

## **Chapter 28 – Promotion, Administration, and Interruption**

**1981-1991** In the fall of 1981, happily teaching Algebra II classes, proud of having a first-born son, and trying to cope with going from two incomes to one, the great principal calls me in and encourages me to change course and get into administration. I had dreams of being a campus principal for years. He tells me that the Super wants to talk to me about administering a project in the central office. Skeptically, not wanting to leave the sanctuary of my classroom, I make the appointment with the Super.

The white-haired sage, the Super, told me that the District had been offered a chance to participate in the Plato Project out of the University of Chicago. The project was to produce tests on a computer to track the progress of students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the fields of math, English, and History. I knew absolutely nothing about computers. I would hire two teachers to help with English and History and have a classroom in a middle school with students as guineas. Needing the money, I took the assignment in November of '81. Said goodbye to my sanctuary and started the process of setting a budget and timeline. Stationed in a big classroom at Connell Middle School, everything I saw was that I was taking valuable space that could be used for classroom learning. Nonetheless, I set it up. *(I will report more on this promotion)*

The Super retired. The Super-Elect took charge. This was the same guy who hired me in 1970 and we had many battles as he was the Super's henchman on teacher rights cases in the 70's. He did not like me. He ended the Plato project in May of 1982. I was assigned to the textbook office on Austin Street. The computer-assisted instruction (CIA) and library administration office were housed in that warehouse. I worked under Ms. Sample. My first assignment was to learn how to use machine language and hack the passwords on TRS-80 discs for CAI programs such as Oregon Trail. The hacked and duplicated discs could then be distributed to campus classrooms. I was also in charge of upgrading the old TRS Model I's and then the TRS-80 Model III with additional hardware memory. I started learning BASIC programming language and how to help with the textbook orders and distribution.

This lasted until the end of 1982. I was then assigned to the main central office complex to the Office of Evaluation under Dr. David Splitek. Dr. Dave was a few years younger than I. He was a 'Super' in training from UTSA. He was in the same class as NEISD Ricky Middleton.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Dave and I hit it off well. He assigned me to program something in BASIC on the big TRS Model II with 8" floppy disks. I had no idea what I was doing. He figured that out soon enough. He then assigned me to evaluate a string of programs like Gifted & Talented, Language Efficiency Program, the program for off-campus detention learning, and the physical education testing.

I was also in charge of letting the bids for all educational computers and business microcomputers. I approved the purchases of hundreds of Apple IIe's for instruction.

Number 2 son, Travis Wayne, arrived in November 1983. Another surprise. Very easy pregnancy and delivery this time. Stubborn little boy. Did not talk...sucked thumb for years. J.A. still did not want to go back to work, but I was making enough to keep us above water.

I trained the Central Office business workers on various programs such as word processing, spreadsheets, and databases. That included TRS Superscript, VisiCalc, and Profile, and then evolved into the MSDOS programs like Palantir, WordPerfect, Word, Lotus 123, Excel, FilePro, and Access. I wrote various database programs for individual offices to collect, select, and report data. The Microcomputer world was exploding. I was in many offices helping the office workers with hardware and software. I wanted to get the computers connected.

Then my world changed. I met Linda in the cafeteria. She started walking with my buddies and me. Hypnotism for weight loss, then, something changed. Vowing to not interrupt our family lives, we started a torrid love affair in May of 1986 that was a maelstrom for 6 years. Talk of the town. Tore us both asunder. Should walk away. Could not stay away.

In 1987, I conducted a big study with IBM to take the SAISD computing in-house, away from Education Service Center Region XX. NEISD had just purchased its own mainframe. Several in the district wanted to know the advantages and costs. I recommended that to the SAISD Board. It failed, but I stood up and appealed to the Board to do something to organize our data and computing needs. I suggested forming an Office of Computer Services as an umbrella. I told them that waiting is not an option. "We are already so far behind, we may never catch up".

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

They bought it. 4 votes for and 3 against, as usual. Even the statistician, most computer literate, government working, board member voted against it. We brought the off-premises printing to the Central campus, built a computer office building around it, and established microcomputer helpers, maintenance, and instruction. We started hard-wiring the offices to share documents and data. The world of microcomputing was upon us. It was exciting to be in the vanguard. Assistant Director of the Office of Computer Services, corner office, was fun, but everyone knew that I should have been the Director.

Pressure from the affair, guilt, and the need to commit my energy somewhere drove me to talk to the Super. I decided to go back to my family. I reminded Super that he had promised 10 years earlier to put me back at Highlands should I fail or want to go. He was happy to move me out of the central office and assigned me to Highlands as an Assistant Principal in 1991.

I told Linda that I was breaking off and returning home. Linda could not handle that.

She moved out of her home. Started her divorce. The world became so confusing. My new Job was very difficult.

My life was in complete chaos.