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Paul Moreno

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Paul Moreno (1930-)
INTERVIEWER: Richard Estrada
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Attorney; member of the Texas Legislature.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biography; experiences with discrimination; the Chicano Movement.

45 minutes (1 7/8 tape speed); 23 pages.

Paul Moreno
by Ricardo Estrada
July 30, 1975

E: Mr. Moreno where were you born?

M: In Alamogordo, New Mexico.

E: What year?

M: 1930.

E: Could you tell me something about your parents' background?

M: Well, my parents immigrated to this country at a very early age. They must have been just a few months old. Both of them were born in the state of Chihuahua, México. My father was, that is.

E: In what city?

M: Ojo Negro, or some little town like that. My mother was born in the state of Zacatecas. They moved out here and my dad traveled the circuit of the lumber industry. He traveled all over Arizona and New Mexico, Colorado, California.

E: What period was this?

M: During the thirties I guess, because I was born in New Mexico and some of my brothers were born in Arizona. So it must have been between 1930-1937 that my dad migrated all over the Southwest. We finally settled here in El Paso. I started grammar school here.

E: Why did your father decide to come to El Paso?

M: I guess because of a job. Also, his parents lived here. My mother's parents lived in Colorado and California.

E: What year did your father and mother originally emigrate from México into the United States?

M: Well, my dad is 75 years old.

E: Is he still alive?

M: Yes.

E: Was he here on the border during the Mexican Revolution, say between 1910 and 1920?

M: I think he was here in El Paso. In other words, he wasn't a political refugee, no.

E: Could you tell me about the rest of your family?

M: Originally we were twelve. Now we are 7 left. Three died at a very early age in Arizona. The weather was too cold for them. Two sisters just passed away about six years ago.

E: So you grew up here in El Paso?

M: Yes.

E: Could you tell me something about your formative years?

M: I grew up about a block from here, at Florence and Third Streets. I went to Alamo Elementary School and then to Bowie High School. I dropped out of high school to join the service.

E: In what year?

M: In 1948.

E: While you were going to Alamo what was the ethnic composition of the school.

M: A hundred percent.

E: A hundred percent Chicano? What about the other schools you went to?

M: Well, Bowie is the other one I went to.

E: So it was just Alamo and Bowie?

M: Yes.

E: And both were a hundred percent.

M: Both were a hundred percent.

E: Do you recall any authority figures, say principals or teachers, who might

have influenced you while you were growing up?

M: One had a negative influence on me. He was a no good son of a bitch.

E: Could you tell me why you have these feelings?

M: He mistreated all of us. We would get punished severely. He was the principal, and as a consequence of his troubles with the teachers we were the recipients of all the anger.

E: Do you think there were any discriminatory undertones to all of this?

M: I don't think so, because at that time we didn't know what discrimination was all about. It was just a way of life and everybody just accepted it. The principals we had just expected us to be spanked and other things, violently.

E: Did they let you speak Spanish?

M: No, that was a no no. They used to get angry at us for that all the time.

E: For speaking Spanish? Were you ever punished for it?

M: Oh, yes!

E: What kind of punishment did you get?

M: They used to beat us with a bat.

E: So you dropped out of Bowie in 1948 and...

M: I joined the Marine Corps.

E: Tell me about your experiences in the Marine Corps.

M: A Chicano joined the service to get a job because he couldn't find any around.

E: Was this typical of a lot of Chicanos?

M: Yes, particularly at that time. At the time everybody used to tell all these romantic stories. All the brothers who were in the service all had stories about overseas, Hawaii, Japan, Germany. I guess all of us wanted

to experience the same thing.

E: How long was your enlistment?

M: I was in the Marine Corps for about six years.

E: So you were in the Marine Corps during the Korean Conflict?

M: Yes.

E: Did you serve in Korea?

M: Yes.

E: Could you tell us something about your experiences there?

M: We took all the crap and did all kinds of jobs. You name it and I did it.

E: Did you serve in combat?

M: Yes, we were the first Marines that hit down in Korea. We went in all the way and then came back out. It was nothing really.

E: While you were in the Marine Corps did you get along with the Anglos?

M: Yes, I got along with them; because, before I had never had any contact with them except for my bosses that I had worked for. I thought that it was quite an honor to hang around with Anglos. At that time I was even ashamed of my culture.

E: At that time you were ashamed of being Mexican?

M: At that time I was.

E: Could you handle English well at that time?

M: No. When I was at Camp Pendelton I used to go off by myself and go up on a hill and practice.

E: Speaking English?

M: Yes.

E: How? What did you do to practice?

M: My "ch's" and my "sh's" were real bad. I couldn't tell them apart.

E: Did you take a book with you?

M: No, I just practiced until I realized the difference between them.

E: Did anybody ever point this out to you?

M: Yes, a friend of mine used to kid me all the time about this until I finally realized the difference. Then I started practicing.

E: While you were in the Marines did you ever experience any discrimination?

M: No I didn't, because I didn't know what discrimination was. I just took things as a matter of course. We did the shitty jobs and that was it. I just didn't know what it was. In other words, I didn't know any better.

E: How do you look upon your years in the Marine Corps? Did you enjoy them?

M: I guess to a certain extent I did, but it was a hell of a brainwashing they did on us. I thought I was a good American but I found out I wasn't.

E: How did you find out that you weren't?

M: When I started going to school, and when I got out.

E: When did you get out of the service?

M: I guess it was 1956. I messed around down here for a couple of years. I was kind of forced to go to the International Business College, but after a year I realized it was a waste of time so I dropped out and went into U.T.E.P. At that time Whittaker was the administrator. He would really go out of his way to help you. He got me enrolled on probation. Those days there was no such thing as probation. You had to have a high school diploma to get in. He went out of his way to get me in and even helped me schedule classes and stuff like that. So I started to find out what was going on, and I think that's when I became a liberal.

E: When you said that you found out you weren't an American what exactly did you mean?

M: I found out that we were denied so many things, like Senator Chavez of New Mexico used to say. I read an article about him where he said that during the war we are Americans, and right after the war we're Mexican Americans, Latin Americans. The same thing happens when we try to get a job. I just realized that all the privileges and rights that we have under the Constitution were not given to us. I'm talking about the school systems and about all the segregation that was going on.

E: So you say that it was during the mid fifties that you started to become aware of this?

M: Yes.

E: Do you think any of your friends became aware of that at that time?

M: Very few really became aware, because at that time it was unpopular to speak Spanish in college. They brainwashed us so much.

E: You mean the same thing you went through in the public schools was happening in college?

M: It was a very quiet, elusive way of brainwashing. You were expected to speak nothing but English, and good English, too. If anybody ever saw you speaking Spanish--and I'm talking about our people--they demoted you. They thought that you were dumb or something.

E: So Mexicans were doing that to other Mexicans?

M: That's right. And when you became a professional, got out of school and became a lawyer, a doctor or what have you, it was expected of you to marry a "gringa." If you married a "gringa" you were really in. You really had achieved success if you did that.

E: That was thought of you if you married an Anglo?

M: That was part of the crap that we were brainwashed into.

E: Did you buy it?

M: I started to buy it, but I realized what the hell was being done. I remember that when I got out of law school and started practicing, all of my friends and I would speak Spanish while we were drinking coffee, and then as soon as an Anglo came in they would change. I thought that was a bunch of bullshit. I keep speaking Spanish all the time, and so far I've been pretty successful. I see no reason to change. I guess somehow I was instrumental in changing a lot of things, especially among my professional friends, who were actually ashamed of speaking Spanish.

E: When you were going to school at Texas Western, did any of the professors say anything, or did you ever get the opinion that they didn't want you to speak Spanish?

M: It was by innuendo, nothing direct. A person I know who teaches Economics over there always used to stress in his lectures how good it was for us to speak nothing but English.

E: Was it Hartrick?

M: Yes. But I'm not saying he would do it in bad faith. He would say that as a professional man you were supposed to set an example; and that you should follow the "American life," so that other people would follow your steps and assimilate into the culture. But it just doesn't work.

E: Do you think it's important for a Mexican American to learn English?

M: Yes, very definitely. But I also see that it's important for us to keep our culture.

E: What was your major while you were going to Texas Western?

M: Accounting.

E: What other courses did you take?

- M: I took mostly Accounting. I decided that I wanted to be a C.P.A. or a lawyer. I knew I really wanted to be a lawyer so I went to law school.
- E: From the outset you knew you were going to be a lawyer?
- M: Oh, yes!
- E: In retrospect, what is your general view of school, in particular of Texas Western in the mid fifties? Did you enjoy it?
- M: I enjoyed it because I liked school. If you liked school you didn't have any problems. You have fun regardless of where you go.
- E: Did you ever take any Mexican history courses?
- M: They were not available at that time.
- E: Who did you take American history from?
- M: Dr. Timmons. He's a crazy guy. The closest you could come to any Mexican or Chicano history was this English teacher who wrote a book on slang. We would go out and give him information. I think he's still there. He's a real crazy old guy.
- E: You know, talking about history, part of this interview is devoted to your attitudes about the upcoming Bicentennial. I'd like to ask you, as a Mexican American in 1975, how do you relate to the founding fathers of this country like Washington, Adams and Jefferson?
- M: I don't relate at all to them. I relate to my own ancestry and to my own culture. I have no feelings toward the Bicentennial celebration. I'm thinking of having my own Bicentennial, whatever the hell it is. I think all that is just a farce, by the conservatives and the Anglos. And really, they're throwing all this crap to us. I have nothing to celebrate about Washington. Hell, we were here already.
- E: The principles upon which this country was founded--the Constitution, the

Declaration of Independence, the right of everyone to pursue happiness--do you identify with that? Do you like the idea?

M: Very definitely. Unfortunately it hasn't been until about the last ten years that we have had even a smell of what the Constitution and the other documents give us right to. Previous to that we never had anything. The concepts themselves are beautiful. We are the only country in the world who have them.

E: Are you saying that the Mexican Americans were denied those rights up until ten years ago?

M: Oh yeah! We still are.

E: In what respect?

M: In anything. Just look at the society pages, all the debutants and things like that. You'll never find a Chicana there.

E: Is that a product of discrimination?

M: Very definitely. That's economic also. You just look at the Junior League here in El Paso. If you have a Spanish surname you cannot be admitted. In the Sherriff's posse you couldn't be admitted, up until just a few years ago, if you had a Spanish surname. Also in the Sun Bowl...very few Spanish surnames are involved in it. And I talked to them; I told them, "I'm going to throw a boycott...throw a picket around the Sun Bowl." "Why?" "Because I don't see a single brown face in there." "Well, it costs a lot of money to be on this thing." "I have the bread. A lot of us do." The same goes on with the United Fund. The United Fund is geared to help the poor, the disabled, and what have you, but nothing except "gringos" run it.

E: Are there some Mexicans that would like to join?

M: You're damn right there are. You know that the United Fund is a good paying

job. The Director makes at least \$30,000 for doing nothing. And what about the Sun Carnival? If nothing else, they can go see the Sun Carnival basketball games free. It's really hard to get into those games free.

E: When it comes to patriotism toward the United States of America, what are your thoughts on that?

M: Let me put it this way: if México was to invade the United States, I would be the first one to go fight. It's that simple.

E: So you think you have proven your patriotism in the past and that you would do it again.

M: I would defend this country because I like the principles it's established under. If we were to follow those principles that are established in the Bill of Rights, as they are laid in the Constitution, we would have a hell of a country.

E: Do you think we have a hell of a country right now?

M: I sure do. Thanks to the Supreme Court.

E: You think it could be better?

M: Very definitely.

E: How long did you say you were in Korea?

M: I was there for about a year.

E: How do you feel about your relationship with México? What kind of relationship is it?

M: I have no personal relationship with México. I would never want to be a Mexican citizen. First of all I don't see...

E: You say you'd never be a Mexican citizen. Why not?

M: There is no justice in México. The United States has a beautiful court system. If it hadn't been for the court system, this country might have had

a revolution. In México you take it, you lump it, and that's it. There is no recourse. You take for example the partido del PAN, which is the more liberal party in México. They have won elections in Baja California to the tune of 200 to 1, and yet they have not been seated. You can't go to a court to get it to order that particular district to seat them.

E: What kind of cultural relationship do you have with México, if any?

M: Oh, well, of course you know that all our culture...all my culture comes derived from there. But I think that we have more culture and more pride, us Chicanos, than those people in México. Here in the United States some of us are attempting to keep our culture, and trying real hard, whereas in Mexico, the swing is the other way, to get more Anglocized. When I travel to México I go see the University kids. As radical as they might be, all of them were trying to imitate the U.S. students--you know, the long hair, Levi's and all that sort of thing. They themselves have lost their identity. Here in the United States some of us more liberal, some more radical Chicanos...well, you see them wearing Mexican shirts and all those things. They are trying to identify more with the Mexican culture. In México they are trying to assimilate too much with this culture.

E: And yet you make a point of speaking Spanish.

M: Right.

E: Do you observe Mexican traditions in your home?

M: Like what?

E: Quinceañeras?

M: Oh, yeah. I wish they would revive them. I think those are beautiful institutions, the quinceañeras. One of the most beautiful institutions that the Mexican culture has is the compadre. It's all an institution

because of the respect. When you gain a compadre, you gain a member of the family.

E: Do you try to instill these values in your children?

M: Very definitely.

E: How many children do you have?

M: Only one.

E: Boy or girl?

M: Girl.

E: Where is she being educated?

M: Scotsdale Elementary.

E: Are you going to try to have her go to college?

M: Oh, yeah.

E: Where?

M: Wherever she wants.

E: Today in Texas politics, who do you consider to be the more influential Chicano politicians?

M: Well, we really haven't got any particular individuals in Texas, unfortunately. I would consider Joe Hernán of San Antonio, and even Leonel Castillo, he's an upcoming individual in Houston. And our own Alicia Chacón, of course.

E: Do you think the influence is going to grow?

M: No, I think like anything else, it has reached a sort of marginal curve. I noticed in this last session that I went to that there are just no more issues. The civil rights movement is gone.

E: You sound pessimistic.

M: Yes, because everybody thinks that everything is rosy.

E: Do you want it to change?

M: I do.

E: Do you have any ideas on how to do it?

M: You're damn right!

E: Tell me about them.

M: Let's change the educational system.

E: How are you going to do that?

M: Let's get financing for our schools. Let's change the Board of Regents.

Get some more regents that are more sympathetic to our problems and to the problems of the Blacks for example. Let's get this university going. Let's have more Chicano professors up here.

E: Is there interrelationship between the needs of the Blacks and the needs of the Chicanos?

M: I think so, because if the Blacks get something, we also tend to get something. By the same token if we get something, the Blacks tend to get something too.

E: How do you feel about the use of the word "Chicano"?

M: I love it.

E: How about "Mexican American"?

M: I have nothing against someone who wants to call themselves Mexican American, Latin American or whatever. I don't put them down, if they themselves don't deny their heritage and they are not ashamed.

E: Would you put them down if they did deny their Mexican heritage?

M: You're damn right I would.

E: Who are the more important Chicano politicians in El Paso?

M: I would have to say Alicia Chacón really is the most influential right now,

I would think.

E: Why is she influential? You keep mentioning her.

M: Because she is a woman. She has been the first woman here in El Paso that has been elected to any type of office. She's got a good background; her husband is a Sergeant in the police force; and she's been very, very active in the Democratic Party.

E: Is she a strong-willed woman?

M: Yeah, very strong-willed. She has also been active in all facets of the educational system. She's involved in LULAC and G. I. Forum also. Besides, she knows what she's talking about. I think being the first woman gives her that edge over the male politicians.

E: What other male Chicano politicians are prominent in El Paso?

M: Well, let's see... I don't think they're very prominent, but some have a lot of potential. Ray Caballero, for example, has a hell of a potential to really be an effective leader, simply because he's a newcomer. His looks are also very important. He has a sort of naive look; people seem to trust that. Not like me, with no tie and things like that. And of course with the district judges, they cannot get involved to much. But I still think that Henry Peña and Eddie Márquez both could be, if they were permitted by law, to go and politic. I would have to say that Alicia Chacón, Ray Caballero; and then Eddie Márquez and Henry Peña, but of course, they can't get involved.

E: Do you have any Anglo friends?

M: Yeah. You know I don't hate Anglos. I hated "gringos". Those are the ones I hate.

E: Do you think there exists a significant breach between Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans here in El Paso?

- M: Significant to what? To another city? Let me tell you this: if you're going to be Chicano, El Paso is the place to be. I think it's the best city in the whole United States as far as the relationship between the Chicano and the Anglo. There is still a gap in our relationships, though.
- E: Can you think of any Anglos who think like you do on the subjects we have been talking about?
- M: I can. This guy next door, George McAlmon; Bert Williams; Malcom McGregor.
- E: Are these people your friends?
- M: Yeah. Bob O'Kelly.
- E: Do you trust them?
- M: Oh, yeah.
- E: Let me ask you this: what do you consider to have been the most influential thing in getting you into politics? What motivated you to get into politics?
- M: I've been in this thing since I was a kid, 14 years old. But at that time I didn't realize what it was. I guess it was some sort of a barrio movement. I was very involved with the C.Y.O.
- E: So you sort of subconsciously cultivated this while you were growing up?
- M: I've been involved in it a long time.
- E: When did you first go to legislature?
- M: 1967.
- E: Have you been there since?
- M: No, I was out one term, but I came back. I'm serving my fourth term.
- E: Do you like it?
- M: Yeah.
- E: How do you get along with the Anglos in Austin and with the people from Dallas?

- M: I hit it off with them real good. As I said, I don't hate the Anglo; I'm no hater. I do hate those bigots.
- E: Are there bigots in the Texas State Legislature today?
- M: Yes.
- E: What sections of Texas are they mostly from?
- M: From all over.
- E: From all over Texas? Does any one section predominate?
- M: No, not really; but the ones from East Texas are really bad.
- E: Well, we better not get into specifics.
- M: Hell, they're politicians. You and me can say anything we want about them.
- E: If I mentioned neighborhood, school, church, family, which one of those influenced you the most?
- M: Family. The family is the most influential institution.
- E: I want to get back to your youth for just a second. You mentioned the barrio just now. Tell me about growing up in the barrio.
- M: It was tough. It was really tough. A lot of things happened right outside on this very corner. I used to be the moderate type. I guess you can say I was conservative. I never got involved with any of the gangs.
- E: Were there a lot of gangs?
- M: Yeah, there were a lot of gangs here in South El Paso. At that time it was real, real bad.
- E: What kind of things did those guys do?
- M: You name it, they did it.
- E: Well, you name it.
- M: Everything. Steal...they would beat the hell out of you just for being in in their territory. See, Florence Street used to be the dividing line and

that's were I used to live. It used to be the dividing line between the O.K. Nines and the Seven X. So you see, I had an excuse not to belong to either one.

E: Did anyone ever try to pressure you to join one of those gangs?

M: Well, not pressure. You had to join to survive. You couldn't walk the streets at night. Where Fernie Cordova lived, it was the hotbed of Seven X territory. It was rough; they were mean mothers.

E: You mentioned Fernie Cordova, who is principal at Aoy School, and there are a lot of your other contemporaries that sort of got out of the barrio and achieved a certain degree of success. Is there any common factor in this, or any common reason that you might feel was important in all of you getting out of the barrio?

M: I think it was the family. Our families, in my case my mother was very strong willed and very disciplinary. I think the family unit itself was the main factor. All those guys who went astray had problems at home. But by the same token there were a lot of guys at Bowie that were real great and everything, and now they're nothing. They never got any place.

E: Do you know Manny Morales? Did you know him while you were going to Bowie?

M: Yeah.

E: What kind of a person was Manny Morales back then?

M: You know, he was a nice guy.

E: He excelled in sports, didn't he?

M: Yeah, he excelled in sports. In the academic field he was just like all of us, just trying to do a job and trying to get out of high school, too, if he could.

E: I interviewed Manny and he mentioned that the only reason that he ever got

out of his low position in life was because of his athletic prowess. He was very, very candid with me. So you mentioned that the reason that motivated you was your family. To what do you attribute your success in politics?

M: Again, my family.

E: What about any one characteristic of your own? Is there anything about you that you think might have really...

M: Well, I pride myself in remaining the same since I've been an elected official. I don't think I have changed one bit. On the contrary, to some of my enemies, I get worse all the time. By that I mean I get more liberal and sensitive to all kinds of problems. I'm still the same; I still boycott the Country Club and all those things. I just don't go to any of those places. I still like to hang around my friends.

E: So you have a loyalty to your origins, is that right?

M: I just like to be with them. I hate all those other things. The only time I go through with them is when I feel morally obligated to go. Other than that you never seem at those big receptions.

E: You mentioned that El Paso is the best place for a Chicano to live than in other major cities in the Southwest. Why?

M: Well, because first of all we're a majority here. Like I said, I feel that the gap has narrowed somewhat between the anglo community and our people, as far as them understanding our problems.

E: Have you talked to many people of your position, like state legislators of other states around the Southwest?

M: Yes. Just recently I've been in Los Angeles, where I spoke with the mayor and others.

E: Did you compare notes about how things were going?

M: No, we don't do that.

E: Not really? Have you ever heard any comment as to what they think about El Paso?

M: Well you see, the people in California have a misconception about us. They still think that the Rangers still come out here and drag you out in the middle of the night, lynch you and what have you. Many people around here feel that we have more political power here in Texas. And we do have more political power here than they do in California; I can't convince them of that. They say, "Well, what the hell do you have? Just a few years ago you didn't have a State Senator. Just four years ago you only had one member in the assembly. You've never had anything."

E: Do you feel proud of being a Texan?

M: No, I feel proud of being a Texican. Our struggle has been so hard with discrimination being so obvious here in Texas. This is the reason we have gained so much. In California, there are still a lot of people who actually believe that there is no discrimination at all that there never has been. I'm talking about people who are sincere.

E: Are those what they call "Californios?"

M: And many, many people believe that there has never been any discrimination towards us.

E: Have you ever experienced any discrimination?

M: Oh, yeah.

E: Tell me about it.

M: While I was in law school I tried to rent a house...

E: In Austin?

M: Yeah.

E: What did you do?

M: I really got mad. I guess it was around 1959 when I started law school.

E: Where is your wife from?

M: From here.

E: From El Paso. Is she Chicana?

M: I'm divorced.

E: Have you ever had any other experiences with discrimination?

M: Those were the overt. The subtle ones I never paid any attention to. Again, that was because of the brainwashing they had. I used to have a hell of a time when I was in the service. I always said that we suffered more than the Blacks. They knew where they could go and we didn't. In the restaurants, I didn't know if they would serve me. Although I have never been refused service in any place, I have been refused a home.

E: In Austin? Without agreeing or disagreeing with your views, I can say that I used to have the same problems when I lived in Atlanta and Columbus. I didn't know whether to go to colored or white drinking fountains and all of that.

M: One thing I have accepted...when I told you that I was ashamed of being Mexican, while I was in the service. You know, I wanted so bad to be white that it was pathetic. Now that I realize that I'm so proud of being a brown man, I live so happily now, because I don't have that shame; I know I'm a brown man. I know that 60% of the Anglos call me a brown man. A lot of people kid themselves. "Well, we're white because some folks say we are...the sociologists say we are." But I don't go along with what sociologists say. I go by what people actually believe or what they think. I can say that the Black man is my brother. Sure, he's my legal brother.

E: Your legal equal?

M: That's right. I'll give him all the rights and I will never deny him anything. But still, I know damn well that the Black and I are different. People don't look upon me as a white man, but I'm very happy right now being a brown man. I realize that we have our own culture, that we have everything for ourselves. I think it's beautiful.

E: Would you prefer that your daughter marry a brown man?

M: Very definitely.

E: You would prefer that she marry a Chicano rather than a "gringo?"

M: By the same token I wouldn't deny it. I would love to see my daughter marry a Chicano, but I wouldn't insist on it. I spoke to my daughter in English for the first five years of her life. After she picked up the English language I stopped. Now I don't speak to her in anything but Spanish. She speaks both languages perfectly.

E: Do you consider bilingualism important?

M: Very important, not only because I can speak both languages, in fact, I wish I could speak more than two languages. I think that any person who can speak four or five languages is just superhuman. He can get more things done by speaking so many languages. It's a golden opportunity if we can speak two languages. I believe that we should take advantage of it.

E: Mr. Moreno, I'd like to end this interview by asking you where you think the Chicano movement is going from here? You talked about a curve more or less.

M: It's dead now.

E: You think it's dead?

M: Yes. I think we reached a peak. I think it's going to be another ten years

until something comes up.

E: Would you like to light a few fires?

M: I don't think so. But then I hate to see this thing go on like this.

There are so many things that have to be done...in the field of education.

And to me the family is a very important thing.

E: Do you see education as being critical?

M: That's the lifeblood. If it weren't for education, I wouldn't be here talking to you, and you wouldn't be here either. I would probably be talking to some Welfare officer asking for my food stamps. Education can make you aware of what's going on, and it can help you light more fires. Or it can help you get rich and then make you forget about your people; a lot of people are doing that. A lot of Chicanos get out of school and then they forget where they came from. They forget about their people who need their help.

E: Do you think it's important that the two colleges here have more Chicano professors?

M: It's very important. They should also think of promoting these guys. To me it's so unfair, so unjust, and so illegal to have a university here with a good 60% Chicanos, and the faculty [there's] only 10%. It's ridiculous.

E: Do you think there is illegality somewhere along the line?

M: There has to be. The first thing they say is, "Well, we can't find qualified..." I hate that word "qualified"; I think that's just an excuse.

E: If you did have Chicano professors at the University, would you want them to be qualified.

M: They are qualified and we're losing them. The greatest export they have is Chicano professors. We educate them down here and they leave. They're

all in San Diego, Berkeley. I have a bunch of friends all over the country that would love to stay here and teach.

E: Why don't they?

M: Because they don't get the breaks, and they don't get the salary that they deserve. We're losing them.

E: Well, this has been a very informative interview. I want to thank you very much.

M: Any time.