

## CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Zoltan Kramar

### (Transcription of Side 1)

MS The interview today for the Living History Project is with Dr. Zoltan Kramar. I am Milo Smith. Dr. Kramar will be interviewed as a faculty member and as an administrator, since he served quite a considerable time as Dean of Arts and Humanities.

Good morning, Zoltan. Will you please start with a brief personal history of your life before coming to Central?

ZK I've spent 30 years here. I was born in 1933. For some people, a tragic year, of course. I lived my first eleven years in Hungary [inaudible].

At the end of World War II, the family decided to vacate the premises, since the Russians were going to take it over. And we moved to West Germany at the time, where we lived for the next five years until we emigrated to the United States in 1950.

In terms of schooling, I had the first five grades in Hungary, and then I continued through the ninth grade in Germany. From the ninth grade, I entered the university in the United States, a nice Jesuit university, Creighton, where I registered with a major in Political Science.

At the same time, I also took Army R.O.T.C. But at the end of my undergraduate studies, I did not get a commission, because I was still one year shy of the five years that was required for citizenship.

Now, being interested in continuing my studies, I wanted to get my service obligations out of the way, so I volunteered for the draft. And so for the next two years, between 1954 and 1956, I spent most of my time with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, which was stationed over in Germany. Which was very nice, being in the old stomping grounds.

In 1956, just weeks before the Hungarian Revolution, I was mustered out and I re-entered Creighton University. I got my Master of Arts in History at the start of 1957. And then, I transferred to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln for my Ph.D., where I worked at for many years.

But then, I received a Regents Scholarship – I think it was the first one in the history of the University of Nebraska, a Regents Scholarship – to be used outside the United States for research for a graduate student. And I traveled to Vienna to work on my dissertation at the National Archives there. Where, incidentally, I met my future wife, Maria.

And I returned two years later. And in 1963, I was sitting in my mentor's office discussing some aspect of my dissertation when he received a phone call from the then-Chair of the History Department at Central.

And so, just to give you an example of how the old boys' network worked at that time, he needed an ancient historian at Central at the time, and so he called his mentor and asked if he had anybody in his "stable." [chuckles]

And so Andy – Dr. Anderson, T. Anderson, who incidentally served during the Second World War on MacArthur's staff – turns to me and says, "Zoltan, would you care to go to Central Washington?" [laughing] I said, "Where?"

Anyway, it was one of those cases where I signed the contract before the interview. And so in August of 1963, in a brand-new Corvair, with the smallest U-Haul wagon that I think you could get, we had our first [inaudible].

MS Good. Now, let's look back at your years of service at Central, Zoltan. You started when and you retired when?

ZK Well, I started in the fall quarter of 1963, and I retired at the end of the spring quarter of 1996.

MS Now, a question that isn't normally asked, I want to ask. Can you remember your impressions of the town, the valley and the school there in 1963?

ZK Remember, this was a seller's market at the time. And incidentally, I've never in my life written a CV. You see, in fact, I received three unsolicited offers, and I really decided amongst them on the basis of a map.

We both, Maria and I, were mountaineers and we loved mountains. But Maria, being a big-city girl, wanted the mountains to be at least within hiking distance of a major metropolitan area, for cultural purposes. And so Ellensburg was ideal. And we said, "Great."

We knew we were coming into a small town. I always loved small towns [inaudible]. But I like the distances. I like a sparsely settled population. I don't like crowds.

And so I personally liked Ellensburg from the first time I stepped in. Of course, for Maria, it was a bit of a culture shock. It took her more time to make the necessary adjustments, but she hasn't [inaudible].

And as far as the college was concerned, I knew you couldn't tell [inaudible]. I knew it was not going to be a big school, like where I came from. I was in a middle-sized school in Lincoln, Nebraska. So I knew it was going to be smaller. But not ever having had any other job, previous job, it was [inaudible], I couldn't compare it to anything.

MS Were the students that you taught that first year a shock to you, as far as their preparation was concerned?

ZK No. No. Of course, I was a teaching assistant for three years at Nebraska, which meant that I pretty much had the introductory courses. Even having had a Ph.D. student as a teaching assistant, I had to lecture in the freshman courses.

So, the quality of the students? They probably were very similar, considering that even though I think the student population was heavily West side, still the impression I got was it was more a rural group – which, of course, was also true of Nebraska.

In other words, I no doubt would have seen a major difference in experience had I come from a metropolitan, Eastern school, where you still have the old-fashioned, multigenerational middle class, and that kind of student population.

MS Oftentimes through the years here at Central, I have had an opportunity to become acquainted with some of our professors who had come from a background of Central European education who oftentimes were very, very disappointed with the lack of discipline of our students, by the ease with which one could get a degree compared with the regimentation and discipline of German schools, for example.

I was very interested as to how you would react to these just-out-of-high-school kids who were not coming before you with much of a background in history.

ZK Well, again, don't forget, I was 16 years old when I came to this country. And all I could say about my preparation up to that point were the first nine grades. But obviously, because I wasn't really a brilliant student, it was sufficient; the first nine years of European schooling was enough to get myself into an institution of higher learning. I remember it was done on the basis of an entrance examination that they gave to every candidate.

No, I didn't make much – of course, again, remember I spent two years in the Army with enlisted men. I happened to be in a unit that was overwhelmingly Puerto Rican, who actually every day, a couple of hours a day, went off and learned English. So, you know, this was no problem at all.

I had no – even though the town back at home came from university, Bagan [sp?], my father [inaudible], and all my friends as little kids – being the brats of faculty – was the kind of youth group that I grew up with, up to the age of eleven.

MS Did you start at the assistant professor level?

ZK No. I was the last one to come in here as an instructor. I was an ABD at that point. And I remember the contract called for staying here at least five years, completion of the dissertation for tenure?

In fact, I came at that time during the big expansion in 1963 under President Brooks. And I came in with a colleague, also an ABD. He came in as an assistant professor because he already had some teaching experience.

And I had no problem finishing my dissertation within two years. He did. And though I stayed, he had to leave. He was very bitter about that.

MS So was the college good to its word in promoting you as soon as you as you completed your dissertation?

ZK Yes.

MS Good, glad to hear that. Now, do you recall the courses that you taught that first year or two?

ZK I taught [laughing] ... I remember having taught this one quarter American History Survey which, of course, was deleted after a year or two. That did not – I did not realize the advantage of having taught that course for another American historian [inaudible]. But I did not realize the advantage of having taught that course until 33 years later, when it came to the very last quarter that I taught at this University, but in the role of an exchange program professor at the University of Pécs [Hungary], our sister university, where that's exactly the course they wanted.

And so what I did, I took out my very yellowed notes from 33 years before! [laughing] and took it from there.

MS Did you ever teach in any other department besides History?

ZK Not department. Program, yes, but not department.

MS Do you recall any particular problems that occurred in the faculty, between the faculty and the Board of Trustees, between the faculty and the Administration here?

ZK I paid no attention.

MS OK, good enough. You were totally naïve, were you?

ZK Totally naïve. But it was more than that, it was – well, maybe better I discuss how I became a [inaudible].

MS Do you recall any humorous events that might have occurred?

ZK I saw that question and I thought it's very hard to recall. Because I think that people who are tragedy-oriented. I happen to be in that opposite group who are blessed with an orientation toward humor, and I have a tendency to see humor in almost any situation, including high masses and funerals. So it's very difficult for me to select particularly humorous events, because any event could be funny.

MS When you check that short list of subjects at the bottom of the first page, starting with A, B, C, D –

ZK *Ohgosh.*

MS Are there any of those that you would like to comment on? This is the time to get your opinion on tape for posterity.

ZK No, not really. I never had any problems.

MS OK. Did you have any attitudes concerning such things as the Faculty Code?

ZK I really don't know that I looked at it very hard.

MS Did you think of it as a device that protected you and your academic freedom?

ZK In fact, since I never thought my academic freedom was being infringed in any way, I didn't even see there was ever any potential problem.

MS That's what we really needed was a lot of well-informed faculty in those years.

ZK That's right! [laughing] As long as they left me alone in the classroom, I [inaudible].

MS I'm crushed. This was my respected dean.

ZK Uh-huh.

MS Were you ever the recipient of any awards or honors during your teaching years, Zoltan?

ZK Well, what did I have? ... I had, of course, the Alumni Distinguished Teacher award. I don't – are they still having those things? It happened in 1979. Well, [inaudible].

MS That's a bargain. Your picture might be in the Library entryway.

ZK No, it's not. That's for the University Distinguished Teacher.

MS Oh, I see.

ZK I wasn't that distinguished.

MS Now, this is one time when I will ask you to not be modest. But what specific contribution do you think that you made to the programs or to the progress of your department or school? For example, the development of new courses, the revision of courses, the revision or development of majors and minors. Go ahead.

ZK Well, I was, of course, hired to offer a new program. That was basically Ancient History. So the – if you're interested in the course numbers specifically, they were History 312 and 313, the History of the Mideast and Greece for 5 credits, and the History of Rome, 5 credits. I introduced [these].

And incidentally, these are not being taught since I retired. And they're not about to replace me with an Ancient historian. We are coming to [inaudible] instead of going.

I introduced the Military History that is taught as a mandatory course for the Army R.O.T.C. But in addition to that, I introduced a very flexible topics course, Topics in Military History, which is offered every other year on average, each time with a totally new content.

In fact, for the first 10 years or so, I remember team-teaching that with Ray Smith. And we had just a ball. And actually, they asked how do we handle credit? Well, we just simply switched off. One year, I took the credit. The next year, he took the credit and the other one just taught.

And that's, for instance, in a 10-year period, we dealt in tremendous detail in almost every conceivable aspect of the Second World War. Special topics, you know. Just the armor, just elite groups, just the various [inaudible]. And we had the island campaigns. And the Burma front, I remember being very fond of that.

And each time, we had 30, 40 students. It was a very, very popular series of courses, I remember that. So yes, these were ...

Then we had a Far Eastern course, kind of a catchall. And I was the one who split it into two separate courses, one for modern Japan, one for China.

MS Did you find that the department was willing to accept new courses?

ZK Oh, they did every year.

MS Good.

ZK They were eager for these. Perhaps there was a certain amount of ... how shall I put it? ... not cynicism, but less than enthusiasm, in this Military course. In fact, I offered it in the spirit of [inaudible].

This was, course coincided with the antiwar movement, during the last years of the Vietnam War. And, of course, the antiwar [inaudible], not at the big universities.

And I said, "Well, I'm curious. Let's see what is going to happen."

So I went out on a limb and I offered the first introductory course on the Second World War. They had to run around campus and find a room in which they could get about 70 students.

And, of course, once they realized the credit hours that that generated, they suddenly became supporters. Apart from that, they were always very, very supportive.

MS Do you recall any instance, in that particular case during the antiwar period of Vietnam, did you ever receive any anonymous notes or telephone calls and resistance to "How dare you teach militarism in our school?"

ZK No, never.

MS Never did, huh?

ZK No.

MS I'm thinking of a particular professor who got a lot of static.

ZK Really?

MS Not about that specific case, but he was teaching Philosophy of Religion, and there were some plants in his class who were going back to their churches. And he was attacked terribly because he did not cover all churches.

ZK These were fundamentalists.

MS Right.

ZK No, I didn't get anything like that.

MS Good, good.

ZK As a matter of fact, if I may, may I just follow that a little bit. In terms of – because there's a question here about student-faculty problems, I never, never, ever had any confrontation with students.

MS Good.

ZK Until the very last two years, when – especially freshmen – I got students who started talking in class. That was the first and only time that I felt I had to stand on my hind legs and tell them how to behave or else they can [leave]. But then, I think there was only ... I think it was ...

MS I'd like to sample something else here. I'll relate to you first my reaction. I discovered that in the late 1960s, early 1970s, I suddenly was a witness to language in my classroom that I had never heard in a classroom before.

I discovered that if I made comments, it got worse. It was better if I just let it go right on by. Did you find that there was a period when students were testing you, to see what they could get by with in your classroom?

ZK No, I never had that problem. I never myself ever used any of that profanity. I was very careful. It's not that I don't use it on my own time. But not in classroom. And it's a couple of things. One is maybe my accent made a difference.

MS What accent?

ZK Well, so I understand. Thank you anyway. I mean, not that [inaudible].

And secondly, the way I addressed them. That was another thing. I would not stand for the attempt to buddy-up the students. It was only "Mr." or "Mrs." or "Miss." And somehow, that rubbed off; and they automatically assumed that same kind of reserved and social behavior as far as it went.

MS As I related, I did discover that it would go away if I didn't make an issue of it. If I would have made an issue of it, it would have been worse.

ZK Would have been worse, yeah.

MS At the beginning of every quarter, I would be tested; and I would ignore it, just let it go right on by and pretty soon – we're talking about the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Were you ever bothered at any particular time, Zoltan, by finding that some of your students were less than honest in taking examinations?

ZK Well, I'm not suggesting that they weren't [inaudible], but my examination was very difficult to do it. Because early on, I decided that my exams should consist of essays. Exclusively.

And as time went on, I reduced the number. So in the last two, three years, I specialized in single-essay examinations, including final examinations. Now, who tries to cheat those? I mean, they were not too difficult.

MS Well, I found a student who was trying to cheat on an essay exam in Theater History. The student – I was looking in the back of the room, where I had wandered, because I could find more there than I could from the front.

ZK Yeah, yeah, I'm sure. [chuckles]

MS And this student kept bobbing back and forth. And I couldn't figure out what's that student bobbing back and forth for?

ZK Oh, really?

MS And slowly, I walked up the side aisle and discovered that that student had come into the room the night before and had written words all over the back of a particular chair, and those were important words that they wanted to write about in the exam the next day. And that student was simply picking out the words. [laughter]

ZK The nature of my exams were such that unique [inaudible]. And if you felt you needed – I mean, you obviously weren't [inaudible].

MS That's right. Now, I won't ask you if you ever served as an administrator, because we know you did, and I'll ask you questions there in a moment.

Were there any particular programs or courses or subject matter on this campus that you do not feel belong in a university curriculum?

ZK Well, of course, I'm an Honors grad elitist. So I would say any of the remedial courses should not have anything to do with a university. At the most, they should be material at the community college level. But I really think they should be taken care of, however the student does that, in the lower grades. I see no point [offering them at the university level].

MS How about the technological courses? I can recall a colleague of yours who was very, very, very opposed to technology –

ZK I really don't [inaudible]. In other words, what is the end result of our technology? I mean, who are they? Are they a species of low-grade engineers or what are they?

MS I don't know. The courses that he was very opposed to were all of those courses concerned with electricity and woodworking, and metalworking, and courses of that nature. And he said, "That belongs in the School of Technology. It doesn't belong on a university campus." And he was terribly virulent.

ZK Yeah, obviously we are not the U Dub [University of Washington] that has Engineering schools. That's perfectly acceptable. It's step to that perhaps, and who knows, they may never get there. But on the other hand, I'm sure there are some teachers who in high school are teaching Shop, and they pick it up.

MS This same professor, Zoltan – I'd like to test this and get your opinion – this same professor thought that Central truly needed, and perhaps always needed, a very good series of courses in the classics. Did you feel that that was a shortfall in our curriculum?

ZK That certainly was supplied by the Douglas Honors College. But I definitely think that the classics should be part of an educated person's cultural baggage.

MS Well, when this man became a Dean for a short while, he visited our department and made me feel awfully good when he said, "In checking through the course of study for this quarter, I find that the only faculty member who's teaching courses that I can justify is Dr. Smith, because he teaches History and Literature courses in Drama."

And you can imagine what the departmental reaction to that man was.

ZK Yes.

MS Have you any relatives who have attended Central?

ZK Well, yes. My wife, of course, and both daughters got their degrees here.

MS They did complete their degrees here?

ZK Yes. Maria got her bachelor's and master's, and the two girls each got a bachelor's.

MS I don't know if you know, but we plan to interview her [Maria], because she's had such an interesting relationship to this school over the years in many different capacities. I think she did everything but sweep out buildings.

ZK Yes, I think so. [laughter]

MS Did you ever serve on a Building Committee, Zoltan?

ZK I may have. I may have. I have some vague memory of that but ... oh yeah! It was ... the only item that I remember that we had any discussion about was naming the Japanese garden. That was the only one that was on the menu at the time that I was part of it.

MS While we're there, do you have any opinion concerning the naming of buildings?

ZK No.

MS Or facilities?

ZK Whatever people are comfortable with.

MS Well, the current regime does not want to name anything for living people.

ZK I think that goes on the same principle of erecting statues to people. I feel it's [inaudible] consistent. [Inaudible]. I can live with that.

MS I understand there is some resistance now to the current philosophy, simply because Central has a history of having named facilities and buildings for people who were living.

ZK Let me put it this way. I would not stand for it if anybody wanted to name something after me. I would find that very unacceptable.

MS Well, I understand that in your History building over there, there was a men's restroom that had a label that said "Stalag Kramar" over the door.

ZK That comes into the category of humor. [laughter]

MS OK, now, let's treat you as an administrator for a moment. Identify, if you will, the bracketing dates, or years at least, as to when you became a Dean and when you retired from the Deanship.

ZK That was between 1976 and 1980.

MS What was your reaction to those four years of service?

ZK Well, let's start at the very beginning, as to how I became a Dean.

MS Please do.

ZK Don't forget that I always prided myself in being the longest-serving **interim dean** west of the Mississippi. [laughing]

I remember, it must have been in 1976 in the spring, we were under a different organizational pattern, as we had schools. We had the School of Arts & Humanities, and that's, of course, the one into which I got lured.

I was going home with a perfectly good conscience, and I was walking right across the quadrangle over here, when opposite me came a character heading to work in the History Department who said, "Ah! I want to talk to you. The people in the area want you to be their Dean." Right there in the middle of the quadrangle!

Now, you have to understand this, that I think I have had a fairly well working vocabulary, but I have difficulty finding words to describe the intensity of my lack of interest in administrative duties. Obviously, part of that comes through.

I mean, to the idea that I would be an administrator – even at a departmental level – it never, *never* crossed the threshold of my consciousness. And here, I'm going home, and I'm looking toward lunch, and here comes the Academic Vice President saying, "I want you!" [laughing]

And, you know, I obviously was a little shocked. And he said, "Well, I'll give you 24 hours to think about it."

And the only thing that occurred to me that it might perhaps be Fate that was dealing me this hand – I certainly wasn't looking for it, I wasn't maneuvering for it, it just dropped in my lap – was at that moment, I was studying, in Military History, I was studying **military leadership**. And that was the area of my research.

I said, "Wouldn't that be interesting, to have some hands-on experience apart from the academic studying of the subject?"

And he offered me the opportunity, in a civilian setting. And so I said, "OK, for one year. For one year, and with the understanding that I'll continue to teach in the department." I was not giving up my program. I would be teaching in the department.

MS What part of the time did you teach?

ZK I taught every quarter for the next four years, at least one course. And there were quarters when I had two courses, yeah. [Inaudible] And so that is how I got in.

Then, after the first year, **then** they decided that they probably had a usable, cheap Dean, and so they hung onto me until there came a rearrangement. Because in 1980, the whole University got reorganized and certain Deanships were eliminated and I could go back to the faculty. Which **was** one of my happiest days.

MS Now, during those four years, I hope you know that you were well respected by the people over whom you were Dean.

ZK Well, I did not experience the opposite of that.

MS Good. I didn't like you but everybody else did.

ZK **Degustibus non est disputandum** [laughter] But at any rate, I did not do anything on my own, simply because I went in with the understanding that I was going to be only a caretaker. Since it was always a one-year thing, I did not want to initiate things that might bind the hands of whoever came in permanently.

MS That's why I admired you. In spite of the fact that you had a so-called "interim" appointment, did you participate in bringing about any significant changes in the School at all?

ZK I don't recall. No, the only thing that I got involved with was piggyback on [inaudible]. But that's not the School, that was the University of Washington.

MS Now, the next question is one that could be embarrassing. Would you share the names of people you felt were especially effective in helping you perform your duties as Dean?

ZK Well, one person was Ellen Ackler, my secretary. [laughing] She did work. I had the responsibility, but she did the work.

MS That's nice of you to say so. That's what we all thought. [laughter]

ZK I couldn't have turned around without her.

MS Now, again, at the bottom of that first page, it's not the same but exactly the same. As a Dean looking at that list, is there anything there that you might react to?

ZK Well obviously, the one problem I sort of followed through, even in the glorious days of expansion. I mean, that Damocles sword was always hanging over us. And I remember at first it was this constant struggle for credit hours, how many credit hours we generated as a department – or, as a School, later.

Once we reached the point where we had no problem generating them, then that was no longer the basis for [inaudible], then the slogan came in that we "had to do more with less." Which is, I think, the current philosophy. [laughing]

MS Now, at least twice in your life, you were involved because of academic reorganization. Do you have any reaction to the organization through which you served?

**(Transcription of Side 2)**

ZK I remember team-teaching up in the Arts Department. And I never questioned the good intentions, or the best intentions, of the administrator colleagues. But I'm sure that the process itself is self-generating after a while. And so you try all these things. People who receive this as imposed on them, of course, don't appreciate it.

Incidentally, that was the one good thing about the Administration at that time; [and] my experience, from my personal point of view, is that I did have a chance to see the other side of the fence. And I will never judge administrators as [do] those colleagues of mine who never had that chance. Because I have been on the other side, I can see them differently. So I can empathize. It didn't mean that I necessarily accepted their positions. But the conditions, I do understand.

MS Now, did you find that as the Interim Dean, you were given the same privileges that a regular Dean might have? For example, in hiring personnel?

ZK Oh, I don't think there was any difference.

MS Were you accepted?

ZK I'm sure, yes.

MS Your superiors accepted you, then, as –

ZK Of course, I never looked upon them as my superiors. I remember – you should cut this out –

MS Do you recall, while you were Dean, were there any areas in which you were not allowed to make decisions, but rather you had to get on the phone and contact Dr. Harrington?

ZK Oh, I'm sure –

MS For example, about money?

ZK Oh, yeah. Of course. That was understood.

MS That money had to be decided at a higher level?

ZK Yes, oh, sure. Which was just as fine, because the responsibility for it was there, too.

MS Now, of all of your years as faculty member, and especially as an administrator, were you aware of a difference of treatment of men faculty members and women faculty members?

ZK Well, this is an interesting – I know this is a very hot-button subject in these years here. But you have to put this, again, in my personal context. Gender conflict or tension is something I got exposed to only in this country. It was never a subject matter in my family, or where I come from.

When you consider, for instance, my mother, when she entered medical school in the early 1920s, 10 percent of that entering freshman class were women. That was in **Hungary [Transylvania, now Romania]**.

And I remember growing up, even as a youngster, when I discovered that girls are different from boys, you know, I was constantly – what appealed to me in a girl was that mentally, intellectually, she was my peer. And that is what would draw my interest. Everything else would come as a consequence of that.

So I was never sensitized to this kind of role differentiation according to gender until I got here. And even then, I had to make myself realize that this is a different ballgame.

No, I never – personally, I never noticed that. Certainly I made no such distinctions. It never occurred to me!

MS Did you ever have women faculty coming to you as a Dean saying, “I am not being treated with justice”?

ZK No.

MS Good. Glad to hear that. Would care to make any comment whatsoever concerning the different Presidents under whom you served?

ZK Well, very briefly. When I came – of course, when did Jim Brooks come on board? Maybe a year or two before I did, right?

MS Yes.

ZK He was a very young President, 36 or something.

MS Yeah, about a year before you came.

ZK Of course, I had no contact with him at all. What was interesting was that I had practically no contact with him as a Dean. The first two years as a Dean, he was still [inaudible], I think.

And the only occasion in which I had face-to-face **conversations** with him was each year when I had to defend my list of promotions. There simply [were] no interpersonal relations with that President.

And so I was aware that he was very strongly interested in physical building matters. This was his interest, buildings, the physical plant of the University.

I understood that he presided over the great transitions from a teachers' college to a State college to a State university. I was aware of that. But he did not impress me as an academic. He did not impress me as much of an intellectual, which obviously he was not, not in the American sense. There is a different sense of that [inaudible] in Central Europe.

But I would say that I really gained respect for Jimmy Brooks after he retired and became a full-fledged faculty member. He became a superb senior faculty member in the Geography Department, something that very, very few university **presidents** will do.

Now, as far as the other president was concerned, he was a fresh breath in that time. Especially in comparison to **Jim**. He was a big city slicker. I mean that as a sophisticate who had a vision, who opened up the University to the outside world. Of course, his [inaudible] everybody always benefited who advocated the national interest. .... **love was Japan**.

He was a very articulate person, you know, academically. His first addresses were a pleasure to listen to. But ... well, maybe he, too, stayed a little too long, I don't know.

And I remember he cooked up the greatest margaritas that I've ever tasted! [laughter] Can I say that? He was a great host.

As far as the current incumbent [Ivory Nelson], I cannot say anything. May I turn that off? [tape recorder turned off]

MS Would you care to talk about your participation as a member of a Deans' Council, having been a faculty member for so long? [chuckles] Was it eye-opening?

ZK It was dull. Terribly, terribly boring. I thought, oh, these meetings.

MS Allow me to tell you an example of my disappointment. I found at one time early on, that there were people on the Deans' Council, such as the Superintendent of the Physical Plant, who were voting on academic matters. [laughter]

And I resisted, and I wrote letters of appeal. And I listed two or three people who were sitting on that committee who wouldn't know a credit from ghost, and yet they were being allowed to vote on academic matters. That was very disturbing to me.

ZK No, I don't recall ever having anybody on that Dean's Council except Deans. And the occasional person that had to come for meeting purposes. But that's all.

MS Did that automatically become the President's Council?

ZK I think no. The President's Council had a much broader representation of [inaudible]. It was chaired by the Academic Vice President.

MS Right. What was your feeling as a Dean concerning the distribution of funds on the campus?

ZK Well, I realized [chuckles] I realized that, well, the American university, certainly the American state university, had a somewhat different mission from the classical university, especially in Europe. And so I understood.

We are taxpayer-supported institutions, and so the larger customer pool, the potential customer pool, had some justifiable decision-making powers over us. And while I ... you see, I always drew a distinction between education on one hand, and training on the other – which, of course, were the two ideas that were around, to the point of complete synonymity practically.

And the way I distinguished was that in education, you learned certain things that make life worth living. Whereas in training, you learn something to make a living. And it is the making-a-living part that is stressed in American state universities.

And so I understood that and I accepted that. It doesn't mean that I was happy about it, but that was the way that this society was arranging matters. I was counting my blessings that there was a little bit of frosting on the cake that was permitted, like the Douglas Honors, where real education takes place.

MS As far as I'm concerned, we are very near the end of questions, Zoltan. But I wanted to make sure that you are given an opportunity to talk about things that you may possibly have notes on that I haven't asked you about.

ZK I was ready to field the questions that you were asking. There is the final wrap-up question about how I felt about my overall impression, which is completely positive. Completely positive. I had a very fortunate and blessed life that I could spend it here for 30 years.

MS We're glad to have had you.

ZK My pleasure.

MS Thank you, sir.

Jean Putnam: I had one question. What year did you retire?

ZK 1996.