Oral history interviews of the Vietnam Era Oral History Project

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Brooks Anderson
Narrator

Kim Heikkila
Interviewer

May 7, 2018
Duluth, MN

Brooks Anderson **-BA**
Kim Heikkila **-KH**

[Interview starts abruptly; introduction of interview has been pulled from later in the transcript for an easier start.]

KH: I have some questions for you about all of this, and about that, about your involvement in the Selma march, too, but I just kind of want to go back a second and just, for recording purposes, say that this is an interview for the Minnesota Historical Society's Minnesota in the Vietnam War Era Oral History Project, and it is Monday, May 7, 2018, and I'm here with Brooks Anderson at his home in Duluth [Duluth, MN]. We're looking out on beautiful Lake Superior on a beautiful spring day—finally, finally here.

My name is Kim Heikkila and today I'm going to be talking to Brooks about his role in the anti-Vietnam War movement in Duluth, as well as his work in the civil rights movement and for other social justice movements. So thank you, Brooks, for doing this. So I just wanted to get that on tape so when somebody comes to listen to this, they'll know who we are and what we're doing here.

So, let me think about this. Okay, the reason—the way I've been starting most of these interviews is to ask everybody to just answer some—five questions very briefly and then we'll go back and we can pick up where I just interrupted you again. So, I know I just said it, but if you could just state and spell your name.

BA: It's Brooks Anderson, B-r-o-o-k-s and Anderson with an "o." I'm eighty-five years old and my story starts or I come to Duluth at age, what am I, thirty? Let me figure it out, thirty—

KH: What year were you born?

BA: I was born in '33, and I came to Duluth in '63, so we can do the math.

KH: And where were you born?

BA: Southwestern Minnesota, Cottonwood. I went to St. Olaf College [St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN], Luther Seminary [Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN], so—and my first parish was in Mankato [Mankato, MN].

[To be continued later in transcript]

[Original start of interview]

BA: SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] came to the campus in '63. The bus, integrated bus trips and the lunch counter [sit-ins] were drawing their energy from the campus but more than that, they were activating the campus and so activism came to the campus in '63. I suppose I came here with some of the instincts to become a social activist, but that wasn't my training; that wasn't my background. And this is—UMD [University of Minnesota, Duluth, Duluth, MN] was not particularly a liberal campus so it wasn't real ripe ground for the kind of social upheaval that was coming, but it came there, too. But that—let's see, that's '63.

I always tell the story to local people because we forget it, but in '64, in the fall of '64, we had a speaker on campus, John Howard Griffin [John Howard Griffin (1920-1980)] and, you know, somebody on a book tour, kind of an interesting theme, *Black Like Me* [*Black Like Me*, by John Howard Griffin, Houghton Mifflin, 1961]. But Kirby Ballroom [Kirby Ballroom, Kirby Student Center, UMD, Duluth, MN] is their venue up there. It was packed and down below—that's on the third floor—the second floor was packed, so a huge crowd. And I tell that to people on campus. Can you imagine that today? I mean, even the most interesting book tour drawing a couple thousand people from a town this size?

And so while on the back side of that discussion, I started planning a trip to go do civil rights voter registration the following spring, on spring break and we were to go to Jackson, Mississippi, where Medgar Evers' [Medgar Wiley Evers (1925-1963)] brother Charles [James Charles Evers (1922-)] was. And when we got there—it was five students and me—he said, "Don't unpack your bags. We're just going to overnight in your host homes," and then, his language was, "And I want to deliver your white faces to my friend Martin." And the next day was the start of the Selma to Montgomery march [Selma and Montgomery, AL]. So we spent the whole time for the duration of our trip at the Selma to Montgomery march and that was powerful; it really affected all of us. You know, just kind of the accident of winding up there, not knowing that's where we were going.

And then the sense even then that there was a lot of history going on here. This was a big, big deal for our country.

[Delayed introduction for interview]

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BA: Southwestern Minnesota, Cottonwood. I went to St. Olaf College [St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN], Luther Seminary [Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN], so—and my first parish was in Mankato [Mankato, MN].

KH: So that's where you were just before you came to Duluth?

BA: So a Minnesota story all the way.

KH: Okay, all right. And how do you identify yourself racially and/or ethnically?

BA: Well, white—I'm Norwegian heritage and, you know, I'm still Lutheran but marginally.

KH: Which I assume is part of this whole story as well, which we will definitely get to.

BA: Yeah.

KH: So, can you identify, just very briefly, because then we'll go on and talk about it in more detail, but what kind of major antiwar and/or civil rights organizations or events were you involved in?

BA: Well, a number of civil rights events. I mean, the trip to Selma would be one. I was—one of the great honors of my life was to be the speaker, the primary speaker—there were a number of speakers—at the memorial four days after Martin Luther King's [Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr. (1929-1968)] death. But, you know, roughly, involvement in the civil rights movement led to, for me, rather directly into opposition to the war in Vietnam and I was, I suppose, one of two or three people who were identified as the leaders of that movement up here.

KH: In Duluth.

BA: I think of myself as a pretty private person but became a very public person through those events and they were public in some pretty negative ways. I mean the constituency I served was not keen on the whole movement of civil rights. I had lots of people pleading with me not to go south when we wound up in Selma. So that was the climate—my constituency clearly was not of a mind to invest the church's resources in influencing students to be protestors.

KH: Right. Okay, I'm going to come back to that, too. I'm making notes here so I know what to follow up on. You also were involved in CALC [Clergy and Laity Concerned], which for the listening audience out there—and we were talking about it a little before the recorder was on, about the difference in name—but the national organization was—

BA: Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. And I don't remember when the national was formed; when we formed ours, but it would have been kind of a tight sequence. I mean, I remember the national leadership, you know, Berrigan [Daniel Berrigan (1921-2016) and Abraham Heschel [Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972)]—can't even remember the Lutheran minister [Rev. Richard Neuhaus] who was part of kind of a threesome who kicked it off. But we were very much attuned to them and their leadership.

I don't know why we wanted to distance ourselves a little bit but we did that by naming ourselves Clergy and Laity Concerned, which I think was a more appropriate term, but that was before the women's movement and we didn't have that kind of consciousness generally at that point.

KH: So you wanted to stay affiliated, but also kind of distance yourself a bit from—

BA: I don't even know who we had conversation with locally to say, because if I remember, I'm not sure I would, but—I don't know, there aren't many around today that might—there's a Phil Solem [Philip Solem] was one of the other people that—he was a Catholic priest and was—he wrote a piece urging Catholic young people to resist the draft and published it, and so he really put himself out there.

KH: He was from up here?

BA: He was from here.

KH: Oh, interesting.

BA: He's still in northern Minnesota. He lived in our Lutheran Student Center for a time after that, cleaned out the coal bin and made it his cell and—so he and I, I think, were the two high

visibility people leading the antiwar movement. And the Lutheran Student Center became kind of a base for a lot of our organizing.

KH: So I want to—and right now you're retired.

BA: Yeah, I'm retired.

KH: Okay, so those are my short intro questions, but I want to start kind of at the beginning as it were and ask you to just tell me a little bit about growing up in—you said Cottonwood, Minnesota? How many kids were there in your family?

BA: Four.

KH: And where are you in the order?

BA: I'm the fourth.

KH: You're the youngest of four? Okay.

BA: It's a town of what? Eight hundred people. Pretty conservative, mostly Lutheran, I think when I grew up the big social upheaval of the time was that Catholics were moving to town (laughter); the Belgian plague was coming in and buying up good Lutheran land and that was the social issue for us. It was conservative in a lot of ways. I think the veterans' groups had a strong influence in town and, like all of America, World War II— we were still living in the shadow of World War II.

KH: And you said you were born in '33?

BA: Thirty-three, yeah.

KH: So do you remember World War II? Do you have a memory of those years?

BA: Oh, yeah. It really put its stamp on me. I mean, we grew up on just a daily diet of World War II propaganda, you know. We were taught to hate the Japs and mock Mussolini [Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini (1883-1945)] and, of course Hitler [Adolf Hitler (1889-1945)] was just a dirty word. I remember scrap iron collection. I think most of those were propaganda efforts. I don't think they were war efforts as much as propaganda, food stamps—World War II was a very large imprint.

KH: Did anybody in your family serve?

BA: My brother-in-law was in the marines and would write letters from Okinawa and from China and, We'll talk about it when I get home, and he came home and he couldn't talk about it. He saw some gruesome stuff.

KH: So you must have had a sister then who was a bit older than you if she was married at the time?

BA: And while she was—while Jim was in the war, she came home with a teaching degree and was my teacher in junior high school.

KH: Really?

BA: Which was interesting.

KH: I suppose that could be a pro or a con, depending. (laughter) So he came home, though, and never talked about his war experience?

BA: Yeah. It wasn't known, and later on, when I become a staunch antiwar person, I think we could communicate on some level, but we mostly didn't go there.

KH: What did your parents do?

BA: My father was—my grandfather, in this small town, was something of a giant. He founded four mutual insurance companies and my dad stayed with the business. But so that little town—he was a big man and he was very big in the Lutheran church. He had been on—I think that branch of the Lutheran church had like five trustees and he was one of them. So the bishops of the church if they were anywhere in southern Minnesota, they came to see my grandpa.

KH: So it wasn't too far a stretch then, ultimately, when you decided to enter the clergy given your family's background and—

BA: Right. That was, yeah, I was—I don't think anybody would have expected it but going to a church college is where the decision was made.

KH: And so you had one sister. What about your other two siblings? Boys, girls?

BA: A brother who became a lawyer; he's next older and then another sister who lived in Waseca [Waseca, MN], was probably, along with me, a little more of an activist but she was on the school board in Waseca and her husband was a banker.

KH: What about your mom? What did she do?

BA: Didn't have a profession other than homemaker and mother. I think she was mystified by my activism also, but I was never alienated from my family by my activism. I mean, in this small town, we were the—my family were a rarity. We were Republicans in a Democrat town. But, you know, alienation from my family was never part of my story. I was going in a direction nobody quite understood, but it was, I think, I was always embraced and respected for—integrity demanded that this was who I be and what I do.

KH: So, and maybe the answer to this question is implied in what you're saying, but aside from the fact that you were all Lutheran and it was a big part of your family experience, were there any other particular values that you were raised with?

BA: I always thought my father had an incredible sense of integrity and I think that's a rare quality. I think you need to be who you are and I guess that would be the strongest—You know, in college, I don't know where it comes from; I suppose it comes from—I had a strong sense that we're all put on this earth to make a difference and I don't know where in my background that comes but I certainly had a sense of it in, How can I invest my life in ways that will make a difference in the world? And ministry seemed like that at the time. It seemed like the right choice for me. And I don't think that's why most people go into the ministry. I think it has to do with saving souls and much more spiritual nourishing and that wasn't where my head was. It was to—from the position, you know, clergy have a really elevated position in lots of communities so it was a chance to use that position for social change.

KH: Okay, right from the outset?

BA: I think so. I don't know if I'm projecting that backwards or not but that seemed to be what motivated me. I studied sociology and for me, it was always a question of, what are the most effective ways to bring about needed social change?

KH: And so that was at St. Olaf you said.

BA: Yeah.

KH: So at that time, so 1933, you graduated in what year?

BA: Fifty-five.

KH: Fifty-five. From St. Olaf?

BA: Right.

KH: Or from high school? So '55 from St. Olaf, so '51—

BA: Yeah, '59 from Luther Seminary.

KH: Fifty-nine from seminary. So from high school then it would have been what? Fifty-one?

BA: Right.

KH: Okay. So at that time, in the fifties, '51, '55, even up through '59, if you're thinking at the time, you know, that you have chosen this path to into the ministry, in part at least, to do some good in the world, what kinds of good did you see as needing to be done? Were you aware of the civil rights movement? I mean, it was kind of early in the post-war years.

BA: No, I don't think I had any of the content—I didn't project that content; it was just—I guess the sense that there are injustices and we should be addressing them. But even that not as much as came later.

KH: Okay.

BA: I think, in some ways I think my story starts probably in the late sixties, maybe I started growing up about the time I go to Selma in '65, and there the transformation begins. So I come back—on the trip home from Selma, one of our five students, his name was Kenner Christensen, he was kind of the hippie among us. He was a chemistry student, went on to become a—get a doctorate in chemistry and teaching college, but a very bright student. He said on the way home, "You know, we've got to make the connection to Vietnam." And I said, "No, Kenner, that's—we've got to trust our leaders. They know more than we do." I said the old party line back then.

KH: This was on your way home from Selma?

BA: From Selma, 1965, Lyndon Johnson [US President Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973)] knows more than we do, you know, and Robert McNamara [Robert Strange McNamara (1916-2009)] knows more than we do. That's where my head—so that tells you how conservative I was at that time.

KH: Which is really interesting because you were just in Selma, and granted, one is foreign policy, one is domestic policy, but, you know, the civil rights movement, to a large degree was about, you know, challenging entrenched power, often in the seat of government—but you still held this kind of belief that well—?

BA: It didn't take me long to say Kenner was right and I was wrong. So by the end of '65, I was—a lot of my ministry dealt or came to deal with young men facing the draft. Phil Solem, the priest I told you about, when he left the parish—he was our draft counselor. I, to some degree, also did that and so dealing with young men with this awful decision. Here's a war we think is immoral and yet, I've been taught to serve my country. The young people I deal with didn't grow up in World War II like I did, but I had it deep in me; this is what you do. You go out and make sacrifices for your country. And so in '65, my head was turning, yeah, all right, civil rights and Vietnam protests are very closely linked and we need to say no to our government's policies.

KH: Now by '65, you know, so you graduate from St. Olaf in 1955. You're in Selma in 1965, so in those ten years the civil rights movement has become very active; very visible, you know, going from the Montgomery bus boycott to Selma. Emmet Till [Emmett Louis Till (1941-1955)] is in there; Charles, Medgar Evers—I mean, the Freedom Summer, there's been so much happening in the civil rights movement in the interim. Are you—how aware of the civil rights movement are you while you're in Mankato or in the seminary? Are you—?

BA: Well, not in seminary, but in Mankato, yes. I told about the trip to Miami.

KH: Yeah, can you say that again? I don't think we got that on tape. So you went to Miami in 1960.

BA: Yeah, I heard Martin Luther King speak. It was one of his very powerful speeches and it had to do with recounting his encounter with the Gandhi [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948)] movement; it was six weeks he spent in India and that's—he was sharing with us that and how he was—he came back, you know, really convinced that this was the way we'd bring about social change, through—and a very clear in saying, there a militancy to it, a militant, nonviolent civil disobedience. And so he spelled that out and again, with his—the power of his eloquence, it stuck with me. I don't know about if the rest of our busload of young people were as ready for it as I was, but I was ready to hear that.

KH: And that was in 1960. And what was the conference in Miami?

BA: Well, it was a national Lutheran youth gathering, mostly high school age, and we had a very active group that I was part of in Mankato, kind of our youth ministry there. I was assistant pastor but had a youth portfolio primarily.

KH: And so when you're sitting there and you're listening to Martin Luther King talk about this and about the Gandhian approach to social change, did that—had you been following anything Martin Luther King had been doing up until that point or was that the real point at which you started tuning in to him?

BA: Well, you couldn't miss some of it. I think he spoke in Mankato one time and for me that was less memorable, but we were aware of him. And I suppose, again, in the conservative circles I was in, I was more taken with his message and can remember a couple of sermons where I offended some of the power people by talking about King.

KH: When you came back and were in Mankato?

BA: So he was influencing me but not—I guess it's all sort of preparatory to the coming to the campus and then just being—I mean, the late sixties, people were [divided]—the divide within families, within churches, within communities was really powerful. There isn't much about the sixties we'd want—I mean, I think the sixties were wonderful in some ways. I think it brought us to the cusp of the kind of change we needed to make, but then the counter-reaction sets in in the seventies, and finally leads to a Ronald Reagan [US President Ronald Wilson Reagan (1911-2004)] and now [Trump] [US President Donald John Trump (1946-)]. But it was in the—let's see what it was I, in my—'65—

KH: So how do you get to UMD [University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, MN]? You come into UMD or into Duluth in 1963. Is it specifically to take a position at UMD?

BA: Right, it was a new position. I was the first full-time pastor, campus pastor, at UMD. The sixties—one of the things—campus ministry generally in the sixties was the church put a lot of investment into it, much more than today. And in part because my story is the story of a lot of campus chaplains that we needed to be reined in. But as I say, I'm the first full-time person at UMD but there was a full-time—later on there was a full-time Catholic; Episcopal person was half-time; there's UCC, which is other Protestant United ministry, there was a full-time person.

Later on there was another, there was a Missouri Synod Lutheran. The churches generally felt like we needed to be on the campus because that's where the future's being written. And I had a strong sense of that, that you could kind of—you knew where society was going if you really tuned in to what was going on on campus so that's going to come down to the rest of society in probably ten years. And I would say that indeed it did.

After the sixties and the early seventies, the activism of those years was over; fundamentalism came on the campus. And I think fundamentalism took over this country about ten years later and again has given us Donald Trump. I think more than any other factor is right-wing religion that gave us Reagan first and I think that's—it's the scourge that—I mean, you can get rid of Trump but somehow we've got to turn around the control that right-wing fundamental Christians have on this government.

KH: So you were just saying that in your view, and maybe in others' views at the time, the idea was to work on campus because there was the future. And, as you're saying, like ten years later these people who are students are now the leaders, good, bad or otherwise. So was that then, at the time you came to UMD to take this position in 1963, did that reflect that idea that drew you into the ministry about, you know, using the ministry to make change in the world? Were you thinking in those terms when you thought, All right, one way to do that is by working with these college students?

BA: Yes, mostly yes. I mean, campus ministry is a hard thing to define. It was hard to get into. A lot of ministers wanted to get into it and I got into more because of who I knew more than what I knew. But I had some people that liked me and when this position in Duluth—I already had—this is interesting. I live here and I look out at Lake Superior—my wife and I are going up to my cabin later today, which is one hundred twenty miles up the shore of Lake Superior—so I have two places on Lake Superior. I was already attached up here and I could have gone to Moorhead [Moorhead, MN] in campus ministry but I said, "I'll wait because I want to go to Duluth" and so I came to Duluth in '63.

What do you do? It isn't like a parish, just running a parish is—it runs itself but you've just got to come to work and make the gears move. Campus ministry—it's something—you define it as you go. But yes, they're trying to—I suppose the church's goal was to hang onto young people, young leaders, who might be led astray by secularism or whatever and so bring those spiritual advisors—but how do you do that? You have a Lutheran student organization and—

KH: So, yeah, what did you do? What did your work entail at UMD? How did you do that?

BA: Well, you run this student organization. At one point we acquired a large old mansion and we did student housing there and for a time we did a supper club. Tried a variety of things, and always trying to build but, at the same time, always this activism. It was true all over the country. Chaplains became leaders everywhere, all over the country, in antiwar and in civil rights. So there was this activism and there was a vacuum of leadership there and so you move into that realm, as my mind gets fully attuned to what civil rights and Vietnam are all about.

KH: So, this question may reveal my ignorance of the matter and you'll have to forgive me for this, but so when you take a job in campus ministry at UMD, who are you working for? Are you working for UMD? Are you working for the church? Is it some combination?

BA: I was working for the church. That made it interesting and a lot of people wondered if I was working for the university. And UMD is a unique campus in that it's essentially all one building. If you're not in there—and typically what campus ministry does is buys property on the edge and have a student center there. That's true in Minneapolis and Mankato, most places. Here, you needed to be on the campus so I think we had a more ecumenical thrust because of that. We needed to be in the campus and the university made an office available to us so the students could find us. So I spent most of my time on campus; I spent a lot of time with faculty and found that that doesn't translate too well to my constituents but I found working with faculty—because they were struggling with the same thing, a new generation of activist students and the students were right. They were right about Vietnam; they were right about civil rights, but especially Vietnam. There was—I'm linking arms with faculty people, saying, how do we serve these students who are really messed over by the system?

KH: So you mentioned your constituency a few times. How did you define that when you were a campus minister? Who was your constituency?

BA: It was the Lutheran churches of the area. So I would go to—Lutheran clergy get together monthly and I had a board that consisted about, mostly of Lutheran clergy so I'd say, relating to the area pastors was a big part of it.

KH: And I'm asking this because of something you said earlier, maybe even before the recorder was on, but the question for me is, then, when you come up here and you start this campus ministry and, you know, a couple years later you're going to Selma and then you're dealing with the war issue and the antiwar movement, is this what your constituency expected of you?

BA: Definitely not. And some were very offended by it; angered by it. I learned later, you know, there were—I should have been more paranoid than I was. I was told there was a group out in Lakeside that were meeting regularly to see how they could get rid of me and there were some clergy that were, when I came to clergy meetings, would be challenging my actions and the things I had done.

But I got along with many of them also, so it wasn't totally alienation. But they were, you know, they were trying times for everybody. The divisions in the late sixties, you know, families were divided; churches were divided. There was just a huge division in this country and it mostly had to do with an alienated youth culture, a youth culture that was turning to drugs. So while some blamed me, some just realized these were difficult times and I think some really appreciated that there were a few of us who were struggling to be on the front lines of this big divide in the country.

KH: So how would you have described the general tone on campus when you got there in 1963?

BA: Sixty-three? Oh, I think it was very quiet. This was a quiet campus and in the early stages of activism. UWS [University of Wisconsin–Superior, Superior, WI] interestingly, was more activist I think because the time they had a lower outstate tuition and so a lot of people who couldn't get into the elite eastern schools, eastern liberals were coming to UWS. It was much more of an activist campus than UMD. I don't—won't say much more about it but they were, as we did community aligned events, there would be more students from UWS in leadership roles than UMD.

KH: How interesting. And I—what was the racial composition? And I don't expect statistics, of course, but how would you have described the racial composition of the student body at UMD in 1963?

BA: Well, very few blacks and not many foreign students at that time. So in '63, there was, must have been, 90 percent plus white, the constituency of northeastern Minnesota. I think later on we had a lot more foreign students and I don't know if there was ever much recruiting of black students but we always had a black constituency. I can't think of—I'm trying to think of the leadership roles that black students had back then, probably less than later, but we had a—in our Lutheran Student Center, we had a Kenyan, no, a Tanzanian and later we had a black athlete from Milwaukee [Milwaukee, WI]. And that always led, for me personally, to interesting conversations with them but—and a wee bit of understanding of how difficult it was to be black. In some ways I'm ashamed how little I understood the black dilemma back then. Everything we did, we did with a lot of naiveté.

When Martin Luther King was killed on April 4, 1968, I had a house right up on the edge of campus. I don't remember, you know, we were numb with shock at the death of the prophet. I convened a group of people in my living room, Mayor Ben Boo of Duluth, a Republican; Erv Goldfine [Erwin Lewis Goldfine (1923-2002)] was a civic leader, a strong Democrat, Bill O'Brien [William Perkins O'Brien (1922-2002)], who was a prominent lawyer and Armas Tamminen head of the psychology department at UMD and a good friend of mine. And a high school student, Anders Christensen, younger brother of Kenner from our Selma trip. And a few others.

And so maybe there were a dozen of us and so we outlined this idea. We can't just sit and mourn Martin Luther King. We have to do something and I think the issue of our time is housing. Let's canvas—we have a plan to canvas the city. We'll go door to door and we wound up doing it. In the course of this meeting, we laid this plan out and I remember someone saying, that's a wonderful idea, Brooks, but I think it will be divisive. We need to go slower. Let's back off and do something else first.

And I turned to Anders and I said, "Well, it looks like we'll do it on our own." No, no, Brooks was the response and there was finally an agreement we would do this. We got an unoccupied downtown storefront, decorated it and made a coffee house in the basement. I remember we had on the walls—one of our statements was Duluth Has a White Problem, and that was sort of our theme. This is not a black problem; we've got a white problem. And so we geared up for, and in the summer, I don't know, late summer maybe, we trained about one hundred people, mostly

young, a lot of them high school; some were college—I don't even remember how many blacks were involved, probably not many. And we canvassed the whole city. We'd send them out in two's and knock on doors, have conversation when possible, and if nobody's home, then leave the literature. And the literature included a decal, "We Support Open Housing." It had a black and white door on it. So we pulled that off. Did it make a difference? I don't know. I know it made a difference in the lives of many of the canvassers.

KH: That was in '68?

BA: This was summer of '68. And I started by saying, I guess I didn't use the word but I hadn't even noticed our naiveté then, that we've got this white problem. No understanding of really the depths of how evil and awful racism was but that, you know, we'll correct this housing issue and then racial stuff will just float away.

KH: But, yeah, maybe it was naïve, but even just flipping the language and the perspective to say, this is a white problem and not a black problem. I mean, that seems like it was a pretty progressive perspective at the time.

BA: I think so.

KH: And you had said earlier somewhere in our conversation about, you know, by 1963, activism was coming to campus through SNCC and, you know, by what? Even as early as '64, when the Freedom Summer is happening in Mississippi and then certainly thereafter, organizations like SNCC are facing some internal division over what white students or activists should—what their role should be in the civil rights movement with, you know, eventually black power coming in and saying, You know, black people need to take control of this movement and for all of you white supporters who are out there, supporting us, go to your own communities and solve the white problem, right? So did—were you working with SNCC? Were you involved with SNCC? I mean, were any of those changes that were happening in the national broad civil rights movement a factor in what then you did in Duluth in 1968 or after?

BA: I'm not aware of working with SNCC but worked with some young black radicals and was conscious of the struggle that was going on nationally. I mean, hanging on to Gandhian principles with SNCC was no small feat. It took all of King's charisma in those days with young blacks and later with—violence was, is so deeply embedded in the American experience that violence is the answer to everything. You'll find it certainly in the antiwar movement, but that's a point I made early on, that I think we haven't given King his due for how—the power of his implanting on all the social movements. I would say feminism, gay rights—we went through a number of pretty major upheavals in those years and in almost all of them, when there were public demonstrations, there was some training on Gandhian principles. I think that's a legacy of King that we've not acknowledged often enough.

KH: Yeah. And like you say, not an easy thing to hold onto in the face of increasing violence from the state as well as activists who are saying, we need to respond in kind.

BA: The last year of King's life was about equally anti-Vietnam and the Poor People's March and both of them just triggered an enormous amount of violence—maybe the Poor People's March more, but his march into the streets of the north were ugly and violent and he had to call some of them off because he just couldn't maintain the Gandhian principles.

KH: Yeah, that's, I think, often—there's a mistaken assumption that to be nonviolent means to be passive or to be weak. I can't imagine the strength it would have taken to maintain that in the face of all of the challenges that were coming, internally from the movement, as well as externally.

BA: And there's lots of stories out there. I mean, we would have trainers come and say, John Lewis [US Representative John Robert Lewis (1940-)] types—I've had my arm broken; I've had my face kicked and you need to be ready for that.

KH: And so they would come to campus?

BA: Well, I—

KH: Or just in general?

BA: In general. I don't remember any—but those principles were adhered to and I can't think that we, the leadership position in both civil rights and Vietnam—yes, we did. We had a white contingent that really hated what we were doing; hated our tactics. People that we, Phil Solem and I, counseled on draft resistance, would—let me do a story.

We're moving forward now—we talked about '68 and King's death. Sixty-nine I think is the culmination of antiwar activities. In '69, there was the October moratorium to be followed by the November moratorium. In Duluth, you know, not an activist town; not an activist campus, we had fifteen hundred people march from UMD down to the civic center and the planning for that was done at the Lutheran Student Center. Phil Solem and I were the—and we had some of the young people that, Phil primarily, but Phil and I had done draft counseling with [who] were objecting to our principles and the way we were—we were sellouts; we were doing the polite thing. We need to make some noise; we need to storm the federal building. And on that day, we get down there with this—and we said this would be a quiet, dignified march and at the heart of that gathering in the civic center plaza with all those people, the heart of that is going to be I think five minutes of silence.

Well, five minutes is—that feels like a century—and so, anyway, we had the city send a crew of five professionals, cameraman, a radio person and a couple of TV interviewers. For days, even this backwater place, Duluth, was having a big deal on the moratorium and they did an hour show—CBS did, in prime time, an hour show on the moratorium and the last—more than ten minutes was on Duluth.

KH: Really?

BA: But during that moratorium, there were four or five young people that were activists and they wanted to make some noise and so we're gathering in front of—there's the county building, the federal building and the city building. We were gathered in front of the city building. I don't know why, but we were on the top of the steps here and so that was our amphitheater out there. And so some of these young people were going to go over and smash the door of the federal building. I don't know if this was a Saturday; I suppose it was. And Phil went over and headed them off. Later when we had meetings these young people were angry at Phil and I—we were the sellouts; this was an ego trip for us. I was wounded. Phil was more mature than me. He just let it roll off.

KH: Were these students that you had known and worked with?

BA: Yeah, we had counseled them.

KH: Oh, that's right. They're draft counselees.

BA: And so that night, we watched, you know, we have our ego trip. I'm one of the speakers and I'm on national news. That was a lead up to the November moratorium. We didn't have a group of people going to Washington, but the November moratorium was a big deal. October was to be a warm-up for it and I assume CALC was the force almost totally behind these moratoriums. So rather than a large group of us going to Washington, we did another—a candlelight vigil. This time we were going to—we marched from down by the arena auditorium with candle lights and again, it was going to be quiet. And along the way, these same five or six young people were picketing us and again, wanting to do a chant and wanting to make some noise and as we—so we were going to—I guess our vigil was going to be around the soldiers monument [Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Duluth Civic Center, Duluth, MN] and there weren't many of us; a couple of hundred maybe. And the FBI arrested these young people.

KH: The ones who are picketing you.

BA: Who are picketing us, arrested two of them in particular, or one in particular, and he's one that I knew because I'd been part of his draft counseling and I—and maybe—I don't know if he was aware of how wounded I was by this. So that changes everything now. They've arrested him and they hauled him off to jail.

So instead of our vigil in front of the soldiers' monument we went around to the back side of the civic building, the city building, to the police and gathered there and somebody came out and said, Is Brooks Anderson here? You can go in and see the prisoner. So I did and he was one scared rabbit and it was a nice moment.

KH: This person who had been arrested.

BA: Yeah, in prison saying, we're here for you, Curt. Don't know where this is going but you know that there's a large group of people out there that are holding a vigil and now that vigil focuses on you and we'll be there for you.

KH: And what was his response?

BA: Pardon?

KH: What was his response to that?

BA: I think it was appreciative. I don't remember that there were many words, but just gave him a clumsy embrace and say, just know you're not alone.

KH: Had he asked to see you specifically?

BA: I don't think so. No, I mean, they just knew—the police knew who I was—that I was a leader. He may have—I never—that's an interesting question.

That story kind of catches some of the drama of that time. But, again, fifteen hundred people is a—that was quite—we had a lot going. We were, I think we were a force to be reckoned with and we didn't realize it. I don't think we knew at that time that our phones were tapped and that we were really seen as a big threat to this country.

One time on campus the head of the local FBI was a member of the same church I was a member of, Mel Eide, I don't know how that name springs to my mind. I was sitting in this campus office one day and our little office, which was down in the library area, was right next to the campus police and Ole Wendfeldt was the head of the police and we liked Ole, but I'm sitting alone in this little office and Mel comes waltzing in and, "Where's Ole?" "He's next door." "Oh, I'm sorry," and he starts backing off and Mel says, "Brooks, I want you to know something. No matter what happens, I respect you." (laughter)

KH: Uh-oh.

BA: I mean, when we ship you off, I respect you.

KH: Right, that's ominous.

BA: Yeah, but that—it's interesting to be telling those stories because it's so easy to forget the drama of it. Somewhere in that same period, and again, I think it would be CALC, but a young instructor up at St. Scholastica [College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, MN] drew up a letter urging the draft board members to resign. Evan Ferber was his name and I think there were maybe, I would say, ten, not more than twelve of us that came down and we did a little brief ceremony by the soldiers monument one afternoon and then we walked over to the federal building and up—didn't take the elevator—but we walked up the stairs, two flights, to the draft office and we wanted to get there while they were still open.

The draft office was a tiny little office so we did the ceremony and we walked over there. If there were ten of us, I bet there were twenty or more of them. And they were probably mostly FBI. I don't know; I didn't see Mel Eide there but I bet every one of us had our picture taken ten times. You know, click, click, click, click as we walked up there. And we went to the office and we had

a nice chat with the secretary, would you please—? We understand you have x number of draft board members and various draft boards here. Here's enough letters—if you would get one to each one that would serve our purpose. That was very polite and nice, but that—again, it was a big deal to them.

KH: And that would have been what year about?

BA: Yeah, good question.

KH: Late sixties?

BA: Oh, I would think maybe it would even be '70. You know, '69 was so much the activist time. I would say, '69 or '70. [Note: this event occurred in November 1968.]

KH: So by that time, I mean, I'm trying to get at why the FBI would have been click, click, clicking as you walked up the stairs because by that time, there had been draft board raids across the country where—I mean, it was much more than just handing out literature so they were not un—

BA: They were armed against, you know, blood or fire or whatever they—so—and we were playing to that, too. Clearly it was after some draft boards, the Berrigan brothers poured blood and someplace else they raided a draft board and burned them. That might have been Berrigan again. So we were playing to that but we were very clear that what we were doing was going to be done politely.

KH: Because again, you were still operating under the Gandhian/King principles of how you conduct civil disobedience.

BA: Yeah, so that's—I had forgotten all about that one and it's—we were all male, I'm pretty sure on that occasion. I went, I don't know when it was, because our CALC group had a couple of nuns and we were—

So let's say that's 1970. I'm trying to think of other events that sort of—well, here's another story, and again, it could be '68; it could be '70. Ray Darland [Raymond Winston Darland (1911-1987)] was a provost and he had been a leader at UMD for a long time and now the administration building is the Darland Building. He was still in office at that time and there was a group on campus and I suppose I was part of it; I don't remember, but it wrote up a proposal that we have a dialogue about the appropriateness of ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] on campus. It didn't seem like a terribly radical thing, not urging its ouster but, let's have a dialogue about it. That's what universities should do.

Ray Darland came walking down the hallway of Kirby, and he comes to this table and he just erupts. "Where's Brooks? He's behind this." And he just stormed and I heard about it and so I went to his office later—I was amazed at how easy it was to get into his office—and he tells me, he says, "I just assumed you were behind it." And I said, "Well, I support it; I'm not the initiator" And then he almost weeps. He said, "You don't know what it's like to be a university

administrator these days." And he named the presidents who had quit or been fired. He had a lot of respect for campus ministry. I don't think he quite understood what we were about and so he'd had no understanding of what were, you know, the social change aspects of it, but he was welcoming to us. So I had that kind of relationship with him. He seemed to like me on some level and I respected him.

I just want to jump ahead and tell the rest of the story. There was another occasion. Now Ray Darland is still the provost but Bob Heller [Robert L. Heller (1919-1993)] is his co-provost. Ray Darland had been in the biology department; Bob Heller had been in geology and Heller was to become the next provost and I got a call from them, Will you come by and see us? Sure.

Well, George Wallace [Alabama Governor George Corley Wallace Jr. (1919-1998)] was coming to town and was meeting at the civic center and they were so afraid of violence and would I do what I can? I said, "I don't think you understand me. Of course I will. That is what my life is about. That is what this movement is about. We do not want violence, so yes, but your assumption that I sort of have control of their behavior is incorrect. I've been the subject of some of their, the focus of some of their agitation." That's just another Ray Darland story. This is my relationship with him.

Now jump ahead to 1982, I'm no longer in campus ministry, but I'm still a troublemaker in town and I have come up with a plan to form a relationship with the Soviets, Sister City, and a campus chemist and I put an article in the campus paper about this. Ray Darland is now retired and I get a letter from him, "Brooks, what a great idea. Let me know if I can be of any help." And so we formed this Soviet Sister City Project and Ray Darland worked with us. We used his name; we put out a brochure with Ray Darland and Mayor John Fedo [John Fedo (1950-)] co-signed it. I would say he was the most distinguished Duluth citizen at that time. So that's '82.

We go to work and we finally form a Sister City in '86 and it's with Petrozavodsk [Petrozavodsk, Russia] and with your Finnish name, you probably know something about the migration of Finns from this area in the thirties to settle Karelia [former Karelia-Finnish SSR] and so that was one of the reasons we picked Petrozavodsk. We recruited thirty-three people to go on our first trip to Petrozavodsk. We're told they don't want us and we came anyway and Ray Darland was among them. He was seventy-three years old; he was retired. He was the oldest; he was the most energetic. He was just a star and it was a tension packed trip and just very dynamic.

When we walked the streets of Petrozavodsk and these old Finlanders who had grown up in our region would come up and embrace us and say, I have dreamed about this day for fifty years. All of these divided families between northern Minnesota, Ontario, Upper Michigan—it lent a real power to this. But Ray was the star of that trip. That's fall of '86 and we knew we were onto something really important by that time.

In March of '87, a delegation of four comes from Petrozavodsk and we will sign Sister City agreement with Petrozavodsk. It happened that on the Monday that we were having this signing ceremony, the navy band was playing at the arena auditorium and it was a free concert, but tickets only, and sold out. And Ray was a navy man and he was just navy to the tips of his toes so I started calling—I would call the Pentagon. It was kind of interesting for this peacenik to be

doing this. I said, “We’re having this Sister City thing. Can you honor them?” And finally arranged to have five seats right in the heart of the auditorium and while this signing ceremony was going on, I was down at the arena and I went backstage and I met the colonel who was the emcee and I told him that these four Russians from Petrozavodsk and Ray Darland will be with them. Will you please honor them but especially honor Ray Darland? He’s a navy man and he loves the navy. He’s been on summer cruises forever and that’s who he is, if you would acknowledge this.

And that’s the end of the story, it did happen, came off. And I like telling that story because I think that’s what peacemaking is about.

KH: That’s amazing to see where the United States are, at least, the circle that you had run in in particular, establishing a Sister City by 1986, 1987, you know, compared to the height of the Cold War where the Soviet Union was—

BA: You know, partly when I tell my story about that turn in ’82, the fall of ’82, I went down to a conference at Memorial Stadium in Minneapolis and it was on nuclear freeze I think. I was like, Boy, I need to get my batteries charged; I’m exhausted but I want to touch down with the moment. And I sat down and I listened to about five, six hours of angry rhetoric, oh, those goddam war makers and, ooh, is that what’s my life’s been about? That does not feel good to me. And, yeah, I think that too much of the peace movement was not very peaceful. It was full of anger, always saying no, and I want to say yes to something. And so I came back and had an intern at the time. I was working at the public library in the energy resource center and I was telling her about this. I want to do something that says yes and I said, I wonder about a Soviet Sister City project; that just came out of nowhere. And then I called Ron Caple, this chemist and I said, “Ron, what do you think about this?” Because he was doing some great work with Moscow chemists and Ron said, “What a great idea, Brooks, let’s do it.” And we went to work and we did it.

KH: So all of this leads me, you know, just listening to the stories you’ve been telling, leads me to this question. You’ve talked a lot about how divisive the times were, the late sixties, early seventies, and how some of your constituents, as well as some of the young men that you had counseled, in draft counseling, you know, took issue with what you were doing and that there was just a lot of conflict. So my question is, how do you as a person, how do you sustain yourself and your commitment to doing what you’re doing in light of conflict that can oftentimes become very personal, as you were saying. You felt really personally hurt by these students who were picketing your peaceful protest. What sustains you as an activist in those moments?

BA: Boy, that’s the right question. I mean, and it’s always looking at it. I mean, it was—burnout was all around and you could feel it yourself, you know, but being—having people turn on you, people that you thought respected you, was always painful. And I guess you sustain yourself by just looking at that and saying, Hey, I’m going to be in this for the long haul and I have to look at some people, young people burned out wholesale, and hippie communes were—I felt like I was a supporter of their alternative lifestyle but they were just a gathering of the burnouts. So I always look at that and say, not me. I need to dance; I need to sing.

KH: You need to say yes.

BA: We need to find joy in the midst of a lot of ugliness. So you become conscious of that but I don't know that we did it organizationally. I don't know that there was a CALC seminar on how to avoid burnout but we should have been more self-conscious about that. I knew that I was in this work for the long haul, and I needed to pace myself.

I wrote a piece—I went to prison in 2000, and while I was in prison, you know, I haven't shared the story that got me there but it was with School of the Americas Watch and when I retired I made a commitment that I would make that the focus of my national activist energies. It was a movement that was very much attuned to Gandhian principles and was led by some veterans and strong involvement of radical Catholics.

But anyway, I went off to prison in 2000, so where was I going—? Oh, and while I'm there, about halfway, I got a three-month sentence and I'm up here in the Duluth prison. I had a visit from a couple of my grandchildren. They admired me for what I did but they had no clue why, you know, Grandpa's a good guy but—

And so I spent the last six weeks there, in addition to my daily journal, I wrote a letter to my grandchildren and I called it "Choose to Be Hopeful." And in some ways that's sort of coming back to the answer to how do you, you respond when things seem to be spinning out of control; you're with Martin Luther King, you say, The arc of history bends toward justice and right now it seems to be bending the other way, but we'll go down this road. But I wound up titling it "Choose to Be Hopeful," saying that I think that hope is something we choose. It doesn't just wash over us. I mean, some people are happy go lucky and that's not what hope it. Hope is—it's dreaming when there's a lot to be despairing about. It was—I would say that was a real deliberate thought process in my life that helped me not burn out.

KH: And, I mean, you went into the ministry—that was your profession. What role did your faith play in your activism or sustaining you, perhaps, through some of the burnout?

BA: I don't know. [pause] This gets to be such a fuzzy question. I never had faith in the church and so having the church not have faith in me was not so difficult. I facetiously talked about the Holy Trinity: Jesus, Gandhi and King—I think a lot of the stuff of my core faith is there. I believe in a call to love my enemies and I think to me that's close to the heart of Jesus' teaching. I think the Beatitudes are pretty deeply within me and King sharpens that and Gandhi sharpens that. So I think that's where faith gives me some substance to go down a different road.

You always feel the pressure to be conventional and to be liked. Peacemaking means risk taking. I got by with a pretty light sentence but you take those risks and you live with the consequences. You know that it's not as big a risk as a combat soldier but a different kind of risk. I say, peacemaking is risk taking and the biggest risk is probably acceptability. We've had some wonderful peacemakers in this town that I really admire, wealthy people, distinguished people, who were willing to stand up and say no to war and that's rare and it's—boy, do we need it in these times.

It; had to be hopeful in these days when the Pentagon seems to be calling all the shots. I believe someday we'll be able to hear Martin Luther King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech. We haven't heard it yet. We haven't been hearing it; we have—we, much of the nation, wants to make him a plastic hero.

And I told you that I was privileged to talk at his memorial service at the arena auditorium and I focused on his "Beyond Vietnam," and I said, do not tame this prophet.

KH: This was at the memorial for him.

BA: Yeah, in '68, April 8, '68. Do not tame this prophet. I remember that. And I got a lot of good feedback from it. It was there already, you know, and the sense that—I think, I bet a lot of people on the stage would say, He got what he deserved. It was mostly because he couldn't stay away from the big issues, you know, income disparity and if he'd just talked about dreaming one more time, he'd have been okay, but—

KH: So that "Beyond Vietnam" speech he makes in the spring of 1967, right? So—and it seems to me—and that was one of the questions I had prepared before I came up to ask you about—that maybe that speech or that moment represents similarly the coming together of the work that you were doing, from the civil rights movement to the antiwar movement and issues of class and income injustice, inequality. So tell me how you saw all of those things coming together for yourself and in your activism.

BA: I think King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech did something for me, made connections; I mean it was the trinity of evil and I think he had a—if it had come ten years later he might have had some more "isms" maybe but materialism, racism, militarism—he gave that and sexism and heterosexism and, you know, we've turned corners on all those. I've lost your question now.

KH: Oh, how you, when you were active at the time, how you saw all of those things being interrelated.

BA: Well, that part of King—that seems to be one of the many gifts King was given. You can't—if you're going to put all of your energy in racism and sexism and if you don't make the connections and today, I'm saying militarism needs to be on the table above all and I think a lot of well-meaning people want, Let's fight our feminist battles and to hell with men's issues and to hell with militarism --you can't do that. I think you need to make all the connections. There's more to be made but that's—I think, for me, that's the real gift of "Beyond Vietnam."

KH: So how did you—in fact, I'm going to start with a more basic question than the one I was just going to ask, and the answer might seem self-evident; I maybe can assume what your answer will be but I'm going to ask it so you can be explicit about it. Why did you oppose the war in Vietnam?

BA: I think so much evidence became clear that it was—we were being lied to—it was amoral. It was a hard corner to turn because I've always, you know, I grew up in World War II and you want to believe in your country. My country is on the right side. And I'm not answering

your question because I don't know how to get at it. Another phrase from "Beyond Vietnam" is America is on the wrong side of the global revolution, and I've had lots of experiences that can affirm that.

It's such a hard place to get to that, you know, there's all kinds of assassination theories. It's not hard for me to believe them. Was King killed by agents of our government? I think so. I think there's enough evidence with the family trial in what, '90 or whenever that was. I think he was killed by agents of the US Were the Kennedy brothers [US President John Fitzgerald "Jack" Kennedy (1917-1963) and [US Senator Robert Francis Kennedy (1925-1968)] killed? I think they would do it. They—there is an evil out there that will—and they is the Pentagon and their corporate sponsors.

I'm really jumping around here if you'll forgive me but I talked about this, the October moratorium. CBS and all of them—there were hours of prime time coverage. One month later, the biggest demonstration that had ever been held in Washington was the November moratorium. It got—I've heard this—a minute and a half collectively, of all the mainstream media, a minute and a half. And it's been that way ever since. I think Nixon [US President Richard Milhous Nixon (1913-1994)] and Agnew [US Vice President Spiro Theodore "Ted" Agnew (1918-1996)] and the Pentagon and corporate America said, hey, wait a minute. We own the media. I think if the civil rights movement had not happened when it did, it came on the scene about the time the television came on the scene and they didn't know how to control it. It was competing stations trying to, well, let's rush down to Birmingham, and let's go here. Great. If it happened today, Selma would get zero TV time and it would probably be on the sixth page in the *New York Times.*

KH: Well, and you can see the difference between the coverage of the war in Vietnam and subsequent coverage of Watergate. I mean, they learned something from—

BA: Yeah, and I think—I think Vietnam was more justifiable than Iraq or Afghanistan. I think the Pentagon has just done a masterful job. They spend—I Googled this, who knows if it's close to right, but—fifteen billion dollars a year on public relations, manipulating public opinion, fly-overs at football games. They own collegiate football or sports and pro sports and I watch a lot of sports and it's working. And that's why I really focus on militarism. I think we need to name it and name it and name it and make a connection to all the other isms.

I find it interesting after what's the Florida—

KH: Oh, Parkland [Parkland, FL]

BA: Yeah, Parkland. Listen to endless analysis and I didn't even once hear anybody say militarism. Do you ever hear anybody say, well, why not? Why shouldn't you gun down people if you're frustrated? That's what we do. That's national policy. No, we never go there. That's been turning in my head, you know, and I'm waiting for somebody to say it. The "M" word, militarism, and it's not being said. And I think that's—I would say one of the things we need to do today and one of the skills we need to be taught is how do we honor veterans and not bless war? Because that's a big part of this fourteen, fifteen billion that the Pentagon spends.

And the Pentagon doesn't honor veterans. They'd cut them off at the knees if they had a choice between medical trauma and a new weapon system, but they use veterans, I think shamefully, to get us to bless whatever war they have. Of course, war is their business and until we confront that, we will continue to be in perpetual warfare somewhere. If it winds down in Afghanistan or Iraq, well, Iran is waiting and Venezuela may be would be another—we'll find—we are militaristic to the core; enemies define us; we create enemies and then we feed on them. So, I don't know, where's CALC when you need it?

KH: So how did you see—or if you want to talk about how Martin Luther King explained it as well, that's fine—but how did you see the connection between militarism, the war in Vietnam and race? What was the racial injustice in the war?

BA: Well, the black people were fighting in larger numbers because of the draft. I think that would probably be the biggest component.

KH: Do you remember thinking about or was there any discussion about the racial dynamics of the war relative to the Vietnamese people themselves or was it mostly in terms of the American fighting forces?

BA: Yes, of course, I mean, you kill gooks; it's much harder to kill white people so—and it's not so hard to kill rag heads today. They're almost white but so we—yeah, there's always a racial component to—it's easier to define the enemy if there's some otherness to them.

KH: Now you've talked a little bit about veterans and your question about how do we honor veterans without honoring war, and you were involved with School of the Americas, I mean that was a Veterans for Peace—my question is are you associated—do you work with Veterans for Peace, other veterans' groups?

BA: I do, not as much as I should, because I'm not a veteran, you know, but I look for a platform to stand on and I say, these are the people we need to listen to. These are combat veterans and we've got a great chapter here. John [John Pegg (1941-)] is part of it and Minneapolis has got a great chapter. There are chapters all over the country. The School of the Americas, Father Roy Bourgeois [Father Roy Bourgeois (1938-)] is the founder of it. I went to trial with a guy by the name of Charlie Liteky [Charles James "Charlie" Liteky (1931-2017)]. They're both Catholic priests. Charlie Liteky died within the last couple years. He was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner and I never knew what a wow that was until you—and it was interesting going to trial with Charlie because the people around there in this military town, Columbus, they couldn't understand this guy and he had a presence about him and they knew his story. This guy had, after a battle, he had pulled twenty-four bodies off and saved as many as thirteen lives after a battle and he had that kind of strength and charisma.

So I think we need to give a lot more visibility to the voices of veterans and it's a way of taking this fourteen billion dollar public relations thing and turning it around saying, Yeah, let's listen to our veterans. There's a local story. In '88 or '89, Governor Arne Carlson [MN Governor Arne Helge Carlson (1934-)] was leaving office and he wanted to, his legacy would be, I want to do

something to honor veterans. The destroyer, I think it was the *U.S.S. Des Moines*, was to be put in our harbor and Arne Carlson really wanted it. This was going to be his crowning legacy. The mayor wanted it; the Chamber of Commerce wanted it; the traditional veterans' groups, the V.F.W., wanted it.

There came a time when there was among the votes that would take place, was one at the city council, and Tom Morgan, who was a member of Veterans for Peace, brought a number of people there to give talks, mostly combat veterans. These weren't people who wore their veteran status on their shoulder but were willing to come out one time and say, I've seen some gruesome things. Do not do this in my name. Don't do anything that glorifies war.

And this city's a different place because of that message of veterans. I don't know that that event—there may have been a lot of other politics—but as it was floundering, Carlson said, I'll sweeten the pot. We'll make this a state park; that means the state will pay all the bills for this war ship and it'll bring twenty-four million dollars into the city coffers and it still didn't come through. And I am really grateful.

You know, my activism has in recent years, has been "not in my town"—it seems to be spinning out of control out there and it's an ugly, violent world and we've got Trump of all things, but not in Duluth. We've got some good things going on here. I wish I had a brochure for you. I've handed away my last one—we're working on a project to have a tour—we call it a self-guided meditative peacemaking tour. So you'll go down, walk on the waterfront, and you come near the soldier's monument. There are seven stops. That's stop number one and those are Korea and Vietnam. I think they're like the Vietnam wall, they're suitable. It's just names. Stop and contemplate the names. So we say, let's start here and say what can we do so that we don't have more names on walls? And the biggest issue of our time, I think, as I've said before, is how do we honor veterans and not bless war. And let's make that the centerpiece.

Then we walk up the hill and we come to Lake Place Park, and come first to the Sister City sculptures. We have five sister cities now. Three of them come out of global conflicts and I think we have one of the best Sister City programs in the country because we've always been—I think it's anchored by Petrozavodsk, which occurred during the Cold War, and then the most recent one is with Kurdish, Iraq, so all of these have got a strong peacemaking component.

And what we're doing on this walk is sort of doing what King says, Make the connections. The next stop is—it isn't there yet but we expect a monument to rename the park Gitchie Ode Akiing which is Ojibwe for People with a Big Heart a place to reflect on our how we mistreated our Native American neighbors and look for new ways forward

Then we go out of the park. Take a left on Superior St. On the corner there's a building called the Building for Nonviolence and that's the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs home. That's the one that's put Duluth on the map. The Duluth model is known all over the world for groundbreaking in terms of a coordinated response to domestic abuse.

Then we go out and up a block to First Street to the Clayton-Jackson-McGhie Memorial, and now after Montgomery another monument that puts us on the map. We're the first city in this

country to do—there are plaques but there's no other monument in the country other than Montgomery—

KH: To victims of lynching.

BA: Yeah, so we're on the front edge of taking a look at how deep racism runs in the soul of our country. Then we come back into Lake Place. That's five now, five different stops. The sixth one—the Million Mom March made a contribution to a peace bell so there's a big focus up there on gun violence and then the seventh is a statue or a sculpting with many hands lifting the Dove of Peace; The Arising. This is the defining centerpiece for our city and if we decide that—if we honor these connections—and we may find some others—but we brag on ourselves. Duluth's doing some good things and we recommend some of these models that these monuments point to and recommend it to—we're a tourist town so we're promoting that now. Doing it with—taking groups on that tour—the idea was to have a brochure that helps you do a self-guided tour but a big part of it is to get more people to go to—Clayton-Jackson-McGhie is out of the way. You have to go look for it.

KH: Yeah, that's interesting. I'll have to go look for it myself actually. So we started our conversation even before the recorder was on talking about Selma. I want to go back there as we wind up. I want to be respectful of your time and we're coming on to two hours now which is great. So tell me—I think I cut you off because the recorder wasn't on before we had a chance to really talk about what your experience was in Selma. So you, and again, I can't remember what we got on tape and what we didn't, but I know you had said that you were particularly moved when John Howard Griffin came to campus, the author of *Black Like Me*, in 1964.

And then you take some students down—originally you were headed to Mississippi, right? To Jackson in the spring of 1965. So tell me again how you end up in Selma.

BA: Well, Charles Evers—and we connected to him through a man on campus who worked in the chemistry department who was a real civil rights hero in Duluth, Bill Maupins, so he makes the contact with Charles Evers and so we were welcome there. And it's—we get there in the evening and—

KH: And this is to Jackson?

BA: Into Jackson. So it would be—I don't know if it was a Friday evening or a Saturday evening, but the next day is the start of the Selma march and we were just vaguely aware of it but he quickly tells us, I have decided you're going to go—You know, the specific quote I shared with you is, I'm going to bring your white faces to my friend Martin. I said that one time in Selma in recent years and the people who were there were I think a little offended by his saying that. That sounds racist. I wasn't aware of that. I didn't have any trouble with it.

KH: It was the reality, right? I mean, this was on the heels on the Freedom Summer in '64, where there was real value in having white people in the media.

BA: I did one more thing. Let me tell one more story.

KH: Yeah.

BA: I went to prison in 2000. I kept going back each year. In 2005, I think it was—

KH: You kept going back to prison?

BA: No, I kept going back to the annual march at Fort Benning [Fort Benning, GA] and so I think it was 2005, I came back home and we were going to have a reporting the next day at a church downtown on our trip there. And that night, I don't know, I woke up wired with a dream and I dream a lot, but my dream that night was I saw a large crowd, mostly black, in Montgomery marching on to Columbus, Georgia, and literally making the connection between the civil rights movement and the SOAW and militarism. And that dream was so compelling I just knew I had to try to act on it. And so I started making calls and short of the story is, we did it.

We, being about twenty of us from Duluth; John and Lynn [John and Lynn Pegg] were along on that and some people from Alabama and we started in—it would be in 2006—we started with a ceremony in Selma, crossed the bridge and then drove to Montgomery and did another ceremony at the capitol steps. And that night, or that evening, started our walk. I think we walked like five days, stopping at black churches, who hosted us. And the dream was that people would join the march and it didn't happen that way. We'd have as many as seventy, including our core of twenty from Duluth.

The organizer who really—I knew an old white guy from Duluth couldn't be the organizer, but a woman from Alabama, who really knew the civil rights community down there and she had enlisted the president of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] of Columbus, Georgia, and he marched with us. His wife was in a wheelchair and that night he got a call from Columbus, said, if you make any visibility for NAACP you will no longer be the president. So it was again, the black community and its ties to the military.

KH: Interesting.

BA: So this didn't come off with, you know, it was pretty fanciful, a pretty big dream anyway, but we did it. We marched into—and then the next morning walked on to the site of the demonstration. So that was one of my finales.

KH: And so when you were there in '65—so there were three marches in Selma in March of '65, a couple of which were stopped. Were you at—am I right in understanding that you were on the third one that went from Selma to Montgomery?

BA: Yeah, we stayed back in Selma. There were just a limited number that could make it all the way. When we got to—and I got my car back the night before the final march into Montgomery. I had lent it to officials and we just stayed in Selma and did a lot of things there. I got my car back and the guy who was using my car said, you mind if I give a friend a ride? Well, that's fine. So we drove to some organizing center and picked up Viola Liuzzo [Viola Fauver

Gregg Liuzzo (1925-1965)] and so this friend is still driving my car and I got to know Viola and started to chat with her about it and we drop her wherever it was she needed to go and I go back and pick up my students.

And then we go to—there was this huge gathering outside of Montgomery the night before and Peter, Paul and Mary and Harry Belafonte [Harry Belafonte (born Harold George Bellafanti Jr. (1927-)]—there was a whole batch of high profile stars that were there—and that night we were driving—we'd been staying in a home in Selma and now we're in Montgomery. I said, let's try to find a safe neighborhood and we'll sleep in the car, six of us in the station wagon. And so we find what we are reasonably sure is a black neighborhood—and it was—we saw all black people and it was late at night and we're driving slowly down the street and a car pulls alongside and it was a black family. And we drove up to their house and we stayed in their house that night.

KH: So you were warmly received by the black community.

BA: Very much so and that was, to me that was amazing, the whole time, how thrilled they were to have our white faces. And then after the march—and the theme of that march—it wasn't one of King's more memorable speeches but this was Moses going up and saying to Pharaoh, Let my people go. And Governor Wallace was the Pharaoh, and it was a mostly, not a huge crowd, but mostly black people, Yeah, Tell 'em Moses, yeah, Moses.

The crowd disperses and we're—this whole week we've been protected by national guard from Alabama, white people mostly, and you could tell they just hate their duty. They would much rather be cracking our heads. And I'm walking toward the car and a little bit ahead; the students are behind me, and I'm walking down the sidewalk and here's a national guard, Get off the sidewalk, you son of a bitch. You know, this is the guy protecting me. We get to my car and we get in and a bunch of toughs come and they grab the back of the car after we all get in and lift it up as I'm trying to back out. Guard's not around. It didn't feel particularly dangerous, but it sure felt—well, it did feel dangerous. I mean, you just know that they can't go very far because the guardsmen are there. We're driving out of town and we're going to go down to the Gulf Coast and come back. And I don't know my way around so I'm sort of floundering and leaving town I've got the radio on and we get the radio announcement that after the march a car was driving back to Selma with Viola Liuzzo and she was shot and killed. And so that was what we were about there. It was more dangerous than we knew at the time.

KH: Had you ever been to the south before?

BA: I don't think so.

KH: And you, obviously, you drove down. What was it like to drive from Duluth down to Mississippi? I mean, could you feel the atmosphere changing?

BA: We looked like what we were, Minnesota plates, Kenner with his long hair looking like a hippie. It was pretty obvious. We're in southern Missouri for breakfast and I don't know if this was put-on conversation or for us or not, but a couple of white guys—and they really looked like rednecks—Boy, I wish you'd sell me your nigger. You know, no, no, boy. This is—he's my

nigger and boy, I know I've got a good thing. But they were doing that kind of conversation so—and then you crossed the line into Mississippi and you could really feel it, you know, especially because of the civil rights was—and Selma was coming. We were recognized wherever we went. But again, I think it was more dangerous than we realized at the time.

KH: And you said you had five students with you?

BA: Um-hm.

KH: How did those five students, how did they get involved in this?

BA: I don't know. I mean, I didn't—only one of them was part of my Lutheran student group. The other woman, was a real activist on campus. I knew Kenner, but not, through other stuff, so it wasn't—they just found me out. They found out about it. There were a few others that wanted to go and their parents forbade it. So it was just sort of an interesting collection of people.

KH: So how long were you down there?

BA: Well, I think the whole trip was a week, maybe eight days.

KH: Did you have a sense at the time of the historic event that you were part of?

BA: A little bit, yeah, and you could feel the power of the moment. You could feel the hatred; this engendered a lot of hatred. Walk by white families and they've got—they're dressed in Confederate uniforms and they've got their little boy out shooting, aiming at us—what a nice way to train your kids. So we saw a lot of ugliness. The black people that were there—I don't think it impacted them the same way it did us white people. I mean, I think, yeah, this is reality. Maybe for them, this was a new reality; there's something to be hopeful about.

KH: What kind of impact do you think that experience in Selma had on you subsequently?

BA: Maybe the biggest single thing I've done in terms of changing the course of my life. I wasn't so conscious of it at the time, but— King had already impacted me and King's death was just a major blow in my life. It's the only time my children have seen me weep; I'm not proud of that but I got that male thing; I don't cry much, but I was just devastated by his death.

KH: Sixty-eight was a hard year.

BA: Yeah, it was.

KH: There was a lot. So he's killed on April 4. By that time Johnson has taken himself out of the campaign for president so we have then Humphrey [US Vice President Hubert Horatio Humphrey Jr. (1911-1978)], McCarthy [US Senator Eugene Joseph McCarthy (1916-2005)], Kennedy for the Democrats and Kennedy is killed in June. Do you remember much about that election season? Who were you supporting, whether actively or just privately?

BA: I was active. I was in the Party and chose to go all the way to the state level and saw the inner working of the Party. I listened to some old Party people almost weep for Hubert, you know. I was a McCarthy supporter and I had liked Hubert Humphrey a lot. I just—and I'd have loved to have said it to his face. I'd love to have been able to say to him, you know, there are some issues that are just too big and you failed this one.

Another story now around politics and this is back to CALC. CALC did a trip to the capitol. Maybe you've come—maybe you've got details on that, too.

KH: This capitol? Our state capitol?

BA: No, Washington.

KH: Washington.

BA: We chartered two planes that flew out of St. Paul—and I can't date this but it was—CALC people around Minneapolis will remember it. I remember there was a guy who was in—the American Friends Service Committee was one of the organizers and a pretty dynamic leader. So two planes, two charter planes out of St. Paul—and these are old, old planes, you know, on the junk heap, then this charter. And we're sitting in one plane and looking next door and they start up their engines and the engine in the plane next to us burns up. So they have to scrub that plane and we take off by ourselves. I remember on the way we flew into Akron [Akron, OH], maybe, for our refueling and the pilot and co-pilot were kind of clowns but it's the kind of joking you shouldn't have done then; you wouldn't do today, but it was like, we had a lot of trouble—as we were taking off. The pilot comes or co-pilot comes in, we barely made it, folks. We've got to do a reshuffle and so we're handing luggage down to rebalance the plane.

We get into Akron—if it's Akron—it's somewhere in there—he starts yelling out the window and, Do you have Green Stamps? And he said we had one of the rotors was—so somebody had to get up on the plane and rewire the control and flying home was more of the same. We iced up and we had to go up to Detroit [Detroit, MI] to get out of the ice. It was a very dangerous flight.

We did our lobbying and I met with our Congressman, had a pretty dynamic—it was John Blatnik [US Representative John Anton Blatnik (1911-1991)] at that time. But then we had a session with Walter Mondale [US Vice President Walter Frederick "Fritz" Mondale (1928-)], one of our senators. Hubert I suppose was the other one at that time. And Mondale comes in and sits down and he has a state department person here and a defense department person here and he sits there and gives a bland opening and a question comes and he said, well, and another question comes and finally this guy who—from American Service, the Quaker, he said, Senator, we came to hear you. Do you have something to say or don't you?

He was really kind of nasty to him and so now Mondale's on the spot and he said, I have a question for you, and it had to do with the bombing of Cambodia which was the hot button issue at that time. If I could check my history that would tell us when we were there. And Mondale kind of—like his mentor—just failed the test. This was an issue that he waffled on. But he said we ought to stop the bombing of Cambodia. That's something that nobody said then. And

afterwards, I was—I just—I don't know if I was going up to talk to Mondale but I listened to a guy come over and he just, Nice going, Fritz. You really blew it. I think he was a Humphrey aide, saying, you really misspoke. But scolding him like a little boy.

And he got off scot-free and it didn't hit the press but he should, in terms of—I wish we had been more together, we'd have kept his nose to his statement. That might have saved his soul, who knows?

KH: So the bombing of Cambodia is what? Starts in '69. I don't know how public it is by that time but then the "incursion" is April 30, 1970, and then Kent State there—

BA: Yeah, I would have thought it might be '70 that this trip took place.

KH: Now, do you know, which reminds me to ask you this. I know that at other campuses across the country certainly, but also in Minnesota, after Kent State, there were student strikes on campus. The University of Minnesota and Mankato and Moorhead to some degree, St. Cloud, but it seems like in some of the material I've come across that there wasn't a strike per se at UMD. Do you remember?

BA: To my knowledge, not.

KH: Okay. Do you remember any kind of response from students on campus around that time or yourself or faculty?

BA: I remember we had a tree planting ceremony one time and kind of a day that was dedicated to commemorating the—it might even have been post-Kent State. Anyway, a tree planting and a big ceremony on campus. And that night—I think we planted two trees and they were cut down.

KH: I can't even respond to that; it seems so ridiculous. And I know then two years later in the spring of 1972, when Nixon bombed Haiphong Harbor in North Vietnam that there are another series of protests on campuses across the state which are much more conflict-laden and somewhat more violent than the 1970 student strike was. And you were still at UMD in 1972. Do you remember anything happening on campus about that?

BA: No. It was generally the roles I've delineated. There were students who wanted to do destructive things. There was a—ROTC was in kind of a Quonset-looking building and there was some damage done. It wasn't burned but—so we always played those roles. We, the so-called leaders, trying to keep a damper on any kind of violent acts so that went on. I have a hard time—that part of my memory is not so clear.

KH: It was a long time ago. So when do you leave UMD?

BA: Seventy-nine.

KH: Seventy-nine. And what prompted the change?

BA: I was on four-year renewable terms and I had done four years. I was divorced in—well, some years earlier, so that made me less desirable but I always felt that post-divorce I was treated well. I said my children are my first focus and I'm not going to let my job intrude too much on that and so I, do with me what you--I didn't fight it, is what I'm saying. They did not renew me and I had people who wanted to fight and I said, I don't want that. And the time was right. You know, I talked about in the seventies—I'd say from '72, '73 on, Campus Crusade for Christ was very strong; Intervarsity was very strong—even stronger but I had more respect for Intervarsity, but fundamentalism was thriving on campus and I saw some of my colleagues trying to wear those clothes and man, I couldn't do that. So I left quietly. I was real clear about that. That I was not—if it comes down to a showdown, there will not be a showdown so maybe the time was right. I didn't have anywhere to go and I don't have a very marketable credential, so I lived marginally for quite some time but with a strong commitment to stay active in the causes.

KH: What did you do for work and—?

BA: Well, that first summer, I just did some carpentry projects for people, then I applied for a couple of different jobs for organizing, community organizing jobs. They both went to black women, and that I understand. I think it was appropriate although at least one of the jobs I think I would have been pretty good at. And then I worked with Community Action doing fuel assistance interviewing, which is something of a shit job, but—and then they cut me free. That was seasonal employment but they kept me on and we started something we called Energy Resource Center, now energy, the environmental movement had come and energy issues were a pretty big deal and lots of social change issues there. So they cut me free to do energy organizing in the off season and I wound up creating a thing called the Energy Resource Center. I applied for the job and I staffed a desk at the public library and it was from there that that I did a lot of other organizing.

It's from there that I organized the Sister City project and some other things, but did a lot of community organizing around energy issues. But those were all pretty marginal jobs that—and then from there after we started the Duluth/Petrozavodsk relationship it was—that's an interesting story by itself. Ray Darland and John Fedo liked the idea but I got a call when we were zeroing in on Petrozavodsk from the mayor, would you come by? And he asked me to meet with him and the city council president and he said, we like what you're doing, Brooks, but we think you're a little too much ahead of the curve here. Let's start with maybe a Sister City in France.

I just listened and it was going to be a Twin Ports—it was going to be a Duluth/Superior/Soviet Sister City project and so we were going to go over to—we met with the Common Council in Superior and I realized they didn't called us in to talk. They got us out of there right away—so we took it off the agenda in Duluth and I said, we've got some organizing to do. So we went to work and when we knew we had the whole City Council on our side, then we went back with this proposal and it passed. And the mayor was good after that, too.

When I made the decision to go for a Soviet Sister City, there were like eight or nine cities around the country that were doing this so I thought it came out of the blue, but it was—I always

felt that, you know, when the time is right, some things happen. I've been saying that about Montgomery and the lynching memorial. That couldn't have happened twenty years ago; that couldn't have happened fifteen years ago but it could happen then when something so dreadful—we can finally start doing—now where was I going with that? Let's see—these several people had the same idea in cities around the country and we're going to—I'm still losing it.

KH: That happens. We've been talking for a long time. So just by way of winding up here, what, if anything, do you think is the thread that runs throughout your life's work as an activist?

BA: Well, lately I've been saying Martin Luther King's pronouncements and particularly "Beyond Vietnam." It ties it together for me nicely and that making connections and then, for me, I bring it locally. Make the connections here; let's get at all the issues here and let's save the world one city at a time, you know. But I don't know if that—but I think King spoke words at the right time in my life that made a big difference.

KH: Is there anything looking back that you wish you would have done differently or—?

BA: Sure, but it is really hard to know, I mean, at that time. I'm pleased with a lot of things that I—I've always felt like I don't have a lot of gifts. I'm not very social but I think I've got guts; I'm a risk-taker and I've really been clear that peacemaking is risk taking. Everybody's a peacemaker but there aren't many risk takers. Peacemaking is saying no to militarism and that's risky. It gets a lot of people killed. I think it gets prominent people killed.

It's—so I don't know, your question about what would I do differently—I just don't know. I'm happy with the course of my life. I think I had no idea where coming to Duluth would lead me, but there is a sense that I've been led. Whether there's a divine purpose for my life or however you say it, I've come to a place where I said, this is what I think I was meant to be and do, to try to come to Duluth and to stay here. This is my place. You can't—you can have my job—but I'm staying here.

I had a real sense of that at one point in my life that I made that kind of statement to myself. And even that touches on the question of burnout, you know. I mean, this lake is here and I have spent thousands of hours walking that beach and meditating and there's a huge healing presence. Yeah, you always wish you could have done more and do more, but—

KH: You've done a lot.

BA: And stay tuned; we're going to become a peacemaking city. We're going to declare ourselves to be a peacemaking city. That's the next—

KH: Is there anything else you want to get on tape before I release you into the day?

BA: No, I thought maybe whatever it is I lost a little bit ago would come back, but it couldn't be very important.

KH: If it is and if it does, you can email me or call me and we'll add it.

BA: Yeah, I believe in storytelling. I think we should learn to tell our stories. Say, I've got a piece I'll—I've got a written piece that I wrote from prison.

KH: Oh, that would be wonderful.

End of interview