

HL- Hello, I'm Hattie Lindow. I am working on the ethnic studies project the cultural revitalization and I'll be interviewing my dad Mark Lindow. Good afternoon.

ML- Good afternoon.

HL- My first question is how long have you lived in this area?

ML- I with my family have lived in Tacoma for coming up on eight years?

HL- And where did you live before that?

ML- Before that we lived in Bend Oregon and in San Francisco California and I'm originally from Fort Smith Arkansas.

HL- What brought you from Fort Smith and then eventually to here?

ML- Originally teaching was not my first career it's a second career so I became a teacher in San Francisco and when we started a family changed my career to teaching and from there followed a job from San Francisco to Bend Oregon and then took another job in Tacoma I just kind of moving around and now have settled in Tacoma so it was a different teaching opportunity.

HL- Interesting. What is something from your culture or homeland or where you grew up that you wish more people in this area practiced?

ML- One thing we had to get used to coming to the Pacific Northwest from San Francisco in particular and sort of from the end I think was hospitality because I'm from the South and the first time I took my wife back to Arkansas she was just blown away by the the checkout person at the store would say hi and ask you how you're doing and it would be very personable and it's just the culture is different out here in general people are not unfriendly but they're not overly friendly like they are in the South so I'm OK with it but it's a definitely a change.

HL- Do you have any inquiries or like thoughts why you think that?

ML- Is it's colder up here. In the South it's just that's a thing, it's a southern tradition to me very very hospitable very welcoming. If someone shows up to your house you would invite them in and you would always have you know a snack or a drink ready for the guest to come in. I think it's more of a more of a tradition in the South and maybe just because Pacific Northwest is newer in terms of Europeans who have moved to this area.

HL- So your childhood was in Arkansas, in the South, what was it like growing up there?

ML- I thought it was great. Temperature was hot, um I my family was very kind of lower middle class but we never wanted for anything and I had the benefit of a private education of until about 6th grade when I transferred over to public school because I wanted to play basketball and also had the advantage of going to schools that were very diverse maybe not quite as diverse as here in the Pacific Northwest but certainly not completely not completely Caucasian so I really enjoyed that growing up and look forward to that diversity and so one of the reasons I came to the West Coast.

HL- And then taking where you grew up to where how you see children now, what are some of the differences from that you see in your childhood or childhood growing up to how you see children growing up here?

ML- I in general especially being a middle school teacher I see that attention spans have changed and it's not kids fault it's just the world we live in. Screen time I think has changed a lot. I didn't have that advantage, or if you want to call in an advantage, when I was growing up. When you had to entertain yourself you would go outside and play even in the summertime you would ride your bike you'd go find someone to play basketball with or just shoot on your own even if you didn't have so that's, I had a love of reading and that helps but there was no instant entertainment gratification so you had to work and be creative and I feel that was an advantage for me so it'll be interesting to see as the generations come along if anything is lost and not having to really work to entertain yourself.

HL- And then what are some historical events from your growing up that have had an impact or a large impact on your life that you could recall?

ML- Well, I just, things that I remember very vividly are our connection with Wisconsin my dad's side of the family is all from Wisconsin so every summer we didn't you travel much and we would go there for two weeks and hang out and so a love for that area of the country and if we weren't on that trip usually we were camping so also my love for the outdoors. I think one big thing that was historical event at least for me personally I was an athlete and very much wanted to be a basketball player until about 9th grade 8th 9th grade when I didn't grow I was 6 inches shorter than I am now and was a good basketball player was just not overly athletic and didn't get the playing time and so I turned to music and other things and ended up quitting the basketball team and that summer grew 6 inches ironically but I had already made my pivot to academics and music and other things that were not organized sports related I still played sports have played sports for the rest of my life um, and then going to college. For me college it changed my life in a lot of ways definitely my favorite academic experience of all my education was going to college found a lot of like minded people again in diversity of thought and different people and people who were really interested in learning new things and trying new things and so um college was a great experience for me.

HL- Are there any historical events from that time that you remember that had an impact on your life or?

ML- Such as U.S. history or?

HL- Anything

ML- Well I mean if you're thinking of kind of U.S. history or world history things that would have shaped my childhood where I remember the challenger disaster when the space shuttle blew up and that was a big thing. The fall of the Berlin Wall was kind of a world changing events during my lifetime. Historically I you know being from Arkansas and in college at the University of Arkansas at the time I worked for a new station so I got to meet then governor Clinton who would go on to become President Clinton shake his hand once or twice and so yeah I felt like I was a little bit involved in history but nothing that really altered the course of my life.

HL- Do you feel or how do you feel about participating in the Pledge of Allegiance or national anthem?

ML- I do I choose to do being a middle school teacher I have a classroom of students and we say the pledge every morning it is their students option to say the pledge to stand or not to stand or say the pledge and um I I always ask them you know is this just why are you doing it what is the intent behind it do you do you have is this a form of protest or is this as many things are in middle school just a just a

reason to not do something that the school is making you do because everyone doesn't have the cultural backgrounds that would necessarily naturally lead to protest and they certainly can't articulate well. This is why they're not doing it but you know our country is a democracy and so even saying the Pledge of Allegiance is a democratic thing and I wish in some ways we did a better job as a country to make it more of a place where people would want to you know say the pledge or be patriotic in that way and my hesitation with that is that you know if you decide not to say the Pledge of Allegiance the caution is always do make sure that you participate in our democracy because if you choose not to do this and then you choose not to vote ultimately your voice is going to be lost in the process and so all those things that you want to see changed are only changed by participating in a democracy.

HL- Um was there ever a time in anytime of your life where you realized you had power or privilege over another group of people or a person?

ML- No. I think the whole idea of white privilege is something that I have just been educated on recently and part of the thing I experienced was the term privilege was a hard term for me to understand and it took a lot of time and reading and education from other people to help me understand that, you know I was not rich I my family was not powerful I'm like what do you mean by privilege and then in the past few years coming to understand that I may not have been rich and I may not have come from a powerful family but I still had many privileges or advantages that especially people of color did not have do not have and so it's it's been a recent kind of education and coming to understand I'm not overly aware and in fact a couple times I have almost felt like I've been on the other side of the issue where it was an affirmative action situation or I was you know going for a job and someone else got it and it's like well wait a second was I was I the most qualified and so umm yeah. I have I misused it? oh I'm sure I have, but not not consciously or something that I could someone someone would have to point it out to me to help me.

HL- Have you, on the same topic of privilege, have you seen this type of um power or privilege or some type of oppression dynamic in your workplace?

ML- No not directly in my current workplace and not to say that it doesn't happen but I think you know being in a public school being in a minority majority school being in a school that's you know has an equity team and is very at least attempts to be very aware of the situation I think it would be not nearly as overt if it was happening again being raised in the South though those sorts of jokes and things were said and did I see a lot of it growing up, yeah absolutely, absolutely.

HL- So you worked in a in Tacoma in a public school now but you used to work in a private school in Bend Oregon. Do you see any major differences from the two schools or in any of like the private public school differences or even in locations in San Francisco just any of the differences?

ML- Yeah well if you take San Francisco that's uh something in the in the middle Bend was an interesting place because it's a it's a small it's a big small town. It's a very resort town very affluent town and so you there's virtually no middle class. There's very wealthy and then everyone who is the working class who is doing all the jobs for the resorts and the restaurants and hotels and predominantly Caucasian very white there and so private school doesn't have to mean necessarily not diverse not diverse ethnically it's often diverse socioeconomically because you have to be able to afford a private education so that was interesting, that was even interesting coming from San Francisco where this the

private school that I taught and was majority Chinese American so it was even a different different dynamic there and then coming to Tacoma and now teaching in a public school where lower socioeconomic class very very diverse multiple multiple different ethnic groups yeah I I in some ways you students are all the same and in some ways a lot of that stuff in my opinion doesn't really get show up until you're an adult and then you're I don't know think you know something but kids kids are very open vessels and even the things that they are taught at home in school can unlearned is not the right word but at least be they can be shown that there's another side to the argument so very much enjoy that so that's kind of the difference between the three places.

HL- And then um kind of similar to the last question, what's a difference between working at a private school versus a public school?

ML- Well the big one is if your private school is a religious school if it's a Christian School there's a there's a different value system that's just inherent in the school and you know I've taught in Christian schools that you know were Christian schools had a Christian education component to it but not all of my students were Christian and they were coming there for the quality of education, it's so I don't know a lot of I I would say maybe there's in general a value of the education because you're paying for it in private school and not every student but at least if they don't feel it at least they have you know some parent or guardian who is paying for it and so we'll kind of enforce that for them sometimes in public education you get students who middle school don't want to be there but they're if there's not a push at home for education and for improving yourself academically they just don't have that same sort of drive I think that's kind of inherent in the two systems and that's not to say that there are many many public school students that are very very driven regardless of socioeconomic status.

HL- Do you think there's a lack of quality of education from the public school system rather than the private?

ML- No I don't think so. I think there are two different systems, but I think they both work effectively well. I think in the public school system you have more more students more teachers and so if you have a teacher that's you know maybe not up to standard just statistically you will have more of them in the public school system and that doesn't mean that you won't have them in the private school system but I think the quality is there I was told in my teacher training that you know if a students going through school and you'll have some teachers that are better or some teachers that you have a connection with better than others a student has a bad experience one year it takes I think 3 3 consecutive years of bad teachers to really statistically show a change in the overall education that you know students are resilient and if they have a quote unquote bad teacher one year another teacher will help them make up those deficits so no I I difference but not difference in quality I think you can have quality education in both places.

HL- Awesome. And then last question. Is there one thing that you would change in the public school system when it comes to either inequality or let's start with that with inequality?

ML- I wish, inequality, what's the second part?

HL- Ethnicity.

ML- Or ethnicity, alright so inequality umm one thing that changed I I you know speaking as a white male and a person of privilege it feels like we do a lot and I'm thinking someone else might have something to

say that I don't see but I do feel like the majority of what I see in the teachers that I teach with and the students that are involved that there is at least a a a very very strong attempt for equity and to make it a safe place for everyone to learn in terms of ethnicity I wish we did a better job of celebrating our cultures and not that we don't but that to me is the beauty of you know having so many different people is that we could do a better job of learning from each other so more than just you know Asian American Pacific Islander month or Latino month or I would love us to see us do more of of inviting in guest speakers or groups or performance groups that represented that culture so you can get more than just clothing change or quotes on the board or you know a PowerPoint that shows some things I would love to see people actually demonstrating and discussing their culture in person.

HL- Well, wonderful thank you for your time!

ML- You're welcome.