A FORCE FOR CREATIVITY, DISCOVERY, AND LEARNING

Getting involved seems embedded in the genes of Jim and Karen Schaefer and daughter Marie. And, although Jim (English 1970), Karen (Journalism 1969), and Marie (current anthropology Ph.D. student) took three different paths in getting involved at MSU, the university would approve of them all. And while it all began at MSU some 45-50 years ago, Jim and Karen can't remember a time when they haven't been involved in issues, causes, concerns or relationships on the local, national or global level.

"Karen and I are both interested in transformational change, and, when speaking specifically about MSU, we believe it's always been the relationships that help create that change," Jim says. "For example, John Hannah, president of MSU when Karen and I were students here, was a family friend who used to pluck feathers off chickens for relatives of mine who had apple farms. The incongruity between the two jobs was not lost on me."

"President Hannah was a superb leader. When I was at The State News (MSU's student-run newspaper) reporting on his office and the administration, I went to board of trustee meetings, and he and we'd meet beforehand."

Lesson learned

"What always impressed me about John Hannah was that he was always prepared, and the lesson I learned was never go into a meeting without already knowing the outcome. That's how he did it, and he was very successful at it. Whether the issue was big or small, he'd done his homework. He'd talked to the people involved, and negotiated out the rest. The meeting was just to confirm the decision."

Asked if he and Karen met while students at MSU, Jim says, "No, that's the weird thing. We were both here in approximately the same timeframe. But she had the 'upper-crust' experience. Karen lived in and was president of East Landon, and was a Spartan Round Table member. (Formed in 1947, the Spartan Round Table was an informal lunch meeting between President Hannah and representatives of various campus groups, as a means of communication between Hannah and students.)"

"So, Karen met regularly with John Hannah, too," Jim says. "I lived in Fee Hall; in fact, it had just opened on the far edge of campus, 30 minutes from practically everything. My one major involvement was The State News."

Alabama trip

Jim says one of the most remarkable opportunities he had as a State News reporter happened because John Hannah was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as the first chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. As a result, in 1968, Jim traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, with President Hannah for some civil rights hearings on the Maxwell Air Force base when George Wallace was governor.

"That was a very interesting experience. But I really didn't appreciate it until I got back and people asked, "What was it like?" and I realized just how dangerous it had been. After all, this was a very tumultuous period, during the time of the Freedom Riders. You had to respect that."

Jim added that the people holding the Commission hearings focused on collecting information about equal economic opportunities for African Americans in a 16-county rural and non-metropolitan area in Alabama and Mississippi. At that time, manufacturers generally employed African Americans in the lowest paying and least desirable jobs, usually as laborers and menials. Because of the hearings, Schaefer met people like social activist Julian Bond, and even had dinner with the vice-chairman of the Commission, Eugene. 
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"...and were involved in outreach for the well-being of people in this state, our nation, and the world."
skills we acquired at MSU, and, in my case, from the College of Arts and Letters. “Through all that we’ve done, Karen and I have remained deeply grateful for the year, has produced more than 200 30-minute television Book Television Program Jim and Karen’s current project, because I had to understand the rationale for all that I did there. The editor and head of the history department went “I was responsible for everything in each issue, including quarterly, And when they did get published, they’d generally become they wanted to get published but had never submitted. “That was quite interesting, to help people like that. They were part of the small press network and had numerous published who’d never had that happen before. We Helping people psychiatrist in Louisiana, and a butcher in Oregon.” “In 1972, we were married at Bethel Lutheran Church in Muskegon, where my parents were married.” “In 1972, we were married at Bethel Lutheran Church in Muskegon, where my parents were married.”