

Ken Turner

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SPEAKERS

Interviewer: Bedell Terry

Interviewee: Ken Turner

Bedell Terry

This is Bedell Terry. It's March 20, 2024, at 10am. I'm with Ken Turner via the online zoom platform. And we're going to begin our oral history interview for the University of Baltimore stories, The 100th Anniversary Oral History Project. The purpose of this project is to celebrate the university's centennial by preserving the memory of those influenced by the University of Baltimore over the years. We will be creating a digital archive and exhibit and making these recordings available online. Ken, how are you?

Ken Turner

Good morning, Terry, I am pretty good?

Bedell Terry

Let's start with some basic information. Where were you born?

Ken Turner

I was born in Baltimore City.

Bedell Terry

Baltimore City. What about your family life? Are you from a large family, a small family?

Ken Turner

I am from a family of six kids and raised by single mother.

Bedell Terry

And I'm from a family of six kids. All right. Large families.

Ken Turner

Absolutely. Fun time.

Bedell Terry

So, you grew up in Baltimore City? Where do you go to school?

Ken Turner

I went to school in South Baltimore. I attended Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill Junior High [School], Patapsco, Elementary [School]. And I went to Southern High [School].

Bedell Terry

What do you do after school?

Ken Turner

Well, after school, I went to CCB, Community College of Baltimore. At 20, I went into the Marine Corps Reserves and from there worked at a variety of different places.

Bedell Terry

How was your experience in the Marine Corps Reserves?

Ken Turner

I wouldn't change it for anything in the world. Great people did a lot of great things.

Bedell Terry

So, you went to what is it boot camp?

Ken Turner

Sure did, Paris Island.

Bedell Terry

And with the reserves what is it a five-year commitment?

Ken Turner

No, actually I was in reserves for 22 years, so I retired from the reserves.

Bedell Terry

and made it to what rank?

Ken Turner

E-7 gunnery sergeant.

Bedell Terry

Ah! on TV they call you, Gunny?

Ken Turner

Yes, sir. Absolutely.

Bedell Terry

So, what brought you to the University of Baltimore?

Ken Turner

Well, actually, my experience with the University of Baltimore started around probably 1982. So right after I graduated from Community College of Baltimore, I came here for a brief stint. And it started going on and off.

Bedell Terry

So, you attended on and off from 82 on? 82, yep. And what was your field of study?

Ken Turner

Business Administration

Bedell Terry

How did you like that?

Ken Turner

I think it's the foundation for everything that I do even now.

Bedell Terry

And what brought you to be an employed with the University of Baltimore?

Ken Turner

Well, I used to work for the University of Maryland, Baltimore. So, I transferred to UMB, and I came here after nine years there.

Bedell Terry

So, you went from the University of University of Maryland, right? Where is that campus?

Ken Turner

The University of Maryland, Baltimore campus is in downtown Baltimore.

Bedell Terry

How'd you like that?

Ken Turner

Oh, it was great. Had a great time there.

Bedell Terry

So, when did you? What year did you start working at UB [University of Baltimore]?

Ken Turner

I started working at UB [University of Baltimore] in 2006.

Bedell Terry

What was your first impression?

Ken Turner

Well, I'd like to think that I did a lot studying before choosing to work at UB. I was looking at staying in the University system. I had a lot of conversations with a lot of people. A common theme of what I was hearing was that University of Baltimore was on the move as far as erecting buildings, development of programs and everything else. Also, like I said before, I studied here on and off and at that time in 2006 I was an evening student here. So, I got to see a lot of what was going on just by coming to class.

Bedell Terry

So, when you when you started was, was the campus basically the same as it is now?

Ken Turner

No. It's not the same as it was in the 80's. I don't totally recollect what the campus looked like back then, but a lot of the buildings that are here now weren't here back then. the Academic Center was here, I remember taking a lot of classes there. The Business Center might have been just built or not built at all. I definitely remember the Learning Commons building and the old Langsdale Library being here. The Student Center and Angelos Law buildings weren't built yet.

Bedell Terry

So, you've seen the campus grow and morph into something much larger?

Ken Turner

Absolutely.

Bedell Terry

And was the new library, wasn't there?

Ken Turner

No, it wasn't, it was before. When I came here, it was just Langsdale Library. And that was before the renovation?

Bedell Terry

And what was your impression of, of the campus when you got here? It's a small, urban campus. And you're coming from University of Maryland, which is a bigger campus, right?

Ken Turner

Well, you know, I had already been coming for evening classes. So, I kind of saw the momentum before, let's say came here to work. I saw it growing and thriving. Lots of things were going on there were lots of students, particularly on the evening shift, or during evening hours. So, a lot of students are still friends today. There was a lot happening building wise were coming up and renovations were happening. It was just an exciting time.

Bedell Terry

And how have your impression changed over the years?

Ken Turner

Well, I think we have kind of contracted a little bit, as a campus, but that has a lot to do with the times and everything else. Student enrollments are probably going down overall in higher education everywhere. Not to mention, problems with the pandemic and everything else. But like every place else, you have to adapt to change.

And I think that's what the university is trying to do as much as possible. So, the increase in online platforms, development in new programs, the in-house events and things like that are a response to the changes in the university and higher education landscape globally.

Bedell Terry

How did the pandemic affect you and your role at UB [University of Baltimore]?

Ken Turner

Well, I'm the custodial manager here. So, it affected us quite a bit. Cleaning regimens had to change in conjunction with the guidelines from the CDC [Center for Disease Control]. And so, chemicals changed, methodologies changed. How we approached our daily schedules changed quite a bit.

So, it's actually practices that we still use today. Because the virus is still around. To me, it just makes sense to keep cleaning at this point for health. Similar to the way it's done in other institutions.

Bedell Terry

So as the custodial manager what, what's your actual duties?

Ken Turner

Well, I manage a group of almost 30 housekeepers, three supervisors and a housekeeper lead under me. I work in conjunction with the facilities management which we're a part of that. So, there is the maintenance side of the house, and then there's the housekeeping side of the house.

Bedell Terry

And that's for all of all of the buildings at UB [University of Baltimore]? Right. Including the space that's now occupied by the police force, correct? It's a big job. Yeah.

Ken Turner

It's got to challenges that's for sure.

Bedell Terry

What do you think the biggest challenge is?

Ken Turner

Well, I think probably at this point, the biggest challenge is just staying ahead of the needs of our occupants. And just trying to anticipate their needs, and having schedules that complement what they do. So, just having prior knowledge of what they're going to be having the event wise, and things like that, help us out quite a bit.

Bedell Terry

And who's who is your direct supervisor?

Ken Turner

That would be Andrew Van Der Stuyf

Bedell Terry

And his title?

Ken Turner

He is the Associate Director of Facilities Management.

Bedell Terry

What do you what do you see from your standpoint, the, the expansion of the University of Baltimore?

Ken Turner

It's kind of hard to say, I'm not that attuned as to say what's going on as far as how the plan on expanding. But I will say this, I think that the area is becoming a will be becoming a lot bigger and a lot more vibrant there is a lot of things is going on, let's say with the train station, I think, when all boils down to it, what's going to happen is traffic patterns in this area is going to pick up so much more, it was

always a vibrant area. But again, like I was saying before, I think we've emerged pandemic and everything else I think this area is going to rise up like a phoenix, , they're unveiling, train station as it is at this moment even as we speak, with transportation and things like that improving in the area, living spaces improving in the area, and buildings going up to accommodate housing and things like that.

Staying abreast of all of those things, as well as being tuned into what's coming out of the community colleges and things like that will act as a catalyst for the university. All of those things are feeders for the school, and I think the school is going to be the benefactor, I think the university has to be ready when it all happens.

Bedell Terry

So, you think that that University of Baltimore holds a place in the expansion of Baltimore City,

Ken Turner

no doubt about it, no doubt about it.

Bedell Terry

And the area that the university is in? How has that changed in the 18 years you've been there?

Ken Turner

I have to say that maybe it probably hasn't changed that much. And I think that speaks to the area. Let's think about the things or the entities that surround us like the Maryland Institute of Art [Maryland Institute College of Art], the Lyric Theatre [Lyric Opera House], all of these things, as well as University of Baltimore are staples, of this area. The train station, the Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Station, all those things are just "Anchor Institutions" in the area that just hold the area together. And then with the new things that maybe got peppered in the area over the years [such as the Student Center, Angelos Law School and the Fitzgerald building] that anchor us to this area, and it's only going to get better.

Bedell Terry

You must have met a lot of colleagues over your 18 years how do you how do you think you feel about that? people that you've worked with,

Ken Turner

oh, man, I have fond memories of quite a bit of memories of a lot of folks, who have come and gone. It's always been a fun place, collaborative. Fun loving colleagues, lots of activities and things like that. Just a great place to be great place to work I wouldn't come here if I didn't think so.

Bedell Terry

That's a good attitude. No sense going to work in a place you don't like. Absolutely. Life is too short.

Ken Turner

yes it is.

Bedell Terry

So you grew up in Baltimore went to school in Baltimore attended UB and basically have been with UB for 18 years.

Ken Turner

Right.

Bedell Terry

What do you think has been your highlight in your time there?

Ken Turner

Oh, I got to say just relationships for the most part. I think that's what drives a lot everything as far as being successful. The people that worked with and just been surrounded by all these years are the ones that, get you through the day-to-day things that need to happen. And the culmination of it is basically 18 years of what I like to think was a successful run.

Bedell Terry

And the responsibilities have grown over the years.

Ken Turner

Yes, I'd say so. And I think again, with pandemic the, it's changed a lot for us but like anything else. You have to adapt and conquer.

Bedell Terry

that's the Marine in you coming out?

Ken Turner

There you go.

Bedell Terry

That must have that must have formed a lot of who you are.

Ken Turner

Ah, yeah, I like to think so. The Marine Corps way of getting things done works in any environment. So, if you can get people to buy into it, you're going to be successful.

Bedell Terry

Now to go back to your start at UB, how did you find out about the job?

Ken Turner

Let's think back, it's been a long time. I believe I just was searching through a lot of the universities in the system because at that point, I was nine years into the system. So just to see what jobs were open

around system whether it was UMBC [University of Maryland Baltimore County] or University of Maryland College Park, Coppin [Coppin State University], you know, closer schools in the system. University of Baltimore, and they had a position open that fit my skill, so I looked at it, applied and said to myself let's give this a shot.

It's close to my home. And it all worked out. I mean, got good feedback about UB from actually a lot of my counterparts at UMB [University of Maryland, Baltimore]. As a matter of fact, I remember a conversation with Terry Smith and Terry was a VP at University of Maryland Baltimore. I actually ran into him when I was coming to interview, and he was walking across the parking lot the area where the Fitzgerald building is standing now all of it was the UB Parking Lot [University of Baltimore] at that point.

And so, he started asking me questions, Ken what are you doing here? So, I told him I was here interviewing for a job, this is this is a great place to work. He said he was actually on a committee, for the renovation of the LAP [Liberal Arts and Policy] building, which was Loyola Federal Bank. And he says, this is a growing and thriving university. We always had talks like that when I saw him on the street. And, you know, from there, I think my mind was made up if they were accepting me, I was going to work for UB.

Bedell Terry

And I believe they've been glad to have you over these 18 years.

Ken Turner

I hope so.

Bedell Terry

Is there anything else you'd like to talk about and about your career at new UB [University of Baltimore]?

Ken Turner

I mean, not much comes to mind at this point. But you know, I'm ready to answer any questions that you have.

Bedell Terry

Well, I've worked through most of my questions. there anything you'd like to add.

Ken Turner

I got to say it's been a long and, I believe, fun career. I am so glad that I could help out in this project, for the 100-year anniversary. Yeah, I have seen a lot happen. A lot of different alumni are coming through. And just proud to do it.

Bedell Terry

Well, I want to thank you for your time. This has been a pleasure talking to you. And hopefully, you'll be well, I say, hopefully, you'll be there another 18 years, but I don't know. You want to work?

Ken Turner

Ah, that's a stretch. Yeah, that's a real stretch. And if the creek don't rise, we'll see how long it goes.

Bedell Terry

As retired personnel tell you, there comes a day when you say I've had enough.

Ken Turner

I think I'm close to that. But you know, we'll see.

Bedell Terry

All right, well, thank you very much, Ken.

Ken Turner

Thank you, Terry. Appreciate it.