

Sam Smith, University News Service Director
Transcript of Interview for the 50th Anniversary History of SIUE Project
Interviewed by Ellen Nore-Nordhauser
March 20th, 2006

EN: It's Wednesday, April 27th, 2006. This is Ellen Nore. I'm interviewing Mr. Sam Smith of the University News Service for the 50th Anniversary History of SIUE. [recording stops].

SS: Sure. Do I need to get up closer?

EN: No, it's very sensitive. See the little green light flash?

SS: Okay.

EN: It's.

SS: Uh. It was the summer of 1990, and he [President Lazerson] had completed 10 years.

EN: Mm. Okay.

SS: And it's based on the, um, there was a, actually a small book published about that decade. Did you see that? Do you have a copy of that? *A Decade*—

EN: Yeah—

SS: *A Decade of Challenge, A Decade of Achievement*.

EN: Yes, the book about Earl Lazerson. I don't have a copy of it, but I took notes on it from the Archives.

SS: Okay. This, this is an executive summary of that.

EN: That was very, very good, I thought. Were you in charge of that?

SS: Well, I was involved in it.

EN: [EN laughs] Okay. I thought it was wonderful, myself.

SS: We did a lot of the work for it. The articles here—some of them are very personal. The man that made it happen, education partnership, impacts of public service, higher education for minorities, the President at home, and some very personal information about him. What makes him tick, that's also very personal. And the university in the 21st Century. Um, and...

EN: Is this the speech that he gave at a National Convention of Metropolitan Universities? I wonder...

SS: I'm not sure...

EN: ...if it is. Because I, I interviewed Frank Akers and I think he was part of writing that speech.

SS: Mm-hmm. I don't think so.

EN: No. Maybe this, this is, what, this is, oh no... that's SIUE in the 21st Century.

SS: Greg Conroy wrote this article.

EN: Okay.

SS: He was in our shop.

EN: Okay. Yes.

SS: And uh, now this...

EN: Well, I'm glad you told me about that...

SS: This is just excellent, because, particularly when you get into the executive summary. The book itself had not been released yet. It says here at the end that it would be available, um, [pause] "*The Complete Report: A Decade of Challenge, A Decade of Achievement* will soon be available through the office of the President." Um, and this, it covers so many things that were important to that decade. Um, his philosophy, of course, his goals and objectives, and uh, how he made things happen.

EN: [EN laughs] Yes!

SS: The, um... some very important quotes in here from him. The one, in particular, I was looking for: [clears throat] "I'm honest with people and I expect them to be honest with me, and I do not tolerate less than the best in a professional relationship."

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: That was an excellent characterization of how he approached things [SS clears throat]. Um, I was going to refer to some of that later, after we get into this.

EN: Okay.

SS: I don't know how you want to proceed?

EN: Well, I wanted to start with how you happened to come to SIU and why you stayed after you had experienced in the job?

SS: Sure. Okay. Um, I was trained in Journalism at the University of Illinois and uh, the focus was on a newspaper, on a newspaper career, although even at that time, I had been somewhat associated with the Public Information office at the university there, I had friends there, and I always thought that would be a nice place to work. But when I completed my degree, uh, in Journalism, um, I went to newspapers and had a newspaper career for 25 years.

EN: Yes.

SS: Then, in 1972, I'd been the owner of several papers. I was part owner of the *Metropolis Planet* and um, my partner wanted to sell his, his share. There was a job opening here at the University at SIUE in the University News Service as the Assistant Director position actually was open. I was told about it by Bill Lyons, who at that time was heading up communications for uh, Carbondale, and the System, actually. I think he was over both campuses at one time. He told me about the position here and I interviewed for it, and was able to get it. Um, and the next year, my boss, the Director uh, was reassigned to develop a, ah, 10th Anniversary Celebration. 1975 was the 10th, 10th Anniversary of the permanent Campus. And um, I was named Acting Director after he was re-assigned. In 1976, I was uh, promoted to Director. And uh, I enjoyed the work here. I just enjoyed being at the University and working with highly educated people. And uh, uh I just considered it really the big leagues [EN laughs] I thought it was a really nice place to be. And uh, I enjoyed the relationships that I developed here and, uh.

EN: Did you find that having edited several papers helped you in your new position?

SS: Oh, absolutely. I think Journalism was excellent training for the position at News Services. Which uh, News Services, at that time, was involved in a lot of things, uh, and more as time went by. Uh, When I first joined News Service, uh, I believe we were responsible for photo service as well and for the Information Center and the University Center.

EN: Yeah.

SS: We had Sports Information. And uh, later, in a reorganization, we became responsible for Graphics and Printing. At one time, we even had... am I going too fast?

EN: No!

SS: At one time, we had, uh, for a short time, we had responsibility for Conferences and Institutes.

EN: Oh, my!

SS: And, uh, we had a film unit. We produced 16-millimeter films. Uh, and that unit was available for departments if they wanted to have a film about their operations, or about their, whatever. Uh, they were available. And there were several films uh, produced at that time. Uh, we did two different films on the MRF [Mississippi River Festival]. You know about the MRF?

EN: Yes. I know that Steve Kerber's working on a really good thing about that for the Anniversary.

SS: Good. And, uh, there was a General Information Film done. There was one for Nursing. There was one for... let's see, I can't remember. There's actually, I think, probably about a dozen different films produced at that time. Later, it became a victim of budget-cutting. I don't remember just exactly how many years the film part went on but I'd say at least 10 years. There was a reorganization in 1977, I believe, that was the year that vowed to bring on a new... Part of that made me report directly to the President as Director of News Services. At that time, uh, a new person was brought in, Jim Buck, was uh, named uh, Vice President for, uh, for, I think the first title was Public Affairs. Later, he became, his duties were expanded to Development and Public Affairs [SS coughs]. So, after that, I reported to him, and uh, we picked up, it was later then, that we picked up some additional responsibilities, Graphics and Printing. Um, there were a number of different [EN and SS laugh] things considered. A consultant was brought in, at one point, who recommended that we have responsibility for the Radio Station, which didn't happen, thank goodness. Um, I was spread pretty thin then.

EN: [EN laughs] Yes!

SS: We still, still had Sports Information, which was a growing concern and responsibility. The, uh, is that enough about me and my personal getting started? Why I stayed and so forth?

EN: Sure. Right, I, I would like to ask you. I know when I interviewed Doug Eder, he said that one tip you had given him was to always remember people's names. And so, I was wondering, what is your secret for doing that?

SS: Actually, I'm very poor at it. It's a, it's a—

EN: He thought you were wonderful and he said you remembered—

SS: I really worked at it. I, I made myself do it but it was never easy for me, for some reason. I always admired people who could do that so easily. Paul Simon [Illinois Politician], for example, who could do it so easily. He would see somebody he hadn't seen for 10 years and know their first name. Paul Powell [Illinois Politician] was another one in the Legislature. There are many politicians who have developed that art. I think it is an art. [EN laughs] I worked at it very hard. I guess I was fairly successful at it, but it was never easy for me. And now I'm finding that my memory is fading and I really, really have to have some clues and I brought along some things to help me, in case I get lost.

EN: Well, that's good. Well, with all these responsibilities— when I've looked through the Press files—you covered the big stories and the little—and even it seems like very small stories, so the Press files are just enormous. I wondered how you hired people in your shop. You had Tommy Walter. Did Mildred Arnold do some writing for you too?

SS: Yes. She reported with us. At the end, she was the editor of the *Alumnus*. She'd always been involved with the alumni. Uh, she uh, she was here when I came, she was a part of the operation.

Um, but um, we had several people along the way and we always looked for Journalism graduates, primarily. And uh, people who would be outstanding writers.

EN: Uh-huh.

SS: Um, I had a little... uh, you asked how I selected people, I had a little measure that I used that, that worked pretty well for me. You go through the conventional interview processes and, and all that, but at the end, I would ask the, uh, the candidate to write a, a, a brief autobiography in his/hers own handwriting, could be a half-page, could be a page, um, basically just a brief summary of their autobiography. And it was amazing how revealing that was. They didn't have time to type it and make changes and edit and so forth. And they, uh, these would come back with numerous errors in writing and grammar. Uh, it was just extremely revealing. [recording feedback] We couldn't afford to hire someone who was going to have those kinds of difficulties. And so that was an excellent way. There is one case that I remember where a person had been highly recommended to us. And uh, she was an excellent interview, very articulate, very nice presentation uh, an attractive person uh, great personality, great ability to talk and discuss things, and, uh, but when I asked her to do that, it came back—about 3/4 of a page. It came back and it had something like eight or ten grammatical errors! Um, it was very, very poorly done, and of course, I didn't hire her. And I was about 30 minutes after she left my office, I got a call from one of the Vice Presidents wanting to know why I had not hired so-and-so. I said, "Well, I think I can show you." He was pretty upset. He said, "I think you're going to have to." So, I just took that piece of paper up to him and showed it to him. He said, "What's this?" I said, "It's her autobiography she wrote herself as part of the interview." He said, "She wrote this?" I said, "Yes, she did." He said, "Well, enough said."

EN: Yeah.

SS: It was just so amazing to me how it was so revealing. Um, but, [pause] was there another part of your question on that?

EN: No. I just wondered how you picked people.

SS: Yeah. You uh, in your approach to me, you said, as I talked about, what are your views on "turning points" in the history.

EN: Yes. Yes.

SS: I thought that was interesting because I think it's very important, significant in history, to look at, what I consider, turning points. I think that maybe the first one, in my mind, was the MRF [Mississippi River Festival]. I think most people wouldn't think of that as being an important turning point, but it was an uplift for the University when it was first developed. It was basically a 10-year program. For the first few years, it was extremely important to the University in terms of identification, being known regionally, nationally even. To this day, people still remember that this is the place where the MRF was. Then, there were problems with it. There was, uh, there was ah, it went down, and I think that was definitely a turning point, when it was dropped. The Administration at that time—This was after John Rendleman died—I, I just think,

if John Rendleman had lived that we would still have an MRF. There was a master plan for it which called for uh, major facilities... [recording feedback]

EN: Mhm. That's right...

SS: ...modern facilities, a very glamorous plan for that facility.

EN: Yes.

SS: I think he, somehow, would have made it happen. I think he was so dedicated to it that he would have, he would have made sure it happened. So, to me, that was a turning point. Uh, when Earl Lazerson became President, he, he was determined to bring uh, about improvements in the academic side of the University. This [*The Complete Report: A Decade of Challenge, A Decade of Achievement*] details, in the summary in here, details those things that he did in terms of the academic side. His emphasis was on excellence, and the uh, one of the programs that he introduced was the Excellence in Undergraduate Education Fund. There were a number of others and if you'd like, I'll go into detail on it.

EN: Sure.

SS: They're in here... but uh, advancing educational excellence that embraced a number of different, new approaches and programs: [Noise of paper shuffling] Offering opportunity through access, encouraging student achievement and development, faculty and staff growth and development, providing more effective public service, physical matters, personnel concerns, and facilities, institutional development, enacting the university's values, ah, the rather new mission statement in connection with that. Under each of those, there's a lot of detail.

EN: Mission statement...

SS: A lot of detail. Um, he uh, [pause] he was not totally successful in what he tried to do, but I think he had a major impact on the University.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: The faculty was [clears throat] was very disappointed with some of his approaches, um. I have an article here that, that you may have seen... I don't know if you've seen this or not... that shows some of the reaction to his approaches.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: [SS clears throat] That was a survey of the, through the Faculty Senate, [clears throat] it was published in the *Post Dispatch*, [SS clears throat] uh, which shows that the faculty in particular were very, very unhappy with, with him and with Barbara Teeters, his Vice President and Provost. But they prevailed and Lazerson prevailed and I think the bottom line is that uh, whether you liked him or not, you have to acknowledge that he made dramatic improvements in the University—academically, financially. He went through years of extremely tight budgets,

when, through no fault of his. [Recording feedback] The State, state, you know, Legislature was cutting back on budgets, and uh, he had to run a tight ship, which he did. He was good at that.

EN: Yes.

SS: Um, some people said he left a bloody trail. But he prevailed, and I think, the bottom line, after 10 years of that, he, he was considered a, a, a tremendous success and uh, it was recognized nationally. In here [*The Complete Report*], there are kudos from Kenneth Shaw, who wrote this when he was President of the University of Wisconsin System after having been here and at Carbondale as President of the System, SIU System, Senator [Paul] Simon, the President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Allan Ostar, Governor Thompson, Senator Dixon. Those are just some of the tributes that came to him, recognizing his success in bringing about reform here and, and development of a, of a growing and academically successful University. Um, so that, that was definitely a turning point, his leadership uh, was a turning point in the University. Another turning point, which was actually part of his administration, was the development of recruiting and uh, and on-campus housing because of increasing enrollment. Um, he, uh, the University went through a period when recruiting was almost non-existent. We had a very cavalier attitude here that the doors are open and all you had to do was show up and the students would come. But then, enrollment started declining in the '90s... or the '80s. It started declining in the '80s. It was a very difficult uh, challenge to overcome. There was a Task Force was established to work on this. I was a member of that task force. David Werner headed that up. And as a result, I think the University is still benefitting from the work of that Task Force in establishing recruiting strategies and uh, uh which reached out to the community and the State and the region. Of course, then as more students came, we were going into the period, there was a gasoline shortage at that time also. [EN and SS laugh] And uh, commuting was no longer in favor.

EN: Uh-huh.

SS: Students began to look for places to live near campus. The only on-campus housing we had was in the apartments at Tower Lake.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: Uh, and uh, the uh, it was amazing how controversial it was uh, just getting that first residen— residence hall approved. Of course, it had to go through the State levels of approval and the State funding. And uh, um, it, it was not an easy challenge.

EN: Was this in the Legislature where it met particular difficulty or with the Illinois Board of Higher Education?

SS: The Board of Higher Education, primarily.

EN: Okay.

SS: Because this had been pretty much established as a commuter institution, and it was definitely a right turn uh, from that point. A lot of people thought it was going to be a white elephant to put up on-campus housing. And at that time, I remember Western Illinois University was closing one of their high-rise dorms because students...

EN: Oh.

SS: ...were not coming there. So, it was a controversial issue, but he, but Lazerson persisted and prevailed and uh, the uh, after the first residence hall was built, it obviously became, everyone, became aware that it was a plus for the University since then of course, it's a matter of record that two more were built, and now a third one is, uh, a fourth one, actually...

EN: A fourth one.

SS: ...is in the planning stages. So, I think that was a significant turning point.

EN: Were you, were you one of the people who worked with the Board of Higher Education?

SS: Not, not directly.

EN: Uh-huh. Do you think it was Earl Lazerson, himself working..?

SS: Oh, yes. He did. He had people who assisted him, but he was the main one made the, who represented the University at the State level, both in the Legislature and the Board of Higher Education.

EN: Okay.

SS: And I think that, you know, that was a period of tight budgets. You, one of your questions, later on, I think, was about, something about... did we get... Well, you asked about the [recording feedback] political status of the University. Well, I think that his leadership was significant in that area. He, he definitely fought for the University, and I think it paid off.

EN: Mm-hmm. I know I've seen in the files that he, he, I don't know who, he wrote newspaper columns or had columns published under his name for the Edwardsville *Intelligencer*.

SS: They were written in our office.

EN: Uh-huh. Different papers and that he organized to raise taxes. He organized groups to, to community groups to raise tax— to press, press for a tax increase.

SS: Yes. Judy Meyer in our office was the one who wrote those "Insight" columns. [EN laughs] Prior to that, the President's Office had always had a speech-writer, and someone who undertake special writing projects. That was Pete Simpson, when John Rendleman was President. He later was transferred to our office and worked out of our office until he, until he left on disability. Ah, and after he left, we hired Judy Meyer for that responsibility.

EN: I see. [pause] I know he worked for Senator Vadalabean.

SS: Yes.

EN: So, sometimes you would have a letter from Vadalabean written by him and a letter from Rendleman back to Vadalabean [EN laughs].

SS: Right, right, right, right. Pete was an interesting person. He was very, very talented in terms of writing. But um, he was a great resource for John Rendleman at that time, in the busy, early days of the University. Um, then, I think another turning point—I've referred to this indirectly in other things that I've said—I think it's maybe to be pulled out as a turning point, would be the leadership changes.

EN: Yes.

SS: Those were turning points in the University. I've already mentioned John Rendleman. I think if he had lived, this would have been a much different University. He would, had a lot of leverage at the State level. He was even being considered, apparently, as a candidate for Governor himself at one point, as I understand it. As, as we've said earlier, Lazerson representing the University politically at the State level, was very effective at it, but it was a period of tremendous challenge. When it didn't matter how tough you were. Ah, it was still a challenge to, during those budget-cutting days. And then Ken Shaw was only here for a couple of years, and then went on the Carbondale. But I think that, through all of that, the University was highly, highly respected at the State level. I think we were treated as well as anyone.

EN: Okay.

SS: As well as any University in the State. There might be some exceptions to that, but I think that's my general feeling about it that there was equity in terms of we got our share.

EN: Mm-hmm. Okay.

SS: We had to fight for it, and I think if those leaders had not fought, we would not have received as much support as we got.

EN: Well, um, I'm very interested in leadership. And um, I know, John Rendleman. I've thought of um, it seems, I've thought about writing something separately on him sometime, and talking about establishing democratic traditions in a University. And participatory traditions in a University. And his skills as a, he had speech writers but he had a good sense of humor.

SS: Absolutely. Absolutely. [EN laughs]

EN: Which I think is wonderful. And he was pretty good on the stump, as a lawyer.

SS: Yes, yes. Correct. All of that is correct.

EN: I thought of. I also think he was loyal. He took the wrap for the Stone House. He didn't say, he didn't say "Oh no, it wasn't my idea" he said, "I gave him bad advice." No.

SS: Yes.

EN: And then, one of the, I thought of putting together a little booklet of documents from the history of the University and one of the things I thought I'd put in is his press conference on the shoeboxes. Cause I thought that was excellent and today you wouldn't have a politician opening up like that to the press. I think it's just amazing.

SS: Yes.

EN: Do you have anything to add to those?

SS: I wasn't here at that time, but I was very familiar with the situation.

EN: Sure.

SS: Because I was in Metropolis editing the paper and I also had a close association with Bill Lyons, at Carbondale, the Communications Director there. We had, we still have a Southern Illinois Editorial Association, which Bill Lyons pretty much created. Which is made up of editors of all the newspapers in Southern Illinois. That association still exists and it's still housed in the, in the communications office at Carbondale. I was very close to what was going on. I was very much aware. Paul Powell was from our area, from Vienna. I knew him personally, so I was intensely interested in [EN laughs] whatever he was up to. Um, and uh, I, what you've said about John Rendleman was absolutely correct. I just think that he had so much energy [paper rustling] and ah, and charisma and leadership ability that he could almost make anything happen.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: He could, on the spur of the moment, he could make things happen. I remember one time, we had a series of seminars, do you remember those?

EN: Yes.

SS: What were those called? They were in the... let's see. I think... Anyway, there were a series of issues that were discussed. And uh, Pete Simpson had written a speech for him to give, I think, in connection with at least the introduction of it. I remember this so well, that John started more or less reading the speech. He wasn't a person who would just read the speech word for word, but he was following the speech. And all of a sudden, he said, "What the hell!" [EN laughs]. He just threw it aside and talked. He was so effective in situations like that! One time, at Commencement, we were having Commencement out at the MRF site, in the tent, and a thunderstorm was coming up [EN and SS laugh]. Of course, we were keeping in close touch with the weather service. We knew the weather was very iffy. Very, very iffy. All of a sudden, it appeared that the storm was right there, almost at the edge of the campus, lightning and so forth.

And it was just getting started. John Rendleman jumped up and said, "Let's get the hell out of here!" [EN and SS laugh] Of course, everybody just almost panicked and took off. It was...

EN: So, did people head inside or was that the end of Commencement that year?

SS: I think we came to various places on campus. There had been some strategies worked out in advance, so it wasn't, it wasn't bedlam. [EN laughs] There was some direction on what to do. He made a very spur-of-the-moment decision that he'd had enough of that storm. So, where are we?

EN: We were talking about leadership and you went, you were mentioning, you mentioned John Rendleman and then you mentioned Ken Shaw and then you mentioned Earl Lazerson and I asked you to go back and talk a little bit more about John Rendleman.

SS: Well, his departure was a tremendous loss to the University, in my opinion. I just think that things might have worked out the same in the end, I don't know. I think he was getting us there faster than most leaders would have.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: He was so dynamic in and I think that faculty that worked with him... He was just a player to work with in tough situations and tough challenges. But he was able to deal with them. It was a terrible loss, and I think that, for the next few years, we had good leaders, but they were just more or less taking care of things, trying to keep from slipping. Meanwhile, the State was starting to cut budgets and so forth. I think that Earl Lazerson came on at the right time to run a tight ship and to strive for excellence in everything we did. It was tough. He has some comments in here on how he dealt with that and how he came to... I would urge you to look through this because he talks about getting people to accept his, what he wanted done and it was not easy. For example, the Weekend University, mean that the Faculty had to work nights and weekends, a new approach. They were not happy about that, and I don't blame them, but he persisted.
[Recording feedback]

EN: I wonder if the faculty would feel the same about that sort of thing now?

SS: I think it's a matter of approach. I think that uh, uh, Nancy Belck had some new ideas and so forth, but she felt the pulse of the Campus. She walked with the Faculty. She walked with the Staff. She walked with the Students, heard them out, heard their ideas and their suggestions and complaints. It was highly effective. I think she had a collegial approach, a very warm approach. She didn't always give people what they wanted, but I think they felt that they'd had a fair hearing and that she was listening, doing the best she could. I think under her leadership, morale was probably at the highest, across campus, in my opinion. She was here three years, is that right, three years?

EN: Yes.

SS: In, uh, '94 to '97.

EN: That's right. '94 to '97. And I think she...

SS: Then, excuse me...

EN: It seems to me that she might have stayed had not our system been headed by... the men. Yeah.

SS: Yeah. There were some difficulties at the System-level which caused her to look other places. And I think that people at her caliber were very much in demand at that time across the country. She could have gone several places.

EN: She's still at UN. I'm from Nebraska and when people from there, they say, "Oh, thank you for giving us Nancy Belk." I mean, they're having terrible financial problems, now. In Nebraska, less than a million people, for example, they're really having to cut the budgets and everything, but she really brought in millions of development dollars and the faculty loves her.

SS: I'm glad to hear that. She was followed by David Werner and I think that he carried on in very much the same style, not exactly, but he had, I think, more cordial relationships with the Faculty and the Staff. He's a different kind of person, but still, I think he recognized that those personal approaches when you're working on problems really pay off in accomplishments.

I can't speak for the present leadership, except that I'm hearing good things about it around the community. Apparently, he's uh, he's uh, at every level, he has made himself known and available and interested in what's going on, all the way from the barbershop in the University Center to the highest levels.

EN: I took the tape recorder into the barbershop and talked to Terry while he was cutting my hair.

SS: Recently?

EN: Yeah, about a couple weeks ago.

SS: That's good. Terry's one whose been here all these years and has an excellent view of what's going on here. You know, he hears it all in the barbershop.

EN: Right. The lady that works in there is the daughter-in-law of that Mrs. Lewis, who resisted the land sales so that was fun too.

SS: Yes, yes. Terry's wife works there too.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

SS: I've had my haircut there every time - for 33 years. Only one time I had it cut someplace else. I was away from the campus. So, I know Terry very well. You know, he has a tremendous sense of, he could be a counselor. I've heard him advise students and staff and faculty. He has a sense of being able to evaluate a problem and make a recommendation. He's a neat guy. Um, you had mentioned leadership at the top and perhaps at other levels, I wanted to mention Charlie

Cox. [SS coughs] Charlie Cox was here when the permanent Campus was first opened and worked for 25 years. One of the things that he did that I think was very significant, he did this on his own, it was an idea that he developed, was sending out home-town photos to the newspapers. He would take a picture of a student who had accomplished something or written something or achieved something in sports, whatever, or just a student from Peoria who was in some unusual program here or something. Something unusual. He'd take a picture of the student, send it back to the home-town newspaper. The papers loved it! There were thousands of those pictures published. Just imagine what it did for the University!

EN: Yes.

SS: That made everybody happy. It made the students happy, it made the family happy, it made the community happy, it made the hometown paper happy, to have news like that. [tape recording stops]

SS: I have one like that, I used it for years.

EN: It is very... sometimes I've had to record people in noisy places and it still works. [EN and SS both laugh]

SS: Yeah. Okay, um... [long pause]. Is that enough on leadership style or?

EN: Well, I wonder if you could you say anything about the relationships of the different Presidents with the press?

SS: Okay. One of the things that I instituted here and I don't need to take credit for it, an idea that I had and it worked pretty well, was to take the Presidents to meet with the editorial boards of the various newspapers, primarily the daily papers. That was very successful. The ah, most of the Presidents were comfortable doing that, and the newspapers enjoyed having a direct relationship with the University leader. I did that on a regular basis. When there was a new President, or a new editor, I made sure that they got acquainted. And ah, the ah, I think the Presidents generally relied on the University News Service to represent the University with credibility with the press. We were known for giving the true picture of what was going on at the University. We didn't try to hide things. We didn't advertise our problems, but if there was a problem, and the press wanted to know about it, we tried our best to give them a fair report.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: An example is one time at noon, there was a person with a gun, got on the bus at East St. Louis and rode the bus to campus and went through the classroom buildings brandishing the gun. And ah, the police were called, of course, and he was chased out to the north side of the classroom building out there before he was apprehended. I was at lunch. A lot of the press knew about this before I did because they had their police scanners. And ah, the papers started calling me, asking, "What's going on?" I said, "You tell me. I don't know." That was a situation where we had a good working relationship with the press. We tried our very best to stay close, provide their needs and give them stories that were accurate and gave them the facts on every situation.

EN: What about [Kenneth] Flack and [Robert] Seguso, the tennis, the tennis players?

SS: Yes. Ah.

EN: I was going to ask you about handling difficult stories. That was a kind of a national story.

SS: Yes, it was a national story. The ah. We had a Sports Information Director who was primarily involved with any sports activity. If it was a major situation, some of the rest of us might get involved. We made good Sports Information through the years. I don't recall. Nothing pops into my memory about that being especially difficult.

EN: Particularly difficult? Okay.

SS: I know we dealt with it. There were a lot of questions. There was some disagreement at the University level as to how to handle it. And ah, I think the Athletic Director lost his job as a result of it.

EN: Yes. Yes.

SS: But I, I don't recall the press being in any way hindered or kept away from the story.

EN: Okay. Okay.

SS: I mean, we were open about it.

EN: Yes, well, I saw articles in *The Globe* and *Post Dispatch* about it.

SS: Yes. Yeah.

EN: And I'd wondered if you had given them the information. I'd interviewed Cindy Jones, that's why I ask about it. Of course, that was very important in her career.

SS: Of course.

EN: She had to kinda come in and clean it up. And make the scholar/athlete tradition.

SS: Right. Yeah. I had forgotten about that period.

EN: And you brought me, I wrote down a few ones that I could remember this morning about difficult events. I know that during John Rendleman, maybe you weren't here yet, there was a professor that ran over a policeman's foot when he was stopped and was making a lot of fuss about the university police.

SS: I heard that story but I was not here at the time.

EN: Okay. And then you did bring me a clipping about the unpopularity of the Vice President during Lazerson's first... [crosstalk]

SS: Incidentally, I—

EN: His first Vice President...

SS: I'd like to keep this...

EN: No, I—

SS: I'd like for you to return it...

EN: Well, I, I can go down and look in the microfilm in the *Post*...

SS: If you wanna just copy it, then that, that's fine.

EN: Okay, good! Then I will return it to you. Tell me, where should I mail it?

SS: My mailing address is [mailing address].

EN: Okay. Well, when I return your interview, I'll return this.

SS: Do you think, do you think you'll have the chance to get a copy of this?

EN: Well, I can get one from Greg Conroy. He has most of the ones... it's kinda spotty...

SS: I'll loan this to you if you want it?

EN: Oh, I'd love to borrow it. I can mail it back sooner to you if you're worried about... I could probably get it done this, this weekend and get it back to you next week.

SS: I'm not worried about how long it takes, but I really think that this article, in particular, would be good.

EN: Okay, good.

SS: [unintelligible]

EN: Okay, thank you so much.

SS: I also have a, something that I did when I was here, was do a timeline.

EN: Uh-huh.

SS: You might want to borrow that too.

EN: Oh, this is wonderful! You and Florence Gillig are just the greatest!

SS: That does have everything on it, of course, but it has a lot of important activities. And Greg Conroy borrowed it recently and added a few things at the end.

EN: Uh-huh. That's good.

SS: It's chronological. And like I said it doesn't have everything on it but it does have some of it.

EN: Oh. Thank you so much.

SS: I would like it back, also...

EN: Oh yes, I will. I'll send it back as soon as possible.

SS: This, this is a paper I put together in 1990, which was based primarily on this. It's kind of a summary and I don't remember why I did this and where and when. I think it was... but you might want to take a look at that also.

EN: Yes.

SS: That's about basically Lazerson's...

EN: Yes. I wonder if we could, I wonder if this could be in that booklet or writings, [EN laughs] because it would be nice to have, you know, someone who worked with him. Because really, the faculty opinions that I have interviewed on him are pretty negative.

SS: There were difficult times in his relationships.

EN: Yeah.

SS: I think he was just so determined to have things happen that sometimes, he sort of forgot to be nice to people.

EN: Mm-hmm. Or maybe he just didn't have much tolerance for people who weren't here for the long haul maybe. Well...

SS: You know, there certainly... I think Nancy Belck was a very effective leader. You don't hear those kinds of things about her.

EN: No you don't.

SS: So, leadership can be achieved in various ways. There are different strategies for leadership. I always admire people who can be patient, and ah effective in leadership, even in the most

difficult of circumstances. I think John Rendlemen showed that quality when the Campus was being threatened.

EN: Uh-huh.

SS: I was not here, that was before I came here, but there's that picture of John Rendlemen in the University Center meeting with the students at the time when campuses around the country were revolting, and Carbondale had revolted. I think he prevented a revolt here because of his approach. He listened to them.

EN: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I've interviewed two of the people who occupied his office during that time and they have very positive memories of him. I think they both, one of them said, "Well we didn't want to have something like Carbondale." Do you have any final thoughts here?

SS: Ah, I think we've covered pretty much the major things that I'm remembering. I've forgotten a lot of things [SS laughs] I've been gone eight years, and it's surprising to me how much the Campus has changed in those eight years.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: Personnel have changed. So many retirements. Many new programs. Talking about values and programs and the Mission Statement and all that—those were all developed while I was with the News Service.

EN: Yes.

SS: I think they were. I served on some of the task forces that dealt with some of these things. I know the struggles that went into them, and I really think they had a significant bearing on the future of the University, these values. I think they're excellent. You have access to this?

EN: Yes, I do. Sally gave me a copy when I interviewed her, she gave me a copy of the 2006...

SS: The Mission Statement, ah, the new programs—I think it's impressive that during the years that I was here, there were 60 new programs approved and initiated, such things as the BFA in Art and Design, the Master's Program in Art and Design, the International Business Program in the School of Business, Human Resource Management in the School of Business, Computer Science, Construction, Environmental Studies. In Foreign Languages and Literature, I was surprised to remember that French, German, and Spanish all came on board in 1976.

EN: Hmn.

SS: In the Foreign Language and Literature department. Management Information Systems, 1990. Marketing Research. Mechanical Engineering was not established as a program until 1987. In Music, there were several things, like Jazz Performance and Musical Theater, Music History and Literature. In Nursing, the Nurse Practitioner Program and Medical-Surgical Nursing. In Political Science, there was a Bachelor of Science program authorized in 1974, right after I

came. In Psychology, ah, Industrial Organization in Psychology, Community school of Psychology. Public Administration Public Analysis. The School of Psychology. In Theater, there was Dance Performance and Design were new programs. I added it up. There were 60 of those that were initiated in those 25 years, which to me says that we were growing and developing and becoming a much more comprehensive University.

EN: Yes.

SS: The buildings are the same way. The buildings. I counted 13 capital projects in that 25-year-period. The Art and Design Building, the Early Childhood Center and the Greenhouse. Founders' Hall. The James Metcalf Experimental Theater. The, it was a struggle it was to get the Vadalabene Center. I remember what a struggle that was to get that approved by the legislature. Ah, finally in 1983, it was opened. We had been open since '65, and we were still using a high school gym in Edwardsville. Just think what that gym has meant to the University!

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: Then, University Park. I remember the criticism that Lazerson got for University Park. The *Post Dispatch* really took him to task. They said it was a big waste of time. Look at it now. Look what's happening in University Park. It took years for that to develop, but it's really paying off, in my opinion.

EN: There's a big move now to get the maintenance money for the Corn to Ethanol plant. A million dollars a year.

SS: There was an editorial in the *Morning Post* disclosing that and apparently Michael Madigan who was the nemesis of the University all of those budget struggle years, is still the roadblock. He is the main one that's posing that bill.

EN: And I've heard that Glen Poshard [phonetic] has been to many, many meetings about it.

SS: I'm sure he has, and the university is fortunate to have him, I think. He's a person with a lot of political savvy and influence [SS clears throat] [pause]. The University News Service was just involved all those years in just about everything that happened on Campus. I always felt that we were not doing an adequate job, that we weren't actually, in spite of all that we did, covering all the things that should have been covered. Significant things were happening in various Departments. We just couldn't possibly be everywhere all of the time.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: I think that Greg Conroy has done an excellent job in developing more coverage through the new publications that he is now doing. There's more input from the various ah, Departments and Schools and Colleges than there ever was before. In some cases, it was almost like pulling teeth to get cooperation. Something very significant would be going on, and we wouldn't, the professor wouldn't tell us about it. We'd have to hear about it some other way. Then on the other hand, there were the professors who were always in our door begging us to do something about

their project or their program. We had both extremes. Probably the most worthy were the quiet ones who never said anything. We struggled with that. It was a real struggle to find, pick up all the news that I know was going on that we didn't have time or the ability to cover. With the new coverage techniques that are now existing in Public Affairs, with the ah, the comprehensive technologies that have streamlined so much of it in how they distribute news about the University is totally different... and photography as well, it's totally different.

EN: Digital.

SS: It's ah, it's one of the areas with enormous changes. With new technologies. I still think there are a lot of things going on here that need more recognition and coverage. They get slighted because a professor is modest or withdrawn or doesn't like to deal with the press. I really, going back to the question from a while ago of press relations, I really felt good about our relations with the press. We, before television was coming to campus, we, television was new in the St. Louis market, and we devised ways to try to get to them. Ah, we used our film unit in our, University News Service to produce film clips, of ah, which we sent to the TV stations. Before they were organized—I'm talking about union organization—at the TV stations, which shut that down eventually, they accepted many of our clips that we produced were used for their newscasts. That was a very successful strategy for a short time.

EN: Yes.

SS: Then, we tried our best to get the TV stations to come to campus and cover things. We, we were fairly successful at that. I remember when Bob Williams, Professor Robert Williams dropped eggs off the Peck Building. He challenged the students to package them. They were limited on the size of the package for their eggs. They were to be packaged so that they could be dropped off that three-four-story building and not break. And that was. The analogy was in relation to the moon. A trip to the moon. How do you land on the moon without breaking your landing apparatus and or, without crushing the people who are in the capsule? And that, we had a lot of fun with that. The TV stations really picked up on, uh. But, it was, it was a challenge to try to get the TV stations here initially. Ah, they would always come when there was some major problem, like the explosion in the chemical lab.

EN: Yes.

SS: Greg Conroy handled that beautifully. I stayed in the office, and he was at the site. We communicated back and forth and the TV stations were all there. And it was quite a sight. But in general, I feel that we had excellent relations with the press and with TV and radio. We tried our best to keep them informed. We always told them that they were free to ask us about anything. We were not going to hold back on sensitive matters. I mean, if, if we didn't initiate material that, for whatever reason, was confidential at the time, but we, uh, anything that was, that was public information, we made available to the press [pause]. And uh, we had excellent press coverage of all the Board meetings that were held on the Campus.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: Something that we did for a while was take the press to lunch after the Board meeting, and we had a little press conference over lunch. After the board meeting. If they had questions and so forth, we tried to fill them in on background material, that sort of thing, over at the University Center. That worked pretty well, for a while. Some press would not participate in it. They said, we were trying to influence their coverage but uh, that was not the objective. Our objective was to make sure that they had the factual material.

EN: Mm-hmm. [Pause]. Well, there's a lot of ideas here that no one else has brought up. All the people I've interviewed...

SS: I really would recommend this to you, I think you would find this...

EN: Yes. Uh-huh. Okay good. I'll take notes on it. I don't make Xeroxes, actually. I take notes and organize them because that's how I remember. So, now [recording shuts off].

EN: ...Mildred Arnold.

SS: Mildred was moved to our office during that reorganization. She was the editor of the Alumni publications. She was working part-time out of our office. We worked with her on a number of projects and assisted her with her publications. That was after the discontinuation of the yearbook. I think the last yearbook was probably about 1970. I'm not sure. I was sorry to see that [The Muse] discontinued.

EN: It was 1970.

SS: One of the things I appreciated about it so much was being able to find a picture of the faculty.

EN: Yes. [EN laughs]

SS: Some person that I wasn't sure who was who...to pick up a yearbook and look for a picture, I thought that was really helpful.

EN: Yeah. Why was she controversial? I ask people about Mildred Arnold and I get different responses. You're, I have to say you're the most positive. Because I wanted to find out about her. I think this magazine is beautiful!

SS: Yes.

EN: It's just consistently interesting.

SS: Yes. Yes. Yes.

EN: And I think it would be wonderful for the alumni. Maybe you don't want to talk about that...

SS: No, I can't really think of anything bad.

EN: Okay. Not bad, but

SS: Sometimes I think people were bored with her. She was a big talker. And carry on a lot in her conversations.

EN: Okay.

SS: One of her habits that was interesting was that she had the ability to anticipate what you were going to say, I don't know if she read lips or whatever, and she would say what you were going to say before you said it.

EN: Oh no.

SS: It was unbelievable, the ability she had to do that. Some people didn't like that.

EN: Okay.

SS: They were irritated by that. With me, I'm kind of a slow talker anyway. It was easy for her she, she, she...we'd be talking, and she'd say what I was planning to say. [EN and SS laugh] It was funny actually, I always thought it was kind of funny. But ah, that was kinda an irritant I thing. She was a very pleasant, she was social person, she was involved with women's clubs.

EN: Uh-huh.

SS: A society person. She played ah, bridge a lot. And a fashionable person. She always wore the latest fashions. She was good friends with the ah, board person who was from Centralia [John Wham], His wife [Fay Wham] had a fashion shop in Centralia...

EN: Oh, yes!

SS: I can't think of the name...

EN: Oh, I can't think of who... I know who it is.... I've got a lot of notes.

SS: But she would go to Centralia and she would buy her clothes there. [EN and SS laugh] It was kinda funny. She was always dressed to the hilt. I mean, she was... She didn't wear casual. I always thought she was pleasant. She didn't like, she didn't want to be corrected. So, she was excellent with English and Grammar and all... but all of us make mistakes. We had a rule in our office that nothing ever went out before another set of eyes had seen it. It wasn't always me, but someone would always review what was prepared for errors or grammatical typos or whatever. Invariably, I'd find... I hated myself when I did, but I'd find a typo in her copy. She just, she resented my pointing those errors out to her, and she'd always have a big excuse why that happened, [EN laughs] "Oh, I was tied up with whatever here... I was distracted and that's why I made that mistake." She wouldn't admit to a mistake.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: But, I didn't consider that a real fault but some people didn't like that. That was one of her characteristics. [Recording stops].

SS: ...Beat, or the Courthouse Beat, or the Education Beat or whatever. I used that strategy to try to get coverage of the University. I assigned each person in News Service a beat, things they were responsible for, to bring in news. And ah, it worked to a degree, but I was never completely satisfied. I didn't have a real good way to enforce, for one thing. Pete Simpson, you couldn't count on him to ever follow up on anything.

EN: Mm-hmm.

SS: He was an excellent writer when he did, and when he had a pet project, he did it up very well. There, Tommye Walter was an excellent person to cover an interview, she was very conscientious about it. She would be a good resource.

EN: Mm-hmm. Okay. Yes, I've seen many articles by her.

SS: I think there's three, three in here.

EN: She wrote a lot for *The Alumnus* and *The Observer* later.

SS: Right. Yeah, yeah. She's been active in the retirement... see this article here, this first article is by her. Um, she's, would be an excellent resource, and you're going to do Greg Conroy, yeah?

EN: Well I talked to him, you know he's, he's...has he been here...he's been here 30 years?

SS: Oh, no. No. He's been here more like ah, 15 to 20.

EN: 15 to 20. I I he's been here a rather short time. I have talked to him though. I think he sets a very high standard for his writing. Myself, I love the way he writes.

SS: Yes.

EN: I subscribe to his news that he puts out online. [EN laughs] The Greg Conway News.

SS: There's an article about him here.

EN: I have a lot of.

SS: I think about 1985...is maybe when he came on board.

EN: Okay. Well.

SS: That's 20 years.

EN: Yes, it is. Right. I've interviewed some more recent. So I will interview him. Because people say he has such a wonderful overview of everything.

SS: Mm-hmm.

EN: Like, I... [recording ends]