **MR. PAGE:** There are a lot of positive things  
17 happening. Obviously Detroit, like most major cities, has  
18 major problems: racial problems, educational problems,  
19 poverty and blight. All of those things. But lots of things  
20 have happened. Lots of new restaurants and entertainment  
21 areas, redevelopment of commercial space downtown. A lot of  
22 residential loft space being developed. This riverfront  
23 project should stimulate a couple of billion dollars in the  
24 next five or ten years of related developments between the  
25 river and Jefferson, and that should build on itself. So

1 there's a lot of good things happening.

2           **MS. CITRIN:** That's great. It's so interesting that  
3 you have this sort of dual career, one foot in the Jewish  
4 community and the other in the non-Jewish world and really  
5 have had an impact on many, many things.

6           Do you want to talk about your Jewish involvement?  
7 When was the first time you went to Israel?

8           **MR. PAGE:** Actually the first time I went to Israel,  
9 my family went in connection with my oldest son's bar mitzvah.  
10 We went on just a family trip. Then when I was president of  
11 Federation, we had the first two Miracle Missions. I went  
12 with one of my sons, Jason, and my other son on the Miracle  
13 Mission two.

14           My favorite story about mission two was I went with  
15 my son Mark and David Hermelin was chairing that mission.  
16 Because I was president and he was chair we had this suite in  
17 the hotel which was really two bedrooms and a big reception  
18 area. You know, David was David. He had people coming to our  
19 room at all hours of the day and night. He was selling art  
20 work, promoting mazuzas, he was raising money for various  
21 causes. Very prominent political figures were arriving. They  
22 would stay in our living room, all hours of the morning. Our  
23 bedroom was right next to that, and we got no sleep, my son  
24 Mark and I. David kept getting phone calls. We had a common  
25 phone line. It would ring, but it was never for me, it was

1 always for David.

2 **MS. CITRIN:** You have similar names, so if they  
3 asked for David, you could respond.

4 **MR. PAGE:** No, I knew who they were asking for. So  
5 on the final night we were there he had some kind of going  
6 away party. It was going on till two or 2:30 in the morning.  
7 My son and I were in the next room, we couldn't get any sleep  
8 because of all of this noise that was going on. Finally  
9 everybody left and it quieted down. We were just dozing off  
10 and the phone rang. It rang and rang, so I figured I had to  
11 pick it up. He said, hello, this is David Hermelin. I just  
12 wanted to know if there have been any calls for me. He had  
13 been interrupting our sleep for days. He was just incredible.  
14 A very good friend.

15 **MS. CITRIN:** Everybody who's been interviewed has  
16 talked about his impact on this entire community.

17 **MR. PAGE:** Huge. Not just the Jewish community  
18 either.

19 **MS. CITRIN:** Yeah I know. He was really something.

20 **MR. PAGE:** Major loss.

21 **MS. CITRIN:** Yes. Do you want to talk about some of  
22 the Jewish things that have happened along the way? The  
23 closing of Borman Hall.

24 **MR. PAGE:** Some of those things happened while I was  
25 president. Maybe I'll back up a little bit. I think I

1 mentioned earlier that I got started in ORT. In fact another  
2 David Hermelin story. I'm the one who got David involved in  
3 ORT. Of course he went on to be the president of the World  
4 ORT. I asked him to become the treasurer of Detroit Men's  
5 ORT. I said it won't take much of your time and you really  
6 won't have to get too heavily involved. Of course he became  
7 involved, became president of the chapter, became president of  
8 World ORT and so forth. He always used to kid me, what did  
9 you get me into. That's where I made a lot of my good  
10 friends. Connie Giles, Jerry Hirsch and David.

11 In the Young Leadership Cabinet were Tom Klein,  
12 Stanley Frankel, Joel Tauber, Larry Jackier, we were all  
13 involved in the Young Leadership Cabinet. They had an  
14 Attorney Section at the time, so I got involved in the  
15 Attorney Section, ultimately chaired that section of the  
16 campaign. That was part of the Professional Division and I  
17 got involved in that division and I became involved in various  
18 committees.

19 I had been on the boards of the Jewish Center for a  
20 while and on the board of Jewish Family Service for a while.  
21 You know how those things just grow. Then as years went on I  
22 became more and more involved in various Federation  
23 activities. I was on a number of task forces and committees  
24 and so forth.

25 Maybe one of my major accomplishments is I chaired

1 the search committee that brought Bob Aronson here.

2 **MS. CITRIN:** Yes. There's a picture of you in your  
3 dossier of you and him, and bringing him in.

4 **MR. PAGE:** That was a very interesting process. We  
5 had about three or four finalists. All excellent. I think  
6 they all probably would have done a good job. But I think we  
7 picked the winner. Most of them were execs of smaller  
8 federations or larger. One of them was the president of Los  
9 Angeles, one president of San Francisco, one went to Columbus.  
10 All very good people. But Bob was the best.

11 **MS. CITRIN:** I think he's the best.

12 **MR. PAGE:** We all feel that way.

13 **MS. CITRIN:** Very creative. When you talk about  
14 Michigan Miracle Missions I think it was mostly his ideas to  
15 take literally hundreds and hundreds of people to Israel.

16 **MR. PAGE:** Thirteen hundred people in the first  
17 mission.

18 **MS. CITRIN:** Yeah, I was there.

19 **MR. PAGE:** I know you were. That was great. And  
20 still going on. That's a great tradition.

21 As I just reflect back, Susie. on my activities,  
22 apart from my presidency which I can talk about in a minute,  
23 the things that stand out in my mind are heading the search  
24 committee that selected Bob. After my presidency I was  
25 involved in the task force on the general fund work group.

1 I think the work of that committee really  
2 dramatically changed the financial course of Federation from  
3 what it otherwise would have been. What happened is that we  
4 had a general fund which at one point had grown to about \$70  
5 million as you recall, through the fact that this stock market  
6 had been very strong and we were earning a lot more than we  
7 were paying out on the philanthropic funds and support  
8 organizations. It had grown to that number. It was sort of  
9 our rainy day fund.

10 Then when we got into problems with the Jewish Home  
11 for the Aged, Borman Hall and some of the other demands on the  
12 community, we had to use a lot of that. Then when the market  
13 started to weaken or just before it started to weaken, we  
14 could see we were obligating ourselves not legally but he was  
15 paying out 10 percent on base funds and 7.5 percent on  
16 philanthropic funds, the thought being we were going to make  
17 more than that and we can build up. As you know the ultimate  
18 outcome of that was that we moved away from that because we  
19 were sort of gambling with the future of the community in  
20 terms of continuing to take those kind of pay-outs without  
21 knowing whether we're going to have those kind of returns.

22 We changed all of those ground rules, and it's a  
23 good thing that we did because after we changed them, the  
24 market went through a very weak period and we would have had  
25 our general fund wiped out, more than wiped out if we had

1 continued on those practices. We have since modified those  
2 ground rules. There was a lot of concern whether we would be  
3 upsetting people unduly and will it affect our fund-raising  
4 and so forth.

5 **MS. CITRIN:** It was a hard decision.

6 **MR. PAGE:** A hard decision but I think it was the  
7 right decision. It took some conviction on the part of  
8 everybody to do that because there were some who people  
9 reacted negatively. I think looking back right now clearly  
10 the right thing to do. I don't think we really lost anybody  
11 in the process, even though some people complained. Now our  
12 general fund is rebuilding a little bit. We don't have the  
13 potential to build it through excess returns, but we're trying  
14 to build it in other ways through the legacy program.

15 **MS. CITRIN:** I think it just made the whole  
16 Federation more fiscally responsible for what happened.

17 **MR. PAGE:** Every president has certain challenges  
18 they face some of which they know when they go into office and  
19 some of which jump up and bite them. I had both of those. I  
20 think the things that I recall about my three years in  
21 particular, I had just shared the Identity and Affiliation  
22 Committee and then the Strategic Planning Committee, so that  
23 we had really identified issues that we as a community had to  
24 address in terms of re-prioritizing what we're doing, running  
25 more efficiently, involving more people, putting more emphasis

1 on education, just to mention a few things. Those were some  
2 of the things we tried to implement during my presidency.

3 I think the thing that I take the most satisfaction  
4 from is I think that during the time I was president we did  
5 introduce a number of fiscal disciplines. We set up the  
6 Fiscal Oversight Committee. All of that continues today. My  
7 perception was that Federation wasn't being run like a  
8 business, it was being run like a volunteer non-profit  
9 organization, and it had to be run like a business.

10 **MS. CITRIN:** Well, you're talking about millions and  
11 millions of dollars.

12 **MR. PAGE:** Right. How much was involved and the  
13 importance of what we were doing. And so we introduced a lot  
14 of disciplines and procedures and audit controls and  
15 oversights that I think have stood us in good stead ever  
16 since.

17 **MS. CITRIN:** I did read something about how the  
18 organizations ran before sort of willy-nilly and you took  
19 especially the agencies and made them much more responsible to  
20 the Federation and to themselves, and initiated some rules  
21 that they should abide by.

22 **MR. PAGE:** We did all that, and I think it's worked  
23 out well. Of course I didn't anticipate Borman Hall being  
24 almost closed and having the huge financial problems that it  
25 had, and we had to work through the first couple years of my



1 presidency, what to do with that. I think ultimately the  
2 conclusion we agreed to was right, that we really shouldn't be  
3 in the business of providing nursing home care; that was not  
4 what our expertise was. We cared about our elderly citizens  
5 and we wanted to make sure that they were well taken care of,  
6 but that we really could be more effective from a planning and  
7 funding standpoint instead of the provision of the services.

8 **MS. CITRIN:** It's the first time that I remember  
9 that an agency was closed. We were always opening new  
10 agencies and adding in response to the community's needs, and  
11 here we to take a second look at and say this is something we  
12 did before but it's not necessary that we do it now.

13 **MR. PAGE:** Exactly. We did the same thing with the  
14 transportation service. I was a great closer. Didn't open a  
15 lot but we closed a lot. That's the business we also  
16 shouldn't have been in. It was not being run well. Being run  
17 by one individual who's not being overseen appropriately and  
18 so forth. We have to play to our strengths and recognize what  
19 we can and can't do.

20 **MS. CITRIN:** But I think that that possibly led to  
21 us establishing other organizations where they see who's doing  
22 what and there's not as much duplication of services.

23 **MR. PAGE:** Right.

24 **MS. CITRIN:** Especially like for the elderly with  
25 COJES. I think it opened up a door.

1           **MR. PAGE:** Any organization today has to look for  
2 ways to avoid duplication, to reach out and collaborate with  
3 others. And we clearly as a community needed to do that and  
4 need to continue to watch that we're doing that continually.

5           **MS. CITRIN:** Absolutely. Well, do you have any idea  
6 about if you could look in the crystal ball, you were the one  
7 who first approached with your Committee on Identity And  
8 Affiliation the, what's happening in the modern world of Jews.  
9 It's not the same old Jewish community. Do you want to  
10 comment on what the commission did and perhaps what your ideas  
11 are for the future?

12           **MR. PAGE:** Well, I can try to do that. We did a  
13 study of our community because it followed on the demographic  
14 study and we tried to understand our community perhaps more  
15 deeply than we had before and we saw that first of all people  
16 were not as affiliated either with their synagogues or temples  
17 or Jewish organizations as perhaps there had been in decades  
18 before for obvious reasons. There were far more options  
19 available to people today than there were then. We're less  
20 ghettoized and so forth.

21           Yet people cared about our community, didn't know  
22 how to get involved, wanted to be involved but wanted to have  
23 a meaningful involvement. We needed to reach out to people of  
24 all stripes, whether they were religiously affiliated or not,  
25 whether they were active in the community or just identified

1 through some other source. A lot of things ultimately came  
2 out of that. The Miracle Missions came out of that. We were  
3 trying to reach out to people. A lot more things with young  
4 leadership than we had done before. Building bridges with the  
5 synagogues and temples in ways that hadn't been done before.

6 **MS. CITRIN:** I know it's always remarkable,  
7 especially with the synagogues and temples, that other  
8 communities envy us because we have connections to our  
9 synagogues and temples and we partner with them quite a bit.

10 **MR. PAGE:** We do. We have a great community. I  
11 think I said in one of my president's speeches that we're sort  
12 of known to be one of the better Jewish communities in the  
13 country.

14 **MS. CITRIN:** But we're not the best?

15 **MR. PAGE:** I believe that we are the best. We're  
16 the best in so many ways. I think the degree of involvement  
17 we have, the openness that we have, the per capita fund-  
18 raising, the range of services that we provide, the  
19 innovations that we have led the nation on a number of things,  
20 just make this a very special community. The trick is how do  
21 we perpetuate that in the years ahead. I mean obviously we're  
22 in a rust belt community. A lot of our kids and grandchildren  
23 don't come back here which is troubling to all of us.

24 **MS. CITRIN:** I don't know how we're going to have  
25 any ideas as to how we get them all back.

1           **MR. PAGE:** Well, I only have one of my three here.  
2 I'm surely not the best source and I certainly have tried. I  
3 got one back from Chicago to northern Michigan but I couldn't  
4 get him any closer to Detroit than that. Another one is in  
5 California, my daughter is here.

6           I've seen some of my son's friends who have gone to  
7 other places and some have come back to Detroit. So I'm not  
8 completely discouraged but it's hard, particularly for young  
9 single people, who see the attractions of cities like Chicago  
10 or California or Colorado. I think we have to do the most we  
11 can do, and we've done a number of things, to make it  
12 interesting and attractive here. We've done a number of  
13 things in terms of providing them with social networks that  
14 perhaps they might not have otherwise had. Because once you  
15 get out of college and you get into whatever your career path  
16 is, all of a sudden your range of friends changes from what it  
17 was when you were in school.

18           **MS. CITRIN:** Absolutely.

19           **MR. PAGE:** You have to provide opportunities, which  
20 Federation clearly does with the Young Adult Division and a  
21 number of their programs for young people to interact with  
22 each other. We have to do more of that.

23           I think one of the biggest challenges that we have,  
24 which we're now attempting to address -- I was preaching this  
25 for a long time -- is with the Legacy program, is that we

1 never really ever had any kind of a formal program to  
2 encourage people in their estate plans to leave unrestricted  
3 dollars to the community. People would be very involved in  
4 Federation, major givers to campaign, officers active in the  
5 community, and then they would pass away and they would leave  
6 their money to their family and charities and so forth, but  
7 rarely would they leave money to Federation or the United  
8 Jewish Foundation, and we need that kind of endowment funds  
9 not only for rainy day funds but in order to be able to expand  
10 the kind of programming that we do. So the Legacy program,  
11 which we just launched a year or two ago, is something I think  
12 is very important and we've already gotten commitments of \$20  
13 million plus but we needed a lot more than that in order to  
14 rebuild our long-term endowment base.

15 **MS. CITRIN:** It's amazing to me that people donate  
16 money every single year and then after they've passed away,  
17 even though they've been doing it for 25 or 30, 40 years, and  
18 making contributions, and then they're not remembering.

19 **MR. PAGE:** That's right. That's why we have base  
20 funds which can help to perpetuate their gifts. We've done  
21 nicely on that and that we have to continue to do that. But  
22 that really just provides the annual support for the annual  
23 programs. But we need reserves to help us over the rough  
24 spots, to deal with emergency situations.

25 There's where, for example, Jewish Fund, even though

1 it's not part of Federation it's a separate 501(c)(3) that  
2 arose from the sale of Sinai Hospital to the Detroit Medical  
3 Center. I actually was involved in that transaction, but I  
4 was involved on Detroit Medical Center's side, the buyer's  
5 side.

6 **MS. CITRIN:** But to have that foresight and know  
7 that Sinai could not stand by itself. That was an incredible  
8 vision that you had and a few others, and had the foresight to  
9 establish this Jewish Fund which is an incredible -- I know I  
10 read about 5 percent of the proceeds of over \$50 million goes  
11 back into the community every single year.

12 **MR. PAGE:** We're doubly fortunate that that  
13 transaction occurred because I think it's -- everybody would  
14 agree that conventional wisdom is that Sinai Hospital standing  
15 on its own would not have survived, would have incurred major  
16 losses, that would have been embarrassment to the community if  
17 that had occurred. Probably would have been a drain on the  
18 resources of the community so that was avoided.

19 The hospital was able to sell itself to the Detroit  
20 Medical Center, who wanted to have that presence, for about  
21 \$50 million, which was put into the fund. We now have been in  
22 business I think nine years. We've made grants of about 5  
23 percent of our corpus, so it's about \$2.5 million a year so we  
24 probably have made \$20 million in grants. We still have close  
25 to \$60 million in corpus. So we are able to step into areas

1 that Federation wasn't in and didn't have the resources.  
2 We've made a real difference with respect to some of our  
3 programs for our elderly and people with disabilities.

4 Part of the money goes to building bridges between  
5 the Jewish community and the general community. That was  
6 another thing that I initiated that I'm proud of is the  
7 Detroit Jewish Initiative, which I felt we were sort of  
8 isolated. Particularly that was the case when we moved from  
9 163 Madison here, in Bloomfield Hills. The perception was we  
10 were abandoning the city. Since most of us were born and  
11 raised here and care about the city and so forth, there are  
12 things that we as an organized community can do to help  
13 strengthen the general community and particularly the Detroit  
14 community. That's not where our focus is but it's important  
15 to us that the Jewish community be perceived as an integral  
16 part of the overall community.

17 The Detroit Initiative has done that and it's been  
18 around now for 12 or 14 years. We've supported a number of  
19 programs. The Jewish Fund has done it, but so has the  
20 Federation. That I think helped build significant bridges  
21 with the rest of the non-Jewish Detroit community.

22 **MS. CITRIN:** In reviewing all that you've done over  
23 all these years, you seem to quietly take on controversy like  
24 Sinai Hospital or Borman Hall, broaching an issue like  
25 Affiliation and Identity, and very quietly work out situations

1 and problems or issues that we have. Anything that you would  
2 like to add to that?

3           **MR. PAGE:** I don't go looking for that. Some of it  
4 comes to me. We're going to have difficult issues that  
5 confront us as a community all the time and there's nothing  
6 unique about me. We just have to try to deal with them as  
7 thoughtfully, carefully and unemotionally as possible in order  
8 to work our way through it. A couple of things you mentioned  
9 were those kinds of issues, but we've come out the other end  
10 and we're stronger for it, I think.

11           **MS. CITRIN:** I think I was reading something in your  
12 file that people admire your analytical way of approaching  
13 problems and your quiet subtle way of dealing with things.

14           **MR. PAGE:** I'm not sure my wife would agree with  
15 that, but it's nice that some people feel that way. I've  
16 enjoyed everything I've ever done in the community, Jewish or  
17 non-Jewish. I think it's very important to be part of the  
18 community that's given you the opportunities. I've had  
19 considerable opportunities here that probably wouldn't have  
20 happened otherwise, and I just want to give some of that back.

21           And I enjoy doing it. Unlike some people I know who  
22 cannot stand to be in meetings, I can tolerate it. I'm  
23 thinking back all the wonderful people that I've had the  
24 opportunity to know through the community. We talk about  
25 people who didn't like meetings; David Mondry comes to mind.



1 He just could not stand because he was an action-oriented,  
2 get-me-the-results kind of guy, which he demonstrated when he  
3 led the Operation Solomon and Operation Exodus, which was to  
4 take the Jews out of Russia. So there are a number of people  
5 like that. Stanley Frankel comes to mind and a few others.

6 Your brother-in-law, Marty Citrin, was a very good  
7 friend of mine, and I think probably I learned more about  
8 Federation from him than I did from anyone else. We were on  
9 the board of a company together and we used to spend lots of  
10 time together. We used to travel together to meetings and we  
11 would always talk about Federation. I just thought he was so  
12 insightful and strong. He was a great leader of this  
13 community. Hy Safran, who was just a wonderful man who cared  
14 about this community and worked so hard in it. David  
15 Hermelin, Joel Tauber, Max Fisher. On and on. My life has  
16 really been enriched knowing these people and more recently  
17 Penny Bulmenstein and Larry Jackier and so forth.

18 **MS. CITRIN:** This is interesting work because when  
19 you think about what the Jewish community was, you talk about  
20 three generations ago when your relatives came here, there was  
21 no organization. Now over the past century and into this  
22 century it's amazing what we've developed here.

23 **MR. PAGE:** That reminds me of something. When I  
24 first got involved in Federation, that would have been 45  
25 years ago, something like that, I had the distinct impression

1 -- do you remember Sam Cohn? He was really a dedicated  
2 professional. Sam Cohn ran the programming at Federation. He  
3 didn't want to hear your opinions about it, or if he heard  
4 them and didn't agree with them, he just went on and did  
5 something else. I always felt that Federation then was a very  
6 close-minded and closed organization except for a few people.  
7 The Paul Zuckermans and Max Fishers of the world. But you  
8 didn't get the sense that they were reaching out to other  
9 people.

10 I think that has changed dramatically over the  
11 years. I think it really is a partnership between  
12 professionals and lay people. I think both views are sought.  
13 I really think there have been some significant changes in how  
14 the community is organized and how it runs itself. We need to  
15 do that. We need to be open to new ideas and new people.

16 **MS. CITRIN:** I'm always amazed when I go to a  
17 meeting and someone brings up an idea that I would have never  
18 thought of. It just boggles the mind that we have this great  
19 energy that's going on here.

20 If you had a vision for the future, what would you  
21 say, any ideas about where you see the Jewish community  
22 heading?

23 **MR. PAGE:** I don't know that I've got a good enough  
24 crystal ball to answer that, Susie. I would say this and  
25 you've heard this over the years. We're always wringing our

1 hands about whether the next generation is going to be as  
2 committed and involved as the prior generation. I've now been  
3 through at least two or three generations of that and my  
4 feeling is that's just not true. That each generation comes  
5 with its own strengths and vitality, and you could just look  
6 back on the senior leadership, lay leadership of the  
7 Federation when I started it was Max Fisher, Irwin Green, Paul  
8 Zuckerman.

9 **MS. CITRIN:** Leonard Simon?

10 **MR. PAGE:** I left him out when I was talking about  
11 people who made an influence on my life. Leonard was clearly  
12 one of those.

13 **MS. CITRIN:** He's our hero.

14 **MR. PAGE:** He was spectacular. So focused and  
15 dedicated and unrelenting in everything that he did. He was  
16 also a friend of my parents. I got hooked up with him early  
17 and I was so inspired by him.

18 My point is that if you looked at those people, you  
19 say how could we ever replace the Leonard Simons and Max  
20 Fishers and Paul Zuckermans of the world. If you fast forward  
21 one generation, you had Joel Tauber, Marty Citrin, Conrad  
22 Giles, David Hermelin, so forth. Then you fast forward to  
23 today, and you've got great leadership today and wonderful  
24 young people in their 30s and 40s. Every year you go to the  
25 young leadership awards and they get better and better. I

1 don't really have any concerns about the quality.

2 **MS. CITRIN:** That's promising.

3 **MR. PAGE:** That's ultimately what it's all about.  
4 We'll have our challenges and they'll overcome them I think.

5 **MS. CITRIN:** I was going to ask you what you thought  
6 your best accomplishment was or incident that you remember,  
7 but obviously you've already talked about that with things  
8 that you've said. Any secrets we don't know about David Page,  
9 that you're a doting grandfather?

10 **MR. PAGE:** Oh, I'm a doting grandfather. I just  
11 learned that I have a fourth granddaughter yesterday. My son  
12 Jason lives in Charlevoix and he and his wife have a son Max.  
13 She was expecting on the 15th of June, so we were up there and  
14 hung around for a few days. She was late and I had to get  
15 back for things and then my wife, who teaches at the medical  
16 school, had to get back. so we got back and of course  
17 yesterday she had the baby.

18 **MS. CITRIN:** What's the baby's name?

19 **MR. PAGE:** The baby's name is Sydney Rose. I've got  
20 four beautiful grandchildren and three wonderful kids. I've  
21 got lots of secrets, none of which I'm sharing with you.

22 **MS. CITRIN:** You don't want to talk about your  
23 friendship with Ruth Bader Ginsberg? That's kind of  
24 interesting.

25 **MR. PAGE:** Ruth was in law school with me at

1 Harvard. She was a class behind me, but her husband was in my  
2 class, Marty Ginsberg. So I know her; I'm not one of her  
3 intimate best friends.

4 **MS. CITRIN:** It's interesting that you were talking  
5 about women not actually in great attendance.

6 **MR. PAGE:** In our second year of law school she had  
7 her daughter, and she invited me over for dinner and she  
8 cooked a nice dinner and so forth. She was brilliant and she  
9 was on the Law Review. But when Marty graduated and started  
10 practice in New York, she went with him so she transferred to  
11 Columbia. She was lost as a Harvard graduate and graduated  
12 Columbia. Then when she got out of Columbia, she couldn't get  
13 a job as a lawyer.

14 **MS. CITRIN:** Now women are plentiful.

15 **MR. PAGE:** About half of the people who attend law  
16 school are women. Half of the lawyers we hire in our firm are  
17 women. It's changed dramatically. We had a class of 500 and  
18 some students and I think there were seven or eight women in  
19 our class. It's changed. At Dartmouth there were no women.  
20 I just came back from my 50th reunion at Dartmouth. That's  
21 changed. The world has changed a lot.

22 **MS. CITRIN:** It sure has. Well, thank you very  
23 much.

24 **MR. PAGE:** Thank you, Susie. It was a pleasure.

25 **MS. CITRIN:** It was wonderful and wonderful to read

1 about all the things you've done. As I said, somehow you do  
2 them very quietly and don't cause any ruckus but manage to  
3 solve a lot of interesting and serious problems in our  
4 community.

5           **MR. PAGE:** That's nice of you to say. One of these  
6 days I'll have to talk to you about this dossier which I've  
7 never seen. I'll have to go through it and try to edit it.

8           **MS. CITRIN:** It's all wonderful. Thank you.

9           **MR. PAGE:** Thanks, Susie.