

RETIREMENT THOUGHTS

By Charles H. Backstrom

The University Club, University of Minnesota, February 14, 1997

1. I am deeply honored that you-all are here. Especially on Valentines Day. I just hope there will be no long-run complications in your love lives for spending the evening with me.
2. All around the room are people who have made a difference in my life. Some by their challenges, some by their questions, some by their answers, some by their presence day-to-day. I want to thank you individually and collectively for that assistance in my growth. You guests are a mixture of town and gown. I shared some big project with each of the townies. They were always difficult and incredibly time consuming, but also always satisfying, and always fun.
3. But some people who should be honored here tonight are not with us. In a way I think my greatest scholarly accomplishment was getting a few other people on paper:
 - a. I met Jerry Hursh-Cesar in the Naftalin campaign. The next quarter he showed up in my campaigns class, and we ran a survey as a class project. Jerry taught me survey research, and we wrote up the lesson guides into a best-selling book. The first edition sold 65,000 copies with one ad. We didn't make much money on it, because the selling price was \$1.95. The 2d edition sold about 10,000 more.

Jerry died this summer. I wish he could have been here so you could appreciate what someone said about him, that we were privileged to share the intellectual fireworks display he sent off.
 - b. Nick Masters was my first co-author. In graduate school we wrote a paper on the two-party system that won a prize. But the real prize was the merciless mutual criticism of each other's thinking and writing that we continued. Nick also died this fall.
 - c. Bob Agranoff is still alive, but in Spain. He has been saying for 10 years he wanted to be in on my retirement event. He is a prof of health policy at Indiana. We did a project together to judge the effectiveness of the sample ballot in campaigns. We later wrote a piece for his book on using aggregate data in campaigns. We developed a rating system of precincts in legislative districts. When he visited one district to see how it was going, they were wildly excited about how it was what would make them a winner. Then Bob noticed that they had reversed the priorities, spending all their effort in the worst precincts instead of the best. He didn't dare tell them – and they won! To show you what kind of guy Bob is to work with: one time he said to me, "Boy am I in trouble. My book manuscript was due last Thursday, and I didn't get it off till Tuesday."
 - d. Speaking of living coauthors, Len Robins is here tonight, but he would probably rather be revising our latest article. Len needed to be taken by the hand and led through his own data. Our slogan was Tiny Steps for Tiny Feet. It worked, because out of that study he got a reputation for insights about block grants that is newly relevant today. In return for that assistance, he helped me work through the Congressman/Challenger survey data from CBS I had that finally got published.

Leonard and my collaboration is an example of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. We actually compliment each other. Leonard has the postmark syndrome – send it off today no matter what shape it's in. I have the one-more-run syndrome – we can't send it off until we have put the data through another computer test that requires new research. We now compromise and send off the seventh draft, however much more work it could use.

But recently Leonard said our collaboration was not all that fair – when he read something I wrote, he would say, "Wouldn't it read better like this?" while when I read something of his I just went "Blech!"
 - e. I am also honored that my children are all here tonight. They are all find human beings, respected workers, good spouse selectors, and wonderful parents:

FAMILY:

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| 1) Paul | Programmer in the King County Seattle Assessor's office.
Programmer for people who wanted me to be their free consultant on election surveys. |
| Jennifer Davies | Executive of Safeco Insurance in Seattle.
She was the first family member to insist on the need for a dumpster to clean my home office. |
| 2) Anne | Attorney with Doherty Butler & Rumble in St. Paul.
Punched election data cards. |
| Dave Brown | Prosecutor in Hennepin County District Attorney's Office |
| 3) Brian | Vice President of the Empire Foundation for Policy Research and CHANGE-NY in Albany. At Rochester, received an A in Game Theory from Bill Reicher, with a plan for talking us into giving him a car. |
| Nancy Backstrom | Worker with handicapped children, and a quality judge of my bread, at least the aromas. |
| 4) Claudia | Physical therapist with Institute for Athletic Medicine. |
| Jamie Hornibrook | Athletic Trainer for IAM at Bloomington Jefferson. |

I think that at one time or another, all the kids helped with some research project. I know they all had stints at card punching. All of them are fine human beings, respected by their co-workers, good spouse choosers, and wonderful parents. They give us continuing pleasure.

- 5) My wife Barbara deserves a lot of credit that I lasted all these years in reasonable shape. She celebrated with me all the accomplishments, and supported me in all of the difficulties. She also woke me up after many short nights in time to get to class. She decided against making a statement tonight. I don't know what she would have said, but she might have said she thought when I was out every night that Control Data was the name of a mistress.
4. A lot of things can happen in 37 years. Many of you have brought some of them up. Most of the ones we remember are funny. Even those that weren't funny at the time are now.
- a. Someone asked me the other day what was the first evidence of my interest in politics: Age 3, walking around the pictures of the Presidents saying. That's my Calvin Coolidge, that's my Herbert Hoover. More recently Barbara made me stop singing. "That's my Ronnie Reagan, that's my Georgie Bush."
 - b. **The internship program**. I wish I could claim to have started it. But Art Naftalin and others had invented the fieldwork courses. Minnesota was a national leader in getting politicians on campus and getting students off campus to work in politics. When I was in Michigan, I attended a summer workshop in Pennsylvania where the Minnesota staff were resource people.

The Department had a grant to administer the CCH in Minnesota. After Naftalin left for state government, the young prof (Floyd Flom) who was administering it took a job in industry in June. The Department had permanent staff line items in those days, and I was hired on a two-year temporary basis to fill the slot.

So I came to work every day and ran the internship program. It was my job. For many years it was an overload – I had no fewer committee assignments. I appreciated it when the job title Director of Internships was created as my assignment.

I appreciate the support the Department has given to the internship programs over the years, especially since some people were suspicious it couldn't be academically respectable part of the curriculum.

And I greatly treasure getting the Tate award, which I couldn't aspire to because it didn't exist. But it validated my efforts over the years.

I believe that the answer to the declining participation of young people in politics is through internship programs. But I don't know how to get them all to do it – if an internship were required to graduate, everyone would hate them, and most of them would fail. [You can't be sure of the outcome: One student wrote last year over the course of his internship he went from being naively cynical about politics to being sophisticatedly cynical about politics, which both he and I classified as real growth.]

I was trying to think of something funny about the internship program, and I thought of one young woman who thought it was her duty as an honest and open person to go around the legislature telling members what unflattering things other members were saying about them. I thought that would be the end of the internship program. Only in Minnesota would the intern directors say there's no way I could be responsible for what everyone did when they got over there.

- c. **How I came to U of M.** I went to Eastern Michigan University because I wanted to teach at a small school where you could get to know all the students. This often stated goal was the source of wild taunting later by my grad school cohorts when I later came to Minnesota, then the largest single campus.

I soon learned what I really wanted was to go to a good school (as I will say more about later).

Anyway, I had to leave Eastern Michigan because after I gave my first midterm exam the Chair told me I was exhausted by test paper allowance for two-and-a-half years. I had to sneak paper from the new graduate school dean's office. But I had to type the exam myself (before the days of the word processor). Barbara and I had lots of dates mimeographing and collating my exams. She can't blame me for not forewarning her about what life with me would be like.

Also, the President changed my grades. Any student or parent who complained to him was rewarded by a grade change. When I objected, he said the people of Michigan wouldn't have had another university six miles from Ann Arbor if they hadn't intended for each person in the state to get a BA (precursor of Clinton). I said why don't we just award them a BA with their birth certificate and save them the trouble with coming to college.

I was teaching 15 hours, including an econ class whose professor got TB of the eyes. One night in frustration I came home and flipped open the APSR that had just arrived and saw the announcement for the new Congressional Fellowship program. I wrote out and mailed the application and promptly forgot about it until I had won.

- d. I suspected Bill Flanigan would mention **Marty Hauser**.

Not long ago a woman wrote to the *Daily*: "Why are all men such jerks." I thought that was an excessively broad indictment, but then I realized I didn't really know what a jerk is. Then I thought of Marty Hauser.

We used to have to drive to Midwest meetings, when they were on college campuses, such as University of Missouri at Columbia, or Miami of Ohio. Actually, I think Frank invented the Minnesota Political Science Association so we had a group that qualified to use a University car to get there.

We had to drive dangerous old Highway 12 through Wisconsin. In our car we had a visiting Japanese scholar who didn't drive, Millard Gieske, me, and Marty. I let Marty drive once on the way to Bloomington, but he played chicken with the other cars on the road. At Bloomington he insisted on my letting him use the University car for a date with a waitress who he said couldn't live through the night without him. On the way back Millard had driven a full stint till we got to Eau Claire. We stopped for gas just as a blizzard began. I suggested that people should just grab a snack, because we wanted to make it as far as possible while it was still light. Marty disappeared, and when I finally went inside to look for him, he had his napkin tucked into his neck waiting for a full steak dinner he had ordered. I grabbed him by the collar and forced him back to the car. Then I said he should sit beside me in front so Millard could rest his eyes in case I gave out. Marty said, "Oh NO, I won't sit in the Death Seat. I have a wife and kid at home." I blew my stack, saying I had a wife and four kids and he could jolly well take his chances.

Applying a characterization of the late Nick Coleman: If you sent away for a whole trainload of jerks and got only Marty Hauser, you'd think you got your money's worth. We can't blame the U of Iowa for him; their recommendation of him to us said he has his own agenda. We just didn't know what that meant.

- e. **RAFT** – Rapid Analysis fiscal tool. This was the best idea I ever had – to model the entire fiscal system of the state and local governments so that proposed policies could be tested in advance for effects. This was a mammoth project that I thought I could get finished in a summer, but I worked night and day for seven more years on it before I had to take some time off.

I think it fair to say it triggered efforts by various agencies and the state to gather the data needed to evaluate tax and spending programs. The law firm of Briggs and Morgan has a partial model that people can buy into to test programs. Modeling the Local Government Aid formula is a real test of a programmer, because each new aid formula grandfathers in all the benefits of previous aid formulas.

One sure result of our work was what one of our national advisory board members had predicted: Stasis through government by computer print. Before, only a few legislative authors knew what any proposed program would do. Now every local city and school district can see in advance when they get a penny less, and won't let their legislator make any changes.

When we were designing RAFT, Tom Anding was merchandising the products to come. We were under tremendous pressure to produce. But there was no interactive programming, so we had to submit the whole drawer of cards to run through the computer, only to discover that for want of a comma, the program wouldn't run. We fixed the error, submitted the cards again, and then waited to see what the next error revealed. Turnaround was very slow. The operators understood if they gave you fast service, you just resubmitted the program more times. They pulled all the blinds on the windows, but we peered through the cracks and saw the operators making candles by melting wax and putting it into milk cartons.

- f. **Ballot position.** I was asked by the Attorney General (Warren Spannaus) to defend the state statute that provides for no rotation on the partisan ballot. This required a tremendous data study to prove the point that where offices are party designated, that is the key clue to the voter, and they don't have to fall back on a substitute like position. That suit was brought by MPIRG whose lawyer accused me on the stand of faking data to meet my predispositions on the subject. That was really hard to take.
- g. **The 100-percent sample.** This was a project for the *Minneapolis Tribune* to project early election returns. Later all the TV networks did it. The first year it was used was 1964. We punched cards for each precinct as the data came in, and it ran them through the counter sorter. I decided the next year we had to have earlier results with the conclusions ready to analyze. I wrote a Fortran program to do this, but never got it completely debugged until 4 p.m. on election day. Frank Premack and Frank Wright were the reporters, and never having seen the program operate, Bless their souls; they had to take my word for what appeared to be happening. Luckily everything we projected turned out to be right.
- h. **Art Naftalin's mayoral campaign.** Art wrote a lucid description of what John Turner and I did in terms of classifying precincts for campaign treatment by past electoral behavior. John Turner invented this technique, which of course is widely used by others now. We tried but failed to get a case study on it published. Maybe we can still use the explanation in Art's letter. He never knew what we were doing during the campaign; he only read about it in a newspaper story after he had won.
- i. **Graduate school.** Frank Sorauf told about our rough hewn chair at University of Wisconsin, who always shouted "Backstrom!" at me. Frank is too genteel to tell the whole truth. Bill Young would actually shout, "Christ, Backstrom." I came to think my first name was Christ. One time he asked me who said 'You can't indict a whole people.' I didn't know. "Christ, Backstrom, you ought to know it was Edmund Burke." But this stood me in good stead later, when the Congressman I was working for buzzed me and asked me who said 'You can't

indict a whole people.' I said 'Edmund Burke' and ducked out. The Congressman told his secretary "Isn't education wonderful? You can ask Charles anything you want, and he has the answer.

j. My office. Sam Krislov said after his first term that he was glad to have been named Chair the first time, so he could claim some distinction. He said that at Michigan State he was distinguished being the worst dresser and having the messiest office. But at Minnesota John Turner was a worse dresser and Charles Backstrom had the worst office. When a Daily reporter practically hung out the window to get a wide angle shot of the office and printed it in the paper, the Department got hate mail – one woman said she would never send a child of hers to the University with such messy professors. I learned that Cleanliness is not next to Godliness, but is ahead of it. [I have the infamous picture along.]

k. Working late. Yes, I always worked late. I don't recommend this. I figured I did it only because I was not very efficient – it took me 12 hours to get 8 hours of work done. But the late hours were also to overcome technological obsolescence. I had to retreat from doing statistics by hand to the Frieden calculator. I had to retrain to the punch card counter-sorter era from McBee keysort cards. I got to know all the denizens of the SSRFC while working there. One night a grad student asked me when I expected to get my PhD. I told him I had had it for fifteen years. He said, "I've never heard of a professor who punches his own cards.

I had to retrain myself on Fortran to use the computer. Then I had to learn SPSS to get more capacity. I was the first department member to use a wordprocessor (in a Federal office in Washington). Then retreat to the PC. I mastered the Cadillac of word processing software – Wordstar and Lotus, only to have them not supported anymore. And I haven't mastered Windows and the Internet yet, since nights are getting shorter. The original computers were not user friendly, but the staff of SSRFC was, and I thank them for enabling me to do all my projects.

As the pace of technological change speeds up, you will likely have more cycles of obsolescence than I had, so I shouldn't be asking for your sympathy, but extending mine to you.

5. But there are some other episodes that were not mentioned tonight.

a. I was accused of writing a pornographic book. An official of the Met Council cornered me one day and told me about the Politics of Mental Health. I made him point out what was offensive. It was in my chapter on the background of the dual-centered Mpls-StPaul Metropolitan area. I described how the two cities were started ten miles apart, with St Paul oriented toward Chicago and up the StCroix, while Minneapolis was oriented to serve the Western farm country toward Spokane. I wrote that the two cities lay back to back, a position not conducive to intercourse.

This was a joint book, an early policy implementation study, whose working subtitle was Six Sick Cities in Search of Sanity. I used that analogy to get a rise (!) out of my coauthors. Then I struck the phrase out in the galleys. But unknownst to me, the grad student assistant of editor Bob Connery liked it and reinserted it. I hadn't re-read the chapter after it was in print.

(Do you recall that after 20-year Associate Professor Virgil Parrington at the U of Washington completed his beautifully written Main Currents of American Thought, the president of the U of Wisconsin, Glenn Frank wired him: "I have just read your book. I offer you a full professorship at any salary." Parrington wrote back that he would never teach at a University were the President read the faculty's books. You can see how lucky I was to have followed the same guidelines.)

b. Then there was Joanne Arnaud. I have her to thank for pointing out in her suit against the department that she felt discriminated against the department that she felt discriminated against her by being officed on the less prestigious 13th floor. Before that I was pleased to have the best view of the Minneapolis Gas works of any member. Joanne actually had a view of the river, but I felt lucky I wasn't tempted to waste time watching the barges.

- c. The couple who lay face to face in the back row of my Pol 1001 every day. I ignored them, thinking it had been arranged by the Chair to test my powers of concentration on my lecture.
 - d. The SDS student who tried to take over my class. I came in to Anderson Hall, and he was sitting cross-legged on the desk. He announced that the students were taking over from the arbitrary authority. When the bell rang, I started lecturing, and the student's voice rose. The other students took him on, speaking of authoritarianism, by what authority was he taking over. He finally left. A year or so later he came to my office. He had found out from Rep. Alpha Smaby, a leader in the anti-war movement, that I had helped the legislature implement one-person/one-vote. He said he wouldn't have interfered with my class if he knew I had done something worthwhile in the real world.
 - e. My most famous student – Mrs. Bucher. This 90-year old woman showed up in my night class. She had taught one-room school in South Dakota with a six weeks teachers certificate, but always wanted to join AAUW, so decided to complete her degree. In the final exam, she wrote a 1" essay in the bluebook. I couldn't bear to flunk her, so gave her D-. The next year, there she was again. She said she had learned so much from me in the previous class she wanted to study with me again. She made real progress that year, because she *earned* a D-. Years later she turned up on national TV on the program "I've got a secret." The panelists couldn't guess she had got a BA at age 97 and joined the AAUW.
 - f. St. Peter paper reporting on a redistricting speech I was going to give said I was an adviser to the Governor on abortion. You know – re-abortionment. Some of my subtopics were: a) Should term limits be less than 9 months; b) after the party, what.
 - g. President Carter called to than me for assistance I had given him – a 1980 caucus-night sample that showed he and Mondale had beat Ted Kennedy in Minnesota. The secretaries went to pieces getting a call from the White House. I of course was too sophisticated to be excited. I knew Ted Grindal had put my name on a list from Mondale that was given to Carter, who knew nothing of what was going on. While I had him on the phone I told him why he had lost the election – low black turnout in northern cities.
 - h. Not so smart was turning down an invitation to the signing of an education bill by LBJ. I said I was too sophisticated to fall for that kind of show, and too poor to pay for a plane ticket to go. But my kids never forgave me for not getting a White House pen.
 - i. The Department once sent a letter to the honorifics committee suggesting that the Social Science Tower be named Schoepper Hall, after the professor who was fired by the Regents during World War I for his pro-German sentiments. The committee turned us down, but suggested that the new marble wall in front of Northrop could be named for him. I thought it would be a good idea, because then they could line up dissident professors against the Schoepper wall to be shot.
 - j. Most people don't know I am the author of the Backstrom Rat and Roach Control Law. When I was on leave working with the District of Columbia government, I was assigned to evaluate their housing programs. One thing I found was that residents didn't care about the census categories of substandard housing – whether the front porch was slanted. They just didn't like to share their domain with rats and roaches. A bill was introduced for a pest control program. The Republicans laughed it off the agenda. Most of their opponents in the next election used that vote against them, and when the Democrats won the next year, the bill was passed. (The explanation of the psychology is that if the rats and roaches move in to the first floor, you have to live in debasement.)
6. This is fun, but to get to the most important point of the evening: I want to say that the most critical aspect of my professional life was to have the opportunity to be a member of a first-class department.

What happens to me personally is not as important as what is happening to the collectivity.

It took me some time to realize that my major need is to be a part of a quality organization. My morale and therefore capability to function day after day was largely dependent upon the realization that everyone around me was doing their own work in such a way as to make this a quality place.

Therefore, I want to express my deepest appreciation to each of you for your day-to-day quality teaching and research. You may think you are doing it only for yourself, but you do it also unto me. And it is not only the work, but the ambience – the manner in which the decisions are made. I need to be a part of a class act where the right things are done for the right reasons. And this department is such a place.

I used to take a lot of heat from colleagues elsewhere for bragging so much about this department. They couldn't believe that what I said was really true.

But I am still not sure what makes the difference in having a quality place. A lot of it is in the Administration.

Those profs who were never at another university don't know how rare good administration is. I had other teaching jobs before this one, and was also in the army. What I saw there is how bad things can get with a weak, lazy, stupid, craven, insecure, mean person in charge. Under those conditions, it isn't enough that you do your work well, if in fact you can work at all.

My first college Dept was difficult. There would be such nastiness and sniping at the Department meetings that when I got home I would have to go to bed with a tension headache. The next month I would tell myself I wouldn't get upset, and wouldn't say a thing. But one time I remember that the Department – it was a combined social science faculty – voted that political scientists stop teaching about something so useless as the Electoral College. I couldn't keep out of it and was back in bed with a headache again.

7. We at Minnesota have had a remarkable series of Chairs. I don't have any explanation why this has happened. I don't think it has any necessary relationship to the recruitment of excellent researchers and teachers, because I don't think there is a necessary correlation between academic institutional street smarts or public spiritedness, except maybe that people who are secure in their own merit are not threatened by having excellence around them.

Anyway, I learned a lot from associating with these fine chairs:

- a. From Charles McLaughlin that pompous letters from the University's bureaucracy should be read aloud for the humor, and then ignored. That eternal vigilance is the price of quality, and each threat has to be resisted – for example giving a Pakistani a professorship as the price to get somebody to donate their library to the University. That you can strengthen weak parts of the department is you move in on them.
- b. From Frank Sorauf I learned that democracy and fairness can be created and institutionalized. The Merit Advisory Commission, and the policy of employment of spouses were Frank's products.
- c. From Phil Shively I learned that in the objectively most hopeless situation you can see as a wonderful opportunity, and the worse it is, the more fun you can have.
- d. From Sam Krislov that due process is always the way to go, not only because it is intrinsically right, but that it saves trouble later.
- e. From Ed Fogelman I learned that humaneness is the soul of professionalism, not its opposite. But humaneness does not mean you tolerate incapacity.
- f. From Tom Scott I learned that bureaucracy does not have to be stifling, but can be liberating by doing things the right way. All you have to do is plan, and – to use a current slogan – just

do it. One example is how he rationalized the course credit and numbering system that lasted until the current semester changes.

- g. From Bob Holt I learned that vision as to what the Department could be combined with an understanding of how institutions work and therefore how they can be worked for what you need. Also, as a bonus, Bob showed me that a person can live liberal arts every day by being enthusiastically knowledgeable about everything and applying that knowledge.
- h. From Virginia Gray I learned that nothing comes to her that waits; instead things come to those who are proactive to try to get them. In my case she saw the announcement of the first Tate award and set Earl Shaw to work making my nomination.

Actually from Virginia also I learned how to shuck off the guilt of undone studies. She wanted to clean up the old data lab outside Flanigan's office, so ordered my hundred thousand precinct data archive thrown out one night. When I came in the next morning – Voila! I didn't have to worry any more about finding time for that study. I was free at last.

When I was hired into a temporary slot at the U of M. I was on the staff of the House Committee on Education and Labor. The Chair was Congressman Carl Elliott of Alabama – I thought he was Abraham Lincoln reincarnated. The Congressman wanted me to be a Congressional staffer for ever. But I insisted I wanted to be able to write things for *me* to say. The day I left, the Congressman called me into his office for one piece of advice: What the chair wants, you want. For someone with Graham Barden of NC as Chair of full Education and Labor Committee that was a hard line of advice to follow. I didn't think I would probably want to do that – to go along with what the Chair wanted.

But given the quality of chairs we have had, I don't recall a time when I had to ignore Carl Elliott's advice for some higher principle.

- 9. Of course I also learned from others who were never chairs, but leaders of faculty initiatives: John Turner that Gresham's Law does not have to operate in academia if you are willing to fight and write and organize against it. The strengthening of our graduate admissions standards and the reinstitution of the grade of F are just two examples.

The first month I was here I was invited to Bob Holt's cabin on Lake Minnetonka. It started out as a hot-dog roast, but I soon realized it was another kind of hot-dog session. I had been coopted into a quality-improvement cabal of younger members. These sessions were where strategy was plotted for the radical improvement of the department. All of the plans were ultimately successful, and look at us now.

I have only two things left to say.

- 10. One is how important tenure is to academic life. Unfortunately you are all much more aware of this than you were a year or so ago. But I want to tell you that tenure is not an abstraction, or something that is tested by professors you only hear about. Instead, you're looking at him.

- a. I myself badly needed academic freedom and its defenders. One day I was at the Legislature to supervise interns and was standing with a group of senators when the University's Vice President for External Affairs, Big Stan Wenberg came past. He said, "I might know you would be here, the worst enemy of the University."

I was interested in reapportionment and had been studying it. I was appointed to the Governor's Reapportionment committee. There was not staff, so I did all the data calculations. Our own report was roundly ignored. But the legislature came up with a plan the night before the last day of the session, which they hailed as an equal-population plan. I worked all night to check the population figures, and reported to the Governor (Rolvaag) the next day that one district – that of the Speaker of the House – was exactly half the size of a district in suburban Minneapolis. The Governor asked if he should sign the bill. I said, You're the governor, so if you think two persons equal one vote satisfies one person/one vote, go ahead and sign it. He vetoed it.

Needless to say, the legislative leaders were livid.

Soon the University Administration issued a ruling that the University computers were not to be used for reapportionment studies of any kind. We had to fight hard to get that policy changed – that anyone could use the University computers who paid the fees. I had a paying account that I used for the reapportionment studies.

I am quite sure I would not have been kept on at the University if I had not been tenured.

- b.** In another instance, President O. Meredith Wilson was asked by the Chair of the Senate subcommittee on Higher Ed Appropriations Committee why he had a professor on the staff who was trying to defeat that Senator.

The President was dumbfounded, not knowing what was being talked about. What it was a study I had started for the NCEP with six to eight other colleges of public issues, including party designation for the legislature. The Senator, a conservative running in a fairly liberal area saw party-designation as a threat.

I had to prepare a justification for this study. It should have been irrelevant, but it helped that I could state that no state funds were being spent on it, because we had a grant. The President agreed that this was a legitimate area for research. But that didn't make the Senator any happier. I treasured a card from the President later apologizing for any discomfiture that this incident may have caused me. Is it any wonder that I think OMW in the only great president we have had at the U of M since I came.

- c.** Still another instance: I stood up to Senate majority leader Bob Brown at another meeting attended by Vice Presidents attempting to coerce us to offering 15 credits for internships. I said this would be bad academics, as well as exploitative of students to charge them full tuition to work free for legislators. Many years later this was still an issue. Bob Kvavik inquired on behalf of current legislators, but the matter was dropped. And even the self-described old curmudgeon Bill Frenzel asked Phil Shively about it – Phil replied that I was also an old curmudgeon, and therefore wouldn't change.
- d.** Another time, Minnesota Republican National Committeewoman, Rhoda Lund, affectionately dubbed by Frank Sorauf as Tobacco Rhoda, said at a national meeting that the internship program of NCEP was a plot to improve Democratic campaigns operated by me. Since MCEP was pro-partisan in its mission and rigorously bipartisan in its practice, this was a shock. What I had suggested was that interns typically had a wider experience with first-time campaigns. Since Republican were in the dominant majority in the legislature, they had fewer first-time campaigns. But there were always going to be an equal number of interns for both parties.

If I was seen as jeopardizing the MCEP program I could have been let go.

I hope this demonstrates to you that threats to academic freedom are real, and that general institutionalized protection is needed so that we can pursue legitimate inquiries.

Don't assume that these skirmishes are without cost. Who's to say that our appropriation wasn't lower those years because of what I had done.

- 11.** In conclusion, I just want to say thanks to the people of the State of Minnesota for paying my tuition so that I could spend my lifetime as a student. And it has been a privilege to work with the same age young people, most of whom thought they might be better off if they knew more about something that I was also studying.