

SIOB Presidential Biography

Richard Klimoski: 1991-1992

EARLY INFLUENCES

Americans seem to like to categorize and classify things. For example people are typecast in terms of the time in which they were born, brought up as children or when they became young adults. We have the "Gen X" and "Gen Y" cohorts and the "Millennials" and the "Baby Boomers". There may be a term for my age-mates who were born like me in 1943 during the height of the Second World War, but I do not know of it.

I was the first of six children to be brought into the world by my parents. I was born when my father was serving in the Army during the Second World War. My mother raised me while trying to make ends meet on an enlisted man's salary during a time of national rationing. It is significant that my parents had met just before the war broke out while studying to be pharmacists. In fact, my mother recalls being one of the first women to become a registered pharmacist in Massachusetts. After the War both of my parents worked for my paternal grandfather who had learned the "pharmacy business" as an apprentice. By this time he owned and ran two neighborhood pharmacies in the western Massachusetts city of Holyoke. He employed not only my parents but my Aunt (his daughter) as well. I just barely avoided the obligation to follow in this family tradition of pharmacists. But more about this later.

I had a fairly typical education in Holyoke public schools. What set me apart during this period was my interest in tools, science and model building. This can be attributed to the fact that both my grandfather and father were handy with tools and there was a "shop" of sorts in the basement of one of the pharmacy buildings where they performed repairs on anything that could be fixed. I am sure that this was largely driven by a desire to save money. This "fix it" approach had a profound effect on me. To this day I still try to fix something instead of immediately replacing it. I guess our family was into sustainability before the term was popularized.

This was also the time when America was engaged in the "Korean conflict". The U.S. was investing in military bases for the Strategic Air Command. With the newly invented technique of air refueling, these facilities were to be capable of launching bombers that could reach anywhere in the world. One such base was built near my hometown and resulted in an influx of many air force personnel, some of whom actually rented housing from my grandfather. Their fascination with model airplanes was contagious. As a result, between the years of my middle school and high school I built and flew many types of plane models. This was to have a strong effect on my initial career goals.

It was not much later that America was well into a race with the Soviet Union for "space supremacy". This was the time of early space exploration. Everyone had "sputnik fever", including me and my school classmates. Thus I felt that I was doing my part as a citizen by learning all there was to know about the operation of spacecraft. Of course, this meant that I had to build and test my own model rockets -much to the consternation of my mother! I guess today I would probably be described as a "geek". Because at that time I was surrounded by a coterie of likeminded peers, all enamored with the discoveries of science. I never felt that I missed out much when it came to the traditional high school extracurricular activities (sports or clubs). In fact, I held sort of a peer leadership role in the pursuit of my "scientific" hobbies. My "posse" often hung around my modest family home building, talking about and

ultimately flying our models at the nearby schoolyard. We also enjoyed many field trips to the local air force base when they had their open houses. Several of us even joined what was then called the "civil air patrol" as student members.

As most people know, a small family business requires the support of each family member. Our situation was no exception. I, too had to work in the family pharmacy and these experiences had a great impact on my development and, perhaps, even my eventual career choice. I worked there afternoons and weekends starting in middle school, through high school and even into my college years. I was first put to work doing the mundane things that would usually be considered as "chores" like cleaning and restocking. I've since come to view these experiences as preparing me for the boring tasks associated with most any line of work. As I grow older (and a bit taller) I was put to work actually waiting on customers, handling money and keeping track of receipts. I was expected to graciously meet, greet, and establish rapport with ALL kinds of people. This included members of the large Polish immigrant community in our neighborhood. And soon came to learn about their unique demands for traditional folk remedies (i.e. live leeches) and herbal products. My duties also included watching out for the inevitable petty thievery that is the bane of every small retail operation. I guess that these experiences helped me become a good observer of people and reading situations.

Perhaps the best skills building I received was from working at the small, 8 stool soda fountain. One might say that this was the perfect "stretch assignment" for a person of my age at the time. Our fountain service was built around a variety of ice cream products, sodas, and coffee rather than food. The pace of work was often demanding as our fountain business came in cycles. As it turned out my greatest challenge was to take and fill orders when the nearby schools released hordes of students at noon for lunch break or mid-afternoon after the schools closed for the day. Not only were orders coming in fast and furious but the fact is many of the customers were my peers. As you may remember from your own experiences, adolescents can be immature, demanding and often behave badly. Working quickly and having to deal with customers my own age required that I had to "grow up fast."

At the time I must have resented putting in all of these hours. But in retrospect I have come to really appreciate what it did to contribute to my maturity. It prepared me for functioning in the world of work, and then some. It had a great impact on shaping my fascination with the behavior of people, with my deep appreciation for the importance of managing relationships and with my growing understanding of the challenges of running a business.

UNDERGRADUATE YEARS

I almost did not go to college. My grades in high school were good enough (I recall being a B+/A- student). My standardized test scores were OK. The dilemma was that my parents were torn between having me, as the first born, go to college and continuing to work in the family pharmacy business; perhaps even to become a registered pharmacist by going to night school. With five other children still living at home, the cost of college was also an issue.

Fortunately, I lived at a time when state universities like the University of Massachusetts (at Amherst) were very affordable. UMass was a relatively close to my home (20 miles). In the end it was agreed that if I could self-fund tuition and fees AND if I continued to help out at the family business on weekends, I could pursue my studies. As it turned out, I was able to find employment as a residence hall counselor in

my sophomore year. This enabled me to receive a very good university education but one that did not place many financial demands on my family.

Driven by the interests and hobbies I had growing up I initially thought that I wanted to become an engineer. This was not to be. My performance in the required math courses during my freshman year at college was only mediocre. Then there was the "language" issue. At the time the undergraduate curriculum at UMass had a language requirement. I can still recall a discussion with my engineering professor and advisor during this time. He had a very clear opinion regarding what a future engineer should study as a language; of course it had to be Russian! When I protested that studying Russian would be very challenging, he disagreed. I remember that he pointed out without the slightest hint of humor in his voice that his own study of Russian did not present him with any particular challenges. He then continued, especially compared with what was required for him to become somewhat skilled at reading Japanese (another language then associated with discoveries then emerging in the fields of science or technology).

By this time it had also become clearer to me that I was really more interested in "people" than in "things". I left engineering after my first year in college and through a variety of small decisions I ended up pursuing a Psychology major.

In the 1960s the Psych department at UMass emphasized exposure to the traditional areas of School, Clinical and Counseling Psychology. I enjoyed learning about these domains. However, I gravitated toward the few faculty members who taught Social Psychology and what was, at the time called Human Factors. The faculty in these areas taught me about the importance of better understanding of people and interpersonal relationships as well as the impact of employment systems or technology on these relationships. My course work in these two areas strongly influenced my desire to pursue a graduate degree in Industrial Psychology.

During my senior year at college, two significant events took place. I became engaged to my wife (now of 50 years) Gretchen. We met during my freshman year. We dated through college. We got married in June following graduation. At about this time I applied for, got into and decided to take graduate studies at Purdue. Deciding to get married was easy. Going to the middle of the country to study did give me pause.

To put the choice to take studies at Purdue in perspective I should point out that I had not yet traveled further west than Buffalo, New York! I did, however, know that the mid-west was the birthplace of Industrial Psychology (we would add "organizational" some years later). Moreover, Purdue, if not the epicenter, was a very well regarded program for graduate education in this field.

INFLUENCE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AT PURDUE

As most know, Purdue is a land grant university located in West Lafayette Indiana, the seat of Tippecanoe County. In 1965, the population of the County was around 100,000 people. The contrast of the rural economy and its traditions with what I had grown up with in New England were great. But the people we were to meet while in my years of graduate studies were wonderful.

When I began my studies at Purdue Industrial Psychology was a major focus of the Psychology Department. In part was because it was so large a program. It included the sub-areas of Human Factors, Consumer Behavior, and Differential Psychology along with the study of the "I" component of our

"I/O" field. While at Purdue I had the good fortune to study with such well-established people as Joe Tiffin, Bill Owens, Bob Perloff and Ernie McCormick. I crossed paths with Bob Pritchard, then an assistant professor hired during my last year of study. The Department was very strong in quantitative methods as well. I took quant course work with such luminaries as Ben Wiener and Hugh Brogden. And, as was common at the time, I had exposure to the fundamental sub-disciplines of Comparative, Developmental, Counseling and Clinical Psychology. My colleagues and I were all told to do well in such courses so that we could become licensed Psychologists, something that many of my peers were doing in preparation for a career in practice. While this broad set of course work might seem onerous today, I do not regret the requirements. It promoted my professional identity as a Psychologist and prepared me to think like one.

Even at that time (the late 60's) there was recognition that the nature of organizations had a major role to play in setting the context for understanding the behavior of people at work. The term "organizational psychology" had just been coined but was not yet reflected in our curriculum at Purdue. To learn more about the nature of organizations I enrolled in courses across campus. The Sociologists Martin Patchen and Bob Perucci taught me a lot about the impact of such things as company structures, organizational culture, technology and organizational leadership on workplace behavior.

My experiences while at Purdue clearly had a powerful effect on my personal and professional development. Some of these were a consequence of my decision to have co-advisors for my doctoral work. One adviser, Don King, had a joint appointment in Psychology and in the Krannert School of Management. Don was a student of Tiffin's and had been at Purdue for many years. He could have taught any of the traditional topics, but he was forward thinking. He was deeply committed to the study of "socio-technical systems" and was an active practitioner in new field of Organizational Development, a humanistic approach to planned organizational change. Don mentored me in both the theory and the practice of organizational change. All of this dovetailed nicely with the course work in Sociology that I had been taking.

My second advisor was Howard Fromkin. Howard had just joined the faculty in the Krannert School of Management. Howard was as different from Don as anyone could be. Trained at the Ohio State University as an experimental Social Psychologist, Howard was recruited to teach research design and methods and to help manage the Krannert Lab, then one of the most modern social science labs in the country. While Don represented knowledge-building based on correlational data, Howard was an advocate of relying on the insights gleaned from well-crafted experiments. This turned out to have a great impact on my ability to appreciate and make use of a variety of methods in my own research.

While Howard exposed me to the experimental methods and research traditions of many of the great Social Psychologists of the time, he did much more. He also taught me how to make effective presentations at conferences, to write well and how to get published. In fact, my first publication was co-authored with Howard and a fellow grad student colleague. It was based on data obtained from an experiment run in the Krannert Lab. Later I was able to gather my dissertation data using the lab facility as well. Fortuitously, my frequent comings and goings in the lab allowed me to get to know key faculty members in the business school. In turn this led to the opportunity to teach Krannert business students while working on my dissertation. Effectively, I was able to gain knowledge, experience and even some credibility in both the "I" and the "O" sides of our field. I also developed the foundation for what was to be a most interesting career bridging Psychology and Business.

The second set of experiences at Purdue that had a major effect on my personal and professional development stemmed from my employment in the Instructional Media Research Institute. This was a grant-supported unit affiliated with the Purdue Libraries. In fact I found this job during my first week on campus. Moreover I was able to work there for several years while pursuing my masters and doctoral degrees.

The focus of the Institute was on learning and on the potential impact of new instructional technologies on learning. At the time, the emphasis was on the use of film and on television as instructional media. Having this appointment turned out to be an amazing bit of good luck. Not only did this work as an RA support me throughout my years of graduate study, it also exposed me to the great people (and ideas) in the fields of Educational, Developmental and Learning Psychology (e.g. Dick Snow was on staff for a while). I contributed to empirical research guided by the prevalent theories and models of human learning (e.g. Gibson's "structure of the intellect") and became exposed to (then) new concepts like "aptitude treatment interaction". The appointment also helped to develop my project (grant) management skills. I became better at writing proposals and reports that were clear but also persuasive.

The third aspect of my graduate studies that stands out (in retrospect) and one that played a major role in my development was the strong student culture associated with the Industrial Psychology graduate program at Purdue. As already noted the program was large, having over 10 faculty involved. This contributed to a large number of students in residence at any one time. But it was not just the size of the student body that was noteworthy; it was also the background (and values) of the students as well.

McCormick had earlier established a well-regarded master's degree curriculum in Human Factors Psychology. This brought in cohorts of military officers each year on one to two year rotations from their regular duties. In turn, this also contributed to some of the traditions that made the student culture so unique and impactful. Many of these individuals were older than the average grad student. They took their studies very seriously and worked hard. They believed in cooperation while in a graduate school where there are often tendencies to be competitive. But they also knew how to have some fun.

One manifestation of the graduate student culture at Purdue was the existence of a student-run organization known as The Purdue Association of Graduate Students in Industrial Psychology. (PAGSIP). This organization contributed greatly to the quality of graduate student life. PAGSIP had elected officers. It had a formal mentor program for new students. It ran many social gatherings throughout the year. It supported students during particularly stressful times (comprehensive exams, running dissertation studies or applying for jobs).

PAGSIP's signature event was a party held at the Midwest Psychological Association Meetings held each May in Chicago and at the Palmer House. Students would rent the suite and arrange for food and drink (often bypassing the formal hotel rules). Students would then sell tickets to the party to the large number of Purdue Alums and friends attending the MPA meetings. (After all this is where the latest research in our field would be presented.) This annual activity generated revenue for PAGSIP. But it did much more. It promoted exposure to senior leaders in the field of Industrial Psychology. And for me it led to strong relationships across generations of Purdue alumni. I bring all this up not because of nostalgia but because I feel that PAGSIP turned out to be a training ground for many of us. In fact I had the opportunity to lead this student organization while at Purdue. Doing so contributed to my deep interest and desire for academic leadership.

The last point to make about my graduate studies program is about my fellow students. Looking back, it was a remarkable group. Among my peers were people like Bill Byham, Bob Gatewood, Frank Schmidt, Dick Jeanneret, Tom Jeswald, Bob Dypboye, Mike Flanagan and Neal and Kara Schmidt. While all of us can lay some claim to being surrounded by good colleagues, I would say that being around these people brought out the best in me while I was studying for my PhD at Purdue. Today, I count on them as my friends as well.

My Purdue days were not all about academics. During my time there, my wife Gretchen had the good luck to become the Director of a local art center, a job that fit very well with her background and training as fine arts major. Her position also provided an extraordinary opportunity for the two of us to get to know many people outside of the University community and to participate in civic events. It allowed us to connect with local and regional artists, many of whom became friends. At this time as a couple we also started to collect contemporary art and antiques, something that we continue to do together today.

STARTING AN ACADEMIC CAREER

There is a great deal of evidence that the first job out of graduate school will have a profound effect on you and your career. This was indeed my experience. As a result of encouragement from my Purdue faculty, I was pretty certain that I wanted a job in a university. The academic market was good in 1969-1970. As a result of my preparation and contacts, I was seen as a credible candidate for a position in either a Psychology Department or a Business School. In fact, for my first job it came down to a choice between University of Chicago (Business) and the Ohio State University in Psychology. My decision to go to Ohio State was influenced by several factors. One was the desire to stay connected to my roots in Psychology. It was also affected by the fact my advisor Howard Fromkin had such positive ties to OSU and its great faculty in Social Psychology including Tony Greenwald, Tom Ostrom and Bib Latane. At the time I was graduating (1970) Jim Naylor had come from Ohio State and was serving as chair of the Psychology Department at Purdue. He too, had good things to say about becoming a Buckeye.

But upon reflection my decision to go to Ohio State was most strongly affected by Milt Hakel. Milt had come out of the Industrial Psychology program at Minnesota and had studied under Marv Dunnette. He had been recently hired to lead the Industrial Psychology graduate Program at OSU. While the Industrial Psychology program had a long and illustrious history at OSU (e.g. Bass, Thayer, Fleishman had all studied there), recent faculty retirements and false starts in hiring created the need to rebuild. Milt was strongly committed to reestablishing the Industrial Psychology "brand" and was very persuasive about how to do this.

I was intrigued by the challenge of re-building a program at such a major school. I certainly recognized that there were risks. But Milt hired me and Mike Wood from the University of Illinois. There we were, three untenured assistant professors. We had limited experience as faculty, much less growing and managing a PhD program. But it was, as we say today, a "stretch assignment". It was also a heady experience.

It was very important that the senior faculty in Psychology and Bob Wherry, the Department chair at the time were on our side. As some will recall Wherry was well regarded for his work on psychometrics especially as applied to work place measurement issues. He was well respected by the faculty and was

dispositionally a “servant leader”. Importantly, he was supportive in what we were trying to do by way of positioning Industrial Psychology at Ohio State as a center of excellence.

Mike Wood would soon move on but the addition of Bob Billings from Cornell, Ed Cornelius from TCU and Bob Vance from Penn State allowed us to reestablish a strong Industrial Psych program at OSU and to bring it to national prominence. Over my 25 years as a faculty member in the program we were able to recruit and graduate major contributors to our field. These include people like Ron Ash, Tom Becker, Jim Breugh, Adrienne Colella, Kevin Ford, Andy Imada, Larry Inks, Laura Koppes, Kurt Kraiger, Manny London, Scott Martin, Terry Mitchell, Paul Sackett, Wayne Sellman, Bill Strickland and Jeff Vancouver.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

My years at Ohio State shaped both my life interests and career trajectory. This certainly included my participation in numerous professional associations. Jim Naylor had started the new Journal of Organizational Behavior and Human Performance (now OBHDP) and invited me to be on its Editorial Board. He also created the group known as "SOB" (Society for the study of Organizational Behavior). I was part of the first group of colleagues invited to join.

Milt Hakel was not only a wonderful mentor; he was well connected and very active in (and would later become President of) Division 14 of the APA. I am not certain that Milt had a hand in opening every door for me but I soon felt welcomed by more senior people in our field and engaged in the service to our profession. This also happened when, years later, Milt (and other SIOP leaders) made the courageous decision to support the formation of the Association for Psychological Science (APS) as an alternative to APA. This exposed me to still another set of professional service opportunities (for example working on the first conference program for this new organization). Milt took on the editorship (and later ownership) of Personnel Psychology. This provided additional visibility for our OSU Industrial Psychology program as well as a set of new contacts for me.

Consequently during my OSU years I became very engaged in the four scientific and professional organizations that have shaped and contributed to my career- The American Psychological Association (APA), the Association for Psychological Science (APS), Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) and the Academy of Management (AOM). I am pleased to hold Fellow status in each of these organizations.

It is clear that in my professional work I have been most deeply connected with Division 14 and SIOP. I think that I have been the Chair of most of SIOP’s standing committees: Program, Scientific Affairs, E&T, Fellowship and Long Range Planning. In fact I had the privilege of being the Program Chair of the first SIOP “stand alone” conference. I was honored to receive the Distinguished Service Award from SIOP and to become its president in 1991-1992.

But I have also developed a professional identity in management studies leveraging my service to the Academy of Management organization. I served as a member of the AOM Board of Governors and have chaired several standing committees. As a result of this I was mentored by Dave Whetten and followed him as the Editor of the Academy of Management Review, one of the key journals of the Academy. Similarly, I would point out that Roy Lewicki facilitated my election to various Editorial roles associated with running the then new journal for the AOM, the Academy of Management Learning and Education. Over the years I have been an active member of several Academy of Management Divisions. But I am

especially proud to have been able to my service to the Human Resources Division and proud to have been elected as the Chair of this division.

1While participation in these professional service activities has often been demanding, it has also allowed me to make an impact. Moreover, interacting with the wide-ranging circle of friends that these activities have created has proven to be very satisfying. As Ben Schneider writes, when it comes to work, the "people make the place". If I may paraphrase Ben, when it comes to a successful and satisfying career, the people you meet and work with over your career also make the difference.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

I have enjoyed making a difference by contributing to literature in the field, mentoring students and serving in professional organizations. The opportunity to continue to have a potential impact led to my decision to join the Psychology faculty at George Mason University. While OSU was a great public university with a tradition of achievements, Mason, also a state school, was a "startup." Located in Northern Virginia and next to Washington DC, it originally a branch campus of the University of Virginia. While OSU had over 50,000 students on its main campus and was a residential campus, Mason was significantly smaller. Most of the students attended Mason while living at home. Despite the many differences between OSU and Mason, the two schools had at least one major thing in common: a Psychology Department faculty that stood for quality.

The I/O program at Mason had a fine regional reputation. Its faculty like Steve Zaccaro, Mike Mumford, Lou Buffardi and Ed Fleishman had all contributed to this. When the position became open at Mason, Ed brought it to my attention. When I learned that there was a strong commitment at all levels of administration at Mason (Department, Dean, and Provost) to grow the program it seemed like it could be a good place for me to again try to make a difference.

The decision has been a good one. With the support of colleagues, I was able to make great strides in moving the program forward. I was able to recruit good people like Jose Cortina, Stan Gully, Rob Ployhardt and Lynn McFarland. Using the SIOP organization as a platform for program reputation building in a relatively short period of time we were able to establish a national presence. This, in turn has attracted additional high quality faculty to Mason including Rasheed Dalal, Eden King, Seth Kaplan and Lois Tetrick.

Our achievements in building out the reputation of the I/O graduate program apparently caught the attention of the Provost at Mason. As a result, I was asked to serve as the interim Dean of the School of Management (the business school at Mason). I was told that the School had gone through several years of internal turmoil and that I might be the one to put it back on a trajectory toward growth and excellence.

At the time it did not seem like an odd thing to consider, given my background in both Psychology and management. I accepted the appointment believing it to be a temporary. But my tenure as Dean was not to be a short one. Over the course of 9 years, we were indeed able to turn things around in part because I was again able to recruit a large number of high quality faculty members and to promote a culture that supports their needs and goals. The School is now nationally ranked and regarded as a strong contributor to the teaching as research mission of Mason.

THE PRESENT

At the time of this writing (age 72) I hold a joint appointment in Psychology and Management at George Mason University. I am a strong supporter of the I/O program and bask in the light of its continuing success. I am no longer Dean of the School of Business. However I am currently serving as the Chair of the Management Area (Department) of the School with the goal of providing a high quality education for future generations of potential leaders of work organizations. I am also Director of Faculty Research in our Business School. Here I see my role as supporting the professional development needs of the School's entire faculty. I continue to be engaged professionally, undertaking research, giving presentations and writing for publication. I am a Director serving on the SIOP Foundation Board whose mission is to ensure the future of our profession through the investment of philanthropic contributions. I am the current Editor of SIOP's Organizational Frontiers Book series. As such, I have the opportunity to charter volumes that have the potential to shape the thinking and direction of our field. I feel that this mix of responsibilities suits me fine. While it is sometimes challenging it also allows me to continue to make a potential contribution to my university and to our profession.

Looking back, I see that I have been fortunate in being given so many opportunities. With the help of others, I feel that I have been somewhat successful in my efforts to make a difference. I am sure that this has occurred when it comes to the many students and colleagues with whom I have worked. But I also have tried to affect the vitality of those organizations of which I have been a part. While it may not be a career goal or legacy aspiration suitable for everyone, with regard to the latter I can highly recommend living a life revolving around the strengthening and building of institutions.

6/10/16