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Phil Zeni Memoir

Zeni, Phil

Interview and memoir
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UIS Alumni Sage Society

Zeni, who worked in a senior position in the administration of Illinois Governor Richard Ogilvie, discusses his educational experience at Sangamon State University in the very early years. He first attended SSU classes at the First United Methodist Church and Leland Hotel before the campus was completed. Zeni's undergraduate degree was in Work, Culture and Society and the graduation ceremony was held at the State Armory in 1973. He delivered the UIS commencement address to the 2005 graduating class.

Interview by Mary Caroline Mitchell, 2010

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Narrator: Phil Zeni
Date: February 12, 2010
Place: Springfield, IL
Interviewer: Mary Caroline Mitchell

Q. I think this is a pretty good microphone. This is Mary Caroline Mitchell, and I'm interviewing Phil Zeni during the Oral History Project. It is actually Lincoln's birthday, February 12th for this interview.

A. 2010.

Q. 2010, right. Phil, before you came to SSU, what other education had you had? And what other schools had you attended?

A. My college career began in September of 1962 at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois and continued largely full time until I was married and then working full time in 1966. It then became more sporadic and occasional. In June of 1967 I was promoted by the broadcasting company I was working for and transferred out of Decatur.

So a quick bit of math tells you that in five years I still hadn't managed to get a bachelor's degree. My attendance had become very part time and sporadic; eventually it was night school only. When I enrolled at SSU I had junior standing.

Q. That was great. So when did you enroll at UIS or SSU?

A. I was a charter student at SSU in 1970. There had been a fair amount of news coverage about the opening of the school and the staff at that time was actively recruiting students. I think they may have even had a booth at the Illinois State Fair. I have a vague recollection of going to an admissions' office in downtown Springfield on north Sixth Street.

I went there, picked up some student recruiting material, and thought, "Maybe after all these years I really ought to finish this degree if at all possible." And here was a great way to do it because I had just arrived in Springfield in September of 1969.

So I enrolled, had my transcript send from Millikin and was given junior standing. The first meeting of the first class was in the building at the northeast corner of Fifth and Capitol; it was the First Methodist Church of Springfield at that time.

The first meeting was more of an orientation than class, but my classes were held there for awhile. It was very different than the old, ivy-covered Georgian architecture of the Millikin campus that I was used to (laughter).

Q. So what type of classes did you take and did you... were there majors? Or how did you decide on that?

A. Well, that's an interesting question because it needs to be approached from several different directions. There were majors of sorts; for example, there were some classic majors, maybe like Biology, but that certainly wasn't my field. I was really seeking to get a degree in business.

The closest thing I could find where I might get credit for all the course work I had already taken was a major called Work, Culture, and Society. It had some specifically required courses, but I think everything that I had taken at Millikin transferred. I began to taking courses at SSU that did not sound like typical courses found in a conventional liberal arts college, although some of that may have been simply the way courses were titled.

It wasn't really the substance of the course that was necessarily different, but the SSU faculty and staff did view themselves as being avant-garde and consequently there were a lot of unique course names. The coursework I took had the greatest emphasis in economics and organizational theory.

Q. Well, Phil, what class was maybe the first... did you maybe take one class to start out with or two at a time? Can you remember how much you went to school when you started?

A. I think I took three courses initially and quickly realized I was overcommitted. I dropped out for about a year after one or two quarters. I was working full time, carrying a full time load of course work, and trying to be a good full time husband and father of two small children. Some of this I don't remember very clearly because I feel like I didn't sleep for several years. I was just running and running trying to stay even with my commitments.

I think I typically took three courses per quarter and then I may have gone down to two occasionally. In the final quarter in 1972 when I was really pressing to finish, I took five courses. One of the interesting features of SSU in its infancy was a lack of the tradition A, B, C, F grading system. There was largely a pass/fail system although eventually letter grades were used in most courses.

Having decided to finish the work on my degree and not wanting to waste my time, I was focused on my course work. The only grades I received were "A"s except one. I had a "B" in Developmental Economics that I felt was undeserved only because there was bad chemistry with the instructor. However, that could easily have been as much my fault as his. I can say that with a sanguine attitude these days, I wasn't quite so sanguine then. And I remember his name with great clarity and I've forgotten the names of almost all the others. Imagine that (laughter).

Q. I might have a question about that. So what were you... how would you describe when you were going to school, where were you working? Were these night classes, day classes? How did this all work in your life and how did it impact your family?

A. Most of my coursework was at night, as it was for many of the returning students. My sense was that this was very much an adult commuter campus at the time. There were some courses offered on Saturdays, in the day time, and I took some of those as well. A few Saturday classes would run three or four hours for several consecutive Saturdays to satisfy the number of hours required.

I was at the time working in Governor Richard B. Ogilvie's administration and I held a series of fairly senior positions in various departments, plus some special short-term, high energy assignments. I was sort of a utility infielder being transferred from one assignment to another depending on what was needed. The launch of the Illinois Income Tax Center is an example. Recently passed legislation required tax filing in the current year and the Department of Revenue needed to be ready to accept returns within a few months. I was assigned to help begin the personnel recruiting within weeks of returns starting to pour in. We needed to recruit, test, select, hire and train some 300+ people within three weeks and another 300+ within the next eight weeks. The December holiday and New Year season that year is still a blur in my memory.

I worked on a series of executive recruiting assignments for the Pollution Control Board, the Illinois State Fair Superintendent, the proposed, but never built, Columbia Regional Airport Executive Directorship across the river from St. Louis. I did some public affairs work for the Department of Personnel and eventually was assigned to the new Environmental Protection Agency working first on the Clean Water Bond Act campaign in 1970. I stayed on at EPA in a senior management capacity there for the balance of the Administration.

Q. So your background it sounds like was a lot in human resources?

A. I had been a general manager of a broadcasting property before I was recruited to come to Springfield and I was young (laughter). There was naturally a human resources component in being a GM; there was public affairs and some plain old general management. Many referred to the people that joined the Ogilvie administration as the whiz kids. He had campaigned as a governor who would solve problems and bring about change in Illinois State Government. He meant it and he did it.

At the time, one of his problems was hiring seasoned, qualified staff to manage an increasingly unwieldy bureaucracy with a non-competitive pay scale. Few senior managers were interested in leaving their current positions to move to Springfield, work for low pay and then be out of a job in four or eight years. Knowing that, a friend of the Governor's, Don Perkins, the president of the Jewel-Osco company, told him prior to his inauguration, "Dick, the state doesn't pay very well, so you are probably going to need to hire more young people than you would expect." And when he did, many were tagged as the whiz kids – frequently not in a kind way.

Although I was 27 when I joined the Administration, I don't know that I qualified as a whiz kid, but most of those who were young and in senior positions were sometimes called that.

But to answer your question; yes, it had an impact on my family because I was gone a lot.

Q. Did you travel in your job?

A. Yes, I spent a lot of time in the State's offices in Chicago. Back then, and it may still be true, many who have a senior position in Illinois state government have offices in Chicago and Springfield. I was technically based in Springfield, but I shuttled back and forth between Springfield and Chicago weekly, sometimes twice a week, sometimes three times a week, sometimes four, sometimes five. And during one particularly trying week I went roundtrip six times, Monday to Saturday. And the last time, the pilot couldn't get the plane down in Springfield because of the weather. It landed in St. Louis and I came home on a bus. That Saturday night was the end of a very, very long week.

Q. So what was the faculty's reaction to having very fully employed students who would miss class? Did that matter?

A. I didn't say I missed class.

Q. Ok.

A. Most of time I would get a late afternoon plane and be here in time for my class meeting. It was rare that I missed a class. That seems odd now that I think about it. Most of my classmates were there most of the time, many had returned to finish degrees and were focused on getting them done.

Unlike many freshman going off to college for the first time, we had not just left our parents' homes and told, "It's time to go to college, do well, we hope you enjoy yourself. Don't call too often for money." It wasn't that situation at all. People were at SSU to focus on degree completion.

Q. How did you pay for your classes? Was it paid for by the state?

A. It was. What a nice thing. It was considered by the state as a way, to use this week's new buzz word, to *upscale* the work force. Closing their *competency gaps* as it is now known, I think. It was considered useful to have this kind of continuing education, especially for managers. Tuition and books totaled only a few hundred dollars a quarter. It was a pretty good investment for a department or agency over the long term.

Q. Can you remember your impression when you went to your first class or your first classes compared to the classes that you took at Millikin? Did anything seem different to you or was it more a reflection of this was the early 1970s and anything was acceptable?

A. No, I don't think I had that mindset that this was the early 1970s and anything was acceptable, or I probably wouldn't have been working in government. If I had chosen a radically different vocation I might have held another view. I think in reflecting on SSU, its faculty and lack of permanent buildings, I thought, "Do these people know what they are doing?" I mean, "Is this really a legitimate university that is going to grant a degree that anybody is even going to recognize?"

In terms of course content and instructors, here again, they strived so hard to do something different from that past. I did know several of the instructors quite well. I was as old or older than some of them. I thought that they were working too hard to make their courses and the university so cutting edge, so avant-garde. The most outlandish expression I occasionally heard was some saying "we are creating the Harvard of the prairie." It was laughable.

They were thinking in such lofty terms – not that we couldn't comprehend it – but, frankly, who cared? Not everything, not every thought that crosses the human mind is necessarily worth transmitting to somebody else and I thought there was a fair amount of that. I thought there was a lot of self-indulgence on the part of the instructors in terms of what they chose to teach and how they chose to teach and the settings in which they chose to teach. In many instances they were just working too hard at being different, thinking "I'm going to shake up all these square Midwesterners."

Q. Did your impression change at the end of your studies? But you weren't here for that long.

A. My coursework and papers were concluded in November of 1972, and I graduated with the class in June of 1973. Not much had changed in terms of the campus or the staff or the instructors maturing by the point.

Q. Ok.

A. It was still pretty... I will use that term one more time and then I'll stop using it. It was still pretty avant-garde.

Q. Could you describe two or three of your most memorable professors, good and bad?

A. Ok.

Q. You can use names if you wish, but you don't need to.

A. I suppose the most memorable character was also someone I was assigned as my counselor and we became very good friends. His name was and you may very well know him because he was on the campus as recently as the time you've been here, Randy P. Kucera. Dr. Kucera was a graduate of the Maxwell School at Syracuse in Public Affairs. His undergraduate work began at West Point, the U.S. Military Academy.

I thought he was brilliant. I also thought he was more than a little eccentric, but I thought he was brilliant. His father had worked for Grumman Aircraft and he was an only child and that may have provided the impetus to attend West Point. At one point I drove him to Joplin, Missouri to his wedding and I was there for the wedding. Unfortunately, the couple was divorced a few years later.

A couple of year more and I introduced the bride to one of my friends and they now have been married for decades. They live in California. I will see them in two weeks when their son gets married in two weeks at Starved Rock. So this string of old relationships just goes on and on. Anyway, I thought Randy Kucera was a great guy and I took several courses from him.

He and I put together SSU's first student intern program using the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as a source of students and now decades later it has apparently flourished and become the Graduate Public Service Intern Program.

I also remember Larry Wollan, an assistant state's attorney here in Sangamon County. He was from a prominent Springfield family. He had previously been a faculty member at Millikin, and I had taken a course from him there years before. At SSU he taught a course in local governmental power and was a very credible instructor. Within a few years Larry went to Washington and served in the US Department of Justice. When I last spoke with him many years ago he was teaching at a university in Florida.

I'm not going to talk about the developmental economics instructor who gave me a B although I remember him with clarity. I will give him credit for one very good concept. He insisted students use two phrases that have stuck in my mind. To this day, I listen to and read news reports and, unfortunately, these phrases are not being used. They should be used and they are much better descriptors of a country's economy than what is used.

He said, "All countries are in the process of developing." If all countries are in the process of developing, some are more developed and some are less developed and they are fairly identifiable. So instead of talking about underdeveloped countries or the developed countries, they are correctly described as being *more developed* or *less developed*. So every time I hear someone say a developed country or an underdeveloped country I think to myself, Professor so-and-so was correct -- I've got to give him credit."

Finally, here is a third instructor that was particularly interesting. As my senior year was ending, I needed to fill some hours and could essentially take any course I wanted. Looking at the course catalog I spotted "Lenin, Stalin, and Mao". I remember thinking, "Oh, this is 'far out' (big phrase then). Now they're teaching communism on this campus. Oh, I've got to see about this. It could be interesting." A full time instructor who was Asian was offering the course.

I signed up along with eight or ten others. The instructor claimed the importance of this course was due to the fact that communism had been chased off of American campuses following the

McCarthy Era and believed that if the US is to formulate good policy and understand how to deal effectively with communism as an enemy the subject needed to be taught. When we had finished trudging through the texts and classroom discussions, we were required to write a paper, not a very common requirement at SSU then.

The subject of the paper was interesting. It was this: "If you didn't have to worry about making a profit, if you did not have to concern yourself with the normal capitalistic structure of operating some kind of business, what sort of business or service would be useful in America if money was not an object?"

Now I have always been a bit of a technoid and I don't want to sound like Al Gore, but here's was the premise of my paper. I thought it would be useful if we were to connect our telephone system to computers so that we could reach into other libraries around the world for students and for business to get information. Kind of an Internet-ish thought in 1972. However, I do not claim to have invented the Internet or Google either.

At the end of the course, the instructor had all of us to his house and he and his wife served us an Asian dinner. They were really very charming and seemed a bit naïve about dealing with students, but wanted to make a good impression on us.

Q. Oh, you should.

A. But this is what I wrote in 1972.

Q. Wow.

A. The instructor reviewed at my paper and I received an A and an A in the course. I have to give SSU credit at that point for allowing people to have this kind of open-minded, free-flowing possibility thinking. However, you don't want such an open mind that all your brains run out, and I thought that was had happened to some of the faculty.

Q. Do you remember any activities outside of a classroom that you would call like student life or did they have special events that students went to outside of class? I know everybody was working but do you remember was there a university week or anything like that when you were attending?

A. No, but I think I probably consumed a tank car full of beer at the Navy Club with classmates and some of the instructors.

Q. Ok.

A. Because that was pretty much a stop after most nights of class at least briefly, sometimes not so briefly.

Q. Was that the faculty as well as the students?

A. Yes.

Q. And was that the usual watering hole for SSU.

A. Yes and there wasn't anybody else there except people from SSU. It was called the Navy Club, but I never saw anything relatively remotely like a ship, boat, sailor, etc., just the beer.

Q. Where was that located?

A. It was right over here, the building is still over here. It's over here, if you come in on Toronto Road.

Q. You mean the Pub, I mean the Crow's Mill School?

A. Yes, yes that's what it was.

Q. After the Navy Club, it became the Crow's Mill School and now it's something else but just lost its liquor license.

A. I see.

Q. Oh, so right over there was where everybody met.

A. Yes.

Q. So ok.

A. But as far as any sort of organized, sanctioned university function for students, I don't have any clear recollection of that. That is not saying there weren't, but I just don't have any clear recollection of it.

Q. You mentioned the classrooms that you were in. In those first years, where were the different classrooms that you attended?

A. I think I'm sitting in one of them actually.

Q. Ok.

A. These buildings here. From the Methodist Church class setting, it seems to me that then we went to the Leland Hotel and there were several classes there. But I thought there were some other classes somewhere else at that time, but I don't remember where. Finally there was one

building, which still stands here. And it has forum seating in it. I took two or three classes in there.

Q. Is that where you sat on the floor kind of?

A. We sat on steps.

Q. The risers?

A. Yes, we sat on big steps. They were carpeted steps that we would sit on.

Q. Yes, right, you would call it The Pit, I think.

A. When that first building (referred to by some as a trailer) was built, we thought, "Well who knows, this could be a university after all." Not looking too hard at the fact that it was mostly sheet metal and then some more buildings were built like that. That might not have been the first; there may have been some others that were out here first that were very much like a mobile home park.

A little patio area was created outside here and many of us thought, "Well this is beginning to look a little bit like a campus, I guess." And then there was nothing after that, I was gone. That was the last building where I was ever in a class.

Q. Was there a library when you were here? Do you remember very using the library?

A. No, no.

Q. Ok.

A. There must have been a book store. However, as a state employee I had access to the Illinois State Library. On more than one occasion I went in there and checked books. I don't know if you can do that anymore.

Q. You mentioned your acquaintances when you were here. I was wondering if you'd maintained relationships from the time that you maybe had met people here.

A. Well, certainly Randy Kucera's ex-wife, Christie, and her husband, Tom. They are dear friends, I've maintained relationships with. Aside from that, probably not many, and I may be unusual in that regard, I don't know. I left Illinois in 1980 came back for one year in 1990-1991 and then was gone until 2006, so that severed a lot of relationships.

There is Karen Hasara, who was actually a neighbor. Her son and mine son grew up together for a few years so I've had a little contact with her. But probably not many, I'd really have to search my memory. In truth, the same holds true for Millikin. I worked most of the time I was

going to Millikin, too. I've actually done a better job of keeping in touch with my high school classmates, even though I worked throughout high school as well. But I have a lot of friends from the past that I've kept in touch with.

Q. Did you meet people that... did students interact? I mean you mentioned going to Navy Club, but then you don't remember... you didn't keep up with those folks or anything?

A. Not particularly.

Q. Ok. People just kind of came in for a bit and then went home?

A. Pretty much, pretty much.

Q. Yes.

A. There were not a lot of... I don't remember any organized event. I guess I was mildly surprised when I went to graduation in 1973 to see so many students, so many graduates. It was a surprise because you could come out here most nights and to class, go back to your car, and not have seen more than twenty people.

And remember thinking at the time, "I know there are more people that go here. Maybe they go in the daytime or other nights or maybe this isn't a popular time to go to class or something." So when I sat there on the floor at the armory where the commencement was held in June of 1973, I was mildly astonished. Row upon row of students; I thought, "Well, I guess SSU has a lot of students after all."

Q. What do you remember about that commencement ceremony?

A. I have the clearest memory of something that to this day is a very moving thought for me. I came from a very normal, average family from Decatur, Illinois. I am the oldest of four. I am the first child in this entire family ever to have gone to college, and my father was a huge supporter of education. He had had to drop out of school during the Great Depression of the 1930s to take care of his siblings and stepfather and mother. He didn't get to finish and he always regretted that and knew it held him back in his work. But there wasn't much he could do about it. So he was always encouraging me to go to college.

At commencement, the students' families were seated in the balcony, including my wife and two children, which was kind of strange. I wasn't alone. A lot of students had children sitting up there too. So I came through the line and was presented my degree, and came off the end of the stage and there was my father. He put his arms around me and hugged me and said how proud he was. I always had a good relationship with my parents, but public displays of affection between fathers and sons were not common including for my father. Parents were not particularly effusive the way parents are instructed to be these days. His hugging me there and then -- that was big, wow.

Q. Yes.

A. That was big.

Q. Do you remember who the speaker was?

A. No. But it's funny, I looked the other day at the commencement program. I was scooting around on the Internet in advance of this meeting, and I looked to see who it was. And I still didn't know who it was even after I looked or it didn't register. Having been the commencement speaker here in 2005, I didn't think anybody would ever remember what I said either. But I was wrong.

I was in East Peoria recently for a meeting with a Vice-Chancellor of the community college. Upon arriving, his assistant had me wait in her office while the Vice-Chancellor finished a phone call. Making small talk, I said "I see that you have an office of the University of Illinois at Springfield here." She said, "Oh yes." I said, "That's interesting, I'm a graduate from there." She said, "I was a graduate, too." I said, "When did you graduate?" She said, "2005." I said, "I was the commencement speaker."

Startled, she paused to scrutinize me more closely and said, "Yes, you were the commencement speaker. I remember that and I remember that I always wanted to get a copy of what you said." I said, "I probably have my remarks stored in my computer and I'll send it to you." And I thought, "Well, she was either being very gracious or she really did want it." Who knows? But it was a surprise.

Q. That's wonderful. When you went to school did people wear their business clothes, I mean during the time you went to class?

A. No, nearly everyone came dressed trying to look like a college student; very few people would come in their business attire. It was a time of great sartorial experimentation, so people showed up in all sorts of garbs, costumes, disguises. I was not immune from that. I would normally be wearing sandals and Levis, certainly nothing I would be wearing to the office, but that was pretty common. We probably looked like a bunch of scruffy, somewhat older college students of that era.

Q. Did anything go in the classrooms? Smoking? Do you remember that?

A. I think that was a case by case basis. Some instructors allowed it, some didn't. It was probably a terrible fire hazard in most places, and it wasn't like we were being supplied community ash trays or anything like that. But I think there were a lot of instructors that would say, "You can't smoke in my class so just forget it."

Q. What about the grading? Did you have classes with grades and some without grades?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Was that up to the faculty member, did you have that feeling?

A. I thought that was up to the instructor. The attitude of many was, "Well, I'm going to teach this and I'm going to give grades or I'm going to teach this and I'm not going to give grades." I think as time went along, there was a thought that grades needed to be given because some people were abusing the system. It was not just the business of the grades but the number of hours taken. At that time, there was supposed to be some sort of limit as to how many hours you could take.

Subsequent to graduating, I heard there was at least one character that had taken something like 37 hours one quarter, finished his requirements in no time, never going to class and no one seemed to care. I thought that type of unpunished abuse devalued the degree terribly. That type of abuse coupled with a name that no one outside of central Illinois had ever heard of made the degree marginal. So I couldn't have been happier when the U of I came along, subsumed all this and gave us some credibility whether we deserved it or not.

Q. As you reflect now at your point in your life and career, how do you value what you received here? Do you feel that it was of value or what did you learn here that you feel was the biggest take away?

A. Well.

Q. Besides your father hugging you. That sounds like a big one.

A. Yes, it was. The university was very dedicated to openness and an attempt to be on the cutting edge. Students were encouraged to think about all the possibilities and not just a narrow set of rules and information to be absorbed and regurgitated on a test.

However, that was probably overdone at the expense of actually understanding the subject matter. But that's part of the changes and cycles we go through in this world and in this country certainly. I found some of the course work particularly useful. I found a lot of it very trivial, unnecessary, unappealing and useless.

There were some gems and nuggets along the way. It depends on what you compare it to. When I graduated I was thirty-one-years-old. I'd had two fairly responsible careers by that time, and it was not like the experience when you are first in college at 18. It was kind of a different experience from that standpoint.

Q. So would you describe your career since you graduated? Because I hear that you have been entrepreneurial, you've been very creative and not bound by convention. You have stepped

outside of different things, so I kind of hear... I'd like you to describe your career because I hear it very much in the same terms you just said about what this university was like.

A. Now let's see, if I was going to describe my career. Unfortunate? No (laughter). Unorthodox? Yes, well maybe.

Q. Unorthodox, yes.

A. Yes, I probably have chosen several paths less taken. I have done so deliberately, and not always pleasantly or successfully -- kind of running against the tide or going-off in directions that were figments of my own imagination.

There have been a few successes fortunately. I still sleep indoors and am able to feed myself and my dog, have a couple of nice houses, a couple of nice cars and a couple of lovely children. If there is linkage between what the attitudes were on this campus, what was being taught, the way and manner in which it was being taught and its impact on my career, I have a hard time identifying it. But there is some I suspect.

Q. Are there things that you would like to share in terms of remembrances that I haven't talked to you about or things that you think that need to be remembered from an alumni perspective?

A. Well, I want to tell another story first. This is a problem interviewing people who are older, you see. They can't just say something, they have to tell a story and eventually maybe try to answer your question if they can.

There was one course taught by Dr. Kucera, and it was called something grandiose, (SSU was given to grandiose course titles back then) Organizational Management in the 21st Century. It was a relatively small class, probably not more than sixteen or so.

There was a series of assignments where people figured out what they wanted to do in the course of the quarter in this class. I volunteered to be a reporter of class activities and generate a newsletter about the class every week. I said I would write it, produce it and distribute it every week to talk about what's going on in the class. The premise being: the flow of information inside of an organization will not be diminished in its importance to the organization in the 21st Century, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It typically was four pages and photocopies were distributed to each class member.

I have always been believer in the optimum application of technology to organizations to the extent it is affordable. In those days the EPA was new and well-funded and there was important new technology available and we were using it to extend our capabilities and productivity.

After a few weeks of this class, I made a surprise announcement to the class when I said, "I don't have the newsletter ready to distribute at this moment, but it will be delivered to us right

here and right now.” At that point I opened a device I brought, pushed the button and out of this device came the newsletter -- faxed into the classroom. My conclusion was that a paper boy won't show up with your newspaper anymore; it will be printed for you in your office.

Well again, I don't want to make it sound like I invented the Internet. But it is the same premise: using information technology. Simply access it or ship it when you want it at the push a button. Very common now but pretty radical then.

And I remember that course with great fondness. I have to thank the Xerox Co. for having been the supplier of those pieces of equipment. There were portable equipment that we could drag around.

What else would I share with your Alumni Association? Well, as you said some people do a better job of staying in touch with their roots than others, and I did not for a very long period of time with this university. In recent years I may have overcompensated a bit. I am now involved up to my eyeballs and have been for several years.

My efforts include membership on the Chancellor's Leadership Roundtable, the Board of the UIS Alumni Association and the Advisory Board of the UIS Center for Public Policy and Leadership. Additionally the commencement address in 2005, the Alumni Achievement Award in 2003 and some meaningful contributions to the schools radio station, and even a bit of guest lecturing may make up for the years I was not involved. I think it is important work, and I am glad I have the time to do it.

There's a temptation for a student to see the university as this big monolith that is capable of running itself and supporting itself and going on into the future ad infinitum. And maybe some of that is true, but it doesn't happen without the support and the care and the nurturing and the energies of not just staff and instructors and administrators but its alumni as well who have a role to play, and they need to be engaged in the process.

End of Tape 1

Begin Tape 2

Q. I'm going to ask a question. I would like to ask you, Phil, how you reflect on the fact that you consider yourself more on the conservative side of things and how it was to go to class with all these avant-garde, what people would have called in those times, communist leaning faculty members?

A. Well, there certainly was some ideological divide between much of the faculty and much of the student body. We were encouraged and inspired and allowed to debate, argue vociferously with our instructors because it was a time after all when these very people standing in front of us imparting wisdom to us were themselves pushing back against the establishment of this

university and its administrators and society in general and encouraging people to do the same. Our attitude was, "Hey, you're the man in this room, ok? So you're going to get it from us."

Q. Yes.

A. And they couldn't very well talk out of both sides of their mouth.

Q. Both sides.

A. Yes. At one moment, they wanted us to be bomb throwers but not in here (laughter). So there was a lot of very vigorous give and take.

There was no name-calling, but it stopped just short of that in terms of people saying that those on the other side of the debate just didn't get it, whichever side it might have been. So there was a lot of very open dialogue, not so much monologue.

Q. Interesting. Well, I would like to thank you.

49 minutes 49 seconds

End of Interview