

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

aurora

from the desk of
KIM DAVIS, managing editor

Leslie —

Sue & Klugner
asked me to forward
this letter to you
after I sent her the
layout for part of her
transcribed interview
that will appear in the
Spring Aurora.

Thanks again for taking
your time on a Saturday to
interview her!

Kim 

907-474-6726 • fax: 907-474-6283 • aurora.magazine@alaska.edu

UAF Marketing & Communications • 311A Eielson • P.O. Box 757505 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7505

Sylvia Sue Rigney
5003 E. State Hwy. AF
Fair Grove, MO 65648

Leslie McCartney
Alaska and Polar Regions Collection
Rasmuson Library
UAF, AK 99775-17505

5003 E. State Hwy AF
Fair Grove, MO 65648
March 6, 2015

Leslie McCartney
Alaska and Polar Regions Collection
Rasmussen Library
UAF, AK 99775-7505

Dear Leslie:

I need to amend my interview.

In 1963-64

The library was located in the Bunnell Building. Dr. Krauss and Dr. Riddolph Krejci (College of Arts + Letters) shared an office upstairs.

Our President in 1963-64 was William R. Wood. Mrs. Laura Jones was the University Registrar who kept active with the international students.

Mr. Edwin Buckingham (Languages) was the man who took his own life and whose funeral I attended. By word of mouth I heard that his doctoral dissertation had not been accepted.

His and another woman's images still haunt my mind.

Lennie
was the
President
of the
Arctic
Anthropological
Society
and a
fellow
student.

At Lennie Hamilton's party in Fairbanks, I had noticed the dejected, depressed looking face of a woman who was sitting on the floor. I did not cross the room to speak with her. After the party, she committed suicide.

I had observed on occasion Mr. Buckingham's face while he was sitting at his desk, but had never stopped to ask him about what was troubling him. This was one of my short comings - not to act on information being fed to my mind.

The first year I was in Alaska, one of my roommates in McIntosh Hall had a scar above one of her breasts and another on her back. She told me these scars were from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. She had been raped at age fourteen. I did not understand how to help her and

skk

only listened to her. She left the university after a semester.

As I aged I learned ways of better helping those who had attempted suicide or who were exhibiting signs of possibly thinking about committing suicide.

Regarding violence on campus, it existed in the form of an older history student who had been kicked off the Fairbanks police force for beating some American natives to death. He was the son of a French Nazi whom the Israelis were seeking for war crimes. Without my permission he stuck the cold barrel of a German luger to my head, screamed "Jew lover" and played Russian Roulette with first one bullet in the gun and then two.

He went to Dr. Slotnik's door and when Dr. Slotnik answered it, the student hit

"Native Americans"

Dr. Herman Slotnik taught history

SSK

him three times in the face. Regardless of the assault and battery on a professor and threats made against some of the women students, he was not expelled from the university.

His twin first grade daughters at Denali School were both recommended for a special class to handle emotionally damaged children. They exhibited behavior of children who had been sexually molested. He had other children as well but he did not live with them. He took a room in a house that had a female preschooler in it who was left alone while both of her parents worked in maintenance at the university. It so upset me that for a time I kept the little girl in my room at McIntosh Hall. That way the mother could drop by and check on her while I was either in classes or working. I could not

protect her forever in this manner. Her parents finally decided to lock the little girl in their room in that house and leave her unattended while they worked. Negligence leaves ugly scars if the child survived.

I don't even remember how to spell this violent man's name. He went by Bob Brossi (Brah-sē-ā) or something similar to these sounds. I feel as though he should be treated as Haman's name in the Bible. On Purim, whenever his name is read aloud, rattles used as noise makers overpower the sounds of his syllables. His name is plotted from memory. So be it!

In the 1964 Denali Yearbook under Juniors, he is incorrectly listed as Sam Emmert. Maybe the name was Brossiere (?)

I may have said in my interview that Senungetuk carved a dog team out of ice that stood in front of the Bunnel building; it was Doug Barrett, not Senungetuk, who was the carver.

Now I refer to Senungetuk's Crying baby. There was good reason for Senungetuk's baby to cry. Senungetuk

wanted me to check on his baby when I was babysitting next door with Wescott's baby. Under no circumstances was I to have the babies together in the same apartment to watch. It was an impossible task to be two places at the same time when both babies demanded attention.

I also did babysitting for the son and daughter of Mrs. Elaine Jacobsen who had an M.S. from the University of Alaska and taught Chemistry. Married students' and dorm parents' children I also tended as well as children of researchers at the Geophysical Institute. In fact I had too many calls for babysitting and would send other women from McIntosh to babysit in my place.

SJK

If you wonder how I could do all these jobs while attending school, it was relatively simple. I would purchase my semester's books before classes had even begun and have them all read before entering the classrooms. It was more difficult in Dr. Skarland's class because he lectured from his head — not a text. Dr. Krauss seemed to be in the process of learning himself and took us through that process with him. It was challenging and intellectually stimulating to be in their classes.

Emily Brown from Unalakleet, the university's oldest student, was the Alaskan native who told me that I had "civilized teeth" and therefore would be unable to chew leather to make garments.

I tutored in English several of the international students. An older student from China, Jonathan Tang, sticks out in my mind as he had fought against Mao. Besides being a former soldier, he knew how to sing the women's parts in Chinese opera.

An arranged marriage between a couple from Nigeria led me to question our own traditions of choosing a mate "like finding a needle in a haystack". The Nigerian couple seemed quite suitable for each other and their parents had made the choice. I tutored the woman of the pair.

I was in the school cafeteria when we felt the vibrations of the Good Friday, 1964 Earthquake. Deep beneath our feet it sounded like a lion roaring. Everyone stopped talking and did not move.

as though frozen in time. Finally a student softly spoke, "I've lived in Alaska all my life and I've never heard a roar like this. I do believe that lion's going to open its jaws and swallow us down to the pit of its stomach." After half a century this I remember as the intent of his words - not verbatim.

Professors and Teachers

Dr. Mitchell M. Berkun.
(Ph.D. Yale) taught Experimental Psychology and liked to test out his propositions on us. We called him a rat psychologist because he owned one that he let climb all over his head and shoulders while he was lecturing. I asked him why he did this and he retorted, "everyone focuses attention on me to see what the rat will do." True!

SJK

I figured out that he had divided the class into those students who would receive positive reinforcement and those who would receive negative. The women who received negative reinforcement quit even though I had explained to them the experiment.

If they had stayed, he would have passed them.

I had an appointment with him in his office when he informed me that Kennedy had been assassinated. Naturally I thought it was another one of his experiments to see how I would react, so I did not show any emotion. To put it bluntly, I did not believe him. The moment I entered McIntosh Hall, I knew it to be true. The stunned faces and sobbing convinced me of the truth. I could feel empathy for their loss. SJK

Sarkis Atamian (M.A. Brown University) taught courses for

the Sociology and Psychology Departments. He was the one with the temper.

After the Six Day War in Israel, I went to Bethlehem and became friends with another Armenian of kinder temperament Father Joseph, who lived upstairs in the Church of the Nativity. He and his family shared many meals with me.

His was an arranged marriage; his Syrian wife had given him five sons.

A Jewish young woman from the University of Chicago taught art at the University of Alaska. Her name escapes me. She dearly liked Chagall, whose stained glass windows I viewed in Jerusalem. I loved conversing with her.

I mentioned to you in our interview that I had cleaned ovens for a living. Once when I was cleaning a woman's oven, this teacher came over and sat by me while we discussed art.

SPK

Even at work, with my head mostly in a smelly, dirty oven, a faculty member took the time to educate me.

After graduation I visited many of the great European museums which held the masterpieces we had studied. I, myself, did research in graduate school on a particular motif, mosaics of Bethlehem and Jerusalem that appear together as the alpha and omega of Christ's life that can be seen high on the arches of churches in Italy. I did research as well for the Israelis on the subject, Jerusalem as it appears in art throughout the centuries.

Dr. Arnold Gruise, Ph.D. from the University of Arizona, was in charge of Student Teaching. After observing me, he told me that I already taught like a very experienced teacher. I was experienced from years of helping to teach my fellow pupils in a little country.

SK

school, Ellington, located in Quincy, Illinois. By fourth grade I was already figuring out the grades of the other pupils and putting their final letter grades on the report cards.

Although I have attended colleges and universities in four states and two countries I am partial to my experiences gained in that country school house and at the University of Alaska.

An Engineers Day Karen Wakto was the student who was surprised by the loud boom and glass from her window being blown into her room. She would love to be interviewed by phone: 1-928-783-8802. Her address follows:

1298 Pageant
Yuma, AZ
85364.

Alaskan born, she must have many stories to share. Her father, aunt, and uncle graduated from the University of Alaska.

Karen (Wakto)
Bollard

SSB

A hand written letter looks like a heck of a lot of information, but it really doesn't contain that much; it's merely a glimpse of the past when people used to communicate in this fashion. May my attempt to connect with someone who lives on this earth at the same time as I do be successful.

Thank you for reading to the conclusion. your focus is appreciated.

Respectfully yours,
Sylvia Sue "Susie" ^{11/10} Klingner
class of 1964