

Interviewer - Doreen Howard

Interviewee - Don Davis Skilled Trades (1982 Lansing)

Seniority = First 1962, now has 30 years seniority  
Mgt on (1985)

Married - yes 3 children

Military = yes, 3 years Vietnam (Pilot)

~~First Day~~ Edu: Criminal Justice Degree and Electronics  
Degree from college

- First Day = Alder plant in Lansing, equipment was old also. Worked on Robotics Transition in 1984.

- Differences from Flint to Lansing = culture and environment were different, Mgt + Union relationships was better in Lansing. Nothing like in Flint.

- Lansing's Body shop was all old welders and hand held machines. When the new robotics come in jobs were safer and ergonomically better under the new system. Most of this time was 7 days a week. You spend more time with workers than your family.

# Differences were a big thing being very close with co-workers spending so time together.

# Reason for Factory = wanted to go to a job with more money and job security, also a job that Don could retire from.

= Hourly to Salary = He was approached several times to bet on salary but he was always committed to the union in the Flint and Lansing area. Don believes in the union



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because it helps both hourly and salary alike because the union benefits both.

- \* Good supervisor - Finds employees strong points and weakness and concentrate on them.
- \* Strikes in Flint = Very dangerous with wildcat strikes. Mgt will replace employees at random.
- \* Strike at Fisher = 3 days. Focusing vs Flint, focusing was always more professional in negotiations.
- \* Capital of Quality = Focusing was quality. Flint didn't have quality put into their jobs like Focusing.
- \* Salary vs hourly = Hourly more than salary. Don is 6 hands on person and salary didn't permit him to do this. Also salary had a better team to do a quality job together.
- \* Plant Population Flint & Focusing = They were comparable, women, minorities etc.
- \* Females in Trades = They had a rough time in the beginning, going into a mans world. They had to prove themselves. Today this is much better working relationship.
- \* Salary vs hourly. In the old days salary was the dominate force telling employees what to do and when. Today mgt gets more input from each employees.
- \* Hourly to salary = People coming from the floor and rank & file Don believes they will do a better job, ~~and~~ than from a college standpoint with no experience.



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- \* Safety = This has changed drastically over the years. Better and safer work environment now from previous years.
- \* Today there are more safety classes and training that is mandatory. ~~Not~~ Not in the early years in the plant. In early years Don saw people get hurt and killed.
- \* Dealing with a death in the plant = looking at this safety wise this was a member of your own family. We need to learn from these bad mistakes. Fisher Body people and co-workers took up a collection for this man's family.
- \* Funny Memories = in the past people played pranks on each other.
- \* Lunch Time = usually people went to Harry's Bar with salary ~~was~~ with hourly sitting down together. This was never seen in the Flint years earlier.
- \* Don always participated in collections. Fisher Body would always come together for people in need or at the plant gates. One big Family.
- \* Don worked all 3 shifts, 7 days a week. Mostly on second shift. until he would be on the day shift.
- \* Gent jobs = The early years this was more apparent. benches made, lockers made, cars painted etc. Today this is not a common practice.
- \* As an electrician Don would sometimes help a



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to work as family member at home, electrical work on houses etc.

# In his spare time Don rebuilds old vehicles, he has numerous vehicles he plans to rebuild. he also is a pilot in his spare time.

\* Best Benefit = GM gave all of us a job that paid well and gave good benefits.

\* Benefits hourly vs salary = pay is somewhat more or salary but they pay more back in health care. Also the hourly contract is renegotiated every so many years.

\* In the 80's the salary workforce was closer but in the later years there is not much closeness. In the past people hired in and retired after 30 years. Now salary is coming in for just a short period of time. Contract losses come in later but there was no allegiance to GM. Contract ~~losses~~ losses didn't also have ownership at GM. They didn't believe in the company.

\* Fun Time = Don had a good workplace, and continued outside the workplace together.

\* Don shows his vehicles all over the U.S. and locally to shows here in Lansing.

\* Body Shipping = Don oversaw this for about 7 years. Each one of ~~the~~ these drivers was very important.

3.5 million dollars for each truck per year.

7 vehicles per truck - over 2000 cars per day were built.

The drivers were very highly skilled also.



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Louise was the last plant to do this. Flint did this up to the 80's and 90's. But Louise did this trucking right up to 2005. But we still built and transported quality vehicles and get awards for this.

Best mgt advice = Respect people you work for. Appreciate your job and benefits. Come in to do a good job everyday.