

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH NANCY A. PROCHASKA
CONDUCTED, EDITED, AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT
for the
KSU ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 73
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Tuesday, 16 October 2007
Location: CIE/CETL House, Kennesaw State University

TS: Nancy, why don't we begin by you talking about where you grew up and maybe where you went to school and things of that sort, if you would.

NP: Okay. Sure. I grew up in north central Iowa on a farm. I went to elementary and high school in Clarion, Iowa, graduating from Clarion High School, which is the same school my father had graduated from. I grew up on a farm that still remains in the family. When I was a junior in high school, I was an exchange student with the Rotary Club and went to Denmark for a year. I came back and entered a community college that was nearby in what was called the Jet Program—the Joint Enrollment Program that we still have—so I went to high school classes in the morning and college classes in the afternoon and then worked in the evening. When I graduated from high school, I continued at that community college for another year and then went on to the University of Northern Iowa and got a degree in psychology and a degree in marketing. I got married. My husband went to graduate school for a couple of years, and then when he graduated, I went to graduate school. During my graduate years I was invited to become an instructor in an Intro to Business class and have been teaching college ever since.

TS: Well, you covered a lot there in just a short synopsis of those early days. What all did you grow on your farm?

NP: We grew corn and soy beans primarily, plus some hay and straw. Very early my dad had milk cows and pigs and chickens, but I was about five when my dad went to business school and he left farming. He had some health issues, some allergies that wouldn't allow him to farm any more. So my mom raised chickens. I had to gather eggs and feed them when I was a kid.

TS: How big a farm was it?

NP: 240 acres.

TS: My goodness. Wow. What are your parents' names?

NP: My mother and father are both deceased now; my father was Paul Thul and my mother was Marcella Vrba Thul.

TS: Were they children of immigrants or how far back does the family go?

NP: Well, my father was not a child of immigrants; however, my father's mother and father had seven children. My father was the oldest, and when my dad was thirteen years old

his father passed away. He was the oldest son and the oldest of seven children, so he took over a lot of the responsibility of the farm that they had at the time and helped my grandmother manage hired help and raised the other children. My dad finished high school early so that he could help with the farm. My mother was a child of immigrants. In fact, I still have the little wicker basket that my grandfather brought through Ellis Island. He was sixteen at the time, and he brought a box that was about the size of a picnic basket.

TS: With all his possessions?

NP: With all his possessions. There were four boys and two girls in his family. He immigrated with a brother, and he managed to keep track of his other brothers and sisters that they left in the old country in Czechoslovakia. He came all the way to Iowa and found some farm land and learned to speak English, but taught my mother how to speak Czech. My mother didn't learn to speak English until she went to school at about seven.

TS: Was he from the German part of Czechoslovakia?

NP: Bohemia.

TS: Right. What was his name?

NP: James Vrba.

TS: There are some great pictures of children going through Ellis Island with a little cap on and all their possessions just like your grandfather that you're describing. Did your mother have an accent all of her life or did she learn English early enough?

NP: She learned English early enough that she did not have an accent. My grandfather was deceased before I was born, but my grandmother did have an accent. She was a very modest woman, but she worked very hard, and she learned to speak English, although not very well. She never learned to drive.

TS: You're talking about your grandmother.

NP: My grandmother. She was of a culture where women didn't need to take that kind of responsibility—they didn't need to drive. And my mother didn't learn to drive until she was engaged to my father, and my father taught my mother how to drive.

TS: What was your grandmother's name?

NP: Louisa Vrba.

TS: Did your parents value education and push in that direction or value hard work and push you that way?

NP: Absolutely, both. My father was a high school graduate and was very proud of that. In fact, he always had a black and white photograph of his high school graduating class hanging in his office. At the time it was a single picture that was maybe only fifteen by eighteen inches or so but it had just a little face of each of the graduates. His class maybe had thirty-five or forty people in it, but he did encourage us very much to get an education, because he recognized that was the key to the future. My mother had only an eighth grade education. At that time, in that culture, girls just didn't go on to school. She grew up out in the country. She went through eighth grade in a little country school, a one-room school house out near the farm. [If she had gone to high school] she would have had to be transported into town. They just didn't value an education for girls at that time. It just wasn't worth the investment for them. Now when we came along, though, by that time my father, who again was the oldest of seven children, really recognized how important it was for his younger sisters to get an education. That gave them options, maybe beyond marriage or in addition to marriage and children. So he very much wanted us to go to college. Before we even went to school that was the mantra that we were going to go to college and get a degree. I don't think he necessarily ever imagined that I'd go on to graduate school, but he was very glad that I did, and he did attend my college graduation and was also present the day I got my MBA; he was very proud of that.

TS: Great. Let's see, you went to your community college for awhile while you were still in high school and then you transferred from there to. . .

NP: University of Northern Iowa.

TS: University of Northern Iowa. So you got your bachelor's there. What steered you toward psychology on one hand and business on the other?

NP: Well, I always had a real interest in sociology, psychology, and social work, and fiddled around with several majors early on trying to decide. Of course, the faculty members were great influencers. The faculty members who I liked and who I connected well with, made those classes the most appealing and I just liked them. My psychology professors would come to the psychology students' club and they had a kazoo band. They would entertain us at our parties. It was fun, so I liked it very much. But, literally, the semester before I was supposed to graduate—I tell my students this story all the time—I was a very good student and I liked school, I was getting a degree in psychology and a minor in general business. I was tutoring in statistics, working in the statistics lab at the business school, and I was about to get married. I had been dating the same man since I was in high school, and . . .

TS: What's his name?

NP: His name is Kevin.

TS: Okay.

NP: I met him when I was in the Jet program. I was a senior in high school and was in this community college. Kevin had been in the Marine Corps. This was toward the end of the Vietnam War. He had been in the Marine Corps and had gotten out and was on the GI Bill. He was also going to this community college but a different branch. There were various satellite branches of this college, and I met him on a field trip, an Intro to Sociology freshman class field trip to Chicago. From Iowa we took a bus to Chicago and did a Thanksgiving weekend study at the University of Chicago. This was in the early 1970s, and the University of Chicago was a very volatile place. But we were there, and that's where I met Kevin.

TS: He was on the field trip also?

NP: Yes, on the bus trip. We met then and dated through the rest of my senior high school year and all of our years at college. We graduated together from the University of Northern Iowa, and we were about to get married, and he was going on to graduate school. Literally, the semester before we were to graduate, I was planning our wedding, and it suddenly occurred to me that a psychology undergraduate degree would probably not avail me of the sort of job that would give me the income that I wanted. Tom, it's a funny thing, I literally woke up one day and realized. We talked a lot in classes about working and interesting ideas and research, but in terms of earning a living, we hadn't talked about it. I realized that I was not going to be able to do what I wanted to do with this degree. I didn't need a lot of money, but I needed to be able to make some money. The very next morning I went to the school of business and talked with them about what it would take to get an undergraduate degree in business since I had a minor. Because of some generous substitutions—I tell you, I am forever grateful to those faculty members,—they helped me with some substitutions and managed to allow me to graduate with a double major in marketing and psychology the same day that next semester. A few weeks later we got married, moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Kevin started his master's in science degree in geology there at Western Michigan. With the marketing degree I was able to get a job in business. I originally got a job in customer service at a company called Zayre which was very similar to Wal-Mart.

TS: We used to have a Zayre's store in Marietta.

NP: Yes, so you know, it was that same sort of model of Wal-Mart and K-Mart. I started on a Monday, and by Thursday of that first week, the manager of the store came to me and said, "Are you interested in doing something more? I've got all these personnel headaches; I've got all these people, and they all want different things, and I need somebody to just take care of it. You have a business degree; would you take care of it?" I said, "Sure." At the time I was certainly glad to do it, as it meant a raise immediately. Four days into this job I get a raise. It gave me an office with a telephone and a door, and I was so full of myself because I suddenly had an office and a door. So I worked there for three years as their personnel manager, human resource manager, and worked in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I also helped set up some of the human resource departments in some of the smaller stores in Chicago. Then Kevin graduated with his Master of Science degree and took a job in Kingsville, Texas with Exxon. Then I went on to graduate

school for my MBA there at Texas A&I University. But the university system of Texas has changed now, and all the state is either in the A&M or the University of Texas system. That particular campus has been taken over by the A&M system, so it's now Texas A&M University, Kingsville.

TS: What year did you get your BA and what year the MBA?

NP: My BA came in 1978 and my MBA was in 1982.

TS: Okay, so you get your MBA and then what happens next?

NP: Well, in August at the beginning of the semester that I finished my MBA— on a Wednesday morning, the phone rang, and it was my graduate advisor. He asked if I would teach a freshman Intro to Business class for him. Whoever he had arranged to teach that class bailed out on him at the very last minute, and would I be willing to step up and meet a class the next morning and teach it? You know how it is in graduate school, especially when you're that close to getting your degree. If that advisor had asked me to wash his car I would have probably said, "Sure." So I said, "Sure I'll be glad to teach that freshman class. I need a book; what kind of book did you have in mind?"

TS: Had you ever taught a class before?

NP: No never! In fact, I had sworn that I would never teach. When I was an exchange student in Denmark my junior year in high school, I taught some classes in English for our school; the school, of course, was conducted in Danish, and I taught some of the English classes. I swore I would never be a teacher because it was so much work, and I just didn't know if I had the patience for it. When I was a kid my parents used to say, "Oh, you should be a nurse or a teacher." Understand, I'm from a very rural area near a very small town.

TS: Those would be traditional roles for women to go into if they wanted professions, nursing or teaching.

NP: Absolutely. And my parents absolutely wanted me to have a profession so that I could earn a living in the event that I was widowed. Mind you, they never, ever imagined that I would ever be divorced because growing up Roman Catholic, it was just completely unheard of that anybody would get divorced. But in the event you were widowed, you needed a way to raise some money, and so teaching or nursing were good choices. My parents even gave me a Nurse Nancy kit for Christmas one year. I didn't want to be a nurse, but I thought, I guess, maybe I'd be a teacher. And I did like to play school because I liked school very much. But when I became a teacher of English in Denmark, I didn't like it very much. I said, "No, I don't think I'll ever be a teacher; I think I'm going to be a social worker or a psychologist or something like that."

TS: Right. So the psychology major then.

NP: Yes, but when I went along that path and found I wasn't going to make any money, I decided to go into marketing and sell something and make some money. Then when my graduate advisor called to ask if I would be a teacher for him for a college freshman class, I turned in a new direction. I literally got the book that afternoon, pulled a syllabus together, and made plans. I don't remember how I managed to pull that syllabus together, but probably somebody just gave me an old syllabus. I really don't remember that detail. I remember walking into the class, though, and there were about eighty-nine freshmen in there. I didn't have any idea what to do with freshmen; of course, freshmen are very special people; and I didn't know what to do. But we just got started with chapter one, and I wrote the first exam. The first exam was a nightmare. But I managed to get through that first semester, and they asked if I'd come back. I finished my MBA then in December, and they asked me to come back in January, and I agreed to.

TS: That first course was before you had your MBA?

NP: I didn't have my MBA finished; I was about to finish my MBA. I was a semester away, and they were desperate, so they took me. I don't remember what they paid me, but it was little or nothing.

TS: Oh it had to be. But didn't that interfere with you finishing up, taking time away from your studies?

NP: No, I was able to do both. I just taught that one class, and they just let me do it. Then in January they asked if I would teach another class. I taught full time, and that probably was three classes that spring. My intention was just to tread water while we were in Kingsville, Texas. Kingsville is a very small town, about 30,000 people. My husband was engaged in oil and gas prospecting for Exxon. We assumed his career would take him to Houston. My MBA was a double specialty in Finance and Management, and I expected to go to Houston, work for a corporation and make some money. One thing led to another, and we were in Kingsville for a couple of years. Kevin was transferred, but not to Houston, but to Corpus Christi. As it turns out, I had a friend who was teaching at Corpus Christi State University and who had decided to leave academia and go into banking. He hadn't even let the university know when he mentioned it to me. So as I was literally moving my household items into Corpus Christi, I applied for his job, knowing full well that he had rendered his resignation that morning. It's never what you know; it's who you know. So I offered my application immediately upon his resignation, and they were facing the dilemma of how to get his classes covered. Well, here I was waltzing in from a nearby university, and had good references, so they took me, essentially sight unseen. I reported and got started and enjoyed it very much. I taught in the Finance department there and did very well. When the oil business went down in the mid-1980s and my husband lost his job in Corpus Christi, I was encouraged to go on to graduate school to a Ph.D. program. But I didn't because Kevin wasn't working, and I was afraid to step away from gainful employment. But the university had an opening for the Director of Admissions. It was a two-year upper level school, so people would go to a two-year freshman-sophomore school called Del Mar and then come over to Corpus Christi State University for their last two years and graduate work. It was just a couple of

miles from the Naval Air Station there. We had a lot of military officers who would come to school.

TS: What's the name of the naval air station?

NP: It was Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. So I taught finance there and enjoyed it very much. Kevin lost his job in the oil downturn of 1985, along with many others. I continued to teach finance, but there was an opening in administration for the director of Admissions which I applied for and got because it made a little bit more money. At the time I was allowed to teach a single night class in addition to being an administrator, and that worked out very well. Kevin went back to school and picked up some courses in hydrology. He had been a petroleum geologist and then became a hydrologist and applied for work here in Atlanta and went to work for an engineering firm. So then when he accepted this job, I resigned that job and came over here to Georgia. We were expecting our first child by now, so I moved here in October, so it's just now nineteen years ago this month, and delivered a baby in Cartersville, and interviewed with Mike [Michael D.] Curley the following February for a finance job. As it turns out that finance job went to somebody else. But then I was given an opportunity to interview for a marketing job. I did have the marketing undergraduate degree and managed to pick up that job to begin the following September because we were on quarters at that time. So I started here the following September [1989] and have been teaching here ever since. At the time Marketing and Management were a single department, and I was teaching marketing classes. When the department split, I fell into the Management department, and I really don't know how that happened, but when they divided, that's where they put me, so that's where I went, and that's where I've been since, and it's been just fine. Just as an aside it occurs to me—and I've used this story with my students—it seems like it's a very disjointed history, and in some ways it is and in other ways it's really not. I always knew that I wanted to be somehow involved with counseling, psychology, social work, interpersonal something, and ended up migrating to sales because I wanted to make some money. But nevertheless all that personal counseling, helping people meet needs is all about selling. I think teaching really is all about selling too—to help people figure out what their needs are and address them and convince them that perhaps this path might be actually in their own best interests before they even realize that getting good grades and pursuing some educational goal is really in their best interest. It's hard to understand that when you're eighteen, twenty or even twenty-two. It's very easy to understand by the time you're twenty-five or twenty-nine, so there actually is some pattern here.

TS: It does look like you should have been in Marketing instead of Management.

NP: But I did specialize in Finance and Management in my graduate program. Actually in my program I wanted to specialize in Management and I took Management electives, but my Graduate Advisor was also the Chair of Finance, and encouraged us into his courses. To tell you the truth it was a wonderful experience; we worked really hard in graduate school. I had very, very bright compatriots in that program, and it went well.

TS: How big was Northern Iowa when you were there?

NP: About 10,000 students.

TS: So it was pretty big.

NP: It was a decent sized school.

TS: What about Texas A&I, when you were there—Texas A&M University, Kingsville?

NP: You know, I don't recall. I bet that it was maybe only about 3,000. It wasn't very large. [6,547 in 2007]

TS: What part of Texas?

NP: Kingsville is in southern Texas. It is forty-five miles southwest of Corpus Christi, and it's just adjacent to the King Ranch. From there you travel south about two hours to the Mexican border. So it's about four hours south of Houston. It was a great place to live. We enjoyed it. It was very hot.

TS: I would think so. Okay, you get to the Atlanta area in 1988, and you must have been living up near Cartersville, I guess.

NP: No, actually we were living right across the street. From where we are sitting, these houses [along Campus Loop Road] were being built when we moved here. Right up the way on . . .

TS: Frey Lake Road?

NP: Frey Lake Road, we rented a house. Kevin's office was on Chastain. I had Humana insurance from my years in Texas and invoked the COBRA because my baby was a pre-existing condition under Kevin's insurance. So I invoked COBRA in order to have insurance for the delivery. It was a Humana type insurance and the Cartersville hospital was Humana. So I was able to deliver the baby essentially for free—the baby's name is Cassandra Marie—I delivered her in Cartersville in December. When I interviewed in February on campus I walked across the street for that interview. It was in the building that now houses the University College; it had been the Social Science building for awhile.

TS: Yes, it started as Social Science and remained Social Science until this year.

NP: Right. So we were over there. My office was there.

TS: That was a short walk then.

NP: It was a short walk, and that worked out very well, but when I got this job we bought a house in Woodstock and relocated there and had another baby there and then I was

expecting my third child when we moved back here near the university. We bought a house about two miles from the university where we live still today. So we've lived there for about fourteen years.

TS: So you have three children?

NP: Four. We had another one while we were there, so we have four now.

TS: So while you were teaching here you had second, third, and fourth child.

NP: Yes.

TS: That really was a lot of work then.

NP: It was. My husband traveled all the time too. He was on the road and, in fact, did some international projects as well. He did project work.

TS: Was he working for Law Engineering?

NP: Law Engineering.

TS: I knew they were over off of Chastain Road.

NP: Right. So students do complain that they're busy, and I recognize that they are busy, but I was busy too with one baby after the next. We had four babies in seven years, and I taught full-time, and I went through the three and five year professional review process. I initially started on contract, nine month contracts, and eventually became a regular, full time instructor.

TS: So you weren't tenure track when you started.

NP: Not initially. Eventually I became tenure track and went up the ranks through assistant to associate and got tenured. I got tenured and got promoted the same year, I think.

TS: Let's see, you started at Kennesaw in 1989 and then when did you get tenured?

NP: A long time after that. I don't know; I'd have to go back and look. I bet I got tenured about in 1997 or 1998.

TS: So it's several years before you got into a tenured track position.

NP: Yes. In fact, I think I was expecting Heather when I finally got tenure track. The university told me that I would not be able to stay year after year after year, and that I couldn't get into a tenure track position without a doctorate. So I applied for graduate programs and I took the GMAT here on campus and gathered my letters of recommendation and submitted applications around the country, because I wasn't sure

that we were going to stay here. We were free to go where ever we wanted. I found myself expecting Heather, and so I went back to them to say, “I’m not entering a Ph.D. program.”

TS: Well, there’s only so much you can do.

NP: Yes. That’s just not healthy. I told them I wasn’t going into a Ph.D., and they decided that they would extend an opportunity to me to continue to teach, and I’ve been here ever since. Very happily. People ask, “How long have you been here?” And I say, “Nineteen happy years.”

TS: Let me think. Tim [Timothy S.] Mescon didn’t come in until 1990.

NP: Harry [J.] Lasher was my first dean. Harry Lasher hired me.

TS: I was trying to think in terms of those tracks over there. You started here in 1989, so not too long after you got here they started the scholarship track, the teaching track and the balanced track—which track are you on?

NP: Teaching.

TS: So you’ve taught heavy teaching loads all these years. How many classes do you teach a semester?

NP: Four.

TS: Every semester?

NP: Every semester and have for years and years. I’ve taught every summer, with the exception of the summer that I delivered my fourth child. I’ve taught every single summer, but I’m not going to teach this summer. I’m already trying to announce from the hilltop that I’m not teaching because that will be a big change, but I’d like to spend the summer at home this time.

TS: I don’t blame you.

NP: But in fairness, I have had course releases from time to time for various administrative things that I’ve done. Right now I’m involved with support faculty or adjunct faculty members—we call them support faculty in our college—hiring them and mentoring them into successful transition into the classroom and then scheduling them. We have twenty-eight in my department right now. In exchange for that I get a course release.

TS: One course release?

NP: But we're dividing that right now in that some of the quantitative management courses are being shuffled together and onto the desk of another professor. So I'm just taking the others. I do have a course release for that.

TS: Right. So you're teaching three courses?

NP: Right now.

TS: Which is still a huge load.

NP: It is. And only people who have done it understand what a load it is.

TS: That's right.

NP: People very often don't understand it. But it's fun. It's good work. It's honest work and it's satisfying, it's meaningful. Really we're very, very lucky, and we're very blessed.

TS: I think so too. Was Kennesaw supportive or not so supportive when you were having all these pregnancies and trying to manage schedules and so on?

NP: They were supportive, they really were. I remember interviewing with Harry Lasher when I first came. He was certainly supportive. Jack [John F.] Grashof was my original department chair.

TS: You had mentioned earlier interviewing with Mike Curley.

NP: I interviewed with him for a Finance job and did not get it. And I went to work for Jack Grashof. Actually, part of the reason, I think, I got that job was because all of the department chairs were pulling their hair out over student advising. We had so many transfer students. Because I had just been the director of admissions in Corpus Christi State, and all of our students were transfer students. We were an upper level two year school—everybody was transferred whether they came from inside the system of Texas or outside, everybody was transferred in—so I was extremely well versed on how to handle it and how to do the documentation and whatnot. So I think when they saw that as a credential, they must have gotten together over a cup of coffee and said, "You know, this woman would be able to alleviate some of our headaches; let's put her on board." So from my very first day of teaching here, I also did very heavy advising. For nine years I advised very heavily, and the advising that I did eventually became a team of advisors. There used to be only me for the School of Business. Then, eventually, there were a couple of us, Greg [Gregory A.] Greenwell stepped in and there were a few others. Eventually, we became an advising team, and the undergraduate program's office took it over as part of their responsibility, and it's just blossomed. Now they are finally hiring full time professional advisors.

TS: Is that right?

- NP: It is high time. I've been advocating that for years and years because it's really a complicated process and that justifies having someone dedicated to the details. So anyway, I did that the first tour.
- TS: I think when I interviewed Tom [Thomas B.] Roper, [Jr.] even after he retired he's been advising.
- NP: Yes, Tom has been a mainstay in the advising area of the College of Business.
- TS: I think in many ways you all are a lot better organized than the rest of us. I like what you're talking about of actually having a faculty person in charge of the adjunct faculty. I know [E.] Howard Shealy, [Jr.] our department chair, I guess takes that pretty much all on himself of hiring them, but I'm not sure that there's much of a training program for any of them.
- NP: When I first got started, I was doing this with Rick [Richard M.] Franza, who has since become my department chair. Rick and I put our heads together with the many, many things that we wanted every new faculty member to know. We just compiled it. I have a tendency to compile things because if I don't write it down and organize it I can't remember anything. So we made up a handbook that now is many pages long and talks about a lot of really practical things; what do you do if, how do you know if there's an ice day, how do you know if there's a snow day, how do you find out where your student roll is, how do you get training on these computer systems? So we've got that all compiled, who to call, where to go, what the websites are. It's been pretty useful. And we do full orientations every August for the new folks and kind of a get-together for the existing people. No department [in the Coles College] has as many support faculty as we have. We visit their classes and review their teaching style and just give some feedback. The turnover is so high across the country, and support faculty members say that part of it is because they're just so disjointed, they're so alienated, they're so isolated. So we try to bring them into the family.
- TS: Sure. We've got about that many support faculty in history. They're not teaching every semester, but altogether. A lot of them are also teaching at Clayton State and Georgia State, and they're just going wherever they can find another section to teach. I don't know how they manage it, and I know how little they're getting paid to do it. It's very hard.
- NP: Absolutely. So yes, I teach four classes, and I do get an occasional course release. Right now I'm getting a course release for mentoring the support faculty members. We'll see. I may pass that on. It sort of feels like I've got that rolling now, so I may pass that on to somebody else and do something else or just do a little more teaching because I do like teaching.
- TS: Which courses do you teach?

NP: Right now I'm teaching the Intro to Business again, after all these years to freshmen and in learning communities. I've done a lot of learning community work here and really enjoy that, and I have a specialty in human resources.

TS: Learning communities meaning you're doing them over at the residence halls?

NP: Those students who live in residences gather together in groups of twenty-five, and they're called learning communities. Then, my Intro to Business course is comprised of two learning communities because the College of Business won't let me teach a section that's so small as twenty-five, so I do fifty. So I have two groups of twenty-five in there, so I have a class of fifty. Half of them then are a cohort, and they continue to be together in a KSU 1101 class and an English class. The other half is together in a math class and a communications class. So then the professors all work together to create some integration among our courses. As a matter of fact, tonight I've got a meeting with those professors and half of my class to talk about what their community service project is going to be this term. So we do that kind of work. I teach that, and I also do human resource classes; right now my HR class is on-line. I've done a lot of online work over the past four years or so, and I'm supervising internships and co-ops as well. I've got fifty students right now working at various companies around.

TS: My goodness. How much credit do you get for fifty students?

NP: They are one class.

TS: That's just one class?

NP: Yes.

TS: So you just get three hours of credit. Wow. I've worked with interns before, actually even with the co-op program on campus twenty-some odd years ago. So I know how much work is involved.

NP: Tom, thank you for saying that because I've got to tell you that I don't think people understand how much work it is; I really don't. That's the fly in the ointment, you know, when you work hard and you sort of get a system going, and then it looks easy, so people assume it is easy. Well, it is easy once you've got it down, but it's work to set it up, and it's work to keep it going. Ninety percent of it is really such a joy. I love to see students get out there, and employers call and tell me how successful this program is, how impressed they are with our students, what a wonderful job we're doing at helping these students grow up into the profession. Then there will be that one person who won't go to work, won't show up, has various problems, and then I must deal with the student and try to mend the fences with the company. That's all a lot of work. But it all goes fine.

TS: Yes. I've interviewed a few people that weren't real happy with the track system over in business; maybe people that didn't have a doctorate; and they're all in the teaching track,

is that the way it works? But I gather that you've been very happy with the three-track system over there.

NP: Yes. I don't know a lot about Track B or C, balance or scholarship. I, obviously, have friends who do it, and they're very engaged in scholarly pursuits. I'm really not trained as a researcher. I tutored Statistics as an undergrad, but I'm really not interested in that. I've done some applied research, and I have published a few things in cohort with others and have done lots of presentations over the years. I enjoy doing that. It's kind of fun to mess around with colleagues who are interested in the things that I'm interested in, but, no, I'm very satisfied to teach.

TS: And your track is teaching and service?

NP: Yes.

TS: I guess the question is do you feel as though your track has got the respect that it deserves?

NP: Well, yes and no. Traditionally, I guess, the work horses never seem to be as respected as they probably should be, and the teaching faculty are really the work horses, offering the day in and the day out delivery. It's not as sexy and glittering, if you will, as the big hit in the very prestigious journal. On the other hand, that's just not my nature. I loved my kindergarten teacher, and I loved my first grade and second grade teacher. I can still name all of my teachers up until about high school, and then I can't name them any more. So I'm really okay with the classroom. I know that students seem to—at least occasionally there will be a few who seem to—think that I influenced them in some positive way, and that's really what it's about. You know, I thought a lot of Dr. [Betty L.] Siegel and I'm very impressed with Dr. [Daniel S.] Papp. But I surely liked Dr. Siegel, and she used to say we're not here so much to make a living as we are here to make a life. I truly believe that. We were talking about the Philip Preston [Community Leadership] Award earlier. That's the string that puts all of this together. I very sincerely believe that those to whom much is given much is expected. I feel I've been blessed in absolutely every way, intellectually, health-wise, and relationship-wise. So I've been given an opportunity to teach, so I teach. And I'm given an opportunity to serve, and so I serve. That's a good thing. If it was not meant to be, then, I guess, there would be an obvious path to go in another direction. But apparently it's meant to be because this is the way it's working so well.

TS: Yes. How large are your classes?

NP: Well, the co-op and internship together, I've got fifty this term, and there's fifty in my Intro to Business.

TS: Because they're the cohorts?

- NP: Because they're the cohorts, and then my online HR class is limited to forty, so I've got forty. The online students just love the online experience, so I don't know how many it would run if we would just open the door, but forty is what we get. We hit forty the first day [of registration] always.
- TS: You received the Philip Preston Community Leadership Award in 2001, and I think maybe this is a good time to talk about the kinds of things that you did to win that award. I actually was in the Leadership Kennesaw class with Philip Preston [in the 1989-90 academic year]. He died that year, and then that class of Leadership Kennesaw recommended the creation of the award. He was a remarkable person who taught accounting, but he also was involved in Japanese-American affairs, was multi-talented, and had just a great diversity of interests and was doing all these things out in the community that went far beyond what his professional expertise was. That was really what the award was created to honor beyond the professional service awards that we give on campus. Let me ask you to maybe not be too modest and talk about the kinds of things that you were doing that led to receiving this award.
- NP: I made a list to help because it's hard for me to remember what things I did back then, but service has always been near to my heart, and I have tried to step up to opportunities, that is, to meet needs always. I think this is right. In 1993 in February, in the quarter system, I was teaching a Business Communications class—I remember it so well—on the second floor of the building that's now University College.
- TS: Old Social Science [building].
- NP: Yes. I tell this story occasionally because people ask about service, and I'll say, "It all started on a dark and stormy night" in February teaching a business communications class—BA 208. It was in the evening, and I had assigned a quarter project to these students, and they were supposed to do some kind of project involving communication. It just wasn't working. We just were not jelling; it was not happening. It was raining, and the rain was turning to snow. It was a miserable night; everybody was there; they were all kind of depressed; we were all cold and couldn't imagine what we were doing there. You know, occasionally, a class just doesn't work. I was pregnant with Heather, my third child, and I wasn't feeling very well. I thought that this was not good. And, I had also been thinking personally over the last six months or so prior to that night, that I was so busy with work and with the babies and now another baby coming that I was not serving my community the way I would really like to. I was thinking about how to make this work better. So, literally, I opened up to this class the idea of "what if we were to do some community service and use some sort of business communication element to make it work together? Would you like to do that?" The students absolutely perked up and said, "Yes!" I said, "Well, what kind of relationships, what sort of things do you have going on?" Already one was working with the Girls Club of America, somebody else was involved with MUST Ministries, and there were several interesting, on-going relationships to big things already inside the room. I asked, "Do you want to do that? Would that be good?" Almost to each student, they said, "Yes! Let's do that!" So we got started. I gave them some time to work together yet that very night to flush out ideas,

and I remember going home that evening and thinking, “Whew! Almost dropped the ball with this class. But it looks like it’s going to turn out.” And it did. They were very excited. It was like turning the page, and we ended up having very satisfying projects. I kept touch with those students afterwards. In fact, at the end of that quarter, Nancy [S.] King was giving Fireside Awards, and I think I took some money from her and some money from the department and invited that whole class to my home for dinner.

TS: Like \$25.00 they were giving, wasn’t it?

NP: Twenty-five dollars. I think I got Jack Grashof or whoever was our department chair at the time to match that money. I fed this class at my house one night. Those who were married could bring their spouse. It was fun. It was nice to honor them for the work that they had done. That’s how it got started. The idea of service learning had been going on around the country, but not much here yet.

TS: I’ll bet that Betty Siegel loved it though.

NP: She jumped on it and absolutely loved it. We eventually worked together, and put together the Alliance for Community Engagements. I sort of championed that for a year and tried to harness what community engagement was going on around campus and how we could encourage and facilitate and support people into it and give them the resources that they’d need to step out into this new area. I did that for awhile. Dr. Siegel was very supportive. So that class and the energy that I got from other faculty doing it—we worked really hard trying to define what service learning was and how we were going to measure meaningful service, measure learning. We worked with that, and I had a number of classes do various things, and they would go in a lot of different directions. For awhile I had a very close relationship going with Belmont Hills Elementary School, which is a very underprivileged school in Smyrna—did a lot of work down there with them in various classes. We did Spring Flings and Fall Festivals. It was always remarkable, Tom. I could take forty or fifty students and introduce the idea and get them started and let it percolate. Then without exception a few would rise to the occasion and bring the resources. It would be relatives, someone they knew, boyfriends/girlfriends, or they themselves would have resources. I had one who was a black belt who did a karate exhibition; one who was involved with a military guy and they brought a Hummer to Belmont Hills. We put on a spring fling and a fall festival for several years, and we’d raise a little money. We’d raise five or six hundred dollars and give it to the school. At the time the Kennesaw State University soccer time was brand new and those soccer team members would come down and play soccer and mess around and sign autographs for these kids down there. The year that they were the national champions [2003], those girls came down the Belmont Hills and scooped ice cream for these little children. These children, of course, I don’t think realized how important these athletes were—these were national athletes—and they came down and scooped ice cream. I was so grateful. Frank Pitt [Assistant Coach, Women’s Soccer] was very supportive. He brought the girls down and he was just wonderful.

So, anyway, we did a whole array of service learning projects through the 1990s. Then in 1997 I was involved with a religious ministry that took medical supplies to Bosnia. The war in Bosnia had ended. I was involved with some people who had taken supplies into the war zone; I never entered the war zone, however. But by '97 the war was over but the suffering was not. There were a lot of people who needed things; there were a lot of orphans; it was just terrible. I was teaching in the summer, I guess, once or twice a week, but my department chair said that I could take a week off and go to Bosnia. So I did. I was gathering up supplies in anticipation of the trip, but I just wasn't getting very far, and here I had thirty or forty students. So I thought they should help me! It was a Management 3100 course. I said, "I need your help, let's get this done together." One student was dating a dental hygienist and got all kinds of dental things. Another's mom was a nurse at a children's hospital at Northside and got all kinds of things. Then everybody who had children called their pediatricians, and they called their cardiologists, and we just all gathered things together. My living room and dining room looked like a medical supply facility. When I finally actually went, I think we had 700 pounds of medical supplies. My girlfriend and I went. I have to tell you, it didn't occur to me that Delta might not accept the boxes—you know, you're only supposed to take two suitcases that can only weigh forty or fifty pounds. In my enthusiasm it didn't occur to me. Then as I was gathering supplies and working with this group who was going, nobody ever raised that issue. They did mention, though, that we would fly into Croatia and we had to go across the Bosnian border. They did raise the issue that there might be problems at the border getting things across, and they would sometimes have to give a case of Bourbon or a carton of cigarettes to get medical supplies into the former war zone. But that was outside of my area. I just had to get it there, and they would handle all those details. We got to the airport very, very early, and we were boxing all these things up. I bought Publix out of all of their duct tape, all of their strapping tape. I had no idea how much stuff it was going to be. When I got to the airport, we were very, very, very early, and we were at the Delta gate, and we were taking all this stuff in the wheelie carts, and the guy said, "What is all this? What are you doing?" I was just so stunned that it hadn't occurred to me that I needed to get a story together. So I just told him what I was doing—I was a professor, and I had all these students, and they had done all this stuff, and I literally had an inventory of hundreds and hundreds of catheters and hundreds and hundreds of pumps for diabetes.

TS: Probably a good thing it was pre-9/11.

NP: Oh, yes. By the grace of God, the Delta man said, "Okay." He didn't ask to look inside the boxes, I didn't have to open anything, I just showed it to him, and that was it. The boxes were there on the other end. We found them at Frankfurt. We had to help move them to another airline, but by that time they were moving, and we were in. So that was '97, and that was kind of a big deal. Then in '98 it was the year of honoring service. Tim Mescon asked me to be the chair of the College of Business effort for that. Each of the colleges had various efforts, and we did what we called Meals for Many. I hooked up with the SIFE organization, the Students in Free Enterprise. I was a Sam Walton fellow, and we got those students . . .

TS: Was that Gary [B.] Roberts [Professor of Management and faculty advisor to SIFE]?

NP: Yes, Gary Roberts and I got that together, with the SIFE students. The College of Business's effort was called Meals for Many. Because we were Sam Walton fellows—Gary and I both were—we got Wal-Mart to give us a tractor-trailer, just the trailer, and that's where we stored the food. We could keep it locked. Then we brought cases and cases and cases of food. Now there were several errors in that project. One was that when we brought the high-profile tractor-trailer, we had them back it up against a set of bushes. Because the bushes were there, we had to lift the cases of food in, and we couldn't get a forklift into the back of the truck. So every single case had to be hand loaded. That wasn't the ideal way to load it. So we had to have a Saturday workday and we had to get the SIFE people to off-load it in order to reload it, so that the weight was distributed properly and all that stuff. Real strategic error! Another error was I wanted to park the trailer on the grass, and they said by the time you get it filled, if you pull off of the curb, you'll crush the curb. I thought, "Oh, my gosh, I can't crush the curb; they'll fire me if I crush the curb!" We also considered trying to store all of this food in the atrium of the Burruss Building. Literally, one day Gary and I were looking at the floor, and we were calculating how much we thought we could get and how we were going to do this. We were calculating the weight of all of these cases, and we thought there was a risk that we would crack the floor. So it was amazing, the little things. It was an enormous project, and it was a lot of fun, but it was also not without a few breathless moments. Anyway, we saw fit not to bring that food into the College of Business or into the Burruss Building. We got it into the truck. Wal-Mart was very generous. We put it up there. We ended up gathering nineteen tons of food. We cut the project off a week early because we had the truck filled, and by now I was starting to fill up pick up trucks belonging to everybody I knew. That was as far as we could go, and finally we said, "No more." At the time, the late Hosea Williams was in charge of the Atlanta Feed the Hungry. He and his daughter and I did a lot of work together getting this altogether. We had a police escort, and it was a big deal, when we went down to deliver all of this food. It was an exhausting process! Another problem was the time change. We did this in October and delivered in November before Thanksgiving. The project worked very well in October because we were still on summer time, daylight savings time, but when it turned dark early, when regular time kicked in—

TS: It gets dark at six o'clock.

NP: Yes, and see, we were gathering food from all the night students, too. Half of the students of this university were at night. So, we were literally (I know it sounds crazy; we probably should not put this on the tape, but it's true), we were carrying flashlights in our teeth, carrying cases of food back into this trailer because we didn't have any light. My children were little at the time. At that time in '98, my youngest was two, and the oldest was nine, and I got the nine year old and the seven year old to bring friends, and then they would hold the flashlights. We would just work! They would also help me move things. We put up a wall of honor with names of every individual that contributed, and there were just hundreds and hundreds of names.

TS: That's great.

NP: It was a good thing; it was just good. It was a good thing to do, but I was glad that it was over. And that year I won the T. P. Hall Service Award for the College of Business. That was in '98. Then in '99 I wrote an article in CETL's *Reaching through Teaching* called "Teaching through Reaching" about community service and engagement and how the university was stepping up to that. I continued to teach classes and use service learning. Then I was doing a lot of work in my children's schools; my kids were going to St. Joseph's Catholic School [Marietta, Georgia], and I was elected to the school board and then elected chairman of the school board for two years. That was a huge amount of work. I was involved with our subdivision, and then our archdiocese put on a Marian Conference, and I was a co-chair of the Marian conference and eventually was named Woman of the Year for our parish.

TS: Which parish?

NP: St. Catherine of Siena [Kennesaw, Georgia] at the time. Now we go to St. Michael's [Roswell, Georgia] because our second daughter is very involved in Life Teen there. It's a national teen program run through the Catholic Church, but it's really for any teen. She's involved in that, and they have a very active chapter at St. Michael's, so that's where we are now. But, anyway, in 2000 I was the parish woman of the year and very involved in the children's schools. So 2001 came and I was nominated for the Phil Preston Award. I applied and never, ever, ever dreamed I would get it because there are many people here who are very involved and certainly at a much higher level. I've always been a worker bee and leader—taking on certain management responsibilities, but just was a worker. I was nominated for the award and did not expect to get it and was really truly flabbergasted to get it, but was very honored. It's funny because now these years later—that was a great honor at the time, but here we are in 2007 and I continue to be honored by it because of the virtue that you invited me here today.

TS: You were telling me earlier that you so much didn't expect to get it that you didn't even go the day of the awards ceremony.

NP: No, that's kind of embarrassing, but no I didn't expect it.

TS: But you were doing service, I understand.

NP: Yes, I had something to do down at St. Joseph's School, and I was not teaching that particular morning, when they had the awards ceremony, and they didn't let me know that I had won. I kind of expected that if I had won my husband would have been invited, and I happened to know for sure that he was at home doing something. So I figured it wasn't me. So I went on and did my St. Joseph School work. When I got back to campus my phone had messages, and they were messages of congratulations. Then I was really kind of embarrassed because I hadn't shown up. Then I had to send a letter of apology to Dr. Siegel for not showing up. But I just didn't expect it, and I was busy doing other things.

- TS: Now, in 2001 were we still giving the awards in the spring or had we gone to the Opening of School ceremony by that time?
- NP: It was in the spring. It was a beautiful day. I remember the day, but I didn't know.
- ST: I think that's great. Do you use service learning in all your classes?
- NP: Not as much as I used to, no. I used to do it very heavily, but I would also be frustrated because you just have to pray for grace every time. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. When it worked, it worked very, very well; when it didn't work, it didn't work at all.
- TS: It depended on the students that you had?
- NP: The students and the community partner that we were working with. I had been very involved with Belmont Hills. The principal there was a personal friend of mine. She and I had children the same age, so we have been acquainted for many, many years. When Cobb County relocated her to another school, my connection to Belmont Hills was interrupted, and I lost my connection. I don't do it as much today as I did. My co-op and internship students are not doing community service, but they are certainly in the community where they are working. My freshmen are required to do some hours of community service, but they're so early in the program that they're just finding their way. Actually, what I'm doing now is trying to pass this on to my own children. I'm trying to get my own children now to step up to community service.
- TS: Now, I guess they're eleven to eighteen?
- NP: Yes. One will soon be twelve, one will soon be fourteen, one is sixteen and one will soon be nineteen. And with mixed success—I think they all have a certain amount of service in their heart, but they're all involved in a lot of athletics and social things and theater, and they're all employed in one direction or another. Even my little guy has a very active and prosperous pet sitting business in our neighborhood. He keeps dogs and cats and feeds them and takes in the mail for people who are out of town or even if they have to work late. So he gets the combination to get into the house and takes the mail in and walks Fido and feeds him and plays with him. He really likes that because his mean old mother won't let him have a dog because I have enough mouths to feed. So he plays with every other dog in the neighborhood, and he gets paid modestly for it, but it's certainly less expensive for the homeowner than it would be if the dog was boarded and much better for the animal, less traumatic, and so everybody wins. Two of our kids are very involved in community theater.
- TS: Where do they go to high school?

NP: Well, my oldest one, Cassie, is a freshman here at Kennesaw. The next one, Sarah, is a junior at Kell High School, and then the third, Heather, is an eighth grader at St. Joseph, and the last, Thomas, is a sixth grader at St. Joseph.

TS: So the last grade at St. Joseph's is the eighth grade, and you didn't want to send them to Pi High [St. Pius X Catholic High School, Atlanta] or anything?

NP: My oldest one went to Blessed Trinity [Catholic High School, Roswell, Georgia] for a year and a half, but she was a very successful varsity swimmer, a sprinter in the free style.

TS: So she wanted to be in the public schools?

NP: Well, yes, and she was swimming on the year-round team here at Kennesaw on campus when we still had the pool. So her athletic friends were here right in this area. She swam with the Blessed Trinity team, but those kids—their homes would be twenty miles away, so it was hard to keep the sort of social calendar that she wanted. And when our phone was ringing it was ringing from kids who were right here that she was swimming with. They would invite her to go hang out. So she really wanted to come and be in high school with those kids. The next one, Sarah, was very pleased with Kell. She saw how much fun Cassie was having, so she stepped into Kell and has been very, very involved in their drama program and is liking it. So I expect the next one, Heather, will likely do that as well, and is likely also to be in drama, but she's excelling in volleyball, so she'll probably be a volleyball player over there. Then the little guy, Thomas, likes to play basketball and baseball, so we'll see what happens.

TS: How do you grade students in service learning?

NP: That's one of the tricks. It's not easy. Generally, it's a project that's a portion of the total grade. The grade is based upon what the final report is. So the final report has to be written. There's got to be a team, and probably there's going to be five to seven individuals. I want to watch them create their original idea and work together. They normally have meetings and they usually have to give me an agenda in advance of the meeting and then a report of the meeting afterwards, so I can follow what's going on. Then they actually do their activity. I'll have some representative from the partnering institution, whoever it might be, report to me that they did show up, they were polite, the work was accomplished or not.

TS: Do you have a checklist or anything?

NP: Yes, I do, but I would modify that checklist based upon what the project would be. Then they would have to do an oral presentation to the class. They would also have to videotape the practice of the oral presentation in order to make sure that they practiced. So there would be a number of elements. They'd get some points based upon their original formulation of ideas, their various meetings, the oral presentation, the written presentation, and the community partner's assessment, and pull it all together. The truth

is, Tom, for those that worked very, very well, it was obviously a solid A. They would come back, and they would have raised a lot of money for something or they would have gathered a lot of books to put into a library. What we find is in poor communities libraries are very difficult to build, and they're very, very difficult to hold. Kids will check out the book, and then they will be relocated from one apartment to the next overnight, and the books are lost in-between or the books go with the kid, and they never see the kid again. So if the students can show me real results, that is what I want.

And at the end, too, they would also have to give me a reflection paper. Sometimes the reflection papers would be very telling. Sometimes they would be very superficial, and I'd know that enough work didn't happen here. You can draw a horse to water but you can't make him drink. On the other hand, there would sometimes be such heartfelt, genuine insights that would make me know that regardless of how many books or how many dollars, the message was learned. I had a guy tell me one time about when he was delivering food. They gathered up a bunch of food for Thanksgiving, and they were working with a local church. They were actually then delivering the food baskets, and he was delivering in his Corvette, I think. He was shocked by how rough the road was, and his Corvette was bottoming out in the ruts of the road. He also was surprised by how difficult it was to find some of these homes because they were just up little dirt paths. Then he said that he realized how difficult it would be for a fire truck to find this place; it's not marked. Then he suddenly realized they didn't have fire protection; they're poor. So while I'm not sure that the lessons he learned he necessarily took with him for a very long time, at least they were there.

TS: At least the thought has entered his head.

NP: Yes. And then I had a student who wrote a wonderful—and I'm reminded of this because I reviewed some of my old reports in anticipation of today—I had a student who created an orientation for Spanish-speaking parents, and this was before we were embracing the needs of Spanish-speaking parents as well as we do today. He created an orientation for a school, a video orientation, in Spanish, and he talked in his reflection report about when he had come to the United States and how he had been the interpreter for his parents to get into school and to explain to his mom why she needed to sign this or that, and he understood the sort of chagrin—I don't want to use the word shame—but the anxiety of not understanding—what it brought to the hearts of these mothers and also the unreasonable responsibility that was shouldered by these children to interpret. That was very fresh in his mind. So when he was creating this he was reminiscent of the times when he was [first in the United States]. I could hearken back to those times when my own grandfather and grandmother didn't speak English. I'm sure that it was difficult while they learned English. Eventually they sent my mother to school—my mother was an only child—nevertheless my mother learned to speak English in school, and I'm sure she would have offered a lot of the interpretation. So it's just good. I'm also just taken as we sit here too about how much has changed even since this award. I came here almost twenty years ago. KSU is a different place. Atlanta is a different place. In terms of service and the needs we're in a very different place. We're very technologically

driven now. It's been five or six years since I won this award, and the nature of service today is actually a little bit different than it was then.

TS: How do you see it different?

NP: Well, just as an example, now the community is stepping up to the needs of immigrant parents. That student of mine who wrote that report was ahead of that curve. Now the county, I guess, is providing substantial support; probably not enough, but more than they were at that time.

TS: The county is becoming so much more diverse than it was. I think we're down to 60 percent or less of non-Hispanic white in Cobb County now.

NP: Is that right?

TS: Yes—23 percent African-American, 11 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Asian, and 5 percent other. So it's a very rapidly changing county, some parts more rapidly than others, but still the county is changing.

NP: Yes it is.

TS: Is the Alliance for Community Engagement still in existence?

NP: No, no, that worked for awhile, and then there was an Office of Service Learning headed by Dick [Richard A.] Grover for awhile. I'm not too sure how that unfolded, but I don't believe we have a formal program any more. Service learning was not universally embraced. There was a lot of skepticism, questioning the rigor of it.

TS: It sounds like it was pretty rigorous what you were doing.

NP: Well, it was rigorous enough, and I've never been ashamed of it. But there was certainly some question . . .

TS: Of the academic content—intellectual content?

NP: Yes. Of course, we would have to fill that in with the class work.

TS: For people going out into the business world to have exercised the ingenuity that they did on these projects, I would think to have that on a resume would be wonderful.

NP: Right; I absolutely agree. We also recognized that individuals who are educated have a special responsibility, a civic responsibility, that they're, in my opinion, morally obliged to step up to, assuming that there's no other kind of extenuating circumstance. And actually the whole university really is encouraging our students to civic responsibility. Sylvia Inman [Assistant Director of Volunteer KSU] and the whole Volunteer KSU office were just starting back in the 1990s and have done so very well since then. So

that's the direction of that volunteer arm. Then certainly there are the areas like social work and nursing and a lot of other areas that are very deliberately directed toward the community. In the College of Business we certainly recognize that, and we teach classes in ethics and in leadership, and I think often those individuals are directed toward civic involvement.

TS: Debbie [Deborah M.] Roebuck [Executive Director of Siegel Institute] came out of the business school to run the Siegel Institute for Leadership, Ethics and Character.

NP: Yes, and an excellent example there.

TS: Dan Papp has, I guess, challenged us to be the premier learning-centered institution in the country. It sounds to me that that's what you're doing. I just wondered how you would define learning-centered as far as what you're doing? Or is it learning centered, what you're doing?

NP: I guess, you know, I don't know what the definition of learning-centered is.

TS: What that means? Well, I think the idea is that instead of somebody standing in front of a classroom and telling the class what they need to know it's where students kind of figure it out for themselves.

NP: The discovery of it.

TS: Yes.

NP: Oh, well, yes, absolutely. We know that people will take in something that they discover on their own much more readily and then retain it much more completely than if they're simply told it.

TS: Something we've asked everybody is about intellectual life on campus and maybe how it's changed; how students have changed; how faculty have changed; how the institution has changed during your time here. Are we a different place than when you came as an institution? Have we changed for the better or the worse? How do you see us nowadays?

NP: I'd say we've changed for the better in a lot of ways. When I came we only had about 10,000 students and the average age, at least in the College of Business, was about twenty-seven. I taught a lot of evening classes. Over the years our average age has gone down a little bit, partially because of the learning communities and the on-campus housing and also partially because of the change of the profile of the university. More and more people are recognizing that this is an excellent institution and one that would be a destination. I think earlier a lot of students came here because they were already employed, and they were transferred to the Atlanta growing and bustling economy, and they wanted to pick up a few classes, so they came here. Rather than saying I'm deliberately going to Kennesaw. But, remember, when I came this was a college, Kennesaw State College, and now it's a university, and we've won the acclaim of various

national distinctions—the best of this, that, and the other. So our students are younger. People are recognizing that this is a university of choice. And we're maybe a little more risk-taking than we were. I say that because I think of things like the virtual classrooms that we're running on-line. I'm teaching an on-line class right now, and I've been teaching on-line for a while. That's just really stepping out into the future and changing the way we do things. I like the fact that many of our students, because they live on campus, are building a community on campus. You see people walking seven days a week, and they're playing Frisbee on the green. There's that exercise area, and baseball and other activities on campus. So I really like that; that feels a lot like a traditional university. We really are stretching in new ways. We're offering early morning classes and late night classes and innovative scheduling. So I would say we're certainly better in a lot of ways. I don't think we faculty are as connected among ourselves as we were at that time, and that's because of technology. Instead of having to walk down the hall and talk to somebody, I just send you an e-mail. As a result I'll be in the office maybe six hours and not actually speak nose to nose with anybody. I might not even come to the office. I might do the same thing, but from my kitchen table. Because I'm extroverted I'm sort of saddened by that. I would like to talk to people more, but that's the way things have changed.

TS: I think that's been a general sentiment out of these interviews that particularly outside our departments we don't relate across campus the way we used to so much.

NP: Although in fairness I've got a meeting here in a few minutes with learning community professors doing some research. There are seven of us who won a national grant to study learning in learning communities. We're working on designing assignments that will be inter-disciplinary and that will evoke inter-disciplinary reactions from students. That has been so much fun because they're all people from seven different areas of the campus. All of us are interested in freshmen, so we get together, and we always have some sort of snacks. So we eat and we talk and we laugh and tell stories, and it's so much fun.

TS: Well, thank you very much for this interview.

NP: Thank you very much for letting me be with you.

TS: All right.

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