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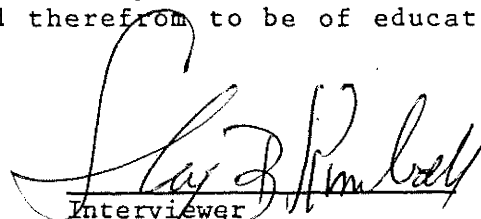
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SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

ORAL HISTORY

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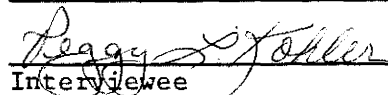

Interviewer

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SIUE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Summer, 1990-91

Peggy Kohler Interview, May 22, 1991

Interviewed by Stanley B. Kimball

Filename: KOHLER.522

Q: Peggy Kohler thank you for dropping by this May the 22nd, 1991 to share some of your memories and reflections for posterity.

You came in 1963 right?

A: Yes.

Q: I came in '59. That makes me ...

A: Elder pioneer.

Q: The elder statesman. However, you qualify admirably for a variety of reasons. The people I'm interviewing first I decided somewhat arbitrarily I guess that I wanted them to have worked on both sides of '65. That is both sides of coming out here to Edwardsville for perspective and background and all kinds of things.

Peggy, why did you come to SIUE in the first place?

A: Well I worked for Olin Corporation and was not terribly happy in my job. I had been there for five years and a woman that had worked there had left and had gone to work at the University, worked for Dr. Kochman who was then whatever the title was back then, Dean of what is now the School of Fine Arts. She was his secretary,

a close friend of mine and she said to me Peggy, why don't you go to work at the University; it's a marvelous place to work. She liked the people. She liked the job, etcetera. So she recommended that I try, so I tried for a job and was hired in Student Affairs. I really liked the interview. I liked the idea of working at a campus. I liked the idea of working at a university. I found out that it's not stable. It's a very moving environment and people out here are not always sophisticated nor very staid and proper--the biggest bunch of nuts I ever worked with in my life so.

Q: . How much difference is there between this world and the real world?

A: There's a drastic difference. The difference between working here at the University even twenty seven and a half years later and with things perhaps not as much fun as it was, but it's a very human. They take a very human approach to the staff out here and always have to a large degree. Things have gone downhill I think over the last number of years and that may just be the change in times, but the difference between working here and working at Olin is like night and day and I mean that very literally. I have always said I won't say I'll never go back to Olin, but I would have to be extraordinarily hungry to do it. It's also, believe it or not, a lot of people don't believe this, but there's a whole lot better pay out here too and there still is for secretarial staff.

Now I can't speak for administration there because I have no idea what the salaries were but secretarial yeah. There were better benefits at Olin back then. Ours are quite comparable now, but in all reality within a year I had far surpassed what I had been making at Olin after five years.

A: I really can't quarrel, Stan. I have to give all the benefit of doubt to the University. With a high school education and as a secretary - of course 27 years here of getting raises - I do. I make a nice salary for a secretary.

Q: A few minutes you thought a university would be marvelous. Well from what I've heard most of it I guess out here has been.?

A: I think I've enjoyed the majority of my stay out here.

B: To what extent, if any, have the various unionizing activities on campus been responsible for the increase of these benefits?

A: Okay now you've asked a real loaded question and I'm gonna give you a real loaded answer okay. First off let me explain. I'm not covered under the union because of my position and I don't know how to describe that. I work in the president's office. I also work for legal counsel and so those two exempt me from membership or exclude me I guess, I'm not sure what word you want to use, from membership in the union. If I were to leave that department and go elsewhere in my position as an Administrative Secretary, say I went to work in one of the schools, I think I would be subject to membership in the

union. That would not make me happy because I don't feel like they've been able to do really that much for the people out here with one exception.

I do understand that they have gotten for Civil Service which we did not have before, what they call extended sick leave. When faculty you start out a new year you've got 60 calendar days of sick leave that are not accruable each year. You've got that immediately available to you at the first of each year I think, and then you get sick leave benefits that are accruable. You can save up benefits until you retire, quit, leave, or do whatever. The extended sick leave benefits are something that the union is responsible for getting for Civil Service.

Q: You started out as a secretary in the office of Student Affairs.

A: Um-hmm. I was a receptionist.

Q: I know that you are an Administrative Secretary in the president's office and also work with Legal Counsel.

A: Right. It's a dual job.

Q: What other positions have you held on campus.

A: None. Well I started out as a receptionist in Student Affairs I stayed in Student Affairs for almost 18 years, Stan. Seventeen and a half years and moved upward until at one point I was working for

the head of Student Affairs whether it be dean of students or vice president and they've used those titles back and forth for twenty-seven and a half years.

Howard Davis was director when I was hired. Later on that title became Dean of Students and then later on Vice President for Student Affairs and then it's jockeyed back and forth. I didn't work for Howard. I worked in Alton for Oz Parker, Osborne Parker.

But being a receptionist, I also worked for Counseling and Testing, Housing, and Student Work and Financial Assistance. All of that came out of that same area and then they started breaking that down into offices as we opened the campus out here. I was originally hired and worked in Alton with some assignment down in East St. Louis and occasionally having to come to Edwardsville. I was all over like dirt back then. Always within Student Affairs. And then in 1981 I transferred upstairs to the president's office.

They abolished the Vice President for Student Affairs position and short of bumping, causing a bumping process within our Student Affairs area they found me another job.

Q: Now working with Legal Counsel that is out of the president's office.

A: Right. Yes.

Q: That's an extension of the president's office. Well certainly that gives you a broad perspective, a broad view, of what's been going on around here.

What do you consider have been your greatest contributions, your most successful activities out here for eighteen years?

A: It was seventeen and a half.. I was there through all kinds of changes. Was one of the few there throughout the changes. You know sometimes there would be secretaries come and go. I will say this much, Student affairs kept a lot of their help for a lot of years back then, but there were an awful lot of comings and goings. But helping to provide continuity. While in Student Affairs I served for six years in the what is now the Staff Senate. I chaired it one year. I was an officer a couple of other years and that I consider to be probably the most beneficial thing that I did for the University was that six years of service representing the Civil Service. We worked really closely with the administration through an awful lot of things that were going on back then.

Do you remember when we were doing a change in the administrative structure of the University and they named the big committee to try to decide what we were gonna do with Jim Brown, Chief of Board Staff. I was involved in helping to set up the committee that decided how the University would be administratively set up and that was a challenging time. We were doing some growing and some changing and things used to change so rapidly. I watched so many changes, but amazingly we evolved back so many times into what we had changed from ten years before and we've gone back and forth with that.

Q: From my point of view we have been doing that since August of 1959.

A: You're not far wrong there either.

Q: It is an ongoing, constant reevaluation process...

A: Yes. It is.

Q: ...which I hope; which I trust is proper and positive but let's find out from somebody who knows. You mentioned change, changes and then I think you said some of the changes kind of brought you back to square one. Have most of those changes been wise and positive in your opinion?

A: I think a lot of them have. Now you've got to be aware I'm gonna display some of my prejudice okay because I'm still a very firm supporter of Student Affairs.

Q: Please do.

A: When they abolished the vice presidential title back in '81, I thought that was probably one of the biggest mistakes that had been made in a long time. Now part of the problem and I won't dare to try to read Earl Lazerson's mind, but part of the problem was a problem with Scully Stikes who was the vice president at that time and it's always been my guess that part of the change in Student Affairs was done because they did not like the way he administered the student affairs program. I won't quarrel with that. I liked Scully. He was probably one of the best bosses from a boss/secretary point of view that I ever worked for. I probably grew more and was challenged more

under him than anybody else that I've worked for in all of these years. At least challenged to use my brain and not just my typing fingers.

However, I can understand where some people might not have liked his style, but I think the recent changes, we're right back to having a vice president for student affairs. It took them a little longer than I thought it would but quite frankly I thought this would be done about five years ago. So I've watched that happen and I feel like if they didn't, you know personal opinion, if they didn't like Scully they should have just simply canned him.

In the long run, I think it was probably somewhat harmful, because it led to such a lack of stability at a time when the students were feeling pressure, stress and needed stability and I think the student's at that time, I know they did, felt as though, well who's going to be representing us and most especially the black students felt that at that time.

Whether right or wrong I know there was some panic and stress that was voiced in my presence by a number of the black students and I think students in general felt this as a problem. Now they had Dan Doelger as Dean of Students and not too long after that I was gone from Student Affairs. He hired Connie Rockingham. They had her come in as assistant dean and I think the students fairly quickly realized they were not without representation on campus. We're not without an administrator who's here to serve our needs as well as disciplinary needs which they don't like to remember.

Another big mistake, personal opinion only, was hiring Barbara Teters. And amazingly I served as the secretary to the Search Committee on that. I think that was a very disruptive time that the University maybe didn't need and I could be wrong. I may be proven wrong given history.

Q: Now you've opened up as I rather expected you would some very interesting doors. Scully Stikes and Constance Rockingham and you have mentioned black students-- how would you evaluate the significant efforts of this University to be successful in their relations with black students? Have we done a pretty good job?

A: I'd have to give the University a very high rating from my own personal standpoint. I think the University has attempted in it's many areas to serve the black student as well as they have served white students. I think all students on a basically equal level.

I'm sure that you could find a black student or maybe many who would disagree with that statement, but I think basically all in all out of the twenty-seven and a half years I have to say I think the University has probably made more strides than other institutions of higher education and in the corporate world as well.

Q: Did you ever have anything to do with the BSA - the Black Student Association?

A: Yes I did. Um-hmm. Yes I did. Very much. As a matter of fact one time I was an honorary member which was a joke.

I was active, well not active, but I was involved with BSA as I was with many of the student organizations though I wasn't involved with them on a day to day basis. Two of my bosses, both vice presidents, - Ramon Williamson being the other and Scully Stikes were black and were very active in their support of black students and therefore very involved with BSA at times and sometimes on a negative level too.

If they felt BSA was getting a little carried away wanting to swing the other direction then they would caution and discipline them if necessary and try to give some level to their approaches and not ups and downs. You know everything can't be at the peak of a mountain. Nor should we immediately dive into a valley therefore BSA was in and out of the office a great deal and so many of the presidents and I can not think of a single name of a BSA president off the top of my head. I'll go home tonight and think of a dozen of them.

I can remember some of the other students though that we were involved in it. But Ben Quillian was on campus, and I think Ben was maybe what's now Human Resources, Affirmative Action back then. At any rate I was going to make Gloria Jumper, our receptionist, her birthday was coming up and I was going to, because she loved sweet potato pie. We had raised sweet potatoes that previous fall so I said, hey I got sweet potatoes at home. I'll make her a couple of sweet potato pies instead of a cake and everybody agreed they thought that was a good idea.

Ben Quillian made the comment to me, oh come on lady, he says a white person can't' kidding of course, a white person can't make a decent sweet potato pie, and I said now listen I was born and raised in the south and I've eaten sweet potato pie all my life and I'm older than you are.

He said that he wanted a piece of this pie in order to judge and he was kidding around and he laughed and walked out. Well of course when I brought the pie, I cut a wedge and took it up to him and he sent me back a letter confirming that I was, he was the advisor to BSA, and he confirmed that I qualified that I qualified to become an honorary member of the BSA.

Q: That's good to have recorded. Very important to have recorded from somebody who was on the firing line.

A: Talk about firing line, the black students took a great exception to the reaction to Kent State because just prior to that they had had a similar problem at Jackson, Miss. with students taking over in the administration building and one of the students was shot. Our black students were very aggravated that white america did not respond to that situation and yet when white students were shot at Kent we - everybody went nuts. So the black students minded that very, very much.

There were a lot of harsh feelings, animosities in the early 70s that we dealt with or early to mid 70s. A lot of them came through our office. I think that's another reason I was so involved at one time with BSA.

Q: Now let's move on to the approximately ten years I gather you've been in various aspects of the president's office.

A: Pretty much doing exactly what I'm doing now.

Q: With Legal Counsel.

A: Um-hmm. Legal Counsel and Chuck Mecum is the president's assistant and I've worked for him and for John Gilbert and his colleagues.

Q: What do you feel best about that you have accomplished in the president's office in general?

A: There's a terrific amount of work that comes out of that office and and I've helped in that aspect of hopefully keeping the day to day running of the upper level administration, secretarially keeping that running. On a personal level I can't say that I've really done any growing during that time.

There is one project that we did a few years ago. I don't know if you've ever seen the policies and procedures books of SIUE. These are two large binders and they're 6 or 700 pages long. I helped produce that.

Q: If I ever did see one I'm sure it would have exhausted me just looking at it.

A: It is just nothing but pages and pages and pages of policies that affect the University and it's updated quarterly. Now Chuck Mecum is the one responsible for pulling together all of the policies that have been being produced since 1957.

At any rate after he went to work in the president's office as the president's assistant that was one of the chores given to him and he pulled together every policy written from whatever source dealing with the University in general, not individual school internal operating procedures and stuff like that because that we don't get involved in. Your school has it's own operating papers and that's up to your school. We don't produce those.

Q: You were obviously involved in this.

A: Yes. I did all of the typing on that and putting it on a word processor and then I do the quarterly updates as he produces from Curriculum Council, Welfare Council, whatever. If they produce policies that affect a new or change an old policy then we're involved in the updating of the policy books.

Q: What goes on in the Legal Counsel office? What is your work there? What does go on?

A: Okay they are basically here to advise the administrative officers in the administration of the University. In other words they're not here to provide legal assistance or legal advice for personnel for personal kinds of things. They advise the president, and the vice presidents, whomever those people say well listen John

or Debbie or whoever you know we would like you to advise Stan Kimball on off campus class work. Then they give their legal advice which can be preventive or correctional or whatever in the terms of running of the University.

Q: So it would be for top level administrative University wide legal position as against any specific positions.

Q: I think we used to have full time Legal Counsel. Now I understand it's pretty much on demand.

A: It has been for a number of years. We had full time legal counsel the last time when Larry French was here which would be before my moving upstairs. He was the gentleman that was killed in a car accident I believe.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: And at that point they decided to move to having part time legal counsel and they have a contractual agreement with the law firm Reed Armstrong to serve as legal consultant to the University.

Q: What have been some of your greatest frustrations here over the years?

A: At one time I made a comment that I was greatly challenged in my position which was a good challenge. I grew in a position starting as a receptionist and grew into, I would like to think, being an administrative secretary, almost an administrative assistant, but not in actuality, to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

I was challenged to the point of growth. I wanted to grow. I wanted to learn. I wanted to expand. I wanted to do things with a higher level of responsibility and taking and living with that responsibility. The movement in the last ten or twelve years (this may go back to when Shaw started) has been to rely more upon the professionals and your staff, you know your professional, administrative staff, rely more on your faculty.

Civil Service are hired basically to do their function and that's all and that's like type work if you are a secretary and so forth. I have felt in the last ten or so years that I really have not done any growing. If anything I have reduced and now quite frankly, Stan, I'm at times a glorified typist and that's frustrating after having been in the work world for thirty some odd years.

That's a frustrating thing for me. I had not realized that was going to change, and I liked what I was doing before. I liked the higher level of responsibility and I liked feeling valuable, not just useful but valuable, and I'm not too sure that I feel that was a lot of the time anymore.

Q: What an excellent comparison, useful and valuable. Anything else along this frustration line?

A: I know we've done a number of staff cuts in the last few years and of course budget is a big problem out here. Budget is a frustration for me, but not as pointed to the University. The lottery was established to provide funding for education and then of course the legislature, powers that be, decided they would put that over in the general fund and I'm hard pressed to believe that all of the lottery funds go to education in addition to what we needed before which was the way I think the public understood it. That's a personal frustration of mine.

Q: If that lottery money does go to education, other monies that used to go to education don't.

A: That's right and that's not the way I think that the general public understood it.

Q: No.

A: That's a giant frustration for me because I have watched some of the cuts and some of the hardships if you will that have occurred out here and over the last number of years and think to myself they were totally unnecessary. Now I realize that higher education is not the only funding that was supposed to be done. I find that we're basically decreasing and that really aggravates me.

Q: When I came here in '59 the state of Illinois was one of the top states in support of education. Now we're down in the 40s someplace.

How about some of your best, happiest memories?

A: Oh, god there are so many at times. I think some of my happiest memories just simply involve knowing the people out here, people that are here now, people that are gone and not only gone from the University but gone from the world.

Q: Yes.

A: We have lost so many. Bob Prorise being one of them yesterday, not that he passed away yesterday, but they did his memorial service and it was truly a moving experience. I had known Bob quite well.

Some of my funniest memories involve standing in my window at Student Affairs and mine was on the outside facing the University Center. Remember when the streakers were on campus? I had everybody in my office. I was the most popular woman on the second floor of Rendleman building because my window looked out and they could watch the streakers come through. I'm like, would you people get out of here and leave me alone because I thought the whole subject was not only funny but ridiculous.

One year in the winter time, I had drawn my drapes and was looking out because it was snowing and we've got one of the most beautiful campuses in the world out here especially when it is snowing if you don't have to walk in it or drive in it. I happened to look out the window and the students were having a snowball fight in front of the center and it had kind of died down a little bit. Just then John Rendleman who was our president and had been for maybe a couple of years at that point and whoever was with him had come

walking out of Rendleman building and around the corner and were going into the front of the Center. I don't know why he didn't cut across the back door, but he came out the front that day and he made the turn and started toward the front door and somebody hit him right in the back of the head with a snowball and I thought woops. I wonder if that kid knows who that was.

He did. John turned around and started the biggest snowball fight you have ever seen in your entire life and here he is dressed to the nines obviously going to a meeting and he had on one of his really nice, nice suits you know and he's out there throwing snowballs worse than the students were. Hollering like mad. He sounded like a kid out there and I was sitting up in my office just crying. It was - he was so funny in all of it. I caught him in the building later and I said do you have to go home and change clothes and he says no but I about froze my blank off in that meeting. I thought that was just a neat memory that day.

Q: Some others?

A: I don't know. I had tried to really think of some and again most of them involved the people out here that I have known because I think probably that's one of the nicest experiences I've had is a lot of the people that I have met out here.

You know another funny memory I've got. A couple of years ago you were involved in it sitting at the lunch table

Q: Now, now be careful, Peggy.

A: You know that table, Stan. They had just had one of the infamous debates of the presidential candidates and David Huntley said the next day at lunch, well, I think we have seen our new president last night, and you looked up and with a very large heartfelt sigh said, oh dear God I hope not, and I of course just about swallowed my plate because it cracked me up so I agreed very much and I figured obviously we must have agreed in at least that time in political viewpoint. I went home and I told my husband about it that night and he strangled.

He laughed so hard and I've never seen him laugh like that, but it was the first time I had ever seen David Huntley speechless and I think that was the other thing I appreciated.

Q: This table you mentioned, we call it the Piranha Table.

A: I've never heard it called that.

Q: I like to call it the longest running, floating crap game on campus.

A: It could be that too.

Q: But it's fifteen years old at least and people come and go. There's a hard core, but all kinds of people from all kinds of disciplines and office drift in and out. For me anyway it's one of my most pleasant, I'm there every day. It's one of my most pleasant experiences. I'm glad you mentioned it. It should be noted somewhere.

A: Oh, yes. It should be.

Q: A little joke I'll share with you. I will sometimes refer to it as my main connection with the real world and the people that hear me say oh Kimball are you in trouble if this is your main connection with the real world.

A: They could have a good point, Stan.

Q: I'm afraid they do.

A: You know some of the people that sit down at that table and some of the discussions and of course I'm not there every day, but when I have been there have been some of the neatest discussions.

Q: Yes.

A: Some that you know I walk away thinking Oh my God we're in trouble and others I go away with a funny feeling, a sad feeling you know whatever but there's one thing about it, there's not a soul that sits down at that table that doesn't get their mind stretched in one way or another. I enjoy it when I do sit down there.

Q: Well we enjoy having you. There's the unwritten law that nothing ever is repeated and we get quite candid and quite critical but I've never known anyone who regretted being candid and that's important.

A: Yeah and I think that's something that has to be understood when you sit down there, Stan, and you know that's something I've always felt though and I never felt threatened when I sat down there whatever I said was just that. It's what I had to say and that it wasn't going to come back someday and cut my throat.

Q: Let's get a woman's opinion of a woman known as Barbara Teters.

A: Ohhhh. One word?

Q: Well let's start with one word.

A: Disaster. And see a few years ago before I changed my ways, Stan, I would have said a whole lot worse than that. She absolutely had no interpersonal relationship skills whatsoever. When she decided something should be done, do it and if she got mad about something god forbid if you were the first person to walk by her because she was just as apt to decapitate you as to look at you. I've heard her many times just literally yell, scream, and cuss at somebody standing in the office and thinking to myself and you know what my language used to be like - I mean you know it used to be pretty bad, but I can say that she even embarrassed me because at least there are times when you do things like that and you always, if you do, you do it in privacy. You don't do it where everybody that walks on the third floor of the Rendleman building can hear you and

especially if you're going to address a staff person and discipline you don't do it out in the front office and I've watched her do that a few times.

One time I refused to do something because it was contrary to what my boss had given me specific instructions on how to do and so she said no I would rather you didn't do it this way, Peggy. I want you to do it this way and I said, but he was very specific that I had to follow these steps and I understood why he told me to do it that way and she reared back to her full height and said do you know who I am? And I said yes ma'am. And she expected me to go further and I didn't. It just really dismayed her and she said I'll talk to your boss. And I said he'll be in tomorrow at 10:00 am if you'd like me to have him call you. It made her so mad she could have literally throttled me. She talked to him and he says well she was following instructions and that was the end of the conversation as far as he was concerned.

She just felt like her word should be law at all times. There were times when it should be, but she was a very hard lady to work with and I watched her treatment of a lot of people and I didn't like that. Now I have heard that people say that they thought she was hired to do a hatchet job and that could be. I don't know.

Q: Were you involved in relating the University to the community and if so please comment?

A: Are you talking on a formal level, Stan, or just myself as an employee and my relating of the University that way?

Q: Well in your, as an employee yes. I don't know whether your offices ever worked with the community.

A: There were community service programs within the Student Affairs office and naturally in the president's office. However, I personally did not go out and make an address to a community group or something like that. However you know I think we all relate the University to the community by our very actions and how we feel about the University and so forth.

Q: Okay. So then in a general sense.

A: Um-hmm.

Q: In the Office of Student Affairs in particular to what extent were you involved with working with the educationally deprived?

A: At one time with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. There are other areas too. I worked in Counseling and Testing which was part of student affairs.

I was involved in testing students of various capacities. Including educationally deprived. We worked rather closely with Larry Taliana and Bob Daughtery in the advisement office back then in helping them to evaluate students.

Admitting former prison inmates was a little bit different. Dealing with them was a little bit different back in the 60s and 70s than it would be just your standard student coming in.

Q: To what extent were these efforts successful? Or to what extent do you feel good about your part of the program ?

A: Well I felt like anything that was attempted at least either worked or evolved into a working situation where they were helping students.

I'd have to say that I felt good about that and there are some students who were helped to be admitted to the University who didn't successfully complete a degree but I'm not sure I couldn't call them a success in spite of that.

Q: Overall what contributions do you feel the University has made to our area?

A: Some of our local school systems were not terribly good. I was so glad to see that the University made a move. I'm sorry , the state made a move to do some standardizing of requirements so that school systems had to start using quality faculty. The University took a number of raps. I don't know if you ever read the *Alton Telegraph* very much or not, but the editorial page used to just tear this institution up about every chance they got. But I think the university has helped in making people realize how important education is.

Q: To what extent has the community in which we are located, Edwardsville, how welcome and how have they received us in your opinion over the years?

A: When they started building this immediate campus in Edwardsville I think in Alton and East St. Louis they were probably welcomed. Bearing in mind that in '57 I was just coming out of high school and not terribly aware of town-gown kinds of things. When I went to work for the University in '63 the relationship was not good. Of course there were people who did not want to give up their lands and this created some bad feelings. I think also Edwardsville was influenced by those people.

The University, as you know one of our big main objectives, one of the major portions of our mission statement is service to the local community, to our surrounding region. I don't think anybody could fault the University that it hasn't been.

Q: Anything else you would like to add to the record on any of the questions I have asked or any questions you would like to address?

A: I have never lost my pride in the fact that I work here. I am proud of the University and I'm proud of it's accomplishments. There are negative aspects I think to anything in life. You can certainly look for them. You can dwell on them and there are times when I do dwell on them, but I've never, again I repeat, I've never lost my pride in working for the University nor my pride in what it has accomplished in this area and I think that probably if we tell people with a certain amount of pride, I work at SIU, or we have a kind comment to make about the University as our employer I think it only reflects well on the University.

Q: Peggy, as an interviewer let me stress that your positive comments are believable because you have been candid and pointed out that as in all walks of life there are problems. Otherwise if you had been Miss Sweetness and Light and Little Miss I don't know what, we would tend to dismiss all of your statements as just something you wanted to say that was nice because you're on tape.

A: If you'd have gotten that kind of a response, you'd have known automatically I wasn't the one in the room speaking. Candid is all I know how to be as you well know.

Q: Well that's why, Miss Peggy Kohler, you are in my office right now. Well what can I say except I thank you. The University thanks you and who knows off into the future when we are both away who's going to be into this stuff and so thanks for coming over Peggy.

A: Thank you. You're welcome. Thanks for inviting me. When I got your letter I thought I don't believe this. I like this.

Let me ask you a question you've got down here if you could interview one or two other people who would I suggest.

I'm thinking in terms of people who have been out here prior to the opening. Through all of the mud. I forgot about all of the mud. How could I forget about that. God, I remember the opening day of this campus. I remember that first winter with snow up to the nose at one point. As a matter of fact that was the second time they had ever closed the University.

When I worked at Alton, that very November, well four days before my wedding, John F. Kennedy was killed and they closed the University at that time. They said that was the first time it had ever been closed and by golly snow closed it the second time because we had snow that was well halfway up my legs. Of course I know that any other person that knows me would say but that's not very far so I'll say it.

But at any rate I was thinking in terms of Vernita - it's now Vernita Dellape. Vernita started out here in '64 and she was in a few other capacities. Connie Gray.

Q: I'm glad you mentioned Connie. I have interviewed her.

A: Okay.

Q: And she had the same thing to say about the parking lots and the snow and the mud.

A: We all remember that.

Q: Yes.

A: Eating out of the machines in the cafeteria of the basement of the library.

Q: Okay. Anything else?

A: No. I can't think of anything.

Q: All right, Peggy.

A: Thanks, Stan.

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Stan:

While reviewing this material, I happened to think of a couple of things which you may or may not want to include in your history. Has anyone brought up the annual mystery dealing with Rodin's Walking Man? If you recall, at Halloween each year he would mysteriously gain a pumpkin head and a pair of shorts to wear. For several years, it threatened to become a tradition.

Also, the painting of the rock on the Morris Quadrangle outside of the Library. I remember when Keith Moyer (original Director of Housing) would go out with Tom Evans (Assistant Dean of Students) and clean the paint off the rock. Practically the next day, one of the student groups/organizations would have painted it again.

I also remember there used to be a table in the cafeteria which had been reserved for the students to carve initials in or whatever, to encourage them from destroying all the others in the cafeteria.

Do you remember Tony Zeppatello and Bill Crabb and their musical group that used to hold 'community' sing-alongs in the cafeteria every once in awhile. And, yes, I did say Bill Crabb. That, of course, stopped when Tony died.

Gee, I had better quit reminiscing or you'll never get back to work.

Thanks so much for asking me. I really enjoyed the "stroll down memory lane" the other day.

Reg Kohler