

Causing Fisher Body Historical Team

5-10-06

10:00
am

Interviewer Doug Radmacher

Interviewee - David Wayne Kalkweit

Seniority - 6-2-75 (19 yrs) D.O.B. - 8-28-53

Married - Yes - (2) boys 23 and 20

Education - 12th grade - some college 1 yr

Military - none

Father was a minister for 25 years and then for out Van and retired later.

Mother was a secretary for church then Today David works for local UAW 602 as an employee who is available that needs to be done on a daily basis.

Family moved from North Dakota to Searfield Michigan at a new high school. He started at the cafeteria in Fisher Body and then hired into the plant in 1975.

Fisher Body was a totally different world. When back in North Dakota, David knew that the locking of the UAW was also a reason for him hiring to Fisher Body. David worked the "enogon" in Fisher.

This was a serving tray on wheels that come into the plant 2 times a shift for 6 minutes break that the enogon delivered sandwiches, pop, water coffee. A man named Bruce DeFond was a supervisor that David knew that helped him ~~so~~ get a job inside the

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Fisher Body plant. He left the cafeteria and went into the plant right then.

First Day - He was put into the Body shop in the silicon bronze booth which was putting and shaping metal. Then he was put into the grinding booth. During the first 3 weeks of employment he was working second shift and going to finish high school during the day which was hard. This booth was very hot, with wearing coveralls and a hood and gloves, also the gun he was using was like a wire brush and this was also very hard.

After this job he went to the trim shop. This was so much nicer and cleaner. He was put on body wires which also very hard and he couldn't keep up very well. Then the station wagons were even harder. You needed to look at a "manifest" which is a sheet listing what part went on this particular car at this time. He was building 88' and 98', the other line was Oldsmobile Cutlars and Station Wagons. There was a time in between that he went to the engine plant where he worked on carburetors at 75¢ an hour which was very hard to do also because there were about 8 different carburetors to

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go on these different cars. This job was a bad job and his foreman worked well with him and helped him along.

Body shop was dark, dirty and dusty so it was called the jungle. The trim shop was very bright, unless the air was cleaner, better working conditions

* Pranks = These gentleman took some putty and made a statue of 2 balls and a penis and the girl was shocked at this.

Also back then the supervisors would work with you and cared for you just like you so workers would help you. David was very proud to work here back then.

Capital of Quality = Dave saw things that needed improvement. But because of the diverse work force. He also felt that most of the people had families in the plant such as father and son who all worked well together.

When Dave hired in there were 6 people with him. A gentleman nicknamed "Family" worked with him and helped him work. He also felt that the people who would miss work were shunned by the group. Also in trim Dave had a younger partner who would help him out on a daily basis

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Workforce = a mix of people, black, white hispanic but more blacks than mexicans. Dave felt like these people were his friends and he treated them like his own brothers and sisters when at work.

David always felt that if you wanted to move around the plant you can transfer shifts and job assignments in other depts.

Family = sister in law and his brother now works at the Fisher Body plant

★ Breaks + lunches = Having worked in the cafeteria people had recognized him and there was some confrontation about being hired in. Dave didn't eat there very often because he knew how the food was prepared. Mostly he would bring his lunch from home.

David also married the girl he was seeing back then till today.

Wagons = David would never utilize these because of working in the cafeteria before.

On the line in trim people passed time by listening to radios in the plant.

If the line ever went down there were all white shirts and skilled tradesmen. a gentleman named Peabody. knew how to fix things, but he also drank quite a lot.

★ Union - Dave did not go to the meetings = Best Memories - while working on the coal

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pile at about 2:00 am, driving a bulldozer his gear shifter didn't work and he was scared. so it continued to move and said had to jump from his bulldozer. Then later on nothing was said about this event.

★ Happiest Moment - The day he got hired in to Fisher Body. Dave had money to buy his parents gifts he wanted to buy for them.

★ Saddest moment - getting laid off for the final time permanently, being out of a job. It was always said that if you got a year security you were safe till the end. When laid off you received unemployment and SUB pay which is supplemental unemployment benefit which when coupled with unemployment

★ gone you about the same money as working. Then his friend Bruce De Ford told him that a junior job was opening at VW local 609 and he was hired. Dave has been there for 31 years.

= Dave is in local 42 - OPEIU which is Office of Professional Employees International. Dave is union steward for the last 7 years.

★ Working in a Union Hall - a union is just like a normal operation. Some good and bad. People think that they just pay dues and want everything fixed that happens to them. Really the membership needs to elect quality people.

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Being an elected committeeman you can only do so much for an employee. People want to see who they are electing for this.

* Best bargained benefit = Health care coverage. Very important for Doves entire family. This has been as important as the hourly wage.

A Community = Church vision team = they plan the direction of the church for the future. Cub Scout leader, The ~~board~~ boards of cub scout, and boy scouts. Also Dave utilizes his knowledge for his church also. Dave has a carpet cleaning business on the side for about the past 20 years.

* Plant Closing = Very hard, much like a funeral, but coming down a little at a time. Final comments = The most successful people work the hardest. President Bob Ferra works so hard at his job everyday.

E ducation doesn't guarantee anything but in today's world you can't get a job without a ~~graduate~~ college degree.

— work hard, find success, and have God in your life. If you don't have him you need to find him.