

Dr. Werner Brand
Narrator

Dr. Jerry Jacobo [sp?]
Interviewer

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JJ: The following interview is with Dr. Werner Brand, professor emeritus and past administrator at Moorhead State University. The interview is held in the studios of the audiovisual department at Moorhead State University on February 7, 1985. The interviewer is Dr. Jerry Jacobo, representing the Heritage Education Commission.

Dr. Brand, we're here today to talk about the Kiwanis Service Organization. But before we get into that, we'd like to know something about you, your background; your personal biographic kind of information.

WB: Okay, I grew up around the Hawley area. I was born in 1909. I moved into the city...or village of Hawley when I was about twelve years old and graduated from Hawley High School. And went on to Concordia College and graduated from there in 1933. 1933, in the midst of Depression, I didn't get a job. So I was working at various jobs around Hawley and was lucky enough to get on as a recreation director for a community. So I worked in Hawley there for a couple years as a recreation director and part time math teacher in the Hawley system. In 1935 I went to Halstad, Minnesota as a mathematics teacher and coach and I was there for six years. Left there in 1941 to go to Seattle, Washington where I was an accountant for about a year and a half. Came back to go into the Army. And I was rejected from the Army on the base of my glasses, my eyes rather. And I was approached while I was at Hawley by the school board asking me to teach in Hawley again. So I taught there for a couple months and then saw an opportunity at Moorhead State to teach an Army air crew program. That was 1943. And I had an interview with the president, O.W. Snarr, at that time.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And got the job as a teacher of math with the Army air crew program. After Army Air crew program left Moorhead State, I stayed on in the campus laboratory school as a mathematics supervisor. And later as a high school principal at a campus school, and director of the campus school, and last twelve years at Moorhead State as the Director of Placement.

JJ: Okay.

WB: I retired in 1975.

JJ: Okay. When did you join the Kiwanis organization? Do you remember when that happened?

WB: I'm trying to remember for sure, but I think it was in about 1946 or 1947. And then I dropped out in the early 1950s when I went on to graduate school. Came back in about 1953 and have been a member since that time.

JJ: Okay, how did it happen? How were you recruited to become a member? Do you remember? The first time there.

WB: I was staying with a Dr. Sanness [sp?] who was a dentist in Moorhead here, I was staying at his place. I was single at the time. And he invited me to go to Kiwanis with him, and I was quite impressed with the group, and so I guess that's why I joined.

JJ: Where was the group meeting at that time?

WB: The meeting at that time was at the old Comstock Hotel.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And we met there for quite a few years.

JJ: Was it a noontime meeting or...?

WB: It had always been a noontime meeting for our Kiwanis club.

JJ: Okay. Right.

WB: This is the Moorhead Kiwanis Club.

JJ: Okay.

WB: The first Kiwanis Club in Moorhead.

JJ: That implies that there are some other Kiwanis Clubs now in Moorhead or...?

WB: There are now two other Kiwanis Clubs in Moorhead, a morning club, Moorhead Vikingland.

JJ: Okay.

WB: That meets on Wednesday mornings. And a Moorhead Golden Key Kiwanis Club that meets on Tuesday afternoons for retirees.

JJ: Oh, okay. Now you met in the Comstock. But then...and was that up until the time that building was demolished or...?

WB: No...when the Frederick Martin Hotel was finished and they opened up the upper room there, a large room there for our meetings, we moved to the Frederick Martin Hotel.

JJ: Up on the top floor?

WB: Top floor.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And it was a big meeting room up there and that's where we met for many years.

JJ: Okay. And currently where does the...?

WB: Right now we are meeting at the Ramada Inn. We've been moving around quite a bit to find a home.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And we couldn't meet any longer at the top of the Martin because that was partitioned off.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And so we had to move out of there.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And lately we've been at the Ramada Inn in Moorhead.

JJ: Okay. We'd like to find out a little more about the nature of the organization Kiwanis. What does that mean, when was it founded? Some background on that.

WB: Actually, Kiwanis was founded in 1915 in Detroit, Michigan. The purpose of the meetings at that time was for a group of businessmen to get together and promote their business. And the word Kiwanis comes from an Indian expression, *nee kiwani* [sp?] which means something that we meet to do business or something to that effect.

JJ: Oh. Okay.

WB: And but...soon afterwards the people that were involved with this thought that wasn't a project that they were really interested in. They could promote business in other ways. So

Kiwanis very soon became interested in helping the handicapped children. And that was just shortly after the...the organization in Detroit.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And then they expanded quite rapidly through the first years there.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: So that was the first purpose of Kiwanis was to help the handicapped.

JJ: Okay. And since that starting in Michigan now it has expanded so it's a national organization?

WB: It is an international organization. We are...Kiwanis has expanded to...most recently, I think they say eighty-one nations and principalities throughout the world.

JJ: Oh.

WB: So it is international in scope now.

JJ: Okay. Is it behind the Iron Curtain, do you know offhand, or...?

WB: Ah, it depends on what's considered as the Iron Curtain, I guess.

JJ: Okay.

WB: They say we are organized...Kiwanis is organized in the free countries of the world.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And has had some difficulty in some of the Iron Curtain countries. But do have in some that are...are very supportive of Communist activities.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: But more and more getting closer to the Communist area.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Is it in Africa, is it in Asia?

WB: Yes. We...it is...I cannot mention particularly the countries in Africa, but I know there are some.

JJ: It is there. Okay.

WB: Certainly in Asia.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: The Philippines has been very strong.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And Japan has...

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And various other places in Asia are coming in at this time. They're building more and more throughout the international scene.

JJ: So this would all suggest that there must be something in the way of international conventions then periodically, or...?

WB: Well, we speak of our international convention as primarily the United States and Canada.

JJ: Okay.

WB: As the international convention.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Then you have also the European Convention.

JJ: Oh, yes.

WB: And the Asiatic Conventions. But we do have delegates coming from those areas to our international convention which we...which is the United States and Canadian Convention.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Well, tell us...tell me about some expressions of the support of handicapped children. Are there things that the local club has done here now to support handicapped children? Or have the purposes broadened from that original one?

WB: The purposes have broadened quite a great deal. Actually, we're very concerned yet about the handicapped and underprivileged.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: But since about...

[Pauses]

Ah, just a minute. I lost my tread of thought.

JJ: Yeah, let's see. Purposes for handicapped...

WB: Oh, yeah. Okay. [Pauses briefly] Ah, since...we have always been concerned about the handicapped since our first beginnings, but I guess the purposes of Kiwanis have broadened quite a great deal. Kiwanis, I think, is particularly noted now for its work with youth programs. We have two groups that we particularly sponsor that are strong groups, and that's the Key Club in the high schools.

JJ: Mmmm.

WB: Of the United States, particularly.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And they...and the Circle K, which is a service club for the colleges.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And I think Kiwanis feels very strongly about these two groups that they are helping these young people to learn something about more about leadership and service to the communities, with the Key Club the high school community, with the Circle K to the college community. And I would say that the Kiwanians have been very proud of these groups of young people that have done so much in these areas.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. So Moorhead High has a key club. Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Moorhead High has had a Key Club since 1971.

JJ: Oh, really. Okay.

WB: We had a Key Club at Moorhead State College campus school from about 1956 to when that closed. So we had a [unclear].

JJ: You would have been instrumental in that, I guess.

WB: Yes, I was advisor to that Key Club.

JJ: Sure. Yeah. Successful...

WB: And I was also the chairman of the committee that organized the Key Club at Moorhead High School.

JJ: Ah ha. Okay.

WB: In 1971. And we've been very fortunate there in having an outstanding leader in Chase Lalum [sp?].

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Who has been noted throughout the Minnesota-Dakotas district as an outstanding Key Club advisor.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And so our Key Club from Moorhead High School has received many honors at the district conventions.

JJ: I'd like to come back to some things the local club is doing and maybe as well what other emphasizes the national group has. But I'd like to find out a little bit more about membership of the local club. Who belongs, how were they, how do they join and so forth?

WB: Well, I would have to say we have a...we feel we have quite a cross-section. We have quite a cross-section of members from the professional to the business areas. And we feel that we have no restrictions such as Rotary does. We used to have the same restrictions they did, one from each category, but that was lifted a few years ago. So the Kiwanis Club has been still a good cross-section of people we feel.

JJ: Okay. But it's so far a men's only that...like other service clubs are...is that an issue now being discussed at all, or...?

WB: Might I say that more...ah, that the Kiwanis Club International is still all men. For a number of years, women have tried to get in, as I suppose they have tried to get into other service clubs. Each year at our international convention it seems that there is an amendment proposed that we allow women into Kiwanis Clubs. Usually at international conventions this has been voted down by a large majority. And there are still some feelings on the part of many members that eventually women will become members of Kiwanis. But many of us feel if that happens that there'd be a lot of men that may drop out and say, "Well, we joined it because of the men's organization and we feel very strongly that if women come in, some of these women are going to be the outstanding leaders and they'll take over."

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And this is why we've been concerned about Key Club and Circle K. Because for many years the Key Club and Circle K were boys and young men. Some years ago—I guess it would be about eight years ago or so—the girls were permitted in Key Club and Circle K. Now in some of our high schools and colleges the majority of members of Key Club and Circle K are girls.

And the boys in some cases are...a Circle K may be entirely composed of girls at the present time. The boys have been shunted aside, so to speak.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And we've been quite concerned about this, although we do still support and have very fine membership in both Key Club and Circle K.

JJ: How does an individual become a member? Must they be recommended by a current member, brought in that way?

WB: Yes. Membership in Kiwanis is confined, let's say, to recommendations from members.

JJ: Current members. Okay.

WB: And then current members and then supported by the board of directors.

JJ: Okay.

WB: Who vote on the prospects.

JJ: Okay. Apparently, the Kiwanis movement has been strong here in Moorhead to grow from one to three clubs. What's the size of the club, the parent club here currently, or what's been average size of that?

WB: The average size of our club has been from somewhere between seventy and eighty. At one time a few years ago we were up to close to one hundred members.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: But then I think because of economic situation and so on we dropped back.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: So at the present time I think we are in the neighborhood of the low seventies.

JJ: Okay.

WB: The other Kiwanis clubs, the Vikingland Kiwanis Club has... the morning club has about fifty members, I believe, or fifty-five. And the Golden Key Kiwanis Club, composed of the retired men, has about forty-three members at the present time.

JJ: Okay. Now we wanted to come back to some programs, activities, projects that the local club has undertaken. And I understand the Key Club and Circle K...are there Circle K clubs on the campus...in any of the campuses around here? Or is that...?

WB: Yes. Ah, we have a Circle K at Moorhead State University.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And we have a Key Club as we mentioned before in Moorhead High School

JJ: Right.

WB: Ah...each year it seems they are trying to build a Circle K at Concordia.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And at the present time they are working on it again.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: We have had one built there and then it fell apart.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And now they are trying to build another Circle K. Hmmm, as far as going across the river, of course, there are a number of Key Clubs in Fargo.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And Circle K at NDSU [North Dakota State University].

JJ: Okay. Now the parent club, the noon club here, the Moorhead Kiwanis Club, can you give me some examples of some recent projects in addition to support of the student groups that you've talked about?

WB: Well...[Sighs] I would say that our service to the community is pretty widespread. Because we get lots of requests for assistance such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire, Red Cross, and...and scout camp and things of this nature. We have also helped with the building of the Christiansen Stadium at Moorhead...at Concordia College many years ago.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Any community project that seems worthwhile at present time. We have subscribed to the Heritage Hjemkomst Center.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Quite significantly. And projects of this type. But as I say, we spread our funds quite a great deal, maybe a hundred dollars there, two hundred, three hundred dollars to these various activities.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: In the community.

JJ: And you get requests for funds. But do you also get requests for help in other kinds of ways? Manpower or...?

WB: This is one of our concerns [sighs] is we have helped to some extent in projects of this nature, but we have felt a little bit remiss in that we haven't done too much of this type in the community. We do help with the Salvation Army each year at Christmas time ringing the bell for funds.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And we do help with the...in the spring each year we help with the Senior Citizen and Handicapped Fair that they have in which we furnish rides for the handicapped.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: When they have their day of their show at the Moorhead Armory. And we are available to help in other causes but these have been our prime objectives through the years.

JJ: Okay. Now you talked about funds being requested from you. How do you develop your finances or how do you obtain your finances? How do you fund the projects? What do you do to get the money, in other words? [Chuckles]

WB: Well, many years ago the ideas were different, of course. We did...the ones I think about primarily are the...when we had the Sportsman's Show at one time. That was many years ago. And we had a very effective Sportsman's Show and did a good job with that. And then somehow or other it required more help than some members were willing to give, and so that was set aside. But for over twenty years now one of our big projects has been our Lutefisk Dinner.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: In December of each year. And there we raise a great deal...not a great deal of money, but maybe between two and three thousand dollars each year on our Lutefisk Dinner. For the past ten years or so our other great project has been our Ice Cream Social in the spring. And that has been a great success for us. These are our two main money raising projects. And all of the funds from these go to support our activities.

JJ: Okay. What kind of numbers...? The Lutefisk Dinner is a well-known one.

WB: Mmmm-hmmm.

JJ: I've been there many times. [Chuckles] And so forth.

WB: Mmmm-hmmm.

JJ: What kind of numbers do you serve in a...?

WB: Well, usually...this year it was around eleven hundred. We have had as many as fourteen hundred at our Lutefisk Dinners.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And at our Ice Cream Socials about twelve hundred. And we've had these in the City Mall at Moorhead.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And they've been...and we've been very pleased with the results.

JJ: Great. I'd like to talk a little bit more about your meetings here. We know that it's a noon hour. You've have meeting places that have moved around a bit. You're currently at the Ramada. Apparently, food is a part of it. It's a luncheon meeting then?

WB: Right.

JJ: Is it a sit-down or buffet? Or what...?

WB: It is a sit-down luncheon.

JJ: Okay, you're served your lunch.

WB: We're served our lunch. We have our lunch first, and then we start our meeting.

JJ: Okay. That's what I wanted to find out, a little bit about the nature of that meeting now [unclear].

WB: Well, we always start of course with our singing of our *America*, and the Pledge of Allegiance, and we always start our meetings with a little devotion. This is typical of Kiwanis. Because one of their prime objectives of Kiwanis is to give more support to the spiritual than to the material values of life. And this is why we always have a devotion to start our meetings.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: But then we usually have a speaker of note come in. And of course we always have a little community singing. But today, for instance, we had the president of the Chamber of Commerce address us.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: On the Chamber activities of Moorhead. Programs of this type. And there are lots of good programs available in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Yes. You, I know. And we want to get into that in a minute. You have been a Key kind of leader yourself. But if you were asked the question...what about leadership for your club? Who are some people whose name comes to mind as you think back over your club?

WB: Well, of course, I would have to go back to people that I didn't really know.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Because the first president of Moorhead Kiwanis Club was the President of Concordia, J.A. [Johan A.] Aasgaard.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And at that time they also had the president of Moorhead State Teachers College as a member. And because the Moorhead Kiwanis Club was the first chartered service club in Moorhead just about a month before the Rotary Club was organized.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And we have been proud through the years of the leadership we have had. And many of the names that bring to mind are many of the leaders of the Moorhead community.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And of course the ones I think of are J.L. Rendall [sp?] of Concordia, Byron Murray of Moorhead State, who has written a very fine history of our Kiwanis Club. And back through the years, Harold Reed [sp?], John Hall [sp?], Kerr Danielson [sp?], and a number of others who have not only acted as presidents of our club but lieutenant governors for our division. And...but before my time and also part of my time were some leaders such as Dr. Duncan and many of the leaders, the professional leaders and business leaders of Moorhead were members of our Club.

JJ: Okay, you referred to a history done by Dr. Byron Murray. Can you tell me just a little bit about that? Is it available? It's a regular published document?

WB: It is a very well-written and well-photographed history of our club from its early beginnings to the present, and is available. We have extra copies of it available, I think, at a price of six dollars per copy.

JJ: And is it also going to be available? Have you donated copies to libraries? Or do you know offhand?

WB: I would have to check into this.

JJ: Okay.

WB: And I'm very glad to do that.

JJ: Yeah.

WB: I'm glad you brought that up, because I'm not sure.

JJ: Yeah. That might be interesting. Okay. You talked about leadership from your club lieutenant governors. That implies some kind of hierarchy that above the club that there is some kind of territorial organization. Can you describe what next level would be?

WB: Yes. We have in our international, we have thirty districts, and that's in United States and Canada. There are thirty districts in what we call our international of United States and Canada. Within these districts there are divisions. In the Minnesota-Dakotas district, which consists of the Minnesota, North [Dakota], and South Dakota; those three states. We have at present time eighteen divisions. And each of these divisions will have a lieutenant governor. And of course for the entire area or the district of Minnesota-Dakotas, there is a governor who is the chairman, so to speak, of the board for that one year.

JJ: Okay. And that's a role that you have held?

WB: Yes. I was fortunate enough because I got a good support from my club to be the governor back in 1976-77.

JJ: Okay, so in a sense for that year you were the leader of all Kiwanis Clubs in the three states here. How many clubs does that represent? How many Kiwanis Clubs?

WB: At that time when I was governor we had about a hundred and fifty-four clubs in the three-state area. At the present time there are, I think, a hundred and ninety-two. So we have grown quite a bit since the...since that seven or eight years ago.

JJ: Now you're the only one that's been governor from the Moorhead Club, I understand.

WB: That's right.

JJ: There had been other lieutenant governors.

WB: Right.

JJ: That year, what kinds of duties did you have to assume?

WB: It was my responsibility at that time to visit all the divisions in the three-state area twice. And at that time there were fifteen divisions. We have eighteen at present. So that meant traveling to all areas of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota as far as Rapid City, as far southeast as Rochester, and so on. So that year I traveled extensively.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Put on about twenty thousand miles on my car, I believe.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And because it was my responsibility besides other things to visit these divisions twice.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And on call sometimes to visit individual clubs.

JJ: So you'd serve as an organization advisor and motivator and...?

WB: The main thing would be motivator, I guess.

JJ: Okay.

WB: I was trying to motivate them to do a better job.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm:

WB: And also at the district wide basis, you see.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Now tell me about the division that the Moorhead Club would be in, how many clubs there that would be.

WB: We just made a rearrangement of our division. Some years ago we used to be in the same division as St. Cloud, and Little Falls, and Morris, and so on. That got to be quite a large division here. Within the last four years divisions have been changed. And we are now in more a clustered division. To the east, we go as far east as Detroit Lakes, and then we have the three Moorhead clubs, and we have the [North Dakota] clubs from Fargo, Hillsboro, Valley City, Enderlin as our division at the present time. So it's in more of a clustered area now.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Okay. Finally, I'd like to get some kind of a notion...I think you know full well what Kiwanis has done in community. You would know better than most people, certainly. Do you think that people in the community have a rather accurate image of Kiwanis and the good they've done? Or what...how do you react to...?

WB: We hope so. Some years ago I had a feeling that people that you don't even realize know anything about the club or what Kiwanis does, ah...brought this out to me. Because we were at that time selling peanuts, and handing out bags of peanuts and asking for a contribution to our...that would help in our service to the community.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And one lady in particular downtown in Moorhead at the Mall, as I handed her a bag of peanuts and she put a dollar in the container she says, "I'm very happy to give this because I know what Kiwanis does for the community."

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: Oh...I didn't know the lady. We have not *really* advertised probably a great deal about what we do in the community, because at the present time of course we do not have a community paper, so to speak, for just Moorhead.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: So if that were true like many years ago, as you looked back through the *Moorhead Daily News* and so on, you'd see the activities of all these clubs in Moorhead and what they were doing.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: At the present time you see very little about it, in any community newspaper.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Werner, you've made a very definite and strong commitment to Kiwanis over the years, your year as governor and your contributions to the local club. What really has the organization meant to you?

WB: I would have to say that it's one of the greatest things that ever happened to me. It probably wouldn't make any difference what service club I belonged to, whether it was Kiwanis, Lions, or Rotary, or what it might be. Except that it gave me an opportunity to get off campus and have some contact with people in the community.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: It has given me an opportunity to know people and to make friendships with people that I would never have contacted through my ordinary life as an educator. And I thought this is one of

the most important, and also, not only locally, but I have had the advantage of having contact with people at not only the district level of Kiwanis but international level. And have made friendships with great people throughout our district and throughout international because we speak of them people that belong to service clubs we think are our particular type of people, and people that are dedicated to the high ideals of life as we look at it.

JJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And so I think this is what has meant most to me is the contacts I've made with other people that I would not have had the chance to through my just educational circles.

JJ: Okay. Thank you very, very much Werner.

[Recording interruption]

JJ: Werner, in summary of this interview today, is there anything that you would like to add I haven't asked about or...?

WB: I think I neglected to say that Moorhead Kiwanis was first organized and received its charter in January...I think it was January 21st of 1921. And that the first president, as I mentioned before, was Dr. J.A. Aasgaard, who was then President of Concordia College. Since that time, we celebrate...of course, each year we celebrate the organization of our club to a certain extent, but we've tried to limit this now to the every ten years. And one of the highlights, I think, is when we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary and the sixtieth anniversaries of our club. And as I look at it now you see we are...what would that be? And just like sixty-three years ago that we were organized.

JJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

WB: And I think it has been a very effective group in the community. And I might say that I have been very proud to have been a member of this organization through the years. I think that just about summarizes it.

JJ: Werner, very much appreciate that. And I would add a personal note here, because I've known you for a long while. I don't know if I ever had occasion to tell you that I once visited with a college professor, Ph.D., who isn't in the Fargo-Moorhead area, teaches at another college. He heard I was from Moorhead State, he said, "The finest college teacher, bar none, that I ever had was Dr. Werner Brand." Thank you very much, Werner.

WB: Thank you very much.

[End of interview]