The following text is from *Davis, G.H., 2005, Imagined field notes of geologist turned president then provost: The Compass, Journal of Earth Sciences, Vol. 79, No. 1, p. 29-32*.

This was an invited manuscript for a Compass issue focusing on 5 geologists, including me. who along the way served as college or university presidents. Three of them had a very direct impact on my professional life, and so I wrote this manuscript in a way that acknowledged them, and others, pointing out some of the ways they influenced me.

IMAGINED FIELD NOTES OF GEOLOGIST TURNED PRESIDENT THEN PROVOST

1964: All first year graduate students (and I am one of them) in the Department of Geological Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin are required *to* gather signatures of each and every faculty member. The 'price' of each signature is 30 minutes of conversation. The word has spread that a signature from **Dr. Peter Flawn** (who would become President of The University of Texas at Austin)**,** Director of the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, will cost dearly. I learned this firsthand today. Immediately he asked me, "Who is the State Geologist in your home state?" I answered, "Dr. Paul Price." (Thank heavens. I had met Dr. Price during my senior year in college). The questions came in rapid succession, one after another, and each carried a lesson. I now fully realize I am no longer in college. Graduate school *is* different: High standards, attention to quality, and becoming a professional were Dr. Flawn's emphases, and at a level I had not before envisioned quite so clearly. I will not be joining the Texas Track Club; there will be no time for this now. For me, Dr. Flawn personifies impeccably high professional standards and expectations, and a broad and encompassing view of earth sciences and society.

1969: Tonight the Department of Geological Sciences at The University of Michigan held its annual spring "roast" of faculty and graduate students. Toward the end of the evening ***Dr. Frank Rhodes*** (who would become President of Cornell University) was about to award the "Silver Screw" award to the Ph.D. student (and I was one of them) who labored the hardest in the most sustained research effort for least accomplishment. I knew I was in trouble. During the previous six months I have "lived" in the X-ray laboratory, attempting to apply (pole-figure device) diffraction goniometry to the search for preferred orientation of minerals in oriented samples from the Caribou sulfide deposit in eastern New Brunswick, my dissertation area. The work is a dead end, and thus not a sentence about it will appear in my dissertation. Yes, my name was announced. Thankfully, Dr. Rhode's eloquence in the delivery of his salubrious salutation made me proud and my peers envious. I'm kidding of course…but not about the eloquence. Dr. Frank Rhodes' teaching is legendary here at The University of Michigan. As graduate students we attend his introductory geology lectures whenever possible, standing in the back of the 'standing-room-only' lecture hall. We observe his mastery of geology and eloquence of delivery and think about our own aspirations as future teachers. For me Dr. Rhodes, a research scientist, personifies engagement in the scholarship of teaching, not narrow or overly pragmatic teaching but teaching that connects science to literature, philosophy, history, language, and broad inquiry.

1970: I just arrived in Tucson, Arizona as Assistant Professor in the Department of Geosciences. The opportunity first came into view last November when my wife, Merriliy, and I were in Atlantic City attending the National Meeting of the Geological Society of America. I went there primarily to interview for academic positions, and, frankly, became a little discouraged at first. There were very few openings. But then I learned that **Dr. James Zumberg** (who would become President of the University of Southern California) wished to meet with *us*. Dr. Zumberg, Dean of the School of Earth Sciences at The University of Arizona, earned his Ph.D. at The University of Michigan. Our conversation with Dean Zumberg was memorable. He encouraged me to think that I would be a candidate for the structural geology opening. I could tell he was a generous man, for while, taking notes, I misspelled "Tucson" before his very eyes, and he did not disqualify me. Rather, he simply said that lots of people have made the 's' before 'c' mistake. That Atlantic City conversation was prelude to arriving in a structural geology paradise for field-based teaching and learning. I marvel that Dean Zumberg wanted to talk both to me *and* Merrily. It speaks volumes about his values and the importance of partnership and family in demanding careers. For me

Dr. Zumberg personifies balancing a vast agenda of science, international affairs, and university leadership, and still finding time to personally engage in recruitment of young people in the building of programs.

1971: ***Dr. Laurence McKinley Gould*** has entered the life of the Davis'. Larry has welcomed us as family. Again, there is a University of Michigan connection, for Dr. Gould received his BS, MS, and PhD degrees in geology from Michigan, the latter in 1925. Following serving as Chief Scientist and Second-in-Command of the Byrd Expedition to the South Pole in 1928-29, he founded the Geology Department at Carleton College (Minnesota) and later became President of Carleton College. When President Harvill (University of Arizona) learned that Larry Gould would be retiring from Carleton, he invited him (in 1962) to join the Department of Geology and serve as his science advisor. The purpose was to help transform The University of Arizona from a regional university to a nationally competitive research university. (Larry thought he would spend just a year or two with UA, but fortunately for me made it yet another career, working actively until 1986 and passing away 9 years later at the age of 99). This man touches my life, as he has so many others. He has been awarded THIRTY TWO honorary doctoral degrees! He is the personification of generosity of spirit, winsomeness, vision, humility, humor, and love of discovery. He is teaching me the value of falling in love with a region of the earth, to study it in depth and for a lifetime and from every angle. For him of course it is Antarctica. (For me, it would be the Colorado Plateau). Before Thanksgiving, 1970, when Larry learned that the Davis' would be traveling north to the Grand Canyon, he called us at home the night before we were to leave, and said in his smooth deep baritone voice: "I envy your first view of the Grand Canyon." The way he said it so stirred us that we couldn't sleep, and so Merrily, and our 2 year old son and I climbed into our car at 3AM and headed out. For me Dr. Gould personifies everything good about colleges, universities, and the life of the mind. *Every* time I enter his office, I come out feeling even better about the world.

1973: ***Dr. Howard Lowry*** was President of The College of Wooster when I attended. I am now trying to read everything he wrote, for it so inspires my teaching. He is not a geologist (English literature was his field), but he understood the life of a scholar-geologist. In one of his addresses he quoted the following: "*Excellence and learning are not commodities to be bought at the corner store. Rather they dwell among rocks hardly accessible, and we must almost wear our hearts out in search of them.*" This is firmly embedded in my textbook: *Structural Geology of Rocks and Regions*. Dr. Lowry, a man of Letters, personifies the ways things were in colleges, back in the old days, when the President was the scholar-leader for the *community* of students and faculty.

1975: I am on the Wasatch Front, at Alta, Utah, attending my very first Penrose Conference. By invitation only, Penrose Conferences are prestigious topical conferences of the Geological Society of America. One of the two co-conveners was ***Dr. Gordon Eaton*** of the U. S. Geological Survey (who would become President of Iowa State University). The topic is "*Geology and Geophysics of the Intermountain West*." Dr. Peter Coney had just joined the faculty of The Department of Geological Sciences at UA, and we traveled here together as colleagues. Gordon Eaton welcomed me, an assistant-professor newcomer to the circle of Cordilleran tectonists, as if we had known each other for some time, as if I am bringing value to the conference. The point of the conference is to integrate geology and geophysics as deeply as possible, bringing these fields together to expand understanding of tectonic evolution of the western U. S. Gordy was especially effective in drawing us all out, and integrating across points of view. I felt that I was at my best, yesterday, during the field trip to Little Cottonwood Canyon, where Peter Coney and I pointed out structures that were identical to some of what I was mapping in the Rincon Mountains and Peter in the Snake Range. Last evening Peter and I were in late night conversations with Max Crittenden (U. S. Geological Survey), and we have begun building a plan for a Penrose Conference on "metamorphic core complexes." (In 1977, the Penrose Conference on Tectonic Significance of Metamorphic Core Complexes was held in Tucson, Arizona. It was a discovery conference on a whole new class of "mountains.") Dr. Eaton personifies leadership in drawing out ideas from others and having the courage to integrate across fields in order to draw

preliminary conclusions, knowing full well that this in turn would trigger rounds and rounds of deeper discussion and argument…thus advancing knowledge.

1982: I have been asked to serve as Department Head of Geosciences. The decision to do so is not as difficult as I would have once imagined. I think of Larry Gould, Jim Zumberg, Frank Rhodes, and others, all geologists, who have demonstrated the value of academic leadership, and the fact that administrative work need not diminish scholarship, teaching, and mentoring.

1986: I am now Vice Provost of the University of Arizona. ***Dr. Nils Hasselmo*** is the Provost. (He would become President of The University of Minnesota). Nils has truly exceptional qualities, and shows the way to break down bureaucratic barriers. His role modeling creates an ideal situation for me to experience best practices in serving in central administration. I am finding that my experience as Department Head in a quality, comprehensive department was absolutely essential to functioning in my new role, especially in faculty recruitment, promotion and tenure decisions, and budget matters. On a personal note, I have already seen that when my graduate students come to my office in the Administration Building to meet with me, Nils always takes a moment and says: 'George, I'm glad that you are still working with your graduate students.' This is affirming!

1991: I have been President of The University of Vermont (UVM) for 9 months. When I arrange to meet with alumni, state leaders, and friends of the university in the various counties of Vermont, I am finding it useful to arrange the venue at a site that is geologically interesting. As a result, the presentation and conversation can be of two parts: first, to talk about the state of the university; second, to talk about the local/regional geology in an accessible way. I want alumni and other supporters of UVM to see the President of UVM as a teacher. Tonight we met in southwestern Vermont, right along the Taconic thrust, and so I ended the evening talking about the enigmatic nature of this geology, making "autochthons and allochthons" and other mysteries as accessible as possible. One of the things I have already enjoyed as President is connecting with the Boulders, the oldest honorary society at UVM, and one that devotes itself to recognizing service to the university and to society. These are outstanding young people. "Boulders" is named after an oblate spheroid (74 cm in diameter, 60 cm in height) of lightly metamorphosed greywacke, rounded in the Pleistocene in a pothole while begin swirled by glacial meltwater, and then rolled by freshmen to its present site more than 100 years ago. Yesterday I completed a gift that I want to give to the Boulders, namely a detailed petrographic description and interpretation of the rock object itself, ending with the following: "*The final transport of the Boulder to its present site was achieved by human labor, to become a symbol of history, strength, endurance, beauty, and function. While serving as tools and instruments of service to bring about positive changes in the normal flow of society, the Boulders themselves become polished and prepared, losing some of the rough edges but thankfully preserving the inner grain, texture, strength, and quality that makes each Boulder so distinctive, so special.*"

1993: I am back in Tucson, again as Professor of Geosciences at The University of Arizona. I did not achieve what I hoped I could have achieved at UVM. Yet I have been given a chance to land on my feet thanks to President Emeritus **Dr. Henry Koffler** and my geosciences colleagues here at UA. Between the time I left Vermont and now, I had the good fortune to serve as a Visiting Scholar during Fall term at none other than Carleton College, Larry Gould country, thanks to my good friend and fellow University of Michigan classmate, Dr. Shelby Boardman, who invited me. I immersed myself there in serving outstanding undergraduate geology majors and co-teaching intro geology, even camping in snow *in September (!)* on a field trip to northern Minnesota.

2000: I am in Bolivia on the Altaplano, in a tiny cross-roads military check point at 15,000 ft elevation. We have been stopped by a few soldiers who are searching the field vehicle. I have time to make a 3-minute call to Merrily from this lonely outpost. It has been a week since I left Tucson. Her first words are: "You are going to be Provost of UA!" I had interviewed, and apparently **President Peter Likins** had made up his mind, and Merrily had said "yes."

Partnership indeed! The 'ride' from 1993 to now has been amazing, expanding horizons in teaching (Active Tectonics), research (the Colorado Plateau), graduate research advising (wonderful students working in Argentina, Bolivia, Nepal, Colorado Plateau), and serving the university (Faculty Fellows). But now this new opportunity to serve has surfaced, and my commitment to engage is based on the opportunity to work with an outstanding, deeply experienced university president who will embrace his provost as a 'partner.' The agenda for change ("Focused Excellence") will be necessary, exciting, and challenging. As I take in Dr. Likin's vision and expectations, I think of Larry Gould's mantra: "*Good is the enemy of excellence*."

Conclusions: We might think that University Presidents have greatest influence and impact on political support, fiscal management, fundraising and development, curriculum reform, alumni relations, and strategic plans. This is all true, to a greater or lesser extent. Yet the university presidents that have personally impacted me, who have been my Compass, have taught me that there is much more. They have demonstrated that personal dimensions of integrity, vision, spirit, synthesis, commitment to students and faculty, commitment to quality, and commitment to equality can profoundly influence the personal/professional lives of individual students, individual professors, and individual staff. This knowledge is their gift to me.

Furthermore, I have learned from *geo-Presidents*, especially, that teaching, scholarship, outreach, and service (including, for some, administrative service) are inseparable *throughout* an academic career. Though at different times these various dimensions may be deployed to different degrees, they nonetheless remained inseparable in the lives of people like Gould, Flawn, Rhodes, Zumberg, and Eaton.

A foundation of integrated teaching, scholarship, outreach, and service is desirable in the complex world of university leadership, whether identifying regional needs (e.g., protecting the environment while sustaining economic development); weighing interdisciplinary academic program proposals (e.g., biomedical science, biotechnology, ethics, law, and policy); programmatically advocating multiculturalism and diversity (e.g., comparative border studies, viewed geographically, politically, culturally, and allegorically); improving teaching (e.g., faculty development and learner-centered education); fund/friend raising (e.g., advocating true engagement of individual students in relation to the advancement of society); enlarging global, perspectives in a world desperately in need of international stewardship and citizenry (so obvious in 2004 that no examples are needed); or, simply taking time to talk (as so simply and effectively captured in Robert Frost's poem, "*A Time To Talk*").

Post-Script, 2004: It's Tuesday afternoon, and I'm off to teach graduate seminar with Dr. Mary Voyatzis, Chair of Classics in the College of Humanities. Our spring semester seminar is "*Tectonic Foundations of the Classic Archaeological Sites in the Aegean Region.*" In charge of geology and active tectonics, I am thrilled to be part of Dr. Voyatzis' team that, in July, will begin excavating the Sanctuary of Zeus at Mt. Lykaion in the Peloponnese. This will be a five-year project. It will make me a better Provost.

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