

1 **Oral History Project**

2
3 **Richard Austing (Dick) – 13 June 2006 – Silverspring**

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6 **A: Now I would like to start this interview by going way, way, way, back.....can you**
7 **talk to us a little bit about your childhood, have you got siblings? And your first**
8 **education...**

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10 D: I have one brother who is older, seven years older, no other siblings....early
11 education at grade school...and then.....grade school in Cincinnati, Ohio, High School was
12 at Roger Bacon which was also in Cincinnati and Bachelors degree fromUniversity,
13 also in Cincinnati, I then received a Masters Degree.....Bachelors and Masters were in
14 mathematics from St Louis University that was in 1955 and spent two years in the army, came
15 out, and went to graduate school for a Doctorate, I got that in 1963 at a Catholic University in
16 Washington DC.

17
18 **A: Did your parents have college degrees?**

19
20 D: No neither of them, I don't think that they got through High School.

21
22 **A: Yet they encouraged you to go to college? We were just talking about your**
23 **parents....you said neither of them had college degrees yet they encouraged you to go to**
24 **college?**

25
26 D: Yes, both my brother and I went to college and he became a very successful business
27 person but they are favourably disposed to as much education as possible.

28
29 **A: Were either of your Mum and Dad in a Computer or Mathematics related field?**

30
31 D: Not at all, Dad was a banker, which was as close as ...to mathematics and my mother
32 was a stay at home...mother....

33
34 **A: In your early years as a young boy were you a good student at school?**

35
36 D: I believe so, yes...I can't tell you what the grades were, but they were usually pretty
37 good, nearer the top of the class...

38
39 **A: And your brother?**

40
41 D: Same.

42
43 **A: And your inspiration came from home?**

44
45 D: I don't know where it came from....must have, but it just seemed to be the thing to
46 do....

47
48 **A: Your brother and you were treated the same in terms of education and**
49 **educational aspirations?**

50
51 D: Yes, we both had the same opportunities and were provided the same opportunities
52 and the support for it...

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54 **A: Was there somebody in your early life who inspired you to pursue a career in**
55 **mathematics and science? A teacher or....**

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D: Certainly several of the teachers in college promoted that...I'm trying to think of anybody in high school...I think it was college level really....I went into college thinking....mathematics....and the faculty there was quite small and the that meant small classes, so we got a lot out of that.

A: And your brother did his degree in mathematics too?

D: No, his was in business, I forget what branch of it and he also served in the army and then went into business afterwards.

A: Why did you choose Xavier as your college?

D: It was my hometown school, my brother went there, at the time it did seem to be the thing to go looking all over the country for Universities, but this was very convenient. It was a long walk, but I could walk to it if necessary. It also had a good reputation.

A: When you did your Masters degree, did you know by then that you were definitely going to do all your degrees in Mathematics?

D: Yes, I took some sort of an aptitude test at some point, I don't know whether it was late high school and the indications from that and the one teacher were to do mathematics. It seemed my.....and everything else would be as it followed.

A: And your parents were very happy with this?

D: Seemed to be, I don't know that they understood it particularly, it was different from business.

A: There is that two year gap from your Masters Degree to your PhD, could you just explain about that to us?

D: What?

A: Your two year gap between your Masters Degree and when you went back to graduate school? It says here that you went into the army?

D: Yes I had taken ROTC in College, so I had an Officer appointment. I had a deferment for a year and a half to get my Masters and after that I served my two years which was part of the duties appropriate to the ROTC and to meet their requirement. Nothing spectacular about that service fortunately it was between wars...

A: That was good timing...

D: Yes, I'm not military oriented at all. It served me well.

A: So you decided not to have a career in the Military?

D: I never wanted a career in the military, no. I preferred being an Officer than ...

A: And then you went back to Graduate School to do your PhD? Did you enjoy that Research experience or was it just something that you decided that you had to do? Why pursue the PhD?

110 D: Well I knew that I really needed that if I wanted to get into teaching in a serious way,
111 and I just felt inclined toward continuing learning more mathematics. I don't think I was ever
112 a researcher in the usual sense of the word, even after I got the degree. Apparently I did
113 enough to satisfy my advisor and the University.

114
115 **A: And you enjoyed that experience?**

116
117 D: Yeah I did, there were some very good people there, both teachers and students, who
118 just were very nice, almost all of the time I was at graduate school I had some sort of teaching
119 assistantship so I had the combination of things that I enjoyed doing.

120
121 **A: You were a graduate assistant here at a couple of different Universities while**
122 **you were at graduate school?**

123
124 D: Yes that's right. It was to pay my way and also to do something that I liked doing.

125
126 **A: When did you choose computer science? Because you have got these three**
127 **degrees now in mathematics....**

128
129 D: Almost by accident, toward the last semester before getting the Doctoral degree, I
130 was just walking down the hallway in the University and one of the faculty members there
131 said something about you know they have openings over at the University of Maryland in the
132 Computer Science centre which had just begun about a year before that much of my life there
133 was a bunch of happen stances that were very timely, as far as I was concerned and it was just
134 one of them who said "Would you be interested in that?" Well I don't know anything about
135 computing particularly, I did have a course in numerical analysis and my adviser was in
136 numerical analysis, but I wasn't using a computer at the time. So I said "sounds interesting, I
137 did want to stay in the area, geographical area of Washington DC and surrounding area, so I
138 said, "would you like me to call over there?" and he said "Yeah", so I went over and had an
139 interview and they needed somebody at the time, they had a big centre there and they were
140 just getting a grant and they had a faculty...They were just getting an educational program at
141 the centre at the time, but that was part of their charge to develop one. So they needed
142 people, and so I seemed to suit their needs. The fact that I was in numerical analysis and my
143 adviser happened to be pretty well known – Morris Newman at the time. So the rest is history
144 as they say....

145
146 **A: Was there somebody on that faculty that mentored you into becoming a**
147 **computer instructor?**

148
149 D: I don't know about mentoring...

150
151 **A: Were you thrown in the deep end?**

152
153 D: Yeah they directed me to the University of Maryland, that certainly wasn't mentoring
154 exactly, and it was very helpful obviously. As I said my advisor was a numerical analyst and
155 my thesis was an algebraic number theory, which I never taught of course. But I did teach
156 numerical analysis when I went over there, but people within the faculty were just very
157 helpful toward my move into computing.

158
159 **A: What was your course load like in those days? How much were you expected to**
160 **teach and were you developing curriculum as you went? At the University of Maryland?**

161
162 D: Yes

163

164 I taught one course, that was officially a research appointment because the computer centre at
165 the time didn't have a degree program, at least at the University of Maryland you could have
166 other than a research faculty, so I only taught the one course and I was supposed to learn
167 something about computing etc. As things developed, they did develop a program and I was
168 involved in that, which again was a very fortunate event for me because I really enjoyed
169 doing curriculum development and it became my theme for the rest of my career. To me it
170 was a very fruitful place for development of curriculum because the centre was not attached
171 to any department. So although the director of the centre was a mathematician and numerical
172 analyst, he had a broader view of life also and we weren't in engineering, we weren't in
173 mathematics, we weren't in physics, we weren't in any other things. We could really develop
174 something that was different and it turned out that the director and the subsequent director,
175 our first director was Werner Rheinboldt and the second was Bill Atchison. Both of them
176 served on the Curriculum 68 committee and Atchison was chairman of it. So I was in a place
177 where things were happening as far as curriculum development goes. We didn't have the first
178 program in computing but I feel we really had a lot sources for the development of it. A lot of
179 places did not have so I felt very happy about that.

180

181 **A: So that was part of your teaching, you did mention your curriculum 68, when**
182 **did you first start helping or joining the professional association and becoming involved**
183 **in things beyond the University of Maryland?**

184

185 D: Somewhere around that time I was not involved per say in Curriculum 68
186 development but Earl Scheppe who was also at Maryland at the time, I think he was
187 secretary for or was a committee member per se but I just kind of got mixed up in that with
188 Atchison, Rheinboldt and Scheppe. Deeply involved and I certainly am not going to claim
189 any contribution to it all but I certainly benefited personally from it, and it certainly sparked
190 my interest in combining my interest in education with the field itself. I kind of feel on the
191 ground floor with all of that and in some sense you asked me earlier about mentorship....Bill
192 Atchison was really a mentor in that regards, he saw my interest in it and his interest
193 corresponded to that and he kind of opened the doors a bit, which was very helpful, and so I
194 kind of got into the ACM through him and into the education corporation through him.

195

196 **A: And you have been involved with the ACM for how many years now?**

197

198 D: Well it was 98, officially at that point and it was 66 – 67....30+ years I think.

199

200 **A: Can you just tell us a bit more about those early years in the ACM and what you**
201 **were doing and things that they were doing in Computer Science at that time?**

202

203 D: I think it was a very grounding experience for me because they were doing things that
204 were not just under the group of Computer Science, Information Systems, Library Systems
205 and all that kind of stuff. Work related computing, education computing, so I got to see a
206 much broader spectrum of activity in computing and computing education. Throughout all of
207 that I kept in touch with the development of curriculumbent I guess was to get
208 curriculum for a variety of people, different groups to the extent that I could and to that
209 extent, other ACM people were extremely both good to me and lead me on.....Jerry Engel
210 got a group together which included me and eventually we produced curriculum 78 as we
211 called it which was supposed to be an update to some extent of curriculum 68 but it was
212 primarily directed towards small colleges which was also something I enjoyed doing as I felt
213 larger colleges and Universities could fend for themselves get their own faculty etc. Small
214 colleges at the time were struggling like crazy to... they knew, I think a lot them realised the
215 need, a lot of mathematics and engineering faculty realised that a lot of students wanted to get
216 into computing so they had to build something in other places, so again, I felt that I was
217 around kind of at the right time and could take some of that background and information that I
218 had into their curriculum. So I did a little bit of consulting mostly small institutions, to help

219 them develop something but that partly was because I was at the University of Maryland and
220 he had a name, and partly because of ACM, greatly did their part toso I just hung around
221 different curriculum developments and that really was my main thrust within ACM.....I guess
222 you would say that I participated in their conferences, I was a committee member and I
223 chaired one of their conferences....I maintained professional interest and activity....
224

225 **A: What about IEEE, you mentioned as well?**

226
227 D: I was never in the IEEE, but again, in the latter years of my experience with ACM.
228 ACM and IEEE started working together a bit more and that involved me in
229 some.....curriculum
230

231 **A: Also in your career you did quite a bit of work with health? Computing and**
232 **Health? Explain that to me....**
233

234 **18:00**

235 D: Yeah through ACM I met Karen Duncan, she was very active in the development of
236 health curriculum and health computing. She also got a group together which I was fortunate
237 to get included in and I was supposed to be the computer expert, one of them in that group.
238 That was a very diverse group and again, another one of those broadening experiences where
239 you find out that all you had was **can?** Really move out into the different areas, so we did end
240 up developing a curriculum, but I never knew if it was successfully implemented anywhere. I
241 must have had some impact.
242

243 **A: Computing is changing a lot in this time between....**
244

245 D: Yeah 1401 and big machines filling a room type of thing or you could look through
246 windows to see what was going on till a few bombs went off here and there and they bricked
247 up the windows then, but it was still the big machines with the punch cards etc. Fortran was
248 the main language where I was although some others were being developed both elsewhere
249 and where I worked and obviously the change into micro computerso I got to see a lot. I
250 didn't get into the wiring, I was a little late for that but anyway,....
251

252 **A: You have been talking about the curriculum development but that was mostly at**
253 **undergraduate level....you did some curriculum development at post graduate level**
254

255 D: Yeah again because the activities in the committee level, people start moving up into
256 that, I got attached to that, I can't exactly remember how, or through whom, but none of it did
257 I instigate, I was always a participant, a happy and wilful participant. I hope I contributed so,
258 yeah we did the postgraduate degree in Health Computing and just a graduate program in
259 computing, computer science primarily although again at various times, we wanted to
260 introduce more information systems in kind of combination but somehow that never got some
261 approvals along the line.
262

263 **A: You also....so that was Undergraduate Curriculum, Post Graduate Curriculum**
264 **but also in the mid eighties you then started to look at Secondary School level?**
265

266 D: Yeah, I can't remember exactly how that came about but there were some people
267 doing some work in it and it seemed kind of an interesting thing to bring it down to the
268 Secondary level....I'm sure it wasin some places at that time, some kind of computing
269 but I didn't think there was any particular real curriculum in it, and Jean Rogers was around at
270 the time and was involved in it at that level and she and I got together and as few others
271 joined in, and Karen Duncan, I think, was also involved in that. We tried to develop at least a
272 years program and information which would include computing but also various other kinds
273 of information that people gather and problems with the information and inundation of people

274 through TV and all kinds of inputs and work through that psychology of stuff with people
275 from different fields coming in to help, and produced a year long thing, that again, I don't
276 know if it was ever implemented or not and published...I don't know what the impact was....

277

278 **A: Have you got any thoughts now on computing at high school? Secondary School**
279 **level?**

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281 D: I think it is a very valuable thing, I wish there was more in the way of courses that
282 would lead either into Information systems or into Computer Science, I don't see a whole lot
283 of that yet, not that I have been delving into it., but it seems that the most of it is the use of
284 computers and word processing etc, that's wonderful, I was reading the paper this morning
285 about a technical school in Washington and some of the people developing games, not just for
286 fun and games, but were going to be used by some other places. I think that kind of thing is a
287 wonderful experience for students, and a lot students can do very well with that at high school
288 level...at Elementary School they are also doing very well with that too...but I guess I wish
289 there were a little more serious progression of courses as you will find in other sciences but I
290 don't see a whole lot of that yet...

291

292 **A: Back to the University of Maryland and your students...you taught**
293 **Undergraduate and Post Graduate?**

294

295 D: Very little post graduate....but the only courses that could count as senior level
296 courses and actually very few of those, most of the teaching was down at a lower level...It
297 was also at Maryland that I got into other things I was advising a lot and was assistant
298 chairman for a while...it was a kind of title, not an official title per say but a working title
299 "Assistant chair for Education", so I was involved in the signing faculty and checking that all
300 the courses were covered and checking that we had the curriculum and the prerequisites and
301 all that kind of stuff, so as a result of all of that the teaching load was a lot less than for others
302 in the faculty...it was essentially the same teaching load as for the research faculty but I kept
303 it at an undergraduate level also, really what I was doing was advising more undergraduate
304 students

305

306 **A: Were you expected to research as well?**

307

308 D: Be a promoter yeah, again I was fortunate to be promoted from assistant to Associate
309 Professor before the real crunch on research came and I never became professor because the
310 crunch came and the many papers in the area of curriculum and a book or something or co-
311 authoring it or something was not considered the kind of research that was promotable so I
312 stayed an Associate Professor and found enough to do.

313

314 **A: But you did write some books? Could you tell us a bit about those?**

315

316 D: Yeah

317

318 **A: Co-authored?**

319

320 D: Yeah someone I met at one of these high school oriented things was interested in AP,
321 Advanced Placement,and computer science thing, so she and I, she got somebody else
322 and did a little bit of writing in Pascal for the advanced placement test, of course it is out of
323 date now, has been for quite some time now....and then I got interested in the computer
324 literacy aspect of things because of some other stuff that I was doing and put my boots on and
325 wrote one and by the time it was published it was pretty much out of date and we did one on
326 file processing which we felt was a useful course but again it didn't really work itself into
327 curriculum very well, so these were interesting experiences but they didn't help much in the
328 way of making publishers happy. We also did one in networking which was primarily her

329 idea and an approach to teaching networking from an application point of view. Again that
330 didn't sit well with the Computer Science curriculum. Anyway...

331
332 **A: Have you supervised graduate students?**

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334 A: Very little, in the very early days we only had a graduate program, so yeah, I did a
335 little bit then,

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337 **A: Has that affected your career in any way?**

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339 D: I think it led me more to the undergraduate level as I felt very strongly that part of my
340 advice to the colleges I went to consulting was to develop a good strong undergraduate
341 program, and the Graduate program will take care of itself. I think they heard the message
342 but I think financially they wanted a few graduate students. Also the faculty were more
343 interested in the development of their own intellect etc than teaching graduate students but I
344 kind of felt that should come after a solid undergraduate program, so much of what I did
345 moved down to that undergraduate level which included community colleges too while we
346 were talking about curriculum development, Joyce Little got me involved, Joyce Currie-Little
347 and that became a very interesting experience.

348
349 **What was interesting about that?**

350
351 Again it was just different from a large research oriented University, that's where the practical
352 stuff was getting done, and a lot of students could get into the large University programmes
353 because we were getting overloaded and a number of them went into community colleges and
354 it took the first two years to get them into the program. It was both a channel in terms of...I
355 can't think of the word...comparing courses, making sure the courses were similar enough to
356 what we were doing that they would transfer abilities and good enough work...so I got that
357 aspect out of it, but I also got the other aspect which was very practical and other courses that
358 were giving application computing and so on...which would lead people to work experiences
359 and then later on if they wanted to come to colleges they could do that. So I thought it was
360 another nice way of getting computing out in the world and helping people somehow.

361
362 **A: I will just turn away from college for a minute, and go back to the ACM....you**
363 **were President of SIGSE for a while. Can you tell us about that experience and the**
364 **things that happened during your time as President?**

365
366 D: I was one of the early....they called them Chairman at the time...I think it lead to
367 eventually some useful and very important curriculum.

368
369 **A: Chairman**

370
371 D: Rather than President yeah but I enjoyed that along with all the conference activities,
372 I had a lot of opportunities, which may not have been available otherwise, one of the things
373 that I remember most of is that we had a conference and I can't say "made a lot of money"
374 because it is a not for profit organisation, but we had a surplus and I drafted a few thousand of
375 that to be used for a community college togetherstart looking toward curriculum
376 development and that sort of thing, Jerry Engel again was very active in all of this too, and I
377 guess.....it a little bit Joyce Little got really started in it and she got started and at the time it
378 was unfunded so it was a little harder to get anywhere, so I think this gave a big spark to what
379 was going on primarily for the community colleges. I think that was my best contribution
380 shall we say, I guess the other good thing that happened...now I can't think of his
381 name...offered....as editor for the SIGSE Bulletin, so I had those same headaches from my
382 point of view, because I had no idea who was going to be editor for the Bulletin.

383

384 **A: When did the Bulletin start?**

385

386 B: Well, before that but I can't remember who was editing, it may have been Bob Bacon
387 himself, he was the Chair earlier. I suspect he had somebody, but I think if he did, that person
388 wanted out at that time. The Bulletin started somewhere close to the late sixties but I'm not
389 exactly sure but anyway.....became a very good editor and really moved that Bulletin along
390 and of course got involved in SIGSE more thoroughly, to the benefit of everybody involved.

391

392 **A: And from there you went on to become Chairman of ACM?**

393

394 B: Yeah, I think so

395

396 **A: Sorry Chairman of an ACM Conference. What were the conferences like in
397 those days?**

398

399 D: The conferences covered the gamut of, it was supposed to cover the gamut of
400 computing activities. There was a chess tournament involved as part of it, exhibits were
401 involved as part of it. Generally speaking it was a pretty active but eventually it was too
402 general I think and the specialty organisations such as SIGSE started moving along much
403 more and the population migrated to more specialty areas and so eventually the conference
404 was stopped. I forget what year. Not too long after I think I was Chair, I hope that wasn't....

405

406 **A: Were they big conferences in those days?**

407

408 D: They got smaller and smaller, by the time I chaired it was somewhere in the 2000
409 people range which was maybe a big conference but considering its range was very
410 small....the Chess Tournament was a very popular activity, and got a number of people and
411 teams involved in that, which added to the conference attendance. It was also a conference
412 that was given in, along with SIGSE and again I think SIGSE was a very important aspect of
413 it. ACM hierarchy seemed to think that SIGSE was tagging along, and I think as the years
414 have shown it was a pretty prominent part of it. It became the lasting part of it, outlasted. But
415 because of that, I can't think of the term I want, peculiar isn't right, a different mix of people.
416 Part of them were there for the ACM conference and the SIGSE conference would start the
417 day the ACM conference ended. So the SIGSE group started out, and then also because of
418 that you got bigger hotels, bigger venues, for the thing, which didn't help SIGSE people
419 entirely, because they were from places that couldn't afford some of this stuff. So it was kind
420 of a strange situation. There were about 12 or 13 different categories, registration because
421 some other applications had already entered group, can't think of their name, joined in also,
422 so we really had three conferences going on at the same time. It got to be a little bit of a
423 mess, it got hard to tell what the focus was at that point.

424

425 And for all of this work that you did for SIGSE you were awarded a fellow of the ACM?

426

427 Yeah that and I got a distinguished service award because of activities at the ACM
428 conference, activities and stuff and again being around at the right time part of that first award
429 of the fellows was to give them to anybody who hadn't received an ACM award ...I hope
430 their standards have changed. I don't know, I have lost touch with that. But there was that,
431 that was a definite aspect of criteria at the time. Was there a particular benefit to being a
432 fellow either after that.

433

434 **A: What challenges have you faced over those years?**

435

436 D: That's a tough one, I guess what a lot of people would look at as challenge, it didn't
437 strike me quite that way. For example, getting my Associate Professorship not to the fall, I'm
438 sure to a number of people in the profession would have been a challenge, I was very

439 comfortable with where I was and what I was doing so it didn't bother me at all. The other
440 thing was the length of time it took to get some other things done, but I preferred working
441 through committees. Committees take longer than some people working individually, but I
442 think the results are much better for the type of work that I'm doing, curriculum stuff. Results
443 were much more, I'm lost for that word too....anyway, had more impact. Just because of the
444 variety of names on that curriculum. If one person put out a curriculum, well that is his/her
445 own ideas, which may not be that wonderful, but if a group did it with the backing of ACM, it
446 just meant more. But it took more time, working with a committee, getting people to do
447 things etc working, getting approvals up the line for publication. In some sense those were
448 challenges but I thought they were reasonable paths to work through things, maybe I'm just
449 too complacent to see them as challenges.

450
451 **A: But you must have been quite proud of that curriculum as it is being used not**
452 **only nationally but internationally.....**

453
454 D: Yeah, I am very happy to be associated with all of that and have my name on all of
455 that. It's what I really wanted to do. Actually toward the end of my career the last few years
456 before retirement I went to the University college of Maryland and developed a curriculum
457 there that I'm very proud of and I felt I had a lot to do with that one, not the detail so much as
458 the direction. I was in a position where I was the Dean for Computer and Mathematical
459 Sciences, so I really had all of the computing courses under me. This was, Adult education
460 was really one of the terms of the times.... Continuing Education or whatever they are calling
461 it now, that too opened up all sorts of windows to for me and an awful lot of people who were
462 in the working force out there. I was instrumental in getting all the courses we had which
463 were full blown curriculum: Computer Science, Computing Information Science,
464 Information Systems, Applications even, but getting all those so that they could be offered at
465 a distance. Which was something a lot of my research colleagues didn't think much of. They
466 didn't think it was appropriate or could be done. But I feel we did it, again we had other
467 people developing the specifics and teaching it, and doing the work, I felt promoting ...I
468 think it has been a very valuable contribution to an awful lot of people out there and there
469 isn't much other opportunity for it. They could literally get a degree without going to a
470 classroom. That was good.

471
472 **A: Any compromises you have had to make in the course of your career?**

473
474 D: Committee work....is full of it....umm, there must have been more than just that but
475 it certainly strikes me as the biggest area of them. Usually they were peaceful

476
477 **A: Dick, do you have any strong outside interests that would enable us to**
478 **understand you better? Any outside interests that have had a shaping effect on your**
479 **career?**

480
481 D: I love to travel, a tourist at heart...I certainly enjoyed going to conferences, I guess
482 one effect was that I was willing to be a committee member and did feel that I did the work of
483 a committee member, but it got me to a lot of the conferences and to help support the travel
484 interest...

485
486 **A: And the meeting the other people internationally?**

487
488 D: Yeah there was, for example, some work I did for University of Maryland, University
489 College, got me to Japan and to Europe because we have had groups over there teaching,
490 originally teaching troops and that brought out some others, So I got to go to places like that
491 to deal with the curriculum there and help people along and understand it a little better or
492 something, introducing a little literacy over there etc to our staff primarily. I feel like I came
493 along at a time when there were tremendous opportunities toward doing almost anything that

494 you wanted to do. In some respect, I feel that I found a niche that I enjoyed doing and I
495 profited from personally. Maybe because I met so many wonderful people who were so
496 active and interesting and it suited me. I can only hope that I was helpful to a lot of other
497 people. I think it was.

498
499 **A: Have you had any circumstance over this time where you have acted as a mentor**
500 **to somebody, or some people? Explain that to us....**

501
502 D: At least one or maybe two people who claim that I have been. I never felt that that
503 was my specific role...per se, but I think circumstances were such that it developed that way.
504 One is Boots Cassel and I do hope you interview her, maybe she will contradict what I say,
505 but there is an occasion again, this goes back to the time when small institutions just did not
506 have the resources etc and she came to a SIGSE Conference to a Birds of a Feather session
507 actually and she was interested in developing something but the institution she was with just
508 with just had no idea what was going on and how and all that kind of stuff. At this Birds of a
509 Feather she either asked a question or admitted a cry for helpwhat do we do? So anyway
510 we talked a bit afterwards and she invited me to be a consultant for her to her place and it
511 went on for a couple of years. Just a collegial thing that developed there that worked out very
512 well and eventually we co-authored books etc but I think her career blossomed quite a bit
513 after that. I don't think after that I had much to do with because she was a starter in many
514 respects and really worked at it. She got along very well on her own path. At least at the
515 beginning, I guess that was mentorship but the other one was the one I was telling you earlier
516 about that money for the community college thing. It certainly helped that along and Joyce
517 Currie Little and I became friends through that.

518
519 **A: One of things that I intended to ask you is what is the thing that you are most**
520 **proud of in your career?**

521
522 D: Probably my last experiences at the University College, developing that curriculum at
523 a distance. There were other places doing courses at a distance -- we had models but I think
524 the way that University College did it and the type of course that was produced was different
525 and leading to the full-blown curriculum. I think before that it was working with the
526 University College, almost as a consultant but I don't think there was any official term that
527 was being used. To help them through some of their computing days, early days, but I think
528 that has just had a tremendous impact. We had students in Iceland, students around the world
529 quite literally, in a sense had the biggest impact that I know about and was probably my
530 proudest achievement.

531
532 **A: That's wonderful....have you got any advice for young people starting out today**
533 **in computing, what would it be?**

534
535 D: Computing now...I think to know what your interests really are and pursue that,
536 whether it be computers and applications or something, whether it be as a science,
537 informatics, information systems area. Whichever direction you want to go...but make sure
538 it suits your bent and if your scientific oriented or if your engineering oriented or if your
539 business oriented, in broad terms anyway. To the extent that you can figure it out ...by then
540 the most important thing to do before going to college with the idea of getting a degree
541 possibly in computing is to get a broad base at the beginning so that if you change your mind,
542 you can go into other things and you don't have to repeat everything. It wastes a lot of
543 years....trying to pick up other pre-requisites...I think the more liberal the education, of
544 course that is my background, the more liberal the education the better off you are going to
545 be...with it as a computer person, and as a person. I would advocate moving in that direction.

546
547 **A: Have you got any predictions on where computing is going?**
548

549 D: Oh man, when predictions come up all I can think of is...early days, when I think it
550 was an IBM person said, oh we have 5 or 6 computers I think that is going to be enough to
551 handle everything in the world ...I think of all the people in artificial intelligence who have
552 made predictions over the yearsI wouldn't dare predict.
553

554 **A: If there was one decision that you made along your career path that you could**
555 **change, what would it be?**
556

557 D: Never really thought about that but just my initial reaction would be nothing...I just
558 felt so very fortunate in that it seems like when I was looking for something, something would
559 come up that I could get involved inof course there was the matter of saying yes or no to
560 it....and I had the choice of no...but if I chose yes, it was a very happy circumstance in many
561 respectsI don't think anything.....It seems strange there should be something...
562

563 **A: Doesn't have to be...If you were starting out again today, would you follow the**
564 **same career path?**
565

566 D: Probably not.....I don't think I would go into the so called pure mathematics, I'm
567 not sure what I would go into....I certainly would try to get better grounded in course work
568 etc...in computing....I never did a course in computing so I don't know what that is but I'm
569 sure there are a lot of gaps because of that – pick up this, pick up that and try to put it together
570 then what is the foundation for all that may not be there as well as it should be. So I think I
571 would pursue that a little more. I would certainly pursue the liberal arts even more intensely,
572 with more interest. Of course I guess some of the wisdom you get with age is that if I really
573 had courses to do, I would forget but I would do them more seriously.....I don't know
574pure mathematics interested me and I was fascinated by it...and I guess I did well in it,
575 but I always felt a lack of being able to apply it....computing somehow you can apply so I
576 guess I would probably have pursued computing more intensely...
577

578 **A: OK if there is one story you would like to tell us so that it would always be**
579 **remembered...what would it be?**
580

581 D: All of the aboveNo I don't have one story, I think I told one or two short ones
582 along the way in the interview and I will leave it at that.
583

584 **A: Ok Dick, thank you very much for this interview, is there anything else that you**
585 **want to add or something that I have missed out or that you think that we should have**
586 **added?**
587

588 D: I don't think so, I'm privileged to be interviewed, it's a new experience. I hope that
589 your program of all the interviewings really comes to something because I think it is an
590 important thing that you are doing.
591

592 **A: Thank you very much.**
593