(CASE ASLO REQUESTED STORIES OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN CAREER PATH —SEPTEMBER, 1996)

Significant Events in My Career Path
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My first "career" was in the theater business. I graduated from high school at mid-term and had hoped to enter college the following fall. I worked in several Knoxville movie theaters as an usher and helped in many phases of theater work. Soon after I became assistant manager of the Booth Theater, I was promoted to a job as manager of the Tennessee Theater, the largest and finest in town. The city manager of the theater chain was very good to me and promised to teach me the business. He showed a lot of confidence in me, I loved the independence and the responsibility and the interaction with the public. So I allowed myself to believe I could stay in this exciting business, and I did stay for two years. I worked happily at my new "career," feeling successful and appreciated—until I learned that the janitor was earning more than I was. I began to look for better opportunities.

I found a job on the night shift at ALCOA, the Aluminum Company of America. I worked in the machine shop as a cost accountant. After the day's work was posted, my time was free. I could sit and think about the unbearable odor of smelted aluminum that penetrated my nostrils. This job paid six times as much as the theater job, but I could not see myself staying in this role. It was a lonely job, as I only saw a handful of people each night. I had no sense of potential, nor of recognition for my work. But my income had improved so much that I began to think about starting college.

One morning after work, I happened to notice a story in the paper about students arriving for registration day at the University of Tennessee. Instead of going to bed, I took a shower, dressed up more than usual, and started out the door. My mother, surprised, asked where I was going. "I'm going to register for U.T." I was almost as surprised as she was, as I had not made any firm decision before that day and had not talked to anyone about it. It was just a possibility that came to mind often enough that it began to seem the obvious next step. I continued to work the night shift as I began college. My parents were supportive in every way possible.

My freshman year was interrupted in April, 1943, by a call to active duty in the Army. After boot camp, I was placed in A.S.T.P. (Army Specialized Training Program) and sent to the College of Engineering at the University of Alabama. In the summer of 1944, my company was sent overseas where we were at the tail end of the Normandy invasion. I was later stationed in Dijon and Reims, France and in Bold Eagleheim, Germany. After the end of the war, I volunteered for continued Army service in Europe—in order to use my time off for traveling and getting to know the rich tapestry of the continent.

I returned home in 1946 to finish college on the G.I. Bill. There is no doubt in my mind that the G.I. Bill made my later careers possible. I was freed from earning a living while attending college, and thus able to be on the fast track academically, and even to earn a master's degree before I left the University.

In the Spring of 1948, I had almost completed my B. S. and had an accounting internship with Price Waterhouse in New York City. After three heady months in the big city, I returned home in June with a job offer, effective after my August graduation. I had found my "career," and was tempted by the offer.

When I arrived back on campus for my last quarter of work before graduation, I was called to the office of the Department Head—not in accounting, but statistics. "Boling, We need you to teach statistics this summer." I was flattered, but protested that I was not qualified, I didn't know how to teach, I wouldn't have time with my own course work, and I had a job offer in accounting. He explained to me that many, if not most, of the veterans who had come back to school after the war had postponed the required statistics course until the last year. The college had been unable to find a qualified teacher for this course and could not meet the demand with only the current staff. As I had been a "grader," checking assignment papers turned in for that course, the staff was confident I could do a good job. I walked out of his office with a teaching assignment, very pleased to be asked, but also worried that this unexpected extra duty might somehow complicate my career plans.

The summer went well, but I was mentally preparing for the move to the big city. However, when I was asked to continue teaching the statistics course through the next academic year, I didn't hesitate. The accounting job would probably be there if I wanted it later, and this would give me the opportunity to work on a Master's Degree along with my teaching. I don't suppose that universities advertise when they are pressed to hire an undergraduate to teach a senior course, but I assume it is not a common practice. Still, I appreciate the opportunity now more than I did at the time it was offered—because in looking back, I realize that experience made me begin to want a career within a university. It put me in the faculty environment, and I found that I loved teaching.

Conflicting departmental loyalties got in the way of a decision about the focus of my graduate work. I had two professors who had been great mentors to me—one in accounting and the other in statistics. Each assumed I would be doing my master's in his field. I postponed the decision as long as I could, taking all the basic graduate courses in each field. In my second year, I had to make a choice in order to select a thesis topic. I finally chose statistics because I had heard that it was best to have degrees in different subject areas. Within a year, this choice became critical in my qualifications for another job offer, very different from anything I had ever considered doing.

In the meantime, I enjoyed the teaching more and more as time went on, and I decided that teaching would be my career. I told the Department Head I would like to continue for another year, and a plan was made for me to serve as replacement for a statistics teacher who was to take a year to begin his doctorate study. I relaxed into that plan, but at the last minute it fell through. The other teacher had decided not to go. I went to a Department Head in another field in indignant protest, explaining to him that it was not "fair." I'm sure he had heard that complaint before, as I have heard it many times since—only from the young and inexperienced. I told him about a job offer I had from Union Carbide, but was not sure I would like. He was kind, and he tried to console me. But he asked, "Why are you coming to me with this?"

"Because," I said, "you are going to be the next Dean."

"How do you know this, when I don't even suspect it?"

"You are the obvious candidate."

"Remember what I am going to tell you," he said. "You will find a good job. And if you leave and prove yourself in a business setting, you will be able to come back to the University in a much stronger position than you could gain by working your way through the ranks." This did not comfort me much at the time. Eleven years later, when I was Vice President, Dean Frank Ward invited me to lunch at the Faculty Club to ask if I had remembered his advice.

Union Carbide Corporation, which at that time had the Federal contract to manage the Oak Ridge operations, had been advertising a research job for someone with an academic background in the areas of engineering, accounting, and statistics. My interviewer told me that a full page ad had been on the back page of the "American Statistician" for eight years. And I suppose it is not surprising that few people would have that specific combination of interests or training. Because the army had put me in engineering (after I had requested languages), and because of my casual decision to take my master's degree in statistics, rather than accounting, I was a fit.

The job turned out to be challenging and exciting. My assignment was to do research to determine better ways to account for the uranium 235 at the K25 operation. During processing, the uranium was in various states (liquid, gas, solid) and in various grades (atomic weights).This made it very difficult to give a clear answer to federal officials who regularly asked for assurances that no uranium 235 was missing. I was a one-man research operation, working with everyone in the mile long K-25 plant. I rode a bicycle all around the plant. I had carte blanche to go everywhere in an environment where most other employees were restricted to their own area. My every request was granted. I had access to staff skills and equipment for my work. But I felt very alone because I could not talk to anyone about my work, the thorny problems I had to solve, my theories and trials and failures, my exhilarating successes. I could not talk to the "security-cleared" engineers with whom I worked because they did not understand error propagation, the statistical technique I was using. And I was forbidden to discuss anything about the job with people outside the building— and given a monthly polygraph to keep me aware of that responsibility. But I also felt more alive and confident and fulfilled than in anything I had ever done.

When the job was completed, I was made head of the Source and Fissionable Materials Accounting office. That was exciting, too—at first. We had the first IBM 650 computer in the South. It filled a rather grand room and required constant cooling and frequent changing of the

vacuum tubes. After a while, the kinks were worked out, the monthly accounting procedure ran like clockwork, and the only excitement I had was my monthly "Lie Detector" test. I would worry that I might have inadvertently let slip some little clue to a government secret. I was pleased to see the statistical-engineering-accounting system I had developed put into practice, but the work was routine and did not challenge me. I was bored and restless and ready to leave.

When Frank Clement had become Governor of Tennessee in 1952, he requested that the University of Tennessee send a budget expert to advise him in preparing his first budget. Mr. Harold Read, my much respected accounting professor was sent. When the budget was ready, the Governor offered him the Budget Director's job. Mr. Read refused, as his salary was better as a professor, he preferred to teach, and he was near retirement and did not want to move. He recommended Bill Snodgrass, who became Clement's first Budget Director.

Bill and I had shared an office at the University and had become friends. He tried to persuade me to join him in the State Budget Office during Clement's first term. But I was skeptical about a "political" job, not willing to gamble on a two year term, and not willing to work for Bill because he was my friend—and I knew that our styles were different.

Two years later, Clement was elected to the first four year term of a Tennessee Governor, and Bill was sent to ask me to come to Nashville to meet with the Governor. Bill was to be the State Comptroller, and Clement asked me to become the State Budget Director. Bill worked to convince me that the opportunity to run the State Budget Office was too big a prize to pass over just because of the reduced income it would provide my family—or my reluctance to tie to anything political. I made the jump, and he was right. I was thirty-two years old, and here I was in another of a long succession of sink-or-swim jobs. Again, it was a challenge, and it was fun.

Buford Ellington succeeded Clement as governor. He reorganized staff responsibilities in his cabinet, changing my title to Commissioner of Finance and Administration and adding other responsibilities to that of the budget office.

After a time, when I had the job under control, I registered at Peabody College to begin a doctorate in Educational Administration. Three sons were born to us in the first three years in Nashville. I went home late after my classes, helped feed and bathe and get the children to sleep, then started studying while Carolyn typed the papers I needed to turn in the next day. You can scratch almost any college teacher or administrator and hear the same kind of story. I sometimes wonder what makes us all so foolhardy as to attempt the impossible. Youth, maybe.

When I graduated from Peabody College in 1961 with an Ed. D., I had two job offers. One was the presidency of a small college. The other was as Vice President for Development of The University of Tennessee. Governor Ellington was really baffled by my choice of the University job. He thought I was making a big mistake. He did not understand that what brought me to U. T. was my enthusiasm for my Alma Mater —and Andy Holt.

President Andrew David Holt was a person who loved people. His strength was in his warmth and his great ability to communicate. He recruited me for my technical and financial background and my practical experience in management. He assigned me the task that had been his in the previous administration, but for which he had never gotten support to pursue as actively as he had wished. I knew that with his enthusiastic support, the development job could be a great opportunity. Andy folded into his concept of development the campus planning and construction functions, and as I had for seven years been the person who made budget allocations for the state's public colleges and universities, I was also the logical person to work as the University's liaison with state government. Andy and I worked well together, my duties expanded, and I was eventually made Executive Vice President along with my duties as Vice President for Development.

An interesting development was my recruitment of Joe Johnson, who had worked with me in the State Budget Office. He had just come to Knoxville to serve as my executive assistant, when Andy had a medical emergency. Andy said to me, " If Joe Johnson is as good as you say he is, I need him right now more than you do." And that is how Joe Johnson, now the President of the University, became executive assistant to Andy Holt.

In 1969, when Andy Holt announced his plan to retire the following year, my name was mentioned among others as his possible successor. After several months, the Board of Trustees elected me to succeed Andy as president, and I assumed that office in September, 1970.

One organizational change I made early in my presidency was the establishment of the Institute for Public Service, based on the model of M-TAS (Municipal Technical Advisory Service), a well-established public service within the University that offered consultants to provide career training or project help for employees of cities across the state. Every public university president repeats the mantra that we provide "education, research, and public service." But I had not seen much support for public service from university administrations. The new institute provided a source for people seeking university consultants, and a proven format for the delivery of services. Services to county governments and small businesses were added. The Institute for Public Service has provided a management umbrella for Radio and Television stations and other service areas as well. It was one of the first organizations of its type and is still a leader in this field.

As President, my focus continued to be on development and the relationships among people that could make a big, complex, multi-campus university work toward positive improvements for the whole University System. Andy Holt had recently reorganized the University as a multi-campus system, rather than a main campus at Knoxville with satellite campuses and programs. We had campuses at Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville, a Space Institute at Tullahoma, Agricultural Research Stations in many locations, and Agricultural Extension Services in 95 counties. I was pleased with the new organization, but I knew it would take much work for us all to learn to pull together.

One of my first moves was to establish a system for improving internal communications. I took my senior staff members to each campus at regular intervals for a "System to Campus Visit." For a full day, we met with a series of groups—the Chancellor's staff, the Faculty Senate, the non-academic employees, the students. We kept them informed about developments that affected the University and asked for feedback so that we would understand their perspectives. I also named a panel of "Faculty Advisors to the President" and "Student Advisors to the President" who met with me at regular intervals. Over the 18 years of my presidency, this system helped me and my staff to build ties with individuals on the various campuses who could share campus concerns honestly with us and who could serve as informal interpreters of university policies on the campuses. I maintained the same kind of openness with Trustees, Alumni, and Development Council Members. I wanted all of these groups to understand the basis for each of our staff decisions and wanted to keep the lines of communication open for feedback.

Although this approach was initially prompted by the student unrest of the period, it proved to have value long after that time was over. And I firmly believe that the financial success of the University in fund-raising (and in some measure in securing state funding) was tied closely to this openness of communication that helped the whole university family to work together.

Every politician knows that many key contacts and decisions are made in the hallways before and after meetings. And so my wife and I stayed with the various groups for their receptions and dinners, for their meetings, for the informal exchanges between and after meetings. A fringe benefit, and not a little thing, was that we developed close friendships among all the university constituencies and support groups. And these have continued to be our good friends, the ones we choose to be with in our retirement years.

Funding a university is always a major concern to the president. It was particularly important to me because we were faced with high rates of inflation during many years of my presidency. Private giving enabled us to make progress in spite of inflationary pressures. Our continued interest in friend-raising and fund raising kept us in the top ten in the nation and number one in the South among public universities. During a 5 or 6 year period in the eighties, we enjoyed good state support and were better able to recruit new faculty members of high caliber. We went from a position of having no faculty chairs to more than fifty, each funded at 1 million dollars—half from the state and half from private donations.

I was very active in business during my years as president, serving on ten corporate boards during the eighteen year period. I discussed this activity with the Board of Trustees and told them I thought such ties could be advantageous to the University. For almost every board on which I served, I eventually became Chairman of the Audit Committee, and my ability to contribute in this key role gave the CEO's confidence in my ability to manage—and by extension,

confidence in the University. As a matter of record, most of the CEO's of the corporations with which I served were, at some point, members of the University Development Council, and their corporations gave major gifts to the University. The benefits went farther, however, as these corporate heads from other parts of the country became familiar with the University and voiced their support in many arenas. The respect given to the leaders of these companies helped to attract other CEO's to the Development Council as well, and, I believe, resulted in a higher level of leadership within that body.

I had come upon this side career by accident. In the first year of my presidency, Bob Platt, President of Magnavox, asked for an appointment and came to Knoxville to meet me. He was inviting me to join the Magnavox Board. When I tried to learn who had recommended me, he responded, "No one. We found you by a computer search." He explained that the board wanted to have a representative from education but they insisted on finding an educator with a business background. All the other board appointments came from this one, as I got to know several CEO's by serving on the Magnavox Board, then was asked to join other boards. Three of the corporations with which I served were bought or merged with other corporations, and in each case I was fortunate to be selected to move on to the new board.

Attached is a financial summary that shows the continuing growth of giving to the University. The years cited are 1961, when I came to the University as Vice President for Development, 1970-71, the first year of my presidency, 1987-88, the last year of my presidency, and 1995-96, representing current giving. By this format, I do not intend to imply that this remarkable growth of private support was all of my doing. I was fortunate to follow Andy Holt, who had created a very positive environment for the University. Outstanding staff and dedicated volunteers helped to build and continue to feed the momentum of this growth. Amounts of dollars raised are measurable in a way that loyalties and feelings are not, but success in fund raising is largely a measure of success in building confidence in the University through open communications within and without.

I see the building and maintaining of a network of positive supporters of the University among faculty, staff, and students and among alumni, friends, and corporate supporters as the central task of the presidency. In such a positive climate, faculty and staff give their best work, students are encouraged and nurtured, financial support builds, and the resulting momentum allows the university to take on ever greater tasks and do them well. There are many "events" in an 18 year presidency, but I continue to believe that a key to maintaining positive momentum through all the surprises and crises is to communicate with all the constituencies of a university and to help each group to have a sense of real participation in the university as a whole. The University of Tennessee is fortunate to have as its current president Dr. Joe Johnson, who was Vice President for Development and Executive Vice President on my staff. It is obvious that he also believes that open communication is the key to effective leadership.

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