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## **Barbara D. Dickerman Memoir**

### **Dickerman, Barbara (Babs) D.**

Interview and memoir

Digital Audio File, 1 hour, 52 min., 69 pp.

UIS Alumni Sage Society

Dickerman, SSU Recruiter/Admissions staff member and former SSU student discusses her experiences at Sangamon State University, having graduated in 1986. Barbara and Cullom Davis reminisce about the early days of the university, discussing faculty members, the few buildings on the campus, and the recruitment of students (including Vietnam veterans). SSU was created with a commitment to community activism (including community organizing) working to create equal opportunity for all (first referred to as fair housing). She remembers how women especially flocked to SSU to obtain a degree and learn about new ideas.

Interview by Cullom Davis, 2008

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Narrator: Barbara D. Dickerman  
Date: July 29, 2008  
Place: Springfield, IL  
Interviewer: Cullom Davis

Q. Ok. Well this is an oral history interview on July 29, 2008, with Barbara Dickerman and the interviewer is Cullom Davis. Thank you for participating in this, Barbara, about your early experiences and memories about Sangamon State University.

A. Thank you. It is a pleasure for me to do this.

Q. Well, good! You were high on our list of people we wanted to interview. Why don't you just briefly give me whatever educational background you had prior – I mean, as a young woman and maybe later.

A. Yes. I went to JC as we called it in those days, junior college, SCI [Springfield College in Illinois] for one year. Then we had sort of a family split up and I was going to go on to U of I but it turned out we helped my brother become a doctor and the other one become a lawyer and I did not go on to college. But I could have, in retrospect.

Q. Yes, but that was probably fairly traditional.

A. It was. Exactly, so my brother Jim was up there at Ann Arbor and he made up this song and he said, "Mother and Babs pay all the bills and we have all the fun." But I was probably sending him fifteen dollars a week. Yes. That was in 1945.

Q. Ok.

A. Yes. So when I started doing admissions work at Sangamon State I was so, I think I had nineteen hours in one year. You try to get someone to take that much a semester or in a year in the 1970s and they'd say, "No, I can't take no more than twelve."

Q. But you got nineteen hours of credit at the JC.

A. So I had nineteen hours at JC, yes.

Q. So you were half way through a college degree.

A. Yes. That's what I eventually took to Sangamon State when I finally came back to school. I didn't really go "back to school." I just took some, finished my degree, though.

Q. Yes. We'll get to that.

A. Yes.

Q. Ok. So you had some education and you had been a good student I suspect.

A. Yes. I went to Ursuline [high School] first and then Springfield High School. I graduated from Springfield High but started at Ursuline.

Q. Un-huh. Were you, would you say that you were a reader? That you read a lot?

A. Yes, although I think I read more for information than for pleasure.

Q. Ok.

A. I like non-fiction better than pleasure reading. Yes.

Q. Ok, Ok. What do you remember –can you actually draw an early memory of even the thoughts about a new university here in town. Do you recall talk around town of this possibility?

A. Oh I do. It was twenty years that it was worked on. I remember at gatherings, and I do remember that the board of directors, whether it was the final one, was George Hoffman, Mary Jane Masters. This is probably all a matter of record, of course.

Q. Yes. But you knew them, of course.

A. Bob Roach, yes and Mary Jane and they were talking about acquiring land. George Hatmaker, the president of the Franklin Life, I don't know if he was on the first board or not but he was one of them as well. I'm pretty sure of that.

Q. Well, of course there were members of the board of the board of regents. I know Mary Jane was on that board.

A. Oh, was that part of it?

Q. But there also was a committee on higher education or something.

A. Yes.

Q. That may be the people you're talking about also.

A. That'd be George Hoffman, I think. Wasn't he?

Q. Yes, he was very active in promoting the University.

A. But then people thought it would never happen. They thought, "Well, it's been twenty years they've been talking about a new university, higher education in Springfield." I remember those remarks.

Q. Uh-huh, Ok.

A. It finally did. Lincoln Land came a very little bit ahead of Sangamon State, a couple of years, maybe 1968.

Q. Yes, right.

A. So that's what I do remember, living out here on Cotton Hill as I drove my children through those cornfields that are now the University campus for years. Billy Cox's house, he was the precinct committeeman.

Q. Oh, was he?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Democratic or Republican? Republican precinct?

A. Republican, I think, yes. Then the McClelland house has kind of disappeared I don't know, but that was the McClelland farm, too.

Q. Right.

A. Because we did a lot of activities, they went to Little Flower and we did activities at Lake Town, scouts and things.

Q. Ok, of course. Sure.

A. So this is my route.

Q. Yes.

A. The same road that goes by the McClelland house – Hazel Dell Road goes right through, right through the corn field. I remember seeing, I saw the whole beginning of the buildings.

Q. So it was kind of amazing really, it was going to be a virtual neighbor of yours.

A. Yes, that's true. I don't remember, I knew they went to the old Leland Hotel as the capitol campus but whether that was while this was being built I don't remember.

Q. No it wasn't. I mean, the notion of a downtown campus was virtually nonexistent when this University opened.

A. Oh.

Q. It was because of a space crunch that they did that.

A. I see.

Q. It turned out, I think it was also turning the adversity into an opportunity, the notion that we would have a presence downtown.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. But the decision had been made long ago that the University would be a suburban setting not an urban setting.

A. I see.

Q. They wanted to be close to interstates and so they chose... I don't know all the details there and it's not necessary for you and me to discuss them because we're only talking really about what you remember.

A. No, and they're a matter of record, of course.

Q. Do you remember visiting that embryonic campus?

A. The capitol campus?

Q. No, no. The campus out here.

A. No.

Q. Ok.

A. I did not.

Q. Of course, at some point you must have an event.

A. Yes, but I can't remember.

Q. You can't? Ok, that's fine.

A. Did Brookens open the same time? I didn't know if it had or not.

Q. No, it didn't open until 1976 actually, quite a bit after the University. It took six years to build.

A. So they would be the buildings, Building F and all those, because those were the first buildings over there.

Q. A, B, C, D, E, F. Yes, the temporary buildings.

A. Yes. I don't – not really. I don't think I went to any gatherings.

Q. Ok, ok.

A. I would say I met Bob Spencer the first night he arrived and you want to know why?

Q. Yes, of course.

A. League of Women Voters, we were gung-ho on fair housing. We had the nerve to produce a television, a half-hour television show about fair housing. Milton Friedland, the manager of WICS television, would help you with anything that was socially, that would improve the social fabric or the community. So he said, "Sure!" I can't think of the woman I think was his producer and, Mrs., well her last name was Wilson I think. So we worked to produce this show. We had parts of *A Raisin in the Sun*, we had actors from Southeast High School. We had Agnes Houston, who gave a speech on part of the show; she was president then of the NAACP.

Q. Right.

A. I don't know how we got it, but Robert Spencer it was his first night in Springfield as I remember, he came out to the television station and made a statement.

Q. Did he?

A. That the University would be backing equal – well he didn't, it was fair housing we didn't call it equal opportunity.

Q. Yes, right.

A. He made a maybe a five minute statement for our show.

Q. That must have been reassuring to you.

A. I don't know how we got in touch with him – probably Milton Friedland or someone did.

Q. Could be.

A. I don't know how we got him to do it. He had just arrived in Springfield.

Q. Isn't that wonderful?

A. I remember that.

Q. He came like in August of 1969.

A. Did he?

Q. But I do know that was a very important goal of his. He wanted fair housing and do what the University could by recruiting African-Americans with good educational backgrounds to live in some of the previously segregated neighborhoods of the city.

A. He followed through on that.

Q. Not that he – well, he spoke to realtors. I know he said he had conversations with realtors.

A. Oh, is that true? I didn't know.

Q. Which wasn't easy in the late 1960s.

A. No.

Q. Yes.

A. But he certainly committed himself that night. I don't know how we actually contacted him and got him to do it.

Q. So you personally met him.

A. Yes, we all, we had a committee that was producing this show, which we didn't even know how to produce. We had music in the background and everything. It was quite good. I think I can find, I think I'll be able to find the script.

Q. Interesting, interesting.

A. Yes.

Q. Did you have further social engagements with him and his wife, Edith?

A. Oh, yes. Partly, maybe because of the Franklin Life, because George Hatmaker would, I remember meeting him there at some Franklin Life – my husband has been with Franklin Life, was with them for about forty years.

Q. Yes.

A. George Hatmaker had been part of that original committee so that's partly where I maybe got to know him.

Q. So Hatmaker may have hosted a meal or some party.

A. A party at the executive room at Franklin Life.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. Then I certainly remember going to Edith and Bob's residence, but that might have been a little bit later where they lived on campus.

Q. The home that was built on West Lake Drive.

A. Yes. Uh-huh.

Q. Yes, that was a few years later.

A. I think so, too.

Q. Two or three I think.

A. Because they were always having some sort of gathering there as you well remember.

Q. Yes. Well, they briefly lived in the Billy Cox house.

A. Oh did they? I didn't know that.

Q. Well first they lived in the townhouse apartments for just a few months.

A. Oh, I didn't know.

Q. Then in the spring or summer of 1970 as the campus, such as it was, was developing, they moved into the Cox house.

A. Oh I didn't know that. Or maybe I – no, I don't remember that. I just remember...

Q. Well, it was temporary while they constructed a home for them.

A. And how Edith Spencer had her stamp on that home that they constructed.

Q. Yes. She really did.

A. No one would ever forget.

Q. Yes. Describe that – what, what, what do you think.

A. Well it's such a natural setting and she had that way. She was certainly not going to have it be formal in any way.

Q. No, right.

A. She would have, but she would always have flowers, which just made everyone feel completely at home when you walked in there. Then under subsequent presidents I think it became quite a bit more formal.

Q. Very formal, fancy draperies.

A. Yes, but not Edith Spencer.

Q. Would you describe the architectural design as kind of New England in some ways?

A. Yes.

Q. Does it resemble – what's it called? Cracker – not cracker box.

A. Simple, no not, not salt box either.

Q. Salt box.

A. But a simple New England house, which, of course, they would want.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Although Edith was from Chicago, wasn't she?

Q. Yes.

A. He was from Vermont.

Q. Yes.

A. That was it. They met at the University of Chicago.

Q. That's right.

A. I think. But the minute you walked in it was just so pleasant. She would have some kids around although I don't think they had grandchildren that early, no, no.

Q. Probably no grandchildren but their children were young adults.

A. Yes.

Q. Yes, some of them were with them still, some already had moved off on their own.

A. Yes. One was...

Q. David.

A. North Hampton, Massachusetts. David rehabbed a theater out there because now my family lives there, and we were visiting there at the time for kids in school.

Q. Oh.

A. So he took over a movie theater, and I think that was his whole field is – not architecture but more or less building.

Q. I see. That's right, that's right, of course.

A. So yes the Spencer's were just unique because they just made everyone feel at home.

Q. Yes.

A. In spite of the extremely...

Q. Some people thought that he was a little intellectually arrogant.

A. Well, Edith took that out of – well, [laughter] Edith balanced that off. If Bob Spencer wanted to act that way Edith would say it would be "old shoe."

Q. That's right, that's right.

A. We know that. But no, I always enjoyed him.

Q. He didn't, he didn't make you feel...

A. No, he didn't bother me as he certainly should have because he was so bright.

Q. Do you remember ever talking educational ideas with him or some of his ideas for the University?

A. Oh, I suppose so or partly his ideas for the whole social fabric in Springfield. That would be more what I would talk to him about or political angles than ideas for the University. I really think so.

Q. Ok. Can you remember any of those – the social fabric, some of his efforts?

A. Well, he would always say "I'm committed." Didn't he have a mandate that all professors had to do some sort of, be involved in some social movement in the community? Wasn't there a written mandate?

Q. Service, yes, yes. Service, responsibility.

A. You would have more of an idea about that.

Q. But also students were to do applied studies in the community. But you're right, faculty were just as obligated to be good citizens as they were to be scholars.

A. Yes.

Q. That was one of his hallmarks.

A. Yes. I almost thought it was a written mandate because they and everyone followed through including yourself on doing that.

Q. Some more than others. I think that over the years, it has softened some.

A. Has it?

Q. It was a strong belief of his that he wanted to avoid the typical hostility between town and gown in this community that exists in other big university communities.

A. He inaugurated the town and gown evenings where they would honor a town person and a university person.

Q. Oh! Now I didn't know about that.

A. Town and gown dinners.

Q. I don't know about that.

A. I remember one of the first ones was Francis Budinger. He was the first recipient of an award. He was the president then of the Franklin Life.

Q. Right.

A. But as – no. I guess he had just, when he retired as you well know, Francis Budinger, president of a huge corporation, came back and earned his one of two college degrees.

Q. College degrees. He was a student of mine, right.

A. That must have been why they awarded him the Town and Gown Award that year.

Q. So that was – was that a preexisting award program? Or something that Bob Spencer inaugurated?

A. Oh, I think Bob Spencer started it and maybe he was the only one that kept it up. Mary Jane Masters was involved in the planning of it. It'd be a big dinner every year. Maybe, maybe I'm imagining things.

Q. No, no. I'm sure you're not.

A. Some of the other recipients, no I just remember Francis Budinger. That's when he stood up and said, "I feel like an imposter." He was quite a personality.

Q. He was a great personality.

A. Yes, everyone loved him, I guess, here at the school. He wasn't the only one of that age that went back. But he was unusually...

Q. Well you mentioned Milton Friedland, he was also a student.

A. A student? I didn't know that.

Q. Yes, but he went, I think he already had an undergraduate degree but he wanted to get a master's degree. He did, and he played very low profile. He didn't lord it over people; he was just another student and a wonderful guy. But there were some others. You must have had some friends who decided they wanted to take classes.

A. They rushed. Everyone, everyone did. I could name a lot of them. Rosie Roach was the first one and finally went on to get her PhD at U of I.

Q. Rosie Roach. Right.

A. Mary Toberman.

Q. Yes.

A. Deanna Statler.

Q. Oh, of course.

A. Maralee Lindley. Now, Karen Hasara is younger than all of us that I'm naming, but she did the same thing as you well know.

Q. Yes.

A. Oh, there was a stampede to go back to school and I didn't because, well I'm not trying to act as if was so altruistic but we were in the midst of all this fair housing, etcetera, equal opportunity League movement They didn't desert it. But I felt like I couldn't with my kids. My kids were younger. I had my kids later than most of those people.

Q. Yes.

A. I did not go back to school when they all did. Katie Eck, was another one.

Q. Oh, of course. Sure.

A. All of those people were involved in the League of Women Voters.

Q. Now did you know all of them socially through the rest of the League.

A. Oh yes! Best buddies all the way through Junior League and League of Women Voters.

Q. Also League of Women Voters, too?

A. Yes. Those are really good friends of mine.

Q. I thought so.

A. But there were so many others and they all went on to leadership positions. Maralee Lindley headed the department on aging, County Clerk. But it wasn't so much the men I think, was it?

Q. No. Well, Milton Friedland and Francis Budinger.

A. Yes.

Q. There must have been – relatively speaking it was women. Now there was talk on campus that the interests of mature, married, child, mothers in town, in attending classes at the university, produced some tensions in some of the family households around town. Is there anything to that? Do you know?

A. Yes, it split up some marriages because I think the women passed the men up. I'm thinking of one, but I won't, I will not harm those people. It did, two marriages. Yes because the women got so involved and also became more aware of so many things and their husbands weren't and the marriages were split up, yes.

Q. So the women were growing intellectually and the men weren't.

A. Yes.

Q. There may have been other factors.

A. Because I don't think any men in their 50s went back with such a stampede as these as the women did. Do you, from your classes, what do you think about that?

Q. My impressions – no I think you're right. But that's my impressions.

A. Sis Dixon was another one.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. I don't think she went at the very beginning, though.

Q. No, no. Pretty quickly.

A. Those women I mentioned, boy they said, "The University is open, we're going." And Jim Krohe, was he a student?

Q. He was a student and a crony of mine.

A. A writer.

Q. Well, a student and a very close friend of mine.

A. Was he? Oh. Well, Mary Toberman – I shouldn't – they had this whole cult of doing things together and I felt a little bit out of it. But I did not go back to school because I was working on other things.

Q. Sure. But it must have been on their lips talking at a lot of parties and meetings.

A. Oh, yes! They started wearing Indian moccasins, long, leather skirts. Yes, I mean it was just, it changed.

Q. So it effected participation in the...?

A. Oh, it was, oh yes I was – we were all still best buddies but I did not go back to school until – now I’m jumping ahead – until Jerry Curl said, “Babs, you’re advising everyone else what to take in college, you better finish your degree.” That was when I was working in admissions.

Q. Yes, and I do want to get to that but let’s wait.

A. So I’ll back up.

Q. No, that’s ok, this is fascinating.

A. But it was just a riot at the time!

Q. Now some of the women must have been a little puzzled by the teaching styles they encountered on campus.

A. No, because they were radicals. Every one of those women that went back, you couldn’t shock them.

Q. Is that right?

A. No. That’s why they... they heard how great this was going to be out here. You couldn’t shock them with radical ideas because they would want more or even had more radical ideas. Which as you know the University was known for radical ideas, don’t you think at that time?

Q. Yes. How about that famous classroom that was kind of an amphitheater, The Pit it was called.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Did they, did they, any of them ever comment about it as an odd place to take classes?

A. Oh no, they loved the place! They used to change their whole lifestyle into the place and they took their kids with them, I think, sometimes to classes.

Q. Sometimes.

A. Yes, they did. Deanna Statler was, and that moved her into, starting to remember, We Care About Equal Opportunity.

Q. Oh, yes.

A. I was not involved in We Care. If there were dues, I might have paid dues. But that came out of her getting Sangamon State, taking classes and becoming more aware of these ideas.

Q. Sure.

A. But then she became an accountant.

Q. Yes, that's right.

A. Deanna Statler did, here.

Q. Yes.

A. But I think she took a lot of other classes.

Q. Surely, surely there was some negative response – some of the teachers, I mean, it can't have been a perfect place. I mean, don't you remember any sort of criticism?

A. Well there was, I remember the legislature, the conference in town. We all went, yes all that.

Q. Oh yes. I know that. Senator...

A. Those are the conservative people in Springfield. But anyone that went out here just, they were just so turned on, Cullom. I think they had been waiting to go back. None of these people because as I say, they were ready for new ideas if they didn't already have it in themselves.

Q. Right. Now do you remember Jo Saner taking classes, too?

A. I don't think Jo started that early because she had two or three degrees anyway. I think she did it more for recreation, don't you?

Q. I'm not sure, but I know she took a few classes.

A. Oh, a lot, yes. She took mostly writing with Jackie Jackson, but she didn't make that stampede. She was older, didn't need it. I think she more just had more social contact with faculty because that was Jo and Mary Jane Masters as well.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I'm not sure when but she, I think she earned another master's, Jo Saner did.

Q. Possibly.

A. Loved it and traveled, went to all the trips that Jackie Jackson went to each year.

Q. Yes, that's right.

A. But those, those are the people that stand out that they were just dying to get in to this university.

Q. Did they have any favorite professors? One of them was probably Jackie I guess, at least in Jo Saner's case. But what were the, who were the people that stood out in their minds? Do you recall?

A. Well, the Justice and the Social Order was what they were so interested in, so that would be Bob Sipe.

Q. Of course, he didn't come for a few years.

A. Didn't he? Oh I thought he was an original.

Q. Larry Golden was an original.

A. Yes. Larry would be another one, Molly Schlich's husband.

Q. Oh, oh!

A. Was, I can't...

Q. Wayne? No.

A. I don't remember.

Q. Isn't that awful? I know him well. He was an economist.

A. Craig Brown.

Q. Craig Brown was a political scientist.

A. Now Carolyn Oxtoby is another one, but I don't think she went back so soon. She earned a degree in economics.

Q. Oh, Ok.

A. A master's.

Q. Yes.

A. But I don't think she went back in the very beginning because she had young, she was younger than I am and had younger children.

Q. Now another person who was much older than you was Calista Herndon.

A. Oh, that's right.

Q. Did you know about her?

A. I'd forgotten that she was one of the gung-ho students, wasn't she?

Q. Yes.

A. Everyone loved her because she had that independent mind.

Q. She did indeed.

A. She would say anything that came to her.

Q. That's right.

A. Did she earn, I guess she earned a degree, I don't remember.

Q. She kept taking the same class. She was crazy about Chuck Strozier and his history classes. And we used to... and Chris Breiseth, a year before we were.

A. Oh, that's another favorite professor.

Q. They taught a course and so did I that involved reading the Sunday New York Times as well as books. Calista just liked to keep taking that class. She didn't really care about a degree, but she wanted to take it because it was a way to read and discuss the New York Times. Most of her neighbors didn't bother reading the New York Times, so this was her intellectual fix for the week.

A. Oh, I see. Now someone else came to mind and now I've forgotten.

Q. Oh, I'm sorry.

A. Chris Breiseth was another favorite professor as well.

Q. Yes.

A. Chuck Strozier. I thought of another person who came back to school. Who was it?

Q. It'll come maybe.

A. Yes, it'll come back. But yes, there were many, many more. Not Alice Kaige, she might have.

Q. She did take classes.

A. Yes, I think most of those first ones I mentioned did earn a degree, a master's. They had bachelor's.

Q. Well, some didn't even have a bachelor's degree, but they earned a bachelor's degree.

A. Yes.

Q. Sally Schaumbacker was another one.

A. Oh, I know the one that came to me was Bobbie Herndon.

Q. Of course!

A. You were her favorite professor because of oral history. She just took over, didn't she?

Q. She did. She was a great, accomplished person.

A. I know she would talk about her oral history things that she was doing way back with you.

Q. Oh she, she was a superb interviewer.

A. I'm sure she was.

Q. Produced some terrific stuff on coal mining of all subjects!

A. Oh, did she?

Q. Yes, she was remarkable.

A. We were all in Anti-Rust together at that time as well, so that's when I would hear the fallout from those who had gone back to school. The joke on me over the years was that I had to get permission from Boomer to march in the ERA parades. (laughter) Not that he was mean.

Q. No, of course not!

A. He made the remark after we got married, he said, "If you wanted to save the world why did you get married?" And that was his mind fix. (laughter)

Q. Well, that's understandable.

A. Yes. But I did have to say, "Boomer, there's an ERA parade next Saturday, so I have to be a part of it even if it is in Chicago." So maybe that's why I didn't go back to school.

Q. I remember that Judith Barringer said that she was so proud when her father, Floyd, marched in the ERA parade. It was a matter of pride to him. He supported her so much. I don't know how he felt about the ERA, but he was so proud of his daughter for taking a stand.

A. Oh, for the things she was doing.

Q. That he was. He said, "I suppose I have a reputation to protect in the community but by golly, my daughter is good and I'm going to stand with her."

A. He was an outstanding person.

Q. He was remarkable.

A. I'm sure Judy Barringer was another one that came back to school. I would sort of think so.

Q. She made, of course she, yes. She was already a librarian.

A. Was she?

Q. She had gotten a library degree, of course not here.

A. Marge Krebs. Does that ring a bell?

Q. No. Kreb?

A. Krebs. K-R-E-B-S. And that broke up her marriage because she got, she became – when you said librarian, she got a master's in library science.

Q. Oh, Ok. Well now these, these...

A. Is this good to have all these names? It is, isn't it?

Q. Of course it is, absolutely. These marital differences, I don't want to explore and you don't have to name names.

A. I shouldn't.

Q. But were any of them not so much one person growing and the other not growing but also some romantic attachments on campus?

A. Not the people who I've mentioned, but I think that was kind of true at the university. It was just such a yeasty mix of everything, so emotions came in to play, too.

Q. There were no rules against faculty dating. I mean, our students were adults.

A. That's right. They [the students] were older than the faculty, probably.

Q. There were no rules against faculty dating students. A lot of us felt that it was inappropriate while someone is your student but otherwise it was fair game.

A. That's because – that's why I always think there will never be another place like Sangamon State because it just fostered that complete involvement. As I said, Mary Toberman especially, not romantic, but as it is, Indian moccasins and this long leather skirt, I thought, "Oh Mary!" Katie Eck as well.

Q. Yes.

A. I'm going to nominate Mary for Humanitarian of the Year next year.

Q. That's a wonderful.

A. Is this going on the tape? Is that alright?

Q. Yes, of course! It's fine.

A. Because Mary, it's such a long list, I mean she's amazing.

Q. She's a terrific person.

A. Yes.

Q. So this was kind of like hippie?

A. Sure, that was the era.

Q. Costumes? Costuming?

A. They called her "Mother Mary," all these younger kids. And Krohe, Jim Krohe, was one of them, of her group.

Q. Mother Mary.

A. They called her “Mother Mary.” I was almost green with envy because she had gotten into this whole new milieu without me.

Q. That’s really, yes. I was going to ask you if there weren’t times that you were a little envious, though you had your own priorities.

A. Yes. Because I was – yes. And then it’s so funny that I wound up working here because I had not been as much a part of it as all those other friends. The other was, well Marie Havens and Ron Havens came, he was a professor.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. Marie joined the League. So that was another link to the University that we all had. But that was a little bit later I think. I don’t know if you...

Q. A few years late maybe, uh-huh.

A. Yes.

Q. Well, let’s talk about how you did end up working at the university.

A. Let’s see, well all right. There’s more about the downtown campus.

Q. Ok. Excuse me, I’m sorry, let’s do that.

A. How we reacted to Ron Sakolsky, Bob Sipe, Michael Ayers. I remember here we were, the League office was on 6<sup>th</sup> and Capitol. The downtown campus came to be. I thought that was the original campus, but I didn’t remember.

Q. Right.

A. I often laugh about Michael Ayers, first time I saw him he had an Indian blanket made into a serape and boots and now he’s the president of the State Chamber of Commerce! You’re talking about evolvment! (laughter)

Q. I tease him about that sort of thing.

A. Yes, and he probably... So they would come over to the League office because they could see what we were doing. We were working then, too, on Con Con, constitutional convention.

Q. Yes.

A. We painted our windows with the things that we were trying to promote. We had a good – I forget who was a good painter, we used water paint and painted all the windows.

Q. On the windows, sure.

A. So they would come over and hang out and give us ideas of things to do. I just thought of this when you called me the other day. Celia McQuown is another one.

Q. Celia?

A. John McQuown became a professor. Celia was his wife.

Q. Ok.

A. Celia earned two master's degrees here, and Celia was eccentric to the extreme.

Q. Really?

A. A brilliant woman, so was John McQuown. So I'm just thinking about Ron Sakolsky did look like the Lord Jesus Christ in those days.

Q. Oh boy, yes.

A. Because he had this long beard, he did. So we would laugh because Celia once said she saw Jesus Christ coming down 6<sup>th</sup> street. It never occurred to me until the other day that it was Ron Sakolsky.

Q. Ron Sakolsky.

A. Well, we said she was having hallucinations. We had so much fun, Cullom. (laughter)

Q. Now you say Celia was a little odd.

A. Yes. So brilliant she couldn't even exist.

Q. Ok.

A. They had nothing in their house but books.

Q. Ok.

A. Barely the necessities and it was like a library. You had to walk down the aisles of books.

Q. Really?

A. She was in the choir at First Presbyterian Church. She worked with us for years. She lives in California now, and she calls me every now and then.

Q. They lived here because John was on the faculty at Lincoln Land?

A. No. John was, he didn't come on the faculty here as mathematics.

Q. At Lincoln Land, no? He didn't?

A. What?

Q. He wasn't on the faculty at Lincoln Land College?

A. I don't know brought him here. He became associated with Roy Wurhle there in that endeavor.

Q. Yes. But John, they were both so brilliant they didn't know what to do with themselves, I do believe, and their children were the same. I have to think that maybe it was Ron Sakolsky that she saw.

Q. Did you get to know Ron at all?

A. Oh, yes. Ron and Bob Sipe. Bob Sipe especially, I did.

Q. Why don't you talk about them, too?

A. Then Brent DeLand. That was the first course I took, Cullom. Is this getting too off course?

Q. Not a bit. It's right on course.

A. I saw in the newspaper, brochure or something that they had a course in community organizing. That's what I was trying to do and had no idea how to do it.

Q. Sure.

A. We, I don't mean "I," we. So I thought, "I'll take that course." So that put me together with Brent DeLand and Ron Huelster. I don't know if he was an adjunct or associate professor or assistant, or was he, do you remember? H-U-E-L-S-T-E-R

Q. I do, I do remember him.

A. They taught the class together.

Q. Oh they did?

A. Oh, and I learned, though kind of in the manner of Saul Alinsky.

Q. Saul, exactly. Sure.

A. So they had us going around town, we formed out of that class, Springfield Area Neighborhood Organization. SANO. S-A-N-O.

Q. Yes.

A. I remember a woman on Cook Street was having problems with the city, so we helped her get past that kind of thing. There was a woman out on the railroad tracks on South 4<sup>th</sup> Street that had two or three, Mrs. Gatchenburger. I think she worked at the University.

Q. Could be.

A. She needed trees taken down. I mean trees this big.

Q. Good heavens.

A. Brent DeLand had all of us out there working on that, but that was improving the lives of people.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. We became very good friends. Brent was an outstanding person, I thought.

Q. Interesting guy, very interesting.

A. Yes. He really, he would really relate to his students. Everyone, all his students did love him.

Q. Now didn't Mike Townsend also teach that class or not? Did you ever work with him?

A. I never had but I knew Mike. I knew Mike Townsend.

Q. Sure.

A. He had a class similar where he was certainly working with the housing authority mostly, I think.

Q. Yes, I guess you're right.

A. But he was true to that mandate to take the university out to the community. So I learned a lot about community organizing from Brent. And then we continued, we stayed friends all to this day. I went to his wedding; he married Carol.

Q. Right.

A. But he was just passionate about his ideas and helping people. Yet sometimes he would get off on the wrong foot with people because he was pretty hard to live with.

Q. Right. Now how about Ron? I mean, Ron was a character.

A. Ron Huelster?

Q. No, Ron Sakolsky.

A. Ron Sakolsky. Oh yes. I remember his street theater that he was doing that when the League office was down there.

Q. Right.

A. Yes, he never quit demonstrating. But I think his students, I don't know. His students, did they like him?

Q. I think students, well some, of course, avoided him because they knew what he was like.

A. Yes.

Q. But the students who took his classes and stayed in them tended to really like him because he was he was a committed individual.

A. Oh, and that was Justice in the Social Order and they taught it. Bob Sipe. I became really good friends with Bob Sipe.

Q. Not so much Ron though.

A. No, but I always knew him and would visit with him. Yes, the capitol campus downtown was going when he was doing street theater. I forget what his – well, it would be various issues.

Q. Right.

A. Not only one issue.

Q. The banks, the downtown banks. He took them on. And they probably deserved it because of red lining and so forth.

A. Red lining, yes. I think you could still do a study and find red lining to this day.

Q. Probably.

A. Then they started the co-op, food co-op.

Q. Oh, Ok.

A. Ron and probably Bob Sipe out on South Grand.

Q. Sure but also the Stone's. Do you remember Ralph and Jean Stone? He taught history. They were active, and the Johnston's.

A. Oh, Mary Johnston?

Q. Yes.

A. Yes, Ok.

Q. Richard? Maybe you don't remember them.

A. I do.

Q. They had some involvement in the co-op.

A. Yes, well that was on 11<sup>th</sup> and South Grand, food co-op.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. But I would still if I would see Ron Sakolsky, I dearly loved all those guys. So that was my fringe association with the university.

Q. So your first classes were in Justice and the Social Order and you got into those classes because of your interest in community organizing.

A. Yes, but I only took that one class.

Q. Ok.

A. That was early on in the 1970s, and then I didn't come back to school until I came to work at the University in 1983.

Q. Oh, Ok. So that was just because the subject interested you as yourself. You were a community organizer and you thought you could learn.

A. By the time you finished with Brent you would know all those people because he brought Bob Sipe and all of them to the demonstrations, which were very effective, I think they were very much. They saved a house for someone also on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. It was going to be torn down by the city and they helped to save that and it's still standing today.

Q. Oh I agree. They were very effective.

A. Those are the reasons that something like the legislature was against the university, right? Bill Horsley comes to mind.

Q. Oh sure, of course.

A. We know how that story, that's an old story. So everyone had either their reasons for hating the university and wishing it had never come or loving it. I think I was on the side of loving it.

Q. Speaking personally of your own milieu, as you put it, did you ever feel like some of your long-standing friends kind of drifted apart because of what interested you at the university? Drifted from you because they just didn't approve of the antics of some of those professors?

A. Oh, no. By that time, well – no, I don't think so.

Q. Ok, Ok.

A. Because you pick your friends that you agree with sort of.

Q. Yes.

A. Although tomorrow I will meet with the people I went to St. Joe's Grade School with.

Q. Oh really?

A. We meet once a month. I did drift away from people like that that had been long standing friends because they weren't interested in the political angle as we were. The group I first mentioned were – we thought we were going move the world. Ethel Gingold, I don't know if she did come back to school. Yes she did.

Q. I'm not sure, but you would know.

A. Yes she did.

Q. Ok, Ok.

A. Because Ethel was my mentor all through everything.

Q. Well, I think of two other women I knew in the League of Women Voters, I'm not sure they got involved at the University, were Gloria Craven.

A. Yes, Gloria.

Q. And Lynn Alderfer.

A. Alderfer. But they didn't come back to school, yes, because Gloria already had her degree.

Q. They really didn't take classes.

A. Gloria might have. Gloria was a part of our group, yes. Lynn Alderfer. Bill Alderfer [the Illinois State Historian, Lynn's husband].

Q. Right.

A. But she really, well they were probably friends of faculty because that was where they, he was the state historian.

Q. Yes, right. I knew them pretty well, both of them.

A. Yes.

Q. But I just remember them being active also in the state League of Women Voters.

A. In the League, yes.

Q. Along with you.

A. Yes well Lynn got into the League the minute she came to town, and we all became fast friends. She's such a brilliant woman. We talked about if we had saved – then she was a state chairperson of the League well, this isn't the university.

Q. Right. That's Ok.

A. If we had saved the things she had written, they would make a book – if we had them.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. If we had them. We didn't.

Q. That's too bad.

A. That's another...

Q. I think at this point we'll pause.

A. Ok.

Q. Then we can get to your job and then classes the next time we meet because we covered a lot of names here. Unless there's anyone I should ask about that we touched on fairly quickly. That Community and the Social Order class, or Community Organizing was down – was at the capitol campus?

A. No, no. It was here.

Q. It was here? Ok.

A. Was there a woman, she was a... well, she was either staff or faculty, I can't think...Grace? No.

Q. I don't know.

A. She was working with Brent and Ron Huelster.

Q. Ok. But I know why you brought up the capitol campus. It was across the street from the League of Women Voters.

A. Yes.

Q. You were in that little collection of storefronts on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

A. Yes. We were on the very corner. Did you teach at the capitol campus?

Q. Oh yes. I loved it. It was a wonderful atmosphere.

A. Oh yes, I bet. Well I just remember the comings and goings and how those people would come over to the League office because we had all of our slogans on the windows so they knew what we were talking about.

Q. Right. A fair number of my colleagues, including me from time to time, also went to Norb Andy's a fair amount.

A. Oh I bet. Cullom, I was, you moved right into what we were doing when you did the school desegregation.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Marilyn Davis was another League person.

Q. Yes.

A. Yes, she joined the League.

Q. Yes she did, right.

A. So did Judy Everson when she came to town for a short period.

Q. So there were, you found some reinforcements from people you met who were in some way associated with the University.

A. Oh very much so. Yes, very much so. I mean, over the years we reacted even more because we would call on certain professors to work with us on surveys and that sort of thing.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. It was always, I don't think we ever had to spend any money on it because they would send a student to do things with us.

Q. Yes.

A. I don't think we ever had true interns at the League from the university. I don't think we did.

Q. But you had some enthusiastic students who were happy to help.

A. Yes, involvement. The professors would send to work with us.

Q. So for you, the arrival of the university was an unmixed blessing.

A. Oh yes. Even if I weren't taking classes, I felt involved in it.

Q. Right.

A. I really did. Oh the other thing, speaking of – we had a world affairs organization. It's a forerunner of (WACCI) World Affairs Council of Central Illinois. World Affairs Council organized by Jo Saner. Dorothea Andreason was another member.

Q. Yes.

A. A woman named Pierce. Blanche Murphy. You remember?

Q. No I don't.

A. These people were a good fifteen to twenty years older than I. But they got me involved, involved in that and we were assembling a library in the Unitarian Church which met out on Elliot Avenue, not on Walnut.

Q. Ok.

A. It was before – they were in an old house. So these women wanted to assemble a library that had to do with world affairs and as soon and as the university opened, we gave what we had and I forget what, to the University library.

Q. Oh really?

A. So that was...

Q. Some books?

A. So that was a sigh of relief, a collection of books, yes. I don't mean, I was a fringe person but they invited me into it. We would have programs...

Q. Sure.

A. Then it morphed into the World Affairs Center of today.

Q. Sure, interesting. I don't remember that.

A. So the sigh of relief I think, when the University came, that they would take over this. But those women were intrepid.

Q. Right.

A. You know Jo Saner.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. If you knew Blanche Murphy.

Q. I didn't.

A. But I'm sure they were involved in the University as well and Dorothea Andreason.

Q. I recognize the name.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Well we've covered a lot of ground. Let's terminate it now and we'll schedule our second appointment. I know you have your travels but Ok now don't...

A. What?

Q. We'll schedule – I know you're traveling soon.

A. Just for a week.

[End of interview 1]

Interview 2

Narrator: Barbara D. Dickerman

Interviewer: Cullom Davis

Date: August 19, 2008

A. I'm close enough to that mike?

Q. I think so.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. This is an oral history interview with Barbra Dickerman on August 19, 2008. The interviewer is Cullom Davis. Welcome back.

A. Thank you very much, nice to be here.

Q. It occurred to me, I don't believe we talked about Homer Butler and Andy or Andrea. Do you remember when you first met them or under what circumstances?

A. Yes. I think they had just come to town and there was some sort of a gathering. Then Andy Butler joined the League of Women Voters, so that's how I got to know them better. But there was some party when they were new in Springfield and I believe it was at the Breiseth's house. Chris Breiseth was a professor here as you know.

Q. Yes.

A. I think that they entertained them, I do believe.

Q. Ok. Of course the Butlers had been here a year or two early then when Chris came, but that doesn't mean that the Breiseths did not entertain them.

A. Oh then I'm wrong.

Q. No, no, no! I'm sure you're right, it's just that, Homer came here in 1970.

A. Before Chris and Jane Breiseth did?

Q. Yes, at least a year. I think maybe just a year. But still, I know Jane and Chris were early and entertaining.

A. Andy did join the League and worked with us on several things. She got involved in a number of other things, too. She was a super active person.

Q. Did you get to know either of them particularly well?

A. Yes, really good friends. I think over the years, I don't remember actually who it is, we just hit it off I guess. I remember we'd have their son at our house when little Paul.

Q. Paul.

A. Was five years old I think.

Q. Yes.

A. Just various things; I felt like I've always known them for some reason because they're easy to know. Well we'll jump ahead but I did get a job at SSU in 1983. And as so often happens, that was a direct result of volunteer work, community work, that you knew a lot of people. And Homer hired me because he was my boss.

Q. Well let's talk about that. So it was through the work you had already done as a volunteer that you were approached to join the admissions office?

A. No, I don't believe, no. I knew so many people at the university because as we said before the university reached out to the community, you got to know each other, you worked together. So there was an ad in the paper.

Q. Ok so they did that.

A. My last son, Chris, had gone to college in 1983 and I knew I'd be sobbing my eyes out every time I looked out the window. So I said, "I'm going to look for something, a real job." And that was when they advertised for admissions counselors, recruiters. They wanted four.

One, Terri Jackson, was already working there. And Brenda Schwartz was working at CONVOCOM, the early public television station at the University. Then I don't know how many others were in the play to be hired but eventually it was Polly Myers, who I think that was her first job at the University and myself. The other two had been working there but started being admission recruiters; they called us more than counselors. We became recruiters and counselors.

Q. The other two being Terri and Brenda?

A. Brenda Schwartz, does that ring a bell with you?

Q. Yes, right, yes.

A. She was at CONVOCOM.

Q. So all of you were admissions recruiters including Polly. I didn't realize that.

A. Yes. Polly quickly moved to the President's Office.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Knowing Polly with her charm, her smarts, everything else before we knew it – but she worked for about maybe a year because we traveled together, visiting colleges and recruiting. But it wasn't long before she was in the President's Office working with Dr. Durward Long; that was after Lacy. Yes, Dr. Lacy was president when I was hired. And then she worked for all the subsequent presidents. But that was just great fun.

Q. Of course.

A. Someone said, "If Lacy wants you, you'll be hired." I believe that Homer was making the decisions.

Q. Yes, who knows? So he was happy with you.

A. So probably Polly and I were hired as older people to recruit older people.

Q. I wonder. Was that an explicit criterion?

A. They didn't say. No because they gave us – each of the four of us had a section of the state. Southern, central, and northern. I guess, well they spread it out into four areas, but we

traveled across the state to college fairs and calling on all the college's recruiting either for the junior level or the master's level.

Q. Yes.

A. But I think in their minds – maybe they didn't want to make, they didn't say it, but they thought we would appeal to older students, which there were so many.

Q. There were. Even on the community college campuses there were older students?

A. You would find them across the state, yes.

Q. But probably most of the students were conventional, twenty-year-olds maybe?

A. They were conventional but we would travel, yes.

Q. So you traveled how much of your work time, maybe one third?

A. Whenever, yes it was quite a bit because whenever a college fair or an event would come up, some sort of recruiting thing, we would be sent out on the road.

Q. If it was in your region.

A. Yes. Terri had Chicago, I had central, and Brenda – and I think by that time Polly had moved on to the President's Office. Although we traveled a couple of times in the Chicago area together and Brenda had the Southern part.

Q. I see. And did you tend to go in pairs or were you on your own?

A. No, pretty much on our own. I don't think it had been done before because they had to order a table cloth and we had, and I've got the poster, I should turn that in it's probably something, a laminated big poster telling us about our upper division, that sort of thing. It was just wild.

Q. Typically these were either college fairs put on by local high schools or an actual community college campus?

A. The colleges. Or either we would make an appointment to go to the college and sit in the cafeteria and talk to students.

Q. Sure.

A. But when it was a group college fair type thing all the other, University of Illinois was always there and so many of the other...

Q. Who typically sponsored a college fair? The school system?

A. No, we didn't go to high schools.

Q. I know.

A. It was held all at either community colleges or four year colleges where we were recruiting the master's level.

Q. Yes right, Ok. Did you find it difficult to have people understand that there was a college called Sangamon State?

A. Oh, well it was unusual because they started at the upper division.

Q. Right.

A. No it seemed to have the most – the only people that seemed to think we weren't very all that good were people from the University of Illinois. They would say, "You don't have that program do you?" I would say, "Yes we do! We have this, that, and the other and graduate level." They could hardly believe it. So here now, they're here and everyone's happy with it, too. They were just kind of skeptical about Sangamon State I thought.

Q. What was your toughest selling point do you think - the small size of the school or the fact that it didn't have many athletic teams or – I'm just fishing here for possibilities.

A. Well it's hard – I just felt so enthusiastic about this school that I didn't think there was anything bad about it, really.

Q. Ok.

A. We had a little half sheet of paper, a half sheet form, we made out for every contact we made and that came back to Sue in the admissions office. Sue was there for years. She diligently followed up every...

Q. With a letter or something?

A. There was a letter with information.

Q. Not Sue Williamson.

A. That was it.

Q. Was it?

A. Sue Williamson. I will ramble, but another person that I want to mention in the admissions office was Loretta Chambers.

Q. That's all right.

A. I don't know why she didn't stay there. She was the most brilliant woman I had met in a long time. She was on computers a long time, well that was twenty-five years ago, she was just fluent in computers.

Q. Right.

A. She was the gatekeeper for the graduate level.

Q. Ok.

A. She had to approve that.

Q. She had to approve the credentials.

A. The credentials. She knew all the things in foreign schools. She said, "This does not mean they have a bachelor's degree from this country." It usually is a two year degree. She had all of that information in her head.

Q. How did she develop that expertise – on the job?

A. She did that for a long time – on the job I think. I was often going to call her but then she quit after she had been there a good fifteen or twenty years to run a shrimp shop on 18<sup>th</sup> and Cook. Take-out shrimp and it didn't last too long, but she's unforgettable.

She made the mistake on admissions day or registration day, she put me on some sort of computer for about fifteen minutes – she didn't know – bad. She had me do something else, but she was just a personality.

Q. Give me some examples of what made her so special.

A. Because you knew she was smart, on the ball. She would not – she didn't just sit around and gossip or like that. She just did her job, she advised everyone. Diane Long was another one of course. Diane would probably have been her boss really.

Q. Yes.

A. But Loretta sat there at her computer and she'd get students in there and tell them what for, and you just had to admire her. I used to go, my son was at the Stratton Building the last few years and I would see her license plate.

Q. Oh really?

A. Because it was "LORET." It was a disabled and I kept thinking, "I'm going to call her." I haven't, I didn't do it and now I don't see that anymore. So that was a personality, it was a personality that made this place.

Q. She was an interesting character.

A. Yes.

Q. Did she have a sense of humor?

A. Oh yes, oh yes. Biting, sarcastic.

Q. Oh, Ok. There was an edge to her.

A. Oh, yes. I remember her sense of humor, but she was so smart. And then Jerry Curl.

Q. Yes.

A. I always said I had two bosses, Jerry Curl and then Jerry Gruebel out at WSEC. They were really the greatest people you could ever work for. I worked for eight years before I got married so I had other bosses.

Q. Yes.

A. Jerry Curl never asked you to do anything that he would not do.

Q. Right.

A. I think he used his psychology background to keep things moving in that office and it worked.

Q. I'm trying to think, was he the director?

A. Yes. He was in Human Development Counseling as a professor.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But he sought that diligently to become the director of admissions and I often kind of wondered why he wanted that instead of the other because he had helped I think, so many

people in this community with the Human Development Counseling degree. He also was their mentor.

Q. Yes, exactly.

A. As well as Bob Crowley, he was the other one wasn't he?

Q. Right.

A. But Jerry Curl wanted that admissions job. His goal was over four thousand students and we made it; he made it. I left there in 1989.

Q. After six years?

A. I went there in 1983, I left in 1989 or 1990 and Jerry – we were almost up to almost 4500, which it hasn't been that much higher than that, I don't know.

Q. Right.

A. But if Jerry Curl had a goal, he would reach it and make everyone else reach it with him.

Q. So he – was he really popular in the department?

A. Yes and no. I really liked him. But no, some people didn't.

Q. What do you suppose there was about him that made it annoying?

A. Well, we said he didn't like you if you were overweight. Jerry was a stickler for his diet, his exercise, and so some said, "He just doesn't like fat people." So he was a little bit – probably because he pushed everyone. You just could not slack off in that department, no one did. But he didn't ask you to do anything that he wouldn't do. He'd run over to Decatur to Richland or wherever if something was needed. I just really liked him. I get a little teary because he lost his daughter first and then he died.

Q. Yes, sad.

A. But before I ever knew him, I knew quite a few women who'd gone through that HDC program who thought the world of him. He was their mentor.

Q. Yes, right.

A. The other was Anna May.

Q. Well she wasn't an admissions person was she? She was a professor in management.

A. No, no. Oh, I thought she was HDC. But I can't think of her name so, but she's another.

Q. Anna May Smith. I think she taught management. You were close to her?

A. Just friends. No, not close. But I know a lot of my friends that was their mentor.

Q. Yes, Ok. Well now I remember a few names, maybe from the earlier days. Don Best was it or Bess? Raymond Bess?

A. In admissions?

Q. Yes. That name doesn't ring a bell?

A. Jerry was not the director; they were looking for a director. When I went there they didn't have one. There was someone substituting, I'm pretty sure.

Q. Ok. Well I don't know. I mean, Ray Bess was director of admissions early, but he may have well have left long before you came. How about Bob Marsh? He was the registrar early. But I don't know how long.

A. I think he might have been just leaving when I went to go work there, Cullom.

Q. I think maybe Diane Long succeeded him as registrar.

A. Maybe Diane sort of was also acting director when they were looking for someone.

Q. Could be.

A. Because clearly she was the head of – she was so good.

Q. She was a wonderful person. Did you then interact with her on a student's – not graduate students – but on their credentials as to what would be counted or what they should take in order to finish.

A. Yes well, we would have to check with Diane on various things.

Q. Yes.

A. But also she also decided who would be graduating at the graduation. She decided who would graduate.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. The other thing when we were hired for this and this was such fun! We went to Pere Marquette with Dr. Lacy, Homer Butler. Cullom I don't know if you were part of that. They wanted us to be familiar with the university. Did you go?

Q. I don't remember.

A. On a retreat? They really gave us three or four days of training, intensive training. So I don't think they've had people in that capacity before. I don't know.

Q. Well, there had been, sure. Marilyn Brookens.

A. Oh.

Q. Do you remember that name? Her father was Norris Brookens for whom this library is named. and she was one of the very early admissions counselors. I remember her. Now I don't know that she had the training.

A. Maybe she was trained when she came.

Q. A little bit maybe. What you're saying is that Lacy and Homer and Diane made sure that you were.

A. Rosie Roach.

Q. Rosie Roach.

A. Was one who went on that training as a financial aid person and several professors and I sort of in my mind think that you might have been one of them.

Q. I may have been. I just don't remember. I remember another – I'm sorry. Here I am – but I'm just asking these names in case you ever ran across them. Another early admissions counselor I'm pretty sure was Jim Peterson. No?

A. No. Mitch Parker or Mary Beth Parker.

Q. Mary Beth Parker.

A. Was just leaving when I came in, some sort of counselor.

Q. Ok. After all, you joined the university as an employee about a dozen years after it had opened.

A. Yes, that's right. It was 1983.

Q. Right. Now I remember in those days there was a real fear that we weren't getting enough students, that the university was just not attracting enough students. But you said you reached an all time high while you were there.

A. Yes and I don't mean that I did. Jerry Curl, that was his goal and he never had a goal that he didn't make, I don't think. He might drive everyone crazy including himself, but I think it might have been 4500 about the time I left.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. Or approaching it. That was his goal. 4500. I think that's why Lacy took us on that little retreat to really go all out, yes.

Q. Sure, sure. That was a major emphasis because it was a matter of life or death for the university.

A. Was it really?

Q. Yes. Now do you remember what building your office was in?

A. Oh yes, Building F.

Q. Building F. Did you have your own little office?

A. Cubicles, we each had our cubicles.

Q. That building was all right. It was fairly new, it wasn't exactly...

A. Oh, we liked it. Human resources was across the hall; we were all big buddies. Terry's mother and I had been friends.

Q. Oh really? Jerry Curl's mother?

A. No, Terry.

Q. Oh, Terry Jackson. Yes, right.

A. Yes, we had been friends through something we were doing – Project Area Council for Urban Renewal. Then I just got to know Terry at that time. There again you have to get tears in your eyes when you think of the people who are not living.

Q. That's right, you do. It's hard to accept.

A. That's why I worry about Loretta Chambers because I saw her car disappear, and I haven't tried to find where she was.

Q. Yes, yes. That's too bad. I suppose Loretta, as I remember her, was probably one of those whom Jerry thought should lose weight.

A. Oh yes, I think yes, he would make it quite obvious. I think he go around with diets?

Q. That sort of stuff is probably illegal in the workplace now to harass people about their weight.

A. Probably. Then we would have little retreats with John Milburn.

Q. Oh sure, sure. What was the subject there?

A. Well, to make sure we all got along.

Q. Oh!

A. Yes, and we'd sit around the table and bring out our feelings. So there was really a lot going on in that department.

Q. Were there some factions within the...

A. Yes.

Q. Ok. Why don't you talk about that?

A. Then there'd be – my brother's a psychiatrist, he's dead now but he was. I remember I said what they did, they said, "Well first be silent," and someone was supposed to speak. That means someone was supposed to jump up on the table and start screaming. But it was very much a psychology session with John Milburn.

Q. I understand.

A. Two or three times.

Q. What were the different factions? Were they racial?

A. No.

Q. Age?

A. Maybe there weren't so many. After well, we got admissions – not director I guess Denny Freeh came on.

Q. Denny Freeh?

A. Yes. F-R-E-H...F-R-E-E-H, I think.

Q. Oh.

A. Either Jerry left, that's when he retired and we got Denny. Because I guess I was still there when Jerry retired.

Q. Ok.

A. I believe. Denny wasn't too popular.

Q. I don't remember him.

A. But actually Cullom, I don't think there were factions. We all joked and kind of...

Q. Oh, now you're being polite. Now I'm...

A. No, I can't think of any – there weren't that many of us. Let's see there would have been about three at the counter and back where Sue Williamson was. Yes, that was her name, and she was a really good gal.

Q. Yes.

A. Two or three people back there, Diane and Loretta, the four of us, Jerry. There were a couple of other people. I see her – Rosemary Lanaghen was – and oh, Betty Kunkel was assistant to Diane. Actually no, we were all friends!

Q. Ok, well I just, I know you're...

A. I don't think I'm being polite.

Q. Ok.

A. All right do I have to tell this? I quit because of Denny Freeh, I knew I just could not...

Q. Oh really? Ok sure.

A. Until Jerry Gruebel came along and asked me to work at the public television station but I will.

Q. Well let's talk about this then. That's perfectly fine. I mean you're just, you're a very – you don't criticize people.

A. He didn't like himself, I think that was it.

Q. Ok.

A. He wasn't a public relations person of all things an admissions director.

Q. Yes. He just didn't reach out to people?

A. Terry Jackson and I had one of our private jokes, too many (laughter) because she was so witty and such a riot. She saw through people far more than I did. Up to her very dying day she'd say, "Babs please, put..." She wasn't too crazy about Jerry Curl, but she worked for him and kept right on and worked through it.

Q. Neither one of you was very crazy about Denny Freeh.

A. No.

Q. He just was not a good administrator.

A. I once saw Terry after I saw Denny Freeh downtown or someplace. I called Terry and I said, "Terry, I hugged Denny. I don't know what was my problem but I hugged Denny because I hadn't seen him for a long time." She said, "Babs! What?" (laughter) But we had more fun, we really did. We were brats.

Q. Well, that's the way you are. You're fun with anybody. But I'm going to ask a couple of questions, and you may not particularly like them. If you don't want to answer them fine. But did you ever feel that the students you were trying to recruit would have preferred talking to someone more their age or at least did they kind of look upon you as a wise mother type?

A. I think they thought I knew more than I did because I was older. I really do.

Q. Ok.

A. Sometimes I'd be frightened because they'd come here with the mother and father and the student and I'd think, "Oh my gosh!" Because I wasn't trained to be – I was new at the job. Then we took a tour of the building and I'd get lost. (laughter) But we had all ages, we really did, from Springfield. Quite a few young men who were just getting out of the service would come in...

Q. Right, Vietnam vets, right.

A. Twenty-five and older and thirty. But there were a number of young students, too. I think they thought I knew more than I did because I was older.

Q. Well your personality helped as well, I know that.

A. It was great fun.

Q. Now how about the Vietnam vets, were they a special challenge?

A. No, I don't even know if they were Vietnam vets. Oh, the other thing we had were National Guard, who were getting the free education.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. Boy when I think about the service people – people in the service now – we'd go to those recruiting fairs and usually we were put next to them for some reason. I don't know if it was alphabetical or what, but the National Guard and boy they were recruiting like crazy and offering the free education which now those people in Iraq were offered free education and that's why a lot of them went in. But I'm thinking we had quite a few National Guard students that were doing both, they had jobs in the National Guard and going to school. It was amazing.

Q. Yes, it really is.

A. Yes. Well, I can't think of really Vietnam vets, but they were coming out about that time.

Q. Oh yes. Still, maybe the big flood had been in the 1970s.

A. Yes, you probably had a number of them.

Q. I did, I did, and they kind of set apart. I mean they were older and kind of had been through more than most people their age. But I liked them, some of them were very interesting.

A. They would be more of a challenge in the classroom too, I would think.

Q. One of them was **Bob Weston**. You know **Bob Weston** don't you?

A. Oh yes I do, a democrat committeeman.

Q. Yes.

A. Or the head of the democrat party, now I see he's ACLU president.

Q. He sure is, right. There were some others who were fairly active on campus. But so you by and large day in and day out for six years didn't mind the travel and enjoyed interacting with prospective students?

A. Well yes, very much. I loved it.

Q. Most of your coworkers and your superiors you got along fine with, but there were a few who, well finally one of them who really prompted you to resign.

A. Yes. I just felt that somehow I couldn't work with him. I almost forget the conflict but when Terry Jackson moved on to the Minority Service Center.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I was the one who got in there after that, but Diane Long stayed for her whole career.

Q. Now tell me about Sandy Schwartz; did she enjoy the work, was she good at it?

A. Brenda Schwartz.

Q. I mean Brenda Schwartz!

A. Brenda Schwartz, she was good at it. She didn't stay long— I forget where, what she did because after that Brenda either moved or something, but she left. She didn't leave within the university because she had come from CONVOCOM. Then the next one that Jerry hired was Shirley Wheatly.

Shirley Wheatly was living in Alton and interviewed for the job of assistant to Jerry but she wound up being an admissions counselor and traveling. She took this other part of the state. She was just a real interesting woman, who had been working at the college – what's the college for Monticello school used to be in Godfrey?

Q. In Godfrey? Oh what is it? I'm not sure.

A. Louis and Clark.

Q. Oh Ok, thank you.

A. I think it is. She had been working there but she commuted from Alton for quite awhile and finally moved to Springfield. She was here a good while.

Q. You must have gotten to know the directions to and the buildings in every one of those area community colleges.

A. Oh yes! Very intriguing!

Q. Richland and Illinois. Did you get as far as Peoria?

A. I did Parkland, Peoria. No I would go way over– it was Culver Stockton. So I guess I got, I was really southern central.

Q. Yes.

A. Because I didn't go to Richland. Jerry Curl did Richland.

Q. Oh, Ok.

A. That was his school. I mean, he wanted to do it, he didn't send us there.

Q. East St. Louis area, did you go to that area?

A. Where?

Q. East St. Louis area?

A. No Shirley Wheatly – that was her area, East St. Louis.

Q. Ok.

A. I did the Quincy area.

Q. Quincy, of course.

A. Quincy College. Then if someone were available I know I'd get things – Elgin, that's far north in Illinois. My husband retired while we were doing that, and he would go with me.

Q. Oh, well that's nice!

A. I went there in 1983, he retired in 1986, so that was kind of fun.

Q. Yes, I guess you could travel together.

A. So we'd begin and then we'd take a couple of extra days or something.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. So it was very pleasant. I have to think of all the different colleges.

Q. McComb, of course that's Western.

A. Been to Greenview with the four year college.

Q. Greenview? Not Greenville but Greenview?

A. Is it Greenview down.

Q. Yes, down south is Green...

A. Yes, uh-huh.

Q. Greenville is down south I think, isn't it?

A. I notice they have a campus here now. I notice in the paper – I was thinking it was Greenview. It was sort of a Christian-based school. I went to the Lincoln College in Lincoln and Lincoln Christian.

Q. Right.

A. Heartland in Bloomington. And the other four year school, not ISU.

Q. Oh, Wesleyan?

A. Yes, Illinois Wesleyan. So that was my area – maybe I was wrong on the area that we had.

Q. No, that's logical.

A. Jerry really was diligent about covering those schools. We would either call and make an appointment with the proper department or it was a college fair. We would make our own appointments at times to go visit.

Q. Now some of these schools probably had better – what do they call it? – articulation agreements than others with us.

A. Yes. We did them. I'm not sure I understand that, yes. Jerry would.

Q. It was what areas you have to take in order to transfer.

A. Yes. What we were good at selling were the GPSI, master's level, and the other internships, there were so many. The state government was here, especially at the master's level, I think that made us attractive.

Q. Yes, right. You told me the name of the community college in Bloomington, but I can't remember it.

A. Heartland.

Q. Heartland! That's right, thank you.

A. Yes.

Q. So you got to know those campuses and a lot of their administrators pretty well.

A. Yes. Oh, then Robert Morris.

Q. Oh, of course.

A. After they came down here. In fact when they first came down here I met with them, they were just getting established. Then Marie Giacomelli is still there. I see her, she's vice president.

Q. No.

A. Marie Giacomelli, her husband was a state police captain. She's a real interesting woman. Robert Morris has done, that was just when they were becoming a bachelor's degree.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I think they maybe weren't at the time and we were recruiting them for the junior level and then we started recruiting for the master's level.

Q. Right. Now what about Lincoln Land? Was there some tension there?

A. No, no let's see. I guess we didn't feel we had to go over there. No, they came. They just came automatically.

Q. Ok.

A. We did have an articulation agreement with them I'm sure.

Q. Yes but there was also at the presidential level.

A. Oh I didn't know.

Q. There had been some tension and who knows why.

A. As long as they had their gen eds and that's what we had to check,

Q. Sure.

A. Where else would they go? There again we had so many older students from Lincoln Land, many of them. We talked about students that returned, Cullom, and I thought of Ida Jackson to add to your list, came with five kids living in the John Hay Homes. I think, you'd have to check the records, I think she earned a master's here.

Q. Isn't that something?

A. Now she's a minister.

Q. That's a great story though.

A. This is the place where people could really come and move ahead, and she did. Another one I thought of was Susan Enlow.

Q. Oh sure!

A. I heard, this is like years ago because we had so many really radicals, they attacked her because of her family. Maybe was that in someone's class they said her family had been the oppressors. Do you remember any of that?

Q. I don't remember that.

A. You don't remember that incident. But I knew Susan. She worked right through them and went to work for community development in Springfield.

Q. Oh, did she?

A. Yes.

Q. I didn't realize that. I didn't know she took courses here.

A. She might have graduated. She did.

Q. I know one of her sisters took courses here.

A. Yes, Melinda.

Q. Melinda, right.

A. Oh, no. Susan Enlow had some incident like at a night class. It was sort of almost frightening that some people just almost – not physically but ganged up on her verbally about her because the Bunn family had originally been oppressors in Springfield.

Q. Yes.

A. So that is what made this place never endingly and you know more than I do Cullom – never endingly interesting.

Q. Interesting, sometimes to its own detriment.

A. I mean that's right, it never quit, it never quit. She showed them all because she worked with people who needed help, and now she's become a nurse.

Q. I didn't realize that either. Well, her mother was a student of mine.

A. Well yes, of course. Sally was well-known for what she got out of the history program.

Q. She and her husband were great supporters of the university despite being vilified.

A. Well I could always find Susan and I could think of a way to ask her about it so I don't know. I don't see her, I used to see her.

Q. There were newspapers – I remember in the alternative newspapers at the time, there were critical stories.

A. Yes.

Q. It may have been Ron Sakolsky.

A. I bet it might have – yes, may have been.

Q. Now, did you find yourself ever with a visiting prospective student here needing to find someone teaching a class where a student could go in and watch a class?

A. Not so much watch a class because we would send them to – you're one of the professors that was very good that we could call and say, "Would you talk to a student?" Jim Nighswander at the education department was good, the art department, and the communication department. What was Henry's name?

Q. Henry Nicholson.

A. No, I never had anyone who would watch a class but if they were interested in a certain area, we'd send them there. Bob Crowley was another good one. Mike Townsend. I think all the

professors were very open to taking the time to discuss with an incoming or prospective student – whether they were incoming or prospective. The television department was really good and open about that. Political Science, Dave Everson. All of that made the whole recruitment effort was campus-wide.

Q. Now I'm going to play a bit of the devil's advocate here. Was – I'm guessing – one of your disadvantages in making a pitch the fact that there really wasn't much of a campus here?

A. I never told them until they got here.

Q. Pardon?

A. I never told them until they got here! (laughter)

Q. I know that but at some point or other if they visited, it wasn't exactly an overwhelming experience.

A. No, and it wasn't very often that mom and dad came with them either.

Q. Right, right.

A. I would have a few. I think maybe if it was a young student and the mom and dad, that was when they thought, "Well, what is this?"

Q. But the word had to get out at community colleges about it, Sangamon State being a pretty small operation.

A. I think, really Cullom, that the idea of the state being able to – well an entree to a job in state government was certainly a plus.

Q. Yes, well certainly that was an asset, for sure.

A. Yes. Well the Public Affairs Reporting but they were such advanced students anyway, and Bill Miller had sold that all over the country I guess. I just don't remember that.

Q. Ok.

A. We had the housing and what with Jim the head of housing was also very good to try to sell them on how much fun they were going to have. It's like Chris Breiseth was telling us to go out and tell people how much fun school integration was going to be.

One night he asked me, I was sent to a black church, and Chris Breiseth sent someone else and me to talk to the whole congregation and I froze. I wouldn't now, but I did then. I thought, "What am I doing here?" If Charles Lockhart and Breiseth were to come, it was a team.

Q. Yes.

A. They had a grant and we got paid ten dollars for every session we came to because they had a grant. Then we were going to have small groups in homes.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. Maybe that, everything at our integration here was very peaceful thanks to people like Velma Carey. That's another thing the University went...

Q. It was and I think the long-term consequences were a bit mixed, but I think it did go over pretty peacefully.

A. Yes. The fact that you signed on to that, Cullom, should never be forgotten, never.

Q. Oh, well, I was just one of many.

A. I've got a laminated thing that the plaintiffs – I don't know where I got it.

Q. Really?

A. A poster this big.

Q. Well, it was a great adventure I enjoyed it. I mean, I was caught up in it.

A. Oh, yes. Oh I know you were; I know you were.

Q. Ok, I'm trying to think of other things about the job. Well, can you remember, I mean it's none of my business except it's kind of interesting, what your beginning salary was when you started?

A. Oh, what was it? That was the other thing, we were hired part time.

Q. Oh, part time.

A. We were, which is always a trick I think, don't you?

Q. Yes.

A. You know you're going to work full time and then we became paid full time. Cullom, I think Jerry Gruebel paid me less because Jerry Gruebel was always trying to find his pennies because he has to.

Q. Right.

A. I think Jerry Gruebel paid me \$16,000, I think we might have gotten \$20,000 [here at SSU].

Q. Oh really? For part time?

A. No.

Q. That was when you were full time.

A. When I got full time.

Q. Ok. So when you started maybe it was half that.

A. Yes, and we were definitely supposed to be part time and then they realized, well they worked us full time.

Q. Yes. Did you have benefits though, even at half time?

A. Yes.

Q. Health benefits and all?

A. Well I don't know, but I'm more familiar with my retirement benefits. No, Boomer [my husband, Bob Dickerman] was at Franklin Life for thirty-nine years and he had good retirement, and Carmelita Hogan Washington was in charge of insurance.

Q. Yes.

A. So she said, "Do you want to sign up your husband?" My husband Bob said, "No, I've got my Franklin Life." Well, as private retirement business had shrunk ours haven't and we wish that he'd come on board with mine because I had enough because of eight or ten years that I worked previously – I had worked for the lieutenant governor.

Q. Oh, Ok. Very true.

A. I had enough state years...

Q. Yes, that you qualified for a pretty decent pension.

A. Yes. But at part time we probably didn't get benefits.

Q. Probably not, depends on how they structured it. But within a few years it sounds like you were full time.

A. You don't care so much about that until it is retirement.

Q. Yes. Ok. The offices didn't move in the time you were there, you stayed in the same facility.

A. No, just after I left they moved over to K I think, but we were in Building F the whole time.

Q. Ok.

A. A long time, they knew that was the admissions building.

Q. Sure, sure. Ok. Well is there anything else? Can you looking back on all of your community college visits or all of your appointments in your office here, can you look back and think of any sort of really funny or shocking experience that became an indelible memory?

A. I think I had lots of slides once that I dropped. (laughter) I had them all arranged for the way they were going to go and I dropped them.

Q. They all fell out on the floor?

A. Yes, yes. That happened. I was always a little frightened because I felt like I really wasn't as qualified as I should be to be doing that sort of thing. But once you got into it, it was like because you were working with all academics. But once you got into it, it was alright. I don't know, but that was the best, traveling was fun.

Q. Sure.

A. Then especially if you met someone and they came to campus to really, came to your desk and talked. That was really fun, and that would happen quite a bit.

Q. Sure.

A. Now I was thinking also kudos to the university and to the community that without the university we probably would never have had the change in government from commission to aldermanic because I guess it was Larry Golden mostly lent his expertise to the research on that lawsuit.

Q. We used, for example, the race riot information as part of the evidence.

A. Oh, well you were part of the team!

Q. A little bit.

A. Working with Don Cravens.

Q. Yes.

A. See, we wouldn't have had the expertise to build those cases without the University I don't think because there had been three efforts to change the form of government – community type efforts and rallying type efforts. My husband keeps old political posters in his tool shed.

Q. I agree, right.

A. There's one of "Change the Form of Government" way back from 1954.

Q. My gosh.

A. Yes so and the other, kind of a maverick professor was Bob Hanie. Do you remember him?

Q. Yes.

A. Environmental Studies was his field.

Q. Right, yes. He was a character.

A. Well yes, but he started this program for gifted high school students.

Q. Right, in summertime they drove off to the west.

A. Yes. Well, my youngest son was in it, got in it. I got recruited to be the fundraiser, which I did a lot. But it was interesting, yes; he was really an interesting, very brilliant man but almost too brilliant. Then I saw *The Music Man* a couple of weeks ago and I thought, "That's Bob Hanie."

Q. That's Bob Hanie! Very hustler!

A. Because he could sell anything, anything. When he died... He had a lot of the teachers go with him, he took teachers with him on those jaunts.

Q. Yes, right.

A. When he died, a quite a few of us went to the funeral. It was a friend of his in Jacksonville that had the party after the funeral and asked us to bring cookies or something. And Cinda Klickna's husband said, "Even when Hanie's dead he's got the women working for him!" (laughter) And he could. But my son got a lot out of that program.

Q. It was an interesting program.

A. He took them to Oxford. I kind of got involved because I felt to raise money for scholarships for kids who wouldn't otherwise be able to go. Hoby Heistand, [rector of] Christ Church stood a couple of scholarships from his private fund.

Q. Really?

A. Yes. So my son was already in England. He had one year in England, and he met them all at Oxford that was what they did. But he got a lot out of working with Hanie.

Q. Good.

A. But he was, yes. He did not get tenure, never got tenure.

Q. I know, I know.

A. He didn't live. He had a heart attack at a young age, heart surgery at a young age.

Q. Yes it's funny how that works out, yes.

A. But I should mention that because I think he brought the name of the university into the community in a different way.

Q. No doubt about it. He was a great promoter. Well, you've talked about quitting under the new director of admissions, and right away Jerry Gruebel invited you to join CONVOCOM.

A. Yes.

Q. In what capacity? Raising money?

A. Oh yes, development.

Q. Ok.

A. It was already graduated from CONVOCOM to the three stations: WSEC, WQEC, and WMEC. They were in Brookens, where his offices were.

Q. Yes, right.

A. That was a great place.

Q. Full time job?

A. There again did he start me full time? I think he did start me at part time, I forget. (laughter) But I wound up working full time for him for four years. There's another person who would never ask you to do anything that he would not do and worked so hard.

Q. I think what he accomplished is remarkable.

A. Yes.

Q. Some people take issue with him on things, but I think he's been a great creator.

A. He had to fire Kim Twells, and now I think he's almost established. Well now it's been in the paper that he really needs money, but he's established people to listening to Channel 8 instead of Champaign.

Q. Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

A. With his human interest things based in Springfield, Mark MacDonald's program as you well know.

Q. Yes, I agree.

A. But he was great first to work for.

Q. So you then, you traveled probably and would spend several days in Quincy or Macomb or Peoria?

A. Well not for Jerry, no. I traveled for SSU to those schools.

Q. No, but I mean development work for Jerry.

A. No, development it was more Springfield because he felt that I had contacts. I did the travel with my working to raise money with established businesses. I had been more on the other side pointing out the faults. So then I had to go back to some of those businesses and try to raise money, but I was on the other side of the fence, really.

Q. That's right, that's right.

A. Because the city council would be saying this that and the other and they'd say, "What's she doing now?" But then of course phone-a-thons are the bane of existence but they have to be done.

Then we had one great event at the State Capitol. [Governor Jim] Edgar had just come into office and at the last minute Edgar and his wife attended. It was a big event – the SSU cafeteria, which was gourmet food.

Q. Yes.

A. It was a great big event celebrating volunteers at the State Capitol in the rotunda.

Q. Yes, well that helped. So you did genuinely enjoy your work with WSEC.

A. With Jerry? Oh yes. Even phone-a-thons if you finally got someone who was dumb enough to want to do some of them.

Q. Was it hard for you to ask people you knew for money? Was that difficult?

A. Yes, it's pretty hard. But with Jerry when he gets you in the mood and he would have retreats as well. We had two retreats a year at Starved Rock and Turkey Run. Jerry could, he was kind of like Bob Hanie, he could sell you on anything, also.

Q. Right.

A. That was his expertise. So those were two great jobs that I just...

Q. Well, at what point did you decide to go back for more?

A. To school? What Jerry Curl said, "Babs, if you're telling these people what they're supposed to take to graduate from college and you haven't graduated" That was when I worked there maybe a year, about a year. So I started and then I did go through credit for prior learning with Jan Kroegkamp, which as you know it's not just a piece of cake.

Q. No, it isn't.

A. They demand – I had to work with Dave Everson and because of my political experience, that's what I based it on. That was fun because you have to write an autobiography and that was nice to share with especially my daughters-in-law that didn't know me that well so that was good.

Q. Yes, right!

A. I had nineteen or twenty credits from Springfield College. So yes, I went to Springfield College.

Q. I know, you mentioned that.

A. Yes I told you that. I did graduate.

Q. So you did get some credit, you got a junior standing I guess.

A. Yes.

Q. Right.

A. I guess I started as a junior but after doing, after going through those hoops.

Q. Yes, right. Ok, what did you major in?

A. I graduated in 1986.

Q. Ok, what in?

A. Political Science.

Q. Ok.

A. I guess I had Larry Golden. I didn't take your courses, Cullom. I wish I had because you were...

Q. Not in political science.

A. You were certainly popular with so many people that I knew. But I didn't take your...

Q. Well I didn't teach political science.

A. I had Bob Spencer for History, Revolutionary War.

Q. Political Science.

A. Yes. We mentioned before, the one that did Constitutional Law, she's a real interesting character, older woman. I can't think of her name either. I remember those courses.

Q. Not Nancy Ford, no.

A. No. But Spencer's classes were interesting.

Q. Yes they had to be, right.

A. So I did, I graduated in 1986.

Q. Good grades?

A. Yes, they made me the – what do they call it when you had to go at the head.

Q. Class marshal?

A. Yes.

Q. Class marshal, really. Good for you.

A. So that was fun for my children to see.

Q. Oh, of course. So your commencement was in 1986.

A. My grandson loves to say, "Well Babs, you didn't even graduate from college until 1986," he said because I'm always encouraging him to be a good student. He says, "You must have been a terrible student!"

Q. Well, I did raise children.

A. Yes.

Q. That's funny. Well, you said that you also would like to talk – and we can touch on the highlights from your perspective, of the ways in which the University or its people made a difference in the community. We've talked about the desegregation lawsuit; you've talked about the city government restructuring, anything else that occurs to you? Either University people or the institution itself.

A. Well I know that Mike Townsend did extensive work within the John Hays proper with the people organizing. I did not work with him on that no, but I know of what he did.

Q. I think, he for several summers he put on kind of a festival over there.

A. Was that Blacks, Whites, and Blues?

Q. Yes, Blacks, Whites, and Blues.

A. But he also did work with people getting, he would – in fact, and I was sort of monitoring the housing authority for the League of Women Voters, and Mike Townsend would be at those meetings. Larry Golden and his Innocence Project, certainly.

Q. Who...?

A. Larry Golden. His Innocence...

Q. Oh the Innocence Project. Right.

A. With all the campaigning against the death penalty. That's very much more recent and there's no doubt other professors were involved in that.

Q. Sure, but Larry has been key to all of those initiatives.

A. Yes. I'm sure he involved his students in that. That's the beauty of it. Another thing you said, "Hard to sell Sangamon State." You sort of knew if you were in a class you were going to be involved in something really important, something that was needed in the community.

Q. Right.

A. Then Cullom, your extensive research into the history of Springfield, you probably know more – and bringing it out in various forums, etcetera.

Q. Didn't lead to any major change or anything like that.

A. Oh I think so. As I listen to these tapes I think so much of what I've heard you talk about, things they're talking about, yes, you reached out.

Q. Well, thank you. What else?

A. John Hay Homes, let's see, when they were at their worst, I think Larry Golden was somewhat involved. I'm not sure.

Q. Oh yes.

A. When they were just kind of almost breaking up. Well then another, Mark Siebert with music. I mean, no one – well I like Carl Scroggin but Mark Siebert was wonderful on the radio station, his classical music. So that certainly brought things in the community.

Q. Do you think WUIS in general has been a major part of community life?

A. That's right, oh yes. Major, major. Then the symphony would have never developed without first of all the auditorium. Then because of the auditorium, it attracted all of these fantastic people to the symphony. Do you remember when it was in Springfield High School.

Q. Right.

A. It was Ok but, the conductor was a professor at Bloomington, wasn't he?

Q. I guess so.

A. Yes, part time.

Q. Leonard somebody. Yes.

A. Yes, from Indiana.

Q. Nice person but, under his successors the quality, the stature, of the orchestra and size have grown tremendously.

A. Oh, but maybe just the bricks and mortar of the building made a difference. It attracted these people who would never have come otherwise so it's just about in everything. The forums that they... Oh, remember "Crisis of Confidence?"

Q. Yes!

A. Bob Spencer started that. Well, they would call it the winter session. But it wasn't, it was clear and I was on the outside. I wasn't a member of the University then. It was clear that the community was invited but students probably got credit for those kind of things.

Q. They did. It was not required, but it was an opportunity for them in a compressed experience to get credit.

A. Yes, and that went on for how many years Cullom? You were a part of it.

Q. Oh gosh, it seems to me it was five or more years. It began actually as something we called University Week that was devoted exclusively to some topic. But then we developed the crisis of confidence theme. It took – it changed over time, I regret that it's lapsed, but it has. It was expensive actually.

A. I bet it was; I bet it was. I'm thinking right now we need another forum on the Crisis of Confidence because that's what we're in the middle of in this country.

Q. Of course, of course, exactly.

A. What was I, Reeves column yesterday, Richard Reeves column.

Q. Yes, I saw it.

A. Yes. So those are almost every facet of the community has been touched by SSU and UIS, yes.

Q. Did you have regrets when SSU became UIS?

A. Oh, not regrets it was just jealousy because I remember how the recruiters from UIS would sort of look down on us when we were recruiting. They would say, "You're such a little Podunk place."

Q. You mean the recruiters at the University of Illinois.

A. Yes. We'd sit with them because, yes we'd be sitting next to them. I guess we'd have the National Guard on one side and University of Illinois on the other, but now I see the beauty of it.

Q. You do? You don't have any regrets about the change?

A. No I was jealous, just plain jealous. Terry [Jackson] and I have a lot of old jokes about that.

Q. Well, some people, some of the older faculty, maybe even I am included for awhile, worried that the things that made Sangamon State wonderful would disappear under the huge embrace of UI. Well, I'm not sure what has disappeared because some of the – because I think that was changing anyway. As the older faculty retired, I think that had more to do with it, personally. I don't think that the U of I has refused to let there be a kind of a spontaneity or sit-ins or anything around.

A. No, no.

Q. I think that it's just been that it's a more mature institution. I don't mean necessarily better, but it is no longer what it was.

A. No, are they still, are the professors from all over the world as they were?

Q. They are. There's no original professors still on the faculty; they're all gone. But one thing that has happened, there's a real campus now. There are freshmen and sophomores, and a lot of buildings. I mean, it looks like a college now.

A. Yes. I worked with some of them particularly on these interviews, I've had some contact with some of these students, young students now, and they just love it. One other thing about this school, it's always been gourmet food it's not...

Q. That's right.

A. I would visit those other colleges, and they would have the green beans and the chicken. SSU and that cafeteria was always excellent.

Q. Always wonderful. Well I always used to say that the three greatest successes of the University were its food service, its library, and the soccer team. Well, that's changed, but they were all very successful.

A. That probably had something to do with our recruiting, that our soccer team was famous, yes.

Q. Yes.

A. I didn't think about that. So no, I was a little jealous about UIS but you see the...

Q. Ok. I want to remind you SSU alumni have the right to get a University of Illinois graduation certificate. Did you do that or do you have a Sangamon State one?

A. No, but I'm called an alum because I get all of the alum things.

Q. Sure, sure, but you didn't request.

A. No I didn't. No I just didn't feel, if I were out in the working world I would really want go get one.

Q. It would be tempting?

A. Yes, because many people really were thrilled to get that, going after jobs.

Q. Yes, I think that's the marker. Otherwise you can let your nostalgia operate and you remember you went to SSU.

A. Yes. I called it SSU for the longest time but I got over it. I mean, I would forget, but I did not apply for the degree.

Q. Well let me wrap up with a broad question. As you reflect back on the thirty-eight years that the University has been here and the various ways in which you participated in its life, is there any way in which you think that the University has affected you in an enduring, deep way?

A. Oh yes I do, partly because of the many friendships that I made within the University. Then again in so much of the work that I did it seemed like I always turned to the University either for help in various things in the community – right now this oral history program, we came to you for training. Peter Boltuc came to work with us and I got to know him, which is kind of an interesting thing. He suggested that we do oral histories. We were trying to go after that – well, that's too long of a story.

Q. Right.

A. Yes, Cullom, yes. I always knew if you needed expertise in some area you could call a professor. You were one of the main ones and you didn't hesitate to jump in on that oral history project, gave us four training sessions.

In just the library, Boomer and I like to browse libraries; we're Friends of the library, we use it. I didn't send my children. Boomer saved money so they could go anywhere they wanted. We sent our oldest to an experimental school, Hampshire College.

Q. Oh! Did he attend Hampshire College?

A. Well, yes he was the one that didn't finish college; it was too experimental.

Q. Too experimental. (laughter)

A. We might as well have sent him here, we could have kept track of what he was doing. He went to Hampshire with – Ken Burns was there when Jim was.

Q. Isn't that something?

A. So yes, I love to drive through the UIS campus, the red trees. I wrote an essay on that and I can't find it.

Q. Oh really?

A. Yes, the red maple trees. It's beautifully planned.

Q. So it has been an important part of your adult life. Is that a fair way to put it?

A. Very much so. It really has. I was not in any of the committees – the twenty year committee that tried to get higher education to come here, many friends of mine were. But there again I keep thinking I might take time to take more courses but I haven't done it.

Q. Well, because if you're not busy.

A. But the programs, the stage programs, that and another thing, it's been tremendous. But I think another important thing was that it opened the community to new ideas by bringing in all new people from all over the world or the country. You had roots in Illinois but you weren't Springfieldian.

Q. Right. I think it has – what's the right word? – made the community a little more cosmopolitan or a little more open minded, not a lot.

A. It's taken awhile. I mean the ballet would not have flourished; the symphony would not have flourished.

Q. Some of the membership organizations – ACLU I doubt if there'd be an ACLU chapter.

A. That's right. Because the people who came in demanded these things, you needed them. The medical school helped as well to open the community.

Q. Right. I think there were some other local organizations that either were created because of interest here or they were largely supported by the faculty.

A. By the faculty, yes. The other thing is the Charlie Schweighauser's star nights, yes.

Q. Star Parties, exactly.

A. That has attracted and we would take the kids to that. I took my little grandson once. But that's another tremendous influence that we had.

Q. Well let me say in closing that you have given to this institution every bit as much as you got from it. So I would consider it is a fair trade.

A. Thanks, Cullom, thank you so much.

Q. It's been a lot of fun, Babs, and I've enjoyed interviewing you.

A. Well, I've enjoyed working with you, Cullom, and every time I ever had a chance to work with you.

Q. Thank you very much.

End of Interview

1 hour, 52 minutes, 19 seconds