

Robert H. Shaffer: The Quintessential "Do-Gooder"

GEORGE D. KUH and MICHAEL D. COOMES

Will Rogers once said, "I never met a man I didn't like." A variation of that sentiment describes Robert H. Shaffer. Everybody who knows Bob admires and respects him. For over five decades—as a counselor, dean of students, faculty member, professional association leader, and international consultant—Bob has pursued a simple but important goal: to encourage the personal and professional development of those with whom he has contact. Throughout the world are thousands of former students, staff members, and professional associates—all of whom he considers friends—who have been touched by Bob's enthusiasm and commitment to human development and who are working toward similar goals.

A native Hoosier, Bob earned a baccalaureate degree from DePauw University, where he was a Rector Scholar and played quarterback on an unbeaten, unscored-on football team. After college, his interest in serving others took him to New York City and the executive staff of the Boy Scouts of America. In addition to scouting work, Bob found time to work on a master's degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, and a PhD at New York University and to court his wife, Marjorie (Marge) Fitch. Bob could not turn down an opportunity to return to his home state and, in 1941, Marge left her promising career as a fashion writer to accompany her husband, a newly appointed instructor and counselor at the Indiana University (IU) School of Business.

In the decade after his return from military service in 1945, Bob's potential for leadership in the counseling and student affairs field was recognized in Indiana and nationally. In 1948, Bob was elected secretary of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and was appointed associate editor of the *Personnel and Guidance Journal*. In 1951, Bob was elected the first president of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA). By 1955, he was full professor of business and education and dean of students, after serving as assistant and associate dean. Such notable achievements usually reflect accomplishments over the course of an entire career. But Bob had much more to do.

Along with Kate Hevner Mueller and Betty Greenleaf, Bob developed a master's-level preparation program in student affairs administration that is considered one of the best in the country (Sandein, 1982). He directed the master's program twice, from 1969 to 1972 and from 1979 to 1981, and he directed the doctoral program in higher education administration between 1972 and 1979. He got to know, by name, every international student who studied at IU during the 1950s and 1960s. From 1969 to 1972, he was the editor of the *NASPA Journal*. Bob's unwavering belief in the valuable contributions of the fraternity system to the quality of life on a residential university campus was instrumental in the establishment of the annual Interfraternity

Institute (a week-long seminar for fraternity professionals) and the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity.

In recognition of these and many other accomplishments, Bob has received numerous awards and honors. In 1969 he received two special awards, one from APGA acknowledging his meritorious service as the association's first president and another from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) for distinguished service. He is the first recipient of NASPA's Scott Goodnight Award for distinguished service as a dean (1973). His alma mater, DePauw University, awarded Bob an honorary LLD degree in 1976.

In 1979 he received ACPA's distinguished professional service award. His fraternity work was recognized with the Lambda Chi Alpha Order of Interfraternity Service Award, the distinguished service award of the Fraternity Executives Association, the Silver Medal for Distinguished Service from the National Interfraternity Conference, and the Robert H. Shaffer Award—named after him—granted annually by the Association of Fraternity Advisers to an individual who has made noteworthy contributions to the quality of fraternity life. He also was honored in 1982 by the National Campus Activities Association for his contributions to the campus activities field.

Bob has received plaudits at home as well. Shortly after concluding an unprecedented 15-year term as dean of students, he was elected secretary of the Indiana University Faculty Council. For a former administrator to be elected by faculty members to such a prestigious position is quite unusual and reflects the academic community's high regard for Bob's work and character. In a recent alumni survey, Shaffer was one of the five most frequently mentioned professors. A portrait of Bob hangs in the Indiana Memorial Union, a permanent tribute to Bob's successes in enhancing the quality of student life at IU. In May 1985, Indiana University conferred on Bob its highest distinction, an honorary doctorate.

Bob's 16- to 18-hour work days added an additional dimension to the challenges of raising a family. In a feature article in the *Saturday Evening Post* ("This Is the Dean Speaking," 1956), Bob said, "In common with other men who've caught a bear of a job by the tail, I'm scheming to make their [his sons, Jim and Bruce] acquaintance while they're still boys" (p. 104).

According to his son, Jim, Bob was successful—thanks partly to the machinations of Marge:

Mom worked hard to rearrange the family's schedule—to her inconvenience—in order to provide Dad with opportunities to interact with us. . . . Dad devoted his life to helping others achieve their potential, me included. I remember asking him how he would know if he was doing a good job. He said his success would be reflected by the achievements of those he had

worked with. I got an idea of how he was doing when a business trip took me to Philadelphia at the same time that the NASPA Convention was in town. I walked into the convention and said, "Hi, I'm Jim Shaffer and I'm looking for my father, Robert Shaffer." In the short time it took to locate Dad, at least 10 people explained to me how respected Dad was in his field and how fortunate they were to have been acquainted with him. (J. Shaffer, personal communication, May 16, 1985)

Those privileged to know Bob as a mentor or colleague are well aware of his abiding interest in their personal and professional welfare. His rich, diverse experiences as a student affairs administrator and professor and an almost contagious zeal, vitality, and sense of humor have kept him in demand for professional development workshops during what was supposed to be retirement from active service in 1981. His appointment as acting dean of students at the Indiana University—Northwest campus in Gary in 1983–84 made a prophet of an anonymous guest at Bob's retirement party: "Nice party, Bob. See you at the office on Monday."

Bob's impressive array of honors and awards belie his self-effacing nature. He cares deeply about colleagues and students, and he has lived his life according to one simple credo: "Do good whenever an opportunity is presented." Indeed, Bob Shaffer is the quintessential "do-gooder."

As with the other pioneers in guidance featured in this series, space limitations preclude chronicling all of Bob's contributions to the counseling and student affairs field. In an effort to preserve for posterity Bob's integrity, character, and unflagging spirit, we talked with him and his wife of 45 years, Marge, about the meaning of his chosen vocation, the importance of professional associations, and his contributions to the student affairs field. In preparing this article, we relied on some insights into Bob gleaned from working with him for 10 years and on the dozen scrapbooks Marge meticulously kept as a record of their lives together.

THE EARLY YEARS

G.K.: Your work in counseling and student affairs administration spans five decades, from the 1930s to the 1980s. What stands out in your mind when you think about your formative years as a student affairs professional?

R.S.: Louis H. Dirks was the dean of men when I was an undergraduate at DePauw, and he became a very good friend. My junior year, he called me into his office after returning from the NASPA meeting, which was NADAM (National Association of Deans and Advisers of Men) in those days. He said each member agreed to talk to some young man in college about going into the field. "So," he said, "I want to talk to you about that. You're my man."

From my graduate school days, I remember my mentor, Harry D. Kitson. Kitson was from Mishawaka, Indiana, where I went to high school. I had never heard of him, of course, when I was in high school. But when I finished college, a friend learned I was going to go to New York to work with the Boy Scouts of America. He said I should look up Harry Kitson. So when I went to New York, I had a letter of introduction from my Mishawaka friend to present to Dr. Kitson, a professor at Teachers College, Columbia. Although we became friends, I obviously did not want to do poorly in his class, and I always felt I had to live up to his high expectations.

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When the war broke out in 1941, many of the people who were leaders in our field went into war service. Some served with great distinction, such as John Darley and Dan Feather, who worked in aircraft crew selection. But in 1946 everybody realized that the guidance movement needed to be broadened; maybe the personnel work during the war even contributed to it. I myself was a personnel consultant, as they called it, MOS of 290, which meant that I was supposed to help in the testing and assignment of personnel.

The postwar period was just great, a lot of growth. In fact, many people do not realize how rapidly American higher education expanded to accommodate the thousands of students and faculty members returning from the service. Indiana University doubled its enrollment twice in about 3 years. We started semesters in the middle of the traditional semester time period because large numbers of veterans and professors were returning at about the same time and wanted to start college. We used church basements for classes and for social events. We even postponed the start of the semester for 30 to 40 days in the fall of 1946 to complete the construction of some temporary barracks. Under President Wells's leadership, IU was very proud to say it never turned down an Indiana resident veteran because of space. We took them and somehow met their needs.

With this larger influx of new students at virtually every institution in the country, orientation became very important. I got interested in the movement and participated in the organization of the National Orientation Directors Conference.

After the war, most personnel workers believed that we needed to broaden our base. At the Columbus, Ohio, convention, which I think was the first following the split between the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), there was general agreement that an umbrella organization was needed.

CREATION OF THE AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND GUIDANCE ASSOCIATION

G.K.: You mentioned that after World War II, some perceived a need for an umbrella organization of counseling and personnel workers. What were the circumstances surrounding the creation of APGA and your election as the first president?

R.S.: The concept of APGA as an umbrella organization became attractive then because guidance personnel, even NVGA members, realized that guidance was becoming broader. Until the Second World War, vocational guidance dominated the counseling and personnel field because we were coming out of the depression, so retraining and replacement counseling was very important. But the number of groups that could benefit from counseling increased. For example, until APGA was formed, school counseling did not have a separate professional organization. School counselors belonged to NVGA or to the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors (NAWDAC).

From about 1948 to 1951, a Unification Committee existed. When the committee met, say in Baltimore or Chicago, they invited regional leaders of ACPA and NVGA to the meetings to sell them on unification. I became involved in Unification Committee work in 1948 in my role as secretary of ACPA. Another

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influential group was the Council of Guidance and Personnel Associations, a federation of representatives from NVGA, ACPA, NASPA, NAWDAC, and other organizations. The council agreed that it should be dissolved and supported the Unification Committee's recommendation that an umbrella membership organization be created.

It was questionable whether anyone really wanted to be the first president of APGA. Either Gilbert Wrenn or Donald Super could have been selected had they been candidates. But both were so busy writing books and speaking that neither could take on

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the organizational detail work required in the first years of operation. But my good friend, Jesse Ruhlman of the University of Southern California, and I finally agreed to be candidates. Jesse had worked very hard on the Unification Committee and had coordinated the Los Angeles meeting. She probably should have been elected for that reason alone. The Unification Committee conducted the election from Washington, D.C., by mail ballot; I was elected.

G.K.: Did you ever wonder if APGA would be a viable organization?

R.S.: I sure did! We didn't have any money and I thought we might go bankrupt before we could really get started. I think we operated on a budget of only \$7,000, and practically all of that came from NVGA as we transferred people and their money from the NVGA payroll to the APGA payroll.

The budget was so tight at the beginning that I remember once at an early planning meeting for the second APGA convention in Chicago (what would have been at the end of the 1st year of what was then called PGA—Personnel and Guidance Association), the officers couldn't even afford to eat. We went to the coffee shop of what was then the Stevens Hotel (now the Conrad Hilton), and big Charles O'Dell (who was at least 6'4") had to squeeze into a booth with six others while we ate hamburgers to save the organization a little money. That may have been the low point because we weren't sure whether the organization would survive financially until the convention.

Willa Norris, the assistant executive secretary of NVGA, became the executive secretary of APGA and organized the national office. Nancy Shivers, the NVGA office manager, became the managing editor for the new *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, which was formerly *Occupations Magazine*. When Willa left for Michigan State, Nancy took over the Washington office and did an outstanding job. Frank Fletcher from Ohio State, the third president of APGA, was the first treasurer and did yeoman work in setting up the books, keeping accounts, and knowing whether we had any money at all! Money was in such short supply, he literally had to delay writing some checks until the end of the month to pay bills. Once Frank asked Willa Norris and Nancy Shivers not to cash their December checks until January. In the early years we had to rent office space from the American Trucking Association. I couldn't believe it when APGA later bought the building on New Hampshire Avenue, which, of course, has been a wonderful real estate deal for the association.

G.K.: When did you think APGA would make it as the umbrella organization for personnel and guidance workers?

R.S.: Thanks to the support from the leaders of the various groups, by the first national meeting of APGA in Los Angeles in 1951, I thought APGA would make it if we could somehow manage our early cash flow problems. Cliff Erickson, the presi-

dent of NVGA at the time (and my roommate at the Los Angeles convention), and Donald Super (the first APGA president-elect), because of his stature and leadership in the vocational guidance movement, were able to consolidate the support of many of the 3,200 NVGA members. Gilbert Wrenn and Ed Williamson, who were very influential among the 700 to 800 members of ACPA, also were strong supporters.

There were many others who were instrumental in making APGA viable. Charles O'Dell was helpful for two reasons. First, he was very large in stature, an imposing physical presence. Second, and more important, he represented the Employment Service, one of the best organized nonacademic guidance organizations in the country, and he helped persuade his constituents of the importance of APGA. Many NAWDAC leaders, such as Anna Rose Hawks of Columbia, Eunice Hilton of Syracuse, and Hilda Thrakill of Louisville, provided a lot of helpful advice. Although NAWDAC did not join as an organization, some of these women later held individual memberships in APGA.

G.K.: Was there any vocal opposition to the establishment of APGA?

R.S.: Not really, but there were a lot of people who thought an umbrella membership organization would be unworkable. The American Psychological Association (APA) was just beginning to evolve into its divisional structure, and we attempted to model APGA after what APA was trying to do.

Most of the reluctance was associated with a fear of losing one's professional identity. Harry Kitson, my own mentor, wanted vocational guidance to be paramount in the guidance movement and said that if we did away with NVGA, he would organize another similar organization. So one of my priorities was to make certain that each division had a particular function and identity. My major contribution was introducing the concept of administration in higher education to APGA as I was instrumental in organizing what became Commission I of ACPA—Organization and Administration of Student Affairs. That attracted some NASPA members to APGA, I think.

M.C.: The unification of counseling and personnel organizations under the APGA umbrella did not bring NASPA or NAWDAC into the fold. Why not?

R.S.: Some didn't want to associate with college professors; others didn't want to be with activity types. The deans of men and deans of women were close-knit groups; each had a very high degree of loyalty.

One of my more embarrassing moments occurred at the NAWDAC meeting in Chicago while I was APGA president. I was still trying to get NAWDAC to come into APGA, and Anna Rose Hawkes, the NAWDAC president at the time, invited me to attend the NAWDAC banquet, which was formal. So I rented a tuxedo, because in those days I sure didn't own one. However, I brought only brown shoes to the convention. I'm probably the only APGA president ever to wear brown shoes to a formal dinner. A lot of my friends said they didn't notice but they sensed my discomfort, and some still remember me as the dean in the tux with the brown shoes!

In any event, we organized a commission on women's affairs in APGA in an effort to respond to women's concerns and created Commission I of ACPA to attract some of the deans of students. Ed Williamson was a great help on the latter, as he was a leader among the younger deans of students. It's interesting that about 10 years later, Williamson became the president of NASPA, but in the early 1950s he was the archenemy of the NASPA rank and file. They saw him as too theoretical, a threat to the tradition of practical approaches to campus problems.

G.K.: As the first president of APGA, what kinds of things did you do?

R.S.: I was president for 2 years, 1951 to 1953. Being president just took a lot of work—appointing committees, writing (in those days the telephone wasn't used very much) to get people to serve on committees and to make reports. I spent many Saturdays and Sundays typing out agendas, committee reports, committee assignments, and mailing labels because we didn't have much clerical help.

I invested a lot of energy convincing others that APGA was a viable organization. In the early days we had a lot of rivalry between proponents of vocational guidance, testing, administration, practitioners, and college teachers. To get people involved, we created more than 20 committees, each involving maybe as many as 8 to 10 people. During the first APGA convention in Los Angeles, we involved as many as 300 to 400 people on these committees. This was intentional, to increase the number of people who had a stake in the success of the organization.

We turned one of the first mass meetings into "buzz" groups. We said, "Everybody in the first and second rows turn around and meet six or seven people and start talking about these issues." We had literally several hundred people who were pretty mad at each other talking about the issues. They were put in a position where they had to participate whether they liked it or not. I was not going to run an organization that members did not feel a part of. Although people probably don't remember that now, I think a lot of people were impressed that the leaders wanted them to be involved. I think that established the philosophy of the association, which has pretty much endured.

APGA got off to a good start, I believe, mostly because we involved people and dealt responsively with organizational and operational problems. We didn't entertain many theoretical issues that first year or two because we just had too much spade work to do. So it was a case of getting people together and selling them on the concept of a broadly based organization devoted to counseling and personnel work.

THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

G.K.: Compared to the 1950s, the 1960s was a pretty difficult period for deans of students.

R.S.: At first, I continued to act as I did in the 1950s, like an old-fashioned dean. When students would come in with "challenges," as they were calling them, or outright demands, I was often ego involved and assumed a defensive posture rather than responding like a professional. It took me 2 or 3 years to catch on to this.

I remember the first time I met with the officers of the Organization for University Reform (OUR), which was advised by Louis Stamatakos (now professor of higher education at Michigan State University) and Sandy MacLean (vice-president of student affairs at the University of Missouri—St. Louis). These OUR guys were bright but I can remember thinking, "You're going to reform what?" "You're going to do what?" One of their early reform proposals was to do away with the dean, something in which I was obviously ego involved! But it wasn't until I began to sense that society was changing and that these young people—rightly or wrongly—were different that I began to see my work as a profession.

The critics of that period said, "Shaffer, you just give in" or "Trouble is you waste too much time talking to them—tell them a few things!" Of course, telling students (and critics!) to jump in the lake lowered the blood pressure for an hour or two. But very quickly another problem arose. At the conventions during that

period we debated whether the dean had to reestablish his or her authority before dealing with radical student leaders. Of course, many of my colleagues across the country spent their careers trying to establish their authority. Calling out the national guard, calling the police, or using force was doomed to failure in those years because students wouldn't give up.

But I enjoyed my job; it was fun in ways. The organizers were always one step ahead of me, which was annoying. But they usually came into my office to tell me what they were going to do. In fact, the few times we had really bad episodes were when they didn't warn us and we couldn't prepare—not to prepare to stop them but to be prepared to handle the incident appropriately and to avoid violence. If the police were caught short-handed and some police officer were really exhausted, it was really hard to refrain from laying a club on somebody who was calling him all sorts of obscene and profane names.

M.C. Some deans have said that they were ordered to have someone infiltrate student organizations to find out what was going to happen next.

R.S.: We didn't have to do that at IU. We had staff members openly attend those meetings. In fact, when I was a student, I was a member of both the Students for a Democratic Society and the original Student League for Industrial Democracy, two activist organizations of their era. Obviously, as the dean of students, I wasn't involved in those organizations, but I continued to receive their bulletins. So spying just wasn't necessary. Later on, about 1965 or 1967, I think, some outside agitators came on to some campuses and encouraged secret actions and violence. But at IU, we didn't need to obtain information surreptitiously because students told us what was going to happen.

But it seemed I was working all the time. People laugh when I say that, but every night (weekends included) one or more militant groups would be out. So I would be up until 2:00 or 3:00 A.M. and then go to work at 8:00 A.M.

M.S.: That's true. But it is also true that Bob and chancellor Herman Wells (president of IU from 1937 to 1962) were the most visible administrators on the campus. Everybody knew Wells and Shaffer, so if they had a problem they knew someone they could call. And a lot of them did call, and it was just fine—Bob loved to straighten them out. And their parents would call, townspeople would call, and so on.

During the 1960s the phone calls began to get tougher to deal with. Callers would say that students were communists and radicals; why did Bob let them do this or that? Then he'd get calls from parents; some thought he was too tough and some thought he wasn't tough enough. And all this time he was trying to hold a dialogue with students so he could get their point of view. I went to pick up Bob after work once and he and a student activist leader were sitting on the steps of his office eating ice cream cones, just having a good talk. That was Bob!

But I could usually expect him home for dinner at about 5:45. After dinner, he would go back to the campus; he always had some kind of meeting. If it wasn't a student group or committee, it would be a faculty committee. But those years really were wonderful.

G.K.: What impact did the Vietnam war have on your role as dean of students and on your personal life?

R.S.: It had a lot, of course. Vietnam was a hot issue at IU in that we were then and we remain a rather conservative state. The war became related to issues of Black students' rights and opportunities. And protestors focused on the university as an agent of the establishment. But as I told a group one day, "Okay, I'll stop the war tomorrow. Now what do we do?" They were demanding that things be done that you couldn't do, such as getting faculty

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R.S.: At first, I continued to act as I did in the 1950s, like an old-fashioned dean. When students would come in with "challenges," as they were calling them, or outright demands, I was often ego involved and assumed a defensive posture rather than responding like a professional. It took me 2 or 3 years to catch on to this.

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The critics of that period said, "Shaffer, you just give in" or "Trouble is you waste too much time talking to them—tell them a few things!" Of course, telling students (and critics!) to jump in the lake lowered the blood pressure for an hour or two. But very quickly another problem arose. At the conventions during that

period we debated whether the dean had to reestablish his or her authority before dealing with radical student leaders. Of course, many of my colleagues across the country spent their careers trying to establish their authority. Calling out the national guard, calling the police, or using force was doomed to failure in those years because students wouldn't give up.

But I enjoyed my job; it was fun in ways. The organizers were always one step ahead of me, which was annoying. But they usually came into my office to tell me what they were going to do. In fact, the few times we had really bad episodes were when they didn't warn us and we couldn't prepare—not to prepare to stop them but to be prepared to handle the incident appropriately and to avoid violence. If the police were caught short-handed and some police officer were really exhausted, it was really hard to refrain from laying a club on somebody who was calling him all sorts of obscene and profane names.

M.C. Some deans have said that they were ordered to have someone infiltrate student organizations to find out what was going to happen next.

R.S.: We didn't have to do that at IU. We had staff members openly attend those meetings. In fact, when I was a student, I was a member of both the Students for a Democratic Society and the original Student League for Industrial Democracy, two activist organizations of their era. Obviously, as the dean of students, I wasn't involved in those organizations, but I continued to receive their bulletins. So spying just wasn't necessary. Later on, about 1965 or 1967, I think, some outside agitators came on to some campuses and encouraged secret actions and violence. But at IU, we didn't need to obtain information surreptitiously because students told us what was going to happen.

But it seemed I was working all the time. People laugh when I say that, but every night (weekends included) one or more militant groups would be out. So I would be up until 2:00 or 3:00 A.M. and then go to work at 8:00 A.M.

M.S.: That's true. But it is also true that Bob and chancellor Herman Wells (president of IU from 1937 to 1962) were the most visible administrators on the campus. Everybody knew Wells and Shaffer, so if they had a problem they knew someone they could call. And a lot of them did call, and it was just fine—Bob loved to straighten them out. And their parents would call, townspeople would call, and so on.

During the 1960s the phone calls began to get tougher to deal with. Callers would say that students were communists and radicals; why did Bob let them do this or that? Then he'd get calls from parents; some thought he was too tough and some thought he wasn't tough enough. And all this time he was trying to hold a dialogue with students so he could get their point of view. I went to pick up Bob after work once and he and a student activist leader were sitting on the steps of his office eating ice cream cones, just having a good talk. That was Bob!

But I could usually expect him home for dinner at about 5:45. After dinner, he would go back to the campus; he always had some kind of meeting. If it wasn't a student group or committee, it would be a faculty committee. But those years really were wonderful.

G.K.: What impact did the Vietnam war have on your role as dean of students and on your personal life?

R.S.: It had a lot, of course. Vietnam was a hot issue at IU in that we were then and we remain a rather conservative state. The war became related to issues of Black students' rights and opportunities. And protestors focused on the university as an agent of the establishment. But as I told a group one day, "Okay, I'll stop the war tomorrow. Now what do we do?" They were demanding that things be done that you couldn't do, such as getting faculty

to declare absolute nonsupport of the war effort. As you know, to get university faculty to agree on or do anything in a short period of time is next to impossible. And then my son, Bruce, was killed in Vietnam. That changed the war for me because I was so personally involved.

M.S.: Bob was attending the APGA meeting in Las Vegas when the army informed us that we had lost Bruce. I knew when I saw the man coming that something terrible had happened. He asked who I was and if any other relatives were nearby. Jim, our oldest son, was doing graduate work in business at IU at the time. But I said, "Tell me what you have to tell me." He wouldn't until Jim arrived. Then I had to call Bob and tell him.

R.S.: Bruce debated whether to be a conscientious objector or to volunteer for the service. When he chose to go, I supported him in that decision. I supported Senator Vance Hartke, who voiced opposition to the war in 1965 or 1966, but I can't remember exactly when I favored the withdrawal of U.S. troops. In any event, my son's death didn't change my work much. Students who were opposed to the war had great sympathy for me, and these students were my friends anyway. But as a servant of the university I often had to oppose them in their demonstrations and declarations.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSION

G.K.: *What have been your most important contributions to the student affairs profession?*

R.S.: That's really hard. I think possibly my most significant contribution was helping colleagues advance in the field professionally and develop personally, encouraging them when they were down, or encouraging them to find something personally meaningful in the field. I saw many emerge as national leaders—Jim Duncan at Texas, Lou Stamatakos at Michigan State, Dave Ambler at Kansas, Phyllis Mable at Virginia Commonwealth and now Longwood, Keith Miser at Vermont—and I should quickly

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add that there are many others who also have distinguished themselves, but space does not permit me to list them all.

Betty Greenleaf, my colleague in the Dean of Students Division and in the College Student Personnel Administration preparation program, and I wondered at times if some of our students were going to get through the program. Betty supported more rigorous admission standards for the graduate program. She once told me, "Don't admit anyone in my absence!" I suppose she would argue that I tended to ignore a candidate's academic record and relied too much on my own intuitive evaluation of an applicant. But I stand on our record because IU has had many strong graduates who were not outstanding students as undergraduates but who have emerged as outstanding student affairs professionals, and it has been very rewarding to have been a part of their development.

I feel strongly that paying attention to and providing support for individuals are keys to professional growth. I spent many hours with individuals because I believed in working with them.

I was sometimes criticized for that, but I found it most rewarding, and I probably would not change if I had it to do over.

Another thing I hope I contributed is solid staff training. I'm really proud of that. I believe most of the people who worked at IU believed that they had my support and encouragement to better themselves, even though at times it meant real sacrifice and a fear of losing them. I'm very proud of our people, and I think most of them feel that their time there was rewarding and growth producing.

I advise staff directors to support the development of staff in whatever areas the staff member seeks fulfillment and to not attempt to make every staff member look and behave the same way. I have told young staff members that if they have a supervisor who doesn't support individual growth, they should form their own support groups. We used to have a Saturday morning support group at Indiana; we would meet in one of our homes, have coffee, and discuss a new book or something. Not everyone liked that, of course, and some former staff members still joke about those Saturday morning meetings, but for others they were very important.

I always tried to recognize and reinforce the person on my staff who differed with me. Other staff members sometimes wondered why I put up with such an S.O.B. But a staff member who challenged my thinking was a useful reminder that people see things differently. I would go out of my way sometimes to tell young people after a staff meeting, "Thanks for what you said," just so they knew that they were okay and were valuable staff members.

G.K.: *You have referred to mentors as "friends." You seem to enjoy the same kind of relationship with your former students.*

R.S.: That's true. Even E. K. Fretwell of Teachers College, who was a famous early writer on extracurricular activities in public schools, became a friend in the sense that he knew my Boy Scout work and encouraged me to write papers on related topics. Since then I have regarded students as friends and colleagues who are searching for knowledge and teaching me too. I have no quarrel with the concept of mentoring, but in professional work and graduate school friendship should be the motivating force, not fear or a relationship based on power or expertise.

G.K.: *You have made some contributions to the literature that are considered classics, one of which is *Personnel Work in Colleges and Universities* (1961), the book you co-authored with Martinson.*

R.S.: Bill Martinson and I drafted that book in about 60 days. It wasn't a classic; we were trying to explain the personnel movement to the layman. We wanted to get it out fast and we did. We had a lot of arguments about how we were going to say things; he was more of a theoretician than I and probably more scholarly. He also was a good editor, and we had a lot of fun working on that project together.

An earlier paper on communication that I really think is close to a classic is, "Student Personnel Problems Requiring a Campus-Wide Approach" (Shaffer, 1961). When I went to the IU—Northwest campus in Gary as acting dean in 1983, I used some of the ideas from that paper. We had a lot of staff meetings and encouraged liaisons with all academic departments because student affairs cannot afford to operate in isolation. I'm afraid some staff people today prefer to avoid the faculty on the student affairs committee and think it's a waste of time to go to faculty council meetings. The farther we are removed from those groups, the more isolated we become. We have to be more assertive and actively contribute to the work of some of these committees.

M.C.: *This sounds similar to things I've heard you say about creating community on campuses. Can you expand a little about what you mean by community?*

R.S.: I grew up in a little Hoosier town called Pittsburg, a village of 300 to 400 people; I knew everybody in town, everybody in town knew me, which had its advantages and disadvantages, of course. The reason I'm so interested in creating a sense of community in college is because in a community, everyone knows, or at least thinks they are known by, everyone else; therefore, there is considerable pressure to always be on one's best behavior. That doesn't mean students will always do everything "right," but maybe they will recognize that somebody knows and cares about what they are doing and say something or perhaps correct them. It's almost impossible to be anonymous in that situation. The pressure is on students to do their best—out of class as well as in class. This is why I have tried to create a feeling of community in any group of which I was a member, because I believe the attention and support of colleagues and peers is a very powerful socializing influence on the college campus. The people with whom one interacts can help one achieve beyond one's limits.

If student development is one of our primary goals, we must get support for it. We can't afford to allow the campus to muddle along as a federation of autonomous and often independent, loosely coupled units that seem to have nothing in common. This is contrary to the whole idea of a university. The common denominator must be a sense of community—shared values,

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pride, and a sense of purpose that is the foundation for higher learning and personal development.

We don't want students to go into the business world, for example, without being challenged to consider or think about the obligations and responsibilities the business community has to the rest of society. What should an educated person do when a business enterprise, like Union Carbide, is so important but is so dangerous that literally 2,000 people can be wiped out? Of course, this can happen in nuclear plants . . . it could happen. So I think it's critical that interaction occur between students of all majors and faculty of all disciplines and that they learn to communicate with each other using a shared, critically examined core of values that defines the community.

M.C. How do you facilitate the development of a sense of community?

R.S.: We had a rule that somebody from our staff would attend a faculty lecture or seminar just so other faculty members would know we were interested in what they were doing as opposed to always being too busy. The second thing is to serve on committees that have varied purposes and composition of members. The third thing I encouraged was having faculty from different disciplines working with us. At Indiana, we had faculty from sociology and history working with us and got some of their students involved in student affairs research. I once went to a sociology professor—who is now a very good friend of mine—who was surprised that we were interested in the things he was doing.

We also tried to develop a sense of community through the 10 residence centers on the campus, with the notion that each center should develop its own personality. We tried various things: business majors in one center and music majors in another (which didn't work at all), and 1st-year students in another. We tried various things so that people facing similar challenges would be

surrounded by others in similar circumstances. The key to making these experiments work was having energetic, committed staff members willing to work long hours in orienting new students, involving them as much as possible, and helping them create some common bond.

G.K.: Sounds like Sandy Astin's (1984) theory of involvement.

R.S.: I'm convinced that's the right track. I tried to do that. When someone on our staff was upset or frustrated with something, I would put them on a committee or task force to work on the problem. Whether it was a new rule about residence halls or parking regulations or who went to conventions—which was a tough one (we didn't have enough money to send everybody so we tried to divide equitably)—I said work it out, find a solution, make a recommendation.

STUDENT AFFAIRS WORK YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

M.C. In what ways has student affairs work improved and how has the field changed for the better?

R.S.: Well, one of the things that has changed for the better is recognizing the importance of evaluating what we do and documenting whether we make a difference. I'm convinced that student affairs professionals have made a difference, but we have not established criteria against which our achievements can be measured. We have taught evaluation for years, now we ought to apply it.

I think we are more professional now and use principles from organizational theory and organizational development more frequently. In the old days, if a student did something you didn't

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like, then he was a traitor. I hate to admit it, but I would often say to a good student-friend, "What were you thinking of? You've let me down!" I'm sorry now to have used that approach, but nevertheless that is what I did.

Student affairs staff people are as eager and as extremely competent as they've always been. As a group, students in our preparation programs have some of the highest personal and academic qualifications of any single group of students I've seen anywhere. I would stack them up against law or MBA students any time. I hope we're not just attracting "hot shot" leaders who are personally persuasive, but that we're also emphasizing professionalism and developing a body of knowledge that can be used and be useful in the field.

But I am troubled because salaries in student affairs and human development work are not keeping pace with other fields. Student affairs staff people are not paid what they're worth. I have to be honest with the competent young people with whom I talk about having alternative professional careers in mind, whether business or social services, which I think are going to be emerging fields in the next 25 years and will pay accordingly.

To me, this is the critical frontier of academia. I'm afraid the prejudice of the academic mind will never allocate the resources to student affairs that the field deserves. People pay lip service to

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the importance of the students and meeting their needs and all that, but because developing the mind and the intellect is a primary goal, I think most budget makers are biased against allocating resources to the so-called "extracurricular" and residence halls. Oh, they want things to be in good shape, they want good public relations, and they want to help students stay in school, but when it really comes down to the dollar, I'm afraid as a group faculty and administrators feel that it's money taken away from the academy's main purpose, cultivation of the intellect. We just haven't been able to convince the academic community that our work also contributes significantly to students' intellectual and academic achievement.

G.K.: Is it possible in the next 25 years that this pessimistic condition you've described can be changed for the better?

R.S.: I don't know about the time period. It's possible if we use evaluative techniques and our professional knowledge to articulate what the field is about and challenge the assumption that anybody can do our work. I continue to be uneasy with the typical faculty member's belief that a college can be administered by any professor who chooses to leave his or her field for a couple of years, serve as an administrator, and then go back to his or her discipline.

We need to interpret for ourselves what we are doing, how to demonstrate it, and how to communicate it to nonbelievers, to the "infidels" as I call them. The fact that I use that term shows that I have not divorced my ego from this work. I'm still ego involved, pitting the believer against the nonbeliever as opposed to using professional judgment and demonstrating that a dollar invested in student affairs does this and that, which is demonstrably better than a dollar invested in some other activity.

G.K.: You mentioned ego involvement and inferred that being ego involved may not be appropriate for student affairs work today. Such an approach probably wasn't appropriate in the 1960s either, but, nonetheless, that's the way you were.

R.S.: The issue is really about commitment. I definitely was committed to the field of individual development, and I believed—and I still believe—that any individual in this world, to make a significant contribution, must also contribute to the development of others, whether it's religious beliefs or any other value domain. Administrators in complex enterprises such as colleges or universities today cannot survive mentally if they're challenged, tested, or required to devote 24 hours a day to the job. We must learn to get a little distance from our work. Maybe I say that because I was too committed. In retrospect, I recognize I didn't see enough of my family in the 1960s when they were growing up. Sunday morning was the only time I had off. I don't think that's realistic for the future, but also I don't think you can go the other direction and just be a "cool-hand Luke" administering a bureaucracy. Those people who do that are quickly identified and lose credibility and interest.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

G.K.: What role did your family play in your career?

R.S.: Marge supported me because she and I believe in and value the same things. We believe in individual involvement. I think the kids wondered what in the heck their dad was doing some of the time, particularly my younger one, Bruce. Once I was raising hell about something at home during the time he was a young radical in high school. He told me, "Don't bring your problems to me." In retrospect, I know he was questioning his role as a leader, and I should have recognized this and offered help to him. When he led a strike in the local high school, it was actually news to me. In my idealism, I thought a father and son should be close enough that no matter who I was, he would have

told me, "Dad, tomorrow I'm leading a strike." But he kept it from me—and very cleverly, I might add.

G.K.: Marge, as you look back, what do you think the kids would say about Bob's high level of involvement in and commitment to his work, which kept him away from home so much?

M.S.: When Bob was home, the boys spent all of their time with him, telling him everything. Ours was a very active household; we were not in a rut, there was no routine, and things were different all the time. They were always included in our entertaining, and we did a lot of that. We started out having all the residence hall staff for dinner once a year; when the group got too big, we would invite just the heads of the units. Later, when Bob got into international work, we had all the foreign students out to dinner. When the number of foreign students increased, we entertained by countries. We would have the Thailand students one night, the Afghanistan students another night, and so forth. And the boys met just about every foreign student who came to dinner.

Bruce and Jim particularly enjoyed our summer vacations that we took together as a family. Jim still talks about our trips to Mexico, how much fun we had and the unusual things that happened. The boys were a part of it all, and they really enjoyed it.

G.K.: Bob, how would you characterize your life?

R.S.: I've tried to make my life positive and interactive, almost assertive. I can't just stand back and be an observer. I get my zest out of having a difference of opinion with someone. I try to involve myself in important issues. I am always trying to learn about a new field, or a new part of the world, or a new issue.

My security or sense of well-being has come from trying to do the right thing and knowing I've tried rather than ducking the issue. "For whom does the bell toll?" It tolls for me. I guess I get my peace of mind out of trying to do the right thing, even though that means my own life may be a little less peaceful. In retrospect, I wish my life had been more peaceful at times, but I don't think

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I can ever find peace in that sense (although I've read Norman Vincent Peale and all that stuff). To some extent, this is a function of the times and may be exacerbated in the role of a college administrator. The world and the campus will never be uneventful or completely at peace. Life is more open now than when I was growing up. People who worry about "privacy"—and I'm not criticizing them—or worry about being bothered are fighting a losing battle. Our lives are not going to be private anymore. We are always going to be influenced by external events, whether it's an industrial accident in India or a war in the Middle East or an economic policy at home that seems to affect a particular sector of society unjustly or a change in campus policy that upsets students, parents, faculty members, or student affairs staff people.

G.K.: What do you think Bob Shaffer will be remembered for?

R.S.: Realistically, of course, I won't be remembered. I would like to be remembered as an individual who helped others be better than they would have been if they hadn't met me, hadn't studied under me, hadn't worked with me, or hadn't been involved with me in some activity.

Second, I hope that I'll be remembered for taking an interest in the individual, not letting the institution and its bureaucracy be

"I would like to be remembered as an individual who helped others be better than they would have been if they hadn't met me . . ."

more important to me than the individual. That meant at times I was perceived as easy or soft. I've often said, "If nobody will defend him, by God, I will," and I did. So I've kept thieves and drunks and others in school when they shouldn't have been. But I'd rather give a guy another chance than say, "You're out."

What will I be remembered for? Very little, probably, other than maybe as a person who helped others. I've just written 10 letters of recommendation, all for the same man who never studied or worked at IU. I feel that I should help anybody, anywhere, because it would pay off both for the world and for me. I'll help anybody.

Noteworthy Events in the Career of Robert H. Shaffer

- 1928-32 Mishawaka High School (IN)
- 1932-36 DePauw University, Greencastle (IN)
- 1936-41 Executive staff, Boy Scouts of America, New York
- 1939 AM awarded, Teachers College, Columbia
- 1940 Married Marjorie (Marge) Fitch
- 1941 Instructor, School of Business, Indiana University
- 1942-45 U.S. Army, World War II (Pacific Theater)
- 1945 PhD awarded, New York University
- 1945-55 Assistant and Associate Dean of Students, Assistant and Associate Professor of Business and Education, IU
- 1948-52 Associate Editor, Personnel and Guidance Journal
- 1951-53 President, American Personnel and Guidance Association
- 1955-69 Dean of Students, IU
- 1959, 1961 Agency for International Development and State Department Consultant, Bangkok, Thailand
- 1964-66 Vice-President, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- 1965-66 66 Chairman, Council of Student Personnel Associations
- 1967, 1970 AID Consultant, Kabul, Afghanistan
- 1969-72 Editor, NASPA Journal
- 1962-81 Professor of Business and Education, IU
- 1969-72 Chairman, Department of College Student Personnel Administration, IU
- 1970-81 Dean, Interfraternity Institute
- 1972-79 Chairman, Department of Higher Education, IU

- 1976 LLD awarded, DePauw University
- 1979-81 Chairman, Department of College Student Personnel Administration, IU, Executive Director, Center for the Study of the College Fraternity
- 1981 Professor Emeritus, IU
- 1983-84 Acting Dean of Students, IU—Northwest
- 1985 LLD awarded, IU

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"I would like to be remembered as an individual who helped others be better than they would have been if they hadn't met me . . ."

more important to me than the individual. That meant at times I was perceived as easy or soft. I've often said, "If nobody will defend him, by God, I will," and I did. So I've kept thieves and drunks and others in school when they shouldn't have been. But I'd rather give a guy another chance than say, "You're out."

What will I be remembered for? Very little, probably, other than maybe as a person who helped others. I've just written 10 letters of recommendation, all for the same man who never studied or worked at IU. I feel that I should help anybody, anywhere, because it would pay off both for the world and for me. I'll help anybody.

Noteworthy Events in the Career of Robert H. Shaffer

- 1928–32 Mishawaka High School (IN)
- 1932–36 DePauw University, Greencastle (IN)
- 1936–41 Executive staff, Boy Scouts of America, New York
 - 1939 AM awarded, Teachers College, Columbia
 - 1940 Married Marjorie (Marge) Fitch
 - 1941 Instructor, School of Business, Indiana University
- 1942–45 U.S. Army, World War II (Pacific Theater)
 - 1945 PhD awarded, New York University
- 1945–55 Assistant and Associate Dean of Students, Assistant and Associate Professor of Business and Education, IU
- 1948–52 Associate Editor, Personnel and Guidance Journal
- 1951–53 President, American Personnel and Guidance Association
- 1955–69 Dean of Students, IU
- 1959, 1961 Agency for International Development and State Department Consultant, Bangkok, Thailand
- 1964–66 Vice-President, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- 1965–66 66 Chairman, Council of Student Personnel Associations
- 1967, 1970 AID Consultant, Kabul, Afghanistan
- 1969–72 Editor, NASPA Journal
- 1962–81 Professor of Business and Education, IU
- 1969–72 Chairman, Department of College Student Personnel Administration, IU
- 1970–81 Dean, Interfraternity Institute
- 1972–79 Chairman, Department of Higher Education, IU

- 1976 LLD awarded, DePauw University
- 1979–81 Chairman, Department of College Student Personnel Administration, IU, Executive Director, Center for the Study of the College Fraternity
- 1981 Professor Emeritus, IU
- 1983–84 Acting Dean of Students, IU—Northwest
- 1985 LLD awarded, IU

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