

**Phyllis Werner, Student Services Director &
Former Evening and Weekend Student Services Coordinator
Transcript of Interview for the History SIUE Oral History Project
Interviewed by Ellen Nore-Nordhauser
March 8, 2006**

Ellen Nore [EN]: It is Wednesday, March 8th, 2006. I'm interviewing Phyllis Werner, for the SIUE 50th Anniversary History. And so, the first thing I like to ask you is, I've read about it, but I'd like to know how you got the job here. I know you were out west and [EN laughs] ...

Phyllis Werner [PW]: I have very unique history with SIU. Um, in the summer of 1974, I moved to Tacoma, Washington. My husband at the time was in the army. And we were, he was stationed there. I had previously been an elementary school teacher doing substitute teaching, and other things like that. And I moved to Tacoma, Washington, where teachers were a dime a dozen.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: And through an organization, a business women's organization that I was a member of, I made some contacts and found out that at the local Air Force Base, McChord Air Force Base, they were looking for school representatives. So I went and there were two positions open. I interviewed with the Local Education Services Officer. And he basically said, "Well, we've got a position with SIU Edwardsville, with our MBA program, or we have a position with University of Southern California with their Master of Science program." We only had one car. And the University of Southern California program required that the individual also work at the army post, which was right next door. Well, since we only had one car, and I knew I wouldn't be able to move around during the day, I said, "Well, I'm interested in the SIU position." The woman that had had the position was due to leave on maternity leave, and she wasn't coming back. They hired me practically on the spot. [EN laughs] I had not met anyone from SIU Edwardsville. I really knew nothing much about the school. But the education officers said, you know, that's fine. And on November, around the first of November of that year, I got a phone call from my friend who represented another school at the base. She said, "Oh," and I don't even remember what the woman's name was. "She had her baby." So I don't know what I did. I must have gone into the education office and said, you know, "Well, do you want me to start?" And they said, "Sure, start working." So, I went to the office, and I didn't know what I was doing. I must have called somebody and said, "Well, I'm starting," or something like that. And I started working for SIU, on the, I think it was on the fifth of November of 1974. Having never seen the campus [PW laughs] knowing nothing really about the university. But then as time progressed, the other interesting thing was I didn't even really know how to use a Selectric typewriter. And that's what we used at the time. I mean, I had used an old portable typewriter. So, I had kind of an interesting situation and met then, of course, some of the faculty members and eventually met the Dean. And it's just so strange. I never saw the campus until 1976 [both laugh]. And, but I started out part time as a uh...

EN: [EN sneezes] Excuse me.

PW: I started out part-time working um, um, you know, like 50% of appointment working for, I think it was for the Office of Continuing... It was either Continuing Education or School of Business, I forget now exactly. I'd have to go back and look at it, you know what my original contract was.

EN: I think it was the School of Business from the stuff in the press releases, but maybe...

PW: I...I...

EN: ...that wasn't quite right.

PW: It, it may have been, and I've done some looking back and cleaning out all my files and that. The earliest contract I came across was not till 1985.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: But I think it started off actually as, as a part time appointment with Continuing Education.

EN: Okay.

PW: And then it expanded to 75% time with the School of Business paying my additional amount. And then eventually, within another, within three years, I was actually a full-time employee with the title of Center Director. And I worked with recruiting MBA students in the Tacoma-Seattle area, um, registering students, taking care of their needs. How I wish now that we had had some of the technology that we have, that we had had then, some of the technology we have now because everything was done by mail and by phone calls. And everything was done, you know, long distance and dealing with things. But I, I was responsible for recruiting students and for um, um, seeing to their needs, helping, making arrangements for the classes to be offered there on, on the base. I found it truly rewarding. And really enjoyed what I did. It was a weekend MBA program. I eventually started working on the MBA myself. And managed to... I didn't actually finish it till I moved here to the main campus. But oh along about 1984, in January of 1984, I was informed that the ah, they were phasing out their off-campus MBA sites, and that the one at McChord Air Force Base would be terminated within a year and a half, which meant I was going to lose my job. Being originally from Ohio, I had been wanting to come back into the Midwest, and for whatever reasons, my marriage was no longer a part of my life. And it was like, "Okay, I'm not going to have this job anymore. And I don't have any reason to stay here." And about, within a, Dave Ault was Dean at that time. Or it was, maybe he was the Associate Dean. And about the same time that I was given that notice, I found out that there was a position open here on campus for the coordinator of evening, well at the time they called it Weekend University.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: So, I applied for that position. Came in March to interview for the position. [PW laughs] By the first of April, I had all my possessions in a U-Haul truck, with my new car that had no air conditioning [both laugh] was being towed behind. And I moved to Edwardsville to take over the position of, or to take on the position of Coordinator of Weekend University. At that point in time, I already had nine and a half years with SIU.

EN: Hmm.

PW: So I spent nine and a half years out in Washington State and made the transition out here and knew no one.

EN: So what did you do when you just drove into town? [Crosstalk] Did you stay the motel and look for...

PW: Well, I mean, I had. No, I mean...

EN: ...because you couldn't look the web for a place...

PW: ...well, no. When I came here in March, by that time, I had been here several times and had gotten to know several people.

EN: Oh, okay.

PW: Because they had conferences for us, like in '90, in '86, no '76, and then maybe another one in '78. And every couple of years, they would have conferences.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: And I knew I had met various people when we would be out here for conferences. But when I came for the job interview, they flew me out in March of '83 for the interview. I guess I was operating under the principle that you know, if you want it, this one, might be, this one's going to be yours. And I actually went out looked for an apartment and hope somebody that, you know, hold this one for me, I'll know within a couple of weeks whether I'm going to have this job. So I had an apartment here in Edwardsville...

EN: Well, that's good.

PW: ...all lined up. And, but I had all my possessions in a U-Haul truck that took five days to drive across the country. [EN laughs] And I arrived in Edwardsville with everything I owned, in a 20-foot truck and on the 8th of April in 1984. And I basically took a week's vacation and then started working for Continuing Education. The following... at that time Weekend University was a part of Continuing Education. I worked for Christa Oxford. She was the Director of Continuing Education. And I was also at that point finishing my Master's in Business. I had like three courses left to go, when I moved here.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: So, I finished those, while I was here. Actually took classes at the site in St. Louis, at the off-campus site in St. Louis. And took one course I think on campus here. That whole, the off-campus MBA program was a weekend program. So, by being a student in that program, I could, I spoke very highly of it. I don't know that I could have done my Master's any other way. [EN laughs] In fact, I did one evening class and that evening class just about killed me... it was every week, you know, but the weekend classes were something that was really interesting. I can show it to you, and even give you a copy, if you want. There was an article that Tommy Walter put the old Alumni mag-magazine, back in 1985, I think yes.

EN: I haven't seen all the copies of that.

PW: I have it.

EN: So, I sure, I would like to see that.

PW: I have a spare one...one, then I can let you, let you see.

EN: Good. Well, I could donate it to, back to the archives.

PW: You can do that.

EN: Yeah, with your interview. I will.

PW: Yeah, do that. And remind me before you leave.

EN: Okay.

PW: But I, she was interviewing a couple of the students that had been at one, at bases that had closed, at sites that had closed and they've come here to ah, complete their masters here and then to interview me for that program, too. So anyhow, in April of 1984, is when I started working on campus, with ah, at the time it was called Weekend University. Planning all the scheduling of those classes, working very

closely with Christa Oxford, I can still remember the summer. One summer I think the Provost had given extra money for anyone that wanted to teach courses in the summer. We offered 91 courses that one summer.

EN: Was this only on the weekend?

PW: Yeah. It was that, they were Saturday and Sunday classes. The classes were offered either Saturday mornings, from like eight to 12. Maybe it was 9 to 12:30. And then there were afternoon classes from 1 to 4:30. And then for a long time, for a number of years, we offered Sunday classes from like 2 to, 2 to 5:30 or something like that. Eventually, eventually the Sunday... classes wasn't probably till about '88 or '89, that the, this Sunday classes may have, they stopped offering Sunday classes.

EN: Goodness. And so a person could complete their general studies and...

PW: Well, I think that was the original intent with that program. I mean, we advertised. There were even bus, they had even purchased signs for the side of buses.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: There's a picture which I think I've donated to the archives, which is a picture of a metro of a St. Louis bus that had the big sign on the side [EN laughs] that said, "Take credit for your weekends." That was...

EN: Okay.

PW: ...that was the, kind of the, the catchphrase was take credit for your weekends. And I think originally that was their plan. And they tried to you know, you can get degree in liberal studies and philosophy or whatever. They had a... I don't know if I still have it anymore. They had information about um, evening and weekend, that you could get your degree on the weekend. I was trying to see... I've been cleaning out my files so much that I don't know.

EN: Did anyone ever complete their degree that... I guess...?

PW: You know, it was really, it eventually, I think eventually it became a problem with getting the upper division courses that you need.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: If you look at what's in the archives, under Evening and Weekend, the brochures, I know I donated all of those...

EN: Yes.

PW: ...When I cleaned out this office, and showing that the, how many courses were offered each term.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: And that, you know, it was probably about 19...'80...'88 or so when we real, '88 or '89, when we finally, when we really phased out the whole Weekend University being a big thing. I think some of that had to do with the change of administration. Weekend University had been the, the, as I understand it, the brainchild of Barbara Teters...

EN: Oh.

PW: ...Who was the Provost at the time. And I don't know, I've lost track of what year she left and that.

EN: She left in 1986.

PW: She left, she left in '86?

EN: She retired in July of 1986. And David Warner became the Provost.

PW: Oh, okay. Well, and then we kept up the Weekend University for a couple more years. And then eventually... we still offer some Saturday classes.

EN: Yes.

PW: But now we average maybe only, you know, five classes at a time. This, this term, we're offering two, an English 102 and a Speech Com.

EN: Oh, I see.

PW: The Speech Com. 105 this term, and a couple of chemistry labs, because they didn't have any other time. But Public Administration still offers weekend classes and Business School. Business still offers weekend, you know, Saturday classes, again classes. But the glory days of Weekend University were...

EN: How many students were enrolled? And did you handle all the administration, the registration, the record keeping?

PW: Well, not so much that because here, Weekend University on campus, it was all just a class scheduling.

EN: Okay.

PW: Students still enrolled through classes. We kept our office open on Saturdays, from like, 8, at one time, it was eight till 3:30 or 4:00. And Sundays, it was like noon to 3:30. When I first made the transition here in 1984... [Phone ringing] ... Oh well. When I first made the transition here in 1984, I mean, I worked Sundays. That's when I worked was Sunday afternoon. I usually had like Friday afternoon off or something, because I would work the Sunday afternoon. I had a secretary that covered the office, you know. And between the two of us we covered work, you know, the office whenever it was open.

EN: Oh my.

PW: And in the office...

EN: You're gonna love retirement?

PW: In continuing education. Well, you know, at the time, it was like nothing stays the same forever. You know, it was, we would be open. I don't even know that we did that much business. I think at one time we you know, kept logs of everything we did. And we would be, that there was actually even bus service from East St. Louis center.

EN: Oh, that's good.

PW: That um, they would, you know, start the bus, I guess the bus left from here would go down to St. Louis center, pick up students and bring them to campus, and then take them back. So we had that. You had to make sure that that was available to students. And oh, I don't remember all the things that we worked on. But mainly it was just the support services being there, you know, being, and it was a natural tran-transition then. By 1980s, late 1987... No, it was before that. Hmn. It was ... I'm working on something here. Let me just see. '84 to '88, my title was Coordinator of Weekend University. And then in 1988, they changed from the emphasis on the weekends to Coordinator of Evening and Weekend Student Services. Actually, for a while they called it Evening Services and Weekend University.

EN: Okay.

PW: It was like, "Oh, what a mouthful."

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: Coordinator of Evening, and Evening Services and Weekend University. And then finally I convinced people I mean, you know, "Okay, there is really we don't emphasize Weekend University anymore. Can't we really just say Evening and Weekend Student Services?"

EN: Yes.

PW: So in 1988, I moved from the Office of Continuing Education to what was at the time called the Office of Admissions and Records. And we just expanded some of the things that we've been doing for Weekend. We expanded it for evening, doing registrations for students and being a liaison for students. In fact, in, in January, or sometime, let's see, we were still on quarters, I think maybe by the beginning of the spring quarter of 1988. There was this big push out, "Okay, we're going to be open in the evenings. We're gonna have offices open in the evenings," and I don't know whether it was Dick Drumuk [Vice Chancellor for Enrolment Management] or who said we would do this. And so every department, every school, every department, all the support services were supposed to have offices open on the evening, in the evenings. Well, that didn't last for long [both laugh]. They start, I think they started complaining right away because they weren't very busy. Because then probably within, by fall semester, it was very few, just the Student Services offices were open, the parking and textbook. And now I can't remember all the offices that were open. But for a while we were having to, they would report to us how many contacts they had in the evening, and things like that. But we also at that point, when we switched from being Weekend University, we started publishing a schedule of um, evening and weekend classes. Plus, plus the whole time, and I had forgotten this, from the time I came here, with the start of Weekend University, we actually did a weekly newsletter, a little one page, newsletter sheet that would be distributed out around campus. We had racks around campus, that we would print this newsletter and make it available to the students. Oh, we did that for a long time. Again, I've contributed a new, one copy of each one of those newsletters is over in the archives too.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: And although I think the very first one, first newsletter, or the first class sched-, weekend class schedule, I think I gave as a gift to Christa Oxford when she left, for her retirement memory book.

EN: That's nice.

PW: Then we eventually made a transition to doing a newsletter at the beginning of every quarter, semester, or quarter. And a number of years ago, we kind of stopped doing that, too. Doesn't, you know, when the emphasis on Saturday classes really died, we stopped doing a lot of things. But I would publish a special supplement to the evening, of evening classes. We published that for a long time. Oh, we, I served on a couple of committees for evaluate... They did surveys of the um, I guess that was in the weekend classes, we did student surveys of weekend classes. Again, that's all been donated to archives,

how much they've got, I don't know. What they kept, I don't know. There were the reports on that we did on that.

EN: How many students did go to with these? I mean, what was the peak enrollment?

PW: Well, you know, I would have to, I have lost track of all those numbers. But I think sometimes we would have um, um, you know, there would be, oh 30...40...50 classes being offered.

EN: Uh-huh. That's a lot.

PW: Like I said the, the most I ever remember was one summer when they offered like 90 classes, because there was extra funding. And everybody, 'Oh, can get a class offered in the summer with extra funding.' So, we offered a class. But I think we had, you know, probably, I don't know, maybe 1000 students or something we had.

EN: That's quite a lot.

PW: You know...

EN: If you think of only 1,200 [12,000 total enrollment] here.

PW: Way, way off the top of my head. And that may be way overboard.

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: It may have only been like 600, because my mind doesn't work quite as well as it used to. With remembering some of that.

EN: Well as a chair I remember, we used to offer a Saturday class now and then. They would always have 25 or 30 students.

PW: Mm-hmm. Well that's what I'm saying. And maybe 1000 is way overboard. So maybe 400 or 500 is maybe more like it, because yeah, we would have you know, 25 to 30 classes. I, I'd have to you know, keep track of all the enrollments in those classes [EN laughs] and, and juggle everything. But by 1998 is when um...

EN: This is great to know this.

PW: ... 1988 to '98, I had the title Coordinator of Evening and Weekends Student Services. And then in 1998 is when the concept of, of a one-stop-shop, the service, what is, we call the Service Center came

into being. I believe it had actually been proposed about four years before that and didn't get very far. There was some administration issues. I think that, "Now why do we want to do that" kind of thing...

EN: Really? Uh-huh.

PW: ...and that. But when Christa Oxford became the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management...

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: ...She's the one that really pushed forward with the idea of, of a one-stop-shop, a service center. And again, it was an expansion of some of the same kinds of things that I had been doing all these years of, of assisting students with problems and resolving issues. At that point in time, in 1998, well, from '88 to '98, my office was over in what's now the main Registrar's office. But then in '98, when we did some remodeling here in this complex here, I became the Coordinator of Client Services for the Service Center. At that time, there were three managers here. I was Client Services. And then Steve Zika, who's now the Assistant Registrar, he was, I guess, Operations Coordinator [Chief Operating Officer]. And then we had Joan Warrington, who was the Assistant Director for Graduate Records. She was located here too. So I at that point dealt with all the front desk issues, the coordinating of the office hours and the services to students and um...

EN: Mm-hmm.

PW: When we created the service center, we brought in the ID card function. So that became a part of the service center in, August of '98 is when we opened the Service Center. I guess that's 10 years ago '98 is when it was.

EN: Right.

PW: Yeah.

EN: Well I know that in the files up to about 1998... Well, not so much during, but, but there were lots of letters and students complaining about the run around.

PW: Oh yeah.

EN: And that seems to have really declined and all these surveys of satisfaction almost give you a great pleasure.

PW: Oh yeah.

EN: When you read them that were ahead of the national curve and students happiness with the place [EN laughs].

PW: Well, one of the things I was doing before you came in, I found I have a file, that years ago I started called my "Very Good File." [EN laughs] And anytime somebody would send me, or my boss would say, "Oh, this is very good," I put it in the file. Well, I came across some, I have a file folder two inches thick, just of where people have sent me thank you cards or, or thank the office for things that they've done or a couple of where you... from administration saying you've made lemons, or you made lemonade out of lemons... and, and things like that. So, I, you know, I to deal with my share of difficult people but I get an enjoyment out of doing that but... In ... Well, how long has it been? 2001 I guess is when Laura Strom, when Christa Oxford retired as the registrar and the Assistant Vice Chancellor, and Laura Strom came in as the Registrar. There was another reorganization at that time and Steve Zika was moved to the Assistant Registrar and I was given management of the service center in its entirety.

EN: And so you don't have three coordinators here anymore. That's what seemed weird to me when you were telling me about it.

PW: It was... ah that was not a good chapter [PW laughs].

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: Very difficult to deal with. There's overlapping, or things that weren't people's business that they got their nose into and things like that.

EN: Mm-hmm. I'd think so.

PW: But and, but as the Service Center, as the Service Center includes not just the ID card, but we have our front desk, which is the client services area. And then we have our communications area which handles all of the mail for all of admissions processing and all of the registrar functions. And we have a considerable number of phone calls that come in pretty sure at the beginning of the term.

EN: Well, where did the service center idea come from? Was that unique to SIUE? Are we...?

PW: No. Within the organization, there's a professional organization called the American Association of Collegiate Registrar's and Admissions Officers. It goes by AACRAO. A-A-C-R-A-O. American-Association-Collegiate-Registrars-Admissions-Officers.

EN: Okay. I have a terrible struggle with this as I'm going through the files and everybody's using acronyms. But I just heard about I, I that's one thing I've learned really learned in doing these interviews that you don't get so much from the files is, is there's a professional organization for every level now.

PW: Just about! That we have a state organization called I-ACRAO, I-A-C-R-A-O, Illinois Association, Collegiate Registrar's and Admissions Officers. And long before I got involved in the organization, it was kind of the, the catch word, they kept callin' it, you know, well, one-stop-shops, one-stop-shops. And I'm not really sure how long ago the cons-concept started, maybe 10...10...15 years ago, something like that.

EN: Did you visit some other campuses where they had this?

PW: No Christa Oxford was very involved in getting the idea going. Like I said, she, she proposed the idea long before she became the Assistant Vice Chancellor. And she, you hear about it at conferences.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: We have, I have since participated in several meetings of the organization. I in fact, in our state organization two years ago, did a presentation with the Associate Registrar at Illinois State University. They call theirs the Student, Student Assistance Center or something like that. And we just did two versions of one of one-stops. But it was the full, you know, the students get the runaround... students get the runaround.

EN: Yes! Uh-huh.

PW: And the more, more things you can do in one central location, the better it is for everyone and everything. We're unique in that we have a cashiering office. And the Cashiers Office was added in 2002.

EN: Now is it called the Bursars Office? Or is it called the Cashiering Office?

PW: Well, it's like, is the Cashier Sat, Satellite Cashier is what they call it.

EN: And so it isn't really the Bursar anymore?

PW: It is. It's the Office of the Bursar, but it's their Satellite Cashier.

EN: Okay, okay. Satellite Cashier of the Office of the Bursar. Okay.

PW: Yeah. I think they officially referred to it as the Satellite um, Satellite Cashier, although I don't know.

EN: Okay, that's fine. I just don't want to make any mistakes in this terminology. And I'll get it off the tape too. But is that what you said, we're unique in that? Is that a positive unique? Or is that something further to be...?

PW: No, I think it's a very positive thing.

EN: Okay, good.

PW: Well, unique in the way we do it, because while the cashier is here, whenever the Service Center is open, they don't report to me or to anyone within the Registrar's office.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: It was seen as when the whole proposal for a one-stop-shop was, was first thought about Christa [Oxford] got a group together and, and proposed it. We talked at that time about having, you know, wouldn't it be nice, then students don't have to come in and pick up a transcript request form and walk down the hall and make the payment and then bring it back?

EN: Yes.

PW: And so it was proposed. And like I said in, in, in 2002 is when they we got a new ID card system, and we made some remo-modifications in the office again. And that's when they opened...the cashier.

EN: That little booth out here.

PW: Yeah. Now again...

EN: And they don't report to you? You don't have to worry about that as in missed...?

PW: No, I keep contact with, with that office about um...

EN: It is very handy.

PW: And you know I want to be sure I'm not getting my years mixed up, because I'm thinking that I came across again something that had when we opened that whole new section there, must have been in 2002, and in like April of 2002, is when they opened. We did the remodeling of the office for the second time to allow for the cashier.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: And then I think Christa actually retired, she must have retired in 2002. Maybe that's what it was. Seems like it's been a lot longer than that [EN laughs]. But so we are, we are kind of unique in that aspect a lot. But some schools will have like, oh, a financial aid office will have representatives that, that they're all in a central area. Ours concentrates mainly on registration and records. Although we have a very close working relationship with Financial Aid office with, with several other offices.

EN: Does that work well? I haven't followed Financial Aid since Mary Ann Smith left. I just love her. I admired her so much. From a distance I just thought she was great.

PW: Well, the financial aid is gone so much, and everything is done electronically.

EN: Yes.

PW: You know, it's...

EN: It's not a bother anything. It's not a big paper hassle anymore.

PW: Not a paper hassle. There's just other things that always occur with anything like that when things are done automatically. Sometimes the students will say they didn't know that they had financial aid or something like that, because they didn't accept the aid. But there's certain kinds of aids that are "Gift Aid" that they don't have to accept and just all sorts of things, but are... For instance, at Illinois State University, their Students Assistance Center is only to do with Registrar's office. And they have, their setup is very similar in how they do things they handle class lists there, too. Like I said, I did a presentation with that one. I've heard other schools, presentations, sometimes schools will just have things where it's just an Information Center only. Maybe staffed by students.

EN: Uh-huh. That's what we used to have. Isn't it something like?

PW: Well there is an Information Center over in the University Center that just answers phone calls.

EN: Oh, okay.

PW: But some schools will have you know, it, theirs, whatever they call one-stop-area has representatives from Financial Aid that come and work in that area for, you know, X number of hours a day or something like that. But we chose that our Service Center, specialists are, we're generalists. We know a whole lot about, we know a little bit about a whole lot of different things. And then when we reach a point where we, where more details needed, we refer the call, the caller or the individual to

someone else that actually works with their, with their records. It allows processors to process. People that are processing transcript requests, or grade requests, or admission applications- they're not constantly interrupted with phone calls, you know.

EN: Yes.

PW: Somebody calls in here wanting to know, well, do I still need my transcript? We can look it up on the system, we can give them their answer, answer their question, and they know what they have to do. If it then becomes more detailed or another problem, then we would refer to the person that handles that file. So we do a lot of referring to other parts within the Office of Admissions or the Office of the Registrar.

EN: And this, so this our particular Student Services Center came out of a group what you would Christa Oxford, and a few other people...

PW: Well it was...

EN: ... were thinking about how to do it and what you want for here, and what would be the most efficient and best...?

PW: Right I can remember when Christa asked us for things that we thought would be helpful, in you know, the Service Center, pros and cons, and things like that. We actually proposed it about two years before it ever came to be because there wasn't some of the support that was needed for it. But I think it has proven to be probably one of the best things that we've done. Over the years since we started here, the Service Center concept, we used to be open till eight o'clock, Monday through Thursday. We used to be open every Saturday until I forget two or three, two o'clock and um, the hours... We have cut back on some of our hours, I think more and more students are doing things by email, by fax, by checking things on the website. So we are still open in the evenings, but not nearly as many hours as we were in the past. We are, we're open extra hours at the beginning of every term. And we stopped our Saturday hours, probably about a year and a half ago or so. Just there wasn't anyone coming in on Saturdays. There weren't very many courses offered anymore on Saturdays either so. But ah. So, we've had quite an interesting time of transition. I often said that my work here was never, I was just had my job expanded. You know, I mean, I started with this little site director, part time site director, and then they expanded that where I was doing more, and you know. And then I moved to the university, and I had my little Weekend University, and then that was expanded. And everything just kept expanding for me and giving me more opportunities to provide assistance and resolve problems and deal with helping students.

EN: And, and would you say that, I'm just- you don't have to comment on this if you don't like this kind of question- but would you say that, that having women in powerful positions helps other women with good ideas move up?

PW: Oh, think so. I think so.

EN: Uh-huh. I know, there's a concern now. I, I, as a chair, we had a kind of women's chairs group for the first time ever. And there's a concern now about that, that there needs to be maybe a mentoring program for women on this campus who want to move into administration, because it's kind of seems to many of these younger women, that it's closing up again.

PW: Yeah, yeah.

EN: Somewhat. You know, not just by accident, I think. That has a history but...

PW: The thing for me having been here so long, is I get a great deal of... I don't know whether it's joy or just some good feelings about working for people that are young enough to be my children.

EN: Yes [both laugh].

PW: Laura Strom, the Registrar, you know, in her mid-'30s.

EN: That's right. Laura Strom I really don't know her. I knew who Christa Oxford was.

PW: Laura is, Laura came to us from Southwestern Illinois College and...

EN: Oh, so great experience.

PW: She is, she has, is a very, very, has wonderful ideas. And she now has taken us forward on the 'Banner Project'. And ah...

EN: What, what exactly is the 'Banner Project'?

PW: Well, that's, you know, converting to a new, a whole new computer system. Student information system.

EN: Okay. Okay, the 'Banner.'

PW: 'Banner', yeah. It was supposed to be in effect for fall of '06, but they moved it to fall of '07. Major, major undertaking.

EN: Yes, it would be.

PW: And I mean, Boyd Bradshaw is quite young too.

EN: Yes. And he seems great.

PW: He, you know, they just have they just have such youthful enthusiasm [both laugh]. Oh, gosh.

EN: Yeah. That's nice. To know.

PW: I have... It's been interesting. Being here, and all the things that, the unusual things with the university, seeing, you know, how we have been on the cutting edge of some things such as the MBA [Masters of Business Administration] program. I mean, when that first, when I first became involved in it was sort of like, "What in the world?" [EN laughs] You know, how can you go to school on the weekends and, you know, accomplish what you're wanting? But, I mean, it's like, um, you know, a few years ago, people were saying the same things about how can you take courses on the, on the web and then accomplish anything, but technology has made so many things possible.

EN: I interviewed someone who was, who really benefited from the boot camp.

PW: That high-tech boot camp.

EN: Yes. She's just like you. She started in elementary education, and she has a really good job now.

PW: Oh, yeah. The technology. That's the other thing. I mean, when I first started with the university, I was faced with an IBM Selectric that I had to figure out how to write, because I'd been a schoolteacher, elementary school teacher. And now it's like, you know, technology has just become a part of your life. People don't use typewriters anymore.

EN: No. [Both laugh]

PW: Back to you know, handwrite if something is a form that you would use to always pull out and type now, it's just easier just to print it out. Because if it can't be done on the computer, you know...

EN: I know.

PW: ...don't want to pull out a typewriter. So.

EN: I still write my notes by hand, because when I write- I'm such a fast typist, that when I, I don't think about things enough when I'm doing that, so I find it helps me process to, to write notes by hand.

PW: You had asked me also... Oh, let's see. Some of the committees that I'd served on. I've actually been on, oh I mean, I was involved...

EN: I know.

PW: ...in the calendar conversion committee. I worked on that one. 1990. And then calendar implementation committee from '91 to '94. That was truly rewarding. I really got to feel a part of the university, and changes that we're going to come about because of all the work that was involved in on that committee. And I've been on parking and traffic since 1992.

EN: Oh, yes.

PW: Well, I, I've been an ex-officio member since '99. But that is probably one of the most hard-working committees on this campus [EN laughs]. Truly misunderstood. But...[Recording stops]

PW: ... that one has been I really enjoyed working on that committee. I've been involved with... Which one is it? The Welcome Week committee since 1985. Well, back in the old days with the Welcome Week committee, I think that was maybe the first year that they had it was an '85. No, that was... it was Preview. It was called...

EN: The Preview was always for the parents. Wasn't it?

PW: Well, no Welcome Week Committee. I've done some things with the Welcome Week Committee since 1985. But the Preview, is the open house one, that's what I was thinking of.

EN: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

PW: And that one they started doing, we still had Weekend University classes at that time. And we used to have invite people out, have the open house on Saturday. And they actually cooked barbecue, gave people hamburgers, cooked lunch and gave people lunches out on the quad...

EN: Gosh.

PW: ...With the Welcome, or with the Preview Committee, it was you know, come to the open house, and then we would have these sessions, and then they would have lunch on the quad. I started, they used to have a trouble table, ticket table, trouble ticket table because you needed a ticket to get your lunch or something like that. And I was the trouble ticket lady. And you know how many years now later? I am the, I have been the information table person for Preview.

EN: Yeah, I love Preview

PW: Yeah.

EN: I miss, there's one thing I miss about retiring, semi-retired is not doing that.

PW: Yeah. And in since 1989, I only missed one Preview Day and that was in a couple of years ago. My mother fell, broke her hip and I had, and she was 95 years old, and I had to go to Ohio. It's the only time I've ever missed Preview Day. It was the year they had at the Vadalabene center because the, they were working on the University Center and they couldn't have it in that location. But I was also involved with... I was on the, I guess they call it the Presidential Search Committee, when, when we hired Nancy Belck. I served on that committee too, which was I found very interesting.

EN: Yes.

PW: Being a Chancellor's or Presidential Search Committee is quite an honor. And I served on Staff Senate, about 1991 to '97. I was on that committee so... And then other things here and there. Textbook Service Advisory Committee, I've been on that since 1988.

EN: Oh dear.

PW: Oh yeah, I was chair of that from '91 to '93. And other little committees every now and then. That ah, we're not ongoing. But those have been some of the ones that I was most involved with.

EN: Like the service center group would be one of those. Or was that just kind of an informal...?

PW: There was a Student Services Council for a while and that. I was on that from '98 to 2003. And it's sort of faded into the woodwork in 2003. I think there was a change in, in ... I don't know, somebody must have decided it wasn't really needed, and we just sort of stopped having meetings 2003 for the Student Services Council, so. But now, we're, oh, since the last, oh since 2000. We're...How long has it been? The ID card system that we, we got a new ID card system called CS Gold, capital C, capital S. And then G-O-L-D. We put that in about two years ago, I guess. And that has been a very, given us a lot of technological advantages to being able to do more for, for students, and having debit plans and lunch plans and monitoring entrance and exits into buildings. They're now looking at having to re-card the campus because we're going to be switching to the new Cougar ID number to get rid of social security numbers. So, that's a major...

EN: That'll be a major...

PW: Well, it's one of the things that we weren't sure that we were going to have to do it. And then they decided, yeah, we better do it. So, even though I'm retiring, that's one of the things I'm going to come

back, and be helping with during that year that I'm coming back to help with these special projects. So that's been rewarding. There's actually a state group that's been started to look at ID card systems throughout...

EN: That's nice.

PW: ...Mainly public institutions in the state. There's maybe oh eight, eight or so schools that get together twice a year, that look at things to do with the usages of ID cards and things that we can do with that.

EN: Will you still use the CS Gold, but just switch the numbers?

PW: It was, what they're going to do- yeah, it's still going to be CS Gold. See, we're making the transition away from using social security numbers...

EN: Yes.

PW: And the new Banner Student Information System uses a generated... Actually, it's going to be a 10-digit number. That will be a number that will be given to every faculty, staff, student, all employees will have a number through human resources, and all students will have a number. So that we won't be using social security numbers. And they will, while they may be maintained in some areas where they're needed, such as for financial aid information, it will not be a part of your official record, at the University. So, we're having to make the transition. New ID cards are revised, revising the ID card and there's you know, a lot of potential for the future.

EN: Yes.

PW: On that. I didn't even get to students or anything like that.

EN: No.

PW: We've had ah, we've been talking for a while here, but... I've had...

EN: I see you're busy. Your phone is ringing so many times.

PW: Couple of them were just my husband. [Both laugh] So but I've had, one of my most memorable students. I can't even remember what the fellow's name was. But back in the days of Weekend University, elderly gentleman, his first name was Philip, I think. He would take the bus from St. Louis to come over to take Spanish classes [EN laughs]. And he would come over and he would take Spanish classes. He must, we must have at that time offer like the 101, 102 and then the second level.

EN: Uh-huh.

PW: He did it on Educard. And then he eventually applied to the university and got his degree in Spanish, I think.

EN: Really?

PW: And he would take the bus every single day.

EN: Gosh.

PW: From South St. Louis, someplace. It would take him an hour or so. I often wonder what happened to him because he must have been... Well, at the time he probably wasn't, I mean, I don't think of that age being that old, [EN laughs] but even though he was retired, you know, so...

EN: Yeah.

PW: He was probably over 65-year at the time.

EN: Sure.

PW: But as he progressed, the years progressed, he would walk with his cane, and he's one of the one of the students that I remember helping [PW laughs].

EN: I've been interviewing these whole, these families of students who graduated.

PW: Oh, nice.

EN: I suggested that for the celebration, they have an event for family families.

PW: Oh, sure.

EN: That graduated.

PW: Sure. Well, you know, the other interesting thing is how I met my husband, my current husband. Yeah, we've been married for 14 years.

EN: yes. Uh-huh.

PW: That's a story too. That, I met him more or less through the university.

EN: Oh. [EN laughs]

PW: Well... When I moved to Illinois, I was I was single again, ready to start my life all over again.

EN: Yes.

PW: And got involved in some organizations away from the University, of meeting other people, single people. And one of the women I met, told me about her cousin. And she had a cousin Ted that she thought that'd be interesting if I met, if I met him. And we, a group of us got together one night and we're doing things together, and I'm talking to Ted and, and he's, "Yeah, he was going to come back." He was at AT&T and he was going to come back to school. Had been 20 years since he last attended school and he was going to be at Carbondale. He had done work at Carbondale and then other things that happened in his life, and he's going to come back to school and finish his bachelor's degree. It was something that he always wanted. And he was going to be taken Saturday classes. And I whipped out my business card and I said if you you know, I, "That's what I work with your weekend classes if you need any, you know if you ever have any questions or so, give me a call." And lo and behold, [EN and PW laugh] he was taking Saturday classes, and he one time after we had gotten to know each other through some other events, he came over after class one day and he helped me paint my house and everything else [EN laughs]. We eventually got married. He finished his bachelor's degree in 1990. And we get married in 1991. And I always say I, you know, really believe in my work. I really provided services to non-traditional services, students, not all of them get quite that much attention [both laugh]. But the thing he's most proud of is that he finished his bachelor's degree, even though it was, he was in his late 40s when he did so. But, oh, I tried my whole life together.

EN: Great story.

PW: So it's going to be interesting being in a retirement situation. So...

EN: Sure, it's a lot of fun. I mean, so far, I've not I don't feel retired. My husband is really [recording stops].