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Sandra Martin Memoir

Martin, Sandra

Interview and memoir
digital audio file, 65 min., 16 pp.

UIS Alumni Sage Society

Martin remembers arriving at Sangamon State University in the early 1970s in a Volkswagen van. She could see little bit of campus with no permanent buildings and a lot of cornfields. Martin discusses her experience at Sangamon State as a "wife of" a faculty member and later when she became an educator with the Learning Center for students.

Interview by Mary Caroline Mitchell, 2010

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Narrator: Sandra Martin
Date: June 16, 2010
Place: Springfield, IL
Interviewer: Mary Caroline Mitchell

Begin Recording

Q. This is June 16th and this is Mary Caroline Mitchell, and I am interviewing Sandra Martin. So Sandra, would you tell us how you came to Springfield, Illinois and Sangamon State University?

A. I would be delighted to do that. It was probably in a Volkswagen van as a matter of fact. The reason I had ... who was one of the first year faculty, our first two years all together. I'm sure he came before that because he got the job.

The promise of Sangamon State was interpreted differently and I am quite confident every person who came here and by every wife or husband although in that day there were many more wives than husbands. So I and other women of my ilk believed that we would actually have some kind of role and be citizens of this new community rather than wife of... husband, respected and profound wife who had nothing whatsoever to do with his domestic wife. That turned out not to be true and that certainly was at Sangamon State. We came up early for a faculty orientation.

Q. What year was that?

A. It was 1970; it was before there was a university.

Q. Right.

A. There were cornfields there. We went looking for buildings and we were a little alarmed.

Q. Where were you coming from?

A. St. Louis and not so very far, that ninety mile drive with all of us and one way, one reason or another a drive we made so many times it became a habitual round of my lifetime, a lifeline of my lifetime. You know I don't have a visual of it strangely enough. I cannot tell you where we actually lived although I can tell you what I wore, which was an Elvira mask – it was most unbecoming to me.

Then we rented a house out to Ron, which was another mistake. Before the getting to know people really began, I had to go back to St. Louis because I was teaching. I was a teacher and faculty member at Forrest Park Community College and had to go back and finish my summer classes. So John made his first introductions, fateful ones for the rest of our lives. Mary, meeting the woman who would become his third wife... just back to your archivist to seek help in other things... [inaudible 2:48]).

So our lives are still very much tied in the aftermath in various ways. My ex-husband, who was my reason for being there and my own since my beloved husband of many, many years, Bill Lambrect and I became acquainted there as well. So that short drive really began the rest of our lives in a continuum that is still today.

Q. What was it that attracted you to Sangamon State University?

A. Well, I had got a job there.

Q. No, but I mean...

A. There were all those PhDs out there, but it was the innovation. It was the notion that this was a university that would attempt to create a new faculty. That was the difficulty of the experiences because as I mentioned when we got there, we quickly discovered that it was like being in the Star Wars bar. Each person was an individual and each one defined what this innovative university would be differently so that we all spoke separate languages and often just talked to ourselves or a very close group.

So the creation of this initial community as I'm sure you'll know by the wonkiness of the administrative tenure in those early years was as challenging as the creating of a new colony on America's rocky shores for people who had never visited such a land. It was not an easy transition for the people in my case. I can't say for anyone else.

Q. So what were you teaching in St. Louis?

A. I was teaching English at the community college. I had gotten my masters at St. Louis University where I had gotten my Bachelors as well, been to Purdue a year, come back after feeling like I was far afield of who I wanted to be. I got hired in one of the ... in 1970 in an early influx, the community college movement was in the 1960s, but an early influx of many young faculty members at that point.

People that I worked within and many of them continued to stay at one or the other of the three sister community colleges in St. Louis. I stayed only two years, but my first jobs were at St. Louis University teaching English as a second language. That was my bridge to Forrest Park Community College. When I came to Sangamon I left my job and I did not realize, had no idea what I had difficulty [inaudible 5:30] it was.

Q. So you came just as a spouse?

A. I came just as a spouse. I think the people who were dearest to me, the women of my continuing community came just as spouses. Now many of the women in my community were [inaudible 5:46] who came from a very different perspective. Pat Smith, who was Larry's wife of Larry Smith, and my ex-husband John's third wife, and Peggy Knoepfle who came from St.

Louis and St. Louis University. The three of us were activists in the creation of the brainchild Women's Poetry Collective in, could it have been as early ... couldn't have been as early as 1971 but it could have very easily been 1972 that Peggy inspired us to pick words.

So those are the three of us who were wives of and the most intimate in our dimensions... [inaudible 6:26]. But Jackie Jackson who was a faculty member as well was also was one of brain child as were the librarians Liz Frazer and Ann Hale who came as independent women.

Q. I'm going to write down, if you could spell those names.

A. I certainly can. Pat Smith.

Q. That's easy.

A. Peggy Knoepfle, KNOEPFLE. Ann Hale, HALE. I don't think there's any other that was an original librarian and Liz Frazer, FRAZER.

Q. Ok.

A. We were all part of the original brain child community, so it was a mix of talented women, wives of, and a couple of independent women thinkers. Then the other person that I was intimate with was Florence Lewis who was an original, well I don't think Florence was quite an original librarian because she actually got her undergraduate degree through CLEP at Sangamon State having only gone to Blackburn.

But it was so near on to it that it would be hard to separate that. So she was a woman in her own standing as well, but that is very much what the divide was. Those of us who came as wives of certainly had jobs. Pat and I had jobs.

Peggy may have been raising a family before that rather than having a job. But we suddenly did find ourselves suddenly wives of and no longer defined to our professional identity. So after a couple of years of struggle, we all concentrated on making very interesting personal lives.

Q. Well ok. When you came there, was there some attempt to get faculty members to meet each other? How did you...

A. I think that there were. I think that there was this whole group of orientation meetings, many of which I wasn't at because I was teaching down in St. Louis. Then, of course, there was the rush of the classes. Once the classes started it seemed things pretty much settled into a traditional mold.

I remember an odd memory, incongruous memories. It's not immediate but it is George Shurer is Dean of... SHURER and Rosamund I believe, although this is all from the big pass ROSA...

[inaudible 9:04] He is Dean of What could he have been Dean of? There were programs, there weren't even collectives. [inaudible 9:18]

Q. An administrator?

A. Yes, he was an administrator. His wife had us to a faculty tea and she poured tea out of a silver pot the traditional way. This was just not what we thought would be correct for the ordinary university or for the wives in the university.

Another person that I want to mention who figured largely in my identity at Sangamon State in my life story is Judy Shereikis, who was another wife of who came in either the second or the third year, I believe the second year.

Q. Shereikis?

A. SHEREIKIS, Richard Shereikis of the Literature program was her husband and Judy worked at the Learning Center for twenty years before retiring and having been at least one Teacher of the Year. So she was another wife of who then found a bit of... well, Judy eventually found a great deal of professional identity throughout her tenure at the Learning Center, so that was very grudgingly given to her after a few years.

Q. So did you become employed at some point after you moved to Springfield?

A. I worked in a Montessori school first of all when my son had gone to a Montessori school in St. Louis, I am... it was an inhospitable environment socially and I not a woman to ignore my children. So that wasn't particularly successful, and then I worked for the Illinois Institute for Social Policy, but the tedium...

Q. Where was that?

A. It was a government, it was a state agency and our mission was... their social services policies. Phil Salsbury was the director and Roy Whirly who later was involved in the university was a director at the time. My main job there was a humorous one. I was involved, I was asked to design what was called the declaration form for the elderly, blind, and disabled. They would be able to fill out their own application for public assistance. Difficult given their circumstances but it was part of the streamlining effort.

That's really when I became pregnant with my second son, Nathaniel, who was born on October 3rd 1971. With that I retired very happily from the state although working with Pat Smith who was an editor, a manuscript editor and who had worked with the National Council of Teachers of English in Champaign and who was doing at that time the Journal of the Illinois State Constitutional Convention.

So working with Pat upstairs in my study at 1004 North Sixth Street, she and Larry lived across the street on Sixth Street. Well, Nathaniel learned to crawl down the long, wide hallway was where I learned to become an editor skilled at this, supported me in many roles for the rest of my life. So then that winter of 1972, Pat and I began teaching part time together at the beginning for the university teaching magazine production.

Q. Where were those classes located?

A. We were in the metal buildings, I think. The buildings were put up by then, and I think that Communications at that time was in H or G. Learning Center later moved in to that, interesting note that, so I took on many different roles in my life. We were just given a classroom because we had to set up the desks and tables. [inaudible 13:00] We brought in our own IBM executive select typewriters and began to try to set type. I did one and then Pat and I did two more sections of actually writing things to produce and the class did create the magazine.

Q. Was that part of a degree program?

A. Communications program, in Communications so that people could take it out of Communications. The Public Affairs Reporting students took it.

Q. What was the energy process like, getting ready.

A. I'm sorry. These were our husband's lives.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. I hate to say that, but it was perfectly true. Later there was a more arduous interviewing process for me to join the Learning Center, and I continued to teach courses probably things beyond manuscript production, beyond magazine production and certainly at the university a few semesters. But then I became an original member of the original Learning Center community in August of 1975.

Q. That's when the Learning Center started?

A. That's when the Learning Center started and dear friends of mine Gary Morgan and Van... [inaudible 14:26], two men, were hired to be the co-Directors of it, both with master's degrees. While Peggy Boyer later of WSSR, which had the...

Q. "Illinois Issues."

A. "Illinois Issues," of course, and I, we both had master's degrees and teaching experience. Neither of us were hired as graduate assistants...[inaudible 14:48] So for me there became a long process of seeking equity, which eventually led to a sex discrimination suit at the university that I filed.

Q. Ok.

A. So in other words, I'm a kind of a rocky road for the city of Springfield, but there were a lot of... there were rocky roads.

Q. Well, I was just trying to figure out who decided there needed to be a learning center. Was that part of a plan?

A. It wasn't part of the initial plan.

Q. Ok

A. But it was a brilliant recognition, and I'm trying to think, Jerry Curl had more to do with it. CURL, who was... what was his title? He was an administrator and a very, a very, a very straight in one sense of the word. Jerry had to do with it, don't know whether George Shurer had to do with it or not. Cullom [Cullom Davis] may well have had to do with it.

I'm sure the faculty possibly more than, oh more than English and Communication was attached to it then because then Sangamon State was an upper division university so that anybody could come to school there as long as they either had credits enough to be a Junior or could do like Florence Lewis herself did, the credit for prior learning or the CLEP program.

So we had the student body of very uneven skills and having the... and at the same time because it was an innovative university, it was some outreach to a diverse socioeconomic, racial, and educated student body. So that there was quickly discovered that many of the students didn't have the writing skills that they needed, the math skills and other skills to do the upper division work.

The Learning Center's mission was to support students individually, programs and class... students individually, entire classes, programs collectively and indeed the faculty as well. In designing a literacy curriculum in working in practicing that curriculum and in many instances, this was our job to try to actually integrate and market with completed enrollment working with projects, which was a little... [inaudible 17:34] Let's be so that we integrate our college... [inaudible 17:42] So that's what we did.

The originals as I say were Gary and Van who were hired from a distance; they were very different co-directors because they couldn't make up their mind. Much to our surprise, Peggy and I were hired only as graduate assistants. Judy didn't have her master's degree actually but did get a degree while she was there.

Q. Graduate assistants?

A. Graduate assistants. But I was...

Q. Was that a job category because normally...

A. That was the only way they could get us.

Q. But you weren't in school?

A. No, I wasn't in school, and I didn't want to take classes.

Q. But that was the way they could afford...

A. Presumably the way they decided they could afford us, still working out how many women will come to work with the whole issue of sex equity was part of the struggle that the university went through as well.

Q. From the beginning at SSU?

A. I think from the beginning, but I only could swear to that from my own experience, which was to be hired at a lower rate despite equal qualifications and to be refused a promotion by a woman... a woman vice president and to fight political machinations.

Q. And who was that?

A. Sue Dezenolet [DEZONDOLET] and Alex Lacy, LACY, was president at the time.

Q. Oh, at that time, ok? So how, explain your lawsuit and what was the result of it?

A. It went on for approximately ten years.

Q. And how many were a part of it?

A. It was just me, it was me individually.

Q. Ok.

A. Supported in a little bit by a wonderful woman on the faculty in business...

Q. Anna Marie Smith?

A. Anna Marie Smith, thank you very much. I couldn't get the matchup in there.

Q. Anna Marie Smith.

A. Anna May Smith.

Q. Anna May Smith.

A. With some support from her, it was a complicated process for promotion and tenure. Eventually through Anna May's assistance, I had an advocacy. I had moved up from a graduate assistant. By the way, by that time I was a single mother of two children and my husband had left the university under not entirely happy circumstances and had moved out of town.

So I was the sole support at that point of two children hired as a graduate assistant with the same credentials that they had. So for the first couple of years, it was just quite, "Oh, why do we have to be this?" Anna May helped that until eventually, how I don't know, I got upgraded to an instructor and I think Judy may have as well. And by then, there were other people as well. Dorothy Godsoe, GODSOE, was hired as our rating instructor, a very able woman although I think that she had worked in secondary education largely before then.

A university graduate and a woman fondly dear to my heart, Sue Eslinger, ESLINGER, whose husband Richard was the Commander of the Illinois Air National Guard and a Smith graduate. Sue was hired, Sue and all of us were [inaudible 21:09]. Then Gerlinda Coatis, COATIS was hired as an English as Second Language instructor for the advocates. So they were graduate assistants, too, but that was pretty much the full component of the Learning Center in say 1978 or 1979 when we were hired early on.

So I don't know what we were all ranked or how people came in, but eventually I got to be an instructor and went through the regular faculty promotion procedure of putting together a portfolio with self evaluations and testimonials of what you did and that you did it. It was a several step process where one was evaluated by one's own program. I don't know what program we were in or who we were evaluated by. And then [evaluated] by one's larger community, maybe first it was the department that... it was a three step process. I think eventually, perhaps the second step was the whole faculty senate.

My promotion was approved by both of those steps. When it went to Sue Dezenolet, she wouldn't approve it. Her reason was that I did not belong to professional organizations and my degree was in literature rather than instruction although Gary's degree was in creative writing. So the next ten years we fought back and forth about whether that meant anything. It was a terrible experience because in the process, Bill and I moved to Washington. I would have to keep coming back and the university's lawyers would say, "Well, you're not ready so we will not go to trial today, so that the whole thing was postponed."

Q. Oh, sure.

A. And the original judge, administrative law judge was a very rude man, absconded... left, quit and took all the materials with him in the middle of it so that it all had to be reconstructed. So it took obfuscation and malfeasance and all kinds of things and my own attorney, Mary Lee

Leahy, who I had written about as a journalist did a very poor job of preparing me in my representation.

But it went all the way up through the Illinois Appellate Court. I won at the second to last level in a beautifully worded testimony without having to refer to a different reason for each judgment, but I did win in the Appellate Court... I would have probably never gotten any money out of them, just got...[inaudible 23:46] past promotion. So I was... the relationship was always contentious...[inaudible 23:56] There was always as much love as there was anger.

Q. So while you were teaching, you were in this lawsuit perpetually?

A. So much by the time I finally filed the lawsuit, I had gone to university... oh in the middle, in 1980 the university tried to disband the Learning Center by firing everyone, tried to ban Gary, Vince, all of us. But we were not, we were a faculty unit protected by the faculty senate, and they had to say, "No we can't fire you after all but we want to disperse."

So I finally went to University Relations for a very short period in 1980, and then I just left the university. Gary and Vince stayed a little while longer. Then the Learning Center was reconstituted and Judy continued for twenty years. Gerlinda still continued until... Sue and Gerlinda continued both fighting cancer part of the time that they were employed.

I think Sue was still employed during her cancer as well before she moved to Florida. Dorothy retired eventually and moved to the new library. They are doing wonderful things as far as I can tell. But no, there... I'm sure it was partially a consequence of my little incident and there were a number of reasons the university thought that they would be better off without kinds of trouble makers, everybody was a trouble maker.

Q. Exactly how long were you employed in some capacity with Sangamon State?

A. From 1972 when I started teaching part time through 1980, so part time faculty member, instructor.

Q. Whatever the title, ok.

A. Supporter in the Learning Center and then University Relations for probably six months.

Q. What type of students, what do you remember about students that you taught? Were they locally from Springfield, Illinois?

A. We certainly had a lot of students from Springfield. There were, of course, no dormitories. The university was meant to be a place that felt... a place where peace was created, but created as a place where peaceful people like Ed Eslinger, for example, or Sue Eslinger or Jill Pensley who is married to my grandchild ... [inaudible 26:28] DiGirolamo who retired two years ago as of the state, as head of the Illinois Victims Coalition.

Janice Scott, I think... I don't know whether Janice got a degree here or not, but Rosie Richmond did and Lana Murdock and so many of the people who were Springfield women. Springfield men as well did indeed come back to the university, come to the university, some of them after community college and did create rich professional lives for themselves through that.

But at the Learning Center we saw perhaps a different kind of person because we really did work painstakingly the same way I do with interns nowadays, line by editing creates, creating their ability, helping them with their ability to be literate students. In my case it was helping them imagine how to write a paper, helping them structure out the work because everything was cut and paste, so doing line editing really leading people by the hand.

Now the Learning Center was like the library in two ways. It was like the library in that it was one of the most welcoming and rich places in the university where there really was a community if you wanted it to. It was like the library in that we were on a regular year round contract. We were there a full day so that students could walk in or make appointments. The library was always characterized by a huge "Get Help Here" poster. We always said it was a "Get Help Here" place.

Q. Where was it located?

A. First of all we were in the leg of G, right where the original communications department had been. A couple of the old offices were put together for an open room; it was always in an open room and then a back quiet room and then faculty offices and some of the faculty offices were in the hall. We secondly moved to the old library when the new library opened and we took... under Jerry Curl we took that large center space and we moved into that space very handsomely and eventually moved to Brookens.

In our middle incarnation we always had a coffee pot. Sue and I were sent out to Myers Brothers [Department store] to buy furniture and we got a huge overstuffed orange sofa, which was portrayed in the pit painting by [inaudible 29:01] ...and all of us in the Learning Center with all of us in our various kind of hippy-dippy looking duds, we got an orange sofa and chair. It made a welcoming look and the secretary's desk, it was Ginger Myers from downtown, MYERS. It was right there, the coffee machine right here. Then the open area had round working tables where we would sit and worked with our students.

Then there were offices around the edge. Gary and Ben and there was another shared office here where Judy and I were up here together. Then there was a reading room and a math room for Dorothy and a math room for Gerlinda. I believe, I'm sorry actually I believe that Gerlinda was over with Jerry Curl at that particular point in time. So it was a very open office space.

So we got the people who needed their hands held, often the people who came here, the people who wanted to talk, and we held their hand and listened to their stories and chatted. It

really was just like sitting and chatting with people. Eventually we had to make appointments, but it was a very loose environment.

One of the students I remember is Maureen Spahr, SPAHR, I believe. She was a gorgeous woman, forties or fifties, big red hair, model-like figure, and a very ... [inaudible 30:39]. She had somehow survived that extended [inaudible 30:44] ... and was getting back [inaudible 30:46]... and needed lots of support in getting anything done.

So we had lots of, I remember several...[inaudible 30:58]. I remember Pauline, I don't know if I'll be able to think of her last name or not and her daughter both came. She was of Swedish descent. We had an... We did crafts and arts, kind of a crafty and artsy crowd. We had poets wandering, Gary was a screenplay writer. Gary was a really... [inaudible 31:20] big curly hair.

Q. Gary?

A. Gary Morgan, MORGAN. Of course we all smoked then. We would smoke at our tables working.

Q. Right, right.

A. Gary with his pipe would... Captain Morgan [inaudible 31:32]... Me with my cigarettes and the kids would come if they needed to. It was a very communal and supportive atmosphere so we would see students who probably wouldn't... [inaudible 31:44] We would see them the most. So they were some of the odd, but at the same time we would work with various faculties. I was a member of the library program committee and the human development counseling program. We would work with them to help them develop the writing competencies that they wanted their students to have.

Q. Yes.

A. Help define the writing competencies they wanted their students to have and did help the students, help them make the kind of assignments that they wanted to that they needed to make to get the students there, and then work with the students on the papers towards that goal. So I would work and I would often visit classrooms in that capacity. I worked heavily with Barbara Eibl, EIBL, who was a wife of. She and her husband were both equal faculty members, in maybe the third or fourth year there... [inaudible 32:43] in Petersburg

I worked with the wonderful Walter Grenier, GRENIER, who was a dashing Frenchman probably in his sixties, very tall. I worked with Gary Combs, who was in the public administration program as well as human development counseling programs so that we would all – we would work with them in their classes in particular. I think each of the particular faculty members who were more enthusiastic in their support and

Q. I was wondering since you mentioned, I noticed how many women kind of had the opportunity to get their education when Sangamon State came to Springfield. Did you have kind of social service leagues that you addressed or whether someone on campus that, was there a ...?

A. Gerlinda certainly did that for the...

Q. International students.

A. International students.

Q. Right.

A. We were that only in a de facto kind of hand holding... [inaudible 33:54]

Q. Ok.

A. We were interested in a maternal kind of way. There did become a women's program and a women's center although it wasn't particularly active.

Q. You weren't part of that? Ok.

A. I think very much in the early years except for the Learning Center, the Library, and the international student program would do its best to put and you found lots of individual support in your faculty and in your students in your communities. We created, I mean it was a very dull place and they certainly did bring, the university certainly did bring... [inaudible 34:30] but I think that most any community of people would tell you that we really did congregate on our own entertainment.

My friend Doug was involved in a madrigal group, for example. There were kite flies and sausage making and there was in my group to branch out with its poetry collective, which was certainly the result of the community though it was never supported. We did, we got some support from the community. I think they did help us pay for one of our publications and put them together as well but was very much a force in that community.

Brainchild was very much a consciousness raising. It was a community of solidarity, a family of women who we created hearers for one another. Once women were heard, their voices became strong and simply ...[inaudible 35:34] in cases across the board and an occasional gift of extraordinary support as the night Ann Hale and Florence's daughter was still ... [inaudible 35:45] Barbie Lewis who is now a Barker, BARKER. She was from ... also. Anna Lou Barker also went to Sangamon State.

The night that I sat with them and got their comfort consultation with my marriage, which was breaking up, so it was a very much people.... People came to one another's needs and there, of

course, were human development counseling program, marvelous classes in which you did some assessments and built your skills. I can't think of the name of it at the moment, but Caryl Moy, CARYL MOY, who was the wife of the Dean of the Med School. Caryl had a wonderful, typical story. She came with no job although she certainly had worked and I believe worked in university education before.

But I think that maybe Caryl had a degree in some part in home ec[economics]. We were in her house when she said I had covered every last thing with wicking including the toilet seat and the Kleenex box. I could not understand how this would be good for her. She became not only active in the conscientiousness-raising classes. I do wish I could say what that was... [inaudible 37:05].

But also with Mary Hotvedt in the human sexuality program, she became far more daring in classes on human sexuality. So here was another kind of example of a woman who bloomed in Sangamon's odd environment and came into her own very easily once the door was opened, and I think that is what happened.

I look at my friends like Rosie, Rosie Richmond, who was a graduate of Sangamon State who died probably in 1995 or 1996 from cancer who was part of our Cookie Monster Day Care Cooperative, which was started by Mary Hotvedt.

Q. How do you spell Hotvedt?

A. HOTVEDT, I think, who was part of the family of Millie Kloam and Michael Kloam and Ralph and Jessica. Millie created the Cookie Monster Day Care Cooperative where I went with Nathaniel and Rosie went with Alan and Stacie. Don Murdoch was with Zoey and Bridget and these are all women who were at the same time or were about to be Sangamon State students and all got divorced in the same era to the exception of... [inaudible 38:43].

So that Rosie, we were all pretty medium and we were all pretty poor, but there just many rich communities that we all identified with four or five different ones and created an almost totally sufficient support system for one another. I think that probably many of the women who got their educations there would tell you that.

I don't know what it was like, the men in terms of support except academic support, which we certainly offered to them through the learning center. But the women's community, women's liberation was flowering at the same time as this was going on. Sangamon was always the place for great early flowering of creative and substantial class of women who each went on to great things.

The Brainchild was pointing them in the right direction. So again we created that the thing is what we needed – women community of people with sympathetic interests came together in the community of Springfield. I think we were all part of that.

Q. Would you talk a little bit about the relationship as you viewed it between the community of Sangamon State?

A. It was terribly exciting. My ex-husband was one of the... [inaudible 40:01]. John was as dramatic in his own way as Ron Sakolsky in causing trouble. Now Ron was part of the New York communist crowd, big guys with wild hair and dramatic ideas. My ex-husband, John Knoll was a former seminarian and seemingly a quiet guy but had a deep, deep streak of alienation and counter-culture in him. What he was interested in teaching was counter-culture things, so he was teaching comic books and underground films, all kinds of things that now even I would look at slightly askance.

I could see why a community would say, "My God, you are teaching these filthy comic books at a state university." So that had something to do with floppy hat day, but I never knew anything about what that was. But there were actual people in the state legislature who considered removing the funding from Sangamon because of the classes taught, the attitude. Oh my God, there was an attitude in the faculty at Sangamon in particular the men who wanted to be as raw and as abrasive and a "Hell, no, we won't" attitude as you could was a very real strain on our majority.

It didn't make their will... [inaudible 41:33] strain at Sangamon. I think the women were not nearly so contrary. We were, certainly I think there were a number of independent thinkers – Mary Jane MacDonald being one whole independent thinker, but I mean I just loved going to the library programs and watching Mary Jane.

I was never a person who would tolerate meetings, but Mary Jane would just roll out their chairs, throw her arms up and we would act out what I thought may or may not have been discussed... [inaudible 42:06] And because she was so completely self-contained and unquestionable, she could do it. So there was this, there were all these varieties – independence in the women, but we were not by and large aggressive, abrasive and rude but the men really were.

So actually there were people in the state legislature and wondered, and thank God for Chris Vlahoplus who was an early public relations director and had grace and savvy to negotiate between the two of them. There was a sense that they had opened up the madhouse in the establishment of Springfield. One can see looking back why they felt that would be the case.

So my ex-husband was one of the people who did indeed bring the wrath of the establishment down on the university, which led eventually through actions of his own both perfectly reasonable and not so reasonable. So did Ron Sakolsky who did manage to continue, got tenure, to stay there until his retirement. Inhospitable place but there was also was this large kinky community that came with Ron.

So another one of the communities were the guys who had gone back to the land and had one of the things I did. Dan Knapp was one of those original people back then who was very

[inaudible 43:35] I happen to know. Handsome, big, bearded, nice – I mean beautiful person, was really nice and going someplace. Dan did a home study endeavor on a piece of land across the road from the university property. I was so fascinated by it that I persuaded him to allow our third magazine production class to create a document called, “The Home Study Armchair Reader.” Boy, is it strange.

Q. Yes, I love it.

A. So not everybody got to do what they wanted. I just bet they wish they got to do more. No wonder these earthy homesteaders thought that we were weird. There was some... I mean that magazine looked into wonders which tried to show just how weird they were. There were cartoons... these kind of *Barbarella* cartoonists. There were serious homesteaders and there were granola-clutching kind of people and there were wind tower breakers.

Q. Just like now.

A. It was originators and deeply weird community. There was I say I think much of the weirdness belonged to the people or women – women who were simply seeking to define what a woman’s role could be. They and with the responsibilities of family and making an income and I assure you that fifty cents on the dollar was what women were making if we had jobs at all by then. We mostly tried to sweeten life while fighting for independence and the ability to support our family rather than to speak to... [inaudible 45:15]... the establishment.

But at the same time, I believe that it was the women of Springfield who carried on the mission of Vachel Lindsay. When I was in university relations for a short time, I did one of the things that was called Facebook and I used Vachel Lindsay’s theme of, “A city must have many hearts in a wheel.” In my sense of Sangamon State and the community that this created because of its presence in the rich corn lands of the state capital, the women took responsibility for that spiritual vision in creating the ideal community, and I think that’s what we did together.

Q. I wish that I could spend another forty-five minutes. We’ve probably just gotten started. I really appreciate your time and I will have to continue this.

A. I know. I hope that I can speak for many... I hope that I have spoken for many women because it is important that everybody else is. I think I have a fine perspective on the contributions of the women of the larger Sangamon State University community to a larger extent.

46 minutes 33 seconds

End of Interview