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## Ken Ritchey interview for the Lest We Forget Collection of Oral Histories

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Judy Leasure

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*Ken Richey*

WRIGHT STATE  
~~TOM RICHEY~~ #31

**WRIGHT STATE  
TOM RICHEY  
TAPE #31**

**TOM RICHEY:**

When you... when you look at the field of MRDD from the perspective of a legislative historical perspective, umm, the major legislation that really set the cornerstone for Ohio's system today was passed in 1967 was Senate Bill 169. And, in essence it created for each of our Counties a County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. A non... non-pay volunteer board and the ability with the support of the County Commissioners to have a... the ability to pass local funding for the services. And, this was the, umm, the direct result of a... of a significant lobbying effort on the part of parents especially with the support of the arch of Ohio. Umm, and the... in the early days, in... in those... after the countries then became organized the focus... the focus of services became, uh, the educational system because many times, umm, individuals had been precluded from a public school educational system. But, certainly not in every case. But, certainly across Ohio that was the experience and that was... rather than the exception. Umm, and that legislation then became the ground work for the funding which is the cornerstone of today's county board programs. Umm, since then there's been, uh, several significant pieces in State and Federal Legislation for example, two pieces of Federal Legislation, uh, really helped put things in perspective, umm, 1973 the 1970 Rehabilitation Act. Put in place a concept of accessible services, accessible facilities and on-discriminatory hiring practices for people with disabilities of all types. Umm, that coupled with a about year later the Federal Legislation on, uh, public education and requirements from IEP moved the

system forward dramatically and... and put in place the expectation that for example, that public schools were to serve all the public kids. Uh, and, umm, in the case of kids with a special need well, put in the requirement for an individualized plan. There's certainly been many, many pieces of the legislation that have enhanced the system over time and I certainly don't remember ever piece of it. But, some examples, umm, you know, we're proud since I've been Director of the Senate Bill 1... uh, 171 which created the Bureau of Registry. Which we now have about 68 people on that because of their... they betrayed their trust whether it was abuse, neglect or theft are now precluded by state law from, umm, serving people... and being employed in the MRDD field. Umm, there's also been, umm, additional state legislation, I mean, we been fortunate enough in the last 5 and 1/2 years to pass about 8 pieces of legislation including, uh, two pieces on major reform in Medicaid that have been the subject of, uh, trying to refinance our system to serve and expand the services. But, to do so while being compliant with Medicaid, which has been a challenge. Uh, and it's not been resolved yet. Umm, we've also reformed Licensure in the last year with Senate Bill 191. And... and, how we now have a better way to delegate nursing I group homes and how we serve people. So, the legislative history and there's obviously more to it than that, umm, and has... has helped whether it's at the state or the federal level has helped protect the rights, uh, and then you couple that with some of the major court cases, which, umm, are important. Put in place a context where how we serve people today in Ohio.

**QUESTION:**

I think one of the most intriguing things to me is the DD Bill of Rights. Because it seems to me like in all the civil rights movements ... I know a lot of people when we've done this

taping had referred to what we're talking about is a civil rights movement and even Mark said this was really a civil rights movement. And, in any other civil rights movements I don't recall anything where a particular group of people had to have a specific Act... a Bill passed to guarantee them the most basic rights. Can you tell us... what... just go into what the DD Bill of Rights is and what some of those rights were for people that, you know, that some of the things we took for granted that those people would have the right to?

**TOM RICHEY:**

Well, when Ohio passed what became known as the DD Bill of Rights it was in response to the, umm, how the state had gone about closing the Orient State Institute and, umm, several of our state legislators including Senator... I think it was then Senator Hobson, uh, were instrumental with that... with conducting public hearings into what had happened. And, out of that it became the recognition that we needed to protect the rights and to do so in a more formal way. And, the Bill of Rights which is still in existence today and is still the... the cornerstone of services and in fact, umm, effects our system and the public education system. Umm, guarantees things that maybe they shouldn't have to guarantee but because we've had so many examples of wherever they... the rights weren't protected. So, for example the... the Bill of Rights has in there, you know, certainly the provisions on the right to be in the community setting. The right to do process requirements. The right to religious freedom, umm, and various things like that and that we still hold dear. And, of course the cornerstone is freedom from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Uh, that have been refined, uh, and... and... re... and defined more clearly over time including the... the Bill we passed about a couple... about a year

ago the Victims of Crime Taskforce became a piece of legislation that, umm, we think will help protect again the rights of people... and help ensure more prosecutions of people that violate those rights. Umm, but to us they're very important, umm, like the civil rights movement, umm, sometimes we do need legislation to protect what should be, uh, uh, what we would have believed to be rights that don't need that outside kind of protection but unfortunately sometimes do until they become part of the mainstream thinking of our society.

**QUESTION:**

And, was it \_\_\_\_\_ Bill Rights just in Ohio or is there something similar across the Nation that you're aware of? Or was this particular to Ohio?

**TOM RICHEY:**

I don't know. Good question. I'm not certain and I don't want to guess not when I'm being on tape. I don't want... No the DD Bill of Rights was Ohio. I don't... I'm trying to think... I know the tapes running but you're going edit this out. I don't think there is a... if there is a piece of legis... federal legislation that's known as a Bill of Rights I don't know it. So, we'll go another question.

**QUESTION:**

Well, uh, going back... what do you think...? I think you already talked a little bit about it... that the role of the families, uh, especially the older families that had people in institutions and all... what was their role in bringing us to where we are now both, you know, with the services we have and the safeguards we have through legislation?

**TOM RICHEY:**

Umm, when we... when we... when we ask ourself how's are... how's are system in Ohio

and across the country move from where it was to where it is? Uh, I think any conversation that fails to give full credit to the role of advocates be the family members, a brother or sister or self advocates, uh, misses the boat. Umm, beginning with the creation of the arch of Ohio in Cincinnati, uh, about what 51, 52 years ago, umm, I think it wasn't for our families, if it wasn't for people challenging status quo with a prevalent thought, uh, we would not have made the progress. And, I think that in the years since then more and more individuals that have an interest in the field have become advocates have helped that too. But, I think in the beginning it was parents who were questioning why is public policy such it requires me to be... putting my child in an institution? Why does public policy, uh, not let me have the right to an education in my neighborhood school? Why should I go to a church basement? And to be told you can be excluded because you quote, can't learn. Is... is a terrible concept. So, families in Ohio when I think across the country did the major bulk of... of the advocacy effort that not only created County Boards of MRDD but created the environment and the culture. And, I think in... in when I look at the change agent that occurred I think this is the perfect storm of advocacy between the Viet Nam War and our massive challenge in public policy coupled with the civil rights movement and again challenging prevalent public policy, not saying law but the way things were and then the same questions being asked people in the disability... by the disability committee, why are we institutionalizing people? Why are we sterilizing people? Why are we not looking at community settings like we would for everybody else? And, I think that the families took the leadership role in challenging the status quo and of course, that was tough. And, in many cases the families went beyond that, put their money where their mouth was... paid for services in church basements, uh,

because public schools excluded kids and that was in fact the law in Ohio at one point and time. So, I think the role of families probably today they're trying to find what their new mission is because we've now gone to more professional system of advocates, uh, residential services. But, you can never forget the fact that on an individual basis the protections we have for an individual, uh, man or woman, son or daughter, child or adult should come from the perspective of people care, be they family members, sibling, brother, sister, aunt or uncle, nephew or niece or somebody that simply is involved in somebody else's life. And, that I think is critical.

**QUESTION:**

What do think if... if you had to look at it from your perspective has probably been the most important federal change whether it was through a court case or, uh, uh, legislation and what's maybe the most important for how Ohio's systems has developed?

**TOM RICHEY:**

Well, if you look at what has moved our system forward it.... it has to be a combination of selected court cases coupled with selected legislation. Uh, as an example in Ohio, clearly the paradigm shift began with the creation of county boards or MRDD. And, the paradigm shift was, the value at the local level of having a focus and an emphasis and an ability to fund those services with the support of local communities by... by \_\_\_\_\_ (INAUDIBLE) being, you know, voted through a levy process. Umm, there was... there was... and again, many federal laws 1973 Rehabilitation Act the idea about what were previous public school(INAUDIBLE) public law in 94 and 42. Umm, and some of the other Ohio Legislation about protection and safeguards. But, on the other hand

without the intervening court cases to interpret it, uh, the court cases sometimes prompted the legislation. For example, in... in the case of, umm, Public Law 94142 writes.... Educational Handicapped Children's Act. It was precipitated by several court cases especially a notably one in Pennsylvania. And, the federal government realized we're going to have, uh, hodge podge of court decisions ruling in the rights of kids from education if we didn't put together a more consistent federal law. There's also been, uh, for example, uh, more recently the Homestead case that, uh, talked about the right of a person with their consent and their permission or support of the professionals in the field to not be necessarily kept in an institution. And, that case came out of I think was Georgia. Umm, and there... so court cases and the avenue of the courts is... is critical not only individual rights violations but in major paradigm shifts.

**QUESTION:**

Do you see court cases as one of the primary instigators in the closing of the institutions in the days of Orient and those things that the court cases that came about were they instrumental in that?

**TOM RICHEY:**

When one looks at the, umm, at what has happened in public policy for... institutions across the country, uh, some of the cases that... that really come to mind have resulted in the... in forcing our society to look at past practices that were not maybe the best. Uh, for example, the most famous court case or one of them was the Pennhurst Case out of Pennsylvania about the Institution of Pennhurst. But, Ohio has Barbara C case. Uh, that did the same thing and sometimes if you can't move public policy one way you try to move it another way. And, umm, you... one would hope we wouldn't have to

always have a court case to see enlighten in good public policy. But, frankly if... if it doesn't work another way then you have to look at what makes sense. So, you would hope and I think we're in a different place so fortunately we not need as many cases. But, you know that's an important avenue if you can't get the legislation or the public to do the right thing.

**QUESTION:**

Mark and I talked a little bit about, uh, the concept of dignity of risk and how that fit into the way services are being delivered and will be delivered and I remember another one of those principals or concepts that when all those years ago when we were working there was one called The Principal of Normalization. What... can you give us a little of the background of that and what you think the history of that was and if it's still applicable today?

**TOM RICHEY:**

Umm, the...the... when... in our field we hear phrases like, normalization and dignity of risk and, umm, I see them a little different. The normalization concept actually came out of a number of MRDD leaders in the... in the institutional environment. And, I'm...

**RESTART**

Umm, one phrase that I hear mentioned and I certainly did when I got into the field a number of years ago was normalization. And, then we hear newer phrases like dignity of risk and then there's others. Umm, that... that... that have a meaning in the MRDD field it might be different elsewhere. In the early days of MR we're talking about the 60's and 70's. Uh, there were a number in individuals in public or private, umm, education... institutions of higher learning. Uh, Wolf Wolfensburg and Burton Blatt as, uh, two

examples of the key leading... leading edge thinking at that point and time. That... that gave us a concept in normalization which meant to them then something that was today most of us look at, well, of course. But, back then was cutting edge thinking and that... normalization back then meant that we should try to put people with disabilities into as normal like a lifestyle and environment as possible. So, we... it's not normal to be in an institution. It's not normal to be in an educational system that's apart from regular education. Uh, it's not normal to travel with 50 of your closest friends or... or in fact, never to travel and never leave the institution. So, the normalization principal that came about was a recognition that systems that were serving people needed to try to make their life as normal like... whatever normal means for you and I for all of us. But, as you do that and as you take people out of quote protected environments that have their own issues you bring... you bring to play how much risk can you give a person or can you tolerate, uh, with people that have disabilities. And, what if they make bad decisions. And, uh, and can you let them make a decision that would be... could hurt them. You know, of course, then you have to weigh how much hurt and what the harms is. But the dignity risk means, without certainly putting a person out of place of being injured or doing things that are bad to their health or their well being. That it's o.k. to fail because that's... that's the risk we all take. So, you try a job and it doesn't work and you get fired. Well, that's part of life so if you never want to get fired then you never take a job. And, I... I think that for people with disabilities, uh, I know my wife and I felt this way our daughter needed to be in a normalized environment to the extent that she could... could deal with it. And, it would be beneficial to her and I think that's true for most of us. I mean, not everybody goes to Harvard and, umm, I think the issue for us is as a society

is looking upon people with disabilities and helping them get to the... to as we call their potential and I'm not sure we ever get to anybody's real potential. But, for all of us it's what makes life normal for us and with the most potential knowing there's going to be risk. And, the two play together but you don't put one, uh, uh, abnormal risk of, uh, something happening but certainly as you move people back into their communities they do have the same events occur that occur to most people in life.

**QUESTION:**

Maybe we can talk for just a couple of minutes about some of the things that we worked together on for so many years and, uh, seems like there shouldn't be an issue but there still is. Some of the struggles with the getting homes in the community. And, the various things that we had to do to get those homes in the community and thinking now how Resident Home is still having to struggle just to get a new home open. And you think maybe that's over and all but, uh, can you go back in those years of... of trying to get homes opened in communities and they ... the old \_\_\_\_\_ syndrome and, uh, you know, where even the kindest of people would say, yeah, I agree they should be here but it shouldn't be on my street or something. And, you know, the difficulties with zoning and those kinds of things.

**TOM RICHEY:**

When we look at the principal normalization and dignity of risk one of the things that comes into play immediately is... is where a person lives. And, certainly it's been a problem in the past, it is a problem today. And, it will probably be a problem into the future. Is, where we locate whether it's a group home for 4 or 5 people or an apartment complex... unit or something like that. Is... is how well is that accepted in the

neighborhood and... and how good a neighbor do... does a group home become or the individuals living in a home. Certainly, if society saw people being institutionalized and as a matter of policy for years and years and year. When you then try to say, no that was wrong we want... or that was not the best approach more we want to put people in community settings. You have to explain to the communities why is there such a change in policy. Part of that is education. Part of that is time. And, part of that is the fear that we all have about things we don't understand. So, if a person never lived with us, they didn't grow up with our neighbors, they didn't go to the neighborhood school. They were always segregated, always isolated. You almost in the back of you mind have an assumption or must be some reason for that other than it was public policy.

So, the struggle for us is as we said people should live in neighborhoods and there were many families that never institutionalized their son or daughter. And, I think, you know, we didn't... I haven't mentioned about that but when those \_\_\_\_\_ parents wanted group homes for their son or daughter cause live everybody else they didn't want their son living at home forever. And, that isn't the normal way people develop... you at a certain point you do grow up and you move out of your family home. It became a challenge especially when it's a group home in neighborhoods. The fear this brings property values down. There'd be too many staff in my street. The fear will these people do something to harm me? And, is...aren't they better cared for elsewhere? I mean, there's a lot of issues some are prejudicial, some are lack of knowledge. But, everyone, every home is a separate struggle and has been for many, many years in many states. There have been a number of housing changes in federal legislation that now give as a right of entitlement, you now need to got through zoning requirements

because it was a time when local zoning jurisdictions banned certain groups of people from living that had needs to live together like people with disabilities but they're not alone. And, those have been taken out of by federal law. Now, you do not as a matter of recourse have to get a... for or less living together you don't get permission anymore. But, you still have to educate the neighborhood. It still is a struggle on a case by case basis. Even if you rent an apartment. And, one building unit in an apartment. The other neighbors say, what does this mean. And, I think we as professionals have to explain to people up front, I know that can cause problems. They have to be honest with people while we advocate for the person that needs a house like they do. The irony is in virtually every case after you've gotten over the... and it's sometimes very difficult the anger the 50 or 100 people coming to a zoning meeting or something trying to oppose something or a group home. And, maybe some of the other things that have occurred or do occur. Our experience has been after a while the home settle into the community and you wouldn't know it's there. Doesn't mean there can't be problems. But, in... in... you know, the research now shows home values do not lessen if there's a group home in the neighborhood. We don't see ten times more traffic in a neighborhood. We don't have everybody's home vandalized by the residents. Umm, we just don't see the things that became the fear of... of neighborhoods. But, I'm very grateful public policy was changed by some of the housing requirements that took away the right of people to challenge who should move into my community. So, I think these things are... are all helpful but every time you open up a home 4 bed or 5 or 10 whatever it is, you do have people say, what does this mean? What's this going to do? But, on the other hand I don't think any of us would want to have our neighbors take a

vote should we be allowed to move in. And, I know having been a parent of a child with disabilities myself I would... I would not be comfortable having other neighbors decide whether she's allowed to have a home or not in a neighborhood or do I have to put her in an isolated farm house somewhere. I don't think that's right. So, I feel very strong about the fact that people need to live together. On the other hand, folks that are doing the developing of housing I think of an obligation that we don't put people in homes that could \_\_\_\_\_ (INAUDIBLE) a risk. That's the other side of the coin.

**QUESTION:**

If... of we go back and in such a really short span of time in an historical... if you're looking at it historically... and the things that you've been involved in what's the journey been life for in watching coming into a system when it still was segregated, when people were still in institutions and being there when they were coming home from the institutions and being there when children started leaving segregated schools and going to mainstream schools. And, when there weren't people living in a community. What's that journey as a professional for you been like and as a person what's that been like for you \_\_\_\_\_ in such as short span of time really, those changes?

**TOM RICHEY:**

When... when you sit back and look at the changes that occurred in our field it's been extremely dynamic and in context although sometimes it felt slow historically it's been remarkable. We have gone from a society less than 100 years ago; I mean even 60 years ago institutionalization would have been a norm for people. To today where we've had actors portrayed... portraying a person with disability win an academy awards. And, that's remarkable. And, we've had the... the concept change in... in all

aspects of life like that and I was lucky I came into the field at a point where my first teaching job, umm, and my first teaching jobs were in public school settings with kids with special needs. Now, I... now one case it turned out I got the storage closet. And, I didn't realize I new it was a pretty small classroom until I saw the blueprint one day for the school that had just been built and opened. And it said storage closet in my classroom then I realized well, this is interesting. Even that being said, you know, the school gave me the resources to buy text books and the kids although they were in a segregated class they were at least in the right school. Umm, today we even see... taking that example further now, uh, some of our junior community colleges offer the opportunity for people with disabilities now to have... to have... to attend some classes and to... to learn at a higher education level and certainly we've gone out of our way now to... to help people with special needs that achieve at... in the... in the... in the advanced education learning. Umm, when I came.., when I came to Montgomery County and took my job the county had a fairly strong community program. And, umm, families... the paradigm had already shifted when I got into the field in Penn... in Ohio now. Where... where families were primarily being served at home. Uh, you know, they went to... they did go to the segregated county board school program for the most part. They did go to the workshop. But, even those too shifted. I know Montgomery County and most county boards did not have a school program. Their kids are now mainstream back in the public schools and... and many counties provide supports to allow the person to be successful in a public school setting. Uh, at the same time Montgomery County and other counties across the state, uh, have pushed and emphasized not only getting people out of workshops into jobs but letting people with disabilities even own businesses which

would have been unthinkable 20 years ago but we have a movement called Micro-Enterprises where people with disabilities can in fact get business loans and start businesses now that... that enhance their ability to earn money with their talents or their resources. And, that kind of entrepreneurship for our field wouldn't have been conceivable 60, 70 years ago. And, I'm not saying it wouldn't have been conceivable for everybody but in the mainstream whether it's Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia whatever the state was it wasn't the way they think. I think Ohio is on the cutting edge when you talk to other states of where we're trying to go and we're not there yet we have a lot to do. But, I think there's enough people now that value things, like self determination, supporting people in small residential settings, listening to what people want in their life and need in their life. Umm, and it's just exciting and... and it's been able to be watched in a generation which wasn't the case with other things like the civil rights movement. That... that have been very big hundred year struggles and we're still maybe not where we need to be in every case. So... so in some ways we've been fortunate that our paradigm shift and our struggles were... were compressed into an employment generation for a person like myself that started in, you know, we had a lot of kids in school (INAUDIBLE) three buildings to when I left their weren't any. And... and not that everything was perfect in the public school but the schools were supporting and accepting these individuals and trying to do the best they could to serve them. So, I mean... I mean it's exciting to see what's happened, I mean, uh, you know, cause I think we've seen so much change in our field and I really attribute a lot of it, umm, to the leadership of President Kennedy because he had a sister Rose Marie with a disability and I think that perspective in what he did with the... creating the President's panel and

their recommendations, you know, said it was o.k. to talk about something that had been kind of kept in the closet. I mean, how many years ago was it that some families literally kept a child or with a disability in a closet because they were embarrassed. So, I think we've really turned a corner and... and I'm excited about what happens in the future. I think we still have things to worry about, about how many... what we're doing with our workshop setting and whether they're still appropriate for everybody. Umm...

## **RESTART**

Uh, I'm really excited about the, uh, what I see happening in the future. I think it's going to be even compressed more so because I think... I think, the... the issue of individual value and individual rights as well as established. I think the leadership of counties and families and individuals... self advocates, people first of Ohio. Uh, have moved us to a point where it can't... we can't back slide. And, I think it's wonderful if we can give people economic, uh, independence so that those people that can make decisions can make the and those people that can earn a living should be enabled to and be tax payers like everybody else. Uh, I think we should... we... and I see... I see those things happening, umm, quicker and quicker now, sooner and sooner. I think people are now saying we may be moving too slow for some people. So, that's... that's good to be on the side of feeling it could move faster. Umm, but I think... I think we have, a... a bright future. There's still going to be problems. There's always going to be issues not everybody is going to agree. Buy I think it's exciting where we're going and I think when I look down the road I see the role of county boards really changing to being one of enabling individuals to have self determined or independent lives with supports that keep them independent because we all know when you're in institutions settings and I

don't mean this in a sense of a facility but it could be an institution of any type. Umm, you really do whether you realize it or not take away the rights and the ability of individuals to do what's... what's meaningful to them.

**QUESTION:**

I want to go back for just a second, umm, when you talked about the Kennedy's and their sister. And, how... how quickly things have happened in the MRDD field and that... that history... how big a change we made in such a short span of time really... I've always thought, you know, that situation with the president coming in at that particular time and Willow Brook where... if those hadn't happened... if those two things hadn't happened if we still wouldn't be where... where we were in the 60's before the changes happened. Do you... do you see that as... as really pivotal in... in really making something historical happen, you know, the change happen, I mean, where would we have been if there had not been those two elements?

**TOM RICHEY:**

When I think back on what might have been the factors that triggered such a significant paradigm shift and how we viewed people that were different. The things that strike me and there's just a handful and I'm sure there's something that I'm not going to remember but some of the things that strike me was certainly the... the role of President Kennedy here you had a president too for the first time talked about mental retardation and before he died received a report from the presidents panel of mental retardation that by the way is even though it's evolved and is still in existence today that sent... that sent a message of what... how we're serving people. You then had thinker of the time like Burton Black, Burton....

## RESTART

You certainly had thinkers of the time and public... and public and private higher education like Burton Blatt, Wolf Wolfensburg and others, uh, Kirk and Johnson who then philosophically talked about the normalization and other concepts of how we serve people and started educating people and their graduate programs and saying, there's more to this, there's more to life. You then had some of the court cases like in the... in the... in the early 70's in Pennsylvania about the right of a child to an educational program. And, all those things then some Supreme Court cases like especially more recently the Olmstead cast. But, there's cases earlier than that, that also... even if they weren't directly in mental retardation or in mental health or other areas put in place the rights concept. Where some of the civil rights cases that, again, civil rights act put in place voting issues for people with disabilities. It's all those pieces coming together and again the middle of that is the individual and their family and how they then took up the lead for the arch of Ohio and the arch of the United States. And, advocated, lobbied and a number of those families are... are certainly still with us and remember what it was like and don't want us to go back to the days when some where counseled, don't bring your child home from the hospital. I mean, in... in just my generation families were not being counseled again to take... not bring their child home unless it was some medically requirement otherwise. Just being mentally retarded was not a requirement... not an issue. So, I think those things did... now if they wouldn't have occurred while we probably wouldn't have had the civil rights movement... I mean, we've had... society would have lost other things because I think they were a natural out growth. If I'm a parent at that time period and I'm questioning some of the things I'm seeing but not

feeling I have power to move them. And, then I watch the civil rights movement take place and how difficult that was. Watch the Viet Nam war protest and again how it changed public policy it leads one to believe we can make the same kind of impact in this field. Then you had the book that Burton Blatt published called Christmas of Purgatory. That was, uh, the film exposé so to speak of conditions in an institution and as long as we didn't know those things occurred we were... we were fine as a society. You see those things occurring and how can you... how can you not react to them. No different than watching the TV today and seeing somebody die in a foreign country and saying, my gosh we've got to do something. And, it's the same concept and I think... I think... I think it would have happened regardless. I think in a sense things aligned and they were going to happen and I'm just... I feel I've been fortunate enough to see so many of those occur.

**QUESTION:**

Do you think the younger parents today... the parents that have not known the struggle and just having a child with a disability is a struggle and but now knowing that struggle that came with being told that your only option is let the child die over in an institution and to fight for every piece of ground that you had to get. Do you think there's some kind of a debt that this generation owes to the generation just preceded them that made things possible for where they are? Or at least a recognition... something.

**TOM RICHEY:**

When you look, umm, at each succeeding generation and do they appreciate what the generation did before the answer is probably no. Umm, and unless somebody helps us along in... and reminds us we do take for granted that here we are today and we don't

know where we came from. And, I think Tom Brokaw's book *The Greatest Generation* summarizes how you've got to focus on what some group of people did that... that moved us forward as a country or as a society. And, I think that certainly the families in the 40's and 50's that said, my son or daughter's staying with me were pioneers. And, umm, probably endured things that we thank goodness don't have to endure because they did endure them. No different than the first person that crossed the picket line to get to a restaurant when they were told they were the wrong color or the wrong religion. Umm, somebody has to do that so that you and I enjoy the benefit of that and I don't think we do than them. I think we just kind of, you know, kind of accept that and, umm, don't realize that no we don't want to stop where they were but we have to be in a place to understand that if they wouldn't have done that somebody else would have had to, maybe us. And, I think those paradigm shifts are always occurring. Umm, whether it's our field or... or another field they're always the pioneer the person has to take the risk, the person that gets sometimes harmed from taking a risk. So, that we can enjoy and then push forward from there to a new paradigm and a new value system and I know we don't probably thank them enough and we don't even appreciate what they did sometimes. Uhh, I mean, now a days, I mean it's... its common practice that every parent would bring their child with a disability home from the hospital. You wouldn't even have a doctor suggest probably other than it was.... There's a medical requirement not to. But, I can't imagine what it would have been like to have been asked as a... a parent maybe you shouldn't bring your child home just pretend they died. And, to say no and the struggles and conflicts you would have had if your minister or priest would have been the one also saying that to you. So, yeah, we... we... we... it's... you have to remember but you can't

make... you can't dwell on that. You have to respect and thank those for what they did because you're... you're the pioneer for the future of services also. So, you're... each... each group or each generation builds on the... on the framework or the... the starting point of the one before them.

**QUESTION:**

Anything that we haven't touched on or anything that you've thought about that you'd like to include?

**TIM RICHEY:**

I... I think one of the things that we... we... when we... when we look back on what was past practice and it's very, very easy to criticize it. Yeah, we shouldn't have done it. It was terrible to do this, I mean... (DOOR BELL RING)

**RESTART:**

When... when you... when we look back on how services were, were those 5 years ago or 50 years ago it's also easy to criticize that generation for what they didn't do or didn't know that we think is obvious today. And, one of the areas I'm a little sensitive to is the area of, umm, the institutions because sometimes they take a bad rap when in their time period they were created, in fact, the early institutions I the 1850's and 1880's that came out of Europe at least the concept and... and evolved in America. Actually, had a pretty noble purpose. The philosophy initially was to bring a person who had special needs together in one place, work them and return them to the community. That was the actual purpose of institutions. They evolved, of course, from there into a long term living situation because you weren't going to cure the problem. If they were mentally retarded, I don't mean it was a problem but if they were mentally retarded you weren't going to

cure it and make it go away, it's not like an illness. So, we created institutions in... as... as a first response other than the family dealing with them by themselves. We... we thought they were going to be here to serve an in... in and out population that became a long term care population. And, then we didn't fund them properly. And, over time we cut their funds. I'm talking about 20, 50 years ago. And, then we wondered what they evolved into when we didn't value the workforce. We put them in many cases out of site and out of mind. If you look at most institutions in most states they were isolated, they were self contained... their own power plants, their own farm land, thousands of acres. And, they didn't... they weren't funded properly. They evolved into something we weren't happy with... we weren't happy with and sometimes like Ohio had a major court case, uh, from one of its facilities. Because of lack of care. (PHONE RINGING)

## **RESTART**

Umm; Ohio had a major court case on the lack of care for people in this... in one of its institutions. It resulted in Ohio coming up to speed where they should be with... with services for people in that kind of a setting. And... and one thing I'd like to just kind of put in place, institutions weren't good or bad initially they were probably a good idea a 100 years ago. It's what you do as society evolves over time and it's how you try and try to change systems and although today we're not enamored of them like we were 100 years ago. They served a... at a point in time they were the only way to serve people and... and if we wouldn't have had them we may have found that we had a serious... a history of genocide of some sort with this population like some of the other countries that didn't serve them in some way. Although today we look upon them differently and we don't... we wouldn't look at the stain of a 3,000 bed facility, you know.

They had a role to play, they tried to play it and then they were never funded properly whether they were publically operated or privately operated and it put them in a no win situation and guarantee they couldn't move forward.

**END OF TAPE**