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Retirement Dinner Dialogue 1979

Western Michigan University

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RETIREMENT DINNER DIALOGUE

Opening comments:

R: In looking over the biographical data on all of the retirees, David and I couldn't help but notice a common thread running through each one's comments about gratifying moments. Almost without exception they all mentioned personal contact with students as being the most satisfying experiences. They also seem to have experienced a genuine pleasure in helping students attain their goals.

And you know, David, we've spent a lot of time looking over materials on our retirees and I'm really amazed that in this little program booklet the committee has captured so much data. Really, everything you'd want to know—EVERYTHING—is in this little booklet.

D: Oh, no, Ruth. Not quite everything. We have here a few, and perhaps lesser known facts—important ones nonetheless—that the committee left out, I think there's no better time than now to reveal them, don't you?

R: Oh, those facts. Ah, yes, and all that information was hermetically sealed in a #12 mayonnaise jar put on Funk and Wagnall's porch at noon today by Beth Giedemann. No one—NO ONE—except us in our infinite wisdom knows what these little known facts are.

D: Exactly. And we have the sealed envelopes here in alphabetical order—so Ruth, you read the first.

R: ELAINE ALBERT: George Bernard Shaw is not too fondly remembered by members of our profession because he once said, "Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach." Well, Elaina Albert has torpedoed this maxim and said "Pshaw to Shaw" by doing and teaching. Ironically, she even taught from an edition of Shaw's play, ANDROCLES AND THE LION, which was translated into his own eccentric phonetic alphabet. Another one of the pedagogical weapons she has been using in her battle against illiteracy is a 15th century hornbook which she has wielded manfully—er, personfully. But what you don't know

In order to get added mileage out of the hornbook—now that she's no longer teaching with it—we understand that she recently consulted with Ellie Douglas of the P.E. Department for advice on how to turn it into a racquet ball paddle!
D: MARGARET JANE BRENNAN: Among Margaret Jane Brennan's many contributions to the field of home economics, we thought of "milking" her position as Coordinator of Special Programs for the National Dairy Council for all it was worth, but decided it was more appropriate to ask her if she is going to take Red Setter "Meg" and Cockapoo "Cindy" along with her on her return trip this fall to the "old sod." Since we notice that she is considering going into real estate, we feel we ought to warn you about falling for any fulsome descriptions of planned unit developments in peat bogs! 

R: ELMER BRUNE: As we looked over the blueprints of the career of Elmer Brune of Industrial Engineering, our attention was riveted to his text on "Welding Skills and Practices." The die of his life has been cast; the nuts and bolts secured. We trust that he is on his mettle and that nothing will come "unstuck" for him.

D: MARY BURNS: We don't know if Mary Burns has ever made a connection between her last name and the climate of two of the places she's lived in during her social work career. But we couldn't help noticing that it wasn't apparently hot enough for her in 1954 and 1955 at the University of Texas, so she became a Fulbright professor at three schools of social work in Egypt! And now we learn she's moving down to Florida perhaps to...

R: ELWYN CARTER: If we were more musically inclined, we would sing a farewell tribute in honor of Western's answer to the Music Man and Bob Hope—Elwyn Carter. But, lacking such talents, ...

We were surprised to find that "Doc" dislikes travel—though he has covered the globe with the Varsity Vagabonds—because the beds were too short and the springs were too weak to allow him a good night's sleep. We know that he and the Vags have cut many rugs over the years, but we can't figure out when he found the time to take up the hobby of hooking them!
3.

D: ELEANOR DOUGLAS: In addition to being a conscientious and friendly teacher of Health and Women's Physical Education, Eleanor Douglas had the formidable task of being the coordinator of all activities in Oakland Gym for several years. We hear that when the male administrators in Physical Education wanted the whole locker room in Oakland Gym, she fought to keep half of it for the women majors in P.E. I guess she showed 'em where and how to put up a partition. Right on, Ellie!

R: LINDSAY FARNAN His skill in his field—Industrial Education—for as well as his interest in students made him one of the most popular professors in his department. He is known for his generosity—in sharing the many extra curricular responsibilities of his department, for whistling old tunes, finding shortcuts to Chicago that take 5 1/2 hours, installing windows off-center, and seconding motions. Our favorite story, however, is the following: "His first office back in the '40's was a temporary wood balcony located over a commercial print shop. Lindsay handled primarily girls in Occupational Therapy, EL Ed. When he became upset with the rough language of the printers, he would lean over the edge of the balcony and yell at the top of his voice telling these men that he had 24 sweet young girls up here and didn't want them to hear such language. To this day, he can be heard a half a block away. His colleagues think it is due to his concern for keeping the young coeds at WMU pure and undefiled."

D: MARY GILLHAM; One little known fact about Mary Gillham of the School of Librarianship is her penchant for poetry. We've discovered an autobiographical verse—hitherto unpublished—she recently wrote:

There once was an Illinois gal
Who assumed she would always there dwell,
But she went for a drive
In the year '65,
And suddenly changed her locale.
HERB JONES: In addition to his recognition as an excellent teacher (Alumni Teaching Excellence Award in 1972) and prime mover for the Spanish Curriculum in Foreign Languages, Herb Jones has also been given the Ponce de Leon Award for Longevity and Youthfulness, by one of his students.

To the casual observer, Herb Jones seems soft spoken. Not so, say his colleagues. "There is... the inevitable and interminable slamming of classroom doors... whenever Herb Jones begins to teach Spanish. His voice is so inordinately booming that the rest of us teaching foreign language could not stand the competition, fearing that our students would learn more from Herb than from us. We have also learned that he has the uncanny gift of making a former student who comes for a visit feel as if Herb has been doing nothing else in the meantime but recalling when that student was in class. In reality, he usually doesn't know who he's talking to because he is horrible at remembering names! Beth Giddemann has made a special request that we say something in Spanish for her colleague, so here goes: (together) Hasta luego, Senor Jones! (Add Si, Ole, Por favor! Buenos noches! Gracias! etc.)

MARGARET LARGE-CORDOSO: She is, by the way, our only retiring newlywed.

If I were to ask Margaret, "Do you mind if I smoke?" she will not hesitate to say, "Yes, I mind." She minds because she did important research on the effects of smoking on both the smoker and the smokee. She is Western's Carrie Nation when it comes to battling smoking and alcohol abuse! And, one of the nation's premier health educators—even international, as her reputation extends to her native Canada as well. Served with auxiliary services of the Royal Canadian Air Force. As the sun sinks slowly in the west and Margaret goes off in her 4-15 to wage new battles—We can hear the call: Down King, Gettum, Up Steel!
KEN MACRORIE: has been such a prolific writer and busy teacher that even now, 9 months after his retirement last September, he is unable to join us for his retirement dinner. Why? As we all know, Ken is neither shy—nor retiring. Even as we speak, he is continuing to do what he has done for so many years—consulting with teachers. This time Ken is "laid back" and "mellow" in California. He's still concerned with the proper use of the English language. In fact, he sent us the following story illustrating California Speak. David, do you know how many Californians it takes to screw in a light bulb? Six. One to put the bulb in the socket and five to relate to the experience.

JERI MANIS: Cosmopolitan and peripatetic could well describe Jerry Manis, premier professor of sociology. In addition to being a prolific writer, Jerry has served overseas as a Fulbright teacher and researcher in several exotic places. When he wasn't on the road, he served as the pylon in professional organizations, serving as President of the Michigan Sociological Society and Chairperson of the Division of Psychiatric Sociology for the Society for Social Problems. He has been known to say that one of his most satisfying moments, in addition to close relationships with colleagues and students, is his retirement. Maybe we should take that as an exemplary model of thinking from one of our outstanding mental health educators. He also isn't reluctant to list "loafing" as one of his hobbies.

Together: We'll drink to that!! (or other comment.)

E.L. MARIETTA In addition to his many contributions in the College of Business, both as teacher and administrator, and his teaching abroad in Nigeria, we thought you'd be interested to know that E.L. Marietta is an unofficial archivist for Western. We understand that he has more records, mementos, convention programs (maybe some old dance cards and a few pressed roses, too?) than are currently held by the official Archives! (Please note: Wayne Mann and Larry Massie!) However, we suggest that any contemplated removal of materials from Vern's offices be done with care, as the many filing cabinets that hold them may be some of the best supports for the walls of Kent Hall!!
D: RICHARD H. SCHMIDT Certified consulting psychologist who hails from Blue Earth Minnesota, frequently recalls being assigned in World War II to treating army bedwetters. A colleague suggests that this reflect some of his clinical psychology interests. Perhaps due to early depression years' experiences, his major hobby is the stock market. We understand that he often spent his Christmas vacations in New York, buying and selling stock and his profit was always sufficient to pay for his vacation. We hear that he's never complained that he lost money on the market, although he still regrets his failure to invest in the coffee market when it was still low.

May you continue to follow the stock market, play poker, smoke your pipe and watch your investments grow in your retirement in Sun City, Dick! — but beware of Colleens trying to sell you a piece of turf.

R: ARNOLD SCHNEIDER, who, according to Dean Darrell Jones, "started the College of Business from scratch and thrust it to its superiority and maturity," has also had time for the finer things in life. We understand that when he was an undergraduate, the Dean of Students at Iowa State Teachers College called Arnold into his office after he had heard repeated rumors that Arnold was spending more time dancing than studying. He asked, "Is it true, Arnold, that you spend every night at Electric Park?"

D: And the answer came back, "Yes."

R: Why do you do that, Arnold?"

D: "Because I like girls."

R: We've chosen the following excerpts from a parody of Rudyard Kiplings' "Gunga Din" which Phil Denenfeld wrote for Arnold's retirement from deanship in 1974:
R: Short on money, looks, and knowledge,
When to Western he first came.
Sangren said, "Go make a College."
Now you all know who's to blame.

D: Then it's Dean, Dean, Dean,
Where in God's name have you been?
North Hall is swaying giddily,
And you're lecturing in Racine.

R: We suspect that we should sue you,
But technically you're clean.
So, we lift our voices to you—
You're a good man, Gunga Dean.

D: BETH SCHULTZ: Born in Bethlehem—Pennsylvania—Beth Schultz is our one-woman Sierra Club—defender of Goldsworth Valley and Kleinstuck Preserve, Beth has managed to make our campus and Kalamazoo a more delightful environment instead of a spread of asphalt and concrete. We're sure she'll be happy to know that some comments about her came to us on recycled paper. We hope she will continue to enjoy cooking holiday dinners for students—but we would like to know what magic she uses to get them to help her with her gardening,—playing bridge and fishing—in Isaac Walton style, no doubt. (That's Isaac—not Eleanor Walton.)

R: DEO STINE: Leo Stine's many contributions to the development of the outreach of Western to the rest of the state of Michigan are well known—as well as his many accomplishments in the Political Science Department—as Associate Dean of the Graduate College—and Dean of Continuing Education. What more could any person do in their career?—except to write a history of the institution you've served so admirably. Now perhaps it is not as well known that Leo was Director of the Michigan Citizen Clearing House from 1957 to 1960. Now this is an organization which—presumably—clears Michigan Citizens...of...well, of...of what? Dr. Stine?
D: **GERTRUDE VAN ZEE** One of the most significant projects in her later years at Waldo Library has been an intricate set of filing rules for the author and title (card) catalogue—(card catalogue, not Sears') Ruth and I were going to entertain the assembled guests tonight with a responsive reading from this distinguished tome—but, unfortunately, I have misfiled my copy. Perhaps we ought to look for it among Vern Marietta's collection, Maybe he needs it to organize his materials... ???

R: Oh, oh, David, I think we've made a mistake here—we should have read William Vandeverter's piece before Gertrude Van Zee's. We're out of alphabetical order, aren't we?

D: Well, Gertrude would say that it depends on whether you file according to whole word or letter by letter—isn't that right, Gertrude?

R: **WILLIAM VANDEVENTER** A biologist who's trying to bridge the gap between two cultures—science and humanities. He was the chairman of the Biology Department for 10 years and a science educator, but also has a hobby of research in religious history and philosophy—and, is an ardent supporter of the Institute for Medieval Studies. He and his wife have roots as Missouri farmchildren, so it's not surprising that they are accomplished horticulturists. Bill's also managed, somehow, to become an FAA licensed commercial pilot, too—even wrote a text on general aeronautics for the Armed Forces Institute. He's also a writer of poetry and a cat lover. By the way, each cat has a name according to its mouse catching abilities. And he must be plagued by rodents. I think he should call his present cat "Pied Piper" instead of 28-mice.

D: **WILLIAM VIALL** Like his colleague Ken McCrorie, Bill is unable to be here tonight. In fact, this evening he is in Venice, Italy (according to a note on stationery from the Grand National Hotel in Lucerne Switzerland. We suspect that he may be discoing somewhere tonight—
a talent, we understand, he picked up from watching television. A noted speaker and writer on educational topics, a grant getter, Bill started out in a Wall Street bank and as a newspaper reporter in the 30's and served with Tank Destroyers in World War II. He is a veteran traveler who also enjoys his own back yard and the gardening that goes with it. You may not know that he's also a poet who often makes fun of himself:

A POEM

There's malfunction in my bric-a-brac,
My brand new tou-tou's out of whack,
My whatsis' batteries are dead,
A faucet's dripping in my head,
My plethora has lost its charm,
I'm headed to the yesbut farm.

And last but not least—

R: WILLIAM WICHERS: A Professor of Industrial Engineering, we found it interesting that he was in the aviation industry before coming to Western. He was a pilot navigator and meteorologist and we conjured up this image of him—looking at the clouds—flying above them—correctly reading the weather at Western and making a beautiful three-point landing here. We trust that his being "grounded" at Western has been pleasant—that he's weathered whatever storms he may have had during his long and distinguished career—and that his flight plans for the future are filed. Up, up, and away, Bill!

D: This has lasted long enough—Together

Together: And to all of you—BON VOYAGE!!