

Interview with Ron Webb (Planning Team)
5-22-02
done by Tim Puckett (TP) and AJ Rocheleau (AR)

The interview was conducted on behalf of the oral history program of the Century High School. The interviewee name is Ron Webb and the interviewers are Tim Puckett and AJ Rocheleau. The interview took place at Century High School on May 22nd at about 1:00 PM.

TP: Mr. Webb, What was ^{your first} involvement with the CHS?

RW: Well my first involvement was I was on the planning team here at Century. During that planning team I was coming over here just to help with the involvement with the ground floor type of thing and also during that time I was involved in attending Athletic Directors meetings and stuff like that prior to being a named athletic director just in case to get anything waiting to go for the new school and stuff like that, before I was named athletic director.

TP: Why did you choose to come here?

RW: Well I thought it was a new opportunity for me to do something different plus I was wanted to be an athletic director I thought and plus being in the same district and stuff like this I wouldn't have to move. So I thought it was a great opportunity. And new ideas with a new school.

AR: What were you doing before you chose to come to Century?

RW: I was teaching health and I was activities director and Glencoe High School and I was head baseball coach.

TP: So did you coach against Mr. Zehr?

RW: I did. We had a 50-50 record against each other. When he was at Hilhi.

TP: How would you compare your experiences with Glencoe between here at Century?

RW: Well Im in a different role number one, number two its been a great experience, Glencoe was a great experience, it was a great school, Century is a great school I think I really believe that we have great kids, its just a different experience. Time wise you know I put a lot of time in here and I have a lot of contests and stuff like that, but the 90 minute, when we changed to 90 minutes block schedule that was different because we were used to an eight period day over at Glencoe, but it's a policy thing I think.

TP: How did you choose, how did you get to be on the planning team?

RW: I was selected. I put in an application with Mr. Barnekoff which was our original principal here and he chose me at that time. I wanted to come here I told him I wanted to come and help open a new school and stuff like that so he choose me to be on the planning team. I had to fill an application out.

TP: What was your job to do on the planning team?

RW: Well again look at the athletic standpoints I would like even though I wasn't named athletic director yet I was there to put a purpose on going to the meetings seeing what was needed to be done if there were any athletic issues that came up then I would be available to go to a meeting or something.

TP: How were decisions made on the planning team?

RW: Well I think it was a group decision a lot. A lot of it you know, everybody had a voice which was a good and then basically, of course the buck always stops at the head. We felt that we had a very , I think we had a very strong input on what was going to, how it was going to look when we opened up.

TP: What would you say were some of your biggest challenges on the planning team?

RW: Some of the biggest challenges I think is you know not opening a new school, what our expectations were, trying to find out what we really want as a group or what we wanted our school to look like you know, we wanted to have a school that was different try new ideas, get more teacher involvement, you know, when we made some choices like when they came here we wanted the teachers to make sure that they get involved and they're really willing to try new things. We didn't want to quote the traditional we want the like, end up going to block scheduling and we haven't done that in the district and wanted teachers that were willing to do that. I think that was a big challenge, getting the right consistency of teachers of here.

TP: Do you think that you have got those consistency of teachers?

RW: I think so, I think so things change of course, we had a, since its open in five years we've had a turnover of teachers of course and we have that all the time in most places, but uh, I think we've got some good young teachers and blended in with some older teachers and staff members that have been around. I Think its changed.

AR: What are some of the greatest satisfactions you've had as a member on the planning team?

RW: Working with the other 13 or 14 people that I had to work with, it was a great experience. Getting to know them really well you know, and not being afraid to listen to their ideas. There idea may be different idea than mine,

but we came to a common ground. Just working with the other people and being involved that was probably one of the best things that have ever happened to me.

AR: How long were you involved with them

RW: the planning team?

AR: Yeah

RW: I think we were... I don't know exact dates.... I wanna say we must have been started... I started going to meetings in September, for a whole year basically, somewhere around in there, I don't know exactly date wise.

TP: Let's say like you and another on the planning team disagreed, how would you resolve your disagreements?

RW: Well I think that's where... We may have disagreed on certain things and that's where other planning team members came in, they would... There was back and forth with somebody, you always had somebody else that could see a different perspective how you could see something, you may be seeing the same idea in different perspectives, you know like one way may be a little different but may be the same. Or it may have been totally different and said man that may not work out right for this school, or that may not work out right, or yeah it would work better this way. I think by everybody being open-minded it really helped out. There were a couple things that we had... brought in some team people to build a better coordination between the groups. And there was a thing where we had to pick up a can without going in the middle and I had one way I was going to do it. I knew I could do it, I could lasso it and grab the can and pull it out without going in the center. Well somebody else, Mrs. Cochran figured we could make thing pull thing, wrap around and pull it back right and suppose to lift the can up without going in there. So I said no I can do it. No lets try it this way. Yeah hey lets try it this way and we just kinda worked out. We did it her way, it worked. It could have worked my way too, but that's ok

AR: Make sacrifices

RW: Yeah, sacrifices. Try new things.

AR: What was your initial vision for Century. Like how did you want it to turn out?

RW: From an athletic standpoint? Or from just a standpoint in general?

AR: In general

RW: I guess I wanted to see that we get people that wanted to try new ideas. I think that... like I said trying block scheduling and things of this nature like I said before I think was a real good thing. Athletic wise I wanted to make it the best in any place else. But I wanted... first of all I wanted teachers and

coaches to come here that... well respected and I wanted other schools to come here because we were a first class program. The wins and losses will take care of themselves, I understand that starting a new school and stuff like this. I wanted teams to say hey go out and play Century, there a first class program and they teach good fundamentals. Again I want to win, but that's more important to me that winning, even though I want to win today (baseball game).

AJ: Do you believe that vision has been realized?

RW: To some extent, I think it's changing a little bit with budget cuts and different things of that nature. I think different people coming in people leaving stuff like this, the vision maybe has changed a little bit. I know we're trying to go to school within a school with smaller communities, that's kind of where we're going. Will that happen, it looks like it, but it hasn't happened yet and I don't know how long that takes. You can't just say hey we're going to do it... I'd rather think things through than just say hey we're going do it next year and go with it.

TP: What advice would you give to the Liberty Planning Team? Based on your own experiences.

RW: I think it's a great opportunity, would I like to do it again, it was a lot of work but it was a lot of fun. I think if you've never been involved in opening a new school I think it's a great experience. I think that I would tell them that...do it. Because that's something most people in their careers don't get an opportunity to do. Here we've had the opportunity to do it twice in such a short period of time or Glencoe its like twenty some years old now so there are some teachers that opened Glencoe but few are still around. So those are some things... so I'd say to the new young teachers and some teachers that have got a few years left in their career, great opportunity and that way you can say hey I helped open Liberty High School or Century High School. When I come by this place I'll say I remember opening I remember the things we went through and stuff like that.

AR: How do get involved with that? Is it just a volunteer deal?

RW: Well what you do is like if you're on the planning team, you're sure to go to that school. So in other words, when I joined the planning team or accepted on the planning team them I knew I was coming to Century. At that time... now there are teachers that are going to apply to come to Century but not on the planning team. They may say I want to teach math over there or PE or health over there. Then they go through an application process. If you're on the planning team it assures you that you're going to spend the extra time without a lot of pay. You know because of extra hours, but you're going to be assured that you're going to be going to Liberty at that time.

TP: So when you were on the planning team for Century, you didn't know you were going to be the athletic director?

RW: Not at first. That's kind of where I wanted to go, but I wasn't named until later on. I wanted to be but it was finalized until later in the springtime.

AR: What are some of the most significant changes you've seen here at Century since the opening?

RW: Significant I think that... I don't know about changes just the vision change and stuff like that. I think with the computer tech labs and lab 2000 those are all big issues and stuff like this. I think we heard more about the Lab 2000 when it first opened up than it is now. I don't hear.. im not trying to take anything away from the Lab 2000 because it's a great program down there, I just don't hear as much said about hey make sure you go down and visit Lab 2000, so that be the biggest change I think, or the computer labs, everybody talks about how many computers we have, that type of thing. So the computer things probably the biggest changes.

TP: How would you describe the culture here at Century?

RW: Diverse. We have kids from many different backgrounds, I think that social economics too. I think kids are kids that whole things about culture the way our community is, where the kids are setup up like this, I think that will change some when we open Liberty. I think we're a real diverse culture here.

AR: What are some significant awards that teams or individuals in sports have achieved?

RW: Well we've won the league championship in softball and baseball now. We've had a state winner in wrestling, Ben Friberg. We've had individual awards, all league teams things of this nature. We've been in the football playoffs one time already, softball has been there in the state playoffs, baseball now for a couple of times. Wrestlers have done very well in competition I think that we've only had a state winner, but we've had a third and things like this, and for a young school that's pretty good. Sure we'd like to be higher in different things but speech, drama, and those types of things have been done very well. I think that's great I think kids should not only get involved in athletics but I think they should be involved in some type of activity. I think our drama department has won a state championship and our dance team has preformed well and our cheerleaders are doing better and all kinds of things. I've been real pleased, sure we'd like to win more but for being... there's schools that haven't been in the state playoffs for quite a few years and we've been there and want to go again.

TP: Considering we're pretty new, it's a good accomplishment

RW: Right, very much so, it's a pat on all our coaches back and how they run their programs and stuff.

TP: How do you view the communities perception of CHS?

RW: I think they really like it, but I don't think we're a community yet, because where Hillsboro and Glencoe have been established for a little longer and we're just starting a community. Prior to this year, last year was the first year a kid started as a freshman and went all the way through as Century kids. Prior to that they were Hilhi or Glencoe some kids coming here. So we're just our community and we're going to change that again, because some of our kids right now are going to Liberty so that's the biggest thing right now to establish a community. I don't think we're there yet. If Liberty wouldn't open here for another ten years, which this place would be too big, then we would establish more of a community. We're starting but we're not there yet.

TP: We just need more time.

RW: Right.

AR: We don't have any more questions, do you have anything you'd like to add?

RW: I'm real happy here and the planning team was great to work with and its great you guys are doing this.

TP: Good experience on the planning team?

RW: Good experience on the planning team, I wouldn't trade it for anything. Like I said I got to meet new people you work with everyday, well not everyday, just outside of the classroom type of thing. You seem them in a different role, and that was really fun.