



A Doable Dream

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Growing up in coal mining towns, neither of my “just off the boat” second-generation parents attended high school, let alone college. Growing up in Akron, I somehow understood that after high school came something called college. I imagine many other children of blue-collar workers received that same message, especially with The University of Akron emerging there among the factories. As a high school junior, I asked if there was money saved for college. My mother’s reply reflected a limited understanding of the process: “Oh, you have to pay to go to college?” Living at home, using money from a scholarship

and part time jobs, I did go to college. I graduated in 1970 as a teacher, and again in 1975 as a school psychologist. Along with several cousins, we were first-generation college graduates. It is only in retrospect that our accomplishments seem special. My memory of The University of Akron is of an accessible place for working-class students to obtain a higher education. An American story: I attended The University of Akron at a time when the dream seemed to work—from coalminer, to factory worker, to teacher. I didn't know it was a dream. It was doable.