

STELLAR SERVICE TO SOU: DOT JARRELL AND RALPH FIDLER

Editor's Note: Now that we are a Retirees Association rather than an Emeritus Association, it is fitting that this edition of the newsletter (my final one as editor) focus on two exemplary retirees from the University's support areas: Dot Jarrell and Ralph Fidler. By providing vital support to faculty and students during their time at the University, they played an important role in enhancing the learning environment at SOU. I asked Dot and Ralph a few basic questions, which they graciously, and modestly, answered. I then asked their supervisors, Phil Campbell and Ron Bolstad, to say something about them. What they all had to say follows. —Jim Dean

Interviewing Dot Jarrell

Question: Dot, how long did you work as Scheduling Clerk at the Stevenson Union?

Answer: I was widowed in 1970 and began working at the College in 1972. I retired in 1989—I guess that makes 17 years. I know the Union Building was really new when I began. Marythea Grebner was my first supervisor, Phil Campbell my last.

Q: What were your major responsibilities?

*A: As scheduling supervisor I was responsible for scheduling banquets, arranging for catering services, working with the Program Board, booking and scheduling programs, and publishing *SOC Today*. Of course in those days everything was done by hand—telephone, paper and pencil, and typewriter.*

Q: What aspects of your University work experience did you most, and least, enjoy?

A: I loved the interaction with students and faculty more than anything. I least enjoyed having to learn how to use a new computer. They were just coming into general use then. Now that was hard work!

Q: Were the students you supervised ever unruly?

A: Not that I recall. Though I was technically night manager at the Union, I had a great night crew working, and we never had any serious problems. I didn't even have to come in to monitor activities.

Q: What do you most enjoy about retirement?

A: Being involved in the lives of my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Phil Campbell's Account

I become acquainted with the Jarrell family shortly after my arrival in Ashland in the Spring of 1968. Dot's husband at that time was director of Food Service at OIT. We used to ride together to go upstate to meetings. In 1970 he was diagnosed with a terminal illness and passed away within days. It was an extremely sad time for Dot and her four wonderful children. Originally she purchased a retail paint business in Ashland with Dorothy Huntly, who had also recently lost her husband, and they formed a lifetime friendship.

After a few years they sold the business and Dot took a clerical position in Stevenson Union. Because of her ability to interact with people and multitask, she eventually became the Scheduling Clerk. As Scheduling Clerk she interacted with numerous students and most of the faculty and staff. You could not walk across campus with her with just about everyone acknowledging Dot. There was always a steady stream of people in and out of her office, not only to schedule rooms, but many times just to visit. I recall that she never hesitated to dress up for fun days like Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, or other special occasions.

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Spring Luncheon Date Set

The President's annual Spring Reception has been changed to a Spring Luncheon this year. It is scheduled for Friday May 30, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Rogue River Room, and will feature an address by President Cullinan.

She will update us on the state of the university, comment about innovative teachers and their teaching strategies, touch upon recruitment of students and suggest how retirees may become involved, and briefly describe the one-stop student registration process. The luncheon is free, though retirees may wish to donate \$10 to the Retiree's Association Scholarship Fund in lieu of paying for the meal. Reservations need to reach Sally Klein by Wednesday, May 21, 2008.

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*Mark Your
Calendars*

*May 30, 2008
11:30 am–1:30 pm
Rogue River Room*

*The Retirees
Association's
Spring Term
Luncheon*

*A Short Business Meeting
will precede an address by
Mary Cullinan, SOU President*

*RSVP to Sally Klein by
Wednesday, May 21, 2008*

*Email (preferred): kleins@sou.edu
Or Telephone: 541 552-6049*

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STELLAR SERVICE

The students loved it, and she soon became a mother figure to many students with her fun ways and motherly insights.

Although we worked together on a daily basis, we also became personal friends over the years, enjoying camping, fishing, and frequent RV trips to the Coast.

She certainly defines what being a nice person is. She was not only competent in her job but was genuinely kind, thoughtful, and an enjoyable person to be around. She was certainly missed after her retirement, but I was happy she could now spend more time with her family and friends, doing the things she enjoyed.

I understand she has had a couple of bouts of illness the last few years. I saw Dot about three months ago, and in her typical way she said "things were okay and it would do no good to complain." The subject quickly turned to how my family was doing. My wife Carol and I share many fond memories about a Dot, and we continue to value her friendship.

Interviewing Ralph Fidler

Q: Ralph, when did you retire from SOU?

A: It was the Spring of 1996, after 20 years of service. Before coming to take a job as Assistant Business Manager at the University, I worked for Hilton Hotels as a Comptroller. I had been a student at the University of Washington, then went to Portland State University where I got a degree in 1974, two years before coming to Ashland.

Q: What were your major responsibilities in the Business Office?

A: I was responsible for Purchasing, Cashiering, Billing, and Student Fee Collection and greatly enjoyed my work experience. SOU was a super place to work. At the University of Washington, a great big school, I was intimidated by my professors. At SOU I could talk with any of them. Actually, it was a great atmosphere to work in. I really enjoyed working with students, too. Most of them were really neat. Of course there were a few that I saw more often than

I cared to—the ones with thick folders and financial difficulties of all kinds.

Q: What aspect of your work proved to be most gratifying?

A: I really enjoyed learning and helping to implement the new Financial Information System (FIS) and Student Information System (SIS). There were a lot of challenges, and resolving them was very rewarding.

Q: Were there areas of frustration?

A: Well, yes. Purchasing was a difficult area, particularly for people in the sciences. We had to get bids on anything over \$100, which was foolish. Legislative mandates were not very realistic and made it difficult for us to serve the institution as well as we would have liked to. The state system's policy on handling surpluses in budgets was a problem area too. From what I hear practice in the purchasing area has become much saner than it used to be.

Q: What occupies your time in retirement?

A: Marilyn and I like to go on cruises and RV-ing. We just completed a cruise to the Caribbean, where we had a great time. We have 14 grandchildren. Taking the RV and visiting them is great fun. Though we're not on the road nearly as much as someone like Bob McCoy, we have traveled as far away as Texas and Mississippi. Last Spring we traveled to Phoenix with the Kaougs and Pyles and took in major league spring training games. Very enjoyable.

Ron Bolstad's Account

Ralph was one of several supervisors in the Office of Business Services, providing oversight to all student accounting, including student billing and collections, as well as supervising the institutions cashiering activities. Hence, he was an essential and experienced manager in assuring that the student registration process went smoothly and was improved as computer technology and software were further developed.

Those of us who worked with Ralph had the highest confidence in his abilities and integrity. In serving the students, parents of students, faculty, and staff he always constructively and responsibly responded to complaints, problems, needs, and the call for his involvement in committee work.

I can say without exception that Ralph was thoroughly dependable, highly knowledgeable about the complexities of the accounting and registration systems, respected, and invariably unflappable and personable in his interpersonal relationships.

Ralph was (and may still be) active in the local Kiwanis Club, helping to paint the homes of senior citizens, placing American flags on the boulevard on holidays, etc. The institution and those of us who worked closely with Ralph could not have asked for a more productive and effective colleague. His "can do" outlook was infectious!

I have been cheered just thinking about Ralph and his value to the college/university over the years. ▲

Spring Luncheon Date Set

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There will be a very brief business meeting prior to the President's talk, during which there will be a vote on a proposed slate of members willing to serve on the Association's Council for the 2008-09 year. Joining the Council for the first time will be Ron Nitsos (Faculty), Sandi Whitesitt (Staff), and Wayne Schumacher (Staff). Continuing will be Ernie Ettlich (Faculty) and Dan Bulkley (Faculty). Election of these nominees will bring the balance of the Council to 10 Emeritus Faculty and 5 staff, thereby satisfying the Association's Guidelines requiring a minimum of 8 Emeritus Faculty. ▲

Remembering Esmo

How many of us on campus in the mid 60s remember a cow named Esmo? The cow, raised by a faculty member with enough pasture to support it, was named after President Elmo Stevenson and Dean of Faculty Esby McGill. According to the professor, steaks coming from the animal were the toughest he ever tried to eat. ▲

HOMAGE TO GRADUATE STUDIES

I ask your indulgence. There wasn't much "hard news" for this edition of the newsletter, so what follows is merely stuffing—something to fill extra space.—
—Jim Dean

As we retire and grow old, we often seem in thrall to the medical establishment. At such times it's useful to think back to what we once were, and did. Thus, this homage to younger years, in this case graduate study years.

I found graduate studies a strange mixture of misery, muddle, and the memorable. Our major professors often provided the misery, and our profound ignorance contributed to the muddle. As to the third, our graduate fellows (most of them Teaching Assistants) often leavened our lives in curious ways. We all remember certain "characters" who added substantial interest to our lives. This is about one I knew.

J. B. (his initials) might as well have been named Job. I met him the second week of the term. He laughed ruefully and told me that though everything was just beginning he was already six weeks behind. I'll give him credit. He looked six weeks behind. His eyes were spectacularly bloodshot, and set above dark circles, suggesting that sleep was a rare commodity. He smoked like a fiend, had splotchy skin and a crew cut.

By late afternoon we were having a few beers together at a cheesy off-campus tavern named Oakie Joe's, and the story of his life was unfolding. I soon concluded that he was clean—that is, not on drugs, unless you can call an overdose of life a drug. He was amusing, bright, and screwed up, the sort of vulnerable guy women sometimes want to nurture and save.

J. B. was the local embodiment of cartoonist Al Capp's Joe x#*\$%&--the little fellow with the unpronounceable name and a little black cloud floating over his head. The law governing his life was "whatever can go wrong, will."

J. B.'s critical essays for a seminar in Romantic American Literature were brilliant, but high drama always surrounded their advent.

They were spectacularly late, a source of major discontent for the student critics assigned to respond to them. Unaccountably, the teacher of the class who struck fear into the hearts of all of us by virtue of his knowledge and raptier wit, and was thus revered, proved to be a "softie." J. B. suffered no penalty for his lateness beyond a mild observation that his essays were "rather late." We learned that compassion was not necessarily antithetical to scholarly rigor.

Though J. B. was anti-war (this was the early 1960s), he was also an Army reservist needing to satisfy his service obligation after an active duty stint as an Army Ranger. So every few weeks he would attend classes in uniform, including highly polished combat boots and a green beret, and we thought it a curious costume to wear during discussions of Thoreau's anti-war writing.

One memorable week he wore nothing but his Ranger uniform. When we asked what was going on, he told us that during a recent cold snap, when temperatures plummeted and his heater failed, the water pipes in his apartment had frozen, then burst, flooding the floor. As is the case with many single male graduate students, the floor of his apartment served as his dirty clothes hamper. So when the water quickly refroze, most of his wardrobe was encased in ice. Only his uniform, hanging in the closet, escaped, and that explained his daily military costume. It did not seem practical to tediously chip three inches of ice to extract his clothes.

Like so many graduate students during those years, we left school before completing our dissertations. We desperately needed jobs, money, and medical coverage. We promised our committee members faithfully that we would get the dissertation finished, somehow, but in most cases it took a few years longer than we planned on. Typically enough, it took J. B. twenty-five. He needed a special dispensation from the Dean of the Graduate School, preceded by a special pleading from his major professor, the same revered professor who

had treated him so compassionately during the seminar.

When J. B. left school he took a job at a state university in east Texas and managed to last only a year or two. Apparently he fueled local resentment by being outspoken about the reactionary racial climate of the area and had the distinction of having the Ku Klux Klan burn a cross on his front lawn. When I heard about this, many years later, I felt a surge of admiration for him.

Whatever his problems, by living life on the edge he seemed to me a powerful illustration of the limitations of conventional life. It was a good lesson to learn. ▲

Invitation Letter To Go To New Retirees

Retirees Association President Bev De La Zerda, as part of an outreach effort by the Association, will be sending a welcoming letter to those retiring from SOU this academic year. She will remind new retirees that retirement brings with it some perks for both staff and faculty; she will also welcome them to participate in the activities of the Association, by way of keeping them connected to the University community and its life, should they wish to continue their attachment.

She will also remind retirees of the four basic goals of the Association: 1) To provide a campus "home" to serve as a point of contact at the University for retirees; 2) To provide a communication link with all retirees through council representation, a newsletter and a website; 3) To provide on-campus events to encourage a continuing relationship between SOU and association membership; and 4) To provide opportunities for the University to use the talents of retirees to the benefit of both parties. ▲

SOUTHERN
OREGON
UNIVERSITY

*Conferences/Senior Programs
Southern Oregon University
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, Oregon 97520*



Dear SOU Retirees,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the privilege of being your president for the past year. It has been an honor to serve you. I have enjoyed socializing with all those I worked with before retiring as well as being able to work on the Council with a great group of people.

A major accomplishment this year was the achievement of reaching \$10,000 for a scholarship in the Association's name to be given to a worthy student. Our next \$10,000 goal is going very well.

During the past year, your Council has worked hard to identify benefits to you for being a retiree from Southern Oregon University and to get the word of these benefits to you, as well as identifying those persons who are qualified to belong to the organization and invite them to join us. If you know of someone who is eligible (must have worked at the University 5 years before retiring), please give their names and address to Sally Klein at the next luncheon or email her at kleins@sou.edu.

See you at the luncheon on May 30.

Bev De La Zerda

