

## Interview with Ted Hardgrove

Hardgrove: Wow, that's an interesting period.

Listokin: Sure. Alright, so . . .

Berkhout: Fine.

Hardgrove: Do you want the door open since that's in the background?

Berkhout: It's – well, I can close it, you can stay there.

Listokin: Actually, as we're going along we're finding out what works better or, you know, which is inevitable, including, you know, which I'd like to start with, you know, just some background on yourself. So why don't I tell you a little bit about myself so – I am a professor in the planning program and I co-direct the Center for Urban Policy Research, that's what George Sternleib used head up.

Hardgrove: The name is familiar.

Listokin: Yeah. Periodically towards some studios related to New Brunswick, but it was always hard getting faculty or students . . .

Hardgrove: To come?

Listokin: It was like right in front of you, so we're clear, we can start?

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Listokin: Okay. Well, thank you.

Hardgrove: Well, you're certainly welcome.

Listokin: We do appreciate your time.

Berkhout: The only thing I do have to get is a form where you agree that we're taping you; I have one downstairs for you.

Hardgrove: Okay.

Berkhout: Okay.

Hardgrove: I can go down afterwards with you if that's easier for you.

Berkhout: Okay, sure.

Listokin: So, actually, if we can just start with, if you can just tell us something about yourself, where you grew up and how you became involved with New Brunswick, but if we can start at the beginning.

Hardgrove: Okay, I grew up in Philadelphia, right outside of Philadelphia, south of Philly in a little town called Folcroft. I went to a college up in New York State called Kings College. Not the Kings College that was in Pennsylvania, but the one up in New York. It was a religiously oriented college. Then I went to seminary for four years in Manhattan and became ordained as a Baptist minister. Subsequent to that, I got my master's in counseling at the Post-Graduate Center of Mental Health.

During my early ministry, I had three full-time churches. But during that period of time, my interpretation of my own faith system was to be involved in community and as one builds the spiritual dimensions of people's lives that you address the social issues that were very strongly developing in the 1960's with Civil Rights, mental health, the war in Vietnam, etc. So I was drawn to community needs and during a period of transition in my life, I went into the public marketplace and said "What can I do to both exercise my faith system but also try to deal with issues of community, such as the poverty, organization and community needs?"

So then I had an opportunity after working a year in that old CETA program that you may remember. [ . . . ]

Listokin: Comprehensive Employment and Training.

Hardgrove: That's right and I was the Director for a year because a friend of mine

directed the whole program for Union County. [Following this position I was invited to direct Unified Vailsburg Community Services Organization.] [ . . . ]

Listokin: And these were what times, just this is for the record.

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] The Vailsburg experience started in [Unified Vailsburg] [ . . . ] was a small community agency that was doing neighborhood organizing [ . . . ]. We had senior citizen programs, we had youth programs [ . . . ] on South Orange Avenue. The goal was to [ . . . ] enrich [ . . . ] Newark neighborhoods in cooperation with organizations in the North Ward, the Ironbound, the South Ward, each had community organizations [were trying] [ . . . ] to make some impact on the systems that impacted city [life] [ . . . ].

And since the economics of Newark was struggling then and now, the neighborhoods [ . . . ] needed some strength and a sense of identity. [ . . . ] I directed Unified Vailsburg while [ . . . ] serving a church part-time. [ . . . ]. . .

Listokin: And this is which church now?

Hardgrove: A Baptist Church, the Northern American Baptist Tradition, which is a [ . . . ] more progressive than [ . . . ] the Southern Baptist Church. [ . . . ]. [In 1980] [ . . . ] a friend of mine sent me an ad [ . . . ] from the *Wall Street Journal* [ . . . ] about [an] [ . . . ] organization called New Brunswick Tomorrow [that was seeking a president]. [The ad] [ . . . ] listed the kinds of things that they were interested in, which [included] [ . . . ] human services, health-related issues, educational-related issues, neighborhood development, etc., [ . . . ]. [I was attracted by the ad in spite of the fact that I didn't know much about New Brunswick.]

Listokin: And the time was roughly when?

Hardgrove: 1980, that's when I began a process [ . . . ] and I went through [ . . . ] [a long] process and after seven interviews [I was selected] . . .

Berkhout: Wow.

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] One question asked about personal motivations, why would I leave the grassroots community organization and come here? Well it was a struggle and some of my friends [ . . . ] [questioned my decision]: “Why would you want to leave that grassroots community to work within a setting which was dramatically different, that had a corporate focus, [and the ] revitalization [of a small city] [ . . . ]?”

And even though [NBT] [ . . . ] verbalized the vision for quality-of-life, the vision of neighborhood response to issues of housing and jobs and education, the question I was raising inside myself “Are they for real? Do they really mean to try to connect revitalization and human services and quality-of-life?” So it was a fascinating opportunity to say, “Well why don’t I go invest a period of time and see whether this group of people who articulated it very well would go through that process of really trying to make an investment in community,” which included culture and the arts. It included employment and the things that are traditionally needed in an urban environment. And so [ . . . ] with [some anxiety] and trepidation [to accept the job, I came [to New Brunswick] [ . . . ] in 1981.

Listokin: And you were living where?

Hardgrove: I lived in Colonia at the time and after my first six months here, I [ . . . ] said to John Heldrich, [who was the chairman of the NBT Board,] most of you know and I see his name across the street. He [influenced] [ . . . ] my life because he was more a traditional conservative Republican, but he taught me [ . . . ] the connection between economic development, employment and health and human services. And I began to see a dimension that I hadn’t seen before. [ . . . ]

Listokin: Sure. Um – I guess you were talking about your personal journey. Your

perspective on the objectives of Johnson & Johnson and the others, I mean why were they doing this?

Hardgrove: I had to understand that and it took a little bit of period of time, even though I heard the language. I was impressed that J&J had options to leave the town, but made a social commitment [to stay in the city]. I had occasion to meet Richard Sellars who was the original CEO of J&J, but also the head of the Development Corporation. And I was impressed; he was a very dynamic kind of man. [ . . . ] When he was in the room, there was a presence, and then to [ . . . ] work [with] and get to know John Heldrich [was an honor].

I saw that J&J appeared to be deeply serious about making more than just a physical and economic investment. And then came the Hyatt, because both, as I mentioned earlier, were holes in the ground when I came in 1981. And we began to think, “How does [the building of a hotel impact] [ . . . ] the people in the city [ . . . ]?” And that was my struggle, how would that happen given the corporate context?

But my first meeting I had around the table, Roy Epps and Tony Marano, whose goal was to make that happen along with John Heldrich and the head of the public service and Ken Wheeler who was at Rutgers at the time and a representative from the city and the development corporation. Here are these seven or eight people at 7:00 in the morning in John Heldrich’s office and I’m sitting here saying, they really – are verbalizing, they really mean this, and so I began to see that J&J and through John Heldrich was really making a commitment. Not just down there to spend the millions of dollars but with financial commitment to the work in New Brunswick Tomorrow, which was reinforced over the years by decisions that were made that did affect, in my judgment, the inner life of the city.

Now it isn’t dramatic in the same public way as building a new hotel or Rutgers building

a new stadium but it was quietly, in my judgment, and incrementally part of the process that kind of tried, at least publicly, to balance some of the economic development. I think without addressing some of the socially-related issues, the community would have really resented the redevelopment.

Now during that period and you were here for part of that period, there was backlash, there was disagreement. And what I did when I first came was go to people's houses, come as your students – what was the name, you would know him if I mentioned it because I know him now very well, but he had a whole neighborhood group together.

Berkhout: Tony Nelessen?

Hardgrove: No, it was Sacks?

Berkhout: Sacks?

Hardgrove: I'll think of his name, maybe but if not, I don't.

Berkhout: Okay.

Hardgrove: [As I was questioning this, John Heldrich asked me to arrange a tour of Newark neighborhoods where I had been working.] [ . . . ] So he took the [ . . . ] twenty-five member Board of Directors [of NBT, including representatives of the county,] [ . . . ] the city and the Development Corporation, Rutgers, Public Service, Squibb, [ . . . ] to Newark. We [ . . . ] spent a day going to the North Ward, going to Vailsburg where I [had worked] [ . . . ] [and to other Newark neighborhoods. [The Board of NBT] [ . . . ] were hearing some of the people I worked with and [listening to ] what they perceived were some of the needs [that needed to be addressed to make a city healthy.]

[ . . . ]

And the second thing John [Heldrich] did during my first six months [ . . . ] was to visit

every church in New Brunswick [ . . .]. [He] [ . . .] went and [listened] [ . . .] to the pastors and sometimes one of their deacons or trustees and [ . . .] [showed the new vision and role of NBT to address neighborhood issues.]

Berkhout: Now when you say he listened, he listened to the minister or were there actually members of the church there speaking?

Hardgrove: There was a few sometimes.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: But it was really the first time in the history of this process that anybody had knocked on the door of the religious establishment.

Listokin: And what were the churches saying?

Hardgrove: Well, [they were appreciative that their concerns were being heard.] [ . . .] They also raised issues concerning their own congregations, the need for jobs, the concern for the children in terms of the educational systems of New Brunswick, the desire for health-related issues, the desire for a supermarket. [ . . .].

They were concerned about the health program, the hospital was shutting down some emergency services, evening and 24-hour kind of service and there was a concern about that. So they heard all of these concerns and that's what triggered in conjunction with UMDNJ, the city, Devco, the Chandler Center [was established], which still exists [today] [ . . .]

[ . . .]

And [ . . .] [the clergy had] a concern about homeless people. [With the support of Mayor John Lynch trailers were put in Boyd Park. That provided comprehensive services to the homeless . NBT was a cooperative partner with community groups and the city in expanding services to the homeless and low income families. One such program was Elijah's Promise that

still exists today. [ . . .].

[As a minister] [ . . .] I not only developed friendships with the clergy, but was invited to their pulpits, and [got to know many New Brunswick residents and listened to their concerns.] [ . . .]

Listokin: And the New Brunswick Tomorrow philosophy, if you had to sum it up is . . . ?

Hardgrove: To address the quality-of-life of the entire community in relationship to health and human services and those human services needs that grow out of those words. [ . . .]

Listokin: And how many years were you there?

Hardgrove: Fourteen years, I was there from 1981 right up to 1995, when I left and then I went to a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program office [that provided grants to neighbor groups like Unified Vailsburg and NBT.]

Listokin: Actually if I could take you back, you started to speak about the Hyatt.

Hardgrove: Yep.

Listokin: How was more of a connection made between some of these community needs and the Hyatt?

Hardgrove: [The first connection was employment.] That to me was the first real – I'll use the word "test." But it really wasn't a test because what began to happen is that as that was evolving, issue of employment became a very major [priority] [ . . .]. [ . . .]John Heldrich took us to Chicago to meet the Hyatt leaders [ . . .] [After the meeting the Hyatt committed to make] sure that [ . . .] one-third of all the jobs would go to New Brunswick residents [ . . .] Initially there was a comprehensive jobs program to try to connect people with the [Hyatt] jobs.

Berkhout: That was true with the Heldrich as well.

Hardgrove: [John strongly supported this].

Berkhout: Right.

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] And so there was that connection so that people were getting some jobs, now not as many as we hope, but [people] [ . . . ] from New Brunswick [were getting jobs] [ . . .].

Berkhout: Right.

Hardgrove: But you know some of the service-related jobs were there and there were a lot better jobs. But the dilemma with that is, you get someone a job and they are earning more than they have earned before. They used to live in subsidized housing in New Brunswick and so what do they do, they now move over to Franklin or to Somerset because they can afford something different. So what happens is they are back-filled with another family, who maybe doesn't live in New Brunswick, who has the same economic issues or problems that the initial family did. So there is a cycle there that just a job doesn't mean you are going to get neighborhood renewal because people who are working as they move out, other people move in in the same modest circumstance.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: That's not an excuse, but that's part of the reality. But there was a direct connection that I think was very positive.

Listokin: Oh, you spoke some about J&J, maybe you can speak about some of the other players, like Rutgers?

Hardgrove: Rutgers was involved and I guess they were always at the table. There was an inner core at Devco, which I guess you are familiar with, Dr. Bloustein and John Lynch and there was a group of five or ten, a very small group. They weren't all on my board, I had

some representatives. [ . . . ].

Berkhout: What was Rutgers' role?

Listokin: The role of Rutgers?

Hardgrove: Well, I think by having Ken Wheeler and subsequently Nancy Winterbauer on our board, their issues and concerns about the students were part of it. But at that time and I don't know about its status now . . .

Listokin: And when you say "issues with the students," the town . . . ?

Hardgrove: And that was hard to engage the students, as I look back because they were seeing from the New Brunswick and as "over there" that they were somewhat insulated from the city itself. And at that time, there was some concern for public safety that is still probably here, but not with the same level of intensity. Again, speaking from my perspective, not necessarily any grand plan for New Brunswick, I think symbolically – and students wouldn't come downtown – but when through Devco, the city and the encouragement of J&J, the Rutgers bookstore came downtown, it symbolized something, and so more students were coming down. A few more students went to the August Café; they went to that great deli that was right along right down by where Rafferty's now was. And again it was gradual, but you saw more students present.

Listokin: Hockey's, was it Hockey's?

Hardgrove: Hockey's, oh they made great sandwiches.

Listokin: That's the best pastrami.

Hardgrove: So you were there during that period. And then right across the street from J&J was the George Street Playhouse originally in that Acme that was there. My wife and I had a chance to attend as well as the Crossroads Theater.

Berkhout: Yeah.

Hardgrove: And that was during that period that they developed that, but it raised consciousness of community, people in the community participated or at least attended. But getting off of Rutgers, I would say in the early years were supportive, but the students weren't as engaged as I presume they are now. I think there are more internships, there is more work and the students go to Dave Harris' daycare center or Elijah's Promise in terms of social work, and social workers were involved in some measure.

Listokin: How about city government in this?

Hardgrove: Well, I wanted to make sure, I mean there was a partnership. At times over the years I was there, you know we would do some modest things. Like we would have a summer program for kids and recreation, for some job programs and New Brunswick Tomorrow would spend \$30,000 maybe up to \$50,000 one year on children's programs. So we'd write an article and it would be in the paper, patting ourselves on the back. But we were able to do that to complement the \$300,000 project that the city was doing. So, that there was sometimes a concern [raised] that we were showing up the city, but [all of the time] the city was a partner with us, but [unfortunately NBT got more publicity[ [ . . . ]. But [NBT attempted and always complemented what the city did. The city did these bus trips or these activities and we tried to complement them. [ . . . ].

The city was always at the table. I would brief John Lynch every month, every six weeks. He had representatives at our board meetings, the same with Paul Abdalla. Dave Crabiel was on the board in his position, so not just the city, but the county was involved because the county helped with the Middlesex County extension, college extension program that came in during this period of time. It was up off of Somerset Street in that building initially, which if it

weren't for Devco and [ . . . ] the city underwriting some of the [expenses] [ . . . ] issues related to it, and New Brunswick Tomorrow helping to attract students [ . . . ] it wouldn't have happened. But the partnership was effective and the city was a major player.

Listokin: John – can you speak some on John Lynch's . . ?

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] When John [Lynch] was mayor and subsequently Senator, not a lot happened without John and his staff really being a major player in it, and so John was an integral part of the process. Now in terms of an operational sense, he wasn't sitting at the table every time making decisions about the program of New Brunswick Tomorrow. But if we were going to do some major things, we would consult, get some input and make sure they complemented what the city was already doing.

That happened within terms of when I mentioned going back to the homeless program. John initially had some resistance to that, but we were able to convince him it was better to have homeless in an environment that made them well and would be in the trailers that they would be safe than have them sleeping here. And he agreed to that and it became a program that he helped to support it publicly and so he was accepting at that time, but it wasn't without some degree of community concern that you were going to have more people from outside the city come because of the shelter being here. The same with some other projects that were the same, but basically they were at the table. New Brunswick Tomorrow wasn't operating in isolation. [ . . . ].

Listokin: The hospital, where were they in all of this?

Hardgrove: They were a player at the table, too. I think Judy Burgess was on the board and I think Harvey Holzberg was part of that group because they were talking about New Brunswick being a healthcare city long before what has been happening now, and he had a key part. [ , , ] When I came to the city in 1981 [ . . . ] Middlesex Hospital [ . . . ] was a very small [ .

. .]. It has subsequently grown beyond imagination. The Chandler Center was also started during the 1980s. Dick Reynolds, [dean of the [ . . . ] [developed to the center with neighborhood support]. Whatever NBT did with health was done in relationship to their being part of that equation. Also St. Peters, St. Peters and Robert Wood were sitting at a table and were part of a health task force. [ . . . ] NBT's programs grew out of a series of task forces with representatives from community agencies and neighborhoods. We had six task forces, youth and education, human services, seniors, teens and children. [ . . . ]

When I left, if you saw the annual report, the 1995 and looked at the back of it, there had to be 150 to 200 people that were involved in some form in the New Brunswick Tomorrow process. Now that didn't happen in 1981, but [ . . . ] over time, more people were at the table and you know between thirty and fifty percent of the people on those boards were either working, most were working or living in New Brunswick [ . . . ]

Listokin: And the community, you mention the pastors who were involved and some leaders like Roy Epps, any others?

Hardgrove: Well Jim Scott was involved, the Housing Authority, again I don't remember their names at this time, [the chief of police [ . . . ] and some of his police officers were involved in [ . . . ] the Safe [Streets] programs and the youth programs. Don Boylin was involved.

Berkhout: Jim Scott, was he a minister?

Hardgrove: No, [ . . . ] he was a member of our board but he was one of the key community people that lived here in town.

Berkhout: Okay.

Hardgrove: Al Cooper [and Pat Sheehan were] [ . . . ] residents that [were] [ . . . ] involved in this process. [ . . . ].

Listokin: So just taking – are there any, we spoke about the hospital, J&J, Rutgers, some neighborhoods, any other players?

Hardgrove: Well there were external business that had a place, Public Service, New Jersey Bell, Squibb, the banks, they were from an economic point of view not just supporting the development but they had to keep people sitting at our table as well. [ . . . ] When we had a summer jobs program, [ . . . ], [J&J, Squibb, Public Service, the city and Devco all hired New Brunswick youth].

[ . . . ] [NBT also addressed the education of New Brunswick youth. The private, parochial, and vocational schools were involved. The three superintendents sat at the table along with community representatives and they were discussing related issues of education, some special activities and courses. We had a teacher recognition program for three or four years that was funded by Mr. Burke at that time, the CEO [of J&J] who gave [outstanding] teachers \$5,000 after a long community-based assessment project, which [ . . . ] created more morale in the schools. The teachers were involved and it showed we were trying to listen to the teacher's needs.

[ . . . ] [During my tenure at NBT we had good public relations, printed great annual reports, but I am not sure that the public understood the NBT process of community planning to address quality-of-life issues in the city. It was difficult to communicate the need to balance human social programs with economic development].

[ . . . ]

Listokin: The annual survey, when did that start and talk some about that.

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] It started I think before I arrived. [ . . . ] [Every two years the survey was taken beginning in 1980.]

Listokin: And how would that be used?

Hardgrove: [It was important to learn that the [ . . . ] people interviewed had a positive impression of the progress [of redevelopment]. I think if you look at the Eagleton Survey back in 1980 and compare it to 1990, there was an incremental, favorable impression [of] [ . . . ] the city.

[ . . . ] [People were feeling more positive about the future. The survey helped encourage the NBT board that the work they were doing was being appreciated.

Listokin: Beyond the thing how people generally thought . . .

Hardgrove: It was helpful.

Listokin: Was that brought into the decision making of what you would be focusing on?

Hardgrove: Well, it reinforced what we thought was already happening, but it did have an impact. If there was continuing to be some current concerns about a particular area [an NBT task force would attempt to address them.] [ . . . ] Every task force would take a look at [the survey] [ . . . ] and say “What can we do to respond to [this community concern]?” [ . . . ]

From a broader perspective, that report did touch [ . . . ] on the economic development. [It illustrated that something special was happening here that was different, that the dream of Leo Molinari and Richard Sellars was becoming a reality. Since I left [in 1995 the city has continued to dramatically change economically] So much has happened from an economic point of view and I haven’t been as directly involved in how that has been, [and] in how New Brunswick Tomorrow has kept up with it. But my understanding that job programs and educational programs have been continued in a very positive way.

Listokin: Can you talk some on the governance of New Brunswick Tomorrow?

Hardgrove: Yeah. Well we have a board, had a board of, I think, twenty-four, about twenty to twenty-four people. It was representative by some of the constituencies, meaning Rutgers and some of the official, some of the businesses. But it also had a clergyman or two, Monsignor Crupi was on it, several of the clergy were on it, Reverend Bodner. Roy Epps was in it from the very beginning; he was one of the founding members, so there was community represented, the county and Middlesex County College. Now not as many neighborhood people as you would have on it, as in the Chandler Center. The neighborhood people, many would be on our task forces and a few would be represented on the board, but it wasn't 51% as some of the government programs.

Listokin: How many, how many people like that were on?

Hardgrove: I'd have to go back and check.

Listokin: Sure.

Hardgrove: Because Jim Scott and Roy Epps and I'd say the two clergy [ . . . ].

Listokin: Okay, so you have the larger board and then you have the . . . ?

Hardgrove: And then you have an Executive Committee and that had, with Mr. Heldrich as the chair of that committee and behind the scenes, they were the ones that kind of structured things and the chairpersons of each of the task forces would be on the Executive Committee.

Listokin: And the members of the Executive – so, you have the chairs from the six task forces . . . ?

Hardgrove: Yes, that would be on the Executive Committee.

Listokin: And who . . . ?

Hardgrove: So if Nancy Winterbauer was the chair, I think the chair of the educational

task force that she'd been a member of, that she would be on the Executive Committee as a consequence to that. If Mr. Feist was active, you remember Herb Feist?

Berkhout: He was a realtor?

Hardgrove: Yeah, Feller & Feist.

Listokin: Feller & Feist.

Hardgrove: But he was in the United Way for thirty years, deeply committed to human services. He was from Highland Park and he was a head of the human services task force. Tony Murano, who was WCTC and your announcer here for football, he was the, he just had a compassion for young people and so he was the youth task force chairperson, so that illustrates it. So those people were on the Executive Committee.

Listokin: So you had the task force, the heads of the – members of, or the heads of the task forces were on the Executive Committee and whom else would . . . ?

Hardgrove: Then the Board, the rest of the Board of Directors would receive information about each of the task forces and they would be asked to act on any particular issues. If we were going to raise funds or wanted to make a major commitment of funds towards a certain project, the board had to make that decision, the task force would recommend it.

One illustration, if you want me to give you an illustration.

Listokin: Sure.

Hardgrove: Which was one that had controversy connected with it in terms of community and even the political, we had to do a lot of homework to make it happen. We wanted to institute at the high school a program for teen parents that had children, so that they could attend school and have [day care for their ]children. Well, when you raise that issue, there are many people who are very conservative initially react that if you are providing services for

teen parents, you are going to contribute to promiscuity and negative behavior.

Well we didn't believe that that would happen, so we began a process of trying to get key people to advocate for it. [ . . .]. So we began a process [ . . .] to get community support for the project.

But over time, we were able to model our daycare center, it's called Pixie. I forget why it's called Pixie, but there is a good reason.

Berkhout: Program in. . .

Hardgrove: We went over to Plainfield where they had a successful one. My strategy, which is a little anecdote, which you may or may not want to use. John Heldrich went with us and we walk in and here is this room full of babies. And the director of the Plainfield childcare center picked up one of the babies that was just cute and cooing away there and she said, "Would you like to hold him, Mr. Heldrich?" So John Heldrich held the baby. At the next board meeting, we had won him over when he saw all that. I mean he may have had other reasons, but I always felt that that was instrumental to John saying, "You know, we've got to give these kids a chance."

And when I left, [there were] [ . . .] twelve [teens] that were using [the center] [ . . .]. [It still exists today] [ . . .] At that time, I think we had had like ninety girls enrolled, [ . . .] eighty of them had gone to Rutgers because they graduated from high school.

Berkhout: Wow.

Hardgrove: [It took over a year to win over the community and obtain the financial resources but the task force structure of NBT made this possible.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: I know that it has really touched community young people. Now right

now it doesn't get much visibility. At the time, it had a one-day headline. We got the schools to give us space, we renovated the space, and we had a little opening. And maybe there was a small article and this article, but none of the issues. And then so it's quietly operated for ten to twelve children all of these years. [ . . . ].

Berkhout: Wow.

Hardgrove: But John . . .

Berkhout: But they probably got bigger space someplace.

Hardgrove: I was going to mention, if you want to interview someone else, Dr.

Larkin, I don't know how to reach him.

Berkhout: Oh yeah, Ron Larkin.

Hardgrove: I think you would find, I mean from his perspective, I think it would be an interesting person for you to talk to. But he was really gung-ho. Penny Latimer. . .

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: Which I am assuming you have – they because if you don't have the schools – and then the teachers had some resistance because they didn't know how it would impact their work.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: [And at the same time [the state had advertized an RFP for creating youth services in high schools. New Brunswick Tomorrow applied and received a \$250,000 grant. We opened a center at the high school and provided mental health counseling in the elementary schools.] program and a youth and children's programs.] [ . . . ]

Listokin: And I'd like to return to that point a little later. Any other, I know New Brunswick Tomorrow did a lot under your tutelage, any other things you might want to mention

about some initiative that you thought were particularly. . .

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] The Summer Concert Series, I came down here and I'm here three months and they said "We've got to work on the Concert Series," and I said "What?" So we, did you ever participate or ever go to any of the concerts at the park?

Berkhout: Yeah.

Hardgrove: Every year we arranged for Lionel Hampton to come.

Berkhout: Yes.

Hardgrove: Which was so enriching, you know thousands of people.

Berkhout: And then the Metropolitan Opera started coming.

Hardgrove: The Opera was there and then New Jersey Symphony and we had a bluegrass night.

Listokin: And how did that come about, the Concert Series?

Hardgrove: It was here when I started, it was the second year. But conceptually behind the scenes for that was, "Let's start having people come to the city to have a cultural event, a musical event." And whenever I would get up and say my welcome to people, I'm saying "This is the precursor to what you will be able to do in years to come at the State Theater. And honestly, I'm not sure that was going to happen because I've been in the State Theater and the roof was leaking. And if I can tell you a brief anecdote, if you want me to. . . ?

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Listokin: Please.

Hardgrove: The New Jersey was going to be there, but there was a threat of heavy thundershowers, you know how they do the day, 30 percent.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: Well if I had the symphony up at a park and a thunderstorm comes, we've got a serious problem with all of those people, particularly lightening and thunder. So much to the dismay of a lot of people, I moved it into the State Theater. Well the State Theater wasn't a very nice place to have a concert at that time. It was dark, it was damp, and, you know, it was depressing, but the orchestra began.

So I went up in the balcony, we had a good crowd, but not like we would have had. I'm sitting there and everybody is mad at me. I'm sitting there frustrated that I made decision because it was bad. Then I went out at intermission and I looked at the horizon and I said "Uh oh, here it comes," and right at the beginning at the second half of the concert, it rained and rained and rained. However, the orchestra comes out and after about three bars, they left the stage. I said "What's. . . ?"

So I go down and go back and talk to them. They said "We cannot play. The roof leaks." So here I had made this decision and I was being vindicated and they ran out real quickly and they played the Sousa march and then I had to dismiss it because here there was – so it was like I did the wrong thing, "Come inside," I did the right thing. So it was just – but it was a precursor to a desire to have culture and the arts. Did it have a major impact, I don't know. But at least it was in the intent to deal with that.

Listokin: Was New Brunswick Tomorrow involved with the cultural center?

Hardgrove: [The leaders on the board were. As an organization we didn't have a direct relationship. We were supportive in a general way.] [ . . . ].

Listokin: And the relationship between New Brunswick Tomorrow and Devco?

Hardgrove: It was very strong. And another person you may want to consider finding –[Paul Abdalla] – and I don't know where you would find him because his name is never

mentioned now in spite of all of it. But those early years when I was there, at least for seven or eight years – do you know who I’m talking about?

Listokin: Nero?

Berkhout: Paul Abdalla and Frank Nero who follows him.

Listokin: Frank Nero, right.

Hardgrove: Frank followed him and he’s down in Florida now. But if you could somehow – but Paul knew Mr. Sellars and if it wasn’t for Paul advocating with Richard Sellars, the State Theater would have been torn down. [ . . . ].

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: Someone already told you that?

Berkhout: Kenneth Wheeler told us the story about the New York architect who told Kenneth that there are three things it needs to have, if it has those then it’s not worth it. If it doesn’t have it, then you have an ideal vaudeville theater well-built and you should keep it. So he brought Bob Totten and he said Bob Totten was like very religious and didn’t want to go in a porno theater.

Hardgrove: (Laughter)

Berkhout: And said “You can walk in backwards, we just have to look at the back of it.” So they did and they found out that it conformed to what would make it a good architectural structure. So I guess then they went to Sellars and . . .

Hardgrove: And Sellars put his own money up to hold it because someone else wanted to buy it. I don’t know what they were doing but – Paul was very involved with Sellers, Heldrich and John Lynch and was [ . . . ] one of the fundamental players in that early period.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: I forget when he actually left. And he. . .

Berkhout: He was with Devco or New Brunswick of Tomorrow?

Hardgrove: No, he was the head of Devco.

Berkhout: Devco.

Hardgrove: And his office, we were on the same floor. And on occasions I'd go down and brainstorm with him some things and he'd come in. But his decision-making and the process that he used was different from mine. He took me down to Columbia, Maryland, and [ . . .] to Baltimore to show the Harbor Place which conceptually was part of Molinari's vision [for New Brunswick] [ . . .], too. So I got along well with Paul, he was a firm, strong leader. But he was sometimes my point of access to John Lynch, because Paul would understand where I was and could interpret some of [what NBT was doing] [ . . .].

Listokin: And again, the relationship between New Brunswick Tomorrow which is doing mainly social services, employment and education and Devco is . . .

Hardgrove: [ . . .]

Listokin: And how would you cooperate?

Hardgrove: Well the Hyatt, the employment issue was strong. Property, the Chandler Center needed help with the physical space and Devco was part of that equation. They helped to be part of the equation of downtown in terms of the Chandler new location. They were part of getting that supermarket in town.

Listokin: Can you talk some about the supermarket?

Hardgrove: Well, just that it had been ongoing; there was no supermarket in New Brunswick. They had tried to get some people to come in, but the condition of the 1980's didn't warrant a market because many of the people who could afford to go to the traditional market,

they went to Somerset, they went to Franklin, they went out to North Brunswick because they had transportation. So people without cars or who were limited in transportation needed someplace.

Berkhout: Uh hum.

Hardgrove: And it was a struggle to find that company to come in. I don't even know whether it's the same company.

Berkhout: C-Town. Somebody else took it over, I think, an individual but it's still a C-Town.

Hardgrove: I'm glad. I mean it was a little bit over-priced, but at least it was convenient and that was part of the community's need. [John Lynch] [ . . . ] and Devco really took the lead in that. [ . . . ]

Berkhout: Now another physical change was the whole Hiram District area?

Hardgrove: Well . . .

Berkhout: Which seems to me there might have been some issues where Devco wanted to do physical changes and it was negatively viewed by the community. So did NBT get involved in any of those hearings?

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] [This] was a Devco concern. They invited [NBT] [ . . . ] to come in [a supportive, non-direct way], you know, in terms of consulting. [ . . . ]. But it was really Devco and the city trying to work out this compromise.

Listokin: And the community perspective on Hiram?

Hardgrove: [ . . . ] [This was primarily a Rutgers issue; the community seemed indifferent.]

Listokin: How so?

Hardgrove: Well because Rutgers – some of the staff there are the professors and the students who were in their classes felt that this was a historic district that should have been saved. [ . . . ] [There was a strong concern that a part of the history of New Brunswick would be lost if the Hiram market area was redeveloped. I believe Devco in a very practical way developed a compromise with the Rutgers advocates and funding was found to capture what was there photographically. The New Brunswick public library has a record of Hiram district.] So that if you were doing research about New Brunswick, that it would be available [at the public library]. [ . . . ].

Listokin: If you were to evaluate, perhaps with 20/20 hindsight, you know what was accomplished, what was not and things that could have or should have been done differently perhaps?

Hardgrove: Well, I have shared a few of the things that I felt from my point of view. There are a lot of small things over the way in terms of youth programs and recreation and – It's hard to go back and look at something and say “What would you do better or differently?” You know I saw, I came in there with a vision, and I'm impatient by nature. If we're going to go on vacation next week, let's go tomorrow. It's temperament. So I came and I wanted to see things happen and I would like to see it happen quicker. But over time I began to realize that the revitalization is a process, it's step-by-step. And that if you rush it too quickly, it's premature and won't be successful. But you've got to do it incrementally and you also have to have some symbols.

A symbol, going back anecdotally, one of the first things I was involved in having done was getting the escalator in the old train station working.

Berkhout: Hum.

Hardgrove: It sounds silly, but really it was a symbol to New Brunswick that you couldn't ride up in the escalator. So Lee Faggione, and God bless her if she were alive, I want to mention her name somewhere. She was a very catalytic, dynamic woman that helped to hire me and was for at least five or six years, part of the board. She's the kind of woman that would walk in the room and light it up. She had this outgoing [ . . . ] personality.

[ . . . ] [Over time I realized that it takes time to see changes. I wanted to rush and I learned to take my time and revise my expectations.]

Listokin: Can you give me an example of that?

Hardgrove: Well, we mentioned earlier it would have been nice, if earlier there was additional housing that was available for low and moderate income folks. The first set of low and moderate income housing was right up on George and Commercial, Devco did it. That was great housing and that was back early, in the early '80's and it was exciting. But I think the residents there were more moderate than low income housing. But it was years before that momentum came to do some of that. And so even though it wasn't New Brunswick Tomorrow's role or my personal role, I wish that maybe we had been able to push that more so that there was more quality housing earlier.

I think it was in the process of happening and if you're honest in the year 2009, it's ongoing and that need would continue to exist, in any city it would. But my hope would be "Let's do it" rather than "Let's wait for the process to get there." And sometimes I became, in my own inner self, a little bit impatient and that would . . .

[ . . . ] I know even though some people would look at the statistics and criticize New Brunswick's schools in terms of the tests they take and so forth. But I believe there has been incremental progress in the schools. The dimension of having more Latino families and the

implications of English as a second language and new families has complicated it. But I believe strong teachers and there is strong education going on, they just can't interpret that appropriately through the kind of standardized testing. And I felt it's improving but the statistics and the perceptions stay behind. And I just wish that we could sell people on some good things that are happening, you know have confidence in the system, whereas, rather than always criticize it.

But every article about education in the *Home News* had a negative tint because statistically we're spending too much and not getting enough accomplished. [*The Home News*] [ . . . ] tried to track the first grade of a school in North Brunswick and a first grade a Robeson School. The *Home News* were going to parallel them over [ . . . ] five years and [compare the progress of each school.] [ . . . ]. In the second year, there were only three students left in that class at Robeson because they [had moved to other neighborhoods and [ . . . ] were in other schools in New Brunswick. [ . . . ].

Berkhout: Right.

Hardgrove: So, if there is that change, that dynamic isn't understood. So they criticized the school and sometimes the teachers, whereas I could see that the teachers are doing it and I was upset. And I wish if I could go back that there could have been a way to try to translate that, the stereotype. It wasn't poor teaching, it wasn't kids that couldn't learn, it was a much greater problem than people were willing to recognize. And that's the kind of thing and it was my impatience to see it. I wanted everybody to have a nice house; I wanted everybody to have a job. It doesn't happen like this.

Listokin: So I don't – the role of New Brunswick Tomorrow and Memorial Homes, can you just speak so I don't . . . ?

Hardgrove: See, that again was part of a long process and the major changes happened

after I left. We tried to be responsive to the children of Memorial Homes with a summer program. But since the Housing Authority was primarily responsible for that, we did not directly become engaged in that whole dilemma and structure. There was an annual, that First Night kind of thing that went out. The police department and New Brunswick Tomorrow working together, there would be some bus trips. But what we did was very superficial to addressing the complicated issues.

I know that behind the scenes, the city and Housing Authority wanted to improve this or that and there were people at Devco that helped to fix the elevator and do some other things. But since there were not at that time alternatives for housing and the resources to pay for it, there was that public – and then the negative dimension, which sometimes washed over the people and made judgments of the people, which bothered us because it wasn't the people, it was the issue of poverty and whatever that meant.

So New Brunswick Tomorrow didn't directly get involved because you need jobs and housing and we tried to get some – and we did have some people from Memorial Homes get jobs at the Hyatt. Now whether they completed them and so forth, I can't say. But there was a desire to be supportive to the residents. We didn't have any role in trying to find them new homes because that was a struggle that the city was doing.

Listokin: You started to speak earlier about transferability, if we can – if I we can share your thoughts, how transferable is what happened in New Brunswick to other urban places?

Hardgrove: Conceptually, I think it's very transferable if you get the right people at the table. Maybe a poor illustration was, I know back in the '90's and late 1980's we went down to Asbury Park to make a presentation, Paul Abdalla, John Lynch, myself and I think even the

Housing Authority and speak to the group there because Asbury Park has a reasonable size that you could get your hands around it. But without, again, the kind of player there, the corporate player that would take a lead and some financial funds up front, they struggled over these years and now [ . . . ] [there have been some positive changes, but it has taken so many years.]

The New Brunswick Tomorrow model would work in that type of city, given the players being in place. But I don't know whether there is.

Listokin: The New Brunswick Tomorrow model is. . . ?

Hardgrove: No, I meant the revitalization model, I don't mean that.

Listokin: The revitalization model.

Hardgrove: But it . . .

Listokin: And that model would be an agency, such as New Brunswick Tomorrow trying to further social welfare, a development entity such as Devco.

Hardgrove: I believe that's essential to success for revitalization that you have to have – for two reasons, one is it makes practical sense to include it. It's a moral issue that you don't want to just come in with new buildings and structures without interfacing with the community and getting some input and trying to make them be of benefit. And there is a public relations reason. But it is, it is a model that's essential. [ . . . ].

Now, obviously in terms of financial and public relations and public awareness, the bricks and mortar get a higher priority. [ . . . ] You need some people behind the scene trying to struggle with what are the issue and what do people need. [ . . . ] Our process wasn't entirely ideal all the time, but there was a clear intent of the board to try to work with youth and children and families in neighborhoods [ . . . ] [to see] New Brunswick [is] more than just bricks and mortar, that the quality-of-life was deeply being impacted and touched. [ . . . ].

[ . . . ] I know John Lynch, Paul Abdalla, Frank Nero, Richard Sellars, but to me, even though John Heldrich wanted this economic development with bricks and mortar, his social and broader perspective made the difference.

Not every town has [the kind of vision that John Heldrich had] [ . . . ]. If you don't have the people, that really see the balance and are willing to get a person a job as well as build a new building. And John [Heldrich] did and it was his vision and obviously Sellars and others. But when, twenty years from now, I just hope people can recognize [ . . . ] [that John Heldrich is not just the name of a hotel.]

[ . . . ]

Berkhout: What about Newark?

Hardgrove: That critical mass. Newark has its own way of trying to do it now. You know, Booker has done support for neighborhood groups, but again the problems are so intense and the housing is so difficult, employment is still so difficult. And again, you have the whole pattern, you have people who finally make it, they get jobs and they slide over to Irvington or they move to another area and they are backfilled with other people who have some of the basic economic problems. It's a cycle.

Berkhout: Right.

Hardgrove: Where new immigrants come in and they take the place and so that's the cycle. And then people judge revitalization based upon what they perceive as negative stereotypes rather than realize that that cycle exists. And you just have to, step-by-step, and there is no miracle.

It's funny, the man that followed me at Vailsburg back in 1980 when I left, and he's still there. Mike Farley, he's still there and he's still taking step-by-step. And he's been there

through a major change in that whole Vailsburg community. And I'm sure he was at Ivy Hill Apartments when those young people were killed a few years ago, because of the community reaction to that.

Berkhout: Right.

Listokin: Any topics that we haven't covered that you want to get down on the record?

Hardgrove: No, I – I mean it just – no, your last question to me is the most important, is it replicable? Because and my answer is yes, because of that balance. And that would be my final theme. Quality-of-life and a partnership between the public and private sector is essential, which touches community life and that would be the fundamental issue.

Now you know you're interviewing Roy Epps and you're interview Peggy?

Berkhout: Penny?

Hardgrove: Penny Latimer.

Berkhout: We don't have, we haven't yet.

Hardgrove: Well, I have a feeling, I mean her Cultural Center background, her Assistant Superintendent of Schools . . .

Berkhout: Right.

Hardgrove: Her education, I think she's an ideal . . .

Berkhout: Sure.

Hardgrove: And Larkin, too, Ron Larkin.

Berkhout: Yeah.

[ . . . ]

Listokin: How was the foundation involved in New Brunswick?

Hardgrove: They are part of the legacy, are you familiar with the foundation's legacy projects that grow right out of . . . ?

Listokin: If you can speak about it, that would be good.

Hardgrove: General Johnson, he was a grassroots street kind of person in the sense that he walked the streets of New Brunswick. And if he saw something that bothered him, he would respond to it. If he saw a house in the Hungarian ward that looked like it needed some help and that person worked for J&J, he'll get it painted.

Berkhout: Whoa.

Hardgrove: He was that kind of person. So he came up with about seven or eight projects in New Brunswick that he was identified with. You know the Kiddie Keep Well program which is a summer camp for disabled children and the Salvation Army and I think there is a something for the Catholic nuns; he had about seven or eight. So they continue with the foundation and it is the New Brunswick area. But they also have made major investments in New Brunswick Tomorrow's social programs and still continue to. They support, in part, some aspects of the work of Devco.

Berkhout: Hum.

Hardgrove: Not for economic development, but more in terms of the administration of Devco. So they have been involved, but they are not actively involved at the table because they couldn't, it wouldn't be appropriate for them to be. But during my tenure there, a man by the name of Terrence Keenan was my point person and I would go every six months and update him and he would give me encouragement or, you know, that he was very pleased. He would come to events at J&J or events in the community from time to time. So it was more a, not a decision-making role, but a funding role but a real support of it conceptually. But also the hospital, you

know, the investment in the medical center, the investment in the UMDNJ, the major dollars that have helped build that.

When I first did Elijah's Promise, I was able to get a local attorney to give us \$100,000 to renovate where they are now in terms of the soup kitchen. Well J&J matched that money and the Chandler Center they helped. But they did a lot of that behind the scenes; they didn't take a high profile in that.

You may not know this, but in 1972, Johnson & Johnson, the foundation began right up on Livingston Avenue, they had a little house. And there is a big ad that this billion-dollar foundation was going to be established. And Terrence Keenan was there at that time and it was in the *Home News*. Well that night of that big announcement, some young people broke in looking for the money.

Berkhout: Oh. (Laughter)

Hardgrove: And Terrence always tells that story.

Listokin: Okay, well thank you.

Hardgrove: Well, thank you for giving me the chance to kind of tell my story.

Listokin: No, no.

Hardgrove: I know it's not as dramatic as . . .

Listokin: Is there anything else that you want to share with us?

Berkhout: Let me go get the. . .

Hardgrove: Very good.

Berkhout: I'm going to go get the form for you.

Hardgrove: Okay, very good.

Berkhout: Now maybe you could mention to David while I'm downstairs, you had

said that you thought that we should – and I can turn these off; apply to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for further funding.

Hardgrove: Oh.

Berkhout: And what is it you think they would . . .

Hardgrove: Well, I don't know what you are going to do or would like to do with what's evolving. But it seems that if it's . . .

[end of recording]