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ORAL HISTORY

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Clay B. Russell
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April 19, 1991

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Date:

4/23/91

Date of Accession: _____

SIUE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Summer 1990-91

Constance Gray Interview, April 15, 1991

Interviewed by Stanley B. Kimball

Filename: GRAY.415

Q: Constance Gray. This is April the 15th 1991. We're sitting here in the theater's green room. I'm delighted to interview you and I want to record that you said you were glad that the university was doing this because a lot of people have a fine, interesting, fascinating, unusual, important, humorous memories of good ol' SIUE that we built and pioneered. We really didn't inherit much of anything. Many of us can take pride in the fact that whatever we are, the best of our kind, whatever that means, - well, it's us and so I have this assignment and now that we're all comfy-cozy, I'll start out with a real quicky question. Connie, why did you come here in the first place?

A. I had to go back to work. It's that simple. I had three children. I had many, many medical bills. I came back to work and planned to work for two or three years and that's been many, many years ago.

Q. Now when you say back, you had previously worked elsewhere?

A. I had previously worked before I had children.

Q. But, not here of course, but somewhere else. You came here when?

A. We moved here in 1960, I started working here in 1964,

Q. I've been here so long I feel like everybody's grandfather. I came in August of '59. I came here because I needed a job. I suspect most of us did. The next question is why have you stayed around so long?

A. Oh, I think there are a lot of reasons. I think that basically I like to work. I think families get used to two incomes. And I think by the time the children are grown - I think it's a natural thing. And I like working. I really do.

Q. All right. Let me bore in just a little. You could, of course, have gotten a job elsewhere.

A. Yes.

Q. You obviously did not. Why did you stay here? Why are you still here?

A. Well, I think when I first started work I wanted to be close to the children. We lived in Edwardsville. I would have made more money in St. Louis, but I wanted to be close to the children. They were all in elementary school and so that was logical. As time went by, it just, you know, I guess I got in my easy position of enjoying my job and knowing what I was doing. There was no reason to change.

Q. I would assume that if they hadn't treated you well you would have certainly gone elsewhere in the area. Where did you work before you came here? Did you ever have any school or academic experience?

A. No. I worked for the president of the Hecht Company in Baltimore as his administrative secretary. My background was a job similar to Wilma Jean's, on a larger scale.

Q. Wilma Jean Bond, secretary to the president.

A. Yes, and I was secretary to the president of a corporation, a big department store chain.

Q. And then you came here and ...

A. And didn't work for 15 years and then came back to work.

Q. I've known you for a good many years in many capacities. What would you consider were your greatest most successful contributions? What do you feel best about having contributed all these years to this place?

A. I think I'm one of those employees who really does enjoy students. I hope, if I've done anything, that maybe I've given them a part of an education that they don't acquire in a classroom.

Q. What do you mean specifically by what they don't get in the classroom?

A. Well, the one thing that a student work job should offer is that they should be trained well enough to go out and work in a secretarial position if that's what they have to do until they can get a job in their own field. You have to enjoy students to spend that much time teaching in addition to doing your own job. You have to allow them to function as intelligent human beings, because they are.

Q. Am I hearing something like helping them in what we sometimes call the real world as against academic life?

A: I think they had better know the real world. But I don't think that there is anything much more real than the academic world.

Q: Oh my.

A: You better edit that.

Q: I am sure it's not real. Since universities have existed there has been the so called town and gown and this goes way back. It is still with us. I don't think that it is bad, it's just the way things are.

You have been here now '64 that is 27 years. In your 27 years, as you look back over a real stretch of time, what has brought you the most satisfaction around here? What made you happiest?

A: Working with students. I really get a great deal of joy from working with students. I talked to one the other day that I knew 19 years ago and she is out working and we had some rough spots when I worked with her and she came over one day last week and said you know Connie, I really appreciate what you taught. You used to make me mad sometimes when you were trying to show us options. And so that is neat, Stanley.

Q: All right now I want to ask when you say working with students, I presume that's in many capacities including student workers, but amplify that a bit. In what ways have you worked with students on campus.

A: Well I serve on the Center Board which is a student group that oversees the functions of the University Center, the business function. Many years ago I worked with the Gamma Sigs on campus.

Q: The sorority.

A: I worked with Sarah Carpenter. She and I met many many years ago; we were fiscal officer and sponsors for them. I think I basically worked an awful lot in the offices with the students. If I am ill and the office needs something those students should be able to operate office as well as I do. Maybe not as well because I file some things in my head. But I don't think they should be given "goffer" jobs. If they are smart enough to be in school, Stan, they are also smart enough to function.

Q: Amen. Now, the students you worked with in the office, the various offices, lets detail before we go any further in how many offices or in how many capacities you have worked here for 27 years.

A: Let's see. I worked one year in Purchasing, that was my first year. I was a full-time worker. I worked in Purchasing which is a great place to learn about the university. It was hard work and at that time it wasn't a fun place to work because of the physical facilities.

Q: If you came '64,

A: There was no air conditioning

Q: You were in Alton or East St. Louis

A: No. I was here.

Q: Oh, you were on this campus. We opened August of '65. Were you in a track house?

A: I worked in Purchasing at Wagner.

Q: Wagner in Edwardsville.

A: Then I came back onto the core campus and I worked in Student Activities for Bob Reed and then I worked for Dale Wantling and Bob. Dale Wantling was at that time was acting Dean of Education and dean of International Services.

Q: Yes, I remember that. We had a trip to Europe in 1962. I remember Dale Wantling. Is he still around?

A: No. He is dead. He died two or three years ago. He was a prince.

Q: Well, I obviously can't interview him. Then after Student Activities and International Affairs then what?

A: That was phased out and I went down to Health Service and I worked down there for 14 years and then I worked in the Information Center for 4 years then they dissolved that position. Then I came over here.

Q: To the Office of the Dean of Fine Arts.

A: Dean Bill Tarwater represents the kind of role model I would like our students to work with daily. He and Dale Wantling represent the best of what education is about.

Q: I count 1, 2, 3 about 6 different areas which should certainly give you insight and perspective on a lot of interesting, unusual aspects of this place and I would like to ask a few questions based on this. In Purchasing, did anything do you have any unusual or humorous? (mixed voices)

A: You know in those days, Purchasing was strictly the old barn of a factory that it was originally so there was no ceiling in there. There was air conditioning and it was right by the railroad tracks. And of course in the summer time, you can imagine the windows were open. The trains went by the soot blew in. When they renovated that place, we worked as the renovated so all this plaster fell down on you. It was kind of interesting. It is a little barbaric to work that way. You can imagine.

Q: I don't think it has ever been ideal over there.

A: It was a factory. It had no separation. Everybody was in big room and the windows were open in the summer time. You couldn't hear when you picked up phones and all the soot from the trains came in and all the dirt from the roads as people came in. So it was kind of interesting working there. It certainly wasn't very plush. It was a great place for someone to begin to work because you really learn what makes the university tick if you work there. There was a real sense of team work.

Q: Any other something you would care to share about your experiences in Purchasing.

A: No. It is a very, very high pressured area to work. After all anything that anybody wants to do has to go through Purchasing. That is pretty much non stop.

Q: The forms and the red tape has to be done just right. I know that.

A: And for a good reason.

Q: I am sure that it is. Then Student Activities. Any highlights or lowlights or anything special you would care to report?

A: As I said, I only worked in Purchasing a year. So when I started in Student Activities, Student Activities was located in the basement of Lovejoy and it was down in the basement. The student year book which we had at one time, Student Government was there, all the food people were there in the anticipation of this building being built and so everybody was in one big room. We used to chase the mice around in the morning. Or if a mouse had crawled into a trash can, the kids would come in and get out and also the vending area was over there. Do you remember?

Q: I remember that the basement was an awful a lot of stuff was down there. Before we move out of Student Activities, any other reflections you would care to share with us.

A: No. I think the dean and I were talking about this one day. That we did not have parking lots per se. And when I worked in the library, I used to park as most of us did out behind the library which was mud. So of course if it rained from the time you came in in the morning when you would go out you sat in. I can remember walking out with my rainboots on and I would sink so deep in the mud it would suck off my boots. We didn't have parking lots. As I am sure you would remember, we didn't have paved side walks. Remember those?

Q: This place was just barely functional when we moved in. I remember it well. Purchasing, Student Activities, International Affairs. How about some highlights, lowlights, interesting, humorous, something you would like to record (mixed voices) for posterity.

A: I think (mixed voices) Dale Wantling in addition to being the Dean of International Services, was, the acting Dean for Education and so he was not in that office very much so there wasn't much training for it as there never is for most jobs on this campus. That was a time when Carbondale had two contracts. You remember the contract in Vietnam and also one in Mali and Ralph Ruffner wanted one of those contracts on this campus and so they picked it up at Carbondale and brought it up here which caused a little flak. Carbondale was angry because they had it taken away from them, Dr. Wantling didn't want it and so it was kind of left to me. I learned very quickly how to take care of five families over seas It was

interesting and I never thought I would learn to do it but I did. Don King and Jim Lucas and all of those people. You remember Don King?

Q: A little, yes.

A: Well those people had been on the Mali contract and of course they both came back from Mali at the termination of the contract to work here.

Q: You mentioned that Carbondale was a little upset. Well Carbondale has frequently been upset ever since I have been here. That's kind of a built in given. Now in Health Services. Did I hear you say 14 years in Health Services? Well surely there is some stories there. It amazed me that Health Services demands cash right up front. No checks, no money order, no credit card no nothing and I can only assume that there must have been a lot of dead beats that would not pay there bills and Health Services had to go that way.

Let's hear some of your great memories of 14 years in Health Services.

A: I don't have many of what I would call happy memories other than again...

Q: Well let's get some unhappy ones.

A: No! We don't need to. Again I had a great deal of student contact so that was neat. It was not administratively well run. It had some enormous personnel problems, absolutely enormous problems that the university chose not to deal with for whatever reason until they got so bad that they could not very well not deal with them.

Q: I just remembered that at one time we had one physician who if he got a runny nose or a little cold wouldn't even show up. I remember he was from St. Louis and this may have been after I don't remember just when this was.

A: He was there.

Q: Well, some of the stories that I heard was that he wouldn't come in if he had the sniffles.

A: That was not true. He could be aggravating, but those were medical people and they should have had more gentleness and more sensitivity to human beings.

Q: I think it was after your time there when they expanded.

A: This major expansion was completed after I had gone.

I don't think they have anymore square feet. In the first renovation they lost a major piece of space. And I don't think they ever got that back. I think that their emphasis is on wellness now. They are very strong on family planning and I am a big booster for that, but I think wellness is the in fad.

Q: Surely there must have been two or three outstanding, unusual things that happened while you were there.

A: I don't think you probably realize that when I first down there the university had an ambulance. Do you remember that?

Q: Yes.

A: That ambulance, most people don't know this, operated 24 hours a day. It was, in fact, used very little on campus. It used to go out and answer some state police calls on the highway. Those young men who manned it, most of them had been in Vietnam. They had been medical coremen in the service. Neat bunch of guys. In that little room next door which was really a closet. We had bunk beds because those guys worked weekends too.

The Mississippi River Festival was still operating when I first went there. And that had a big impact on Health Service because during the time of MRF. We also lived through the drug and alcohol revolution. Health Service had a lot of pressure on it during the time of MRF.

Q: How about some strange people with strange demands all of a sudden showing up. Some severe injury or blood all over the place. I can image all sorts of things that happened down there.

A: I can remember they picked some young man up over at Tower Lake who was kind of out of control and had no clothes on and so forth and then there were other people who were on drugs. You have to

remember again that was in the first part of those years some had been involved with LDS and so some of these Vietnam veterans would have flash backs. They would come into Health Service and they could be very violent. That was a different period. I think most people have forgotten about that. Do you remember the period of MRF all the groupies?

Q: Yes, I do. Drugs and alcohol ruined it.

A: But that was a part of society at that time. Whether anybody liked it or not that's how it was. I think our area had many of those things particularly in that time.

Q: Then you went to Information Services. How about some of the unusual dimensions of information of that office?

A: (Mixed voices) I think that office was a great office. Annette Graebe was a very strong force in that office. She was very good in the P.R. field. The University Ambassadors worked from that office and they were also a good group on campus.

People who call into that office are frequently upset. I think what has happened to them is that they have been passed from office to office and generally by the time that office gets someone they are pretty irate. If there is going to be a bomb threat on campus, that office generally gets it first.

Q: I didn't know that. Did you get some?

A: We had them. They would usually fall during finals week or just before. And is generally to clear a building if a kid hasn't prepared for an exam. So if you phone in a bomb threat and if they evacuate a building you have a little more time to study.

It is an interesting office because you sit in the middle of all the rock bands, which I am sure you would enjoy Stan.

Q: I am afraid I am too old for that. Now, one, two, three the most outrageous or unusual requests you ever had for a speaker or a program.

A: I guess Tommye Walter of News Service who does a great one on the American Outhouse as you know and very much in demand. A women's group from Granite City called and I was always very careful with it because not everybody understood that topic. But these women were very, very, very insistent that they wanted a speaker full of fun and life and on a topic they would never dream of. So I said Tommy was into things historical and we finally got down to the fact that it was a privy. They really went into outer space. The woman was offended, she did not like it, and we terminated the conversation but she called me back the next day and said that she had been talking to her daughter and her daughter had heard Tommy somewhere and so she decided that they would try it and they did and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Q: Now that's priceless. Only Connie could tell us that!

Q: I am picking up on something I mentioned ten minutes ago. Now I may be wrong. It is my opinion that because it is cash up front whenever I go to Health Services, I am not being critical, that's not the point. My impression is that the reason Health Services has cash up front is so many dead beat students and professors have simply not paid after they got medical treatment. Am I wrong?

A: It always was cash on the barrel head. It was very rare and at my discretion or someone else's discretion whether the student would be allowed not to pay and charge it the next day. I suspect that we had more problems with faculty than we did with students.

Q: I have heard this before in the business office. I have made some little mistakes of my own as you would imagine.

A: Oh, I can't imagine.

Q: Yes.

A: No.

Q: Yes. Really I have. Thirty-one years. To make a very long story short, I kind of fussed around a little bit once. And they said hey, you don't understand, you don't know how many dead beats are out there.

A: I think many faculty felt and it was very difficult to get through to them that their prime care could not be taken care of by Health Service for no charge. What they couldn't understand was that it really was supported by students. It would provide emergency care or routine allergy shots for faculty and staff, but it was really a student function on campus. The only reason faculty and staff were even allowed to be cared for was because of workmen's comp.. They had to provide something on campus.

Q: I just want to record one thing myself and that is over the years I was always very pleased with the service I got. I wasn't there very often, but I never went away, shall we say, disappointed.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Let's see you've been in the Dean's office ...

A: Through July.

Q: Not even a full year. On our way in here you said something about one big difference was it was a whole lot more quiet than information services was.

A: It is.

Q: And you also mentioned that you missed a little of that--what we might call the hum of life.

A: Yes, you know, if you move from an office that sits almost in the middle of the Goshen Lounge and when the buses and classes dump and when the rock bands are there and you get a minimum 100 phone calls a day. This, you can imagine, is a cultural shock. I've also never worked in academics. I've worked in the service end of it, but I've never worked in a faculty area.

Q: Well, of course, that's one of the reasons I definitely wanted to interview you. There's lots and lots of academics I'm going to interview. That's one important side, but what the staff knows about this place I want to get. My list of interviewees cleared a couple of desks.

What would you say were your greatest frustrations in the past 27 years around here.

A: Since I came from business, I get frustrated with the fact that the university is very slow to act upon things that are really essential to be taken care of and they tend not to.

Q: I'll let you do that Connie.

A: I think that I get frustrated sometimes and partially my age probably has something to do with that. I don't think we spend very much time teaching kids anything about ethics. It is important that they be taught that and that they also be exposed to these and have role models to learn from. I suppose my age is part of that, but I think you have to educate more than the mind. There has to be some social education.

Q: Yes. The whole person.

A: I think one of the best things about Student Activities, at least in the period of time that I worked there, Bob Reed was in that position asw director and he truly was a teacher. Many of these kids on this campus were first generation. Some of them had a lot of family support to go to college. Some of them didn't because their parents thought they should be in the steel mills. They didn't need an education. I remember how hard he worked at things that seem very simple to me, but these kids didn't know what it was to put on an event. They didn't know that you got dressed up for certain things or that there were certain niceties in life and I remember he taught a great deal of that. I think that's very important if you're going to educate a human being. I really do.

Q: Well, of course all I can do is quickly agree with that. What you're commenting on here brings up so nicely the original concept of this university. The reason we're here is because we figured that we needed to offer this particular area something and we fully realized that - initially at least - most of our student's would be what we call first generation college types. So your comment is most germane to the purpose of this place. I'm not sure we have always spelled our purpose out satisfactorily, but surely one of our great purposes was to offer this part of Illinois something it did not have and needed it. The social dimension with which you've dealt with so long.

A: I don't think we teach much tolerance for differences either. I think we're about a great deal of this as it relates to the black/white question, but you'll never get that if you don't teach people how to be accepting of differences in religion, sexual preferences, whatever differences make the world go around. I think we tend not to be very tolerant. I think we have, as many universities, defeated ourselves.

Q: Who defeats themselves?

A: The university defeats itself in many ways. You can't teach, you can't go out and make the black-white relationship excellent when you have a cast system built in between faculty and staff or between faculty, staff, and students. That exists very strongly on this campus. You can't teach one without the other.

Q: I've got to do something with that comment.

A: Does that statement surprise you?

Q: Yes. Will you please amplify this cast system you referred to.

A: Well, I think that most people including students and staff see this, staff people have served much more in recent years on the senate. I'm on the Senate and so I serve on a lot of committees, there are faculty who have a very difficult time associating with staff and students on university committees.

Q: Well I'm sure they do if you say so.

A: It's very obvious. It comes from a lack of self esteem on their part. What I'm saying is you can't teach one thing if you can't clean that up and make the whole thing good.

I think that's probably eased over the years. I don't think that existed when I first started here. Faculty, staff, and students worked well together. I think as the university grew and we didn't all know each other as well then the cooperative spirit faded.

Q: Would you say we're improving in that or not? Is this cast system as strong as it ever was in your opinion?

A: Stanley, I really don't have to deal with that as much. I have seen it on committees and I can remember one where I really knew it existed. It was when I first served on Long Range Planning and walked in and I had been warned that that's how this particular group felt about staff being there and I thought it was kind of funny, but I also thought it was pretty sad. But, I don't think that I have as much trouble. First of all I know who I am so I don't take that as something personal, but I do know it exists.

Q: All right.

A: I don't have a problem with an inferiority complex. I'm not arrogant, but I don't - you know - I know who I am.

Q: Well, yes and we know who you are Connie. That's good. I'm gonna ask you three questions.

A: If it's my age, I won't tell you.

Q: Okay. No that isn't it. Three questions that we have touched on inadvertently, but now from a different perspective lets just brainstorm some of your best, happiest memories around here.

A: I think most of my memories are very happy, Stanley. I think I've probably given you the impression that they aren't. There have been some very difficult years on this campus, but lets go back to the students. What I see in the business end of it and in the administration end of it and I've found very difficult at times. I really have had so much joy working with students and hoping that I contributed something to their life that it really won't make that much difference to me.

Q: Okay. Now that I want to bore in on because that's excellent. Have you had students come back; have you got any hard evidence, you say you hope you've done all of this. - Do sometimes students come back and say thanks for this?

A: Yes, lots of times and that's neat. I have made friends with some of them and we have stayed friends for as many years. Some of them I knew as freshman and we're still friends.

Q: Okay so you know because they've come back and told you.

A: Yes. I've gotten letters ...

Q: And letters. You have confirmation then.

A: That it worked.

Q: Well that's excellent. It's terribly rewarding isn't it?

A: Yes. It's good.

Q: It makes you think that if one took the trouble to write or tell me, hey maybe others feel the same way but have never taken the time.

A: Well, I think what's neat is - you have to understand that if a student works in an office, they begin to see the university in a totally different way than a student who's not an on campus worker and believe it or not students are very perceptive, nice people. They see the operation of the university as it really is. Then you have to deal with the student and say 'hey, okay so you see this and you don't like it and if you don't like it than don't leave here and practice the same behavior. It is not acceptable behavior.

Q: So, it seems to me that you were able to turn a negative experience into a positive experience for the students.

A: I think it was very positive.

Q: Well I think you have certainly handled that well. I am going to try and remember. My work with students is 99% academic of course, but I like the idea very much and I am glad that we got it

down. We have touched on this somewhat but let me bore right in on three or four of your worst memories or experiences. Maybe some specifics that jump out of your mind over 27 years around here.

A: Walking from the parking lot in cold weather.

Q: Okay.

A: Would you agree with that?

Q: Yes.

A: With glasses freezing to your face.

Q: A couple more.

A: I think that and parking and as I said I can remember walking up and every day I lost a pair of pantyhose because a pebble would get in my shoe and before I could get the shoe off and dump the thing I would, you know, get a run. I used to fuss with Jim Metcalf about what it caused me to work here and I had to deduct that. And he used to have some choice words for me.

Q: That's amusing. That is great.

A: No. It was true and it got to where there were weeks when every day I lost a pair of hose because remember when they used to put that little tiny rock covering on the walks?

Q: Yes. It was very pretty, but not very practical.

A: No, and if you were a female and were in high heel pumps or pumps of any kind that stuff very easily got in your shoe and you would step on it and it just tore pantyhose up like mad.

Q: Now that's priceless. I don't think I'll get that from anybody else.

A: As I say, I can remember going out to get in my car in the parking lot and have galoshes on and sinking down in the mud so far that the mud just pulled my galoshes off. Cars used to get stuck back there. Do you remember that parking lot behind Lovejoy?

Q: Yes. Yes.

A: When it would rain it would turn into a sea of mud. I mean literally.

Q: We frequently refer to those as the good ol' days around here. Did anyone ever deal outrageously or unfairly with you? Just as for an instance on bad memories.

A: I don't even know, Stanley, that that's even something that belongs in this.

Q: All right. From our discussion so far I am getting the impression that you not only feel that you know who you are and feel good, but basically you have had a good experience here.

A: Absolutely. I am very realistic (mixed voices) about the university and since I am old enough to have been around for a while I have very illusions about people.

Q: Good. Now here is a little easier one perhaps. Let's get some humor. We have had some but I am just going to ask you directly for several really humorous unusual kind of things that you have not yet recorded that have happened to you over 27 years.

A: I think there has been a lot of humor, Stanley, when you have worked with kids. I will tell you a funny one and you will enjoy this. Let's see if I can tell it. When the University Center first opened I worked in Student Activities which was the first office over here. When the building was ready they had tours and they had a group of and do you remember the Opapi Lounge when it was originally built with the television room and there were side rooms on that and one of the young ladies from our office took a group of Baptist Women, they were all older women on a tour of the building. Let me see if I can put this delicately. Those rooms were very neat for the students who found all of a sudden they were in love and didn't know how to contain themselves so they got somewhere else.

Q: I think I can follow you.

A: And so Judy was taking this group and she went into this television room and they all got in there and were gathering around there was a lovely young couple doing what came naturally. And when the group of Baptist women, it was just hysterical and this girl came running back ... she was in tears. She absolutely was in tears and she said Connie I said "Oh Judy what's the matter, what's the matter." She was just hysterical and she told me what had happened and I said well you know if all these women are mothers and grandmothers and so forth they have to know the facts of life and true this is not the appropriate place to display them, but they will survive. But she really was just totally wiped out and the women were also wiped out and I always thought that was hysterical. I got a big kick out of that.

Q: It is it's priceless. You may remember, I used to write a lot of those dumb Resident Campus Puritan letters?

A: I think they are great. The kids don't understand them but...

Q: (Mixed voices) One time I said I was walking through the University Center stepping over the usual collections of boy and girl wrestling matches.

A: We had a period of that, particularly on the second floor.

Q: Well that's what I was talking about. My story is unimportant, but your's is priceless. Now let me try again. Let's do another one.

A: Actually this happened when I worked in Health Service and you know they have Senior Fairs and it had rained that day some dear, sweet gentlemen came in to go to the bathroom and when he walked in you know turned to go in he slipped and fell into the john and he got cut. It wasn't funny. I mean it really wasn't funny, but he fell head first into the toilet. Which was hysterical. I mean it wasn't funny (mixed voices.)

Q: I am sure it wasn't, but now it is.

A: You know thinking back over and visualizing this darling little old man falling head first into the toilet was funny. It is now. But you would not wish it to happen.

Q: No. No by no means. All right that's two let's go for a third, Connie. Let's go for a third.

A: Oh, I do remember and you may remember an old back women who used to hang out in the University Center; her name was Ida Mae. She looked like a Tug Boat Annie character and she was on some kind of a special thing where she was paid to come up here. She was from Venice or somewhere down in there and a she came up on the bus and she would hang out in the center. She hung out in the bars in Brooklyn and then she would come to campus. She would get here, faint, and we would have to go over to the center pick the old gal up.

She was very crude there were not many illusions in her life. And she used to come in, and this is again before they remodeled. Remember where the bathroom was in Health Service. They had two cots? And Ida May used to just take all of her clothes off and get to bed and sleep it off and she would stand in the doorway and she would have everything off and she would scratch. They would wake her up in time to catch the 3:00 bus back to East St. Louis or Lovejoy.

Q: There is one thing that I don't understand. Why was she brought here?

A: She had some sort of a grant. I don't know really what it was and she was paid to come up here and go to school.

Q: Well did she ever go to class?

A: I don't think so.

Q: Or just hang out in the ...

A: No. She just hung out.

Q: Oh, I see.

Q: Here is a kind of an open ended question. You can do anything you want to this.

A: I can say no answer?

Q: Right. I am going to read it to you. What would you like to record which might never appear in an official history of SIUE?

A: What would I like to record. Are you talking about a happening?

Q: Well I (mixed voices) I will rephrase it then. I have asked you a lot of questions now what would you like to say other than the questions I've asked you?

A: Well you know and I have always felt this way, Stanley, I think a lot of people are very concerned about young people and there morals and there lifestyle, but I think if you have any doubt where the world is going, you need to work in a place like this and you need to realize that their needs and their hurts and ambitions may not be in the same picture frame, but they are not any different. They are doing things they may regret a few years down the road. They will grow up and learn a lot of things, but I think that it is really neat to work around people. All kinds of people, all ages of people and most particularly young people.

Q: What would you say that the greatest contribution the university has made to the students that you keep talking about, and I am glad you do, and to the community at large?

A: Well I think it had made a huge contribution. I think in terms of jobs for the area, I think in terms of offering education to people at a price that they could afford and opening all kinds of doors and the first generation who graduated may not bear all the fruit but I think that's a place to begin.

Q: Now like that. I have been here so long, Connie, I am teaching the children of my former students. It's conceivable that you had student workers children ...(mixed voices)

A: Whose children are now school...(mixed voices)

Q: This is a long haul and that's why I am interviewing people. Historians have a favorite word perspective. That's why I am going back for years, to us old timers ,if you will.

A: I think I really do, Stanley, I think that it has also given the city of Edwardsville a whole new way to look at itself and I think it has learned that it cannot stay ingrown, isolated.

Q: Here's a personal question if I am allowed one here. I have only I have lived in Edwardsville for about 15 months. We lived in Florissant for ages, but I have noticed so many things and seen so much I may be wrong ,but anyway I am bouncing the question off you. There have been many times when I felt that the city of Edwardsville didn't really appreciate us much out here.

A: I think they do. I think, Stanley what you are feel that when the university first came here it came in as gods gift to women, men, and children and there was an arrogance and these people who were in Edwardsville were not uneducated. Many of them had traveled all over the word they were successful, and some of the first who came from the university was very arrogant.

Q: Run with this.

A: Too many university people would come into Edwardsville and they stepped on a lot of toes. It's like I am the greatest of all things to people and I am here and I am going to pull you out of your misery. Well they weren't in any misery. They were educated, wealthy, astute. We have lived here, it will be 31 years in August, and we moved here from the east coast and we moved on a street where we were the only foreigners. We also had the only little children and the street and nobody could have been nicer than they. They took me out to social functions and introduced me to people, they were good to our kids but we didn't come in with that arrogance. I think that has now lessened because so many people have sons and daughters and grandchildren who have graduated or are going here so many of the towns people are working out here or their wives so you have lost some of that hostility. But SIU deserved some of the anmimosity it got.

END OF SIDE 1

Q: Connie your comments on the university and Edwardsville are a whole new dimension to me and perhaps will be a whole new dimension to a lot of people. To put into perspective your comments, Connie. I want to explain why I said I often felt the university was not appreciated by the community and that is when the book store first came in the retail merchants fought it because they thought we were going to be unfair competition and frankly they are fighting it right now.

I always thought that was unnecessary. Secondly, my opinion is colored by the fact that the hotel/motel association of Edwardsville or Madison Co., or Illinois killed the fact that we would have had an overnight conference center on the second floor, the top floor, of the University Center. Well I have always personally resented that. That is why I am picking up on your comments because I suspect both versions are true.

A: I think there is truth on both sides of the issue. But you have to remember, Stanley, that there has been very little progress in the city of Edwardsville in terms of businesses. It wasn't just the university they fought. The *Wall Street Journal* could have been published in that town and the merchants wouldn't let them.

Q: You mean instead of in Highland?

A: They wanted to come here.

Q: Did they?

A: They wouldn't they needed water; they wouldn't get it for them. They didn't want any industry and some old families didn't want anything to upset their ~~appetite~~^{apple} cart. It was a nice bedroom town; they wanted it that way and they didn't want heavy industry. I think anytime something came they saw heavy industry and an element of humanity that it would bring with them.

And they saw there town changing. There is nothing wrong with that. They felt threatened by it. I don't think it was just the university. There was another business that wanted to come in and it was a whole sale business that would have had no smoke stacks. I think it was a whole sale fruit thing, but it would have put money into the city. They wouldn't let them in. So what you are seeing is that Glen Carbon and Collinsville and everything else has grown because these old merchants weren't going to let them in.

Q: And the result is that downtown Edwardsville is dying.

A: Absolutely.

Q: They big Cottonwood Mall. Glen Carbon got that because Edwardsville would not..

A: Edwardsville would not. You also have to remember to, Stanley that there were people who were with the university who went in with a great deal of arrogance and assumed that many of these towns people were uneducated they may have graduated from Harvard or Princeton, but there was an assumption and I am from SIU and here I am.

Q: Provincialism.

A: (mixed words) Sure.

Q: I have discovered that the best parts of interviews are not planned. They just happen and then I get what I consider my best material. (mixed voices)

A: We were treated very well. We were Episcopalians; we were taken into the church and when my husband Pat moved out ahead of me and Louise Mudge, Mildred Tuxhorn, and Eleanor Godfrey used to take him home for dinner. I think if you get treated like a snob, maybe you treated somebody that way.

Q: I think in the real world they say what goes around comes around.

A: That is true.

Q: What would you like to record that I haven't prompted or bored in or asked you?

A: Oh, I think SIUE is a neat school and I think academically it is getting better and better and better. I have enjoyed my years here. I have, I am sure, put my foot in my mouth. I am a pretty independent woman and if I don't like something I tend to not always to keep my mouth shut.

Q: Well, Amen.

A: Over all I think I really like people a lot and think that 99.6% of the people are absolutely super. Would I come back here to work again if I had to do it again? Yes.

Now if you asked me if I'd get married and have children again, I'd say no.

A: I'm a grandfather nine times over and I can relate to that.

Q: Perhaps my final question, if I could interview but one or two other people who would you suggest?

A: Peggy Kohler.

Q: I know Peggy.

A: Yes, you do. She would be spicy.

Q: Okay.

A: She's worked in the right places to really know Stan. I'm not comfortable with you when you ask me questions about the negative part. I worked in an area that really filler with problems and there would be no benefit in doing it.

Q: All right. Well, you have rather eloquently, but not explicitly made your point.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Now a second person, if I could only interview two more?

A: Who started on this campus. Lets see, who's still around?

Q: Well they don't have to be. They have to be in the land of the living, but they can be retired.

A: Ruth Eidson. Now she is retired but she would be...

Q: Tell me briefly, please.

A: Do you remember Gene Peebles?

Q: Yes.

A: She was his secretary for many, many years.

Q: All right.

A: She worked in the Personnel Office for many, many years until she retired. She's a very bright, very astute woman. Excellent.

Q: Russ. I wouldn't think so.

A: I'll tell you another good person to interview would be Doris Franzi. She's over in the School of Business. And I think one neat thing is in that those people are, each one is so different that I think you'd get a totally different perspective. You know they've worked in different areas.

Q: Well that's what I want.

A: And have different points of view.

Q: I've got to get the broadest.

A: Yes.

Q: Excellent.

A: And I've just worked in some areas where probably if I talked about some things it would be very negative in terms of publicity for the university.

Q: Well how many people could I find that worked in Purchasing, Student Activities, International Affairs, Health Service, Information Service, and the Dean's Office.

A: Not many. My dean is a neat man.

Q: There aren't that many. Yes, William Tarwater....

A: Yes. I think he is. I think, Stan, I would say that he probably epitomizes what I think of a Dean.

Q: Good, Connie, and on that most positive note , I say thanks.

End of tape

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