

## Clayton State University Archives

### Staff Oral History Project #003 Transcript

Transcription of the “Interview with Kevin Fitzgerald” was conducted on 26th day of April 2019 at 10:00 am. Oral history subject Kevin Fitzgerald, CSU Network Support Specialist, as has held the titles of Computer Operator and Computer Technician throughout his 30 plus year of service to the academic institution. Mr. Fitzgerald was interviewed by his University Archivist Feechi Hall. Introduction statement giving general information about the recording session appears at the start of the audio recording. The interview recording took place in the CSU Archives Department’s Reading Room located on the second floor of the Library Building. Pictures of this interview session are contained within this collection’s materials of the Oral History Project.

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**Feechi:** Well good morning Kevin and thank you for participating in the CSU Archives Oral History Project. It is such a pleasure to have to here today I was so happy that you agreed to participate in this project and program, so as long as you are comfortable we’ll go ahead and get started with our line of questioning.

**Kevin:** You’re most welcome.

**Feechi:** Oh thank you! [Laughter] Well my first question is when and where were you born? And did you grow up in the same place?

**Kevin:** I was born in Downtown Atlanta when St. Joseph Hospital was located there. And I lived in College Park, Georgia until I was thirteen when the airport required our family to move for airport expansion. And so our family moved to East Point and I was there for years. I ended up living there for quite a long time. And then now I’m living in Forest Park so umm I lived near the airport my whole life.

**Feechi:** Wow very interesting! Who were your parents and what did they do for a living?

**Kevin:** My mom was Rose Redan Fitzgerald and she grew-up across the street from Grant Park in Atlanta. My dad was Gerald Fitzgerald. He was from East Providence, Rhode Island and they met I guess during the war time years, the World War II years. Because my dad was stationed at a military post northeast of Atlanta, which now I think Peachtree DeKalb Airport is located there where Fort Gordon once was. That’s where he was located, so they met got married. They lived in Rhode Island for a while but then they moved to Georgia in 1948. So yeah ... dad was a... became a tile setter. Even though he had a college degree he became a tile setter and he actually put in some of the floors here at Clayton State in the original buildings.

**Feechi:** Oh wow? So you have strong roots here at this institution.

**Kevin:** Yes, that’s why there’s a picture of me in front of the round building the Lecture Hall that was taken while the College was under construction. Because he wanted to bring us down here and show us this new college they were building in Morrow.

**Feechi:** Wow Oh my gosh!

**Kevin:** Yes that's right. So that's the story behind the picture. My mom was a house wife and although she did she took training at the high school she went to, Commercial High, she learned how to do stenography and short hand and did some of that kind of work before she got married. And then she actually worked at the Southside Sun Newspaper in East Point during the time I was in my teenage years so she could build up her time under Social Security and get the benefits she needed. So yeah, but they were married for over fifty years and lived into their mid-eighties so they did alright.

**Feechi:** Wow! Sound like a very nice family.

**Kevin:** Yes I'm real blessed.

**Feechi:** Did your family or your father encourage you to follow in his footsteps professionally or

**Kevin:** Not really, although I did help him out on some. I helped him out on some tile jobs here and there some. I think I could have done that. But I don't know he was pretty fast and really well organized and I don't know if I could ever be as good as he was but, he did good work.

**Feechi:** Alright sounds good! What high school did you go to?

**Kevin:** I went to Headland High School in East Point, Georgia. That campus is now Paul D. West Middle School. Because the high school went through several mergers and if I was growing up over there now I would be going to Tri-Cities High School.

**Feechi:** Okay Okay, I know exactly where that area is. Interesting you have strong roots within this general local area. That's very interesting.

**Kevin:** Yes ummhumm.

**Feechi:** Now more from our line of questioning about your background, will kind of go into an area of your hobbies and interest. Many people on campus know you as for you love of cycling. And I have personally seen you riding around campus on a very cool bike so, my question in this area is, when did you become interested in cycling as a hobby?

**Kevin:** Well it goes back to when I was in grade school. I was a little late getting a bike. I didn't get one until I was seven. But I was able to start bike commuting to my grade school. I went to St. John the Evangelist Catholic School in Hapeville and I lived in College Park. And I had been using the bus to get to and from. The bus system was predecessor to MARTA Atlanta transit. But when they changed the route it became a real hassle to take the bus to school. I would have to wait on a street corner for the bus for up to twenty minutes in the morning and up to forty minutes in the afternoon. So my brother sad on day "why don't you ride your bike" and I said "you got to be kidding mom and dad would never let me do that". But they did. They let me try it on a weekend and five miles later I was over there at one of my friend's house near the school. So we started doing that and by the time I finished St. Johns, I didn't get to go to eighth grade at St. Johns my high school was a eighth through twelve so I started Headland (high school) in eighth grade, But from the middle of fourth grade to the end of seventh it was over three thousand miles worth of riding.

**Feechi:** Wow

**Kevin:** So I was out there in real traffic no bike lanes. Yeah I could ride on the side walk in places, but other places I was right on the street. I had a couple different variations of the route. I preferred a six mile route which took me a little farther away from the main entrance of the airport.

**Feechi:** Wow (laughter) that's very interesting.

**Kevin:** So my main start was commuting, was bike commuting. But I joined our local bicycle club when I was sixteen. It was Southern Bicycle League joining in spring of 1972. And that increased my knowledge very much over what I had learned on my own. Next thing you know I was doing really long rides and meeting a lot of nice people. There were a lot of people older than I who were really helpful to me.

**Feechi:** Wow. I glad to hear about the different participations in various bike clubs and different things like that, but have you ever thought about, throughout your years here at Clayton State starting a bike club here or cycling club?

**Kevin:** Oh I'm not too good at organizing things like that ...

**Feechi:** Oh really (laughs)?

**Kevin:** But I have lead rides for Southern Bicycle League. I actually lead some bike rides down to this area. And I also taken friends for rides around here. I'll say come join me and I'll show you how to get around. On time I lead a group of people from the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition they call it now. I lead them to the airport (Atlanta's Hartsfield/Jackson International Airport) and had them go right past the terminals.

**Feechi:** Oh wow! Neat!

**Kevin:** That's right. I told them you are used to regular intersections. You're not use to merges so I explained to them how to do a merge. I said I don't want to hear about us on the new tomorrow.

**Feechi:** [Laughing] Exactly!

**Kevin:** The were pretty thrilled because I said here we are, we're outside the south terminal and so we got to take a little break there and the keep going. I got them in and out of there safely.

**Feechi:** Wow. You may have to revisit starting that club here on campus and I may have to join in and see what I can do and get my feet wet at least.

**Kevin:** Yes I am always happy to answer questions, people ask me about the bike I have ... any aspect of cycling asked I'm glad to answer questions.

**Feechi:** And what type of bike do you currently have?

**Kevin:** Right now most likely you'll see me on a bike Friday folding bicycle. It's geared low so it will climb all the hills around here with no problem. I can ride from home or I can ride it in my

van and drive and then bike around campus to the buildings that are farther way such as Clayton East or Laker Village, even the Continuing Education Building.

**Feechi:** Ok nice! What has been your favorite bike ride so far and why?

**Kevin:** Well ...certainly the one that really stands out is the one where a family invited me out to bike across the US with them in 1986.

**Feechi:** Yes I remember reading that article about you in the AJC go ahead you can tell it,

**Kevin:** Yes that's right. Umm I was very blessed and privilege to do that. I had ridden with that family some when they were in the Southern Bicycle League, for almost as long as I was in it. So they knew me, had seen me ride and had seen me ride with other people on both single bike and tandem bicycle because I started taking up tandem bicycling in 1980. So I even ridden with their son on one ride. He was seven at the time and we did like 50 miles on a ride a week that the family was involved with. So in 1985 when the mom of this family Jean Dukes said Kevin we are thinking of doing the bike centennial route next year, Jo comes running up an says "can Kevin come too?" [laughter from Kevin and Feechi] By this time Jo was ten so anyway I looked at Jo and looked at mom and though oh my goodness! But that's what happened. And so the summer of 1986 we left here June 2<sup>nd</sup> and flew to Oregon and started riding that day. And August 31<sup>st</sup> we ended up in Yorktown, Virginia.

**Feechi:** Wow! Wow!

**Kevin:** Twelve states plus Jo and I snuck into a thirteenth one [laughter].

**Feechi:** [Laughter] Too funny! Well what do you enjoy most about being a cyclist?

**Kevin:** I like the fact I get some exercise out of it. Sometimes I get to meet some interesting people along the way and it's a way of saving some money if I can commute because I don't use any gas and it's kind of a stress reliever too as long as you do it right. If you don't pick your routes correctly you can actually increase the stress a lot. People ask me would you rather ride on Rex Road or Tara Boulevard and I'd say Tara Boulevard because it has more room. Rex Road is narrow it has a tight fit.

**Feechi:** Oh yea! Any false movement and ooo goodness!

**Kevin:** There are parts to Rex Road that have extra room but other parts of it that are narrow and pretty stressful to ride like that. With Tara Boulevard there are a lot of places like that but with a rearview mirror and good sense of alertness, it's just what I'm used to doing. When I was a kid I dealt with real traffic then and I can deal with it now.

**Feechi:** [quiet laughter] See you never knew how well it was going to prepare you for your future.

**Kevin:** It did! [laughter]

**Feechi:** Ok so now we're going to move along to a line of questioning regarding your career experience.

**Kevin:** Ok!

**Feechi:** When and where did you start your career path within Information Technology?

**Kevin:** That's kind of interesting. This isn't exactly IT ...but it's close. It's telecom. I noticed that I had kind of a feel for telecom even as a kid and then ummm I was in Junior Achievement when I was in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and the group that I was in was mentored by people from Southern Bell, which was a division of AT&T the local telephone company. And after a while those mentors realized that I knew a little bit more about phone network than most of the other teenagers that were around. And one of them said "you ought to come work for us". And I said "doing what"? He said being a telephone operator and I said "What?"

**Feechi:** giggling

**Kevin:** Because up to that time a telephone operator was a job that had been, you know guys had been first operators, women started being used for many many years exclusively. And so the way jobs were you were kind of pigeon holed into ... women do this kind of work and men do this other kind or work. This all changed with equal opportunity laws so guys could be operators and ladies could work on switching equipment and climbing poles or whatever. Because I was still in high school it was a good fit. So I went ahead and took him up on it. I was a telephone operator for about a year and a half on an old cord-board system where people would dial up zero and I would help them with long-distance calls or problems they were having with local calls.

**Feechi:** Interesting!

**Kevin:** Yes, so I did that again after going to Georgia State. I came back and learned a new system which was much more faster paced so I did that from part of 1979 to I think 1982. But I was away from that a while. I got my first real IT job after taking an introduction to computer class Georgia State University ten years after I had graduated from high school. I was so tired of all my friends knowing something about computers and I didn't know anything about computers. I was lead to believe when I was younger that doing anything with computer you had to be good in math. And I'm terrible at math but I found out that wasn't true. When I took that class I found out you could be good with trivia and that kind of mentality I could do. So I was able to do some simple programming and some simple spread sheets and that kind of thing and I thought ... what am I going to do now? The one of my cycling friend said, he worked at Rollins Incorporated, we have an opening in our IT department for a Form Handler and I thought ... well I am kind of low on money and I thought I would just go ahead and do that.

**Feechi:** [laughing]

**Kevin:** [laughing] So I went ahead and got that job. So there I was in a company with branches all over the country. Rollins owns Orkin Pest-control.

**Feechi:** You're right ... yes!

**Kevin:** They had a bunch of other things they were doing as well. So I ended up dealing with printouts. You know the large printouts which was everything from reports, to bills, checks ... all that kind of thing. I had to run those through machines and prepare those to how the users wanted them. And so later I got to be printer operator and production control person, and then I actually got to be a computer operator and make jobs run. You know the old reel-to-reel tapes you see in the movies now?

**Feechi:** Yes!

**Kevin:** You use to have to load those up and make the job run off of those. And I'd have to clean the tapes and prepare new ones, that kind of thing. That was my first time to do real computer work, that was with Rollins.

**Feechi:** Wow!

**Kevin:** Yes that was from 1985 to early 1989.

**Feechi:** Ok. Well then, when did you start working at Clayton State University and how long have you been here?

**Kevin:** I started in November of 1989. I saw a want-ad for a computer operator while I was actually taking some classes here and I thought well I can do that, though at the time I was working part-time as a courier for courier dispatch I was driving all kinds of important documents around Atlanta for a couple of subscribed routes. It was about a hundred miles driving every day. And so I thought, I could just finish what I'm doing with studying and come over and work here [Clayton State College] and so no big commute and not all that driving and crazy traffic. So I ended up working part-time in the evening, into the afternoons and evenings here at Clayton State. Back then all of our computer equipment was located in what we now call Faculty Hall, it use to be the Administration Building "A Building" as we called it. So that's how I got started here. And it was a lot more laidback then because the computer system was smaller it wasn't as powerful, we didn't have people all over campus using computers to the degree we do now. The main thing I had to do was run backups. Both those machines I had to deal with I had to mount a reel-to-reel tape.

**Feechi:** Oh my goodness! And how often did you have to do that?

**Kevin:** I had to do backups every night. So it's amazing to think all that had to fit on two tapes [the two are laughing]

**Feechi:** So back then when you initially started here do you remember your actual job title at the time?

**Kevin:** I think they called me a computer operator. I'm pretty sure because that's really what I did. I had a couple other duties. When the Faculty Evaluations get marked in by the students at the end of a quarter, because we were on quarters back then not semesters ...

**Feechi:** Right.

**Kevin:** Those would be delivered to our office and I would get to run them through a scan-Tron machine that was connected to our computer system and it would record what the students had marked on the scan-Tron sheets. After a while I kind of noticed which professor were well liked and where were not [both laughing]. Because there were only about five questions and I could look real quick and say oh they liked this one or oh I don't know about that one so that was kind of funny.

**Feechi:** So you could advise students who to take and who to take at that point [laughing].

**Kevin:** I kept that to myself, I don't think I was supposed to talk about that. [Both laughing]

**Feechi:** Exactly, no no no [laughing].

**Kevin:** I can talk about it now so yeah [laughing] it's pretty funny.

**Feechi:** Oh my goodness. So what is your current job title?

**Kevin:** I believe they call me a Network Support Specialist. Yes that's what I do. I help with mainly the connections we have on campus. Everything from the data jacks on the wall to the equipment the data jacks connect to within the data closets. I get to install, remove, and maintain that equipment and document how it's all connected so when we have a problem we can trace it down quick and get things going quickly.

**Feechi:** Well thank you for that because that's a big help to me here in the Archives [laughing].

**Kevin:** I also do the voice for the phone system.

**Feechi:** Oh really!

**Kevin:** That's right when you dial the main number that's me telling you to press this, that, and the other.

**Feechi:** I because I don't dial the main number often, but you know what [laughing] I'm going to go a listen just to identify you [stated in a low fading volume].

**Kevin:** Yes if you call the HUB and you here "your call is very important to us please continue to hold", I say that to but maybe people don't like that too much. [Feechi laughing in back ground] I they [campus community] call the campus when the weather is bad and they [campus community] here we're closed due to snow they [campus community] really like that.

**Feechi:** Ok. I did not know!

**Kevin:** Yes Ma'am!

**Feechi:** You're Mr. CSU himself!

**Kevin:** Well least for the phone system I don't know about anything else, but the phone system I am. [Both laughing]

**Feechi:** That is interesting!

**Kevin:** I say what they tell me to. I don't make any of that up.

**Feechi:** Ok

**Kevin:** I may have to say "wait a minute, this is a tongue twister. I can't say that. Can we rewrite this?" [Both laughing]

**Feechi:** So what was it like here on campus when first started working here?

**Kevin:** Well it wasn't as big. We didn't have as many buildings. We didn't have as many students. And the pace was a little bit slower I would say. I don't think we were quite as diverse, but we were becoming that way. We had some new facilities though. The "T Building" as we called it, the Technology Building which is now Clayton Hall as we know it had just been finished. And we had some vocational technical classes in there as well as regular credit classes like we're use to ... academic style classes. And the Continuing Ed Building was nearing completion and Spivey Hall ... they were putting the finishing touches on it. So it was beginning to grow. Of course Dr. Downs was still here. He was our first president and Dianne Jordon his secretary she was still here.

**Feechi:** Yes.

**Kevin:** So those people had been here a long time. Dr. Downs wasn't too much for computers. That was not his thing so only privilege faculty and administrative people had computers. And the computer system we had for student records and continuing education student records, they had terminals. We called them dumb terminals because they really hooked to the main system and all the functionality came from the main system. So the terminals sort of sat there and were connected and things. We did not have fiber optics between the buildings. All the communication between the buildings were done over phone lines using a system that would put the data over the phone lines where you couldn't hear it being transmitted. That's how things were communicated back then.

**Feechi:** Wow! You really came in at a very interesting time. When it seemed like the institution was really just at that cusp of growing and burgeoning and everything.

**Kevin:** It was. It had become Clayton State College in 1986 which was a little before I got here. But it was definitely starting to grow. And every now and then we would get some new computer systems in and I would have to help set them up. We would get in new printers and set them up. Laser printers were beginning to make an appearance here. We had a few of them back then. So, you know, now you have to look at a printer with a whole lot of letters and numbers after it. [Feechi laughs] We had two original laser jets on campus. Then we started having laser jets 1, 2, and 3's during those first days when I was here.

**Feechi:** And speaking of those printers, I heard from a little birdie on campus that you have quite the collection of manuals for all of the various printers that have been on campus over the past years so...

**Kevin:** Yeah, I have a few of those. [Feechi laughs] I do! Not only do I have the manual for Diane Jordon's printer, I have her printer. [Feechi laughs] Last time when I tried to run it, it



would still run, and I have two videos of it running on YouTube, and they've gotten a considerable number of views.

**Feechi:** Oh wow! I'm going to have to go and take a peek at that.

**Kevin:** Yes ma'am [Kevin laughs]

**Feechi:** Oh goodness, that is interesting!

**Kevin:** NEC Spinwriter 8800, and umm, she had the only one on campus. There were other models of Spinwriters, but they were 3550s, and they were slower. But umm they were every bit as noisy [Feechi laughs] cause they were literally an impact printer with one letter at the time being beaten into the page.

**Feechi:** Oh wow!

**Kevin:** Yes, yes, yep, but very fast for some mechanical action like that. But yeah the laser printers, you know, made those types of printers obsolete. Umm, we still had a lot of dot matrix printers on campus.

**Feechi:** Oh wow!

**Kevin:** Yes, but umm now there's only one department left using those, and that's when, you know, you pay your bill at the Bursar's office, they'll print you out a receipt, and it's printed out on a little Okidata Microline Dot Matrix Printer.

**Feechi:** Ok! Interesting. [Feechi laughs] So we embrace the future while we still hold on to the past.

**Kevin:** We got a little bit of past going on there [Feechi and Kevin laugh].

**Feechi:** So what was your most enjoyable moment umm while you've been working here at Clayton State?

**Kevin:** Wow, well I've got to admit, I was floored, taken aback, shocked, surprised, when I won the Smith Award.

**Feechi:** Oh!

**Kevin:** Staff Employee of the Year for school year 1995-96.

**Feechi:** Ok.

**Kevin:** And back then, they didn't tell you who was nominated for it. You know, they just had the ceremony, and, you know, you went and saw who won. And umm, they called out the names of who was nominated right there.

**Feechi:** Umhmm.

**Kevin:** And I happened to be sitting next to one of the other people who's nominated, and umm, it was umm, Joan McElroy.

**Feechi:** Oh ok.

**Kevin:** And she was nominated too, I said, “Wow Joan, we’re in good company” because all the other people that who got nominated were people that I thought a lot of. I admired them a lot for their work and service, and they were easy to work with and everything. So, when they called my name, I was shocked cause I hadn’t been here [Clayton State University] that long. It was ‘96 and I’ve just been here since ‘89, and so yeah that was something. And the other thing they did, they told my parents and swore them to secrecy, and so they were there.

**Feechi:** Aww...

**Kevin:** So yeah, that was...

**Feechi:** That was really nice and special.

**Kevin:** Yes, yes it was. The only thing they didn’t let me do, they didn’t let me get up and talk.

**Feechi:** Aww... ok mmm

**Kevin:** And if I had, I would’ve said “Hey, I was standing on the shoulders of other people in the department. Umm, you know, it wasn’t just me. I had a lot of people in the background that this would have been impossible without. Abate Zewide, my boss, I had all these years, Dr. Daniel who was our department head at that time, I guess played the role like Vice President of IT back then, I don’t remember what his real title was back then, but that’s pretty much what it amounted to. So, I’m grateful to them and the other people with whom I worked with at the time because it would have been impossible without them so I can say it now!” [Feechi laughs]

**Feechi:** Exactly! We consider this your thank you speech, your acknowledgment speech.

**Kevin:** That’s right [Feechi laughs]. I finally get to say it [Feechi laughs].

**Feechi:** Well coming off of that, umm what has been or have you had a challenging experience while you’ve worked here at Clayton State [Feechi laughs].

**Kevin:** I think it started getting tricky when we first started having computer viruses hit the campus. And at first, I don’t think people took them seriously, because the first one I could remember, we had some real computer labs with IB MPCs and floppy drives and that kind of thing. But they were network, they were hooked up to where you could, a student could work on something using software on a server, and they could print on a printer that all of the computers were hooked to the printer. Well, you’d start the computer and it would say, “Your PC is now stoned.” And so it was referred to as the stone virus. But umm, it appeared like it wasn’t even doing anything bad until your computer, or your work, until later on when you try to find the file, the DIR, Directory Command, where your files were, and you see garbage where the file name should be. It would be a bunch of like farm characters and weird lines and squiggles that was a part of the IB character set and you can’t retrieve your files. And so umm, you know we started having to get antivirus software, and again at first, they didn’t take it real seriously, and were using like trial versions of it and stuff like that. I remember having to come in on a Sunday morning one time and get a powerful virus off file servers that we had along with some of our

other staff because it was just causing a havoc. And so, finally, we got robust antivirus software and umm procedures in place, so it became a lot less of a problem. It didn't totally eliminate the problem, but it definitely made it a lot more pleasant to work here because I wasn't cleaning computers every day.

**Feechi:** Goodness that does sound challenging I could not even imagine.

**Kevin:** It does. It's pull your hair out time...yeah.

**Feechi:** Wow! Well, I know you mentioned one person who is very influential umm within your time here at Clayton State, but are there any other people who were influential, and could you tell me a little bit about them?

**Kevin:** Well, I mentioned Abate Zewide.

**Feechi:** Yes.

**Kevin:** Abate came to this country from Ethiopia. And umm, he umm, went, you know, attended college here in the U.S., and lived in a couple of different places like Iowa and College Park [Feechi laughs], and he ended up working here, he started here in 1986. And so umm he and Dr. Daniel were the ones who hired me. I would learn things as I went along because the only classes I had, and what I did here, and what I took at Georgia State back in 1984. I also took another introductory class here at Clayton State and that was all I had to go on. And so I had to learn as I went along. I would learn from Abate and from other staff members here how to do cabling because that's one of the things I ended up having to do, because we changed from these two smaller systems umm to one somewhat larger, more powerful system. But in order to make that transition, I had to learn how to re-cable all these serial cables. It was serial cables like the old fashion way to hook up computer stuff. It's old fashion now [Feechi laughs]. But I got really good at it, and I got to re-pin many many of those cables and change them over because of the differences between the old systems and the new ones. So, that was something that I had to learn from him, and I also had to learn to work with our Novell Netware, which was the kind of networking software we had at the time. And so, to set things up properly, and to make our computers work properly with the network I had to learn and figure those, I guess the steps involved where when the computer would boot up, it would seek the network, it would find it, and you could log on and that kind of thing.

**Feechi:** Ok.

**Kevin:** So yeah, I had to learn most of what I learned from him. Later on, we got some other folks in here [Clayton State University] who, you know, worked real hard. I know we had Sheryl Garden, the lady who ended up in our department and we had to work together closely. Roger Poor came on board in 1994, he was here for years, until fairly recently and we would learn from each other. And umm so yeah, we had a lot of umm good folks to work with back here in the day and umm I had to work with Dr. Daniel, you know if he had a request, I would have to, you know, let him know what I'm doing, you know, things like that. So yeah, it was basically a learn as you go type of experience. I took a few classes for aircraft mechanic.

**Feechi:** Ok.

**Kevin:** And that teaches you to be a good manual reader. You learn to read the instructions first, then work on it, not the other way around. And that saved me many many times. I know there's a lot of things that were broken or torn up if I hadn't read the instructions first. [Feechi laughs] Cause you know, when you have to work on a printer you have to take it apart in a certain order. If you do it wrong, you can break it.

**Feechi:** Very true, but it seems like you are very privileged to have a good experience to be surrounded by good people to help you grow within your career path and to just be here at Clayton State.

**Kevin:** Yeah, and they were patient too when I would mess up [Feechi laughs] they wouldn't give me too hard of a time. They'd say, "No wait, this is how you really do it, or you know how to do it this way." We also had a great administrative assistant umm when I joined. Judy Giffard, umm she worked here for many years and umm she certainly showed me patience and umm Jean Fowler was also the office staff there so the two of them you know I'd be in the same office as them cause you know I didn't have my own office, I just had a little space there with those two ladies. And umm, sometimes I would even do Farm's handling for them like I did at Rowling's. If they had a big printout that needed to be, you know, remember with these old-line printers they had, it holds down the sides of the paper and the forms were continuous. Well one of the things you had to do, was put it through a machine that would separate them with separate pages and take the holes off and there was a machine that would do that [Feechi laughs] and I knew how to do it. Did miles of paper at Rowling's. So...

**Feechi:** See, all your work experience just prepared you for the next level, you know as you're going on. Nothing bad about that. [Feechi laughs] Well, now it comes, I guess, more of a reflection tone for these lines of questioning which will follow, but what are you looking forward to most once you're ready to retire from Clayton State?

**Kevin:** Oh, wow. I don't know if I'll ever get to retire!

**Feechi:** Really? [Feechi and Kevin laugh] I know you're so integrated into this school and such a integral part of this school! I mean it's like, you are almost those roots of this institution.

**Kevin:** Yeah, I go back a ways, not all the way back, you know you've got Diane Jordan who really does go all the way back [Feechi laughs]. I've been here a while, matter of fact, I went down to the butterfly garden and I noticed they have a brick border around it now. And I guess the retirees...

**Feechi:** The retirees, yes!

**Kevin:** You know on the brick and I was like," Oh my gosh! I know almost all of these names on these bricks! [Feechi and Kevin laugh]" I'd met them at some point in time, but will I end up with a brick there, umm I don't know. I certainly would like to enjoy more umm bicycling time and get some personal things accomplished. Umm, but umm, I know I'd be just as busy retired as I am here [Clayton State University].

**Feechi:** Mhmm ok.

**Kevin:** Yeah, I'm not gonna sit around.

**Feechi:** I could believe that because you do so much.

**Kevin:** I can retire now, but I can't see me doing that.

**Feechi:** I truly believe that because you have so much spirit and zest that you possess, so I can completely see that [Feechi laughs].

**Kevin:** Yeah.

**Feechi:** Well how do you think your coworkers will remember you?

**Kevin:** Well I hope they [Feechi and Kevin laugh] won't laugh too hard. No, I think they'll remember umm I hope they'll remember some teamwork. That I was a good team player, that I helped them out when they needed help. That I listened to them, and I wouldn't jump to conclusions on what they were telling me. And umm, that sometimes I would maybe think a little outside the box, or think of something a little bit different to try to help them accomplish what they wanted to do, or figure out why something wouldn't work. That kind of thing. So I hope they'll remember my troubleshooting that I did for them. And umm, I hope they won't remember me being grouchy [Feechi laughs]. I don't get grouchy much, but it has happened [Feechi and Kevin laugh].

**Feechi:** It happens to the best of us. I completely understand. But, spoken like a true IT professional though, with the troubleshooting comment, I really liked that.

**Kevin:** Yes.

**Feechi:** Ok. Well what do you think you will miss most about Clayton State?

**Kevin:** I'll miss seeing so many people here. Cause I know people here from students, all the way up to the administrators, the cleaning crew, the electricians, the landscape people, umm, because I've had to help all of them at one point in time or another. And I'll certainly miss people from our crew. Umm thankfully with social media, you can stay in touch with a lot of people. Umm I've even had umm, I've worked with interns in recent years. We had student interns work in our department, and I've mentored them, and some of them have later friended me on Facebook and we still stay in touch [Feechi laughs]. It makes me really proud when they've been able to accomplish, you know, good things with their degree and with what they've learned here. Some more so than others, some have had to go into different careers cause there have been times that during my time here when the economy has not been doing good, and IT jobs weren't available like during the dotcom bust that they talked about, I had one of my interns, she ended up having to kind of like say, "Ok, well I can't do that, now what?" And now she teaches special ed.

**Feechi:** Oh wow!

**Kevin:** And she's done very well with that. And I know somebody she helped, worked with, and taught too.

**Feechi:** Aww.

**Kevin:** So yeah, that's been good, umm, to see that. So yeah, I'll miss seeing the day to day contact though. I'll miss that. But umm, I live close by, it won't be hard to come and visit unless I end up moving somewhere else, which I hopefully won't. I like staying around here, this is home, and it always has been. I'm a native Southside, and I can speak southern if I want [Feechi laughs], but I always say our phone system ought to say, "Welcome to Clayton State University. For English, press one. Para Español, preme dos. For Southern, mash three [Feechi laughs]." You know we mash buttons [Both laugh]

**Feechi:** So true, so true.

**Kevin:** You know, of course they never let me say that [Feechi laughs], but...

**Feechi:** Oh goodness! Ok. [Feechi laughs] Oh. What do you want people to know most about the experience working here at Clayton State?

**Kevin:** Well, I'll say that if somebody's gonna come to work here, they gotta be ready to hit the ground running, and do good teamwork. There's a lot of collaborative effort that has to go on. You really can't go in alone here. You gotta be able to work smoothly with other people. You gotta be patient, gotta have a sense of humor, and you make have to interface with other departments entirely. But umm, yeah, you will work hard here. You can't goof off.

**Feechi:** That's true.

**Kevin:** And umm [Takes deep breath], you have to be careful. You have to treat everybody with respect. They'll have, you know, not only will you be taking courses on that, you have to really do it. You know, I'll always say, when people come and visit, when students are first year, the new students, make them feel welcome.

**Feechi:** Yes, I agree.

**Kevin:** No matter what kind of job you have here. That helps so much.

**Feechi:** I really do agree with those sentiments. That's really true.

**Kevin:** Right.

**Feechi:** Ok. Well at this point, is there anything you wanted to talk about that we didn't cover?

**Kevin:** Actually, you did really good. You brought out a lot. I'd say yes, it brought a lot of good memories. I will say, one thing I'll add cause people may not know about this, but when I first came here, buildings had letters. You had the A building, and B building, and C building, and so on.

**Feechi:** Mhmm.

**Kevin:** And that system worked pretty good until we started skipping letters [Both laugh]. More than two letters. But it was our second president, Dr. Skinner, who decided our buildings should have names. The problem is, some of the buildings were named after what went on inside them, and not after a person, or some other name that could be constant. Where that caused problems is for example, what we now know as Magnolia Hall, it's already had several names before Magnolia Hall.

**Feechi:** Oh wow!

**Kevin:** It was like umm, the umm, Business & Health Science Building, the Natural & Behavioral Sciences Building. So now it's Magnolia Hall, and that can't be changed because there's no need to change it. Umm, but umm, on my computer, I keep a file that I can send to people, and it's a building letter to name translator file. It will give you what the building used to be called, all the names it's had, and what it's called now.

**Feechi:** Oh wow.

**Kevin:** And what banner number it has. [Both laugh]. So, I will gladly send that out to anyone who wants it.

**Feechi:** Oh, I would love to take a peek at that, oh my gosh!

**Kevin:** Yeah, I know Dr. Skinner would umm, he didn't like it when people used the building letters, you know [Feechi laughs], he didn't like that. I still use the letters on my documentation, on the little letters on my fiberoptic cables it will have the letters. And I even made up letters for the buildings that didn't have them. So, it just makes it easier to fit on the labels with those letters umm, but yeah, I still remember the letters. If you asked me any of the old buildings what their letter was, I could tell ya.

**Feechi:** Wow [Both laugh]! And I guess this one last question. Are there any, or do you remember any great stories, or legends about the university at all [Both laugh]?

**Kevin:** I-I would. It might take me a little while to put together. I know that one thing that happened was umm, they needed umm, they started having sports teams. You know, they had intramural sports and all, but in 1990..

**Feechi:** Oh right, until 1990...

**Kevin:** We started having the, you know, the sports, I think it was N-A-I-A. You know, that was the athletic association that our basketball team ended up in and so they needed a mascot. We had had some vermin get in our pieces of power equipment, and shorted out the electrical system, so it affected many campus buildings. And so, I said they ought to call us the 'Clayton State Power Rats' [Feechi laughs]. I was just joking, of course. We ended up being the Lakers, and I remember for a time the colors were umm, you know they're blue and orange now, but they originally were green and orange.

**Feechi:** Mhmm.

**Kevin:** Yes. I kind of liked that, being of Irish ancestry.

**Feechi:** Oh yeah [Feechi laughs]?

**Kevin:** I kind of got a kick out of it, but blue and orange is fine. And umm, the lake monster, Loch, has had a couple of different [?]. You know he was green before, had a little different profile in face and all, but I think the mascot that we have now is just fine. And I've got pictures taken of myself with one of the Loch. It was like a statue of him. But with this position in which Loch was standing, it was almost like he was telling me," My printer is putting lines down the page, what can I do [Both laugh]?"

**Feechi:** That is funny!

**Kevin:** And I will gladly send you that picture.

**Feechi:** Oh yes, please do! Oh my goodness..

**Kevin:** And umm, they've had, I've had some humorous things happen. Like one time I was walking in Faculty Hall, and all of a sudden behind me I hear a loud splash. And I turn around, and there's a recycling trash can on the floor, water spilled everywhere. And what happened, I think one of the technicians who no longer works here, they put that up in the ceiling to catch a leak of an old pipe, and I guess it filled up with water and got too heavy for the ceiling tile, ceiling tile gave way right after I had walked under it, and all that water landed just behind me.

**Feechi:** Oh, you were so fortunate!

**Kevin:** I was [Both laugh]!

**Feechi:** I would have thought someone was playing a practical joke on me!

**Kevin:** That's all I tell you! It was so close!

**Feechi:** Ooo..

**Kevin:** And one more, I probably ought to stop [Feechi laughs]. My boss, Abate, was real even killed, and you know, he wouldn't get too excited about anything. But one time we had a power supply in our main data closet, the university center little power supply caught fire inside. It had, you know, flames coming out of it. And, you know he got pretty excited about that [Both laugh]! And I said," I guess when you see an orange glow inside that means it's in an error state [Both laugh]"

**Feechi:** Definitely!

**Kevin:** We had fire extinguishers in our data closet so, you know, they checked everything out. But yeah, that was, it could've been bad, but it was kinda funny in a way.

**Feechi:** Yes! Well I'm glad that was tamed [Feechi laughs]!

**Kevin:** Yeah, I really only have one more thing. I remember one time I had an intern helping me install. Well actually, relocating a battery backup device in what we call a uninterruptable power supply we put in the data closet in Edgewater Hall. So I said," Ok Matthew, plug it in." And he plugs it in, and sparks and flames shot out of that uninterrupted power supply. They'd wired the



outlet to the wrong voltage. It was 220 volts instead of 120. If they'd used the proper outlet, the plug wouldn't have fit in, but it fit right in because they used a 120 style, but they had it wired to 220, so it ran that EPS. But I'm sure that intern will never forget that experience.

**Feechi:** Oh, not at all!

**Kevin:** I won't either!

**Feechi:** Goodness [Both laugh]!

**Kevin:** We didn't know whether to laugh or cry though. We didn't get hurt, you know.

**Feechi:** Thank God!

**Kevin:** But it was a flame, and that electrical contractor had to buy us a new EPS.

**Feechi:** Oh, wow, yes, I bet he did. Oh my goodness.

**Kevin:** Yes, yes.

**Feechi:** I guess it's something about Edgewater Hall with the recent incident [Feechi laughs]!

**Kevin:** Oh yeah! That building has really been worked on a lot since I was her in 2000, I think 05 and 06. They've umm, one floor at the time, they completely removed all the walls, all the offices, all the data closets, all got taken out. And it all got put back better, with a more robust electrical system. Better data cabling, umm, better wiring closets. And I have pictures, I can provide you with those too.

**Feechi:** Oh wow, thank you.

**Kevin:** Give you all the walls gone, and wiring hanging down from up above [Feechi laughs] from everything.

**Feechi:** Wow.

**Kevin:** Umm, yeah, we definitely had electrical problems there because one time I got a call that the Registrar's office was down. And I thought, "What in the world could've happened?" And so I went over there, and sure enough, I go in the data closet and everything's off. I'm thinking, "Oh no." Well what had happened was somebody had a heater in the registrar's office and when they turned it on, it overloaded the circuit.

**Feechi:** Oh..

**Kevin:** And um, what they didn't know was that our backup battery device at the time was on the same circuit. And so when the batteries ran down, everything turned off.

**Feechi:** Oh wow.

**Kevin:** All they had to do was reset the circuit breaker and not use that heater and they were good to go, but as you can tell from that story, we needed a more robust electrical system in that building.

**Feechi:** Yeah.

**Kevin:** And we got it.

**Feechi:** Good.

**Kevin:** We did. And umm, I also have one more story. I had a take your kid to work day.

**Feechi:** Yes!

**Kevin:** Well I don't have any kids, but I have some families whose kids bicycle a lot with me.

**Feechi:** Mm.

**Kevin:** So, one of them's names was Paul Chambers. I brought Paul over here on a Saturday so he could replace some network equipment in the data closet that used to be at the top of Edgewater Hall in the second floor, in the back.

**Feechi:** Mm.

**Kevin:** That was the same one where the power failure took place sometime back, right, because of the heater [Feechi laughs]? Same closet. So anyway, we come over one Saturday, and we go downstairs, and there's water all over the bottom of this building, all towards the front. And so we found the first flood that we had in this building. I use the term 'flood,' it wasn't water several inches high, but it had gotten in several offices, and some storage areas, and the mechanical room all on the eastside of this building, first floor. The reason why it happened, we had a resemblance of a hurricane, or a tropical storm or something come up in 2004, and because of the construction of the university center, the flow of the water changed, and all the water, instead of going through the plaza that was once there, it went in front of the university center, in front of the library, and came down the little driveway to where they park the golf carts.

**Feechi:** Oh...

**Kevin:** And that drain that was there wasn't enough for that water and so all that water came up and went underneath the doors in the mechanical room.

**Feechi:** Oh...

**Kevin:** It came on in. So, we found the first flood [Feechi laughs]. And so, I immediately called public safety, and they got facilities people here to vacuum up the flood water. And it delayed us about an hour cause I had power cords that were in some water and that kind of thing, I had to get them up out of there. But finally, we got finished with that, and Paul and I replaced a bunch of stand-alone equipment in our data closet and put it in what they call a large meddling closet, a chassy. And so, we moved the connections, one at a time from old equipment over to this new device and wired it up and got it going [Feechi laughs]. And when we got done, we were all set, and when they came in Monday, everybody was happy. Everything still worked [Feechi laughs]. You know.

**Feechi:** Well that was good.

**Kevin:** So that was what I did with Paul. I also had him over here one other time to help me with identifying some data jacks in a classroom cause all the labels had come off. You know I like to have things documented.

**Feechi:** Right. Makes sense.

**Kevin:** So I had a cordless telephone, and I was in the data closet with a wired phone. We had wired up one of the connections to use that phone just between us. And we identified every last one of them.

**Feechi:** Wow.

**Kevin:** Yeah. And so I also had him do a sound effect on my computer. When he was a kid, he was fond of criticizing, like kids will do sometimes when they get that age. And so if I was bicycling and would miss a turn, or I'd forget something, he was fond of saying, "You idiot! [Feechi laughs]" He'd say it pretty often. And so, I told Paul, "Let's make a recording of you saying that!" So, I had him record a wav file of him saying that [Feechi laughs]. And so, I took that and put it on my computer for the critical stop error sound effect.

**Feechi:** Oh goodness.

**Kevin:** Right. So, one day Abate was using my computer in one of the data closets. He was sitting there typing along, and he hits enter, and an error message comes up on the screen, and the sound effect comes up, and the kid's voice says, "You idiot [Both laugh]!" And he keeps on hitting enter and it keeps saying it. He said, "Kevin, what did you do to your computer [Still laughing]?" So, anyway, we still laugh about that now, cause he's all grown up. He's married, and he has twin girls, and everything. He's working nearby, and umm, I'll tell him sometime, I'll say, "Well Paul, you called me an idiot two or three times this morning [Both laugh]." I'll be working on something that doesn't work, and an error will come up, so yeah, it's a good story.

**Feechi:** Oh my goodness.

**Kevin:** Yeah.

**Feechi:** Yes. Well you've had so many wonderful adventures, and I think even more wonderful adventures and experiences to have here. And, umm, I just wanna thank you on behalf of the Archives for coming by today, and participating, and just thank you for this time. I've thoroughly enjoyed myself this morning

**Kevin:** Well thank you, I did too [Feechi laughs]. Good memories coming back. I hope I can come back through for you more, if I can find some other goodies hiding in my office. And umm, I also have some videos. I've got a YouTube channel with a few Clayton State stuff on it.

**Feechi:** Yes [Feechi laughs].

**Kevin:** I have more tapes I need to bring over, and have them copied, or copy them myself, and bring them over. You'll be able to enjoy some other cool scenes from the campus from back in the day.

**Feechi:** Alright. Thank you, thank you. Hopefully I don't bother you too much here in the Archives, but..

**Kevin:** It's my pleasure [Feechi laughs]. Just let me know, if I don't know it maybe somebody will know about what you're asking.

**Feechi:** Well thank you again Kevin.

**Kevin:** You're most welcome.