

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW WITH BOB HARBORT  
CONDUCTED, EDITED, AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT  
for the  
SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY SERIES, NO. 4  
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Southern Polytechnic State University Series, No. 4  
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Monday, May 5, 2014  
Location: Town Point, Kennesaw State University

TS: Today the interview is with Bob Harbort, a thirty-one year veteran of Southern Polytechnic. Bob, I'm delighted to get a chance to meet you and talk to you today. I've been at Kennesaw since 1968, and it looks like you've been at Southern Polytechnic since 1983. So we've both been around a long time. Unfortunately, I don't know many computer science folks on our own campus let alone Southern Polytechnic. Maybe a good thing about all of this is that we are starting to get to know each other through some of these Operational Working Groups. Why don't we begin by talking about your background? I know you got a bachelor's degree in physics from Emory University way back in 1968. Why don't you talk about your educational background and mentors along the way and how you got interested first in physics and then computer science? Then you had a unique doctoral program it looked like at Emory, so you might want to talk about that a little bit too.

BH: I went to Emory thinking I was going to be pre-med, and I lasted through one quarter—we were on the quarter system then—and biology and formaldehyde [persuaded me to switch majors].

TS: I understand. I found out very quickly in an anatomy class that I was allergic to formaldehyde.

BH: I switched to being a math major, and then I switched to physics because I was also interested in other things. My math advisor asked me a question one day when she was signing my registration form. She looked at me because I was signing up for an English course that I didn't have to take. She asked, "Why would anybody want to read a book?"

TS: She said that?

BH: Yes. So I changed majors that day, and I actually did the work for a double major in physics and math.

TS: I hope that's not characteristic of most people in math.

BH: No. I also was interested in English literature and so on and did the honors program in English. I actually won an award as an undergraduate for that, so I have a lot of English classes. I am a Quaker, so I went to work for Crawford Long Hospital because I got drafted. I was told, "Do your two years of alternate service . . .

TS: Oh, conscientious objector status.

BH: Yes. I was working at Crawford Long. I guess I worked there for about a year.

TS: Did you get drafted before you graduated?

BH: No, I got drafted right after.

TS: So in '68 we're talking about that you got drafted?

BH: Actually, I volunteered because I had a very low draft number, and I knew what was coming. I just went ahead and volunteered. By the way a budget crunch served me very well because the draft board in Atlanta was in the habit of sending people to the Middle Georgia Cattlemen's Improvement Association, which if you can imagine doing artificial insemination on cows down in Tifton or some place. They didn't have any money to relocate me, so they had to post me in a local place.

TS: That's how Crawford Long came about?

BH: That's how I got there to Crawford Long.

TS: What a great place to go to though!

BH: I was working as an orderly, and a radiology faculty member that taught some physics classes at Emory needed a junior person and managed to get me transferred. So I did a little less than a year of my two years of alternate service working at Emory calibrating x-ray machines and stuff. He was interested in somebody who had a physics background and who could get nabbed to do that. I stayed to work with him and did physics and radiological research for two or three years and got involved, because I had taken a programming course, with computer programming for the radiology department and then eventually moved to the computer center to do computing.

TS: We're talking real early days of computers too.

BH: Yes, we are. I started graduate school at Georgia Tech part-time.

TS: While you were still doing your alternative service?

BH: No, I was still in the same job, but I wasn't on alternative service any more.

TS: Did you get paid like a private first class while you were in?

BH: I got paid \$1.30 an hour, thank you (laughter)!

TS: It wasn't a lot. So after your two years I guess they gave you a bump in salary and a new title?

BH: A minor bump in salary.

TS: Were you born a Quaker or was it a conversion in college?

BH: It runs in the family.

TS: That's interesting.

BH: Not very many of us in the Atlanta area.

TS: But, you know, the American Friends Service did so much with Freedom Summer and civil rights and all that.

BH: Yes.

TS: Okay, so you started Georgia Tech.

BH: I was still working at Emory and driving back and forth going to Georgia Tech and had gotten off doing more general computer stuff outside of the radiology department. I was in charge of all clinical medical applications. We were doing some work with Crawford Long Hospital, and so I had the opportunity to convince the administrator of Crawford Long Hospital to hire me back at a significantly higher level. I was their first director of biomedical engineering. I didn't know what I was doing. There was no such thing as any training for biomedical engineering.

TS: That's a big major at Georgia Tech now.

BH: It is. There wasn't anything at that time.

TS: How about that!

BH: After I worked at Crawford Long as director of biomedical engineering, we were doing a lot of computer stuff with that—computerized intensive care unit and so on—I came to the conclusion that the easy part of it was all the electronics and the fancy stuff, and the hard part of it was, what do you do with all this data? I decided I was going to go back to graduate school and get a PhD I had effectively taken all of the courses when I did my master's at Georgia Tech, all the ones that were related to biomedical stuff. So I went to Emory and went into their Institute of Liberal Arts and designed my own doctoral program.

- TS: You didn't want to get a doctorate at Georgia Tech after you'd taken all the courses there? You didn't want an engineering degree.
- BH: That's a long story. I was in a program at Georgia Tech sponsored by the National Library of Medicine. When they came for a five-year review of the program, they had graduate students lined up to speak against getting it [renewed]. It was just awful. A lot of us took a master's degree and got out of Dodge.
- TS: I understand. I had heard before from one of our recipients of the KSU Distinguished Professor and Distinguished Teaching Awards that she thought that the faculty at Georgia Tech wasn't concerned about students and that Emory was much more student- friendly, teacher-oriented.
- BH: Oh, yes.
- TS: You think so too?
- BH: I got my master's in 1975, and to this day it makes me mad to go onto the Georgia Tech campus, if I have to go down there for a meeting or something.
- TS: Okay, so Emory is friendlier toward students.
- BH: I got a lot out of my doctoral program.
- TS: And, of course, you had an interest in English and lots of different things besides engineering.
- BH: Yes. To get a PhD you typically have to have two out-of-discipline sub-areas to deal with. I'm probably the only person at that program, that usually has some fairly odd ones, but one of my sub-disciplines was that I was licensed as a professional engineer. The other one I took an exam and passed it in classical Greek. That was an interesting combination.
- TS: Wow. Did you have a Biblical interest in classical Greek or a Plato interest or how did that come about?
- BH: From a bunch of philosophy courses I took. Some theological stuff, but that was more radical Reformation kind of stuff than the Greek stuff.
- TS: Yes, the Anabaptists and all those folks from the Reformation?
- BH: One of the things I did while I was doing my two years of service, I said I can be the best orderly Crawford Long ever had and use about 5 percent of my brain. I spent a whole lot of time in the theology library at Emory reading up on the radical Reformation.

- TS: How about that! At the Candler School of Theology?
- BH: I read from Volume 1, Number 1 to date and I still keep up with it—the *Mennonite Quarterly [Review]*—to learn all about the radical Reformation. I actually took half a year of Greek in high school, so that was my start for Greek.
- TS: It must have been an amazing high school that they taught Greek.
- BH: Fulton County, Sandy Springs High School. It doesn't exist anymore.
- TS: Really?
- BH: I took three and a half years of Latin, and we decided to do a half year of Greek.
- TS: Do you still keep up with your Greek? A little bit? Okay, so 1975 is your master's. When do you get your licensed professional engineer? Is that as soon as you get your master's you got licensed in engineering?
- BH: I got licensed in 1979. I started doing work in biomedical engineering at Crawford Long in 1975 when I got my master's. We were doing a lot of stuff that required an official license stamped by a professional engineer. I got sick of finding professional engineers, so I decided I would become one. I never took an engineering course of any sort.
- TS: But the computer science and all the biomedical engineering experience got you through?
- BH: The engineer's exam is a two-part exam. The first part is an eight-hour-long set of problems. You write in a problem book, a blue book, and turn the whole thing in. I took it once and didn't come anywhere near passing it and then took it the second time and made in the high 80s because I had learned what it was they were expecting. Then I had to do work experience and then took the electrical engineers exam. I went into the electrical engineers exam with two physics textbooks, a copy of the National Electric Code, and a slide rule and made a 91 on the exam. The guy who graded my exam wrote me a letter and asked, didn't I know that they had engineering formula handbooks because he couldn't believe that I started with Green's theorem and worked a problem about a power substation, starting from first principles. It's easier to do.
- TS: That's amazing. You're probably the only person in the history of the world that never took an engineering course and is a professional engineer.
- BH: Oh, no, no, there are plenty of others.

TS: My brother is a professional engineer, a civil engineer, and I didn't realize he had to take an eight-hour exam or anything like that to get his certificate.

BH: It's a total of sixteen hours.

TS: Wow.

BH: Of course, the second one in civil is a whole lot harder than electrical.

TS: How do you get to Southern College of Technology or Southern Tech when you started there?

BH: Well, I was on the faculty of the Medical School of Emory in the anesthesiology department. They passed a rule that said if you're in a clinical department we're not going to give you tenure unless you have an MD.

TS: And you're not going to get an MD?

BH: They were interested in people going to work for the Emory Clinic and earning money for the medical school. So, about six of us left within about eighteen months. We decimated the very, very good, world-famous department there in developing instrumentation and monitoring and so on. We all just pulled up and left. I knew the provost of Emory University who had been a physics professor when I was an undergraduate. His secretary knew I was looking for something and was friends with somebody on the search committee out at Southern Tech and told me I ought to apply out there.

TS: The secretary was friends with somebody on the search committee or the provost?

BH: The secretary. I applied, and they were setting up a computer science program at the time.

TS: Oh, they didn't have one before '83 at Southern Poly?

BH: No.

TS: I don't guess we did at Kennesaw either before '83.

BH: So I applied and got the job. You can tell it was a big change for me. I had to buy a car to come out here because I lived and I still live right next door to Emory University. I didn't have a car for five and a half years before I came to work at Southern Tech.

TS: How about that! Now, the job was for department head and assistant professor?

BH: Yes. It was stupid on my part. I was an untenured assistant professor department head. Tell me how dumb that is!

TS: Yes, that puts you in a vulnerable position to say the least.

BH: I decided very early on, you can always get a job bagging groceries at Kroger. What they paid me for was to state my opinions, so I did. We started the department with Becky [Rebecca] Rutherford, Bruce Eure, Diana Stewart—four of us full time—and Pat Roth [Patricia Roth Pierce] was part time. Becky Rutherford is now a professor [and interim chair of the Department of Information Technology as well as interim dean of Computing and Software Engineering during the consolidation]. Bruce Eure is retired. Diana Stewart after about four years moved to Florida after her husband got a job down there, so she's been gone for a long time. We were the four full-time ones, and Pat Roth, who is still here, was an adjunct at the time. She was here teaching COBOL and Fortran in IT in math departments two years before we started the CS department. She has subsequently gone on and become full time and gotten up to the rank of senior lecturer [and program coordinator for the BS in Computer Science program]. She's still here and on the faculty and would be a good one to talk to.

TS: Okay, so they were here before you got here then, I guess.

BH: No, we all came at the same time.

TS: So everybody in the department came in '83 then.

BH: Yes.

TS: Okay, so you've got "stupid" written on your forehead when you come in '83. At that time Southern Tech had been independent from Georgia Tech for about three years and Steve [Stephen R.] Cheshier is still a relatively new president and Harris Travis a relatively new vice president for academic affairs. You had to work with those folks, so why don't you talk a little bit about what things were like at Southern Tech when you got there in '83?

BH: Well, it was very small. We had about 2,200 students total. The place was very well kept, but it looked like it was very well kept by the Marines or something. Every blade of grass was a quarter inch high, and no flowers or shrubs to speak of and so on. An interesting event happened. I started in September of '83, and we, of course, closed up over Christmas break. I came back registration day of 1984, which was the first day we opened back up. My office was next door to the computer lab where we did registration. I went in to see how things were, walked in the door, stepped on the carpet, and it went "squish." There was water running down the walls. We were just dead in the water at this point. We had to postpone registration for a day. We had a real cold snap over that Christmas break. The boiler had been turned off, the pipes broke, and then when they started it back up,



the broken pipes just flooded the computer lab. Now, the first thing is that as an untenured assistant professor and department head, I got a rule put in that said you can't start back to doing anything the first day after school's been closed. We've had that rule in place since then, so that when we come back from break, we open up, and everybody comes to work for one day, and we make sure the place is in one piece, and then we have registration.

TS: That makes perfect sense.

BH: But then the next question arises. Why didn't the low pressure alarm on the boiler cut the water off? Well, the answer is that since they built the building in 1961, the alarms on the boiler had been wired into the light switch in the boiler room. Weekly, the guy would come in, turn the lights on, check to make sure the alarms were working correctly, and then turned the lights off. We're only lucky that we found out with the low pressure alarm. It could have blown the building up!

TS: Which building was that?

BH: Building E, the Crawford Laboratory Building.

TS: Okay. So I guess they had to dry out the equipment and everything first.

BH: Yes. We got going again. You asked about what it was like in the early days. In spring of the year that I was there Steve Cheshier and Harris Travis went off to the American Society for Engineering Education meeting together. While they were gone, somebody from the Board of Regents central office called to ask a question about some detail of the new organizational chart that included deans and shifts in department heads and stuff like this. That was the first time anybody on the campus had heard of it outside of the president and the vice president.

TS: So no participatory democracy?

BH: Right. The department heads got together and had a meeting while they were gone and decided we were going to fuss about this. So we wrote a letter of censure for Steve Cheshier.

TS: This is '84?

BH: Yes, about then.

TS: And you're still an untenured assistant professor in his first year on the job!

BH: Right. I am the person who wrote the letter.

TS: So you're not on his Christmas card list, I bet.

BH: It was signed by every academic department head, but apparently my writing style is such that he took what we had and said, “Harbort wrote that!” And, yes, I’m not on his Christmas card list!

TS: Well, I’m going to interview him next Friday.

BH: We are getting along, we got along fine.

TS: I understand. But this is the professional thing to do, the department chairs asking a question about why we weren’t consulted.

BH: Yes.

TS: Did you get a response?

BH: Oh, they were so sorry, and they were so sorry. Finally, I piped up in a meeting when Harris Travis apologized for about the fifteenth time, and said, “You know, from down here in the trenches, it’s hard to tell the difference between working for an arrogant jerk and working for an ignorant jerk.” That got such a laugh that it just diffused the whole thing, and we settled down and got to work. We held on pretty well. There were a lot of ups and downs in there.

TS: When did they plan on telling you about the new structure?

BH: Who knows?

TS: And you wouldn’t have known if somebody from the Board of Regents hadn’t come out to campus?

BH: Well, actually what they did was they called the secretary’s office in the president’s office. She had no idea what they were talking about, so she called a department head to ask him, a very reasonable thing to do.

TS: And he said, “What?”

BH: It was weird.

TS: Was that characteristic of what it was like to work for them?

BH: Yes. I think both of them were convinced that the safest way to run Southern Tech was to be just under the radar. We would keep getting our little yearly allocations, and if nobody at the Board of Regents remembered that we existed, we’d be in good shape. They tried real hard to hide, and it was interesting.

TS: That is. We were the opposite by that time at Kennesaw with Betty Siegel making herself visible everywhere.

BH: They truly didn't want to rock the boat for anything at all. I rocked the boat for them!

TS: I've got an interview with Dan Papp in which he says that Steve Cheshier was too nice a guy to be a president.

BH: Oh yes, I think that's absolutely true. He's incredibly non-confrontational. Harris Travis is a full-time minister at a church [Zion Baptist in Marietta] and he was full-time minister at that church [at the same time] he was VPAA. We were a second sort of avocation for him, to say the least.

TS: Dan Papp's description was that he was a nice guy who had retired on active duty.

BH: Yes. I went to a concert over there and had a nice visit with him after the concert.

TS: A concert at Zion?

BH: Yes. I get along okay with him, but we've had some serious run-ins. We got some money from the Board of Regents to have a distinguished professorship on the SPSU campus. This was going to be a recurring thing. This was a long, long time ago. The first year we got the money, we got a memo from Travis that said, "This money came too late; we couldn't allocate it the way we were planning; so we're just going to hire some outside person to come give a lecture; and that's going to be the end of it." The second year it came around, we got the same memo. All that had happened was that he had changed the date on the memo. What happened to the money was they spent about \$2,000 having an outside lecturer come in and the other \$18,000 or however much it was went into the general fund because we were always running on shoestrings, just horribly bad budget problems.

TS: Oh my. Still, when you get a grant you spend it for what it was appropriated for.

BH: Well, I turned him in, called up central office, sent them the [memo], and said, "Look at this. Notice that this is the second year in a row that we've done this." Our auditor came out here and just absolutely nailed him and said, "You can't do that any more." Then—you're going to love this—I listed that event as an accomplishment of service to the university on a post-tenure review packet that Travis had to sign off on!

TS: Did he sign it?

BH: Yes!

TS: Okay. Well, it actually was a great service.

BH: Have you talked with anybody about the firing of the department heads?

TS: No, but I would love to hear your take on that. You were department head until 1990?

BH: Yes, and I was not a department head when that happened.

TS: I knew Mike [Michael G.] Murphy.

BH: Yes, Mike Murphy was the one who got fired.

TS: He's in Texas now, but he went to the same church that I go to.

BH: He and I still communicate.

TS: Really? He filled me in a little bit on what was going on, but go ahead and talk about it.

BH: Well, the four department heads that were involved challenged Travis and said, "You really need to make up your mind and be a vice president or go and be a preacher or do something."

TS: This is about '97 just before Dan Papp comes in as interim.

BH: Yes. Travis just abruptly fired all of them. They were all tenured folks, so they went back to full-time faculty.

TS: Right. So the four department chairs send a letter to Travis saying you've got to give up one or the other of your jobs, and he responded by seeing this as mutiny.

BH: Yes, insubordination, and he just canned them all. This obviously was a big stink.

TS: Mike would be your department chair?

BH: Yes. We were supposed to pick new department chairs. I think three of four—one just said, "The hell with it; I'm not going to do this anymore; I don't have to deal with this." The other three, the departments re-nominated the same people back as department heads.

TS: Right. So you're department renominated Mike Murphy to be the chair.

BH: Right. It was initially turned down again.

TS: While Cheshier is still there?

BH: Yes. This was about the time that everybody was walking around with the wristbands, “What Would Jesus Do” on them. Well, I wrote a very public letter to Travis about “What Would Jesus Do!”

TS: Which is a big [embarrassment] to somebody who is a pastor of a large congregation.

BH: Yes, that was an interesting experience. We had some interesting give and take.

TS: You had a theological discussion about it.

BH: But it effectively didn’t go anywhere.

TS: Was your job in jeopardy?

BH: I was a tenured professor.

TS: And you were smart enough to get out as department chair by that time.

BH: I starting having daydreams about taking a chainsaw to the department heads' meetings. So I decided not to be department head anymore.

TS: Did Mike replace you?

BH: Yes, there were two people who were acting department heads and then we hired Mike. When Mike did not get reappointed, we hired an outsider. He came in with the Yamacraw money [an economic development project of the State of Georgia that involved academia, industry, and government].

TS: Oh, yes, Dan Papp was involved in that too [as director of Yamacraw Educational Programs].

BH: It was Hothead Jorge L. Diaz-Herrera [head of the Computer Science Department at SPSU and Yamacraw project coordinator with Georgia Tech]. He was dean of [the College of Computing and Information Sciences at Rochester Institute of Technology, 2002-2011, and president of Keuka College, Keuka Park, NY, 2011-present]. He was a really interesting guy, had a lot of great research stuff, and he was a good teacher too. I liked him. He was an abysmal department head. I have to say, he would probably credit me with this, I got him fired as department. He was tenured so [he continued to be a professor]. We were at the point where we were going to not have pre-registration for the next term because the schedule wasn’t in the computer. He was off screwing around with research projects.

TS: Yes, if you want to do your teaching, and you want to do your research, there’s not a lot of time left for professional service and that’s basically what department heads do is service.

BH: Well, no, at least in the University System of Georgia department chairs are department heads; they are twelve-month employees as far as I know, and they do administration.

TS: Well, okay, that's what I was thinking of as service.

BH: There is service . . . You go to Emory, and the department head is a volunteer job, and its service. In the University System the administration runs the place.

TS: It's designated as administration?

BH: He's responsible for making up the schedule and putting it in the computer.

TS: And no assistant chair, I don't guess.

BH: Not at that point.

TS: Okay, you got him fired.

BH: I went and talked to the dean of Arts and Sciences. We were the 800-pound gorilla in Arts and Science because we were by far the largest department in Arts and Sciences. The dean came over and said, "Outta here."

TS: Who was the dean at that time?

BH: Ed [Edward A.] Vizzini.

TS: Oh, yes, we're going to try to interview him; he's out in Arizona now. Okay, so you got him removed.

BH: Yes, and Mike was acting department head after that because by that time Travis was out of the picture and so on. Then we got promoted from being the big department of Arts and Sciences to being the School of Computing.

TS: The same name as it's got now?

BH: Yes [School of Computing and Software Engineering in 2014].

TS: All right. So then you've got your own dean at that point.

BH: I want to back up a minute. There is something that I did after I quit being department head. I researched and wrote the proposal for the master's degree in Computer Science and found external funding for it from IBM.

TS: External funding for the program?

BH: Yes. IBM paid for the courses for the first year of the program plus beefing up the library and so forth and so on.

TS: Wow, how big a grant was that?

BH: The way they did it was we agreed to admit qualified graduate students who also were IBM employees at a specific division over here at Riveredge [1500 Riveredge Parkway, Atlanta]. There was a division of IBM that did manufacturing controlled software that was located in that building.

TS: So they wanted their employees to get master's degrees?

BH: Yes. The thing that I was pleased with—we wrote this thing up, and we sent it downtown, and Steve Chesier and Harris Travis Harris were just astounded by this I think—it was approved. No modifications.

TS: First try?

BH: First try—first time in the history of Southern Tech that they didn't get it sent back [with instructions that] “you've got to fix this,” for a new degree program. It took off, and the growth in it was not quite as astounding as when we first started the Computer Science department—we went from four students to 500 students in a year.

TS: In a year?

BH: In the undergraduate program in 1983-'84; it was incredible. The graduate program we did very, very well with, the same sort of thing.

TS: What year would that have been? Were you still department chair?

BH: No, I was not. It was 1992.

TS: Now, we kind of skipped your work on your doctorate, but you completed it while you were working full-time and were department chair at Southern Polytechnic.

BH: I finished all the course work in two and one half years. I started in 1979 and finished the coursework before I came to Southern Tech and had only my dissertation to do, which turned into years more after coming out there because it was so hectic.

TS: Sure, it takes a lot to get that dissertation written.

BH: A lot of stuff to do. The only way I managed to do it is that I collected enough vacation time to take a quarter off. I went home and locked myself in my house.

TS: Tell me about your dissertation. I didn't quit understand what it means to do research on theory and application of artificial intelligence in medical systems.

BH: Are you familiar with the critical theory from theology—the criticism called hermeneutics?

TS: Yes.

BH: Okay. What I basically did was take the work of Hans G. Gadamer and Jurgen Habermas, two German social theorists, of applying hermeneutics to interpreting [other] things. Hermeneutics was originally one of the methods of theological explanation. Starting in about the year 1800 people got interested in the idea that you could apply it to literature and so on, and that was a big deal. What I was interested in was how doctors managed to take, for example, in an intensive care unit, a medical record that is this thick with all matter of stuff ranging from clinical impressions of specialists to blood oxygen values and turn that into something like a diagnosis or a theory of what's wrong with the patient. I set up my doctoral program to study that. I took the sophomore year of medical school in my doctoral program.

TS: Oh, you took the coursework?

BH: Yes, because that's where they teach clinical methods. What I was interested in was how do we take people who appear to be sentient human beings and turn them into third-year medical students who are not sentient human beings? There's a whole lot of stuff going on there epistemologically that's really interesting. First of all, doctors are far better pattern recognizers than they are analytic anything. When I was doing radiology, I did radiation therapy treatment pointing stuff. The doctor who was the head of radiation therapy at Grady—I'd ask him and he'd say, "Well, we're going to look at the x-ray of a patient with a tumor." I'd say, "How do you know?" He says, "Because I've looked at 3,000 of these just like this. I know what I'm doing." And that's true; they are pattern recognizers. The other thing that is just really amazing about doctors as opposed to scientists is epitomized by a cartoon I saw years ago, and I've saved it. This guy is sitting on the edge of the examining table in his underwear, and the doctor says to him, "I think it's your kidneys, and if you want a second opinion, I think it's your gall bladder." The point is that doctors take action on the basis of uncertain knowledge all the time. That is the point of clinical medicine is to be able to do that. The only doctors who can do it scientifically are the pathologists who are doing the autopsies!

TS: You're being a little unfair to doctors though aren't you?

BH: No, I'm not. I think that is an incredible ability to do that, but it's not analytic reasoning.



TS: Right. I was just thinking when I was in the hospital for a week with an infected finger, and they had to get the bacteria out of there and put it in little Petri dishes, and it took them several days to figure out exactly what the bacteria was. But I thought that was pretty scientific.

BH: That's pretty scientific but that's a subpart of it. In the meantime, they're keeping you alive. You get somebody to come into the hospital in the emergency room with a high fever. The first thing they've got to do is get rid of the fever before they can take the time to back off and see why there is a fever in the first place. So all the time there is that moving around in uncertain areas. What I was interested in is what can you do with clinical information systems to support that kind of reasoning? We know how to design a data base to help the scientists do what they're doing, but how do you do that with a system that's supporting a doctor? And the idea is—the stuff I'm talking about was my original idea, but what I'm about to describe wasn't—the University of Rochester, New York, developed a clinical system in one of their hospitals in the early 1970s that paid attention to—a doctor would walk up and log into the terminal at the nursing station and go to look at a patient's medical record—it paid attention to the clinical specialty of the person who logged in to decide how it was going to organize the data in the medical record to present it most effectively. The pulmonary specialist can get to all the same information that the cardiologist can get to, but it's arranged differently.

I was interested in that sort of thing, in how you would make decisions about doing that. They had like five specialty areas, and that was it—just static stuff. I was interested in pushing that much more in-depth into things. One of the things I was working on at the time at Emory was what we called a cooperative anesthesia record. They had an anesthesia machine in the operating room monitoring the patient, and here's the chart that they're going to write on, and it looks just like the chart that the doctor is going to write on except it's on an XY plotter. When the doctor wants to write something he writes, and when the computer wants to write something, it jiggles the pen a little bit and says, "Get your hand out of the way" and goes over and writes on the same chart, so there are two cooperating entities coming up with the medical record for the surgery. So that's the sort of thing I was doing, and I was interesting in evaluating the effectiveness of those kinds of systems. That's what I did.

TS: Any great thesis or conclusion that came out of all of this?

BH: I think we did a lot for various kinds of medical systems, and I also think that I was a minor participant in pushing into some areas where we used philosophical constructs called ontologies as a way of describing the conglomerated objective and subjective data that we were interested in analyzing and dealing with. One of the things I mentioned down in here as something that I did . . .

TS: You're referring to your curriculum vita.

BH: Yes. I went to a Gordon Research Conference on applied epistemology.

TS: That's 1988.

BH: Yes, 1988. Why I point that out is, when I finished my dissertation and I had to submit the stuff to Dissertation Abstracts International, I put applied epistemology down as the subject matter.

TS: It sounds like applied research to me that you're doing, so applied epistemology?

BH: It came back from Dissertation Abstracts International, and they said, "There is not another thing in our entire database that says applied epistemology. Don't you want to use a different term?"

TS: No.

BH: I said, "No, that's it."

TS: It's the uniqueness of what you did.

BH: Well, by God, I got a call from one of the organizers of the Gordon Research Conference on this, and he said, "I can't believe that this came up when I looked in Dissertation Abstracts. You ought to come to this thing." So I did. Now you do a Google search on applied epistemology, and it gets a quarter of a million hits.

TS: So you were the first.

BH: It's out there; it's a discipline now, a wacko sub-discipline of artificial intelligence or cognitive science or whatever.

TS: Did you ever think about going to a place where you could devote more time to research as opposed to teaching and other things?

BH: I am a homegrown Atlanta boy. I live less than half a mile from where I was born. Yes, I've thought about it, but it'd have to be awful good, and I'm certainly not going to do it now. I'm too old.

TS: So despite the battles with the administration, you're basically happy to be at Southern Polytechnic?

BH: Yes, I'm enjoying it. I think that one of the responsibilities of a tenured full professor is to keep administrators in line. It's much less a part of things than academic freedom about any weird discipline that I can spout or whatever. I think

the fact that I can stand up to them and say, "That's a crock. You ought not be doing that." That is a really important part of it.

TS: What did you think of Dan Papp as president at Southern Polytechnic?

BH: I liked him; wish he'd stayed. I was one of many people who encouraged him to stay.

TS: Well, he put out some fires when he got there.

BH: Definitely.

TS: But he didn't stay. I guess the Board of Regents told him he was going to be an interim, and he didn't apply, I suppose.

BH: I don't know what was going on with all of that.

TS: I don't either. At any rate, Lisa Rossbacher comes in in '98, and she's been there for the past sixteen years now, but is on her way to Humboldt State before too much longer. How would you assess her sixteen-year tenure as president?

BH: I really like her. With one exception I think she has done a very good job. She was a very good president. She has finally gotten over her fear of raising money.

TS: Oh, she was never a good fundraiser until recently?

BH: We had as a commencement speaker several years ago, Lonnie [G.] Johnson. He is an industrial designer, big in the area of mechatronics engineering, has his own industrial design firm here in Atlanta, and is an ex-NASA scientist who is a very, very good speaker. He is also the person who funded all of that by having been the inventor of the Super Soaker water pistol. He is a multi-millionaire. Can you imagine inviting somebody to be a commencement speaker who is a multi-millionaire and not asking him for money, not asking him for at least, "Can we associate with your organization?" Nothing. I was astounded that she let that slip through her fingers. She's gotten better about it. But that was just amazing.

TS: So no continued contact with him after that?

BH: No. I really hate that because we started a mechatronics program that's the only one in the Southeast, and it could have been the Lonnie Johnson mechatronics program if we'd had good sense.

TS: Well, maybe it still could be.

BH: Whatever. But the thing that just drives me nuts is that, you know what we don't have on the campus? We don't have a provost. She is on the one hand a pretty

- much hands off administrator and on the other hand refuses to delegate it. Last year she was off applying for a job. This was before the consolidation started. She's been looking for a job a long time.
- TS: Southern Utah University?
- BH: Wherever, I don't know; she's been to Michigan; she's been to all sorts of places.
- TS: Yes, she was applying out in Alaska at one time.
- BH: Because she and her husband were 150 miles apart [when he was on the faculty at Georgia Southern University] and what they really want is to be at the same place—and I think that's a very admirable thing.
- TS: She says he's going with her to Humboldt State.
- BH: Yes. But she was off applying for a job, and we had a job offer and a tentative acceptance from a new PhD computer scientist from Emory University that we lost to a competing school because for four days there was nobody in charge that could sign off on it. This is what a provost is for. I started giving her a list—I'm up to 247—in terms of reasons that we need to have a provost. I just fuss at her all the time about it.
- TS: Kennesaw has not had a provost for a terribly long time. It was a reform that Dan Papp brought about early in his presidency.
- BH: But her administration technique is that she has a first level of vice-presidents and so on that is completely flat. She lets the silos fight with one another until things get into a crisis, and then she tells Ron Koger, "Go fix this." You need to interview Ron [R.] Koger [vice president for Student and Enrollment Services and interim president from July 1, 2014, until the consolidation is completed]. Koger is in his early 70s maybe. He doesn't want to retire, but I don't think there's any place for him [after the consolidation].
- TS: I'll see if I can talk to him. But otherwise you've grown a lot in the last several years.
- BH: Yes, oh, I think she's done a great job on that, and she's down there at the Board of Regents pushing for stuff. It's a huge change from before.
- TS: What about Zvi?
- BH: I like Zvi. I get along with him okay. When he first came, he was very interested in student success stuff, and he is the one who started the SPSU 1001 Hitchhiker's Guide to SPSU. I was in on the very first development of that and developed an

online version of that and taught it for a number of years until it got sucked into our SACS QEP. I think he is a little timid about worrying about budget too much.

TS: He doesn't want to do things if he doesn't have the money to pay for it?

BH: No, it isn't that. For example, we are in a giant [problem]. If you try and figure out what tuition somebody is supposed to be paying, it's very, very difficult to do because on the one hand we charge in-state and out-of-state tuition that's based on who the student is; on the other hand, we charge for courses based on whether they are online or in class. It's a mess the way it's all set up, and we need to regularize it and straighten it out because we have students every semester making bad decisions about what courses to take based on trying to game the tuition system. I've multiple times said to him, "What we need to do is straighten this out." And he says, "But if we do that it could happen that the Board of Regents will take money away from us." If we're doing our jobs right there may be a bump in the road, but it's not like it's going to bankrupt us. I just think he's too scared of that to do a good job. He's done a whole lot of really innovative things, and I've been pleased with that. He is also—I'm on the Student Status committee that decides about letting students back in school, probation and all that stuff—and he's too forgiving.

TS: I'm not surprised.

BH: We throw somebody out of school and say you've got to sit out a semester, and he says, "Oh, no, no, we'll let him back in." I pointed out to him a couple of years ago a Chinese exchange student, an architecture student, who had been on deferred suspension for six semesters, never passed anything, but was let back into school six semesters. I can understand if this was somebody from Syria who didn't want to go back home because they'd be blown to smithereens, but for God's sake, all we're doing is taking their money.

TS: Right. Okay. So you were a teaching fellow in your Center for Teaching Excellence. I didn't know you had a Center for Teaching Excellence. I'm learning new stuff about Southern Polytechnic all the time.

BH: Yes, it's been there for a number of years. I was the third director of the center. I got the teaching fellow thing before I was director.

TS: You got the teaching fellow in the 2002-2003 school year. When did you begin as director?

BH: From 2006 to 2008.

TS: Was that a part-time position?

BH: It was one-third time.

- TS: Until 2002 the KSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning was a part-time job. Since then it has been full time, and we have a director and several associate directors.
- BH: I was the last faculty director. We switched to having a staff person run it and a faculty committee that does some things.
- TS: A staff person with no academic credentials?
- BH: She has a master's degree in Education and has had a number of positions at SPSU. She's retired now and works half time and is the director of the Center for Teaching Excellence [Office of Faculty Support and Development].
- TS: Does the center do anything worthwhile?
- BH: She's amazing. Talk about somebody to interview. Her name is Dawn Ramsey. She came to us as director of Continuing Education a long time ago and has been through a number of things. She was dean of Extended University. She is the best organizer and planner that I have ever had anything to do with and has run a number of our things. There is a program sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers called Future City, which is a middle school contest of designing a city of the future. They have a yearly contest, and it runs in individual schools. Then they compete in a regional competition and go to a national and so on. We started running the regional competition some years ago. The last year she did it, it was the largest region in the country. It was by far the biggest event that we ever held at SPSU. She's an interesting person.
- TS: Sounds like it. You've taught a bunch of courses, and it looks like you developed an amazing amount of courses over the years.
- BH: I really enjoy doing that, yes.
- TS: Do you want to talk about any of them? What are you proudest of?
- BH: The third course on the list, General Systems Theory. We had way back in the quarter system an artificial intelligence concentration, and General Systems Theory was one of the things in that. I guess about three years ago I stumbled across somebody on Facebook who was a graduate of our program and took General Systems Theory from me. He is now vice-president of a bank in Charlotte, North Carolina.
- TS: Wow, where all the bank headquarters are.
- BH: He has gone far, far away from whatever. I asked him, "What do you remember about going to Southern Tech?" He said, "There isn't a day that goes by that I

don't think about something that I learned in General Systems Theory." This is 25 years after he took that course.

TS: How about that?

BH: It's just a really interesting course, and I've had a lot of fun with that course.

TS: What exactly did you teach in that class?

BH: It is about the mathematics and cognitive science of systems in the broadest view. Let me give you an idea. When I taught that class, I used two paperback books. One of them is called *General Systems Theory: [Foundations, Development, Applications]*, and it was written by a Canadian researcher [Ludwig von Bertalanffy] in the mid-1960s [New York: G. Braziller, 1968]. The other one is called *The Sciences of the Artificial* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969], and it was written by Herbert [A.] Simon who is a Nobel Prize winning economist who in his entire professional career was a psychology professor at Carnegie Mellon University, but he was the founder of their computer science program, and is one of the inventors of artificial intelligence. The first day of class in General Systems Theory we come in and we go over the syllabus and stuff, and I said, "For your first homework assignment for the next class I want you to read Chapter One in each of these books. You will note when you have finished that each chapter is 23 pages long," or whatever it happened to be—"I want you to tell me whether that's a coincidence or not and justify your answer." The next week they come back to class and I have roughly half the class who have gone to the library and looked at Chapter One in hundreds of books to decide something. The other half of the class roughly has looked at all the chapters in those two books. They get into a violent argument about whether you can consider outside information or whether you have to limit your inferences to just those two books. Fantastic discussion!

TS: External or internal evidence.

BH: Three people sitting in the back of the room just sort of [observing]. Finally, I say, "What about you guys?" "Of course it's not a coincidence. It took you years to find two books that had the same number of pages." There's an example of draw the box differently. I mean, that is just the most perfect example of what is supposed to go on in General Systems Theory—those kinds of methodological questions.

TS: Right. How many classes do you teach a semester nowadays?

BH: Given the online and that sort of stuff it's hard to answer that exactly. Right now, I've got two sections of an undergraduate class, but one of them is fully online and one of them is in class, so they overlap (I treat them exactly the same); two sections of a graduate class that I do the same thing with; two undergraduate

special topics classes; and one graduate special topics class. I am one of the people who walks around behind capstone project students and beats on them and makes them work.

TS: How many of these classes do you teach a semester?

BH: That's this semester.

TS: That's this semester? How can they justify making you teach so many classes?

BH: Well, the two sections of each of the undergraduate and graduate—they count as one class.

TS: Why?

BH: Because that's how they do the accounting.

TS: Is the work of the two equivalent to what you would normally do in a class?

BH: It's got a larger enrollment than I would have if it was just one section of one class, but otherwise it is fine with me because I treat the two of them exactly alike. As a matter of fact, in D2L [GeorgiaView Desire2Learn Integrated Learning Platform], I just merged them all into one class and do it that way. It's not bad. One of the things that I do that is probably worth mentioning because I do it a whole lot with all of my classes is—you're familiar with Benjamin [S.] Bloom of Bloom's Taxonomy? Do you know the other thing he is famous for? It's called Bloom's Two Sigma Problem [first reported in the journal, *Educational Researcher*, in 1984]. In the early 1980s he and a bunch of graduate students looked at what factors affect test performance in teaching students from grammar school all the way up through college—what are the things that are statistically significant? The most significant thing is the amount of individual attention we give the student. He found that you could take even a below average student and increase their scores on standardized tests by two standard deviations by giving them one-on-one tutoring. This is one of the bedrock ideas of the home schooling movement because people realized you don't have to be a great teacher if you're there all the time. This is why home schooled students do better in general.

As we got into doing lots and lots of stuff online, I began asking myself, "How can I utilize online systems to give the appearance of individual attention to students?" One answer that's really simple is I don't treat them in aggregate when they're online. We have aggregate stuff; we have public discussion forums and all that sort of stuff; but I do individual interactions with students on homework; and I do completely formative evaluations. Somebody turns in a homework problem to me—first of all I collect homework one problem at a time and not in problem sets; so I can look at one homework problem and say, "Yep, you got it right." Or "no, you didn't do this right; what you need to think about is



thus and such,” and give it back to them. I have these little interactive conversations with students about their work, and it happens while they’re thinking about it and not two weeks later when I get around to handing the stuff back to them. It is amazing how much better they do. I do the same thing when they have a research paper. Each student individually gets a discussion topic, and they post in the discussion topic, “I think I’d like to write about database systems.” “Well, that’s a little vague; what about database systems are you interested in?” [We go] back and forth and back and forth through the drafts and the gathering of the data and everything else until they finally turn in a final copy of the paper; and I’ve been there every step of the way. What it is is the cheap, electronic version of the British tutorial system.

TS: That’s a lot of work on your part.

BH: But it’s spread out, and it suits me. Let me point out something here. I talked with a lot of folks about the notion of formative assessment. [We did a presentation entitled] “Extending Teaching-Learning Interaction: Ten Years Accumulated Experience” [by Bob Harbort, Bob Brown, Nancy Reichert, and Nancy-Laurel Pettersen]. We looked at courses in four different disciplines where we had roughly 120 to 150 students that had been taught using traditional assessment and another group of 120 to 150 that had been taught using formative assessment. What we found in there was that we could very significantly affect the distribution of A’s, B’s and C’s without changing the distribution of pass versus DFW. In other words, the students who wanted to learn we got them to learn better, but we didn’t do it by just giving grades. This is seriously significant down to the .001 level. It’s hard to sell people on the idea of formative assessment because it appears at first to be more work but, hey, the idea is to teach the students.

TS: Sounds like you’re very much student-oriented.

BH: There are probably students who would disagree with you.

TS: That’s why you’re in the business though. Why don’t you tell me a little bit about the consolidation? When did you first hear it was coming?

BH: Well, with everybody else. What Halloween, something like that [laughs].

TS: What was your first reaction?

BH: Actually, I think I saw this coming. Where I saw it starting was in the quarter to semester conversion [1998]. You probably didn’t notice this as much in the history department here [at KSU] as we did in technical departments there [SPSU], but we lost approximately 25 percent of our credit hours in each degree program. We had a program that was like 209 quarter credits. Convert that just to semester hours, and you end up with about 144 semester hours, and we’re

limited to 120, so we lost a chunk out of that. Then we got 60 credits of that core curriculum, and we didn't get a whole lot of control over [that]. We were all so busy fussing about that, we turned around and all of a sudden there's a whole lot of stuff that used to happen in the 35 universities that all of a sudden is happening down at the central office. We just never noticed that that took place, but there was a tremendous amount of pulling together stuff during that process. Then when they announced the beginnings of consolidation [in 2011]—I've suppressed the name of that woman now—she came from Georgia College and State University and was briefly vice chancellor for academic affairs.

TS: She had been president at Georgia College?

BH: No, she was a dean.

TS: But she became vice chancellor?

BH: I can't remember. Anyway, she wrote a couple of editorials, one of which was in *Inside Higher Ed* and one some place else that I came across. I think she was one of the movers towards the idea that 36 then, because we'd started Georgia Gwinnett College, universities in the system were too many to manage. So when we started the consolidations, I can see that they're doing this and it ain't anything to do with the places they're consolidating. What they're aiming for is twelve to fifteen universities when we're done with the whole thing. I really think that. They realized, and I tend to agree with them, five years from now if anybody can remember any of this stuff, 95 percent of the students will be gone from the system and 75 percent of the faculty will be some place else. I don't think it's as big a deal as some [people think], and I just think it's going to happen.

TS: So it was just a matter of time?

BH: Yes. I was disappointed in the fact that they didn't pick a new name for the new university, but I have to say there's a whole lot of branding that's gone on at Kennesaw, and we [SPSU] have been behind the eight ball on doing our branding well. So that makes a certain amount of sense.

TS: My impression was that a lot of people were really upset that nobody was consulted ahead of time before the decision was made.

BH: You have to remember where we live in the hierarchy of things. We are much like dogs in relation to people buying dog food. They don't get a choice! That's what I mean about nobody's going to remember this.

TS: Well, let me try to ask a neutral question. What do you think Southern Polytechnic will gain, and what is it going to lose—the students in the engineering programs and engineering technology and all the things that you teach at Southern Polytechnic? And the faculty too, what are the gains, what are the losses?

BH: I think a major gain is being a part of a much larger institution. It's going to help us in a whole lot of secondary ways: name recognition, advertising, and all sorts of stuff like that. I think one of the really big losses is in the homogenization of the core curriculum. Core has been the way that universities could have transferability, but yet have a unique identity. If you look at courses, English 1101 or 1102, the STS [Science, Technology, and Society] classes that we have, etc., that have been oriented towards people with a technology interest, I think as that gets churned into the . . .

TS: STS is going to become an elective instead of a requirement as I understand it.

BH: Well, it has to be the same core. It's the same university. You can't support it any other way. We're going to gain a tremendous amount in foreign languages. We have students who want to take foreign languages, and they have to come up here to do it because we have a barely viable Spanish program and offer French every once in awhile or German every once in awhile. The STS classes like I said, the courses . . .

TS: And you had taught some of those classes, hadn't you?

BH: Oh, yes, a lot of them. But the other core courses—English 1101 and 1102—instead of just, “Let's write papers on some nonsense topic; let's write papers about reviewing technology in Atlanta or studying the Beltline, or something like this.” I think we're just losing in a big way on that, and that's a shame.

TS: Your opinion is fairly nuanced. You're going to gain a lot, and you're going to lose a lot.

BH: Yes, I think so.

TS: And life is going to go on.

BH: I see something happening. I will just add to that briefly. We had a meeting last Friday of the computer science faculty of the two schools. We came out here, and met in the Clendenin Building to talk about the curriculum because we have an OWG [Operational Working Group] that was working on that. We wanted to get together and hash some stuff out. It was a good meeting; it was productive. We made some shifts in things. I suggested something that they're looking into as a possible new course and so on. At the same time, I could just see the silos building back up.

We went through the process when we were the Computer Science Department and had all our degree programs in the Computer Science Department and then got promoted to the School of Computing. When we went from being the largest department of the School of Arts and Sciences to being the School of Computing,

we were told at that time that in order to make the organizational chart of the university symmetric, we had to have departments within the School of Computing. So we had to separate out into Computer Science, Software Engineering, and Information Technology. We didn't have Game Design yet. This was pathetically stupid. The day that I signed a letter saying I was going to be a computer science professor, I was teaching one CS course, two software engineering courses, and an IT course, but I had to say that I'm a computer science professor.

I suggested what we ought to do was have the department of people who have offices on the east side [of the J Building] and the department of the people on the west side because it made as much sense. It's not like biology and math and arts and sciences. We all cross taught things. It took us years to recover from this. The first semester of having three departments, doing the schedule, the IT department head sends out this e-mail to faculty in IT only, saying "What do you want to teach next semester?" Same thing in computer science. Then they couldn't make a schedule up because they didn't have a part of the faculty they were used to. It was just incredibly stupid.

We finally broke down some of those barriers and got going again, and I see the barriers coming back because we had this meeting, and it's just the computer science faculty, yet your courses in there—there were like five different courses that everybody in all of the programs takes. But we're the only ones sitting there talking about it. What about the interests of the software engineering people and so on? I talked to the dean about that this morning, and he said, yes, he saw exactly the same thing happening, and it scared the daylights out of him because it's going to be a mess. There's not really a good reason for that bump in the road. We just need to be more cohesive and collegial about it. That's going to be a problem.

TS: Well, you said you were on four different Operational Working Groups. How do you think the process has been going?

BH: It's interesting because some of them have not been very effective at all. I'm on one called Research Computing, and we kind of messed around, and we turned in some stuff, and that was it. One of the co-chairs of the Research Computing thing decided halfway through that he was going to go back to teaching full time, and he didn't need this bother, and quit. Then somebody else came on for like the last two meetings. The registrar group is just amazingly well done. I think the folks who are running it are doing an admirable job. We're going picky bit by picky bit through all this stuff, and it's going to be right when we're done. I think we'll screw some stuff up, but it's going to be a very minor amount of a huge amount of material that we've gone through.

TS: If a student needs to go to the registrar's office, is there still going to be an office on both campuses?

BH: I am not actually sure how they're planning that, but I think there will be some sort of a representative down there. One of the things that I haven't seen anybody suggest, and I think I'm going to put it in one of my intermittent emails to Dan Papp, is I think we need to have somebody who is somewhere between an ombudsman and a fixer for about two years on the south campus just to sit there and deal with screw ups that come up because they're going to be plenty of them.

TS: You can bet. We've got an ombudsperson on our campus. Do you all have an ombudsperson?

BH: After a fashion—they may pay him a small retainer, but he's hardly ever there and I hope will fade off into oblivion.

TS: Sounds like you definitely need one then.

BH: I used ombudsman as a formal term. Really, what we need is somebody there who is a fixer. The two people that I can think of—I don't know what this is going to sound like—but the two people that I can think of who could do the job are Ron Koger and me.

TS: Well, it would be a good job for you.

BH: And Ron Koger, as VP for Student Services, has more than once actually referred a student to me to get some truly screwed up thing straightened out with his student records and so on. The two of us know all the ins and outs and are keeping up with how things are developing, so it might be interesting to do that. I want to show you something. This is possibly for another time. You mentioned that it looks like I taught a lot of courses. While we were still in the School of Arts and Sciences and before the days of the World Wide Web, I developed a course called Information and Research, which was an undergraduate research methods course that was a required course. It was a lot of fun. Imagine before the World Wide Web what you could do in terms of teaching people how to find stuff. It just changed drastically as the web came along.

TS: Absolutely.

BH: The other courses listed [in my curriculum vita], Issues in Information Management, Philosophy, the Animal Consciousness course—that was a fun one—the Feminist Philosophy of Science course—I thought they were going to burn a cross on my office door for that sort of thing. But all of those were what were called upper level Arts and Sciences electives, and Julie Newell and I were the ones who pushed those into existence in the School of Arts and Sciences and said we have to have some way to get people beyond what they get in the core curriculum to do stuff. So those were all required courses. These were just different versions of ones, but there were lots of others out there taught by other

- people. Then, when we did the quarter to semester conversion, we put in STS 2400, which was her absolute baby. I'm sure she talked with you about that. Then I developed a number of other STS courses. One of the things that I used to do was make fliers to post on walls—little posters and stuff—to advertise these courses because who the hell is going to sign up for Feminist Philosophy of Science?
- TS: Taught by a man?
- BH: Well, here is [a flier] just to give you an idea from the Animal Consciousness course. Each one of the five posters along the side is an actual poster that I made to advertise these things. These are pre-photo shop days. This was made with an X-Acto knife and a Xerox machine.
- TS: So you've got cartoons on here.
- BH: And all sorts of different stuff. Then we had the contest with the posters. I particularly like the conditions for it—it's over on the right-hand side—you could either win a horse or a university administrator.
- TS: [Reading from the flier]: A talking horse or a college administrator!
- BH: I became known for wacko posters. Some of them were even three-dimensional. I was very weird. But the origin of that was in 1984, I think it was, I started something, which was an end-of-the-term party for the computer science students. We held the very first one at a bar on Franklin Road over here, Dutch [treat]. This got to be a thing, and every term had these things.
- TS: And back then Franklin Road was still a pretty nice place to go.
- BH: Yes. This was 1984. There is the first poster [pointing to a poster in a file folder].
- TS: Okay—"Attitude Adjustment Seminar, March 14, 1984." The place was Hennessey's on 1033 Franklin Road. "They're not expecting us." And you have a map of how to get there from the Big Chicken.
- BH: Every term had a different flier, and the fliers got more and more complex and arcane. I have a collection of these fliers.
- TS: They need to go into the archives.
- BH: Yes, I'm going to donate them to the archives. One of the things that people came to expect was the colophon—the little disclaimer down at the bottom, and each one is different.

- TS: “Award does not include airfare, meals, or lodging. It does include road map, a toothbrush, and a bottle of Pepto-Bismol. Otherwise, it’s your trip to enjoy any way you can. We couldn’t care less what you do. Furthermore, the CS department and its employees are in no way liable for anything that happens at Attitude Adjustment Seminars.” That may or may not be true.
- BH: You get the idea. Well, people came to just really expect the colophon. I finally in one absolute fit of lunacy sat down one day, and this was an Attitude Adjustment poster. It’s all colophon—the whole thing. Don’t read it. It’ll drive you nuts.
- TS: Something about Bimbos.
- BH: Yes, Bimbos [Saloon and Eatery] is over on Delk Road [Marietta, GA].
- TS: Oh, the place you’re going to?
- BH: It’s now Delkwood Grill. I wrote that start to finish in one giant blast in about ten minutes, which really worries me.
- TS: I usually wind up asking people why you stayed as long as you did. I think from the enjoyment you obviously still get from working with students, I know the answer.
- BH: I like it—wonderful time. I have been through a lot of changes there. I assume you’ve read the history of SPSU.
- TS: Yes. Richard A. Bennett [*Southern Polytechnic State University: The History* (Marietta: Southern Polytechnic State University Foundation, 1998)].
- BH: You know that they used to have the thing about capturing the rock and all that stuff. Well, in about 1985, the Computer Science Department captured the rock and took it away from the fraternities. We had a great time doing that. I’ve done a whole lot of really interesting stuff and enjoyed a lot of it. Actually, doing the graduate program, getting that started, we did, in the Computer Science Department more thesis research type stuff than any other department. We’ve probably done more masters’ theses than the rest of the school combined. So I got to do an awful lot of really interesting research by directing thesis committees. That was a good way to do that sort of thing. It was enough probably.
- TS: It sounds like you’ve got a good attitude about the consolidation, going into it with your eyes wide open, and it looks like you’re going to make the best of it.
- BH: My retirement plan—sometime when you’re over [in the Atrium Building at SPSU], you’ll have to stop by my office, and you’ll understand this—my

retirement plan is to get run over by a beer truck before I have to move out of my office [laughs].

TS: Okay, so you don't have to move everything! Well, I'll tell you what, I just had the KSU Archives come over to my office, and they carted away forty boxes of stuff, and that solved a lot of problems.

BH: I'm about to do that. One of the things that I have done—I started probably twenty years ago—here's my reasoning—as you get older, you have to prioritize your vices.

TS: Okay, you can't do them all any more.

BH: Can't do them all any more. I'm down to women and cussing. I'm not having any luck with women so . . .

TS: So cussing is your number one vice.

BH: I have a lot of discretionary income because I'm not spending it chasing women, so I decided that I would start investing in antique scientific and computing instruments.

TS: Well, wonderful!

BH: I have a fairly serious collection of stuff. My oldest item in this thing dates to 1646. So we're talking serious computer pre-history.

TS: Some museum pieces.

BH: I'm going to donate all of that and hope to be able to set up a display. I branched out from just the computing stuff to other types of scientific instruments. That's one of the reasons I taught the History of Measurement and Calculation. That was a lab course. Everything we talked about we used. It was a whole lot of fun doing that.

TS: Well, I've enjoyed talking to you this afternoon.

BH: It's been a lot of fun. Thank you very much.

TS: Thank you.



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