



A Commuter's View

John Michael Halaiko

In the fall of 1969, I transferred to The University of Akron from Kent State University, at the beginning of my sophomore year. I have many fond memories of UA from that era.

As a commuter I always parked where the James A. Rhodes Athletic Facility is now. That space was one large two-to-four block commuter parking lot. Since I was a new student, the only classes available to me were afternoon and evening classes. That worked out just fine because I could work the midnight shift at Pacific Intermountain Express Trucking Dock, out in West Richfield; sleep at home from 8:30 a.m. to noon; and still make a 1:00 p.m. class down at the University.

I changed majors when I transferred to UA, from Industrial Arts to English. I was enrolled in the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences. As an English major, many of my classes were in Kolbe Hall. Some of my notable professors of the time were Charles Duffy, Sally Kennedy, Leonard Fleischer, James Egan, Gerald Levin, and many others. I am forever indebted to these professors and the many fine teachers I was privileged to have at The University of Akron.

Shrank Hall was brand new in the fall of 1969, and the distance from Kolbe to Shrank was pretty much the extent of Akron's campus at the time (east to west). E. J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall was just being constructed.

I remember, with great sorrow, May 4, 1970, and the terrible loss of fellow students at KSU, and the forever grief experienced by their families and friends. I will never forget these students. The University closed for a number of weeks. That was a very tragic spring, and a tumultuous time on college campuses.

For a short time, in my junior year (1971), I roomed on the second floor of what later became the Stitzlein Alumni Center. At the time, the first floor of the three-story mansion at 138 Fir Hill housed the offices of CYO. That office is where I first met my soul mate of now almost forty-six years, Janie, who was a secretary for CYO. We later encountered one another, one evening on the walkway near John S. Knight Auditorium. Not long after that, we had our first lunch date at Jack Horner's on East Market Street.

Also in 1971, I worked the evening shift at the checkout counter in the old library on Carroll Street. I would announce the closing of the library at midnight on the loudspeaker. When I left the library, I used to love the smell of freshly baked bread from Wonder Bread over on South Forge Street.

I was granted a BA in English in June of 1972, and I am quite honored to say that I graduated cum laude.

As I went through my undergraduate years, I picked up many education electives, and in the fall of 1972, I student taught at West Junior High School.

Janie and I married on April 14, 1973, and had a second-floor apartment at 410 Nash Street, which is now about where the thirty-yard line is at InfoCision/Summa Field Stadium, looking south.

Like many students at UA, I had to work while attending college. In that four-year time period (in addition to the job mentioned above), I worked summer, or part time during the school year, for a homebuilder; a tree company; a home insulation company; the City of Akron Recreation Department; The University of Akron; The State Liquor Store on South Main (after I turned 21) (not my favorite job); drove for a lumber company; and labored at concrete, block, and brick masonry.

UA was a true dream in many ways. One major way was that it was very affordable. I still have the tuition receipts that show \$225 for a full fifteen hour quarter load!

The education that UA provided for me set the stage for a forty-three-year career in teaching, administration, and coaching. I am forever proud of The University of Akron.