

Corey Tafoya:

Hello, everyone. Welcome to Education Buzz, our District 50 podcast where we talk to people in and around the educational community and in Harvard. Today, we have a really special treat for all of you. I want to thank everyone that has subscribed to the podcast and have been listening. We didn't really know what this might become, but it's become something special and we have a special treat here at the start of June where we're going to talk to Dr. Richard Crosby. It is an honor to talk to someone like Dr. Crosby who has really seen a lot of Harvard District 50 through many different angles and Dr. Crosby, I'm going to go out on a limb in saying this is your first guest in a podcast. Am I right?

Richard Crosby:

You are so correct, Dr. Tafoya.

Corey Tafoya:

That's right. Well, thanks for joining us. This is really a treat for me.

Richard Crosby:

You're welcome.

Corey Tafoya:

Well good.

Richard Crosby:

Thank you so much.

Corey Tafoya:

We have prepared for this a little bit and I kind of lovingly teased Dr. Crosby that we've never had a guest quite so prepared and that's one of the things that I would tell people when they ask about you. They say, "He is very prepared with whatever he does. He's going to be thoughtful and really do things the right way," so thanks for all your preparations, but let's just jump right into it.

Corey Tafoya:

I've told a few people that we were going to do this and people got really excited just to hear of some of the things that have been your experiences through Harvard. Why don't you just by way of an introduction explain to everyone a little bit about your background and your family life, and introduce anyone that might be living under a rock and might not have known Dr. Crosby very well.

Richard Crosby:

Okay, well, very good, Dr. Tafoya. Thank you so much.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

Well, I was raised on a ... around Annawan, Illinois on a rural farm, family farm, the oldest of five sons and a fifth generation farm boy. While growing up, I assisted on our family farm, as well as had several jobs in the area working on farms, for a grain elevator for the Illinois Department of Conservation, and a state park across from our farm.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay. What's the name of the state park?

Richard Crosby:

Johnson Sauk Trail.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay, S-A-U-K?

Richard Crosby:

Well, it's S-A-U... yes, U-K. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Corey Tafoya:

Okay, yeah.

Richard Crosby:

It was named after the Sauk Indians.

Corey Tafoya:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), wow.

Richard Crosby:

Of course the Annawan High School mascot was the Annawan Braves.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh, okay.

Richard Crosby:

I attended Annawan High School. While in high school, I participated in football, basketball, track, chorus, drama, student council, yearbook, and FFA.

Corey Tafoya:

Was it a big graduating class or, I mean, it's a smaller school, right?

Richard Crosby:

Yes. It was a smaller school and I had a graduating class of 34.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay. Well, my mom's graduating class is about the same number and she always said that her school was so small she had to sing both soprano and alto.

Richard Crosby:

That was about the case with me also. Yeah, that was for sure.

Corey Tafoya:

The same story.

Richard Crosby:

It was great and had a great class. We got along well and had a lot of successes and a lot of people have gone on to be very successful.

Corey Tafoya:

When you were finishing up with high school, did you already think that you were going to go into education or were you going to be on the farm or how did education start into your world as a profession?

Richard Crosby:

I guess education ... I really didn't know what I was going to be doing you know?

Corey Tafoya:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richard Crosby:

It was just one of those things. About half of our class went to Western Illinois University, which I did, and half of the others who had gone to college went to Northern Illinois University.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay.

Richard Crosby:

Then, there were a few others who went to some other colleges, but for the most part, those were the two major colleges that people had gone to. Probably I was really impressed with a high school Social Studies teacher and coach. I guess through that process I just had gone to college, I majored in Agriculture, of which I almost have a major in Ag myself, but I then graduated though with a degree in Elementary Education.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh.

Richard Crosby:

With an Ag minor and Psych emphasis.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh, geez.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah, right. I mean, what a combin-

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

Anyway, I finally lit on that and then ... we lived six blocks from the school in which I taught in Macomb, and two blocks from campus, so graduate work was not a real strain to get to as far as having to-

Corey Tafoya:

You were right there.

Richard Crosby:

I was right there. I'd come home and change clothes or do whatever and then go off to class.

Corey Tafoya:

Right.

Richard Crosby:

In the evening, so that worked out really well.

Corey Tafoya:

During those times, was there still a farm that you were able to ... did you go back to the family farm or did you get to meet some local farmers that you helped in the summer? Did you keep connected to farming? Because I know even to this day you're still involved in things, so I'm sure there was a little part of you had that need to be on the farm a little bit.

Richard Crosby:

Right. For sure. Well, we ... I eventually then after a couple years I would marry Jackie, who had gone to Annawan High School also. Then from there, in college, we came home a number of weekends. I was the oldest of the five boys. The next oldest brother was a couple years behind me and he had gone to a trade school in Chicago and wasn't home very much and then he went into the service. Then, we had a five-year gap between the next boys, so I would go home and help on the weekends to help my folks on their farm, but then eventually I did a job around the Macomb area.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay, and that was your first teaching job?

Richard Crosby:

Yes, it was.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah?

Richard Crosby:

Yes it was. First teaching job. Yes.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh, what a thrill though. I can still-

Richard Crosby:

Yes, it was.

Corey Tafoya:

Remember the thrill of my first teaching job. Yeah, that's special.

Richard Crosby:

I mean, it was great. They had three different K-6 buildings in Macomb at that time. So yes, I taught at one that was closest to where we lived and yes, I have fond memories of Wilson School in Macomb.

Corey Tafoya:

Wilson School, and what grade was that?

Richard Crosby:

Well, I had fourth through sixth grade.

Corey Tafoya:

Fourth through sixth grade.

Richard Crosby:

We were a non-graded so to speak school.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh okay.

Richard Crosby:

And had moved in that direction.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

And I was able to have access as a teacher to a lot of the prospective teachers who were trying to get their clinical time in and then student teachers. We had lots of student teachers in Macomb.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh, right. In the university town, right. Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

Yes, for sure. Yes. That was a real great source to tap on what was really going on currently in education with them.

Corey Tafoya:

At that time, Dr. Crosby, was it ... Now, I mean, we have probably, I don't know, 80/20 or 90/10 at the lower grades, female to male teachers. Was it a little bit more balanced at that time or were you, as a male teacher on the lower grades, a little bit on the smaller side of the ratio?

Richard Crosby:

Well, I'd say I was the only male except for the principal at Wilson School, so there were probably 15 teachers there, plus all the itinerate people who came in. Yes, I was the only male at that time.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. At that point, did you do any coaching things because you had the athletic background, too? Did you get drug into some coaching or did you pretty much just take grad school and spend time with your new bride?

Richard Crosby:

Right, exactly. Well, we sure did that, but no. It was a K-5 building, or K-6, but they didn't start athletics until seventh grade at the junior high. No, I was pretty focused on going forward there with a master's degree since we were so close to the university and Jackie did the same.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh, that's smart. Where was she working at the time?

Richard Crosby:

Well, she was a grad assistant ... Well, she worked in the financial aid office there at the university for the first four years and then for grad school she worked as a teacher assistant.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh wow, so you guys were kind of immediately wrapped up in the educational world there together.

Richard Crosby:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), yes we were. Yes we were.

Corey Tafoya:

So then at some point you hear that there's a job in Harvard, or was it McHenry first?

Richard Crosby:

McHenry first.

Corey Tafoya:

That's right.

Richard Crosby:

In Macomb though, during the summers and Saturdays I was a carpenter, a sider, and a painter for a large condo development that was going up. So during those three years, during grad school, I had plenty of work if I wanted it building those condos. And then it was time there Jackie was ready to go out to get a full-time teaching job and being a Home Ec major at that time, most of the Home Ec jobs around a 30-40 mile radius were pretty much taken up professors wise and things like that. Anyway, we decided that we were going to move wherever, so I started interviewing and interviewed in McHenry to open up a new school in McHenry called Parkland School.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh okay.

Richard Crosby:

That was in 1971.

Corey Tafoya:

Right, 1971. And there it still sits kind of on 120 and right as you go into-

Richard Crosby:

Ringwood Road.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah, so that's the ... as it opened?

Richard Crosby:

Yes, right. Well you know on the first day that I came to work ... they started me like August 1st, and ... anyway how I got that job is I applied for it and I had been applying for a number of jobs that spring. So I drove from an area down around Macomb that I'd interviewed at up to Annawan and then Jackie stayed back with the two kids at home. So then my brother, who had just gotten out of the service at that time, he went along with me up to McHenry. So along the way my radiator starts to leak.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh no.

Richard Crosby:

So we kept limping along, we finally get to Rochelle. At Rochelle, at six o'clock in the morning, we go out to a John Deere dealership out in the country and we've got to put a new hose on the radiator. Well it wasn't a spring-loaded radiator hose, so every time you pressed on the gas, it would collapse.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh.

Richard Crosby:

The hose would suck up.

Corey Tafoya:

Right.

Richard Crosby:

Oh it was terrible. So I called ... so it's getting to be 7:30, I call McHenry and I say, "I know you're going to think I'm really something, but I am stalled here in Rochelle, Illinois." They said, "Well, don't worry about it. Get here when you can." So we limped around finally and got to Crystal Lake. In Crystal Lake, they flushed my radiator out.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay.

Richard Crosby:

I could only go like two miles and then I had to stop and let it cool off, and that was crazy. I finally got there about 3:30 in the afternoon.

Corey Tafoya:

Golly.

Richard Crosby:

And then they called and offered me the job. I was over there for two years and really enjoyed that, but I was looking to get into a principalship. You know they talk about the seven-year itch, well I was into a two to three year itch and wanted to move on. So anyway, I interviewed in Harvard then. I applied for a dual principalship to cover both Central and Jefferson.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh okay.

Richard Crosby:

When I came to Harvard ... when I interviewed for Harvard, the superintendent at the time ... well, this is how things have changed you know, he offers me a cigar.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay. Wow.

Richard Crosby:

I thought, "Well you know, I don't think I better do that."

Corey Tafoya:

Right.

Richard Crosby:

I passed on that.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh wow.

Richard Crosby:

But we interviewed and had a great interview. He was a farm boy himself. That was on a Friday, so they invited me back on a Monday to ... they offered me the job.

Corey Tafoya:

Sure.

Richard Crosby:

But over the weekend we had driven over to Harvard taking Route 14 and what a spectacular view that was at night coming back from Woodstock, around Woodstock, coming toward Harvard. As you come around the curve there, you look over to the right and you see Harvard with all the lights. That was really impressive.

Corey Tafoya:

You still remember that moment seeing it.

Richard Crosby:

Yes we do, and you know we knew that they had the five schools, a hospital, swimming pool, train station, and that the district encompassed 106 square miles. So all that was very impressive but the thing that really impressed us the most was that when I came for the interview on the Monday with the superintendent, he said, "Hey why don't you just go up to the high school. We're going to watch the high school band [inaudible 00:15:42] be sent off to Vienna Austria."

Corey Tafoya:

Oh my gosh.

Richard Crosby:

Oh yeah. I couldn't believe it. Here the band director is up on the stairs on the north side of the high school, and here the school buses are all lined up and the kids were all getting loaded on and they were going to Vienna. I was so impressed with the support of the Harvard community and the achievement by the high school band. This was a fantastic introduction to the Harvard school district.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah and that was what? 1973?

Richard Crosby:

That was 1973 mm-hmm (affirmative).

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. Vienna. When you think of Vienna, you think of music, so just to send the band there, you must have been like, "Wow, this is quite a place and I'm being welcomed."

Richard Crosby:

You know the amount of money ... exactly, and the fund raising that had to have taken place.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh, considerable, right?

Richard Crosby:

It was really great in how they supported that. So yeah.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow. So then how did that work? It was a split responsibility between both Central school and Jefferson. What were the grade configurations and how did you manage your time between those two roles?

Richard Crosby:

Well, you know it was always a funny thing because they'd call me at one place and, "Oh he's in between." It was always one of those things, but how I ... well, at Central we had Kindergarten through third grade.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay.

Richard Crosby:

But we also had Kindergarten through third grade at Washington. And at Jefferson we also had some third, fourth, and fifth, so there were a few third graders there at Jefferson too. So at Jefferson it was basically third, fourth and fifth at Jefferson.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh I see, okay.

Richard Crosby:

So that's how that was and then I went by the need primarily. I'd see where the issues were or I'd try to do every other day.

Corey Tafoya:

Sure.

Richard Crosby:

Or then I started doing a half day in each school. I'd most generally start out at Central and then I'd switch over to Jefferson, but depending on whichever school I was going to have a staff meeting or etc.

Corey Tafoya:

Right.

Richard Crosby:

Wherever the need was at that time.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow. During those years, did your own children come through the buildings? Were you their principal at any point?

Richard Crosby:

Yes, quite a bit for sure. Two months after we had purchased the building trades house #4 ... because the night that I was hired for the school district, item five say was the hiring of the principal of these two schools, and then item number seven or eight was the selling of the building trades house #4, so Jackie and I ... it was a sealed bid and there were six other bidders I guess as we found out later, but ... that's spending our time there for a month, month and a half trying to find a home. I didn't want to keep commuting from Wayewood. We wanted to live in the district. So as we went along, Michelle actually started kindergarten at the junior high two months after we moved to Harvard.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh really?

Richard Crosby:

So the kids ... although she had been enrolled at McHenry, you know she was already enrolled, but then we moved so she enrolled and started kindergarten in Harvard in the fall of the year.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh wow.

Richard Crosby:

And then Brian followed two years later.

Corey Tafoya:

So any memories of having your own kids in your schools? I've had some friends who have done that and they've said 90% of it is a blessing. There are some parts where it's more for the kids a little bit awkward, but when you do that in a town like Harvard, we all know each other pretty well. I mean, that's one of the blessings of being in a community like ours is you have that support and it feels like an extended family. So any memories of seeing your own kid on the playground, or around the corner, throwing snowballs.

Richard Crosby:

Oh yeah right, for sure. There was always a little downside to that. Being a little bit more of a helicopter dad so to speak, but for the most part I believe I attempted to keep my distance so to speak. It was interesting by the time I got to junior high, because I went through Central and Jefferson, I was there for

five years. Both kids had already been in school, they were already at Jefferson, and Brian being in third and Michelle in fifth, and then when we moved to the junior high, same thing. But then when it came time for Michelle to move to the high school, her friends were saying, "Hey, is your dad going to go to the high school with us too?"

Corey Tafoya:

Right.

Richard Crosby:

I think it was ... I think it was a good experience. The thing that was really nice was that being in the community I was able to get to all the kids activities in town at the time. I didn't have to leave work. Most of the events started at four o'clock. Although at the junior high I was also in charge of transportation, I was around the office area there and being able to participate and watch the kids participate in different activities. In looking back, I believe it worked out, although there was some consternation I'm sure from the kids at times. I realize that but for the most part I tried to stay pretty much out of their business so to speak.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah some friends of mine that have done that same thing said you can stay out of each other's ... you just kind of smile and give each other a little wave. Before I ... when I left the principalship it was a similar story. I had interviewed in Crystal Lake in 155 where Michelle works so it was kind of all in the works, and my daughter was an eighth grader at that point. She came home the day before I was going to get accepted by the school board in Crystal Lake, she came up to me after dinner and said, "Dad, are you ever going to like take a different job or maybe go to a different place you think?" It was the day after their eighth grade night or something like that and I said, "Well, why do you ask?" "Oh no, I'm just wondering."

Corey Tafoya:

So the next night we went to be introduced and I said, "Cameron you asked me to get a new job and I did." I didn't tell her of course it had been going on for two or three months, the process. She's like, "No, you don't have to, I know you love that job." So it was kind of our running joke that, "No, I did this for you. What are you talking about?"

Corey Tafoya:

But that is special to be able to contribute to something that you know your children are going to benefit from.

Richard Crosby:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), correct, yeah. I wholeheartedly agree with that.

Corey Tafoya:

So that puts you at the junior high. How many years were you at the junior high?

Richard Crosby:

I was at the junior high nine years.

Corey Tafoya:

Okay, that's longer than seven-year itch.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah exactly, exactly. A month or so after I had been selected for the junior high, I received a letter from the board, or through the superintendent, indicating that part of my duties ... I was going to be the Director of Transportation for the district. A position that I held for the next 21 years actually.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow.

Richard Crosby:

I had already qualified as a bus driver because we were having difficulties at Central and Jefferson, and Washington too, getting bus drivers at that time. At that time, all you had to do is get your physical. You could go down to the motor vehicle and go off for a bus driving test and get your license.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh wow.

Richard Crosby:

Anymore you have to go through quite a process with classes and things like that, but at that time there wasn't much to getting a bus driver's license. So anyway I did that at the junior high for nine years, yeah. For sure.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, geez. So at any point did you only have solitary responsibility for transportation or was it always transportation and the building, or when did you kind of come out of the building principal role?

Richard Crosby:

Well nine years later, but during that time, that nine years, right off the bat I was Director of Transportation also, and then I was also in charge of maintenance for the district. I was the overseer, the contact person for maintenance, and then I was also ... we started to satellite our meals out of the high school to Central and the junior high. The junior high had never had a cafeteria so to speak other than the infrared sandwiches. So they had the infrared sandwiches, mass feeding or something like it was. Anyway, we had that, and then also I became involved ... because we did not have a special ed department where we had someone who could type all the reports and do all the scheduling for all the staff ... all the special ed, psychologists, social workers, etc. I oversaw that for probably four years also during that time.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, how many hats can they put on one guy?

Richard Crosby:

Well, you know there is that. I guess I was hungry for it to be honest with you. You're young, you're wanting to show what you can do. You want as many experiences, so the experiences were there so I gladly took those experiences on.

Corey Tafoya:

Yep. When you think about those things, yeah there are these points where you're like, "Wow, that's a little bit more," but then you kind of get into it and see the benefit of these things to the people around you and they appreciate them. Yeah, you just take it on and you don't think really about it.

Richard Crosby:

Right, right.

Corey Tafoya:

So during those times was Jackie a teacher in the area, or where was her educational path?

Richard Crosby:

Well, she was pretty much ... she started out ... well in McHenry when we were over there she got a job in Spring Grove. So she was in Spring Grove for five or six years, and then she moved over to McHenry, took a job over at McHenry and was there for I think nine years ... oh 18 years actually, 18 years at McHenry.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, that's quite a career too.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah right. She was there and then she applied for Cary 26 as the Director of Curriculum, so she was in Cary for 16 years.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, that's quite a career.

Richard Crosby:

And then superintendent.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah, there. Wow. You guys must have had some incredible stories between all the things you were wrapped up in.

Richard Crosby:

Yes we did. Yeah, that's for sure.

Corey Tafoya:

And the busy lives you lead as an administrator, you're just kind of coming and going at a nonstop pace. That must have been a really fascinating life. I suppose Jackie really appreciated you being in Harvard

where the kids were because I'm sure you picked up some of the slack in some ways being closer. If one was sick, you know you were there to pick some up from the nurse's office and some of that.

Richard Crosby:

Right, right, but she ... when the kids were smaller she went to all the out of town events because I just didn't ... during the junior high years I went to the at home events, but the out of town events, except for Friday night and the weekends, I did not.

Corey Tafoya:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), right.

Richard Crosby:

Because of responsibilities, but she was able to do that and then she took care of the house.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

Oh yeah, she was a busy person. A lot of energy.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah, she just accomplishes so much. At what point were ... there must have been a transition out of the junior high principal and away from those dual roles as transportation and junior high. How did that next transition go?

Richard Crosby:

Well, the superintendent was retiring so I applied for the position. I was interviewed on a Saturday afternoon by the board and that same spring, in '78 ... or that was '87 I should say, '87. Anyway, I did keep the transportation as I went along. So anyway, I was really eager to see what I could do. I was encouraged to apply for the superintendency, which I did.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

So that's ... it was a great ... after 14 years, I then served an additional 12 years as superintendent at that time.

Corey Tafoya:

Right. From '87 for another 12 years.

Richard Crosby:

Right. At that time, I still had the transportation and the cafeteria also.

Corey Tafoya:

Right, right. Well that is quite a story from just coming in and saying, "I'm going to be this dual principal," and just taking things on, to superintendent. So what was the year that you stopped as superintendent? What year was that? Do you remember?

Richard Crosby:

Oh yes, that was in 1999. July 1999 and we were in negotiations with the support staff. It was something that ... you know you always want to get it done, right?

Corey Tafoya:

Yes.

Richard Crosby:

So anyway we were there until midnight because I was going off and it was going to be July 1st the next day. So anyway we negotiated right up to midnight. We actually probably went into the next day also finishing it up.

Corey Tafoya:

You worked for free for a day, huh?

Richard Crosby:

It was great. It was a great group there to negotiate with. I might add too that I was so fortunate that both the negotiations with the support staff and the teaching staff throughout the years, some were tough, but all through the negotiations, working with both unions, it was definitely as you look back at it a pleasure. Everyone wanted what was going to be best for the kids and everyone was reasonable in the amount that they were asking for, and while a lot of the negotiations went on into the next year, it was still productive and I never saw it as being protractive.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah, in the end it is a very rewarding experience because you usually come to something that feels fair and both sides really have been heard and it always takes a little longer than you want because there are other things you want to get to, but hardly anything is more important than having that just [inaudible 00:32:56]. So I guess through the decades ... that's maybe a good segue Dr. Crosby, as you kind of made that comparison. What were some of the things since you arrived in '71 ... you had a great view of Harvard District 50 in the 70's, and the 80's, and the 90's, and you still, here we are in 2020 and you still have an integral role as a member of our school board. What are some memories of some of those decades or some of the things that you saw come and go through the years, or some of your memories of maybe the best of times, some of the high points that happened over the things you saw.

Corey Tafoya:

You mentioned seeing the band sent off to Austria. There have got to be some other things that you thought, "Man that was just a really special thing to be a part of."

Richard Crosby:

I'd say probably in 1980 we saw the building of the track and a rock wall where the community got behind on the south side of the track there. They put up a monstrous rock wall. The community members, farmers, and construction workers with their backhoes went out into the country, and the farmers had volunteered to give away their big boulders and things that they had that were in the ground out in the country and pluck those out with the backhoes and put them on the trailers and then bring them into the track. They dumped them there and then they had to be stacked. That was a great undertaking.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah, wow.

Richard Crosby:

You know I think in '84 we added propane to our buses.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh.

Richard Crosby:

I know that wasn't really a big deal I guess, but yet it was financially because at that time we paid for all the equipment for converting all our buses ... well not converting but putting additional propellant on the buses with propane so that we could go 400 miles or more with a bus-

Corey Tafoya:

Holy cow.

Richard Crosby:

With both gas and propane. And the differential between the price of gasoline and propane was ... it was like, I don't know, it was like a 60 or 70 cent spread.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh wow.

Richard Crosby:

So you may have gotten a mile or two less with the propane per gallon, but for the most part we had everything paid for in the first year. So we had the propane probably for 9-10 years, but then the differential started getting so narrow and then the cost to replace the equipment ... it was coming time for that to be done, so we just went back to the gasoline. We never did go propane during my time because that was another \$12000 or so per bus, so we were not in the position at that time to be able to turn our buses over.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

You know they were like 10 year old buses. We were trying to get to a five-year schedule depreciation, but for the most part, that was tough. Some of the other ... the budget say for instance in '87.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh yeah.

Richard Crosby:

The budget in '87 was 12.5 million.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh my goodness, wow.

Richard Crosby:

And today we're at 40.

Corey Tafoya:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), right.

Richard Crosby:

I mean, just think. Things have-

Corey Tafoya:

37 years difference, right.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, wow.

Richard Crosby:

So how that has gone since '87. And then in '87 there we received word that Wal-Mart was coming to town.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow.

Richard Crosby:

So that had the pros and cons.

Corey Tafoya:

Sure.

Richard Crosby:

But they have been a good neighbor over the years.

Corey Tafoya:

Yes, I'd agree.

Richard Crosby:

In '88, the developer impact fees were passed in the county. It was at the county level. We still hadn't done it in the ... that was only in the [inaudible 00:37:36] out in the country. It wasn't for Harvard Proper, because that would have to be done by the city council, which was done a couple years later. The city council did and it was pretty much right along with what the county border had gone along with. Then at that time we both had impact fees both through the city and through the county also.

Corey Tafoya:

So that's a nice supplement through the district budget then for sure to get you through some lean times.

Richard Crosby:

Oh awesome man and then, as I'll get into it a little bit later here, you'll see how we were able to use that. In '88 also, we through the booster club replaced the old bleachers that had been at the high school since '56.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh wow.

Richard Crosby:

In the old gym ... in the new gym I should say, the south gym. The booster club got behind that and we were able to replace the bleachers. You know how bleachers get if you don't have a motor on them anymore, you had four or five people on the front of bleachers pushing and pulling those bleachers and they would get sprung. One side would be going faster than the other. It was a sight to see, both there and the junior high.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow.

Richard Crosby:

Soccer begin in '88.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh is that right?

Richard Crosby:

Yeah, for boys. We had a YSO that was really big here in Harvard and they were very instrumental in getting that going here in the schools, so in '88, and then the girls I think followed a couple years later, because we did have some girls playing on the boys team.

Corey Tafoya:

Was it right away a high school sanctioned sport or was it a club, or did it start right away as a high school sport with a state tournament and all?

Richard Crosby:

Yeah, it was a sport right away at that point with the school. And then in 1990 we had the passage of an education fund rate because we were going through some pretty hard times in '90.

Corey Tafoya:

'90, okay.

Richard Crosby:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), in '90. At that time also we had the VIVA program started, and that was Volunteers in the Visual Arts.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh.

Richard Crosby:

That was very successful during the 90's and Mr. Layman at the Harvard State Bank was very instrumental in donating prints of famous artists throughout the school. So you see all the artists-

Corey Tafoya:

Pictures on Central office.

Richard Crosby:

Yes they are, at the board office.

Corey Tafoya:

Those are from Mr. Layman?

Richard Crosby:

Yes they are, from Harvard State Bank. He did that for all the buildings, but we also had a lot of those there and we still have them at the board office. In 1993 another interesting time for us is that we were looking for space, as we were always looking for space to money in the district. In 1993, we were bulging, particularly at the elementary level, because at the high school in '73 when I came we had open campus. We had to go to open campus in 1973. Over the years, through '88, our enrollment dropped to 1450.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh really?

Richard Crosby:

Yes. So there in the late 80's, actually late 70's, when we came to town, a lot of people were moving out from the suburbs and that particular year that I became the principal at Jefferson in '73, we had an additional 34 fourth graders that they had not anticipated having in the district that particular year. That was in '73. So that was a major impact at that time as far as ... and then of course we were at 2100 students too. So by '88 we had dropped to 1450 in the district because people had then decided that commuting was not cutting it. They just couldn't afford to commute and move out here. But then the population by '93 was starting to pick up again. We had over \$200000 in impact fees that had already been collected by that time. And so we were going to have plans, we already had it on the drawing board and had already sent bids out actually, to build the three classrooms to the far western part of Jefferson.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh okay.

Richard Crosby:

Out to Hart Street.

Corey Tafoya:

Yep.

Richard Crosby:

So those three southern most classrooms were going to be built regardless of a referendum or not because they were going to be paid for because the impact fees-

Corey Tafoya:

The impact fees had done that.

Richard Crosby:

Right, could only be used for building. So at the same time, that spring, the stakeholders in Harvard passed a building referendum for construction to add those ... to go along with the three classrooms that were being paid for by the impact fees. So that, not only for Jefferson, but for the junior high and high school also.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh yeah, okay.

Richard Crosby:

That was in '93. Because we were bursting at the seams everywhere. We had tried a number of times. The community was telling us, "Build on the ground that you have. Do not be going out and buying more property to build." So that's why this referendum passed in the major part because we were building on-

Corey Tafoya:

On current land.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah, the current land that we owned, and that we were taking care of Jefferson, junior high and the high school.

Corey Tafoya:

Oh yeah.

Richard Crosby:

So that was 30 classrooms, two gymnasiums, and one learning center.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, geez.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah, that was a huge undertaking.

Corey Tafoya:

That's a big moment because then at that point you were overseeing grounds as well as the superintendent responsibilities, so you were wrapped up in that in every way possible.

Richard Crosby:

Right, right. That one there was ... as far as we had a person who oversaw, the coordinator of facilities, but then they came to me as the person to coordinate the different programs. So yes that was quite an experience with what I had there with building on to those three schools.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah another highlight I believe were the board briefs in 93-94. After each board meeting, minutes were typed and then distributed. Our courier then took them around town to different locations so people could see what was going on within the district.

Corey Tafoya:

See the progress, right. The fruits of the labor of the vote of that referendum for sure.

Richard Crosby:

Exactly, exactly. Then in '94, the spring of '94, we found out that Motorola was coming to town.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah.

Richard Crosby:

That was another big highlight.

Corey Tafoya:

Yes.

Richard Crosby:

All the anticipation of that and the visits that we took busloads over to Libertyville to see their plant over there. That was huge that we had won that fight so to speak to get that here in Harvard. By the time the Motorola was about ready to be opened up in '97, they said, "You know what, we're going to give that, off of Harvard Hills Road, we're going to give that 75 acres, or 70-some acres, to the city, of which the city is to give to the school district half of that, 35 acres."

Corey Tafoya:

Okay.

Richard Crosby:

So that's how we got that 35 acres and the land that we have up on Harvard Hills Road. Now the first year we did maintain that, mowing it to keep the weeds down and things like that, but after that, the FFA alumni then came in and they said, "We will take care of that piece of property," and then the funds that were made from Harvard Hills were then turned over to the Ag and FFA programs.

Corey Tafoya:

Ah yeah, I was going to ask when that had started because your Agricultural background would always kind of lead you back to find ways to help kids that were doing that and that's still a proud part of our district, that FFA ... it's still being taken care of by our alumni group.

Richard Crosby:

Yes it is. They're great to be able to maintain that for the schools and then the kids being able to ... over the years, they've been able to help with some of the planning of what would go into the crops and then all the money was to be spent. Definitely at that same time, in '94 or so I guess, in '97 when they were about ready to open it up, they had given us the ground and they also had given the school district \$100000 to be toward computers for computer labs. So then we were able to bring the computers into being. So that's how we were able to get computers in the schools.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow, so that was the initial round of the lab through that seed money from Motorola?

Richard Crosby:

Right, mm-hmm (affirmative), exactly, exactly. Yep.

Corey Tafoya:

So yeah, that was about the time where pretty much you had to provide kids some type of exposure that it felt like a part of the curriculum almost. That was something, it wasn't just an experience ... I

remember early on going to a computer lab and there would be three of us around a computer just kind of watching what it did to learn the function of it, but that was kind of the point where it felt like one of the obligations of the district that you should expose kids to that because certainly their future would be involving a computer in some way.

Richard Crosby:

Exactly, and at that time it was getting into the offices also, so then we were having a person from MCC come in, and then we had a couple teachers in the district then who were instrumental in getting this moving also.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah, wow. Just that whole move.

Richard Crosby:

Yeah, that was sad. Look at where we were at, every student in the school district has a laptop, or Chromebook, and staff also. Another interesting I think phenomena was Music on Wheels. We had to cut the art and the music back and so then Pat Fisher was very instrumental in getting Music on Wheels in 1994 where they had the Yamaha types of musical instruments on the bus outfitted. The Kunert brothers out of McHenry had bought the bus and furnished the bus with these instruments and then the music teachers then would be parked at each of the schools, and the kids would then come out to the music bus for music.

Corey Tafoya:

Wow.

Richard Crosby:

Music on Wheels.

Corey Tafoya:

Before we take a little break here, educators are so creative. That's one of the things that I probably ... just that idea right there shows just the willingness where there is some idea to help kids. They're boundless in their efforts to find creative ways to help kids. Why don't we take a little pause here and then we're going to come back with Dr. Crosby and finish up some other recollections of the district here on our Education Buzz podcast.