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Stanley Elkin

an anecdote
What more could an editor ask for. A piece about one of America's foremost modern novelists written by one of America's foremost modern novelists and philosophers. And both of them are faculty at Washington University.

William Gass, the David L. May Distinguished Professor in the Humanities and a member of the Department of Philosophy, has known Stanley Elkin as a friend and colleague for many years. When Gass said he would do the article on the prize-winning novelist for Washington University Magazine, we knew we had a natural.

It captures the essence of Elkin's personality while at the same time letting the reader in on a bit of Gass' own as well. The article, "Stanley Elkin, An Anecdote," does not contain the usual list of honors and awards: so for the benefit of the readers we recount them here. In addition, an article by Elkin on turning middle age is included for your pleasure.

Elkin is Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters and a member of the English Department. Novelist, short story writer, and editor, he is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His works include A Bad Man, The Dick Gibson Show, George Mills, and The Living End. George Mills won the National Book Critics Circle award for

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY'S MCDONNELL CENTER FOR THE SPACE SCIENCES HAS RECEIVED A GIFT OF $2.5 MILLION FROM THE MCDONNELL DOUGLAS FUNDATION, INC. THE GIFT WAS ANNOUNCED BY WILLIAM H. DANFORTH, CHANCELLOR OF WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY.

ROBERT M. WALKER, MCDONNELL PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS AND DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER, SAID THE FUNDS WILL BE USED TO SUPPORT GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS, BRING VISITING SCIENTISTS TO THE CENTER FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, AND ENCOURAGE NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS BY FACULTY MEMBERS.


CENTER SCIENTISTS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN MOST OF THE MAJOR NASA PLANETARY EXPLORATIONS OF THE LAST TWO DECADES, INCLUDING THE VIKING AND PIONEER MISSIONS. THEY HAVE DESIGNED AND FLOATED HIGH ALTITUDE BALLOON AND SATELLITE EXPERIMENTS, SUCH AS COSMIC RAY OBSERVATORIES. THEY HAVE PERFORMED TELESCOPIC OBSERVATIONS AT NATIONAL FACILITIES.

AMONG THE CENTER'S STUDIES IS THE EXAMINATION OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL DUST—MUCH OF IT PROBABLY FROM COMETS. AN ORBITING DUST EXPERIMENT WILL BE LAUNCHED BY THE SPACE SHUTTLE IN APRIL AND RECOVERED A YEAR LATER.

OTHER CENTER SCIENTISTS ARE STUDYING LUNAR SAMPLES FOR THEIR POTENTIAL USE AS BUILDING MATERIALS AND SOURCES OF METALS—IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE HUMAN EXPLORATION OF SPACE. METEORITES FOUND IN ANTARCTICA BY CENTER SCIENTISTS ARE ALSO BEING STUDIED.

MCDONNELL DOUGLAS FOUNDATION'S SUPPORT TO THE CENTER HAS ATTRACTED LEADING SCIENTISTS TO THE UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTMENT OF EARTH AND PLANETARY SCIENCES AS WELL. RESEARCH HAS COVERED INTERPRETATION OF DATA COLLECTED BY LANDSAT SATELLITES AND OTHER NASA MISSIONS.

"TODAY THE CENTER IS A UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF THE CREATIVE INTERPLAY BETWEEN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY, PRIVATE INDUSTRY, AND GOVERNMENT IN FURTHERING THE EXPANSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN AN AREA OF BROAD NATIONAL INTEREST," SAID WALKER.

CHANCELLOR DANFORTH SAID THAT JAMES S. MCDONNELL'S VISION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACE IN MAN'S FUTURE CONTINUES TO BE EXPRESSED THROUGH THE CENTER.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

GREETINGS. WE TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN WELCOMING YOU, NEW FRIEND AND OLD FRIEND RETURNED, TO THE DUTIES AND PLEASES OF WASHINGTON. MAY THIS YEAR WITNESS GREAT MENTAL, MORAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOURSELVES AS YOU STRUGGLE ON TOWARD WHATEVER NOBLE AMBITION HAS BROUGHT YOU TO THESE GATES. PRAILMA.

THIS CORDIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WU CAMPUS WAS EXTRACTED FROM THE STUDENTS' HANDBOOK OF WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY 1909-10. WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY PRAILMA, A SELECT SENIOR SOCIETY WHOSE MEMBERS WERE CHOSEN FOR THEIR "LOYALTY" TO THE UNIVERSITY, THE HANDBOOK WAS REQUIRED READING FOR ALL NEW STUDENTS. IT SERVED NOT ONLY AS A USEFUL GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY'S FACULTY, BUILDINGS, STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL EVENTS, BUT IT WAS ALSO THE OFFICIAL HARBINGER OF THE TEN UNIVERSITY RULES.

"FRESHMEN ARE URGED TO STUDY CAREFULLY THE RULES PRESENTED BELOW," WARNED THE HANDBOOK, "AND TO OBEY THEM TO THE LETTER. BY SO DOING THEY WILL NOT ONLY EARN THE RESPECT OF THEIR FELLOWS IN OTHER CLASSES, BUT WILL SAVE THEMSELVES A GREAT DEAL OF ANNOYANCE. BUMPISHNESS AND DISOBEDIENCE WITH REGARD TO THESE RULES CAN RESULT ONLY IN CORRECTIVE MEASURES."

BY ORDER OF THE SENIOR CLASS, THE TEN RULES PROHIBITED THE FRESHMEN FROM SMOKING PIPES ON THE UNIVERSITY GROUNDS, LOITERING IN THE ARCHWAY OF UNIVERSITY HALL (NOW BROOKINGS), OR WEARING BADGES, BUTTONS, OR PINS. FRESHMEN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO SPROUT MUSTACHES OR SIDE-BURNS, BUT WERE OBLIGED TO WEAR A CAP "OF GRAY CLOTH WITH A CHERRY RED BUTTON" UNTIL AFTER THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

SEGREGATION, BY CLASS STANDING, WAS THE ORDER OF THE DAY. THE STONE WALL BOUNDING THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE QUADRANGLE WAS DESIGNATED THE FRESHMAN WALL. THEY WERE ALLOTTED SPECIAL SEATING IN THE REAR OF THE CHAPEL AT ALL SPECIAL CHAPEL EXERCISES. ONLY JUNIORS AND SENIORS WERE ALLOWED TO "FREQUENT" THE STEPS AND ARCADE OF LIBRARY HALL (NOW RIDGLEY), AND ONLY SENIORS WERE ALLOWED TO LOITER ON THE STEPS OF UNIVERSITY HALL.

AND FINALLY, THE FRESHMEN WERE GIVEN USE OF A SPECIAL LOCKER ROOM IN THE "NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE BASEMENT." THE RULES DO NOT SPECIFY IN WHICH BASEMENT THESE LOCKERS WERE TO BE FOUND, BUT IT WAS STILL A BASEMENT. "UNINITIATED" FRESHMEN MUST HAVE VIEWED THE CAMPUS THE SAME WAY AN EXPLORER VIEWS AN UNEXPLORED CONTINENT, WITH A MIXTURE OF FEAR AND EXCITEMENT.
Business Groundbreaking

As dawn broke on Friday, October 7, the School of Business was having a program, a very significant event—the ceremonial groundbreaking for the school's new $13 million home.

Guests arrived on campus—some as early as 6:45 a.m. Those who attended included an impressive contingent from the St. Louis corporate community and others from as far away as California, New York, and Florida.

Nearly 800 guests moved on to Graham Chapel to hear the morning's keynote speaker, Charles F. Knight, chairman and chief executive officer of Emerson Electric Company. Knight, who chaired the Business Task Force of the Commission on the Future of Washington University, which recommended construction of the new building, told the overflowing Chapel audience how the school and the University had arrived at this moment of celebration.

He spoke of the planning process, the give-and-take of the meetings, and the Task Force's recommendation: that having a nationally recognized business school should be a top priority for Washington University for the 1980s.

"The recommendation is important," he said, "but for me, more important is that the process put in place the fundamentals for successful implementation."

Knight said that he and other members of the Task Force, many of whom were present and were recognized, looked forward to being part of the continuing process as the school moved toward achieving its goal.

From the Chapel the crowd proceeded to the old baseball field, the site of the new building. A canopied stand had been set up for the remainder of the program, which included brief remarks from Chancellor William H. Danforth; W.L. Hadley Griffin, chairman of the Board of Trustees; George H. Capps, general chairman of the ALLIANCE FOR WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY; Dean Robert L. Virgil of the Business School; Dr. J. George Robinson, representing the business faculty; Richard S. Ritholz, president of the Undergraduate Business Council; and Fred Dyer III, president of the Graduate Business Association.

Five companies and three individuals were recognized for their strong commitments to the Business School. The companies were: Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.; Emerson Electric Company; Brown Group, Inc.; McDonnell Douglas Corporation; and Ralston Purina Company. The individuals were Albert Kopolow and Hubert Moog, who were present, and John Simon, who was unable to attend.

The program concluded as a group of trustees, volunteers, alumni, administrators, and the faculty and student representatives took their places behind a row of ceremonial shovels for a high-spirited earth-turning.

Unusually wet and cold weather caused a slow start on the building but excavation has been completed and the concrete basement walls are being poured.

The size of the new building, at 132,000 square feet the largest individual academic structure on the Hilltop campus, will become apparent when the steel framing begins in March. When the steel is in place, masons will begin constructing the exterior walls out of red granite trimmed with white limestone.

Project architects Kallmann, McKinnell, and Wood, in association with Murphy, Downey, Wofford, and Richman, chose the stone materials to complement the traditional collegiate gothic style of the historic campus.

Completion of the new School of Business building is set for July 1985, in time for the 1985-86 academic year.
**Openers**

**Pigging Out**

If you’re the type “who, if given the choice between sex and a pound of chocolate-chip cookies, would have to think twice before answering,” then you’ll enjoy alumnus David Hoffman’s book *The Joy of Pigging Out*.

His book includes sections on the six basic food groups: fast, frozen, fresh, finest, foreign, and familiar. He even provides the rules for proper pigging etiquette. Among the rules are: “If God had meant man to use a knife and a fork, he wouldn’t have given him fingers”; “No food is bad cold”; and the caveat for all those pigging out: “Never trust blue food.”

Hoffman had originally planned a career in medicine before he discovered pigging out as a way of life. Partake. After all, Sara Lee doesn’t sell 45,000 cheesecakes a day for nothing. And someone has to devour those billion Twinkies a year.

**Medical Chair Established**

Anonymous donors have established an endowed professorship at the WU School of Medicine to honor two faculty members for their accomplishments in the field of medicine.

The new chair is the Irene E. and Michael M. Karl Professorship in Endocrinology and Medicine in the John Milliken Department of Medicine. The professorship honors the husband-and-wife team of Irene E. Karl, WU research professor of medicine for the Division of Metabolism and Endocrinology, and Michael M. Karl, WU professor of clinical medicine.

The first professorship will be held by William H. Daughaday, director of the Division of Metabolism and Endocrinology, professor of medicine and director of the Diabetes Research and Training Center at the medical school. He also is a staff physician at Barnes and Jewish hospitals. His research has brought about a better understanding of basic hormonal activity, especially that of growth hormone and plasma steroid levels.

**The Beautiful and the Sublime**

What started as an intern’s project has snowballed into a major exhibition at the Gallery of Art in Steinberg Hall.

Michael Tammenga was hired in November 1982 under an Institute of Museum Services grant to help inventory the Gallery’s 103-year collection and develop projects to aid public access to the holdings. Tammenga has a master’s degree in art history from Vanderbilt University.

A specific assignment was to generate an exhibit from the Gallery’s collection. Tammenga presented several ideas to Gerald D. Bolas, director, and Joseph D. Ketner II, curator and registrar; their choice was a comparison of one style of British and American landscape paintings called “sublime,” to be exhibited in the lower gallery.

As the project progressed, however, they decided to expand the exhibit to make it their large show of the year. Thus was born “The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque: British Influences on American Landscape Painting,” February 18 to April 8 in the main gallery.

The thesis of the show is that 19th-century American landscape painters, lacking their own cultural identity, felt compelled to study British and European masters. Three British aesthetic conceptions, “beautiful,” “sublime,” and “picturesque,” were influential to the Americans as they approached their native wilderness.

In this exhibition, for the first time, the works of...
Hudson River School artists Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Asher Durand, and others can be seen together with the British masters they emulated, such as Richard Wilson, Thomas Gainsborough, and Joseph M.W. Turner.

Runners

A common complaint many college and university students have about their education is the amount of running it takes to earn a degree. On a typical day at any institution of higher learning, it is not unusual to see students galloping across campus from one classroom to the next saddled by book bags weighed down with textbooks and papers.

Washington University students who are victims of this exhausting four-year dash may have derived some satisfaction from the knowledge that 20 faculty, staff, and administrators volunteered to represent the University in a punishing 26-mile relay marathon on the asphalt slopes of Forest Park, and did some running of their own.

Sponsored by the Xerox Corporation, the marathon was a competition for more than 100 fleet-footed employees from 62 of St. Louis' largest organizations and businesses. The competitors included Monsanto, Ralston Purina, McDonnell Douglas, the U.S. Army, Seven-Up, Southwestern Bell, the U.S. Coast Guard, Anheuser-Busch, General Motors, and Pet, Inc.

On the day of the marathon, it was cold and sunny. The 20 scholarly sprinters from Washington University divided themselves into two teams of 10 runners and prepared for the race. "At this point," said Susan D. Rollins, a fourth-year medical school student and former tour guide for the University's medical center, "our biggest concern was what to wear for the race. We decided to brave the cold and wear shorts."

Most of the team members were experienced runners; they required little training for a course they thought was going to be flat and uneventful. But, at the last minute, the original course was appropriated by a bicycle race and changed to an area of the park known for its steep hills.

The hopelessness of the situation was further complicated by the fact that the average age of the Washington University runners was significantly higher than most of the other teams. Team A's oldest runner was 57 and Team B's was 60. One competing team, the U.S. Army, boasted a team of barrack-bound 18- to 20-year olds just aching to prove their athletic supremacy.

In the end, however, a tenacity that surpasses academic understanding aided one Washington University team across the finish line in second place. The second team finished fifteenth. In addition, Susan Rollins was declared the "fastest woman" in the race. She ran the 2.6 miles of her relay in a little over 15 minutes.

Sometimes I think Washington University is a haven for the criminally studious.

In the mailroom today I ran into a guy from my English Lit class. He told me he was spending tonight—this is Saturday—studying. Studying! On a night when all of fraternity row has united to bring us the second annual “Club Med” party—complete with two live bands, hotdogs, pretzels, soda, beer, punch...even mud wrestling. My face twisted in disbelief at his brash avoidance of recreation.

“Look,” he sighed. “I have two tests on Monday and a problem set due Tuesday, and I still haven’t finished reading James Joyce.”

My eyes dropped from his face to the unopened phone bill I held in my hand. That was the last thing I wanted to hear. I haven’t even started reading James Joyce. I never even wrote my name inside the front cover. For some reason, though, I have decided that it is better for me to go out and have a good time tonight and then spend most of the day and night tomorrow catching up on my work.

Most of us work hard at Washington University. To counter-balance that, we tend to play hard, too. Students here will rarely overindulge in one of those activities at the expense of the other. Still, we often have to make a choice regarding a particular set of events: Should I attend the chemistry help session, or should I go with my friends to see China Syndrome at Brown Hall?

The decision is easier for some than for others. Although we are all here to get an education, students' non-academic goals are less universally clear. Sometimes there is a real dilemma in choosing between fun and schoolwork. For many students, academics take priority, although it may not be the preference.

There are almost always alternatives to studying available on or near campus. The students themselves decide what to take advantage of and what not to.

But college catalogs still warn that if you’re looking for a party school, you should stay away from Washington University. For a private university to have any credibility, academics must take top priority. But the impression you get from catalogs is that you can’t enjoy anything besides a classroom education at Washington University. That is misleading.

Admittedly, the social life at Washington University has different meanings for different people. I’ve heard descriptions from “depressing” and “pathetic” to “energetic” and “fairly busy.” One girl, much in the ever-present, cynical tone, asked, “What social life?”

It is common to berate the social atmosphere here. From some students there is a constant, low grumbling that says there’s nothing to do here. At the same time, there are students here who are busy all the time, planning and attending parties, participating in sports, getting involved in campus politics, and getting to know a diverse mixture of people.

As much as some students complain about the lack of activity at Washington University, as a group, they seem to keep feeding that gripe by staying away from campus events and remaining uninvolved in decisions that affect them.

“Students just generally like to complain about the situation they’re in,” says Mark Segrist, a resident adviser in Rutledge Hall.

Dean of Student Affairs Harry Kisker agrees: There’s a shared camaraderie in complaining that binds people together. “Upperclassmen,” says Kisker, “perpetuate untruths because it’s ‘cool.’ When people visit other campuses, they find out how much really does go on here.”

Non-Involvement in the ’60s

The radicalism of the Vietnam era caused a serious decline in the amount of campus activities at Washington
University. Many students were too involved in such things as the sit-in at Brookings Hall to bother with trivialities like designing a float for the Homecoming parade. During the late 1960s and early 1970s many traditions here met their demise. The Greek system declined considerably, both in number of existing fraternities and sororities and in the number of members per group. Activities like the Bearskin Follies and the Marching Band faded away. The yearbook has struggled ever since. Homecoming has made a comeback only recently.

Another consideration in examining the campus social life is that for many years Washington University was primarily a commuter campus. Few students came from outside the St. Louis area. Dean Kisker explains that “our years of tradition as a residential campus are less than other campuses.” Kisker also pointed out that in the 1970s, students’ claims that there weren’t enough opportunities to meet people and to get involved on campus were probably legitimate.

That feeling persists, despite the increased number of organizations and activities designed to accommodate students. This attitude may continue because “the campus moved to attracting residential students before it had the facilities to handle that,” says Kisker.

So, current social traditions at Washington University are only as old as the residence halls on the South-40, which opened in 1960. Now, half of the undergraduate population lives on campus and looks for activities in which to get involved. Because traditions are so young, they are just beginning to stir substantial interest among the campus community.

The feeling of academic rigor increases drastically several weeks into each semester. During orientation week, and for a few weeks thereafter, so many activities are going on that students have difficulty deciding which they should go to. When academic pressures increase, the number of available campus events decreases.

The social scene diminishes for several reasons. Fraternities and sororities stop having open parties once rush is over. Orientation events designed to expose new students to each other and to the University run out once classes begin. Because students begin to do their schoolwork, they have less time to devote to planning activities. Also, fewer people attend the events that do occur, either because they have to get work done or because they simply are tired of the types of parties that happen on campus.

Fran Merriweather, a sociology student from Rhode Island, knows to expect a time when social activities on campus hit a low. “There are periods when it’s moving and jumping,” says Merriweather, “and periods when it slows down drastically. Sometimes you have to look beyond campus on your own to find things to do.” A junior, Merriweather says, “Sometimes I like to cool out in my room, listen to music, hang out in the Central West End.”

In general, the level of campus activity varies inversely with the level of academic pressures. In planning, student groups and administrators have to take into account what academic things are going on. Therefore, much of the social life revolves around the academic life of the students. During mid-term exams, for instance, few students have time for planning or participation.
At that point, according to Faith Maddy, activities coordinator for the Department of Residential Life, a lot of stress exists among students. Maddy says that it is then the responsibility of the administration to “step in to provide tension releasers that give short bursts of energy. I think we’re getting better at doing that for the residence halls.”

**Bear Boosters**

The most common and long-lasting (I was warned about this when I visited as a prospective student) complaint is the absence of an adequate sports program. The University’s varsity teams haven’t received national recognition recently, and the athletic facilities have been far below par for years. The football field, track, and swimming pool were built for the Olympics in 1904. Since then, partly because the regulations have changed, the facilities have not served properly for competitive or even recreational athletics.

The University has begun construction on the new Athletic Complex, using the original Fieldhouse as a base. With 1985 as the target for completion, the renovated facilities will include an 8-lane, 25-meter pool with diving area, handball, racquetball, and squash courts; and an outdoor 6-lane, 400-meter synthetic track. The total cost will be $13 million. Many students and faculty members believe this is a worthwhile investment.

Justin Carroll says the Athletic Complex “will make a difference in the psychological attitudes of our students—and the faculty and staff. The University community will take pride in it and use it.”

Dan Blank, a junior from Brookline, Massachusetts, believes, “It’s about time the University began promoting the athletic program, funneling money into the football and baseball teams… they’re finally getting new fields and new coaches.”

The absence of “good varsity teams” bothers Carlos Davila. “From what I’ve heard about other schools,” says Davila, a business student from San Juan, Puerto Rico, “they center a lot of their social lives around sports events.”

A transfer engineering student from Dallas, Texas, Jim Cannon, attests that at his previous school “sports events were terrific social gatherings. Here they are much less so.”

Sophomore Ken Moehringer blames the University’s students for that. “Athletes are putting in double-time,” he says, “The least people can do is show a little support.”

Perhaps the completed Athletic Complex will spark more interest in sports at Washington University. Junior Russell Shaw says of the Complex, “I think it’ll have a major impact on students. People will be kind of awestruck at first, but it will be a definite asset to the school.”

Dean Kisker offers some insight into the athletic program in general, calling it “nondescript, partly because of our location and funding for the teams.” According to Kisker, the Athletic Complex will “make us moderately competitive with schools with which we are already competitive academically. Sports visibility is very important to the institutional identity.” Certainly, sports play a crucial role in the reputations of many American universities.

Students’ concerns about athletic facilities only partially relate to the University’s reputation, however. Their fundamental interest is purely recreational.

Clarence Roby Jr., a senior on the baseball team, comments, “It’s about time they look at athletics as a greater dimension of social life for students.”

**School Spirit**

From the sports programs stem a major morale problem among some Washington University students. Many believe that a lack of school spirit, of real pride in the University, undermines a lot of campus activities. Dean Kisker explains, “There’s enviable pride in winning the Putnam Prize, but students can’t get fired up about it.” (Kisker also mentioned a popular football cheer which proclaims to our opponents, “That’s all right. That’s okay. We’ve got a higher GPA!”).

Shaw sees that lack of enthusiasm and pep slowly changing. Still, he says, there’s a long way to go. “Big-name Ivy league schools,” says Shaw, “have the same academic emphasis but do not have to combat poor school spirit.”

“The student body,” says Steve Marcus, a junior from Wilmington, Delaware, “has no central theme—no oompah.”

According to Dave Kohr, a freshman from Syracuse, New York, what’s missing at Washington University is a sense of unity. “Most people like the school, unlike at a lot of the high-pressure schools,” says Kohr, “but there doesn’t seem to be a focus. The diversity (of students) seems to make it sort of disparate.”

“The lack of school spirit,” says Carroll, “is more a lack of identity of what Wash. U. is, what it means to people. We’re so fragmented; there’s no one unifying force.”

Ken Moehringer agrees. “Everyone’s doing their own thing too much. That’s the problem.”

What kinds of “their own things” are students doing? Drinking, for one. Although the drinking age in St. Louis is 21, on-campus drinking is virtually unaffected by the law.

**Freedom with Responsibility**

Once Orientation ends, few parties do without some alcoholic beverages. Recently, though, the BACCHUS (Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students) chapter here influenced planning enough so that every event
must also provide a non-alcoholic beverage.

Junior Mark Segrist chooses not to drink. He complains, "Too many things are very heavy on the drinking. People like to get sloshed. I usually get bored and leave." Segrist believes: "People couldn't have a party without a keg (of beer) here."

Ellie Murphy, a freshman from Lindsborg, Kansas, says that "alcohol is more socially acceptable; most everybody drinks." Although she isn't sure that the accessibility of alcohol is always a good thing, Murphy thinks "Wash U. attracts a responsible crowd that knows how to use it. Well, that's just college."

Drinking on campus surprises some students and parents, although students here are probably less indulgent than those at state schools or in cities with lower drinking ages, many students believe. Dean Kisker says the University does not want to set stricter rules regarding drinking, but rather wants to maintain the latitude now given students.

"We are a very liberal campus," says Kisker. "We assume that students have as much freedom as possible and are responsible for exercising that freedom. That often horrifies parents."

One popular annual campus event is the "TANG" party, which focuses on beer-chugging competitions. At this particular event, alcohol remains the central attraction. But Faith Maddy strongly believes that "there are other aspects of large parties that draw people."

"At Walk-In Lay-Down," a twice-yearly event in the quad which boasts a free outdoor concert, free popcorn, a barbeque, and two full-length feature films, says Maddy, "drinking is not the central focus, yet the event always draws a huge crowd."

"They have to realize that some people don't just like to drink beer and listen to rock music," says Roby, president of the Association of Black Students (ABS). Roby is concerned about the enrollment of black students and the activities available to them.

"When you take a few minutes to think about it," Roby says, "you realize that most campus programs reflect the dominant culture. Programs for black students are only those that black students put on." Through more cooperation between black and white students, Roby believes that there could be more events that exemplify other types of culture.

Maddy says that one goal of her department is to "get minorities heard a bit better." A few years ago, the Department of Residential Life included a black, Kevin Slater, who Roby says, "served as a buffer-and an idea person, espousing ideas for black students from time to time." There has been no one to fulfill that function since Slater left, according to Roby.

A Complete Experience

Most students do enjoy their social lives here. A recent campus survey showed that although there are enough student activities on campus, students have to make an effort to find the activities that interest them: "I can't say there's much missing at all," says Steve Marcus. "I think it's very complete."

Barry Boone, a junior from Hempstead, New York, gets impatient when students complain about the social life: "Why don't they find something to do?" During his freshman year, Boone sometimes found it "really annoying that they weren't doing anything just because there wasn't anything to do."

According to junior Jeremy Nauert of St. Louis, "The students are beginning to get tired of hearing from themselves that there's nothing to do. And they don't really believe it either."
Senior MBA student Doug Fish questions the apparent disgruntled attitude: “Doesn’t anyone say they love it here?” When biology major Claire Mazow is at home in Houston, Texas, she tells people that she loves it here. Mazow says that she enjoys most “the people who make up my immediate surroundings.”

“What makes a party,” says Mazow, “is going with my friends.” Major events, like Walk-In Lay-Down and the TANG party, which involve student planning and participation, tend to attract large crowds. Other events lauded by students as fun and worthwhile are the Washington University Olympics, in which most of the residence halls participate; the South-40 Formal, a new alternative to formerly independent residence hall spring formals; and the annual Thurtene Carnival, which involves most of the University community and the St. Louis community as well.

One popular and unique tradition is painting the underpass along the path from the South-40 to main campus, beneath Forsyth Boulevard. Splotches of haphazard color appear one day, only to be covered by an artistic advertisement the next. Any group may venture out late at night to paint the underpass, whether to announce a friend’s birthday, publicize a flower sale in Mallinckrodt, or salute a new fraternity pledge class. The next day, everyone passing through reads and views the painted messages, which are sometimes crude or funny, usually creative, and always entertaining.

Diverse Activities

A variety of social activities on campus as diverse as the student body exists. A recent Admissions Office publication tells high school students triumphantly: “At Washington University it is easy to get involved.” This is undeniably true. There are nearly 200 recognized student groups on campus. Not all are on campus each year—groups fade and revive with shifts in student attitudes and interests—but the majority persists. To become involved may be too easy.

The conclusion of that recent campus student survey showed that a majority of the students interviewed said the big problem was to find the time to participate in all the activities in their areas of interest.

Ross Davies, editor-in-chief of Student Life, says, “The lack of activities on campus was a severe problem when I came here almost four years ago; but, since that time, the situation has improved.”

“I think the attitude of the freshmen and transfer students is positive,” Carroll says. “And we’ve made some progress with the upper-classmen. I don’t think that a majority of students believes there’s not enough going on on campus. Our brochure proves there are many activities and that there is something for every student.”

For writers and photographers, there are several student-run publications, including Student Life (the campus newspaper), the Hatchet yearbook, and Cadenza literary magazine. Students with a precise academic focus may choose, among others, the Pre-Med Society, the Pre-Law Society, the Society of Women Engineers, or AISEC (the International Association of Students in Economics and Business Management). The Student Union and the Congress of the South-40, two governing bodies, have spaces for officers, student representatives, committee members, and programming board members.

Talented students (there are many
At left: a long-time tradition at Washington University: Thurlene Carnival.

Fraternities and sororities are influential on campus, but only about 26 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women belong to the Greek system. During the past two years, a revived fraternity (Sigma Phi Epsilon) and a new sorority (Alpha Phi) have appeared. The resurgence of interest in fraternities and sororities on this campus is indicative of a national trend in that direction.

The Greek system, according to Maddy, offers a particular type of atmosphere that is successful but does not appeal to everyone on campus. For some, the time commitment and constant affiliation with one group is too limiting. Therefore, most students remain independent.

But to Dan Blank, being a member of Beta Theta Pi is only limiting “in that there are so many activities involved in the fraternity that I can’t get involved in other activities on campus, but obviously that’s my priority.” Blank served as rush chairman for his fraternity last fall. “Obviously I hang out with my fraternity brothers,” says Blank, “but with rush you meet more people. I would say I meet more new people than independents do.”

“You can’t deny the fact that they’re involved,” Carroll says of the Greeks. “I think they have a lot of influence.” Greeks, along with their own activities, participate actively in events that are not specifically Greek, together with independents.

**Thursday Night Fever**

Weekends begin on Thursday nights here. The Rat (technically the “Umrrathskeil”) is a congregation place on Thursdays, where friends meet for conversation and a beer. Next door, the Gargoyle offers Thursday night dancing with a DJ or a live band. There are happenings at a few houses along fraternity row, which pick up at midnight when the Rat and Gargoyle close.

Why are these Thursday diversions normally more crowded than weekend events? Partially because of their regularity and reliability. Rarely is there nothing going on on a Thursday night; students know ahead of time what’s available.

One freshman feels that Thursday nights are “usually better than the weekend, because everyone looks forward to the weekend. When it comes, everyone realizes how much work they have to do.”

When the weekend does come, students make decisions about balancing study time and play time. Studying, sleeping, parties, sports, and procrastinating are common weekend activities. Some students date (and many say that people with boy friends or girl friends are happier here than those without), others spend time in groups or with one or two close friends.

There are movies on campus every weekend and often during the week as well. The campus frequently offers classical music concerts by student groups, and occasionally big-name rock and jazz musicians are brought in.

The Performing Arts Area and Edison Theater present student and professional dance and dramatic productions for which the cost of admission for students is nominal.

Access to the city of St. Louis is limited, because of poor public transportation and because many out-of-town students don’t have cars. But there is a lot going on in St. Louis, and the Department of Residential Life tries to compile lists of city attractions for students to use as references for planning their own entertainment.

Freshman Dharm Kapadia, from Edison, New Jersey, explains that diversions take up less time as the semester progresses. “At first it was go-go-go partying,” says Kapadia. “Then you learn how to balance your time.”

In the long run, Washington University students are expected not only to take advantage of existing activities but also to create their own. Dean Kisker verifies this: “We don’t hold your hand here.”

Along the way students may complain or get bored, but they also will probably learn to make better use of available resources.

Barry Boone admits, “Sometimes I get bored.” But, he adds, “It happens. Even at home, it happens.”

Jeremy Nauert perceives a “constant dynamic flow” on campus. As a result, he says, “Things never become predictable because there’s such a diversity of people and events.”

Along with academics, Washington University students need only to seize every available opportunity and to create them where they do not yet exist. They have the enthusiasm, knowledge and potential to significantly improve the social atmosphere at this University.

Right now, I’m going with my friends to the “Club Med” party. Before I leave—just to make myself feel better—I’ll write my name on the inside cover of James Joyce.

I’ll read it tomorrow.

Lori Tenser is a senior majoring in psychology.
I first met Stanley Elkin when he was a graduate student at the University of Illinois. A magazine called Accent, on whose editorial board he served, had decided to devote an entire issue to the work of a heretofore unpublished writer named me. I taught at Purdue University, nearby, so it was simple enough to visit, to party, and I came away not unnaturally well disposed: to Stanley, many others, to streets, fire hydrants, to trees.

A year later—this was 1959—I came over to Urbana from Lafayette to put in a year as a visiting lecturer, dividing my time equally between philosophy, literature, and fiction writing—a split which proved worse than any pea's. The writers were wonderful (they usually are), but the English Department was full of scholars notable for notes they could write down but couldn't play; in the Philosophy Department perched a row of positivists so preserved in their opinions even the nits beneath their wings were stuffed; and the novel on which I had already labored a long time chose this moment to tell me my labors had been in vain. I found out that the streets flooded, that dogs visited the hydrants there as they did elsewhere, and that the trees were being cut down. I would rather relive that year than rejoin the navy, but that's about it. Stanley Elkin was certainly a welcome light in a dark time.

Of course, I liked the fact that Stanley seemed to approve of my work, and I was impressed by what he had just begun to publish. That was not all. I was impressed by his size, for Stanley was already larger than life. I was impressed by his youth, which I envied, for my habit in every enterprise was to put out my meager blooms only after the season was over, and all the vases had been put up. I was impressed by his wife, whom I coveted; by the raw unsauced way he devoured life; and possibly more than anything then, I was impressed by his stories, his anecdotal history of himself; not just by what those histories were or contained, although they rarely lacked interest in that regard; but by how he told them: how he entered into them, how Stanley, himself—always the subject—became objectified; became a character we all first heard, then felt we saw, emerge from our narrator's memory. Stanley also groused a lot. He wanted what he felt were his just desserts, his due, and to that end he kept accounts. Receipts, it seemed, regularly fell short. In addition, he constantly complained about his health, which was precarious; but those complaints were hard to believe, he seemed so robust.

Back then, in the first fuzz of our beginnings, what was hard was hard. It was hard to believe the way writing was difficult to do. Now, as life fills with irrelevance like a leaking boat, it is the easy, the simple, the trivial, that has become impossible. I think of our habits as organs outside us, as satellite cities or colonies overseas, by means of which we can carry on an extended commerce; and as so often happens, the suburbs will swallow the city itself, the colonies rise in revolt; our habits no longer require an habitué, but think they can carry on by themselves. Stanley's—to me, imaginary—bad health set up shop, held fire and going out of business sales, only to reappear in another location with another name. I won't say that the dirty tricks life has played on him have made Stanley a better player of the game; but they have made him a better player of the game. Once his symptoms had surfaced like submarines—about that unmistakable reality, he grew grouseless; he grew brave.

There tend to be emblematic moments in a friendship, moments which more than mark it off, but become almost its masonry. I had been able, that year in Urbana, to find quarters for only a half a year; so for the second semester my family had moved across town to a street whose elm trees were all coming down, where the noises of saws set your life on edge. However, we had a little house-warming and put on happiness like a paper hat. A few couples were to come for dinner. For the occasion every cloud in the sky burst. The rain did not come down in strings, it came down in horizontal planes. The streets in our neighborhood flooded; most of our guests refused to wade: the basement began to fill with water. I heaved washing and drying machines up onto blocks. The blocks were waiting in the basement like sandbags along a levee. Clearly this had happened before. Now I could see watermarks on the walls toward which this fresh flood rushed like a runner to the tape. The Elkins crossed the river, arriving with every pant and gown rolled up and nevertheless wet to the altogether. We experienced the levity which local and still manageable disasters can generate. Every 15 minutes I would throw open the door and look down the stairs where step after basement step was disappearing into the swill.

I then began to fear for the electrical system. Certain switches, I insisted, had to be unsnapped, fuses unscrewed, whichever it was. With the water nearer thigh than knee, and certainly over my rolled up every things, a flashlight held riflesike over my head, its beam pointing down like a toy sun, I began to wade around looking for the fuse box, of whose nature and location at this time I knew nothing. At my back I thought I heard the paddling of a waterbird. It was Stanley, almost as wet from head to toe as toe to head.

"I thought if you were going to electrocute yourself down here," he said, "you ought to have some company."

Stanley lived, and still lives, in a state of quixotic excess. His weak heart hates the calm and simple center, and prefers to beat out at the edge of things.
He sees—he has always seen—the path back in the way out to those edges; he knows the trials of the return; and this gives his understanding of events a shearing strength, a sense for the power in things that are coming apart which some of his readers regard as merely comic. That is: Elkin knows that a shoe put on is a shoe which will have to be removed, and he understands this not as a future foot will, but as the present one does. He renders the firstfootforward with the words which include the eventual two steps back. Yet, and this is the heroic part: the shoe goes on anyway; it fits; the forward step is taken.

Now Stanley is holding the flashlight, and I am taking teeth out of the mouth of this box. I haven’t found the main switch. Do I want to pull the main switch? I don’t know. Nor have I asked Stanley to go back upstairs and drip off in the kitchen. I try not to believe this is dangerous. I find the main switch looking like the shadow of a switch, not a switch. Stanley says: “I wish I had rolled up my shorts.” So I don’t pull the main switch. We’ll dammit have dinner. It was rather a nice meal, too, I remember. Being alive, even all wet, put us in good spirits. We set a new watermark that night.

This is one of the few of Stanley’s stories in which I am actually a participant. Normally I tell it, not as I have told it here, as Bill Gass would normally tell it; but as Stanley does, for his version is clearly superior. On the road, in Minneapolis or Atlanta, I often tell the story of the broken thumb at the drive-in, or of the time Stanley went to Hollywood to redo the computer’s dialogue for that wretched movie, The Demon Seed. I enjoy the thought that Stanley will reach Dallas just after me, and people will say, as he begins his Herbie-Bogart-abroad stories, “oh, we’ve heard those.” I have a million of his, and I’m quite a hit with a mouthful of beer.

Stanley, we joke, has the manuscript disease: M.S. From a trip abroad, I bring him back a cane, and then complain when he doesn’t use it. Stanley no longer looms, as he did in the old days; instead he shambles to a chair or sofa, but in any room no one is larger or more alive. He lets us joke, not to save his spirits, but to save ours, which is generosity a degree beyond the generous.

But Elkin humor is always dark, people will say, so why shouldn’t it sometimes be at his expense? And if I report that his new novel is about seven terminally ill children, it will be hard to refute them. We have lately read of these vulgar benevolences: some stricken ten-year-old is flown to Florida; snatched out of the tropics and shown snow; put on the back of a horse and told to yell whoopee. How to reach through this disgusting exploitation, this seven-hanked sentimentality, to the pain? His work has always done so: his wit, his language, will find a way through these bogs of falsehood and fields of shit and give us back the tragedy.

I have often thought, the tables turned, how I would have called from the top of the cellar stairs toward the wet bottom of the Elkin basement: “Need some help, Stanley?” I would say, from my safe and sane position. “I’d join you but I’m wearing my new suit.” “I’m hungry, so don’t switch off the main.”

These days, when we are all more than knee-deep in it, and someone is about to switch off the main, I find Stanley’s novels more and more like his own wading figure. They say: “if you’re going to go to hell in this stupid, senseless way, you might like some sane and generously human company.”
Turning Middle Aged
by Stanley Elkin

His suits. My father’s suits. The power of my father dressed. His suits. Their ample lapels, their double-breasted plenitude, their fabrics like a gabardine energy, their sharkskin suppleness, their silk like a spit-and-polish swank. Trousers, he said, were to be worn above the waist, two inches, say, above the belly-button, though he never wore his there. His rode his hips like holsters and gave off not an illusion of bagginess but some natty rakish, sporty quality of excess, bolts, cloth to burn. Full at the calves and shins, just spilling over his shoetops, fabric seemed to roll over him like water. He stood in clothing like a man swagging in the sea. In middle age the power of my father dressed. What I invoke is the fierce force of middle-aged men, the fabulous primacy and efficacy of their prime-time, bumped-up lives. I want to be clear. I’m middle-aged too now. And in some ways—not all—I never had it so good. The terror is gone. Bogeymen don’t scare me. I’m a bogeyman myself now and I know how we operate. With a smugness hard-fought-for, a carelessness and ease cultivated years. Like a game-show host for the immediate family.

Put the worst face on it. You’re not reading this in an inflight magazine at 600 mph. You’re not upper-mobie. Your neckties, if you own any, are not of the season. Nor your suits nor your coats. Your rainwear leaks, your shoes lace, and the last time you had a chain round your neck dog tags dangled from it: a raised initial for your religion, another for your blood type. They had your number.

Put the worst face on it. You don’t have an expense account or bother with the long form. You don’t know what to give doormen: you don’t know how to tip. When the tornado comes to town, the floods and the tremors, your home’s overturned in the trailer park—there are broken eggs in the toilet bowl, coffee spilled on the bedsheets. Your daughter in Minnesota may have seen it on TV and you want to reassure her. Put the worst face on it. But for a moment, just for a moment, you hesitate and wonder if you shouldn’t wait for the cheap rates that come on at 5:00. (There’s an hour time difference in Minnesota. Are they an hour ahead or an hour behind?) If they’re behind does the cheap rate apply? Does it have to be 5:00 in Minnesota to get the discount? Put the worst face on it. It doesn’t matter, and it sure as hell does.

And in some ways—not all—I never had it so good. The terror is gone. Bogeymen don’t scare me. I’m a bogeyman myself now and I know how we operate.

The heart where athletes give 104 per cent in the Oldtimer’s Game? Once, just one lousy once before you die you’d like to be there in the tavern when the television crew comes, hold up a finger and scream, “We’re Number one! We’re Number One!” Because you’re looking to root, you’re settled in fanhood and the submergemanship of community and somebody better come along soon who can put it all together. How do you think it feels to have to go on national TV every year and mumble, “We’re number five, we’re number eight.”

The worst face, which is tough, a judgment call finally, for the fact is there are limits to the negative imagination. The head never performs without a safety net and bad news and pain are always surprises. We fantasize upwards.

But the worst face. For the sake of argument grant that, excepting bad health, things are as rotten as you care for them to be, that you’re middle-aged and vicissitude-prone, a failure.

Now a better face. Failure or no—and this is the point—the chances are excellent that you never had it so good, either. You’re earning more as a failure in your middle years than ever before. You’re settled like an academic before. You’re earning more as a failure in your middle years than ever before. You’re settled like an academic in tenure, your arrangements arranged and it would take dynamite to blast you out of a rut that you came to think of as hell.

Now a better face. Failure or no—and this is the point—the chances are excellent that you never had it so good, either. You’re earning more as a failure in your middle years than ever before. You’re settled like an academic in tenure, your arrangements arranged and it would take dynamite to blast you out of a rut that you came to think of years ago as a groove. If it’s going too far to say that you’re happy, surely it’s not stretching a thing to declare that you’re accustomed, used to it.
Because you can get used to anything, even your life.

Have you noticed the perversity of old people? How they insist on what appear to you to be small, pointless martyrdoms, how they almost invariably eschew comfort and small gains? This one attends a dentist who hasn’t kept up; that one will not eat French food. Their habits are not loyalties, they are superstitions, some customized mumbo jumbo of accommodation, set in their ways as children, warding off risk by never taking one and putting their faith in the locks and deadbolts of ritual and habituation.

Middle age is nothing like that. It puts its faith in the law of averages, which is what it still has in common with youth. What it has in common with old age, of course, is the beginning of an unpleasant consciousness of the body. Aches and pains like echoes in reverse, the mimic noises of the bones and flesh without any apparent stimulus. What it does not have in common with either is a certain privileged smugness, almost brave, almost heroic, status by dint of staying power.

If one stands on ceremonies they are one’s own ceremonies.

For myself I am no longer vain of my appearance. If I’m, flabby—flabby? I’m gross, I’m gross with grocery—I consider what it would cost me to alter my stats. Hard work, exercise, the bad breath of diets, a will power in the service of some will not my own, some sleek and glossy Overwill, what strangers might like to look at, playing some other guy’s gig and force-feeding myself into youthful images so alien—I’m no newcomer to middle age, if I live and nothing happens I’ll have had my fifty-first birthday in May—that I would probably feel comfortable only on Halloween. Your real dirty old man rarely looks his age. I’d as soon purchase a toupee or have my face lifted, my teeth capped, my shoes shined.

For years my wife cut my hair, then stopped. Now I go to a shop called The Happening. I am always the oldest man there by fifteen to twenty years. That includes the hair stylists, as barbers call themselves these days. I’ll tell you the truth. Always on the afternoons of these haircuts I find that I am depressed, out of sorts, vulnerable. The radio in The Happening is constantly tuned to a soft-rock FM station. Sirens and lorn love, all the torchy registers, all the two-bit griefs. Jane or Jan, girls in their late twenties—I can’t remember the names of these girls who cut my hair—call me by my first name, like car salesmen or cops.
writing tickets. They mean well to pretend I'm still in the game. It's even sweet in a way. Certainly they don't suspect how patronizing it sounds but almost compulsively I want to explain something to them—for never very far from my thin bravery is my fat cowardice; it's mistaken identity I fear—to apologize, to blurt out how I really need this haircut, honest, that the stuff gets in my eyes, tickles my neck. I hold my tongue, of course. When they ask how I want my hair cut I don't know what to tell them. What can I say? I'm balding. To me a haircut is a kind of affection I shall have to work on this. It's an imperfection in my middle-age stance, the real life that in real ways I've been working on for years.

Understand me. Swim laps, lay off the smokes, restrict your salt intake. If your motive is health, getting right with the underwriters, if you're sick and tired of sick and tired, I'm all for you. But good shape? At our age?

I made this holy silver-wedding-anniversary vow. If some lady in a strange town, really great-looking, really intelligent, nice and not a hooker, nice and not crazy, should ever come up to me at a party and say, "Hey look, I figure, a swell guy like you, you're a happily married man with this nifty family I wouldn't hurt for the world and I expect absolutely nothing in return, absolutely nothing, it's just that gross, middle-aged guys old enough to be my father happen to turn me on. So what do you say, sailor, when it's over it's over, strictly goodbye-dear-and-amen-here's-hoping-we-meet-now-and-then, meanwhile everything my treat, what do you say, my place or yours?"

Well, I'll be honest. I would almost certainly have to think about it. I'll be more than honest. It hasn't come up and I no longer expect that it will.

So, in my case, middle age is at least partly ascetic, in the sense that however okay it may now be deemed to be to come out of the closet—Paunch Power!—and however seemly and respectable it may yet become even to die, it is mostly a piecemeal withdrawal of expectation. It's too late to learn to ski with impunity. I shall never go into the wet suit or snorkle the seas. I shall never break the bank at Monte Carlo, and learning Chinese is out of the question. Neither do I expect to be asked to spy for my country and I'll never solo. Nor will I handicap the ponies or get the knack of reading sheet music. I have almost given up hope of ever receiving a standing ovation.

But that's all small potatoes. Never my area of competence or concern. Ski? Even as a kid it hurt my hands to make snowballs and I'd catch cold pulling my sled and what do I care about breaking the bank at Monte Carlo? I wouldn't know what to give the croupier.

They're strengths in disguise, could be, these holes in my training. They free up obsession and shut distraction off at the pass. All the things I won't do, or can't, focus my options, allow me to service only my necessities. They tunnel my hope and—well, it's like this. As people get older they cease taking polls. More certain of their own, they're not so interested in other people's opinions. When fantasy flies out the window reality comes in at the door. He's not a bad fellow, Reality. Quite nice, really, when you get to know him. For every pipe dream he takes away he leaves an energy, some increment of measured confidence just as heady as the diffuse, winner-take-all vanities of the young. And you do grow negligent of appearances; you do better; you grow weary of them, all of the reflected stances. You take less offense in mirrors and, like sums done in the head, narcissism becomes an inside job.

Like most writers, I've always wanted a best seller. Nothing spectacular: eleven weeks, say, at number seven or eight on the New York Times Book Review best-seller list would do me, maybe ten minutes including breaks for commercials at the end of a major talk show, and David Levine to do my caricature. Perhaps an honorary degree from a minor major university. Modest, you see, bucking for average as these things go. (Indeed, as they go as these things go—I'm working on a new novel now, perhaps the best, certainly the longest. I've ever written, but I doubt it will happen. I don't write it off—this is the world, everything happens—but I wouldn't bet on it. For now it's enough to do the work, to use my craft for my craft, and let the icing take care of itself. Leave me to Heaven, I say, and soak in my middle years as cynical and comfortable and unselfconscious as a man in his tub.)
George Pake, former provost and trustee of Washington University, is group vice president, corporate research of Xerox Corporation. In the 1983 Ferguson lecture, delivered in Graham Chapel, he argued for a national rededication to United States technological leadership through renewed investment in research and development. This text is based upon that lecture.

A Golden Era

When I joined the Washington University faculty in 1948, the nation was dedicating itself to a postwar rebuilding, particularly in its educational and economic sectors. Looking back 35 years, we recognize that it was the beginning of a golden era in our scientific research and technological development.

By George Pake

In 1983, we are not in a golden era of support for scientific research. Measured in relation to the Gross National Product, the nation's participation in research and development (R&D) more than doubled from 1953 to 1964, steadily declined from 1967 to 1977, and since 1978 has been about three-quarters of the high plateau.

To an intelligent observer from another planet, our reduced emphasis on R&D would make little sense. He would note that, based upon our R&D investments immediately after World War II, the United States surged to world technological leadership. This brought advances in productivity and attendant generation of national wealth, which in turn enabled us to afford the massive social and economic gains that have occurred from that time through the 1970s. Yet with our eye no longer on the technological ball, the nation's R&D investments and educational systems have decayed.

These investments are essential to the economic means for supporting burgeoning populations and for coping with the inevitable side-effects of such populations: strain of food, water, and other material resources, environmental pollution, and the social pollutions of crime and pestilence that accompany overcrowding and deprivation. More science (that is, more knowledge and understanding) and more of its application (that is, more technology) are needed to solve these problems. Other social and political factors also are
required: world-leading technology, in
and of itself, will not suffice. But it is
essential, and we are in danger of not
having this critical necessity.

The United States must restore and
maintain education and training in
science and technology. Instead of just
R&D, it is time to speak of E,R&D with
the E standing for education. It is
self-evident that a nation needs a strong
educational system to be technologically
strong. But the increasing complexity
of technology requires that education
must go well beyond the three Rs.

Intelligent, persistent tinkerers could
once make inventions of ultimate tech­
nological and economic significance.
Edison, the Wright brothers, and
Henry Ford come to mind. Modern
technological advances are a different
story. They typically require a scientific
and technical base. Consider the tran­
sistor, the laser, or synthetic insulin.

The required conditions for tech­
nological innovation nowadays are:
scientific or technologic education and
training; sophisticated instrumentation;
long-term goals; stable funding; and
freedom, within a sense of overall
direction, to explore new concepts.

These conditions are not associated
with tinkering in the basement. A
formal university background is almost
always essential to meet the first
requirement and to work with the
instrumentation of the second. The
modern R&D enterprise is inextricably
lined with the research university: A
great big E comes before R&D, and I
shall refer to the E,R&D macrosystem.

High Technology Weaknesses

Leading individuals in technological
industry and research universities have
recently been challenging the vitality
of the nation’s E,R&D enterprise. They
point to fundamental weaknesses, even
pathologies, in American high tech­
nology. These spokespersons include
Richard Mahoney, chief operating
officer of Monsanto; William Norris,
chief executive officer of Control Data;
John Opel, chief executive officer of
IBM; and Ian Ross, president of Bell
Laboratories. Their collective view
should not be taken lightly.

These E,R&D problems have global
impact and are not a parochial matter.
Basic research and graduate education
are essential to world progress and
participation in modern advanced
technology, and many nations since

World War II have depended upon
the United States to help supply them.

One significant index of the relative
health of the E,R&D system is the
portion of the gross national product a
country invests in future R&D. During
its postwar investment, the United
States steadily increased the fraction of
GNP devoted to research and develop­
ment, more than doubling it by 1964.
After about four years at a peak of about
3.0 percent, a slow and steady decline
set in. It leveled in 1973 at about 2.3
percent and has remained at about that
percentage to the present. Other
nations, notably West Germany and
Japan, steadily increased their invest­
ment rates while ours declined.

But, a substantial portion of American
R&D also is directed toward the mili­
tary. When our civilian R&D rates are
compared with those of our major
trading partners, we now fall well
below West Germany and Japan.

The number of patents granted
United States inventors at home and
abroad is another indicator. The num­
ber of U.S. patents granted to United
States inventors has dropped since 1971
from 55,000 to 40,000 a year. Foreign
patents granted American inventors
have also dropped. During the same
period, United States patents granted
foreign inventors have grown from
about 20,000 to about 25,000 a year.
The contrast of the United States
decline with foreign growth is disturbing.

Basic Research and
Educational Decline

Perhaps the best indication of our
E,R&D system’s health, however, is the
health of our basic research. Basic
research activity measures both the
strength of our university graduate
training (most basic research is per­
formed in universities) and the health
of our longest-range investments.

The United States annual basic
research investment, from all sources,
expressed in constant 1972 dollars has grown little since 1968. For a growing nation that is not encouraging.

And I believe it is worse than available statistics suggest, because statistics do not show the E portion. The education system feeds the scientists, technicians, and executives into our high technology enterprise. In a 1982 issue of Science, John Opel, now IBM chairman, said, "The United States is slipping in the race to strengthen the capabilities of its people: talented, educated, and trained human beings—the ultimate resource of any nation." He summarized the deterioration of elementary and secondary mathematics and science education in the United States and the worsening aptitude and achievement scores of our high school graduates.

For example, I have read that in Chicago there is one physics teacher for every two high schools; fewer than 10 percent of Chicago high school students take any physics; and fewer than 16 percent take any chemistry. In a science test for 14-year-olds in 19 countries, the United States ranked 15th and Japan first.

This sorry situation ultimately reflects itself on our engineering schools. Thomas Martin, president of Illinois Institute of Technology, has collected grim statistics. Six percent of all American degrees awarded are in engineering as compared to 37 percent of all West German degrees and 21 percent of all Japanese degrees. With half our population, Japan graduates 5,000 more electrical engineers each year than we do. Overall, Japan has six times as many engineers per capita as we do.

Among United States citizens, the number of Ph.D. degrees awarded in engineering has dropped 50 percent in the past decade. About half of the engineering Ph.D.s presently in the United States are awarded to non-resident aliens. Between 10 and 15 percent of the engineering faculty positions in the United States are unfilled; qualified candidates are unavailable at prevailing salary levels. Engineering faculty shortages are particularly severe in computer systems and microelectronics. Data indicate that 17 percent of faculty positions in computer science and technology are vacant. American universities produce only about 250 computer science Ph.D. graduates annually—about the number that one major corporation alone has sought to hire each year since 1980.

Industrial salaries and modern equipment draw faculty away from the university, and venture funding combines with the low-capital, quick-transfer nature of software to draw away some of the system's researchers. Student training and basic research suffer all along the line.

Across the board, universities suffer from obsolete equipment. There are serious needs in the laboratory sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology. But, universities particularly lack modern computing research equipment to carry on architecture and systems-software research on topics such as distributed computing, networking, and data base management. The National Research Council is mounting an effort to diagnose the obsolescence problem across all science and engineering fields. There are some indications of partial remedies from federal agencies, but programs to revitalize established areas are not likely to foster new computer-system research.

Performance and Funding of R&D

Ultimately, before prescribing a health remedy for our E,R&D, we must first understand the roles in industry, government, and the universities in funding and in performing R&D. (The available data do not include the E component); NSF data for 1980 show a total R&D activity in this country of $61.1 billion. These funds were distributed as 13.3 percent for basic research, 22.4 percent for applied research, and 64.3 percent for development.

Two sources provided the funding: industry (48.2 percent) and government (47.8 percent). Universities funded only 2.3 percent of the total: industry and government 96 percent. But universities [including their Federally Funded R&D Centers (FFRDC's)] and govern-
ment each perform about 13 percent of the nation's R&D. Some 70 percent of the R&D activity is performed by industry.

The proportional shares change drastically, however, when we consider where basic research is performed. Despite their modest part in the total R&D picture, universities do 60 percent of the nation's basic research.

My final data illustrate why any cut-back in federal funding of research to universities adversely affects America's basic research. Nearly 66 percent of all university R&D funds in 1980 came from the federal government. By including the FFRDC's, that figure grows to about 75 percent. By including state- and local-government support, the total government portion is 80 percent.

Clearly, the health of basic research depends critically upon a strong partnership between universities and government.

**Partners in Research and Development**

The overall R&D system is a tripartite enterprise: the federal government, industry, and the universities. Let us consider, therefore, the interactions among the partners.

Industry-government: In an E.R&D context in the 1980s, there is inevitably much comparison of the perceived alliance between industry and government in Japan with the adversarial relationship between business and government in the United States. On this topic I am not expert, and for example, our friends at the Washington University Center for the Study of American Business would be better commentators than I.

University-government: Generally the strong link forged after World War II between the federal government and the research universities created the scientific base for United States technological advances and leadership during the decades from 1955 to 1975. But recently there have been serious tensions in this partnership. Federal budget cuts have followed years of an inflationary squeeze on university research. Problems over accounting regulations and government resistance to full-indirect-cost reimbursement have surfaced, as well as defense-motivated concerns over the open publication of some kinds of university research. Unlike the industry-government interaction, I would not characterize the university-government relationships as adversarial. But there are significant stresses that in the national interest need to be relieved.

Industry-university: Industry has taken only a small part in performing basic research and a much smaller part in the support of university research. In 1980, industry performed just 17.3 percent of the basic research, and the government funded a portion of that. In the same year, industry supported 3.7 percent of the R&D in universities, excluding FFRDC's; including them, industry funded only 2.7 percent of university R&D.

Some change is taking place. Recent bold new joint-research efforts between corporations and research universities have emerged. These include Washington University programs in biomedical areas with Monsanto and Mallinckrodt, an Exxon-Massachusetts Institute of Technology cooperative research program in combustion science, and a new Stanford University Center for Integrated Systems in which nearly 20 companies are cosponsors.

We must encourage as many of these relationships as industry can afford, providing they do not threaten the freedom and autonomy of the university. But, along with a number of my colleagues from industry, I must stress that these special relationships are no panacea for national needs.

In terms of direct industrial needs, the essential research is applied research. Industry may fund basic research to provide a "window on the world" of new basic knowledge with commercial potential or to meet an obligation it may feel to replenish the store of basic knowledge. But industry's support of basic research will never be major because its commercial applicability is never predictable and often far in the future.

Since most of the funding for university basic research is already derived from federal tax revenues (to which corporations give about half of their pre-tax earnings), company management can at best justify the spending of only a fraction as many basic-research
dollars in universities as they do in their own organizations. Even if industry increased its university research support by 20 percent of its own current basic research budget, it would increase university research funds by 5 percent at most. That would be welcome, but it is still no solution to the fundamental problem of starved university basic research budgets.

We must regard basic research as building a bank of knowledge upon which all segments of the nation can draw for application to the social good. The broad, but untargetable applicability of basic research over the long term provides the sound rationale for public support of basic research through the tax base.

Factors in U.S. Technological Leadership

Leadership in E.R&D must become our primary national goal. To achieve it, a long-term view is essential.

An instructive example of the effects of such long-term investment is provided by the achievement of U.S. leadership in electronic technology from World War II through 1980.

The responsible factors began in the 1930s and related in many respects to World War II. In the 1930s, totalitarianism in Europe drove some of its premier scientists to the United States. During the course of the war, several technological triumphs demonstrated momentous application of earlier basic long-range research. Following the war, veterans' benefits provided an unprecedented opportunity for undergraduate and graduate training of depression-era youth, and often they chose science and engineering study. (This period was the only time in history when the United States accorded its young men nearly universal opportunity for college and university education.) The postwar technological advance depended upon this cadre of professionally trained people.

Renewed investments toward achieving technological leadership should be the first priority on the national agenda. During this period, federal agencies initiated substantial funding of university research and graduate training in technical disciplines, triggering a major expansion of the academic research enterprise. This helped attract a second European influx—the "brain drain." Of specific importance to the modern electronics industry, NASA and a new Sputnik-spawned Defense Department agency, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, launched numerous projects, including several materials research centers in universities.

Illustrations by Michael Haynes.
When the space shuttle Challenger swooped out of predawn darkness onto the Mojave Desert last Labor Day, a waiting McDonnell Douglas jet whisked tubes of pancreas cells back to St. Louis and an eager team of diabetes researchers at Washington University School of Medicine.

The same shuttle mission brought back sample plastic-and-metal plates that Washington University scientists had designed to capture cosmic dust. The plates were soon returned to the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences on the Hilltop campus, where a team studies the precious particles for secrets they may hold about the origins of the solar system.

The two Washington University experiments were part of Challenger’s payload, back from the black vacuum of space and bound for analytical laboratories across America.

Objectives of the two tests—a cure for diabetes and a curiosity about what could be the primordial stuff from which the solar system emerged—represent the range of applied and basic research performed while the spacecraft orbits the earth. The stakes are significant though dissimilar: medical science is closing in on diabetes, a disease that still kills 300,000 Americans yearly. And the “dust catchers” play out the age-old urge to explore and understand where we are from.

Isolating insulin-producing cells from a healthy pancreas so they can be transplanted into diabetic humans is the goal of Paul Lacy, M.D., Ph.D., the Edward Mallinckrodt professor and head of pathology at Washington University, and David Scharp, M.D., associate professor of surgery.

The pancreas cells they prepared were the first living cells sent aboard a space shuttle for biomedical experimentation.

While the shuttle orbited, a solution containing the canine pancreas cells was injected into a McDonnell Douglas electrophoresis device in the ship’s cargo bay. Previous tests had led scientists to believe that the electrophoresis device could separate cells that produce insulin from other pancreatic tissue. In zero gravity conditions, the McDonnell Douglas Electrophoresis Operations (EOS) program had achieved a 700-fold increase in the purification of noncellular products processed through the device.

Lacy and Scharp wanted to obtain pure samples of insulin-producing cells for their research. Unexplained malfunctioning of this pancreatic cell subtype is thought to cause insulin-dependent diabetes which affects 1.5 million Americans.

Beyond their efforts to characterize the abnormal cells that cause diabetes, Lacy and Scharp are conducting animal experiments to determine if transplanted beta cells—the specific cells that make insulin—can control diabetes in animals. Their beta-cells transplants have controlled diabetes in rats and mice. Their series of transplants to control diabetes in dogs also look promising.

The ability to obtain large quantities of very pure beta cells by processing them in space would speed diabetes research and might bring beta-cell transplantation to human clinical trials sooner than would otherwise be possible, according to the researchers.

Before the Challenger lift-off, they collected pancreatic tissues from several dogs. Using a special enzyme technique they developed, the scientists were able to break the pancreatic tissues into individual cells that could be kept alive and functioning in a special nutrient solution. The single-cell suspension prepared for the shuttle mission was frozen in liquid nitrogen and transported from St. Louis to Cape Kennedy. The cell samples were thawed and taken aboard the Challenger on the day before lift-off.

The continuous flow electrophoresis device, developed by McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Company, separates chemicals or cells suspended in liquid by subjecting the suspension to an electrical field. Under the influence of the electrical field and without the hindrance of gravity, the beta cells within the suspension would be “pulled away” from other kinds of cells, forming a separate stream to be recovered at the top of the electrophoresis chamber.

This effort at separating beta cells is one of many being completed under the auspices of a research agreement signed last summer by McDonnell Douglas and Washington University School of Medicine. The agreement fuses McDonnell Douglas’ expertise in separating and purifying biological materials with Washington University’s record of success in controlling diabetes through transplantation.

The pancreas cells survived their journey into space. The two researchers continue their analysis of how well the separation process worked. Their laboratory now includes a McDonnell Douglas electrophoresis device, installed last December. “The separation abilities of the ground machines—operating in earth’s gravity—have improved a great deal,” says Scharp. “Now an enormous number of experiments are possible. We’re very hopeful that we’ll be able to solve our problem on the ground, in a much purer form than before.”

Jim Rose, McDonnell Douglas’ electrophoresis director, enthusiastically views future collaboration with Washington University. “By McDonnell Douglas bringing practical technology to the University’s biomedical research pursuits, collectively we are striving to better understand enzymes, hormones, and cells, and perhaps bring commercial products to the public for effective disease treatment.”

Rose hints at what this union of industry and academe might produce: “Our successful collaboration may make it possible to establish a national center for bioprocessing, using the combined resources and talents of McDonnell Douglas and Washington University.”
Several shuttle missions already have carried tests aimed at increasing the “harvest” of cosmic dust. High-altitude U-2 flights have been gathering the tiny particles for about 10 years but results are meager. At about one trillionth of a pound per particle, the whole world’s dust supply is still less than one billionth of a pound.

“Most of the dust—the same stuff that shooting stars are made of—likely comes from comets,” says Robert Walker, Ph.D., McDonnell professor of physics and director of the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences.

“If—as we suspect—comets are composed of unaltered primordial material that was part of the cloud of gas and dust that collapsed to form the universe, we can learn much about the origin of the sun and planets by studying these dust particles,” Walker explains.

His team, part of an international community of scientists interested in space dust, has built a collector that will be one of many investigations flown on a new spacecraft that will begin its mission this spring.

The April shuttle launch will carry the LDEF—Long Duration Exposure facility—and then set it spinning in space 250 miles above the earth. LDEF will be retrieved about a year later.

Hurling through space, LDEF will encounter cosmic dust. Fragments will penetrate a thin plastic foil on the surface of the plates and then enter larger containers where atoms from the dust fragments are trapped.

The experiment also serves as a prototype for a comet-atom-return mission where similar capture devices would be flown close to the head of a comet.

Once the particles are back in Washington University’s space sciences laboratory, they will be scrutinized—atom-by-atom—with a highly sophisticated analytical device called an ion probe. Washington University is one of only a few universities in the country to acquire the instrument, made possible by a gift from the McDonnell Douglas Foundation.

Beyond their shuttle-borne space dust investigations, McDonnell Center scientists have participated in most major NASA planetary explorations of the last two decades. They have designed and flown numerous high altitude experiments. They are studying lunar samples for their potential use as building materials and sources of metals—important considerations for future human exploitation of space.

Results from the largest cosmic ray experiment ever flown in space—directed by Center members—are still being analyzed. Center scientists have announced development of an entirely new way to see cosmic rays, a technique that will probably be used in future space flights.
When D. Bruce La Pierre listed what was needed to help break the logjam in negotiations in the complex and emotional issue of desegregation of the St. Louis area schools, he wrote of qualities like these:

An “amalgam of self-interest and altruism, the participants’ trust and respect... faith in settlement as the best solution, and... good humor, leadership, and tireless efforts.”

La Pierre, a professor in the University’s Law School, actually was writing about his former boss, Dean Edward T. Foote, who had played a major role in the early stages of the landmark 11-year-old areawide desegregation case. But when Foote left the St. Louis area to become president of the University of Miami, it was La Pierre himself who assumed the role of peacemaker, and he brought those same skills to negotiations, which succeeded despite the initial pessimism of many who took part.

“Without his intervention at least four or five crucial times that I can think of,” says one of the many lawyers involved, “the negotiations would have broken down.”

“I’m happy that a Washington University faculty member could help resolve this problem for the St. Louis community,” said William H. Danforth, chancellor at Washington University. “When parties agree to a plan such as this one, they are more likely to make it work effectively than if they are forced to follow a court-ordered program.

“I hope it will lead to an improvement in education for all children in the city and county,” he continued.

La Pierre, member of the University’s faculty since 1976, was the court- appointed “special master” in the desegregation case, a negotiator to help bring together all the parties involved and investigate whether the case could be settled without going to trial. Initially, La Pierre scurried among the several parties in the case—conducting what he called “shuttle diplomacy, a la Henry Kissinger”—to try to craft a settlement that would avoid a long and costly trial yet still satisfy all parties in the sensitive issue of school desegregation.

No one thought that finding a solution to satisfy everyone would be easy—and it wasn’t. But as last February’s trial date approached, La Pierre sensed that the parties might be able to reach an agreement. He sought delays from U.S. District Judge William L. Hungate while the attorneys for 23 suburban school districts, the Liddell group of plaintiffs, the N.A.A.C.P., the City Board of Education, the State of Missouri, the City of St. Louis, and the United States Department of Justice continued the negotiations. When the settlement was finally reached and then approved by Hungate, it signaled an historic first in school desegregation cases. Instead of a court-ordered plan imposed after litigation, the parties agreed upon a plan providing for voluntary interdistrict student transfers between the city and the county, magnet schools, and provisions to improve the quality of education in the city schools. The settlement plan was implemented in the fall of 1983, but its final fate will not be determined until this spring when the Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit will hear arguments on the objections of the State of Missouri and the City of St. Louis.

La Pierre sees his role in the process as that of the eternal optimist. “If I brought any quality to the negotiations, it was that I wouldn’t give up. No matter how bad things looked, I kept pushing. I just hounded people, and what I got for my efforts was that people were willing to rethink things.

“There were heated moments and times of extreme disagreement, but the people involved always tried to see the broader public interest in avoiding litigation. That’s often not easy for attorneys to do, represent the interests of their clients and see the broader public interest at the same time.”

His colleagues in the negotiations agree. “It was a mind-boggling, back-breaking job,” says one of the many attorneys in the case, discussing La Pierre’s role in the case. “I’m just amazed he was able to do it.”

“All of us have good things to say about him,” adds another. “Anything I say would understate his contribution.”

The first contribution made by the bearded, precisely speaking law professor came when he served as recording secretary to the biracial citizens committee named by the federal court in the spring of 1980 to oversee the formulation of an intradistrict remedy in the case, which had first been filed in 1972 by black parents unhappy with the schooling being received by their children. The committee was chaired by Foote, then Dean of the Law School, who played a key role in the desegregation struggle until he went to Miami in June 1981.

Foote, who had recruited La Pierre to join the University faculty, also persuaded him to become involved in the desegregation case, first with the citizens committee, then with the drafting of a plan designed to alleviate segregation in the city schools that remained even after full implementation of the city-wide, intradistrict remedy ordered by the court in May, 1980. Foote’s plan called for voluntary transfers of students between county school districts and the city, and Hungate in large part adopted Foote’s proposal—then known as the 12 (a) plan—in an order of July 2, 1981, that stayed interdistrict litigation against county school districts that agreed to participate in the plan. By the fall of 1982, 15 of the 23 county school districts had joined the 12 (a) plan, and their experience under the 12 (a) plan laid the seeds of the settlement which went into effect in the fall of 1983.
In the broadest terms, the settlement calls for black and white students to move between St. Louis and St. Louis County until county districts reach a proportion of black students ranging from 15 to 25 percent, depending on their percentage of blacks before the transfers began. All student transfers are voluntary, and magnet schools offering specialized instruction in various areas will be set up to attract students across district lines.

About 15,000 to 22,000 blacks could transfer from the city to the county under the plan. For black students who remain in all-black city schools, the plan calls for large amounts of money to be spent to upgrade the overall quality of city schools.

Foote says one reason the plan won final acceptance was its broad-based support from the beginning. "It wasn't created out of whole cloth in a back room someplace," he said in an interview from Miami. "It was created with a long series of discussions with counsel, with school boards informally, and with various community leaders."

Equally important, Foote added, was La Pierre himself.

"He has absolute integrity," Foote said. "You have to be trusted in a job like that or you can't do it, no matter how
smart you are. You also have to be a very able fellow, and Bruce is as bright as he can be. You’ve got to be a good lawyer and understand the law, not just as it is written but its nuances and its infinite complexities. Although he has not had much practice experience, he has a very fine mind, and he understands the law.

The plan has drawn widespread attention nationwide, particularly in areas facing similar court action to integrate schools. La Pierre is careful to point out that the settlement in the St. Louis case cannot necessarily be transferred to situations in other parts of the country. He considers it more of a social precedent than a legal one. “St. Louis is in a lot of respects a southern city,” he said during an interview in his typically cluttered office at the University’s Law School building. “We had a very successful intradistrict plan, with no significant white flight and no major social upheaval. I’m tempted to say that the community is a remarkably pragmatic community, which has avoided the ills and the controversy that rocked cities like Boston. We just didn’t have that there.

“The plan is voluntary in two senses. The parties, through a process of compromise and consent, reached an agreement about the solution to the problems of interdistrict school desegregation. Some say it isn’t voluntary because there was a threat of litigation, but no one forced anyone to sign it. They chose to adopt it. The other sense in which it is voluntary is that all student movements are voluntary, both into the city and out of the city.

“The settlement is significant because it demonstrates that widely diverse parties can reach an agreement about a highly social issue. Even if the precise terms of the St. Louis settlement cannot be adopted as the solution to school desegregation in other cities, the process and the goals of community-wide agreement can be adapted.”

That process of agreement has been traced by many of the parties in the case back to an article written by La Pierre in 1982 in the Public Law Forum, a St. Louis University publication. The article—titled “Voluntary Metropolitan School Desegregation in St. Louis—An Opportunity Lost Or A Second Chance?”—came at a time when prospects for a settlement before trial seemed bleak.

The article discusses in detail the 12 (a) plan which Foote and La Pierre had submitted to the court the year before. It points out that while the results of a prolonged trial would be uncertain, all parties involved would have more control over the outcome of the case if they were willing to get together one more time and hammer out an agreement.

“If St. Louis is to seize its second chance for a final settlement of the metropolitan school desegregation case,” La Pierre concluded, “then the district court must vigorously promote settlement negotiations. Either the court or someone, like chairman Foote, who is appointed by the court and who is widely respected and trusted by all, must assume responsibility for negoti-
was not one of money but one of principle, and they were very fundamental principles. Nothing is more fundamental than schools, and nothing raises more fundamental objections and emotions than school desegregation.

"You had everything in this case working against settlement. Yet we settled it, and Bruce played a very big part in settling it."

La Pierre started his attempt to achieve a settlement by keeping the parties in the case apart, at first, and serving as the link between them to try out new ideas and new approaches. As the trial date of February 14 loomed, and he was scheduled to report to Hungate whether a compromise was possible or whether the St. Louis County school districts would go on trial, he was not optimistic.

"On Friday, February 11, I thought that I would have to report that the litigation should proceed," he recalled. "But significant progress was made over that weekend."

La Pierre declined to reveal the confidential details of the negotiations. But he did say that he worked all of that Saturday afternoon and "from the crack of dawn to midnight on Sunday," keeping his secretary in the office until after midnight to be able to present a report of favorable progress to the court on Valentine's Day.

Over the next few days, he won several short-term extensions, working feverishly in room 322 of the federal courthouse in downtown St. Louis with lawyers representing all of the parties in the case. Most of the work was done between February 12 and March 30, La Pierre said, as first the attorneys and then their clients approved an Agreement in Principle and ultimately the settlement.

Just as Hungate and the lawyers involved in the case credit La Pierre with being the catalyst whose hard work salvaged the settlement, La Pierre compliments the attorneys who worked with him to avoid trial.

"All this is such a blur," he said, consulting his notes as he tried to replay the sequence of events that led to the settlement submitted to Hungate March 30. "I never had a chance to think. There was always one more thing to do, and the telephone never stopped ringing.

"The lawyers deserved a great deal of credit, because they were willing to think in creative terms, to compromise to find innovative solutions to a complex social problem. I can total up the hours I worked, but I can't tell you the war stories. There were more than a few moments that were tense."

None of his colleagues in the negotiations would disagree there.

"There were periods when things for all practical purposes would blow up or deteriorate to the point when I didn't think any future movement was possible," said Donald J. Stohr, who represented the sprawling Parkway School District in west St. Louis County. "Somehow Bruce would get things going again, coming up with a compromise to get around some knotty problem or stumbling block."

"He was not so much an initiator or a drafter, as I saw it," added Henry Menghini, attorney for the Affton and Lindbergh districts. "What his chief role was was to keep the wheel turning. Whenever the wheel would stop, he would jump in and make suggestions and not get mad and keep trying. That was his role, and he did it brilliantly."

"He had an amazing ability to remember the positions and the interests of all of the different parties involved," said attorney John Gianoulakis, who represented the Pattonville and Ritenour districts. "He had the trust of all of the people, in that the participants believed he was always being absolutely honest with them. There were times when people became angry and upset, and there were times Bruce was entitled to be, too, but he avoided that."

"It's fair to say," added Michael J. Hoare, attorney for the NAACP, "that he was equally abused by all sides, at one time or another, and still was able to withstand the momentary criticisms and persevere in his objectives, which took an awful lot of strength of character on his part."

La Pierre recalled one of the several moments when, despite all of the hundreds of hours spent on the case, the settlement threatened to disintegrate as he sat by helplessly. It was a time that should have been triumphant one, when he and two of the attorneys stopped for lunch on their way to the courthouse to file the final agreement.

"I'd been up until four in the morning, putting together the absolutely final edited copy of the settlement on a word processor," he said. "Everything looked good. I went home, went to bed, got back downtown about 7 a.m. and everything looked perfect. We were about to go to court to file the three copies required, and two lawyers and I stopped at a Chinese restaurant on the way.

"Everybody was very tired and everybody was very hungry. Just as we started eating, a lawyer for one of the school districts appeared and said there was a problem. Everybody's heart sank.

THE SETTLEMENT IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT DEMONSTRATES THAT WIDELY DIVERSE PARTIES CAN REACH AN AGREEMENT ABOUT A HIGHLY SOCIAL ISSUE."
“One short phrase in the final copy apparently did not conform with the last working draft. I practically tilted my plate up to my face and slid the food down my throat, then got back to the word processor and thought I had fixed the problem. But in the meantime, the other lawyers at lunch decided the change in wording was not merely cosmetic but was substantive, so they pursued me to tell me so. Fortunately, they resolved the question quickly, and we then proceeded to court directly.

We got there about 1:45 p.m. but were told by the court clerk that the language of the order said the agreement could not be filed until precisely at 3 p.m. I was horror-stricken, because I didn’t want any more complications. I didn’t want any more chances for anyone to change any more words. Finally I convinced the clerk we should be allowed to file early.

“The lesson of the story is: Don’t tell anyone where you are going to lunch.”

Luckily, there were no more major snafus. The plan was accepted, and it went into effect in St. Louis County this fall without a hitch. A four-day strike by school teachers in the city delayed its full implementation, but on the day La Pierre recalled the negotiations, the strike was over and things were running smoothly. He expects them to stay that way.

“The county districts are competing for kids. All the kids who have transferred to either the county schools or the city are being welcomed. A kid will transfer to a county district or to the city, come home and tell other kids on his block, and soon more will want to transfer. Word-of-mouth on top of all of the official publicity will help make this plan work.

“Any settlement is a political settlement. We were trying to work out a settlement that would be acceptable to political entities, and all of these entities have their own constituencies. You have to work out a settlement within the terms of the law, and at the same time you have to have one that will be acceptable to the constituencies of the parties.”

After avoiding a trial in the first place, La Pierre does not see the parties in the case ending up back before Hungate.

“You don’t spend seven months massaging a settlement agreement with all the parties, then massaging it through the court, so you can go back to court. Nobody wants to go back to court. Everybody has invested a lot of time and effort to reach the settlement, and now they are investing time and effort in making the settlement work. Next year, the newspapers will run a short story noting the second year under the desegregation plan. By the third and fourth years, it will be totally unremarkable, just part of the St. Louis education system and working smoothly. That’s certainly the way I would like to see it.”
He also would like to see his life resume a semblance of normalcy. Though his official role in the case ended June 16, La Pierre has kept track of the case closely. He also looks forward to some future public service—after he has had a chance to recover from his last experience.

"I kibbitz with the lawyers in the case all the time. Many of them on both sides have become my good friends. This settlement matters a great deal to me. I want this thing to work. I miss intensely the hubbub, the phone calls, the pressure. I like teaching very much, and I like research and writing. But I think I want to get more involved in public issues. So far, it's been remarkably rewarding."

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**CHRONOLOGY**

Here is a brief chronology of major events in the St. Louis area school desegregation case:

1972
February 18: Minni Liddell and a group of North Side black parents file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. District Court, claiming that the St. Louis School Board, school officials, and the state of Missouri have been responsible for segregation in the St. Louis school system.

1975
December 24: U.S. District Judge James H. Meredith approves a consent decree. The St. Louis School Board agrees to increase the number of minority teachers in each school, to consider establishing magnet and special-subject schools, and to take steps to overcome racial imbalance.

1977
March: The U.S. Department of Justice, two groups made up mostly of white parents and students, and the City of St. Louis are added to the suit as plaintiffs. The state Board of Education and the state commissioner of education are added as defendants.

1977-78
October to May: The case is tried before Judge Meredith in five sessions totaling 13 weeks. Trial transcripts total 7,114 pages.

1979
April 12: Judge Meredith rules in favor of the School Board and against the black parents group, the NAACP, and the Justice Department.

June 6: The NAACP appeals the ruling to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

1980
March 3: The Court of Appeals unanimously reverses Judge Meredith's ruling and orders immediate planning for systemwide desegregation, saying: "Voluntary techniques will not effectively desegregate the St. Louis school system."

March 14: Judge Meredith appoints a desegregation planning committee headed by Edward T. Foote, then dean of the Washington University Law School.

August 15: The Court of Appeals denies a request by the state attorney general to delay Judge Meredith's order, clearing the way for the citywide desegregation plan to go into effect.

December 22: U.S. District Judge William L. Hungate takes over the desegregation case from Judge Meredith, who must reduce his workload because of ill health.

1981
January: The St. Louis School Board and, later, the NAACP ask Judge Hungate to order a desegregation plan that will include all school districts in Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis counties.

July 2: Judge Hungate makes public his voluntary areawide desegregation plan for St. Louis and St. Louis County.

1982
August: Judge Hungate unveils a plan for the merger of St. Louis and St. Louis County school districts and says he will consider imposing it if the voluntary plan fails and suburban districts are found liable for the city schools' desegregation.

October: The U.S. Supreme Court refuses a request by the state attorney general to review the case in St. Louis. D. Bruce La Pierre, a Washington University law professor, is appointed special master in the case to attempt to work out a voluntary agreement among the school districts.

1983
February 17: After three days of meetings, attorneys for the city and county school districts announce a tentative "agreement in principle" on a voluntary plan.

March 30: A final settlement plan, approved by all 23 county districts, the St. Louis City Board of Education, the NAACP, and the original Liddell plaintiffs, is submitted to Judge Hungate.

July 5: Judge Hungate approves the settlement plan as "fair, reasonable, and adequate."

November 28: The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit hears oral argument on the appeals of the State of Missouri and the City of St. Louis seeking a reversal of Hungate's July 5 order approving the settlement.
A paradox confronts everyone who thinks or writes seriously about the Middle East these days.

On the one hand, it is virtually impossible to avoid the pessimism of those who argue that nothing can change the region's dreadful political, social, and economic conditions. Apocalyptic literature, after all, was a Middle Eastern invention and Armageddon, besides being a place in Israel (Maggido), is an argument that things can only improve after some sort of world-shaking cataclysm.

Even Western optimists—be they British, French, Russian, or American—are much less satisfied today about the possibilities of such things as Democracy, Socialism, Economic Development, General Settlements, and Peace.

On the other hand, enough of these delusions remain alive to color our perceptions about the Middle East. In addition, they are probably partly responsible for many of the muddled Middle East policy messes in which Americans, Europeans, and Russians find themselves.

We all share versions of three fundamental illusions about the Middle East. First, we seem convinced that we can make the region more hospitable to our interests if only we push the right political buttons, or pursue the right policies, or find the right solutions/equations to the area's problems. The Russians believe that self-styled Mid-East “socialists” or “Marxists” can flourish if they are offered Treaties of Friendship and Cooperation, and/or given enough arms, money, economic aid, scholarships, and trips to Moscow. It didn’t work with the Egyptians, the Somalis, and the Ayatollah’s Iran, and it isn’t working with the Syrians and Iraqis.

The French apparently believe that they can re-establish a French présence in the Middle East by “loaning” Super-Etendard fighter-bombers to Iraq, selling weapons to everybody who can pay (including Khadafy), sending 2,000 paras to Lebanon, and whispering sweet commercial nothings into any Arab ear willing to listen. It remains to be seen if French blandishments are any more effective than the Russians; the evidence to date (including the bombing of the French base in Beirut on October 23, 1983) suggests early French disappointment.

And successive American administrations believe that a general conference, or an overall settlement, or the right political formula can not only solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, but for that matter, any other conflict in the region.

As Americans, we can’t believe (again, in the face of all evidence) that sweet reason and a willingness to compromise will not sweep aside the accumulated “misunderstandings” of decades or centuries. (How very American is the remark attributed to Warren Austin, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.: frustrated by the seeming inability of the Arabs and Israelis to agree on a cease-fire after one of their wars, Austin wondered why they couldn’t just sit down together and work it out “like good Christians.”)

The second illusion is related to the first. Again, we share with the Europeans and the Russians the notion that solving or dealing with one key problem of the area will somehow permit us to deal with all the rest. The British and the French, who have been active in the Middle East longer than the Russians or ourselves, are admittedly less prone to this kind of reductionism because (presumably) they “understand” the region better.

Nonetheless, we all share this belief to some extent. After leafing through a sizable sample of this year’s output of articles, books, and official statements about the region in English, French, and Russian, I found it possible to make a relatively common list of these “key” problems.

A common list would include at least the following: the Arab-Israeli conflict (for which every side has a self-serving solution), the Palestinian problem (which everyone agrees must be resolved, but invariably at someone else’s expense), and oil (which is said to dictate great and small power politics in the area, and to whose defense the U.S. is “irrevocably” committed.)

Other “keys” might well include Khadafy (who is, according to President Reagan, the “most dangerous man in the world”), the new Islamic fundamentalism (which is said to threaten all regimes in the area, be they conservative or radical), and the so-called “Islamic bomb” (whose specter is presumed to haunt not only Israel, but everybody else including the current members of the “atomic club”).

Finally, the third illusion, which we share with the Russians (and which our local allies embrace when it suits their purposes), asserts that Middle East instability, violence, and terrorism are ultimately caused by the malevolent Other superpower. Thus, Americans blame the Russians for the region’s troubles, much as the Russians blame the U.S. for the same things. This is, of course, the most comforting of the three illusions. When all other explanations fail, the Manichean vision serves the double purpose of attributing our failures to the evil designs of the Hosts of Darkness, and of ranging ourselves with the Children of Light.

Middle East Illusions

Historically, the Middle East is the land of miracles and mirages. In recent times, unhappily, miracles have been in short supply, but not political mirages, illusions, and hallucinations.

By Victor Le Vine
At base, all three illusions speak to the historic frustrations the West has experienced in the Middle East.

Most frustrating, of course, is that Western formulas—which flow from Washington, Moscow, Paris, and London in unending procession—usually have very short lives when applied to Middle East problems. This even includes those instances when local actors themselves undertook to sponsor them.

If the “right” formulas still elude us, even less promising is the search for the “key” element whose resolution will untangle all the rest. Just as Western formulas for the Middle East tend to crash on landing in the area, so is it the case that no one element—be it oil, or the Palestinians, or the Arab-Israeli conflict, or whatever—is necessarily connected with any other. I’m convinced, for example, that if by some miracle everyone’s definition of “justice” for the Palestinians could be realized tomorrow, and without disagreement, Lebanese factions would remain at each other’s throats: Iraq and Iran would still be at war, Khadafy would continue to meddle in his neighbor’s affairs, and the fundamentalist Islamic militants would be not less adamant in their demands for the bloody “purification” of local regimes “corrupted” by Western influences.

There is, finally, the superpowers’ reciprocal Manichean visions; more a delusion than an illusion, and ultimately more of a threat to the peace of the world than the others. It must take more than just blindness or stupidity to see a Russian, or an American, hand behind every conflict in the area. Indeed, to insist that such is the case is to bring on that very result. No more dangerous future for the Middle East can be envisioned than to see it become the arena for the next superpower game of “Chicken.”

Is there a “right” way to think about the Middle East? Of course not: to suggest this is to fall prey to the very illusions which have prevented us from seeing the area, its people, its problems clearly and realistically. The most that can be said on the subject is that the fewer illusions, the better.

We are least likely to be trapped in the area’s mazes, or to precipitate an unwanted superpower confrontation, when we start cultivating a healthy respect for the complexity of its problems and the perplexities of its peoples.

Victor Le Vine is professor of political science at Washington University where he specializes in African and Middle Eastern Studies. He frequently lectures, teaches, or does research in both regions.
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