

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY:
WASHINGTON, DC ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

NARRATOR: Eric Sheptock

DATE: October 12, 2012

INTERVIEWER: StacieNicole Simmons

PLACE: Martin Luther King Jr. Library (Washington, DC)

Interview I: Background Journal

The initial Eric Sheptock interview for American University's *DC Oral History and Social Justice Project* was recorded on October 12, 2012 at the Martin Luther King Jr Library in Washington, DC. This interview is the first of a two part interview with Alison Kootstra, a fellow student interviewer for the DC Oral History and Social Justice Project. Alison Koostra and Elliot Blumberg, a photojournalism student from the Corcoran College of Art and Design, were present during this interview. Both interviews were videotaped and Alison Koostra and I alternated between recording responsibilities to capture both the audio and video for this project.

The purpose of these interviews is to document the experience of unhoused individuals in the Washington, DC in hopes of undergirding advocacy activities already in progress. The initial contact with Eric Sheptock was made by American University, Oral History professor, Dr. Dan Kerr earlier this year. Prior to our interview, Alison Koostra and I attended the September 17th, 2012 SHARC (Shelter, Housing and Real Change) meeting and met Eric Sheptock, where he currently serves as chairman. Background information can also be found on Eric Sheptock's blog: *Tick Tock Sheptock* at <http://streatstv.blogspot.com>

Eric Sheptock is both friendly and outspoken. It is apparent that he has, by his own admission, been known to fare well in front of the camera and behind the microphone. He jokes about having a “radio voice” and shares his stories with finesse and ease. Mr. Sheptock’s clarity of vision, as it pertains to the plight of unhoused individuals on issues concerning affordable housing and living wages, is well noted. Originally, our interview was scheduled for the Oct 11th, 2012, however the Huffington Post requested an interview with Mt Sheptock therefore we graciously rescheduled.

As a child, Mr. Sheptock shares that growing up in a very large family, coupled with the number of children residing in the Sheptock home, often made them news worthy. This encouraged his security in the spotlight and is clearly reflected in his demeanor. He also traveled with his mother, Joanne Sheptock, on speaking engagements, in which he was invited to sing along with his brothers and sister. Mr. Sheptock even sang a brief tune for Alison (one of many reasons to listen to Part II).

It should be noted that the room was darker than expected, with light bulbs missing in the ceiling. Despite the fact that the room was also very warm at the onset, all were comfortable and the atmosphere was inviting.

In conclusion, this interview captures a gentleness and compassion that must be heard rather than read to fully experience. It is my sincere encouragement that you listen to the full recording.