

Easy To Forget, and So Hard to Remember

Memoirs of Selected Episodes

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(With Apologies to Rodgers and Hart)

Arthur Singer

INTRODUCTION

“As life is action and passion, it is required of a man to share the action and passion of his time at peril of being judged not to have lived.” Oliver Wendell Holmes

All memoirs are self-serving and mine are no exception. I try throughout, however, to credit the individuals from whom I got ideas and those who were my critical advisors.

I do not have an original mind. But, when I hear a good idea, I recognize it and act on it. There are many examples of that in what follows, and I always make clear an idea's provenance.

It has been frequently observed that luck plays a big part in life. For the most part, my luck was extraordinarily good. First, I married well. My wife, née Joan Cristal and known as Cris, had an old friend, Bill Jones, who introduced me to Max Millikan, a professor of economics at MIT and the Director of the Center for International Studies. He hired me and continued to guide me throughout my eight years at MIT and thereafter. He died at age 56 in December 1969. Max's genius was that he was able to nourish the highest intellectual scholarship and apply its findings to public policy. The encouraging smile over the bow tie launched many of us, and its memory has helped keep us afloat.

At MIT I was surrounded by intellectual giants. I worked closely with many of the best scientists and scholars in the world. And in my jobs thereafter, I continued to call on them. The experience I had and the people I met at MIT were the platform for all that followed.

I did no research for these memoirs. At age 80 my memory is not infallible. In fact, it is considerably less. So, for the sake of accuracy, I should call these episodic memoirs an approximation of the experiences recounted.

For the most part, I try not to generalize, philosophize, or draw lessons. I concentrate on the particulars. Occasionally I stray. But I quickly return to what Jack Webb used to say: “Just the facts, ma'am.”

FAIR HOUSING IN SUBURBAN BOSTON 1955-1960

When I was discharged from the Navy in 1955, my wife and I were living in a small apartment in Cambridge. With \$3,000 in the bank we decided to check out the possibility of buying a house in the suburbs.

One summer day we drove (a car was our other asset) to the western suburbs to look over the towns of Weston, Wayland, and Sudbury, etc. While wandering around a small model house in Wayland, a real estate agent took us under her wing. If we didn't like this house, she had many more to show us in our price range (\$15-20k).

Over the next couple of weeks she called us regularly with other houses to show us and to urge us to act – the market was going up, the banks were going to require larger down payments, and other inducements to act quickly. Her reasons may or may not have been true, but they worked. We found a house in Sudbury where our agent said “I guarantee you will be perfectly happy”. How could we resist such a guarantee! More of that later . . .

My wife and I had grown up in all-white, middle-class suburbs and attended nearly all-white colleges. I spent four years in the integrated Navy (all officers were white).

My friend David Ives was a Boston Brahmin, who had attended Harvard (roommate: Elliot Richardson). David was now working for the Wall Street Journal and had moved to Sudbury that summer.

Sudbury was an all-white town gradually transforming itself from big farms to suburban house lots as the farmers cashed in on their land. I don't really know why, but Ives and I decided to lead a fair housing movement. I don't believe we felt it important to live in an integrated town, or that we thought our children should go to racially mixed schools. But this was just after *Brown v. Board of Education* and, perhaps, that influenced us.

I think we probably just felt that the housing situation in Sudbury for Negro families was an injustice staring us in the face. There were no federal or state laws prohibiting discrimination. Individual home sellers could turn away Negro families and real estate offices could tell them nothing was available. Most Boston suburbs were out-of-bounds to Negroes.

We formed a committee of like-minded people and we found that adjacent communities were doing the same. So we joined forces in a loose alliance.

Ives and I visited real estate offices and asked them to refer Negro families to us. No offer was snatched up so fast. We visited owners with their houses on the market and tried to persuade them to sell to Negroes.

Mostly we failed but, now and then, we ran into an Eleanor Roosevelt. What a breath of fresh air that was!

Despite a low batting average, we kept at it, and a few Negro families moved to Sudbury. One case was of particular interest. A Negro Army Captain and his family wanted to buy a house in North Sudbury, not far from Fort Devens. The owner of the house had no problem, and they made a handshake deal.

Neighbors in the area soon landed on the owner and persuaded him to change his mind. He called me to renege on the deal. I called the Captain. He was used to it.

Several months later the owner called me to report that his house had not sold. Would the Captain still be interested? I called, he was, and the sale went through. Economics trumped neighbors, who, in time, came around.

Over several years about half a dozen Negro families moved to Sudbury. No big deal. Ives and I hardly felt as though we had accomplished much except to generate a lot of hostility among citizens. We were comforted by FDR's observation: "Judge me by my enemies."

But other towns made similar progress and, collectively, we lobbied for new legislation. We succeeded, and Massachusetts became the first state to pass a fair housing law making it illegal for house owners and brokers to discriminate. But the Fair Housing Committees were not finished.

We convened a conference to discuss our future strategy. I was asked to prepare a paper to keynote the meeting. I thought back to our experience when we were house hunting in 1955. Not only did we see many houses, but we had an agent who did many things in addition to showing us houses. She encouraged us and helped to overcome our anxiety of parting with our meager savings. She educated us on mortgages, taxes, and other home-owning responsibilities. She was doing her job to earn a commission. Occasionally, she was a pest, as many agents are. But had she left us alone, we might still be living in a small apartment in Cambridge.

For the conference paper I contrasted this treatment with what Negro families encountered. (This was depicted in an audio playlet written by A. R. Gurney, a member of our committee). Equality in the market – not just non-discrimination – should be our goal. And one way to achieve that was to create a new agency which would use the aggressive sales approach that white customers encountered.

The conference concluded by creating a not-for-profit agency called Fair Housing, Inc., and to locate it in Roxbury, the primary, Negro neighborhood of Boston. Under the leadership of Del Sachs, that agency had a long life and made slow but steady progress. Gordon Allport was right: contact erodes prejudice.

MIT 1955 - 1963

For the first few years at MIT I was the Administrative Officer of the Center for International Studies. I plan to tell a few stories that came after the Center, but these early years at MIT were the building blocks. I have already mentioned the key role of Max Millikan, but there were others – friends and mentors: Francis Bator, Lucian Pye, Don Blackmer, Walt Rostow, Alex Korol, Dick Hatch, Mary Burns, and many others. And I didn't just prepare the budgets and assign the offices. Max made sure that the job would be stimulating. I went to Washington often to visit the CIA – Richard Bissell and his assistant – responsible for monitoring an annual contract that provided the Center administrative support. I traveled around the world visiting the Brussels' World's Fair of 1958 (an MIT committee had helped plan the American Pavilion), Dan Lerner in Paris, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan in Rome, George Rosen in Bombay, and settled in for six weeks in Delhi where I established the Center's field office and hired the staff. On the way home, I spent a few days in Rangoon visiting Lucian and Mary Pye and family.

The Center was the first organized effort to tackle economic development. I attended all the staff lunches and seminars – my best educational experience. All in all, it was more like an elevated graduate program than a job. What an introduction to the world of work!

Then I moved on to Assistant Dean to John Burchard and my education continued. In this job I interacted with MIT scientists and engineers in particular episodes that I will recount.

MIT CENTENNIAL - 1961

MIT was founded as Boston Tech in 1861. (It qualified under the Morrill Act, which was signed by President Lincoln earlier that year, and continues to receive a small subsidy to this day.) In 1917 it was transferred from one building in Boston to a sprawling campus in Cambridge which continued to grow year by year. In 1950 MIT sponsored a Mid-Century Convocation chaired by John Burchard. The climax was a standing-room only session in the Boston Garden featuring a speech by Winston Churchill, who had been voted out of office in 1945 after leading the British to a victory in World War II.

When MIT's hundredth birthday was in sight for 1961, the administration turned again to John Burchard to run the show. Burchard assigned me to the centerpiece of the celebration. It was decided to invite "the hundred greatest scientists in the world" to be MIT's guests for the party. Of course, there would be speeches, panel discussions, seminars, and other duties for the guests. A committee, chaired by Jerry Weisner, and including Walter Rosenblith, Martin Deutsch, Vicki Weisskopf, and a few others, was convened to select the guest list. We met about ten times over a few months. For me, it was the best educational experience I ever had. Imagine some of the greatest scientists in the world deliberating over who were the greatest scientists in the world. Mid-way Weisner moved to Washington to become JFK's science advisor but he continued to serve as chairman. That meant many trips to D.C. for me to keep Jerry apprised of the committee's progress and to get his input. (Burchard had asked Weisner to invite JFK to be the main speaker. Jerry was confident that he could deliver the President, but he stalled in pinning him down. Burchard panicked and invited the British Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan, who accepted.)

When the 100 invitees and alternates had been decided upon, it was my job to try to get them there. Amazingly, practically all accepted. MIT, with its hugely distinguished faculty, was a magnet as was the list of invitees. I forgot how many Nobel Laureates were there, but it must have been a couple dozen. At that time, MIT itself did not have a Nobelist. In April they all arrived. Cambridge had never seen such a congregation of greats.

I won't even attempt to summarize the proceedings. I was too busy running around to see that everyone showed up at the right time and at the right location. Two highlights that I especially remember were speeches by Robert Oppenheimer and Edwin Land. Both spoke softly, poetically, almost spiritually. Each received a standing ovation. Their presence was exhilarating, but I'd be pressed to recount what they said.

On the final day of the Centennial celebration, all the guests gathered on the stage of Kresge Auditorium for a photo. Jerry Weisner said: "Get up here, Art. You did all the work." He positioned me prominently. The next day the photo was on the front page of the Boston Globe. The caption was: "The Hundred Greatest Scientists in the World."

MIT PRESS 1960

John Burchard was Chairman of the Board of the Technology Press, a subsidiary of John Wiley and Sons, a New York based commercial publisher specializing in science and technology. The Press was a one-man office that served, in effect, as an advance scout for Wiley for books written by MIT faculty. I felt that MIT should have a full-fledged university press and Burchard agreed to let me give it a try.

I convened a three-man advisory committee: Bill Spaulding, Chairman of Houghton Mifflin, Tom Wilson, Director of Harvard Press, and Datus Smith, President of Franklin Books (Formerly Director of Princeton Press.) I was not surprised when the committee in their report recommended that MIT break the cozy arrangement with Wiley and establish a full-fledged university press. They also recommended that the Institute's administration provide funds to get the new entity off the ground.

Burchard and I secured President Jay Stratton's approval but without a commitment of funds. That was left for later consideration. We then headed for New York to talk with Brad Wiley, President of John Wiley and Sons, about a divorce. To our pleasant surprise, he was fully supportive of the plan to establish the MIT Press and offered his help in any way he could.

I then began a search for a director. One of the first candidates I sought out was Irving Kristol, who was the VP of Basic Books. Kristol had a series of interviews at MIT and, when he finished, we went to the Faculty Club for drinks. I think he was positively disposed until we talked. I wanted him for the job but with eyes open. I warned him that the administration had not committed any funds and that the new director would have to keep after them. No one had put it to him that baldly and he didn't particularly like the prospect. He turned down the job. But he appreciated my candor. A few years later when he and Dan Bell founded The Public Interest, Irving asked me to be a member of the Publications Committee. Thus began three decades of always stimulating dinner meetings where I contributed little but took away a lot.

The first director of the MIT Press was Carroll (Curly) Bowen, who did an outstanding job of getting the new enterprise off the ground. Today the MIT Press is thriving.

PUGWASH 1961

After the MIT Centennial I found myself suddenly in demand as a conference manager. I decided to accept the offer from the Pugwash Committee.

Pugwash is a small town in Nova Scotia where Cyrus Eaton had an estate. In 1957, alarmed by the Cold War, Eaton offered his estate for a meeting of Soviet and American scientists to start a conversation. About eight or ten scientists met that year and started something. There have been at least one or two meetings every year since then including many more scientists from many more countries. They have all been known as Pugwash meetings, even though only the first few were actually held there.

In September, 1961, the Pugwash meeting was scheduled to be held in the United States for the first time. A steering committee had been formed and they had made preliminary plans. Harrison Brown of Cal Tech was chairman and Paul Doty, Don Brennan, Bentley Glass, and Eugene Rabinowitch were members.

Rabinowitch was born in Russia and was part of the physics team at Los Alamos. He was the founder of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists and the current editor. The assistant editor of the Bulletin was Ruth Adams, who had been Ms. Pugwash from the beginning. I was warned by several sources to beware of her since she would resent an intruder coming in as conference manager. (These warnings were wrong. Ruth welcomed me on board and did everything possible to assist me. We became good friends until she died in 2004.)

As conference manager, all the arrangements were turned over to me. My first job was to untangle some preliminary plans. The Committee thought it would be a good idea to have the conference at two sites: the American Academy estate in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts and the Aspen Institute in Aspen, Colorado. I doubted the practicality of this plan. But I wanted to visit Aspen so, obviously, a site visit was necessary on the Pugwash budget. (A large grant from the Ford Foundation was financing the conference.)

In the spring of 1961 Aspen was a different place than it is now since Hollywood and the 'beautiful people' have taken it over. It was a small mining town built in the nineteenth century. Walter Paepke, a Philadelphia millionaire, had become enchanted by it and decided to restore it. There was only a tiny airstrip near the

town. The flight from Denver in a small aircraft (the pilot and I) was beautiful and scary – flying close to the top of the Rocky Mountains, around peaks and clouds, being buffeted up and down and sideways by the wind – surrounded by spectacular scenery which I wish I could have enjoyed.

Aspen and the nearby countryside was one of the perfect spots in the world. It would have been nice to show off this part of America to the Soviet scientists, but the one-at-a-time trip from Denver was out of the question. Aspen was out for the conference but I spent three or four glorious days there making up my mind.

This occasion was probably the beginning of my practice of locating conferences in places where I like to go (Bermuda, Key Biscayne, Big Sur were among my Sloan Foundation favorites.) I'd always like Vermont, so I went touring around looking at big inns to see if any were suitable for a crowd of about fifty. Near the top of the state I found the Lodge at Smuggler's Notch at the base of Mt. Mansfield outside the village of Stowe. It was perfect. The Lodge itself was understated luxury. There was a separate large building for plenary sessions, nearby chalets for families, a music hall for chamber music concerts, a tavern next to the Lodge where some of the best conversations could take place, and all the amenities such as a large pool, tennis courts, a ski lift to the top of Mt. Mansfield, and a superior French restaurant. Best of all it had a manager, Ivor Petrak, with whom I hit it off instantly and who did everything imaginable to make the conference a success. I signed up the Lodge for two weeks in September for the exclusive use of the Pugwash crowd.

Having settled on the location, the next job was to build the infrastructure: support staff, transportation, entertainment, interpreters. (The Committee was deciding on conferees, except for the Soviets who chose their own.)

In June, Mary Morse showed up at my office. Mary had been working in London for Joseph Rotblat, who was the leader of the small group of UK scientists who had joined the Pugwash meetings. Rotblat was a Polish physicist who had fled to Britain in 1939. In 1943, he and several other scientists from the UK (including Klaus Fuchs) joined the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos. The context at that time was a race to beat Nazi Germany to the bomb. In early 1945, it was discovered that Germany had no bomb project but the

Los Alamos Laboratory proceeded full steam ahead. Since the race with Germany was illusionary, Rotblat quit and went back to England. He was the only one who took that course.

Back to Mary Morse. Since she had some Pugwash history, she volunteered to work for me on the forthcoming meeting. I hired her on the spot. She gave me valuable help through the summer and at Stowe. I also asked three of the best secretaries at the Center for International Studies to join the secretariat for two weeks in September. They thought that two weeks at a plush resort in Vermont sounded good so they accepted. It turned out to be a grueling experience of work, day and night. They did not thank me.

I went to New York to visit the UN in search of interpreters. Since the General Assembly was due to convene later in September, interpreters were available. They only worked one way, i.e., they would listen to Russian and speak in English or vice versa. So I hired four – two of each specialty. I thought we were all set. But late in the summer the General Assembly decided to start early. Three of my interpreters reneged. That left one man, Vladimir Pojadiev, who stuck to his commitment. For two weeks at Stowe, he was in the booth for all plenary sessions interpreting both ways – English to Russian and Russian to English. One man did the job of four. He saved the day.

I knew that Middlebury College had a strong language program with summer institutes in Russian. I visited them and recruited five or six Russian language students to attend the conference as consecutive interpreters. Pojadiev was a simultaneous interpreter in a booth with a headset. The Middlebury students hung around groups of conferees in informal settings and translated for Americans and Soviets. They were not fluent in Russian but they got the job done.

Klaus Liepman was the head of the Music Department at MIT. I was chatting with him one day about Pugwash and he came up with a great idea. Marlboro College in Southern Vermont was the scene of a music festival each summer. Musicians from symphony orchestras across the country came to Marlboro to study with masters like Rudolph Serkin, who was the founder, and Pablo Casals. Liepman knew Serkin and offered to introduce me. So the two of us drove to Marlboro and met the great man who didn't act like a

great man, who frequently have a case of 'importantitis'. Not Serkin. We arranged to have a group of Marlboro musicians come to the Stowe conference and perform chamber music concerts in the evenings. They were a great success.

One small glitch. There wasn't room to accommodate the Marlboro group in the main Lodge. We put them up in a luxury chalet nearby. I didn't count on the artists' temperament. They felt they were being treated like second-class citizens, stuck off. I asked Paul Doty, a distinguished Harvard chemist with whom I had developed a close rapport, to ask some of the scientists to mingle with the musicians after their evening concert. Doty got the best including a couple of Nobelists (Igor Tamm, Ed Purcell) to make the musicians feel part of the enterprise. Problem solved.

The Soviet delegation flew from Moscow to London. There they learned that the USSR had resumed atomic tests. (There had been an informal moratorium which both sides had observed since 1953.) They were not given instructions on how to explain or respond to questions on the breaking of the moratorium.

The Soviet scientists proceeded to fly to New York where a chartered plane flew them on to Burlington, Vermont. Limousines drove them on to The Lodge at Smuggler's Notch. They stonewalled all inquiries about the resumption of tests until they received instructions. When they did hear from Moscow, there was still little enlightenment. The moratorium was not binding. The U.S. had held more tests before the moratorium. The USSR was merely trying to equalize.

I won't attempt to deal with the substance of the conference sessions. There were moments of intense friction but the Pugwash veterans tried to damp them down. They understood that Pugwash was intended to find consensus, not to fight the Cold War. This was not always easy. This was the period of maximum tension. Gary Powers' U-2 had been shot down in May, 1960 leading to a shambles at the Paris Summit. JFK had met with Khrushchev in Vienna in June 1961 – a meeting that probably shouldn't have been held so soon after the Bay of Pigs. The seventeen months that linked the Vienna meeting to the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis in November, 1962 was the most dangerous period of the entire cold war.

One bright spot in the conference was a visit by Robert Frost, accompanied by Stewart Udall. For me, it was a memorable moment to meet the great poet. And there was the beautiful setting of the Vermont countryside. Not Aspen, but perhaps even better in its way. As Bernard DeVoto wrote: "Vermont is a place you start to miss before you have even left."

Ivor Petrak offered me a complimentary few days at the Lodge when the fall colors arrived. He told me to bring my wife and another couple. So the coda to the Pugwash conference was a visit to Stowe in October with Pete and Molly Gurney, with whom we have shared so much over the years. We even included six month old Charlie. I'm sure he remembers it well.

AFRICA - 1962

During my early years at MIT I worked primarily with social scientists and humanists. The Centennial and Pugwash episodes brought me into contact with scientists, many whom I knew only casually before they became my working colleagues. That continued when I became involved in mathematics education in sub-Saharan Africa in 1962.

Jerrold Zacharias, Professor of Physics, was a general mover and shaker in education. A couple of years earlier, Zach had attended a conference in Rehoboth on African modernization. Most of the talk had been about high technology like nuclear reactors. On the last day a Rev. Calker, the Rector of Forah Bay College in Sierra Leone, got the floor. His message was that the conference had been focused on irrelevancies. Most of the citizens of the countries of Africa believed in a variety of superstitions, magic, supernatural forces. They knew nothing about cause and effect, not to mention elementary science and mathematics. Any effort to help Africa must concentrate there.

Zacharias was impressed with Calker's message and, when Calker died in a plane crash on his way home from Rehoboth, he took up the cause as a memorial. In the summer, 1961, he directed an eight week summer study at Endicott House. Africans and Americans spent the summer surveying the field. At the end of the summer I asked Max Millikan, who had participated, how it went. He said he initially thought it was incoherent bushwah, but he had just read the final report and realized how much had been accomplished. That was my first introduction to Steve White who wrote the report.

Zach, with whom I had become acquainted through the Centennial and Pugwash, asked me to go to Africa in the spring of 1962 to organize a summer-long curriculum workshop in elementary math for African schools. He advised me to see Steve White who would give me instructions. I met Steve and then began a close collaboration on a host of projects for the next three decades. Steve died in 1993 at the age of 77. He was a

partner and a friend of a rare kind. He didn't like many people.¹ I consider myself extraordinarily lucky that he liked me a lot (as I did him) and many of the accounts that follow will be about Steve and me.

On that first meeting, Steve went to the blackboard and listed the English-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Under each country he listed the names of people who had been involved thus far. They were primarily professors and teachers. He directed me to go out there, find a place to meet for two months, search out the names on the blackboard and try to sign them up, find others in any way I could, hire a local African to be the contact man, and do whatever else was necessary. (Steve didn't believe in detailed instructions. I would figure out what to do when I was there.) A few weeks later I was off to East Africa.

The University of Kampala (the capital of Uganda) was my first stop. It was considered a possible site for the summer study. But I quickly learned that it was in session during the summer and could not accommodate our group. About twenty miles away was Entebbe on the shores of Lake Victoria. Since I always preferred a comfortable hotel to college dormitories, I rented the beautiful Lake Victoria hotel for the summer. Now I had to find the participants. I visited schools and colleges in Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and others. I made a good start on the participation with one caveat – I had no way of judging the quality of the teachers. I signed them up and hoped that some of them would be good. I then left for West Africa.

I arrived in Accra, Ghana (after a harrowing night in Leopoldville Airport) and was met by Pat Suppes, who also became a life-long friend. Pat was trying out an elementary math curriculum, which he had developed for kids in East Palo Alto, in Ghanaian schools. We attended some classes and observed the teachers and students cope with Pat's innovative curriculum. Then we proceeded to the hotel and dinner. Pat revealed that it was his fortieth birthday so a celebration was called for. It wasn't hard to find. The streets of Accra were filled with music and dancing – the “highlife” where everyone seemed to dance with everyone else. Pat and I, after a few libations, were in a relaxed and merry mood. We joined in the street scene, were fully

¹ Except for Les Midgeley, I. I. Rabi, Jim Killian, Robert Oppenheimer, Ed Purcell, Jerrold Zacharias, Howard Hiatt, Groucho Marx, Al Bowker, Frank Loesser, Julian Schwinger, George Miller, Mike Bessie, A.J. Liebling, Din Land, E.B. White, Red Smith, etc.

accepted, and highlife-ed the night away. I, then, continued my recruitment for the summer study in other West African countries, particularly Nigeria, which was then as now the largest country in Africa. Suppes and I then went to London to continue his fortieth birthday celebration for a few days and then home.

I spent two days out of the office writing a report on what I had done. I even wrote a letter of invitation to each of the participants I had invited – not a form letter but personalized in each case. I should not have bothered. Steve threw them away. He had his own idea about how the project should be presented and what the letter of invitation should say. I never gave a draft to Steve again. Should a rookie give suggestions to Ted Williams on how to hit?

UPON LEAVING THE CENTER

By Roger Bull

(1963– At a farewell party given for me by the
MIT Center for International Studies)

A.L. Singer, Dean of All,
Isn't really nine feet tall.
Has a pair of hands, no more,
Keeps just two feet on the floor.

Headwise, only needs one hat,
Gets spots on his best cravat.
Sometimes has to watch his weight,
Sometimes reaches meetings late.
Has been known to go to bed,
With the New York Times unread.
Hits his serve out, now and then,
Doesn't fill his fountain pen.
Sometimes fails to tell his frau,
Where he can be reached, and how.
Can't remember all the dough,
Budgeted ten years ago.
Can't drink more than a fifth,
Without getting slightly stiff.
Isn't really such a dealer-
Hasn't written Christine Keeler.
Hasn't traveled half as far,
's Cooper, Leika, or Schirra.
Talks forever on the phone,
Can't leave well enough alone.
Don't expect he'll call you back –
Gone to Africa with Zach.
Takes away Jack Horner's prize-
Every finer in two pies,

A.L. Singer, Dean of All,
Isn't really nine feet tall.
He just seems that way to those.
Who have to fill his shoes, or clothes.

So what's all the fuss about?
Let him go. We'll do without.
Leave us our old row to hoe,
We shall reap as we shall sow.
Fair enough. But here's the stinger:
Sewing's slow, without A. Singer.

FOUNDATION YEARS

Before continuing to recount episodes during my years at Carnegie and Sloan, I will make a short detour to express some thoughts about foundation work in general. Don't worry – I won't turn philosophical or pedantic. I'll return to specifics quickly.

Nothing would strike your average citizen as more bizarre than the business of giving away someone else's money, and nothing would appear easier. To be sure, the man who makes his living as a foundation officer is likely to be bizarre. But ease is another matter.

The primary source of uneasiness is the awareness that he is obliged to operate within a dense cloud of ignorance. He never quite knows what he is doing nor why he is doing it, and when he finishes he never quite knows what he has done.

There is malaise to be found in the recognition that no sound basis in theory or in fact exists upon which his decisions are being made. There is no body of praxis on which he can rely. It is an old story: Under conditions of stress we are more at ease in the presence of constraints than without them. At least it sounds as if it should be an old story.

At Carnegie and Sloan I learned that the best foundation officer is proactive, i.e. he decides what he thinks should happen and then he makes it happen. (Of course, he is enabled by a vault full of money.) Some of the time he may be right and he will have made a difference. When he is wrong, he will have wasted some of his benefactor's money. But it keeps rolling in. Of course, he has to deal with colleagues, and trustees. But if he has a good batting average, they will not usually get in the way.

On to particulars.

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION - 1964

In 1964, in my first year at the Carnegie Corporation, John Gardner, president of Carnegie, was serving on LBJ's task force on education. He told me that a major element of new legislation would be research. About seven or eight universities around New York City had already struck out in their efforts to raise funds from the Office of Education. With new money for research on the horizon, I thought the NYC proposers should collaborate.

I called all the presidents and was stonewalled. Then I called the Chancellor of the City University of New York, whom I had never met, Albert Bowker. He picked up his own phone, I made my pitch, and he said he'd drop in to see me that afternoon.

Beginning that day, Bowker and I became close friends. He is an unpretentious, modest man whose manner belies his accomplishments. I think he's the most important figure in American higher education in the second half of the twentieth century. After the war he was a key figure in building Stanford to the "Harvard of the West," he built CUNY from four campuses to twenty-three and a student body of 250,000 students. Then he protected Berkeley from the budget threats of Ronald Reagan's governorship. And he was the first assistant secretary for higher education in the new Dept. of Education.

With Bowker aboard, the other universities quickly joined the collaborative effort. We began to meet.

At the meetings there was lots of wrangling. Bowker was a passive chairman and we weren't making much progress. I called Steve White. He attended one meeting, didn't say anything, and didn't take any notes. He used to say: "If I can't remember it, it's not worth remembering." In 1993, he couldn't remember me. (Of course, in my defense, it was a few days before he died of Alzheimer's disease.)

In a few days he turned up with a 25 page prospectus. I took it to Bowker. We sat in his window overlooking 95th Street drinking scotch. Bowker started reading White's paper. After about five pages he looked up and said, "He's really good, isn't he?" Bowker, in his typically understated way, immediately

recognized White's brilliance. From that point on, we made rapid progress. White's prospectus became the basis of a proposal to the government, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 became law and, as Gardner had forecast, included Title IV for research. The NYC proposal was funded. The Center for Urban Education was launched.

CUE was a joint project of eight universities. Bowker was chairman. Bob Dentler from Columbia was director. For many years it produced important research on urban schools.

JFK ORAL HISTORY - 1963

In mid-December 1963, John Gardner asked me to join a meeting. His visitors were Robert Kennedy, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., McGeorge Bundy, and Fred Dutton. This was about three weeks after JFK's assassination.

Bobby Kennedy was seeking a grant from Carnegie to finance a unique kind of oral history of the Kennedy administration. He proposed to have members of the administration interviewed (and recorded) by other members of the administration. For example, Robert McNamara might be interviewed by Douglas Dillon, who in turn, might be interviewed by Dean Rusk, and so on. He thought that insiders could bring their experience to the process and conduct richer interviews. And he wanted to start right away while memories were fresh.

John Gardner reacted like any experienced foundation executive would. He did not challenge RFK's idea but he wanted to explore it further and consider the alternatives. He raised the question whether it might be better to wait awhile until emotions were under better control. He also suggested that the Columbia Oral History Project might be utilized.

Bobby went ballistic. He stormed around the office cursing John and insulting him. ("I didn't come here to waste time listening to nonsense from some functionary.") He marched out slamming the door.

Bobby, of course, was still in the throes of grief and his emotions were raw. His patience was non-existent. The only way that Gardner would have satisfied him was to write a check for \$250 thousand. No conversation, just a grant.

Gardner shortly left the office. Arthur, Mac, Fred, and I were left there not knowing what to say. After a short time, Arthur and Mac left to find Bobby. Fred Dutton and I went to my office to see if we could salvage the project.

I thought it was basically a good idea. Having had some experience with "professional" oral historians, I didn't think they were needed. But I did think the project should be sponsored by a university. Dutton, a

pragmatic man, said "Okay, but let's make it Harvard". We agreed that Oscar Handlin, an American historian, would be the right guy as overseer if we could get him.

On the issue of timing, Dutton's view was that it would take some time to organize the project, so there would inevitably be a delay of at least several months. We agreed that Fred would send me a proposal; I would try to recruit Handlin as project director, after checking with Mac and Arthur and securing their assistance. And we would go from there.

And we did. Handlin accepted, Fred produced a good proposal, Gardner, with no scars from Bobby's behavior, approved it for the Board.

The oral history now resides in the Kennedy Library near Boston. Much of it is fascinating.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CARNEGIE COMMISSION

I

One afternoon in the autumn of 1964, I was day-dreaming at my desk at the Carnegie Corporation of New York. A ringing phone interrupted my reverie. It was David Ives, an old friend from Boston who was then working at WGBH-TV. He and Hartford Gunn, WGBH's General Manager, were drafting a speech for Ralph Lowell, Chairman of WGBH, for a December convention for the National Association of Educational Broadcasters. Ives and Gunn were considering writing a proposal into Lowell's speech calling for a Presidential Commission on the financing of educational television. They wanted to talk it over and, specifically, to raise the question of whether a privately, sponsored commission might be preferable to a Presidential one.

My reaction, generally, was to cheer them on. I suggested a private commission with the President's blessing, and that the scope of the commission be broadened to include the nature of educational television, not just its financing. At that moment, stimulated by Ives's call, the Carnegie Commission was born.

II

Or it might be more prudent to say it was conceived. The idea needed the approval of my boss, John Gardner, Carnegie's president, and, subsequently, the Carnegie Corporation's Board of Trustees. My talk with Gardner was short. He immediately backed the idea, but, as a much more experienced foundation officer than I, he expressed concern that we might be turfing on the Ford Foundation, the principal funder of educational television. He quickly reached out to Henry Heald, Ford's president. Heald's view was that Carnegie was a better sponsor for such a commission since it would bring a disinterested perspective. Ford was already deeply involved; Carnegie was virgin. (This agreement between Gardner and Heald was ignored in early 1966 after McGeorge Bundy became Ford's president. Bundy either didn't know about the agreement or did not feel he was bound by it. But that is not part of my story.)

III

If the President's blessing was to be obtained (and I thought it would facilitate organizing the Commission), I needed a way in to the White House. Fortuitously, Douglas Cater, whom I knew from his days at Reporter Magazine, was the President's staff man for communications. We talked and he agreed to try to get the President's endorsement when the Commission was announced. (The President subsequently gave his blessing with the proviso that J.C. Kellam, the manager of the Johnsons' Texas broadcasting properties, be a member of the Commission. No problem.)

IV

The next step was, perhaps, the most important in organizing the Commission. Even though we had no Board-approved grant, no chairman, and no Commission members, I felt it imperative to hire Stephen White as a Commission staffer. White had been a friend for several years, and we had often talked about the potential of non-commercial television. I considered him the most knowledgeable, imaginative – indeed, brilliant – person on this topic (and many others). Furthermore, he was a writer of huge talent. We talked, he gave notice at CBS where he was currently employed, and soon joined the enterprise. We both agreed that the Commission should not deal with instructional television for the schools – that was another job – but that it should focus on prime time. White christened the new beast “Public Television”.

V

Next came the chairman. A somewhat impromptu lunch was put together at Christ Cella's Restaurant in New York. Present were Everett Case, Chairman of NET, Lloyd Morrisett of Carnegie, David Ives of WGBH, Max Millikan of M.I.T., Steve White, and me. Someone (perhaps Gardner) had mentioned James B. Conant as a possible chairman. White and I worried that his interest would tend toward schools so we sought an alternative of equal stature. White and I had recently worked at M.I.T., and Millikan was still a

notable professor there. One of us nominated M.I.T.'s chairman James Killian, and, with three votes, it was a done deal – subject, of course, to Gardner's and Killian's acceptance.

VI

Why did we think Killian was such a good choice? First, he had been president and chairman of the world's leading technical university. Second, he had a broad acquaintance among the country's scientists and engineers, and they universally respected him. Third, and perhaps most important, he had been summoned by President Eisenhower to Washington after the Soviet Union's Launch of Sputnik in 1957. He organized the President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC) to advise the government on a broad range of scientific technical issues. In this role he dealt with many executive branch agencies and committees of Congress. In short, he knew his way around Washington. Since I was convinced that a successful commission had to be linked to the political powers that would deal with its recommendations, Killian seemed like an ideal choice for chairman. Gardner invited him; he accepted; and, in the end, we could not have done better.

VII

Killian, Gardner, White, and I then proceeded to recruit the other members of the Commission. Killian got Edwin Land, perhaps the most important member, not only for what he contributed to the Commission's deliberations, but for his testimony before Congress. He painted a lyrical vision of the future of public television that inspired everyone. Killian also recruited Lee Dubridge, president of Cal Tech.

Gardner got old friends James B. Conant and Terry Sanford, who first put forth the concept that led to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

White invited his friend Ralph Ellison. I invited my acquaintance Rudolph Serkin, who treated the Commission to several private piano concerts. I also invited Leonard Woodcock, who turned out to be one of the most valuable members.

The necessary formalities were carried out by the Carnegie Board, providing the appropriation to finance the work of the Commission. White and I rented a small office suite on New Street in Cambridge to be near the Chairman. We hired some staff: Hy Goldin from the FCC; A.R. (Pete) Gurney, soon to be a celebrated playwright; Mark Harris already a celebrated author (Bang the Drum Slowly); and Greg Harney from WGBH. I visited the three heads of the commercial networks to see that they were comfortable with the emerging public television. They were. All the preliminaries were completed. The Carnegie Commission on Educational Television was launched.

AFTERWORD

My story of origins is told. But I am compelled to add a coda. In 1938, E. B. White wrote in Harper's Magazine: "I believe television is going to be the test of the modern world, and that in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision, we shall discover either a new and unbearable disturbance of the general peace or a saving radiance in the sky."

During the Commission's work Steve White, who was acquainted with E. B. White (no relation), wrote to him. Steve reminded him of what he had written in 1938 and asked what his 1966 thoughts were. E. B. White wrote back as follows:

Non commercial television should address itself to the ideal of excellence, not the idea of acceptability -- which is what keeps commercial television from climbing the staircase. I think television should be the visual counterpart of the literary essay, should arouse our dreams, satisfy our hunger for beauty, take us on journeys, enable us to participate in events, present great drama and music, explore the sea and the sky and the woods and the hills. It should be our Lyceum, our Chautauqua, our Minsky's and our Camelot. It should restate and clarify the social dilemma and the political pickle. Once in awhile it does, and you get a quick glimpse of its potential.

Thus inspired, Steve White wrote the Commission's report: PUBLIC TELEVISION: A PROGRAM FOR ACTION, which led in short order to the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

SINGAPORE 1964

In the spring of 1964 MIT was asked by the State Department (CIA) to send a consulting team to Ngee Ann College in Singapore. (Nanyang University had been infiltrated by communists.) MIT sent Lucian Pye who selected me as his partner.

Pye was born in China and spoke fluent Chinese. He was an expert on that part of the world. We had been close friends since 1956. I was honored to be paired with him on this mission.

We met in Saigon where Pye was a consultant to the South Vietnamese government. (Four years later, the MIT students' anti-war chant was "We won't die for Pool and Pye".) When we arrived in Singapore our first meeting was with the new Prime Minister, Lee Kwan Yew, age 41. He is now 85 and he has been Prime Minister almost continuously.

Singapore was the richest country in Southeast Asia. Although it was a part of Malaysia, it had legal autonomy in many areas, in particular, education.

Ngee Ann College was a private, small college with big aspirations — far beyond its resources, financial and personnel. I had recently visited the California Community colleges for Carnegie Corp. and proposed that model for Ngee Ann.

It fell flat. Aspirations such as "The MIT of the East" were not satisfied with a goal of LA City College.

In much of the developing world there is widespread and profound concern with the legal standing of degrees. There is also a general belief that academic standards mean the standards of foreign institutions. To achieve high standards attention must be concentrated on international, i.e. British, practices and not on success in preparing students for local tasks. In Singapore, the criteria of quality had been those of the international academic community, not those of relevance to local needs. Leaders were willing to support, in principle, the idea of a community college. But, since they were so sensitive to standards, it made it more

difficult for them to accept, in practice, an unconventional pattern at Ngee Ann. Thus, at the time, we did not succeed in selling Singapore an export from California.

Many years later we learned that Ngee Ann College was beginning to introduce vocational curricula into its program. So perhaps we had a little influence, but it took a long time to gestate.

After Singapore we visited Kuala Lumpur and Penang and then spent a few days in Hong Kong where the Pyes were living for the summer.

In April 1965, Lucian authored an article about our mission to Singapore. He was typically generous to identify me as co-author.

Lucian Pye died in September 2008.

THE PUBLIC INTEREST 1965

I have already written about my meeting with Irving Kristol at MIT and, subsequently, how he invited me to join the Publications Committee of The Public Interest. We met quarterly for a dinner – seminar at the Century Club in New York or at a Washington hotel. Irving Kristol was the original neoconservative. In his case the word was properly used-new conservative, former liberal. Irving had been associated with ENCOUNTER, REPORTER, and BASIC BOOKS. He lost faith in political liberalism during THE GREAT SOCIETY when he felt that the government interventions didn't work. The big exception, of course, was Medicare and Medicaid.

Kristol devised an ingenious formula for The Publications Committee's composition. Half were smart, intellectual businessmen, mostly from Wall Street. The other half were academics, mostly social scientists, interested in public policy. The business types enjoyed mixing it up with the academics and vice-versa. The first group subsidized the magazine. The second group wrote for it. Some of the academics I knew but over thirty years I got to know them much better – Jim Wilson, Dan Bell, Nat Glazer, Marty Feldstein, Pat Moynihan (who continued as a member after he became a senator). One of the businessmen became a close friend-Martin Segal. Marty became bored with Wall Street after awhile and, having made his bundle, was free to pursue his real love-the arts. He was Cultural Affairs Commissioner for New York City, chairman of City Center, chairman of Lincoln Center, and painted in his leisure time. Segal came to the U.S. from Russia as a teenager. He had no higher education, but it didn't matter. He is very smart, a great manager, and has a winning personality. He learned as he lived. He became one of my favorite people. When I was on the visiting committee of the CUNY Graduate Center, I nominated him for an honorary doctorate. It was his first-though many came later- and I was very proud, sitting anonymously in the audience, when the citation was read and the degree presented.

One night Cris and I had dinner at the Segals. Two other couples were guests. One was Mr. and Mrs. Benny Goodman.

For the most part, The Public Interest was a conservative group and the content of the magazine (a quarterly) reflected this. But to a man, they were knowledgeable, smart, intellectual, and cordial. I contributed little but was glad to be there. Liberals who think they are the only ones who understand how the world works, should be exposed to The Public Interest Conservatives. They would be humbled, as I was. But not converted.

Pat Moynihan and I became great friends. He did me several favors when he worked in the Nixon White House. One night we sat in the Biltmore Bar (a great men's bar now gone) for several hours drinking scotch. It was just after the Moynihan Report on the Negro family. Many civil rights activists attacked the report. It is now considered prescient. But then Pat was irritated. It got late and we were drunk. I had already checked into the hotel and Pat decided to do the same. He had a wallet full of credit cards but refused to show the clerk anything but his White House pass. The Assistant Manager was called. Pat wouldn't budge. "There are only 130 people in the world who have this pass and I demand that this hotel give me a room." The hotel stood firm, Pat marched out into the night.

But I'm straying from the Public Interest. In the Reagan years, the magazine published some pieces on supply-side economics, which even I know is nonsense. Bob Solow quit The Publications Committee. I probably should have too, but I enjoyed the group and found it stimulating – particularly Irving, Pat, and Marty who is still going strong at 93.

TITTICUT FOLLIES 1967

I got to know Fred Wiseman before he began making documentary films. He was working for a new think tank in Cambridge. I was president of EDC which had a state-of-the-art film studio for making education films. I forget how we met. We'd both gone to Williams College, one class apart, but hadn't met there.

He made his first film, Titticut Follies, and invited me and Cris to attend a private screening. There were only a few people there. Al Sachs dean of the Harvard Law School and his wife Del were there. I don't remember who else. The film had been shot at the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Elliot Richardson, Massachusetts Attorney General, had arranged access.

Wiseman's style was what is called cinema verité. No narration, no music, no beginning, no end. Just an open camera recording what people do and say-and editing. He has now made more than thirty films in the same style.

I was overwhelmed by Titticut Follies. I thought it was the best documentary film I'd ever seen. The small gathering seemed to agree. But there were problems with its release. Elliot Richardson felt Wiseman had exceeded their agreement and was considering draconian rules to ban film-makers from all state institutions. And also to take Wiseman to court to prevent the film from being shown.

Richardson convened an advisory committee. I was a member – talk about conflict of interest. The committee was able to persuade Elliot not to close state institutions to other film-makers but he was determined to have the courts ban Titticut Follies. He would argue that the film invaded the privacy of the patients.

Wiseman asked me to testify in court as an expert witness. I agreed. So as a member of Richardson's advisory committee, I was prepared to testify for Wiseman to argue for redeeming social value trumping privacy. In the end, I was not called. Blurring the patients' faces was the court's decision. However,

Titticut Follies, a brilliant, original, historic film would be banned in Massachusetts. Apparently, it was too expensive to blur the faces so Wiseman went on to his next project.

Many years later, a Massachusetts judge ruled that the patients in question had died and Titticut Follies was approved for screening in the state. Big deal. By that time Wiseman's films of other institutions had been critically acclaimed unanimously and he was considered the best documentarian in history. Massachusetts was late to the game.

After Titticut Follies and a few other films, I nominated Wiseman for a MacArthur Foundation "genius award." I had no status as a MacArthur scout, but my letter must have been persuasive. Wiseman won. He called me at 5 am with the news. Much later, when I was an official MacArthur scout, my nominations all failed.

ONE NATION, INDIVISIBLE? 1968

I

In the fall of 1961, Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris, NY Yankee outfielders, were chasing Babe Ruth's record of 60 home runs in a season. It had stood since 1927 as one of the immortal icons of the national pastime. After 154 games, which previously had constituted a full season, Mickey and Roger fell short. Mantle was injured about then and could not play out the season. Maris kept closing on Ruth's record for the next eight games. The full season was now 162 games. Maris hit 61 home runs. Some so-called baseball experts think the record is tainted because of the extra games. They are wrong.

That fall the President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC) had been broken down into subcommittees, one of which was science education. The Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 had led to the panicky reaction that the U.S. was trailing the U.S.S.R. in science and engineering education. Edward Purcell, the Nobel physicist from Harvard, made the comment at a meeting of the subcommittee that if he were teaching high school physics that September he would incorporate the Maris chase of Ruth's record into the curriculum. After all, there was plenty of physics in baseball – force, momentum, optics, etc. But his central point was that the teacher would not have to generate student interest. It was already there in abundance.

II

That anecdote stuck with me for many years. I finally found the occasion to act on it. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In the weeks that followed, schools were in turmoil. Never had conflict between blacks and whites been so sharply defined and so agonizingly experienced. Education, in its accepted sense, had very nearly come to a halt in inner-city schools. Even in all-white suburbs, students found it impossible to fix their attention on arithmetic or social studies. Arithmetic was irrelevant and social studies was clearly leaving a great deal out.

III

There was a need. It was answered during the days following the assassination in different ways. A few of those responses coalesced in the offices of Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts, where I was president.

From the District of Columbia came Mary Lila Sherborne, an associate of EDC, to report that the Cardoza district, in which she taught, was on the verge of education anarchy and perhaps even physical dissolution. She and the teachers she worked with had all but abandoned the ordinary curriculum and were concentrating their educational activities on biographical material dealing with Dr. King. But they needed help.

From Brandeis University came Lawrence Fuchs, Professor of American Studies, and an associate of EDC. Professor Fuchs saw the moment as one in which television destined for schools might make a real contribution. He saw in EDC the institution that might organize and coordinate that effort if it could raise the money. And within EDC there was a staff, moved and troubled by the assassination, and anxious to make some effective response.

These forces and others bore down on me. With Ed Purcell's 1961 notion of how to use a major event to teach still in my mind, my response was immediate and direct. In a matter of days, One Nation, Indivisible? took shape.

IV

I quickly received approval from the major networks and National Educational Television (NET) to have access to their journalistic material dealing with race relations and promises to permit its use. For the commercial networks, such liberality was unprecedented. At EDC I began to gather a staff to prepare associated printed materials, and from the Boston public TV station (WGBH) a commitment to assist in whatever television production might be needed.

Jim Koerner dashed off a brief outline but there was no time to set it down on paper in the form that foundations were accustomed to. Fuchs, Koerner, and I marched off to New York to see Ed Meade and Fred Friendly at the Ford Foundation. They listened to our proposal, fine-tuned it here and there, and then Friendly excused himself to go see McGeorge Bundy, Ford's president. He brought back a half million dollars, which was my estimate of the cost. It may be doubted whether the Ford foundation, or any other major foundation, has ever made such a grant in such a period of time on the basis of absolutely no bureaucratic folderol. It was just as well; I had already begun spending money that it was not clear I possessed.

V

The next stop was at Newsweek Magazine. Could Newsweek publish and deliver, over a period of one weekend, printed materials for students and teachers – materials that were not yet written or even outlined? No problem, said Newsweek, we do it all the time. And no charge.

Finally, before beginning the creation of the TV and written materials, I thought that a black and white steering committee of distinguished citizens would give confidence to school principals to permit the project into their classrooms. They would not be able to screen the TV or review the written materials, which would arrive at the starting point.

I went after James Farmer, Ralph Ellison, Carl Stokes, James Allen, John Gardner, and Francis Keppel. They all signed on without hesitation. Most of them knew me and were betting on me not to do something stupid. Those that didn't know me I approached last, thinking that they would be influenced by those who had already signed on. I am sure that this committee's endorsement facilitated schools' participation.

Under the direction of Peter Dow, a number of EDC staff worked day and night. They were helped by others who offered to contribute: John Lewis, future distinguished Congressman, came to help from SNCC in Atlanta and Robert Trivers postponed his Ph.D. oral exams at Harvard, to join in. (Trivers is now a world class scientist.) Four weeks were spent editing the NET and network footage into coherent thirty minute

programs and preparing written materials to supplement and amplify those programs. As segments were completed teachers used them in trial classes, then gathered to discuss their successes and failures. The trials and discussions themselves were filmed and constituted a valuable set of teacher training films, which were presented by WGBH over the public network the week before the programs for students were aired. Finally, *One Nation, Indivisible?* went out over the air into the classrooms. Two million students watched, at a cost of fifty cents a student.

VI

The program was evaluated twice, immediately after the event and two years later. I will quote from the second of these evaluations:

We have gathered evidence that a major event can be the basis of a special program for the school curriculum. It can make a major difference in developing ideas and attitudes of the young. At least, *One Nation, Indivisible?*, as one specific example, provoked dialogue, rethinking, and a base for evaluating later experiences.

This was precisely what it was intended to do.

And the London Times Educational supplement wrote:

It may well be that the idea of using television in conjunction with specially prepared printed materials, as invented by EDC's *One Nation, Indivisible?* will be seriously developed in America as a means of bringing modern history into the schools in a powerful and compelling way.

It's still a good idea.

YALE 1968

In 1968, I spent several months on special assignment at Yale. I was between jobs. Joel Fleishman asked me to spend some time evaluating a few special programs at Yale to provide educational assistance to minority students.

I discussed the project with Joel and Kingman Brewster, Yale's president. I asked them to broaden my task to include Yale's approach to minorities generally. I was given an outstanding gift - a young graduate student as a full time assistant. His name was Jonathan Fanton. We immediately hit it off except for the meaning of full time. Jonathan thought that it meant 24/7 (to use the current cliché) while I, being more indolent, wanted to proceed at a more leisurely pace. We took a middle ground.

For a couple of months we spent most of our time interviewing deans, professors, students, community leaders, project directors, and counterparts from other Ivy League universities. Among the other things we discovered, Yale was way out in front in efforts to help minority students. This was largely due to the energetic entrepreneurship of Joel Fleishman. He had started the Yale Summer High School, the ISSP (Intensive Summer Study Program), and other projects. We looked at each of these projects and found they were all successful in their own terms. But, with the exception of ISSP, we did not recommend their continuation.

A few years previously, I had been part of a small committee appointed by MIT's president Jay Stratton to assess the Lincoln Laboratory and Instrumentation Laboratory. That committee concentrated its inquiry on the interface between the laboratories, which were located off-campus, and MIT central. Did faculty and students interact so that the Institute was enriched in its central mission? Or was MIT simply a contract agency for the government? That committee, chaired by Howard Johnson, who could soon become president of MIT, concluded that the off-campus labs were not sufficiently integrated with the main campus and that they did not contribute to MIT's central mission.

Carrying that principle in my head, I had lunch with Elting Morison, who had been an influential member of that committee at MIT and since moved to Yale. I asked if he thought the principle our committee had reached at MIT with reference to big government labs was applicable to small privately financed projects at Yale. His response was unequivocal: A university should not undertake a big government lab or a small foundation project if it wasn't directly integrated with the primary purposes of the institution. Morison's and my MIT experience bore directly on my Yale assignment and our recommendations.

ISSP was different. Designed imaginatively by Fleishman, it recruited high achieving students from historically black colleges to spend three summers at Yale in "intensive summer study". The goal was to motivate and prepare these students to pursue a Phd and become college teachers. If successful, this program stood to benefit Yale directly by enlarging the pool of qualified minority doctorates as potential faculty members. At the time about 40% of the students, after three summers at Yale, were in a Phd program. Fanton and I thought that ISSP should be the one program that should be continued and money should be found to assure its long range future. We so recommended.

On the more general matters of Yale vis-à-vis minority students and faculty, we found a serious deficiency and little effort. My recollection is that there was only one black faculty member in 1968. Our recommendation was that enlarging minority faculty and students be given higher priority.

So with our brief cases full of drafts, charts, memoranda, etc., we took off for La Jolla to visit my special weapon, Steve White. Steve was working at the Salk Institute and living in Rancho Santa Fe. We had worked together many times. We delivered our material. Steve said: "Get out and come back in three days."

Fanton and I checked into the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club and hung out at the beach, in the ocean, on the tennis courts, and in the bar.

After three days we returned to Rancho Santa Fe and Steve presented our report. It said all the things we wanted to say but much better than we could say them. There was one glitch. Steve referred to Yale as an

“elite” institution at its very essence. I thought it was clear that “elites” came in all colors and that students and faculty from minority groups should meet Yale standards. But, as it turned out, “elite” was a loaded word which was a red flag to many students.

The Yale Daily News attacked our report as too conservative, except for Paul Goldberger, who defended us eloquently. Doug Hallet, the fiercest critic, came to my office to apologize three years later saying: “There is a big difference between 20 and 23”.

HUNTER COLLEGE - 1970

In May of 1970, Jacqueline Wexler, President of Hunter College and a long-time acquaintance, gave me a call. Hunter was in trouble. In March, a large group of students seized the campus and brought the college to a halt. I had been reading about the crisis in the paper but did not think it had anything to do with me. President Wexler, whom I first got to know when she was a nun in St. Louis, had put together a task force of thirty members representing all the factions in the college. Fifteen were to be the first team and the other fifteen alternates. She needed a moderator from outside the college. She proposed to give the names of three candidates to the task force and let them choose. I would be third; there was practically no chance that I would be chosen. So I agreed. When the ballot was presented to the task force, the other two candidates, it turned out, were well known and had made some enemies. No one had heard of me, so I was selected. (I've always suspected that President Wexler expected this outcome. Ex-nuns can be devious.)

Then began a long, hard trudge. Jonathan Fanton, who had worked with me at Yale and on a job for CUNY's chancellor, joined me again for this one. His comradeship made the project tolerable and, at times, even fun. During the summer we met two evenings each week trying to hammer out a peace treaty – a new governance plan for the college. For a while we made no progress. Each member was eager to talk but not to listen. The scene was chaotic and going nowhere. I was a total amateur as a negotiator, but I had read a tip somewhere. I made a rule that before anyone could say his piece, he had to summarize the previous speaker's contribution. There were still plenty of arguments, but now we knew what they were about. If a point was agreed upon, I immediately put it on the blackboard under "SETTLED", so they would not return for a rematch. Gradually, the list grew.

Finally, in a marathon weekend session in Stratford, Connecticut, the group produced a "consensus document" based on the agreements reached in principle during the summer. The one issue remaining was what, if any, the students' role should be in evaluating teaching and having a voice in tenure decisions. These matters were the sole preserve of faculties at institutions of higher education. The very fact that it was

on the agenda was radical innovation. The solution was also radical. The new governance plan provided that “strongly negative student questionnaire responses for a faculty member five successive semesters are to be a strongly presumptive basis for a departmental recommendation of non-reappointment of this non-tenured faculty member”. Similarly, five semesters of strong favorable evaluations shall be “strongly presumptive evidence” for reappointment. A tenured faculty member who received five successive bad evaluations would be assigned to non-teaching duties.

With that provision agreed upon, we were finished. Whether the new plan worked or faltered, a visible mechanism had been hammered out at a once embattled and polarized campus.

An article in *Change Management* entitled “Consensus at Hunter” quoted a senior faculty member of the task force: “Singer is the most sensitive negotiator I have ever run into. He is sensitive to when to move, when to call for consensus, when to say “we’ve talked enough, now let’s get down to the nitty-gritty.” Despite the gratifying praise, my career as a negotiator was over. The work was too hard.

BOYNE HIGHLANDS - 1971

In 1971, I was asked to give a speech at a Public Television conference in Boyne Highlands, Michigan. My assignment was to compare the PTV system as it had evolved over its first four years with the Carnegie Commission report. Steve White and I worked on the speech together but I went alone to deliver it. I was unprepared for the bombshell it turned out to be.

If I had it to do over again, I would have started the speech with a preface that made the following points:

1. The Carnegie Commission invented Public Television and put it on the map.
2. The Commission established the breakthrough for Federal financing of public broadcasting.
3. The Commission recommended the formation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting which is now critical to its structure.

These points would have properly celebrated the historic contribution made by Carnegie. I might have quoted from the James Reston column in the New York Times in which he welcomed the Public Broadcasting Act as "the most important event in American education since the Morrill Act of 1861".

Instead I jumped into comparing the Carnegie Commission recommendations with the situation at that time (1971) and finding not much of a match. The principal area of mismatch was "localism" which the Carnegie report emphasized repeatedly. Carnegie recommended a system of local stations to serve their local communities using local talent and local events with a large part of the cost coming from an excise tax on the sale of television sets. Electronic interconnection would be a rare occurrence.

(It should be pointed out that the Carnegie model has never been tried anywhere and who knows if it would have succeeded. I suspect not.)

The system then existing, four years after the enabling legislation, was dominated by PBS which came on the scene in 1969. National programming for all stations distributed through the PBS network was the central

characteristic of the public television system. We had, in effect, a fourth network organized along lines similar to the commercial networks. This is precisely what the Carnegie Commission warned against.

John J. O'Connor, the television columnist of the New York Times wrote: "Among those leading the opposition to the growing power of PBS is Arthur L. Singer, Jr., instrumental in the initiation of the Carnegie report." (7/11/71) I had not intended to lead the opposition to anything. I was merely pointing out that the Carnegie Report had not been followed in respect to localism.

After O'Connor's column, the calls began. Jim Killian called to chastise me. Perhaps he wanted to maintain the fiction that everything was going as Carnegie recommended. Or perhaps he realized that the die was cast and it was pointless to rock the boat. Whatever the reason, he was angry. Hartford Gunn, the President of PBS, was also angry. So was the Ford Foundation (whom I implicated in the centralization). And others, too. There was no good reason for this reaction. Public Television was on a course from which there was no turning back. But, as I did not say in the preface to the speech, the Carnegie Commission made it all possible.

COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE - 1972

I was invited to be the Program Committee chairman for the 23rd Annual Conference of the Council on Foundations, May 9-12, 1972. I accepted reluctantly. These conferences were not particularly stimulating but I thought that I could add one or two wrinkles to liven up the proceedings. As it turned out, one new wrinkle occurred spontaneously, and one was planned.

The Program Committee's job was to select a theme for the conference and then to arrange four days of speakers and panels. "Foundations and Public Policy" was the theme we picked and we recruited a luminous cast of presenters. At the second dinner meeting, the featured speaker was Arthur Okun of the Brookings Institution (formerly LBJ's chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors.) His topic was "Economic Trends and Foundation Options" and he may have touched on that subject for a couple of minutes. But the big news of that day had been President Nixon's decision to expand the war in Vietnam by initiating bombing raids in Cambodia. Okun was infuriated by this new development in Southeast Asia and devoted most of his time to condemning the new bombing strategy, the war in general and Nixon. He was angry and made no bones about it. His speech was argued over by the participants for the next three days, both the substance and the appropriateness for the occasion.

My own view was positive. I admired Okun immensely and, in my eyes, he could do no wrong. He could speak on any topic he chose and, if it ruffled the feathers of some of the conferees, I didn't care.

The other new wrinkle was planned: we had a spy at the conference. Since these meetings were closed to outsiders, I thought it would be fun to bury an observer in the crowd and have him share his impressions at the end. My choice was Elting Morison. Armed with false credentials, Elting sat in on meetings, lunches, informal gatherings, etc. His speech at the end was hard-hitting, more criticism than praise, but all done in the inimitable Morison civilized manner. Some of the foundation types didn't like it. Too bad.

FOUNDATION LUNCHEON GROUP - 1973

The New York based foundations used to have a monthly lunch at a fancy hotel ballroom with a guest speaker which was usually one of their own. They were usually deadly dull. So when I was asked one year to be the chairman, I decided to try something different. Instead of luncheons, I organized a lecture series held monthly at 4 pm.

I arranged to use the Caspary Auditorium at Rockefeller University and to follow the lectures with a reception. The theme was "The Future in physics, biology, medicine, arts..." The lecturers were a stellar cast including Phil Morrison, Peter Medawar, Ed Wilson, Charles Eames, Herb Simon, Lewis Thomas, Robert Nesbitt, and a few others.

The setting was perfect. The lecturers were outstanding. The Series was well publicized. But only a handful showed up. That says something about foundation staffs.

Since that embarrassing attempt to stimulate the field, I have stayed away from collective foundation activity.

ECONOMICS - 1969

When I first joined the Sloan Foundation at the end of 1968, I thought that we should revive a program in economics which had been the starting point for the Foundation. Alfred P. Sloan had felt that the American free enterprise system was so successful for him, GM, and the US that it should be celebrated. So he made a variety of grants which were propagandistic. I thought we should resuscitate Sloan's original intent with a respectable economics program which would bury the earlier sleaze.

I wrote to a number of economists soliciting advice. (I never pursued this particular formula again.) Most of the replies were unhelpful. But, as I could have predicted, Bob Solow had an idea which formed the basis for a fifteen year Sloan program in economics. Microeconomics was losing out in graduate study to the more glamorous macroeconomics. New incentives were needed. Bob and I formed an advisory committee with him as chairman and me as note taker. Fellowships for graduate students who chose microeconomic topics for their dissertations was our chosen instrument to redress the balance. The advisory committee reviewed the departments across the country and chose the ones with strong microeconomists on the faculty. I then visited those departments and invited them to apply for a grant to set up a fund for graduate fellowships. They applied, many were chosen, five-year grants were made. At the end of that period, Paul Joskow was asked to evaluate the program to see if the swing toward microeconomics was happening. It was. So another five-year program was initiated with a new, younger advisory committee (Solow chairman). I visited economics department (many new ones) and invited proposals. A new set of grants was approved.

At the end of a decade the world had changed and the advisory committee decided to put our emphasis on open-economy macroeconomics. Departments applied, grants were made, fellowships were awarded and another tilt was exerted on economists in training. I suppose this might be called fine-tuning in economics education to meet the needs of changing conditions. As long as Bob Solow was in charge, the advisory committee had my confidence and that of the Sloan Board. Fifteen years after we started the program, the Chairman of the Board asked me if they could pirate Solow to be a member of the Board which would

foreclose my using him as an advisor. Bob said to me privately: "We can always meet in dusky taverns."

And that's what happened.