

1 **ORAL HISTORY OF:** Alan E. Schwartz
2 **INTERVIEWED BY:** Wendy Brice
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4 **LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Jewish Federation
5 **SUBJECT MATTER:** Jewish life, family history

6

7 **MS. BRICE:** I'm Wendy Rose Brice. Today is June
8 28th, 2004, and I'm sitting with Mr. Alan E. Schwartz at the
9 Jewish Federation Building in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, to
10 talk about his life and his leadership role in the Detroit
11 community.

12 The Jewish Federation provided me with a file that
13 they had collected, a bio of yours and some news clippings
14 over the years. It's just incredible the list of
15 accomplishments and directorships and awards you've won. So I
16 didn't know where to start talking to you and where to go, so
17 I thought I would start at the beginning and ask you a little
18 bit about what it was like when you were growing up, where
19 your family lived, how many siblings you had, some of the
20 memories you recall of Detroit in those days.

21 So let's start with your parents. They were?

22 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, my father and mother who are
23 passed away, my dad was born on the borderline of Russia and
24 Poland and came over probably at around the age of 3. My
25 grandfather, my father's father, was a Talmudic scholar. He

1 never learned to speak English. As I grew up and we came to
2 knew each other, we really couldn't converse but we used to
3 kind of kiss and hug and smile and frown, but we never really
4 spoke.

5 My mother was born in New York. My father met her
6 there and then they moved to Detroit, really to escape the
7 poverty and punishment of living on the Lower East Side of New
8 York without funds. Dad probably came here when he was in his
9 20s.

10 **MS. BRICE:** Was it before you were born? You were
11 born in Detroit?

12 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I was born in Detroit. And I was
13 born on Pingree, which was a highly populated Jewish community
14 of quite modest means in those years. That's where I grew up.

15 **MS. BRICE:** How many years did your parents stay in
16 that house on Pingree?

17 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I was born in 1925 and I would
18 believe that they stayed there for about eight or nine years.
19 Then we moved to Chicago Boulevard.

20 **MS. BRICE:** What was your father's profession?

21 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Dad became an attorney and really
22 specialized in creditor rights types of activities.

23 **MS. BRICE:** When you lived on Pingree, do you have
24 any memories of the neighborhood?

25 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Pingree was very close to Linwood. I

1 remember Pingree quite well. I remember our little flat.
2 They are all very happy, pleasant memories. We did live there
3 during the Depression years which were '29, '30, '31, but that
4 did not have any strong memories. I do remember our
5 neighbors. I had an elder brother. We used to walk on
6 Saturdays to the movie theater which was about five, six,
7 seven blocks away from us on Linwood. I went to Roosevelt
8 School. All those were really very happy memories. I don't
9 have unhappy, unpleasant, trying experiences as a youngster at
10 all.

11 **MS. BRICE:** Are there any particular merchants you
12 remember, either in the Chicago area or Linwood that stand
13 out?

14 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** No.

15 **MS. BRICE:** How did your family celebrate holidays?
16 Were you fairly observant?

17 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Not really. My grandparents were and
18 we would attend High Holidays at their house.

19 **MS. BRICE:** Were they in Detroit at this time?

20 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** They had moved from New York to
21 Detroit. It was kind of my father's responsibility to make
22 sure that they were well. Again, my grandfather really never
23 worked, because being a Talmudic scholar, they lived on
24 Rochester Road right across from Shaarey Zedek, so that he
25 would be able to walk to schul. He used to help congregants

1 with their teachings and knowledge. Notwithstanding that, we
2 really were not brought up in a strongly religious
3 environment. I did attend Shaarey Zedek on High Holidays but
4 did not observe the sabbath or otherwise.

5 **MS. BRICE:** What about your wife's family?

6 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Marianne grew up in Detroit. Her
7 father was a remarkably successful person. His name was Nate
8 Shapero and he founded, over a great number of years, the
9 Cunningham Drug Store chain. It became a publicly owned
10 company but he was the head of it. Then his son was the head
11 of it. As a matter of fact, at one point I acted as chairman
12 of it. But ultimately it was sold. They were raised at
13 Temple Beth El. But again, were not deeply observant and
14 their experience was to attend High Holidays to go to Temple,
15 but that would pretty much be it.

16 **MS. BRICE:** Did you and Marianne raise your children
17 in a more religious environment?

18 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Not really. I think it was very much
19 in the form that we, too, were brought up. The kids went to
20 Sunday School at Temple Beth El. We would observe the High
21 Holidays in our home and with our family and would attend
22 services. But it would not be very frequent that we would be
23 within our temple on other than on those occasions.

24 **MS. BRICE:** And yet your Jewish identity is very,
25 very strong.

1 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** It was always very strong. There was
2 never any question about that, in terms of who we were and our
3 pride in being it.

4 **MS. BRICE:** How is it that you went to Cranbrook for
5 your high school education?

6 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, I think it was part of my dad's
7 philosophy. I think Dad's dedication was really obviously to
8 be a good husband and good father. He wanted his children to
9 have a better life than he had. I think he recognized from
10 the very beginning that for that better life to be achieved,
11 education was going to be the cornerstone of it. When I was
12 12 years old I went to Cranbrook. I became a boarder because
13 at that time you couldn't be a day student if you lived south
14 of the Eight Mile Road. And I used to see my folks on the
15 weekends, but they were doing that just to make sure that I
16 had the cornerstone of an education.

17 **MS. BRICE:** Did you study arts there as well as
18 regular education?

19 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** No. Others could have but mine was
20 just a regular curriculum.

21 **MS. BRICE:** Do you think being at Cranbrook
22 influenced your passion about the arts in this community?

23 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Not really. I think Cranbrook helped
24 me to be able to deal with all types of people. There was
25 perhaps one or two persons that were Jewish in my class. But

1 there was practically no obvious anti-Semitism. But I did
2 learn to deal with and be comfortable with all types of folks.
3 Cranbrook was a church centered school. And interestingly
4 enough it had no influence on me, but I became what is called
5 a prefect, which was an officer. And on Sundays, being a
6 boarder, I would go to Cranbrook's Christ Church and would
7 very often pass the plate. But it at no time caused me to
8 compromise or waiver my own religious background.

9 **MS. BRICE:** You said you were one of just a few
10 Jewish students. Was there anyone else from your neighborhood
11 that went to Cranbrook?

12 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** No, not to my knowledge.

13 **MS. BRICE:** That's unusual.

14 So you were at Cranbrook in --

15 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I graduated in 1943 on the 5th day of
16 June.

17 **MS. BRICE:** After you graduated from Cranbrook you
18 were called to service.

19 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I graduated in 1943, which was a war
20 year. I went to the University of Michigan for one semester,
21 and then I went into the United States Navy. The Navy sent
22 me, as part of a naval program, first to Western Michigan
23 College and then to Harvard Business School. I became
24 commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy. Went
25 over to the island of Guam, which is in the South Pacific.

1 And then came back and was separated from service, and went
2 back to the University of Michigan for two semesters, and the
3 university, I'm sure, was a program they just had, but gave
4 you kind of credit for everything you did, including your time
5 overseas. So after two semesters they gave me my
6 undergraduate degree, and then I went to Harvard Law School
7 and graduated from there.

8 **MS. BRICE:** Amazing. Was your father involved in
9 community service and leadership?

10 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Not really. I think Dad was too
11 busy. He did become a member of Knollwood Country Club. He
12 was president during the Depression years. But Dad and Mother
13 were not involved in community life and I think Dad would just
14 not involved with dealing first with the Depression and then
15 dealing with his responsibilities. It was not part of his
16 history or culture.

17 **MS. BRICE:** After Harvard, if I read your resume
18 right, you went to New York to practice law and work for the
19 state attorney general there.

20 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I became special counsel. It wasn't
21 the attorney general. Following the Kefauver commission
22 hearings, I don't know that you would remember that -- there
23 was established within New York state state by the governor,
24 who was then Governor Dewey, established a Special Crime
25 Commission and I was appointed as a special counsel to this

1 Special Crime Commission, which was a crime commission whose
2 mission was to investigate the possibility of relationship of
3 the judiciary to organized crime. There were no dramatic
4 discoveries that were made, but I was asked to be a special
5 counsel for that and I did for a period of probably eight, ten
6 months.

7 **MS. BRICE:** And then you came back to Detroit
8 following that?

9 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, no. After that I went back to
10 the law firm and then my wife was from Detroit, I was from
11 Detroit, with the strong urging of our folks, we decided we
12 would come back and see what life might be like here as
13 opposed to practicing law on Wall Street New York.

14 **MS. BRICE:** What year did you marry Marianne?

15 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Marianne was at Wellsley. I
16 graduated law school in 1950, Marianne had finished her second
17 year at Wellsley. We got married in the summer of 1950, moved
18 to New York and Marianne finished her last two years at
19 Barnard College, which is part of Columbia.

20 **MS. BRICE:** So you came back here in 1952. When you
21 came back did you come back with the intent of opening your
22 own practice?

23 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I came back with the idea of
24 certainly practicing law, and I came back with the thought of
25 becoming associated with a law firm. I did look at a number

1 of them. At that time there were not very many Jewish people
2 that were in non-Jewish law firms. My father caused me to be
3 introduced to a man by the name of Jason Honigman. Jason and
4 Jack Miller were associated together. I visited with them and
5 we decided that we would form our three-person partnership
6 rather than two-person partnership.

7 **MS. BRICE:** Were you the first larger Jewish law
8 firm in town at that time?

9 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Oh, no. First of all, there were
10 only three of us. But there were some Jewish law firms in
11 town that had, eight, 10, 12 people in them.

12 **MS. BRICE:** Was there any other professions in those
13 years, in the '40s, '50s and '60s ^{where} there was a lot of
14 discrimination against Jewish professionals entering certain
15 firms or fields. Did you find any of that in law?

16 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** In what sense?

17 **MS. BRICE:** In being interviewed, qualified, but not
18 accepted for the job?

19 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** No. Because I guess I never really
20 applied for a job. I visited a number of different firms but
21 decided -- now the firm I went with in New York was in 1950.
22 I scholastically achieved at a very high level at Harvard.
23 Third in my class, second in my class, fifth in my class. I
24 was editor of our Harvard Law Review. So I was a desirable
25 candidate.

1 When I decided to go to Wall Street, those firms
2 were taking Jewish people -- again, this is in 1950 -- but
3 there were very, very few Jewish people. Practically no
4 persons of color and practically no persons who were women.
5 As a matter of fact when I graduated law school, women were
6 not allowed to attend Harvard Law School. It wasn't until the
7 year after that, that women were permitted to matriculate
8 there. So in the law firm in New York, I was perhaps one or
9 two Jewish persons in a much larger firm, 50-60 people at that
10 time. But I did not feel any discrimination. I didn't feel
11 uncomfortable in the circumstances. That's the way life was.

12 In Detroit in 1950, that was pretty much true in
13 most of the professions as well. But I didn't personally feel
14 excluded from anything.

15 **MS. BRICE:** Did you open your first office in
16 downtown Detroit?

17 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Jack Miller, Jason and I. They were
18 in the First National Building. I joined them. We are still
19 in the First National Building and we are in the same space
20 except that now we have a number of floors in that building
21 where our office today has about 200 attorneys. We never left
22 our space, we just kept adding to it and adding to it.

23 **MS. BRICE:** As I was looking at your bio, it looks
24 like you have all second career and that's your career in the
25 community leadership area. For the sake of this interview,

1 you've done everything from stellar leadership at the United
2 Way, the Michigan Opera Theater to Jewish Federation, all
3 kinds of health agencies and arts agencies in between.

4 When you think back, what was it that got you going
5 in this commitment to the community that you have?

6 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I don't think I could really give you
7 an accurate answer as to that question. I think I can only
8 say that I have, as you've indicated, been involved in the
9 general community as well as the Jewish community. And from
10 the very beginning and the modest areas that I had been
11 invited to serve on, I always found it important and
12 satisfying. But I can't attribute it to, no one ever sat down
13 with me to say that this is what one should do or not. I just
14 seemed to have been invited to be active in lots of different
15 areas, Jewish and non-Jewish. I assumed that the invitations
16 came from the fact that I happened to have been successful in
17 my career, came to know people who were seeking others to be
18 of assistance. They would come to people they knew and I was
19 one of those persons. So I can't really attribute it to any
20 specific thing.

21 There is a story I tell from time to time, but it
22 isn't directly in terms of participating in that manner, but
23 my wife's family had a small private foundation under their
24 family name. We used to make a very modest contribution to
25 it. Their charitable giving would be made in that manner.

1 One day in about the year 1956 or '7, a young man by
2 the name of Max M. Fisher called me and asked if I would visit
3 him on a Saturday afternoon. Max at that time was in his
4 young 40s and I was in my middle 20s. He called me over and
5 said, Alan, I want to speak to you about your charitable
6 giving. You should give in your own name. You should not be
7 giving through the name of your wife's family. Stand on your
8 own feet, do it in your own way. We chatted for a while and I
9 said, thank you, Mr. Fisher. And I did from that point on and
10 it was very modest contributions I was making. Max didn't ask
11 me to become involved or anything, but he just felt that was
12 important and he took the time to visit with me.

13 **MS. BRICE:** Well heeded advice, do you think?

14 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Yes. And it happens, I've been very
15 close with Max over the years. I sometimes laugh about that
16 with him. At one public event when I was being honored and
17 Max was there, he spoke to me and then I said, he didn't speak
18 to me, he lectured me, which is what he did.

19 **MS. BRICE:** Were there any mentors in your life who
20 also gave you guidance, good examples?

21 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, there were wonderful examples,
22 but in terms of there being an active mentorship, no. I would
23 say that Max Fisher, with whom I had become very close over
24 the years. At a very young age I spent a year as chairman of
25 a company called the Arlan's Department Store, which took me

1 to New York, four to five days a week. Max was in New York
2 that often and we used to spend time there. When he became
3 the founding member of Detroit Renaissance, he asked me along
4 with Al Taubman, to become charter members of that. He wasn't
5 mentoring as such, but there's no question that because Max
6 was interested in and had the confidence in me, I did become
7 involved in organizations that I might very well have not been
8 involved with or would have been many years later. So there's
9 no question that Max's interest in me did relate to many of my
10 activities.

11 **MS. BRICE:** Detroit Renaissance and New Detroit,
12 they're different are they not?

13 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Yes.

14 **MS. BRICE:** What was New Detroit?

15 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** New Detroit then and now, and I
16 became president of New Detroit; I don't recall the year.
17 They were both founded after the riots of 1967. And you're
18 familiar with the terrible riots. New Detroit was formed
19 first and the first president was Joe Hudson. It helped to
20 try to deal with the social injustice and social relationship
21 of people within our community.

22 Detroit Renaissance was formed about three years
23 later, and Max was the founding chairman of that, that was and
24 is principally dealing with the economic development of the
25 city of Detroit and to some extent it's environs, by trying to

1 help with tax base and trying to help with population. But
2 the questions of racism and diversity and the like were
3 principally the function of New Detroit. I became active in
4 New Detroit, became its president. Found that to be a very
5 important activity, a very eye awakening activity. Each of
6 them continue with their respective rules, today.

7 **MS. BRICE:** Did you work a lot of Coleman Young?

8 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I worked a lot of Coleman Young. I
9 was involved in some of his quasi-governmental activities.
10 When Coleman was mayor, I was president of Federation and
11 there were a number of occasions where the Jewish Community,
12 through Federation, needed to talk with Coleman or vice versa.

13 **MS. BRICE:** When the Jewish Community was leaving
14 Detroit, did he ever talk about that or was that ever
15 addressed in a forum?

16 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Coleman never spoke to me about that.
17 When the Federation's headquarters were downtown on Madison
18 Avenue, at the time that there was a determination made that
19 the headquarters should be moved from there to here, I was not
20 the president at the time, but was very much involved with the
21 executive committee and the like. I was one of the few people
22 that thought it was not either the right or wise thing to do,
23 and I was very concerned that the city of Detroit would
24 believe that in their time of need, because this was following
25 the riots and there was a lot of distress, that they would

1 feel that the Jewish leadership was abandoning the city rather
2 than coming to its help and support. I was concerned about
3 that.

4 It turned out that that issue was never felt or
5 articulated and the Jewish people continued to be active in
6 Detroit affairs. It's just that the headquarters weren't
7 there. And the reason that the headquarters weren't there, it
8 wasn't to try to run away from Detroit, it was that a lot of
9 people just did not want to, then or now -- it's too bad -- to
10 come downtown. In order to be able to have the meetings and
11 agencies, it was felt that it could be more effective by
12 moving out, and so that's what it was.

13 **MS. BRICE:** It seems like your community commitment
14 has got three areas of interest. You've got arts, education
15 and you have community development, both within the Jewish
16 Community and the larger community. Is that fairly accurate?

17 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, I've not really thought of it
18 that way. I certainly would have said the division is between
19 the Jewish Community and the general community.

20 Now, in the general community, I guess I think I've
21 really been interested and active in just about all aspects of
22 the community. It happens that the field of art is through
23 the Detroit Institute of Arts.

24 I had been chairman of the symphony during their
25 financial period and I'm vice-chairman of it today. I serve

1 as an advisor on the arts commission. But these were to me
2 just really not art institutions. They were cultural
3 institutions that were important to the health and vigor of
4 the people in the community. I didn't choose them from that
5 standpoint.

6 My wife would have chosen the museum, as she had
7 been enormously active, then and now, because of her very
8 dominant interest in the field of art, of which I'm a very
9 happy passenger but in every sense she is the leader of our
10 involvement in the art field.

11 **MS. BRICE:** Do you ever say no to anybody?

12 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Oh, sure we do. But there would have
13 to be a reason to say no. There are times you have to say no,
14 but it really comes down to saying no if you feel that you
15 can't really be that helpful. There are times you aren't so
16 involved or that you don't think you're the right person to
17 make that type of contribution.

18 **MS. BRICE:** How would you describe your leadership
19 style?

20 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, I don't know if I would -- I'm
21 trying to be as accurate as I can -- I don't know if I've
22 really ever articulated myself to having a particular style.
23 I guess when you said what things do I think are important
24 that kind of cut across practically every agency, Jewish or
25 non-Jewish, I think I would say there's a number of things.

1 One, to have a sincere deep interest in the activity. Two, to
2 be prepared to spend the time that it takes because it usually
3 does take serious time.

4 Three, to make certain that you have a strong
5 professional group. If you said, would I ever say no, I would
6 tend to say no to an agency that had an important mission but
7 it did not have a professional staff that could do the job, I
8 would find that very difficult because I would not believe it
9 could be accomplished. On the other hand, it's easier in a
10 way to build, I believe, the correct community board than it
11 is to make certain that you have the right professional staff.
12 But once having the right professional staff and the right
13 board, I think most persons would want to make sure that the
14 authorities are properly delegated. There's an old aphorism
15 that you don't hear too much, but I think intuitively I always
16 was aware of this. If you can't measure the output, then it
17 is not very possible to value the input.

18 In philanthropy, very often grants are made or
19 programs occur but there traditionally may not have been
20 enough valuation of what happened, how many lives were really
21 affected, how many were really impacted. Was it being done in
22 the most efficient manner? Was it being too limited? All the
23 things that can be measured sometimes by metrics. I think
24 increasingly philanthropy is being aware of the requirement of
25 measuring outcomes.

1 So all those things together with lots of other
2 things, I suppose would have to do with style. Obviously
3 having strong, excellent people, and making sure that their
4 authorities are well delegated.

5 **MS. BRICE:** I wrote the book on the history of the
6 Fresh Air Society. I don't know if you saw that or not.

7 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** No, I didn't.

8 **MS. BRICE:** And in doing so, I interviewed Lester
9 Burton. He told me a story that I don't know, I think you
10 were among this group that he was talking about. He was
11 talking about the Tamarack Hills authority. In the days when
12 that group was active, that the group of gentlemen who were on
13 the authority, were leaders like yourself and Lester Burton,
14 I'm trying to remember some of the other ones. Was Shiffman
15 on the authority?

16 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I was involved with Fresh Air, but
17 even that, I don't have a vivid memory of the type of
18 involvement I had.

19 **MS. BRICE:** Well, the story Lester told me I think
20 applies anyway. He said this group of influential men in town
21 at the time, in the '70s and '80s, had the ability -- he
22 called them an old boy's club -- that they would get together,
23 they would talk about what the needs are in the community, and
24 just come up with the money. And one guy would ask the other,
25 and the other would ask the next. And the next time the need

1 came up, the process would repeat itself only in a different
2 order.

3 I wondered if you feel that there's a sense of that,
4 that the philanthropists in this community know when to give.
5 But how do you ask? How do you initiate that process of
6 asking for the money to be given these big projects?

7 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I have never been, in my judgment, a
8 leader in the fund-raising aspects of our community. Sure,
9 I've been a participant, and yes, I would do some asking, but
10 if I have been a leader in many of the philanthropic
11 activities, I would never have thought of myself as a leader
12 in the fund-raising areas. There are others who clearly have
13 been and are and I think that could be better directed to
14 them. But in the instances where I have asked others for
15 support, which goes on today -- there are things I do, both in
16 the Jewish and non-Jewish community -- it's very simple. You
17 have to believe very sincerely in the importance of the
18 activity. Two, it has to be important enough to you, to be
19 able to make a contribution. And, three, if you think it's
20 that important, then what you're trying to do is to help make
21 this happen, because it's important. You go to your friends
22 and very often you'll have another person with you, a
23 professional person, who will -- I won't mention any names.

24 I did not go to Wayne State University, but I happen
25 to think Wayne State is important to our community and I serve

1 as a trustee of their foundation. The president has asked me
2 if I would speak to another person and I will. I've made a
3 modest contribution and I will be asking him for a modest
4 contribution. But a member of the university will be with me.

5 So it's like everything else. Identify something
6 that you think it's important. If it's important to you, you
7 better exhibit that, and then you'll want to have others
8 support it as well, within their range of capacity and
9 philanthropy. And not everyone will say yes.

10 **MS. BRICE:** As you think about all the different
11 leaders, both persons like yourselves, who've taken strong
12 leadership roles and development agencies, and the
13 philanthropists. And you've already spoken about Max Fisher.
14 But who are others that you admire for the work that they've
15 done?

16 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** And we're talking in the Jewish
17 Community. Well, everyone would always begin with Max Fisher.
18 There's so many fine people. I would think of a person like
19 Bill Berman, who then and now has been very active, and
20 particular interest in education. Judge Avern Cohn, a close
21 personal friend, has always had an unusual, interesting and
22 strong interest, and an impact upon many different areas.
23 Very often there's scholarship areas, intellectual areas, and
24 even today there's not too many months that go by that I don't
25 get a call from Avern saying, can we be of help here, and

1 we'll meet with a professional person who needs help in his
2 office for an agency that can be any type of agency.

3 Each one of the presidents of Federation have,
4 without exception, been involved in dynamic and useful, and we
5 all know their names. But I think the names I've mentioned
6 probably are the ones that most immediately stand out in my
7 mind.

8 **MS. BRICE:** Back to the 1970s. In those years you
9 were chairman of the Jewish Welfare Federation. You received
10 the Butzel Award and the B'nai Brith Humanitarian Award. What
11 were the challenges that this Jewish Community faced during
12 those years?

13 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** In the '70s? Well, this would have
14 been -- I'm reconstructing it, because I can't really
15 visualize it that well, but the riots that were in 1967, so
16 that in 1970 the city of Detroit was still torn with the
17 ravages of the riots. There was an enormous amount of racism
18 and distrust and concern. So I think that was one of the
19 paramount interest. And I mentioned to you the outgrow that
20 was New Detroit. I was active there and was concerned and
21 true in Renaissance. Federation was clearly, as good
22 citizens, interested in that as well.

23 In the year 1970, I don't recall the specific Jewish
24 needs at the time. I don't recall in what years the Israeli
25 circumstance was such that there was -- because the wars and

1 the like as to -- at what point that was it -- at its height
2 for not.

3 **MS. BRICE:** I read your comments, I believe from
4 1972, when you were president of Federation, that the first
5 group of Russians had come into Detroit that year. Looking to
6 address those needs.

7 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** And those were financial needs as
8 well as social needs, vocational, educational and yes, that
9 was clearly in our mind.

10 Not directly responsive to this, but there's a story
11 I kind of like to tell. It must have occurred in the '70s.
12 This kind of has nothing to do with anything, except it's in
13 that time period. In the '70s, Henry Ford came to Max Fisher
14 and to myself and said, the time has come for Jewish persons
15 to be able to be members of the Detroit Club, which was the
16 old established non-Jewish club. Most of the social clubs
17 were still exclusive. The DAC was at that time. And he asked
18 Max Fisher and myself if we would become members. We said
19 yes, on the basis that if we became members that it would mean
20 that it would be open to all appropriate Jewish persons. The
21 answer, of course, was yes. It was Joe Hudson and Henry Ford
22 but Henry took the lead. Therefore, both of our names were
23 submitted and it has to be approved by the board of the
24 Detroit Club. Any one person is able to black ball you. It's
25 a blind black ball. We were both black balled.

1 I called up Henry and Max -- some of this is in his
2 own autobiography but it just shows the wisdom of Max -- I
3 said, Max, here we are, we're both black balled, we have been
4 going to lunches there, community lunches, for years. What do
5 we do now? He said, Al -- these were his words -- Alan, you
6 don't understand. This is not our problem. This is their
7 problem.

8 It was written up in the *New York Times*, not because
9 of me but because of Max. But our names are in there. And
10 then about three months later, Henry called back and said, we
11 want you to put your names back in. There was one person who
12 had black balled both of you. Not for correct reasons. It
13 was because you were Jewish. Our names were put back in. We
14 were both admitted and today it's a total open club just as
15 Detroit Athletic Club is and most of the clubs are today. In
16 any event, that was kind of the way society worked.

17 Again, not in response directly to this, but in
18 those years I was on the board of the Burroughs Corporation,
19 which became Unysis, in the computer business. There was an
20 outstanding African American who was the director of
21 Burroughs. And I remember saying, why don't we have lunch and
22 I'll meet you at the Book Cadillac Hotel. This was late '60s
23 or early '70s. When we went to go into the main dining room,
24 we were asked if we would not eat there because they really
25 didn't want to have African Americans eat in the main dining

1 room.

2 Now, that was the environment at that time.
3 Obviously people were concerned not only about Jewish matters
4 but non-Jewish matters. These were very much in everyone's
5 mind and experience. So in those years I'm sure social
6 justice was very much in my mind. But I guess it is today as
7 it is in the minds of all of our people.

8 **MS. BRICE:** You were talking about how Max Fisher
9 looks to tomorrow. What do you see as the challenges ahead of
10 us as a Jewish community?

11 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, over a long period of time I
12 would believe that our challenge begins with the fact that our
13 population is diminishing and that there's a very high
14 percentage of mixed marriages that are occurring. I am not
15 anti-mixed marriage at all, except that one of the concerns
16 about the mixed marriage is that the youngsters very often are
17 not embracing Judaism or it may not be embracing anything.
18 This is a concern.

19 I think in many ways Bob Aronson and others might
20 not quite agree with this and if so, I would yield to them.
21 But I think that the unified role of Federation years ago had
22 a somewhat stronger dominant position than it does today. I
23 think that's very important that there be a strong organized
24 Jewish community, and that does require a very strong Jewish
25 Federation.

1 So I guess what I would say I would be most
2 concerned about are young Jewish people receiving Jewish
3 educations, growing up as Jews, being involved in the
4 organized Jewish community, in order to be able to
5 collectively meet the needs both locally and internationally.
6 Because I do believe that the international needs will become
7 very possibly greater than ever. I don't know how to assess
8 what the local needs will be, but I know of no reason why they
9 should be less than they are, because there will always be
10 special needs for special Jewish people, which can only be
11 effectively taken care of by an organized Jewish community.

12 **MS. BRICE:** When you were growing up, the Jewish
13 community geographically lived very close together. Today,
14 we're very spread out in this area. They're dominantly out in
15 the Bloomfields. We have a lot of miles between us. How do
16 you think that's affected developing Jewish identities and
17 leadership in the community?

18 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I wouldn't know how to measure it,
19 but I do believe that a dispersion, a geographical dispersion
20 does interfere to some extent with the ease of there being
21 identification. I think if everybody lived within X number of
22 miles of each other and from their synagogues, and from their
23 temples, and from their Federation offices and the like, I
24 think that it becomes more natural and easy for people to
25 develop those associations.

1 But does that mean that there's anything fatal in
2 that, absolutely not. Is this going to change, absolutely
3 not. And one could say it's healthy as well, as long as
4 Jewish people stay strong in their Jewish identifications.
5 Then it's probably healthy that Jewish people are able to live
6 in, and matriculate in, and be members of organizations and
7 institutions and housing areas all over. So that what we
8 really would like is to have total equality in all aspects of
9 life, and yet be doing it as Jewish people, and not need to
10 live in a programmed area and be able to go to only certain
11 schools and to be members of only certain institutions. So I
12 think it's good, but I think it does add to the challenge.

13 **MS. BRICE:** Okay. Last set of questions.

14 If we had a scrapbook that contained snippets of all
15 the work that you've done in the community, of all the
16 different organizations, which page would you want me to see?
17 Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of?

18 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, I don't know if I'd call them
19 accomplishments. But if you said which of my activities would
20 I have possibly even enjoyed the most or felt the best about,
21 I guess I'd clearly have to include my Federation activities.
22 I would include my Renaissance activities. I would include
23 New Detroit.

24 I'll mention one that is probably not very known.
25 When I was quite young there was a Skid Row Committee in

1 Detroit. At that time, Michigan Avenue was a skid row, and
2 the skid row alcoholics used to live there and they used to be
3 called skid row bums. I was asked by Mayor Miriani at that
4 time to be the chairman of the Skid Row Committee. And I
5 particularly enjoyed the opportunity of working with these
6 very unfortunate people and trying to find ways for them to
7 get back into society, and to be able to deal with their
8 alcoholism, and with their poverty, and with their families.
9 I was quite young at that time, but I've never forgot the
10 satisfaction that came, because that was about as distressed
11 as people could be subjected to.

12 I've always enjoyed the museum, enjoyed the
13 orchestra. I could go on and on, but I really wouldn't know
14 where to begin or end.

15 **MS. BRICE:** If we were flipping through this book,
16 who are some of the people you would point out to me that
17 you've met over the years and worked with over the years?

18 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Are we talking about Jewish people?

19 **MS. BRICE:** No. Just in your community roles.

20 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Well, in these areas I've had the
21 opportunity of working with several of our governors.
22 Governor Romney asked me to head up a program to develop a
23 foundation for the cultural arts. That still exists today.
24 And I enjoyed working with Romney. And I enjoyed working with
25 Governor Engler, although we had certain political issues.

1 I've enjoyed working with the mayors of our city,
2 practically all majors including Kwame Kilpatrick. I've
3 enjoyed working with council people. Certainly with our great
4 civic leaders, the Max Fishers of the world and the Joe
5 Hudsons, Rick Wagner, who's CEO of GM. All the different
6 organizations. I've always been on a lot of board of
7 directors and your community activities seem to involve them
8 as well. Being on the boards of Comerica, Detroit Edison,
9 Bendix Corporation, all of those different companies.

10 I remember Mike Blumenthal who was the head of
11 Unysis. Mike today is more Jewish than he was then, but
12 really wanted to be of assistance in certain areas. It was
13 always exciting and interesting to work with him.

14 Harold Shapiro was the president of the University
15 of Michigan and became the president of Princeton University.
16 He was a very interesting person who was brought up in Canada
17 in a Jewish family. He had very strong educational views.
18 But it does become an opportunity and a privilege, if you're
19 involved deeply in matters, to be involved with people who are
20 able to be involved in public life and to make a difference.

21 **MS. BRICE:** Do you feel you've made a difference?

22 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I think I've been part of
23 organizations and people that have helped to make certain
24 things happen. I certainly didn't do it by myself. But, yes,
25 I think I've been part of teams and organizations that have

1 helped to -- and sometimes have failed, but has usually helped
2 to make things a little better.

3 **MS. BRICE:** Knowing that our purpose in recording
4 this is to pass on to the future generations leadership
5 qualities and skills, what advice do you offer?

6 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** The only advice I think I would give
7 is, and I have as young people have spoken to me, if you're
8 going to be involved in community life, which I hope most
9 people will, do it for the right reasons. The right reason is
10 to try to be of assistance to others. And if you're going to
11 enter the arena, do it seriously. Don't do it with your left
12 hand. If you are, one, you're not going to be very effective
13 at it, and two, maybe you're utilizing space that could be
14 occupied by another person. And then finally, if the person
15 has the interest and the ability, start as early as one
16 possibly can. One of the excuses is not an excuse, that they
17 don't have the time to do it. You know the old saying, if you
18 want something done ask a person who is too busy to do it,
19 because he's going to take it on and find a way to do it. So
20 my advice would be for those who really want to be helpful for
21 the right reason, get started and be serious. Do as good a
22 job as you possibly can, and get the satisfaction from it.

23 **MS. BRICE:** Thank you.

24 **MR. SCHWARTZ:** Thank you.