University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives
Interviewee: David Eisenman (Part 5)
Interviewer: Katie Nichols
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Katie Nichols: Okay. This is Katie Nichols. I am here with David Eisenman. We are continuing our ongoing interview. Today is February 11, 2020, it's 3pm and we're in the conference room at the Archives Research Center. All right, take it away.

David Eisenman: Okay. Today, I wanted to return again to the 19—the late 1960s, the time of the centennial year, 1967-'68, and things that were going on in those days on campus that may or may not have been recorded by other people. I may have mentioned in previous sessions that the centennial year budget came predominantly from the Graduate College, of all places, which had something called contract research reserves or CRR money. In a sense, it was the kind of gamesmanship that budgeteers played in those days, and my work later in the chancellor's office on budgets and then for the Bureau of the Budget, the state of Illinois, taught me the games that people play, but one of the games was, of course, if you have a contract with the federal government or a company to do some research project, there's the direct costs of materials and staff to do the work, but there are also obviously costs associated with providing a laboratory, heating it, having janitors come and clean it at night. So there are their overhead costs that almost always people who sign contracts with universities will pay. And the university used to negotiate a percent kind of by department. So the chemistry department, for example, might have slightly higher overhead than physics, because they really do have labs and reagents and hoods that have to suck away dangerous fumes and things of that sort, whereas a physicist could sit at his desk and do theory pretty much, you know, in 10 square feet of table space. But in any case, contract—we charged contractors, whether they were federal government agencies or private companies, overhead.

But in those days, the university was pretty well funded by the state, so the state was already paying the power bill and the cost of maintaining buildings and so forth. So the truth is, we were being paid twice. Now, it wouldn't be fair for the state of Illinois to just give away overhead money, to say, the federal government. I learned when I worked in the Ogilvie Bureau of the Budget that Illinois taxpayers paid more money to the federal government than the federal government ever spends in those days in Illinois in all forms, meaning, you know, government installations that hire local people, government support of highways, things like that. So Illinois was a net exporter of tax dollars to the federal government. I don't think anybody felt badly about clawing some of them back.

And the Graduate College used these reserves creatively when a new member of the faculty joined. And the Graduate College, although it was run in those days by Dan Alpert, who was a physicist, although the Graduate College might have been seen as steering more towards the sciences, this was the day of big government investment in science. Nevertheless, any new faculty member who was trying to do research and working, for example, on a PhD, graduate students, they got startup money from the Graduate College to begin their research until they could be funded by a contract, for example, with a government agency or with a private corporation. So Dan Alpert, very much—well, of course, the University of Illinois, because of its ILLIAC computers, was one of the leading places in the nation for the development of large, fast computers. And Dan felt that our mainframe computers ought to be available not just to engineers and scientists, but to anybody who had a creative use of computers.

Now one, one kind of project that I know was going on in the late '60s was called the development of concordances. This is an interesting concept. If you take all of the words of Shakespeare's plays and you simply count how many times he uses each word, you're learning something about his vocabulary. And there people were beginning to realize that you could tell a play that was probably written by—assuming that you know that say four plays are definitely written by Shakespeare, but there's some question about whether another play was mostly written by Shakespeare or revised by his players, or maybe not even his work. One way you could tell is that people have certain characteristic words that they tend to use over that other people don't use. I can't give you any good examples at the moment from my own vocabulary, but there were times in my life when I was aware that I tended to use certain words that I never heard anybody else say. So this idea was, if you could—of course, people had been doing this even in the 19th century. I mean, can you imagine, actually—well, the whole Oxford English Dictionary project, when you think about it, is insane. People got the earliest books from the Bodleian and other very old libraries and simply went through and listed every word and tried to find the first time any given word was used in the English language and deduced from context what the meaning must have been. This was a an 80-year project, pretty much all done by hand before anybody thought of, well, what we now call modern computers. Although there were what amounted to IBM cards, you could have card files. And of course, card files are very flexible, because you can move cards around, add to them, reorganize them. In a sense, it was a highly manual, but computerish approach to things.

But anyway, putting all that aside, although people had built concordances before, nobody had ever used a computer to assist. But if you could sit and type, just type every word. We didn't have optical character recognition until the '90s, but back in the '60s, if you could hire people to just type in all the words of Shakespeare to a computer terminal, the computer could keep track of how many times each word appeared. So there were people in the English department who started using computers to produce outputs that simply had counts, how many times is the word 'a,' 'the,' 'given'—choose a word, and you would look for outliers. You would work—you could

compare the diction of one play with that of another, and where there were massive differences, you could argue that maybe Shakespeare hadn't written it. Well, this was the kind of thing that Dan Alpert thought computers would be good for, not just doing calculations for scientists, but doing other simple tasks that people in other fields might have enjoyed to have the computer do.

So, Dan had rules. Anybody could use the mainframe computers between, say, two and six in the morning. And his cover story was that maybe they weren't busy duing those hours, but we were paying these huge rents to IBM for their mainframe computers, and the rent didn't say how many hours a day you were using it. It just said you had it. And so in a sense, anything that was done, he told them between two and six in the morning would be sorted for free, so he wouldn't have to charge them. But of course, scientists who were operating on grants, charged computer time to their grants. It was one of the costs that a government agency would have to face if it was funding a project that involved computers. Now actually computers—stacks of cards in those days were how you sent your program in. You typed out your program onto individual punch cards, and then a punch card reader read them, sent it to the computer, it either did perform your task or there was a glitch in your code, and you had to sit there and see if it would run or not. If it didn't run, you got your cards back and tried to figure out what you'd done wrong. There'd be a little report, as in, we started working, and then we quit at this point, and you could sort of deduce what was wrong with your program and maybe fix it. So there was, there was a need to kind of be there while your your thing was running. But if you were a scientist who already had your program down, and you were just feeding more data in and analyzing a new bunch of data, obviously, you didn't have to be there, and it could perfectly well run at two in the morning as well as any other time.

But Dan wanted to see who was serious, not just messing around. And so he said, these are my rules. And people who were willing to come over between two and six, generally speaking, made pretty good uses of the computer. So I brought with me today, just for fun, something that Doyle Moore did in 1972. It's we're looking at a full-size computer output. This is the kind of paper we used to have, and it looks like two, eight and a half by 11 sheets, side by side. So I must it must be 17 inches wide and 11 inches high. These have punch holes in the side because they they ran on, they were run through the printer on wheels. The IBM company came up with all of this approach. And this particular thing is entitled 'four letter word.' This is a four-letter word. It's the title of this big box of paper, which is three inches high, God knows how many feet long it is. And there's a very short Fortran program at the beginning that simply tells the computer to make every possible combination of four of the 26 letters in the English alphabet. So the first, the first line of this computer output is A, A, A, A. A, A, A, B. A, A, A, C. And so forth. As soon as we get through all 26 it becomes A, A, A, A, A, B. A, A, A, A, B, A. A, A, B, C. A, A, B, D, and so forth. So by just varying first the last letter, then the next to last, then the next to the next to last, and finally the first letter, you get every possible combination of four letters. Well, of course, people joke about naughty words as often being four letter words. So every bad word you can

think of is somewhere in this printout. But Doyle found that just simply doing this had the most remarkable effect. People would have to look to see if their favorite four-letter word really was in there. You know, you would explain to people, of course, it is, the machine, given clear instructions, is going to carry them out.

Well, this was one of many things that people did, but people also discussed, I said— oh, I should have brought. There's a portrait of Doyle Moore printed on the computer in which English letters and symbols are simply used to establish a gray scale. So we have a whole big portrait of him, but it's entirely made up of letters. So one of his students found a way to take a black and white picture and reduce it, instead of to pixels, to individual letters, and then print it out, and it's absolutely from, you know, 10 feet immediately recognizable as Doyle Moore, but up close to just, of course, a whole lot of letters and symbols on paper. So, he was an imaginative guy, and he wanted people in the, in the design field, over in Fine and Applied Arts, to realize that computer assisted design of all sorts was going to be useful. Now, of course, architects produce rotational computer images of a building that they're building. They can calculate spaces with the help of computer assisted design software, all of which didn't exist in the early '60s, the middle '60s, when the centennial year was going. We could all see the future. We knew these things were going to be important, but nobody knew how quickly, how much work might be involved, before these ideas were useful.

And this, of course, is a problem that universities and anybody worried about education faces. I remember chatting with the dean of the Pittsburgh Medical School at about that time, who said, you know, we're teaching molecular genetics to our doctors, but it may be that in the entire time they practice medicine assuming that somebody graduated, say, in 1968 at the age of 26 if he was going to work 40 years and retire at 66, he would be retiring in the year 2004, and the question was, would, even by 2004 would knowledge of how DNA affects us be useful to doctors in curing people of anything? And I think the answer is it probably wasn't for the greatest part. So he knew, on the one hand that that he was taking out of the curriculum more practical things, maybe that the average doctor could make use of, but he was intellectually preparing doctors for a world that might not come into fruition even in their entire careers. And I think all over the university, there was a feeling that we had to be practical. We wanted people to be alert to changes in tools that might be available to them. But at the same time, dwelling endlessly on these tools might be to the detriment of mastering more tried and true techniques that would be more practically useful in the short run.

But these were the kinds of questions that the centennial year struggled with. There was a document titled "Educating for the 21st Century." Well, now that we're 20 years into the 21st century, it's kind of fun to look back and say, did we perceive what some of the challenges would be? And of course, the Vietnam War was raging at the time of the centennial year, so we were very focused on international affairs and violence and nuclear weapons and other issues, which

may be existential, but you know, environmentalists also were part of the centennial year program. And my mind is failing at the moment, but I'll think of his name, one of the more famous of the early 20th century environmentalists was still active and showed up on campus and gave a lecture. All we'd have to do is look at the program of the centennial year and you'd recognize some names. And of course, the Great Lakes were terribly polluted at the time, and the beginning of the Environmental Protection Agency was right around the corner. People were talking about Earth Day. The first Earth Day was somewhere along in that period. So there was a growing awareness of some environmental issues, but nothing like, for example, the exhausting of groundwater. But there were people in our College of Agriculture who had been around the world, saw the advantage of hybrid animals and hybrid crops for increasing the ability of mankind to feed itself, issues which are coming to the surface again now, as we realize how extremely water dependent most of our agriculture is, and how rapidly we are drawing down fossil water underground. This is an existential crisis of the 21st century that I'm not sure was being—that anybody focused on in '68 but I have to go back and look. I think we were, we were not aware of how large the environmental crisis was, but there were already people beginning to see the importance of ecology.

But to come back to the Graduate College, I just think that somebody ought to at some point look hard at the period in which Dan Alpert led the Graduate College, because I think he was really far seeing, very clever, extremely broad in his interest, and made the University of Illinois one of the few places where the humanities and the social sciences had access to tools that were mostly seen as those of the hard scientists. I should mention also survey research. This university had Seymour Sudman, who was one of the wisest people about how to ask questions. The sex researcher over at the University of Indiana.

KN: Kinsey.

DE: Kinsey. Kinsey, of course, was famous for realizing that how you ask a question, especially if it's a sensitive question, determines whether you'll get accurate answers or not, and in fact, asking the same question a number of different ways and at different times during an interview is the best way to home in on and hone the accuracy of people's responses to questions about sensitive—he found, by the way, that people are far more sensitive about their finances than they were about their sex lives. But anyway. There were people on this campus who cared a lot about statistical information, and now we live in an information world in which people are revealing themselves constantly on social media. But it wasn't easy in the '60s to find out what people were actually thinking and what their, their private behaviors, including how they spent their money, actually were.

And here we had some pretty good social scientists who were doing research into people's behaviors, that was really pretty good. And I was very happy to work with some of those people

in the early, in the late '60s and early '70s, when I was looking into why the University of Illinois had the student body that it did, and why certain people were missing, and I've mentioned in previous interviews that learning something about the family income distribution of the University of Illinois students was fascinating to me, because nobody else was paying attention. The president didn't know, the chancellor didn't know. The people in the admissions and records department had data sitting on their shelves that had they trusted it, had they verified it, would have told them that we were rapidly becoming a socioeconomically elite institution, having been a far more democratic one just a decade earlier, mostly because of inadvertent changes in society and embracings of trends that looked sensible, such as, let's not just be open admissions. Let's select people according to high school class rank and test scores, not realizing that those things were correlating with income, and that the demand for higher education was rising faster than supply, and that we were being taken over by upper income people whose kids outscored lower income people. But Jane Loeb, who is still around and should be interviewed, did end up Director of Admissions and Records in the early '70s, and she was a social scientist researcher who did know about the correlation between entrance standards and the actual performance of students, and realized that we were being overly selective, perhaps, and that students who scored a bit lower might actually perform just as well or better, if they were simply motivated. That high school class rank test scores may seem objective to members of the legislature, but they are not necessarily the best way to choose a student body. We're still debating that in the year 2020, but I think that a lot of the variables and a lot of the data were actually quite available by the early '70s. It was a political problem. How you change the way you choose a student body.

My experience at Harvard, which was because it was a private school, didn't feel constrained to satisfy legislators and really value diversity. I was already biased in the direction of questioning a merely automatic, mechanical admissions policy. But again, social science research was aided by the access to computers. You could run large amounts of data, and I'm very proud of the project I think I've mentioned earlier, but I wouldn't have thought even to try it if I hadn't been at a university that used computers wisely. I simply took responses by freshmen at the University of Illinois in which they estimated their parents household income and got the state of Illinois to go to those very parents in their Illinois income tax forms, match the kid's estimate with the parents' reported income, and then remove identifying information, so that we had a database in which you had the student estimate and the parent may be accurate, maybe not—some parents obviously cheat—the parent actual reported income. And what we found was what social scientists already knew we were likely to find, which is that there was a regression to the mean. Low-income kids overestimated their parents' incomes, high income kids, kids from high income families underestimated their parents' incomes. But the delicious response, from my point of view as a social planner, was that in the region in the middle where you might not give a full scholarship to a student because his parents could have paid something, there was good enough agreement statistically between what the kids said and the parents said that we could plan, we could say exactly how much it would cost to have a financial aid program that would match

parents' ability to pay with state's investment and send every able kid to the University of Illinois, without regard to parents' incomes. And it turned out it would have been cheaper than keeping tuition low for everybody, which was the traditional approach of land grant public universities such as the University of Illinois.

So I already knew by 1971 that a high tuition, high aid model would have been a much more efficient method for a government to invest in its young people, but politically, it was impossible to get any such idea any traction. Although the Ogilvie administration and Dan Walker, running against Ogilvie in '72 both endorsed the Eisenman plan. But when Walker was elected, he chose not to be governor, just turned over the responsibilities of the governor to a bunch of people, and Vic DeGrazia, a former aide of Robert Kennedy, ended up with the higher education portfolio. And when shown the Eisenman plan, said, 'Fuck the poor, they don't vote.' And that was the end of that. So you know, you can play the game of thinking you know, what's going on in society, rationally designing a government program that would produce the maximum social benefit for the minimum amount of money, and the whole thing can be flushed down the toilet based on somebody's notion of how to win elections. Well, that's disillusioning, but I'm not sorry that I worked on the problem, and I still think the data are there, and if we ever become rational, which probably one cannot hope for, you know, it's out there.

Now, other topics for today. In the middle of all of the turmoil in the fall of '68, the university had been dangling invitations to Arnold Beckman of Beckman Instruments, hoping that he would give a bunch of money to his alma mater. And Arnold, in the meantime, was on the board of Caltech, California Institute of Technology, and he apparently expressed some unhappiness with the fact that there was a lot of turmoil on the campus of the University of Illinois. Before I came over today, I went to my day timers, and I know I have them, but I can't find the late '60 ones. I'll dig them out. It has to have been the fall of '68 in the middle of the so-called Black students rioting on campus, or might have been, conceivably, the next fall when it was even more turmoil on campus, that one day David Pines and Dan Alpert, somebody else, maybe Chancellor Peltason, came to me and said, 'David, we would like you to get aboard a plane and fly to Los Angeles and talk to Arnold Beckman. Just be there and answer his questions. Tell him what's going on on campus. We need somebody to reassure him that we haven't lost control out here.' So I went out to Willard airport at seven in the morning, got aboard some plane, which I think took me to Chicago and then to LA. I remember arriving, LA time, somewhere around noon or one. In the airport in LA, there was a conference room, and there was Arnold Beckman, and he sat down with me and said he wasn't happy. He thought they were handling their Black students at Caltech far much, far better than we were in Champaign and what was going on. So we had a something like two-hour conversation, which I just told him what I was observing and answered his questions and then he said, 'Well, I feel a bit reassured, and thank you for coming.' And I went and got on board a plane, and I was home by 10 at night or something like that, all in one day. I never got out of the airport. But now these days, you see—when I go over to the Beckman

Institute and they stick my head in an MRI machine, and I'm participating in studies of the aging brain, I always say to them, 'Young man or young woman, you know, this whole institute wouldn't be here if it weren't for me.' So I tell them that. I take full responsibility for the Beckman Institute, because, after all, I went out and reassured Arnold Beckman, 1968. Now I don't think he gave the money for another 10 or more years.

And of course, Ted Brown, who had been head of the chemistry department and may have ended up in the Graduate College, ended up being the first director of the Beckman Institute. Ted's wife just died a week or two ago, but Ted was very concerned about the lack of Black students at the University of Illinois, a very actively involved faculty member during Project 500 and during the centennial year. And I first got to know Ted in the late '60s. I've not now seen him in 15 or 20 years, but he knew Arnold Beckman very well and kept in touch with him and played the piano with him when Arnold Beckman was 101. Beckman lived a very long and productive life and was quite a fine fellow in many respects. I already had used Beckman Instruments as an undergraduate. My job was working at the Boston Lying-In Hospital as a night lab tech, and so I used some of the early Beckman colorimeters, so I had seen the products of his career even before I met him. Not that I remember mentioning any of that to him, but I knew who he was, so that was kind of fun.

Let's see anything else on the topic of the Graduate College and the interaction with the arts, and then this little bit about Arnold Beckman. I don't know that I have a whole lot more to say today, so maybe this is a shortish episode, and we'll return to other topics on another occasion. But I did think that people should know that this university was unusually multidisciplinary. We had leaders in those days. Jack Peltason remarked that—he was in his second or third year of Chancellor before he became aware of all the different interesting units that this university encompasses. It's a very big place, and he was still discovering little service units, little, I mean, here we are in a building that was once the pomology research center. He was still discovering things like the pomology research center. And he had been here before, as I think, Dean of LAS. He was coming back to the campus to be its first chancellor. We used to have a president who ran all three campuses from the big administration building, but the span of command had gotten too wide, and Jack Peltason was the first chancellor at the Champaign campus, social scientist. Maybe I should talk a bit about Jack one of these days and about our interactions. I guess maybe there's one other thing I could add here. I think I've talked about going to—have I ever talked about the white arm band? I think—

KN: Yeah, mhmm.

DE: —white arm band story. One more story. There was a sit-in in the chancellor's office at one point during the—either '68-'69 or '69-'70, and I heard about it, so I went over to the chancellor's office, and it was filled with Black students who had something that they were bothered by. And

I knew some of them, but not most, of course, I knew a few leaders. But I just came in, said, okay, what's going on? And people were happy to tell me. And the thing went on a couple of hours, and people were finally ready to go, some agreement to listen to them had been arranged. And I stood up and said, 'You know, after the sit-in in the Illini Union, the press came and took some photographs of litter on the floor, and then *The Chicago Tribune* ran a headline about $50,000 worth of damage, and it turned out to be more like $1200, you know, months later, when everybody looked at it.' I said, 'I very strongly recommend that you clean up and you leave this place as neat as you can possibly leave it so when people come in, they do not have grounds, visual grounds, on which to argue that you've had a riot of some sort here.' And everybody loved it, and they did clean up. A little earlier during that time, however, I quietly walked around the office and pushed the lock buttons on all of the filing cabinets. I thought, all we need is one hothead to grab one of these filing cabinets and open it up, throw the paper all over everywhere, and we will really have trouble. So I hoped I wouldn't get into trouble, that no one would notice what I was doing. I was just pushing those little buttons. There was a key, but all you had to do to lock a filing cabinet was shove it. So, you know, I was a kind of a counter revolutionary, but I really, I really realized that most of these people were well meaning, and did have what they felt were legitimate grievances, and they were not violent, but all it took was one or two hotheads to make the whole group look disreputable. And I felt that was unfair, and it was an odd time to to be in the position I was in as a graduate student, or at that point, still a graduate student. Yes.

Now, oh, that way, I was going to talk about John Cage. Okay, well, we have a few more minutes, I think, if that clock's actually running accurately. I think it's off by an hour.

KN: It's an hour off. 3:42.

DE: Yeah, yeah. Well, let's talk about John Cage. David Pines is, David Pines is head of the centennial, the Graduate College committee on the centennial year, was also about to become, or maybe already was, the head of the Center for Advanced Study. We were creating an interdisciplinary unit, an actual building over on Illinois Street, a house that was converted that would have offices for visiting scholars, they would be called fellows, and senior faculty at the university would be given appointments in the Center for Advanced Study, which would free them from some of their departmental obligations and allow them to become University scholars. This is a model that some of the private schools had. John Bardeen, for example, was a junior fellow at Harvard. Princeton had fellows and, of course, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. So there was a model for a place where people whose interests didn't neatly fit any more directly into a departmental unit could broaden out and talk to each other. So maybe having offices next to each other would be mutually fertilizing.

Well, I'll tell a story. John Cage, the composer, had been coming to this campus off and on ever since the early '50s. He had—we were, another thing that was going on here was that electronic

music—and here's again, the use of computers in an unusual way—electronic music got started at the University of Illinois, and, alright, we're just going to outline this one, because maybe I should denote a whole hour to Jerry Hiller, who was a chemistry professor, but also keenly interested in music. His wife was a singer. He'd been interested in music his whole life, but he began to notice that the computer programs he was writing to explain long chain molecules were awfully similar, in a way, to implementations of classical counterpoint. The rules of classical counterpoint. In classical counterpoint and music, once you have established a couple of notes, your choices for the next note become increasingly limited, and the rules drive how you compose. So when we listen to Bach and Handel, they sound similar because they're following a rule driven method of writing music. But what wasn't clear then, and still isn't really, is whether artificial intelligence is entirely a mathematical thing, or whether there's something else called inspiration or creativity or the unconscious. Freud's notion that we are, we are, of course, rational creatures, but we're also irrational. The question was, what role does imagination and thinking outside the box—there are quite some phrases for this, but what role does this play? Jerry wanted to perform experiments, so there was a thing called experimental music in the '50s.

One of the branches of it was musique concrete. What would happen if you just go out with a microphone and hold it by the ocean or go and hold it in the middle of a forest, just record whatever sounds are going on around you. Wind blowing, bird calls, noises on the street corner of cars going by and people jabbering. Pierre Henri was a Frenchman who created pieces out of just recordings made in the world that you mix together, possibly purposefully, maybe just randomly, and you called it music. Well, why not? Cage loved this sort of thing. He decided that he didn't like the notion of composition because it was authoritarian. The composer was telling people what to do. What if, instead of telling them what to do, you let random chance enter into what they might do? Wouldn't be you telling them what to do, but you selecting or allowing some process to produce something that would be different from what human minds would normally come up with. So Cage was always experimenting, always doing interesting things, and suddenly, here he was on campus. We had given him—the Center for Advanced Study—had given him a fellowship. When I met Cage, he was able to say to me that he was, by then, 60 years old. Was he that old? Certainly in his 50s at least. And he said, I have never been able to save a cent. I've lived from hand to mouth my entire career, but this is the first time I actually am not hungry all the time. And so he was renting a car. He didn't think anybody should own a car. He thought renting made lots of sense, leasing, and he lived in rented apartments. I think he was still supporting his mother, who was in a nursing home, and he had a very strong sense of paying his own way. He was very good at promoting himself, finding grants, getting people to pay him to give lectures. He wrote books that people bought. He was self-supporting, but it was always hand to mouth, and he was very committed to the work of his partner, Merce Cunningham, the dancer. And so he he made sure that Merce and his dance company were financed, and he often wrote music for them, helped them get publicity, et cetera. Anyway, there was Cage, suddenly, and I got to meet Cage.

So in '67, maybe at the beginning of the centennial year, could have been the fall of '67, we had something called Music Circus in the in the stock pavilion on Pennsylvania Avenue, isn't it? Yes, on Pennsylvania Avenue. And lots and lots of people did things all at the same time in one great big room. So there were—Claude Kipnis was a mime, and he put out a mime show, various people played different kinds of music. It was, in fact, outrageously loud, even hard on the ears, maybe even dangerous to people's hearing. Something that I never forgot and made a point about when it came time for *HPSCHD* in 1969. But Cage was a charming person, just to know, and we all wanted to participate, even though we weren't musicians particularly so I said, 'What can I do, John?' He said, 'Well, this is a fall concert, and in New England, of course, there are always cider and donuts at fall concerts. So how would you like to be in charge of the, of the concessions stand?' So I said, 'Sure, that sounds like a lot of fun.' And it turned out that the university had such strict rules about food being served on its premises that I had to buy the cider and the donuts from university dining halls or something at some outrageous price. We sold it all at a loss. I think I had to pay 10 cents each for Dixie cups. And that was then, you know, today's money, that's a dollar.

It was perfectly absurd, but it was an awful lot of fun, and I think it might have been at that point I'd already either been working with Doyle Moore and his graduate students to do posters for the centennial year. But Doyle told me that he was in 610, which was an art supply store at 610 John Street. Yeah, West John. And he saw John Cage going through stick on letters. You used to be able to buy sheets of black letters that were kind of stuck onto glue and that you could rub with your, with a ruler on the other side of the plastic and push them down on paper and make a something you could then photograph and have a poster made from it. You could, you could do a design. So Doyle went over. Doyle knew John Cage. By then, they'd been introduced, probably at David Pines' house. So he said, 'John, why are you looking at those?' And John said, 'Well, Marcel Dupre—' Marcel, the wrong one. Marcel, who's the—Marcel Dupre. I've just been listening to his organ work. 'Marcel Duchamp,' the Dadaist artist and an old friend of Cage's and chess playing partner, 'has died,' he said, 'and people have asked me to do some kind of memorial.' He says, 'Well, I didn't want to, so I thought, oh, I can do a piece entitled, *Not Wanting to Say Anything about Marcel*, and it will be a series of posters or transparent plastic pieces that can be mounted in any order in front of each other, so that you look through them and you see words, but the way [coughs] the way you put them together, would change all that.' He said, 'I have this idea that I want to do an art piece,' but he said, 'I don't know anything about that stuff. You know, I'm a composer.' And Doyle said, 'Well, look, we have graduate students over in the art department, in design, my graduate students. Why don't I find you a student, and he can be your technical aide, but you don't have to use these stupid rub on letters. We have beautiful fonts and printing presses, and we can produce anything you need. You know, just get a little help.'

So that's the point where Cal Sumsion, S-U-M-S-I-O-N, and John Cage began to work on *Not Wanting to Say Anything about Marcel*, the famous plexigrams, which are thought to be Cage's first graphic composition. Actually, his first graphic composition, I argue, is *HPSCHD Poster #3*, which was printed by me, and others, in John Cage's apartment on University Avenue in Champaign, in time for the May of 1969 premiere of *HPSCHD*. And, and if I haven't talked about that poster at some point, I should bring a copy in and just discuss it, but it's an astonishing piece of work. It matches what was going on in the music itself. And I think it's really John Cage's first graphic composition, even though, of course, Cal had a lot to do with it. Maybe that's worth its own hour just talking about the *HPSCHD* graphics, that may well be it. But Cage's presence on campus really was wonderful. He was an excellent person to have around. Talk about a sunny disposition. He was always smiling. He could find amusement almost everywhere. He really taught how to live in a zen way. And I think my life was greatly enriched by having met him. I used to be extremely annoyed by noises at concerts. And he really got me to see that the world is a messy place and you might as well laugh as get angry when complications sort of show up and trip you up.

But bringing people like Cage and Al Huang, who still lives in Champaign and has been an amazing link between East and West. Al is the son of Kuomintang generals, his mother and father were both generals, if you can imagine. And by the way, were introduced to each other by Zhou Enlai, the right-hand man of Mao Zedong. But they were on the other side. They were all together once upon a time in the military academies of China when China was fighting with Japan in the '30s. But Al was brought here by David Pines in the Center for Advanced Study, and he still lives in Champaign. He's been all over the world teaching Tai Chi. He's back in China, bringing back the original, more complicated calligraphy to a country that simplified the Chinese characters as part of the communist move. His brother has been rehabilitated by the current leadership of China and now maintains this amazing connection between East and West.

But there was really a ferment in the '60s and a looking outward and a seeing of the whole world in a way that I don't see in today's University of Illinois. And that was what I wanted to talk about today, was the breadth of vision of Dan Alpert and David Pines and the sorts of things that they got started that still have little ringing ramifications, even all these years later. The late '60s were a very interesting period. It wasn't all about anti-war rebellion. There was much going on that was forward looking and that anticipated an awful lot of the things that are going on in our world today. Well, that's probably enough for today.

KN: Okay, wonderful. Thank you.