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## Rob Kling: A Remembrance

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## **ROB KLING: A REMEMBRANCE**

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### **EDITOR'S FOREWORD**

The following brief obituary appeared in the November 2003 Stanford magazine:

Robert Elliot "Rob" Kling, MS '67 (electrical engineering), PhD '71, of Bloomington, Ind., May 15, at 58, of cardiovascular disease. After teaching at UC-Irvine for 23 years, he joined Indiana U. in 1996 to head its new Center for Social Informatics and teach such courses as Digital Libraries and Computerization in Society as well as seminars in information science. He authored or co-authored more than 175 books and other publications and was editor of the journal *The Information Society*. Survivors: his wife, Mitzi Lewison; and his sister.

Although factually accurate, it does not encapsulate what a remarkable member of our profession Rob was. Each of my few encounters, ranging from a formal lecture to sharing a taxi, was an intellectual experience. There are few people about whom that can be said.

On October 3, 2003 a formal remembrance of Rob was held at Indiana University with four speakers who worked with Rob at UC Irvine and four from Indiana University. Three of these talks, by people in information systems, are reproduced below.

### **I. ROB KLING, THE FATHER OF SOCIAL INFORMATICS: A RESEARCH COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND Suzi Iacono**

It is a great honor for me have to known Rob over the past 23 years.

We worked together on a daily basis at UC Irvine during the 1980s when I was an assistant on his NSF-funded research. Later when I was at Boston University in the 1990s, we continued writing papers together.

Today I would like to share with you some of my experiences in working with Rob, and knowing Rob as a field builder, and as a man.

## WORKING WITH ROB

A lot of people over the years asked me: What it was like to work with Rob?

Well, working with Rob was very interesting; when I worked with him at Irvine, he did not like to work in his office. He had one of those offices where you couldn't open the windows. He hypothesized that he was uncomfortable there because there weren't enough negative ions in his office; so he bought a negative ion maker, which I guess didn't work very well. Because in 9 years I only remember one or two meetings there. His office became a kind of storage space for the reprints of early papers and cast-off equipment. But this really didn't matter as he liked to work everywhere else; and he liked to talk when he worked. In fact you might say that one of the most important aspects of working with Rob was talking with Rob. It meant taking issues seriously enough that you would agree to jointly wrack your brain for hours trying to figure something out. So, in 9 years I came to know every café, restaurant, hotel lobby, and book store in Orange County. By the end we probably walked every bike path in Irvine and every sidewalk in the Dana Point and Newport Beach harbors. Some days, this talking, walking, eating, having coffee business went on for hours.

Part of the talk that went on was the critique of the places where we ate, walked, and talked. The chairs were evaluated, the lighting, the noise levels, the ease of getting there and parking the car, not just the quality of the food or the coffee. Rob was on this constant quest for the perfect place to eat, have coffee, and talk. I don't know, perhaps it was like Plato deliberating under his tree or the Greeks putting temples on mounts. Perhaps there was this idea that if we could just achieve some state of bliss, even if this bliss was bliss at a coffee shop, perhaps the products of our talk – the ideas -- would be enriched, emboldened, enlightened.

I don't mean to imply that all this talking ever diminished Rob's prolific writing output. It was just his style, I think. He liked to pound out his ideas as he pounded on tables or as he pounded the sidewalk. He wanted to talk until he had it all worked out in his mind. There was this implicit recognition that getting the ideas out and organized was the hard part; writing them up was easy.

The next thing one should understand about working with Rob is that for him, being out in the field, conducting empirical research was the most fun thing one could ever do. It was the ultimate adventure; it's what made scientific discovery possible. And if you buy my thesis that Rob liked to talk out his ideas, then, what could be more fun than gaining entrée to some interesting firm doing interesting things like manufacturing radars for F-18s or new pharmaceuticals to talk to perfect strangers responsible for their design, production, or million dollar budgets to find how they used Information Technology in their worklives and what they thought about Information Technology? These research settings were our classroom.

In those early days, we --his research assistants and students --called ourselves "data raiders." At the end of day, we came back with the booty – pages and pages of notes on our interview schedules, and then we would spend hours organizing and analyzing our notes, and talking about what it all meant.

The point was discovery. We were sneaky. We had methods for unearthing what was often implicit or could not be spoken.

I remember one great discovery at PRINTCO, a pseudonym for one of our field sites. We were asking our interviewees what value the company received from its IT investment in a new Material Requirements Planning system. We soon learned that everyone we asked claimed they didn't know the answer, but they firmly believed that somebody else in the firm did know. They all said, "Look, we wouldn't be doing this, spending our money this way, if it wasn't worth it." Well, we interviewed many, many people; no one knew the answer. We came to the conclusion that they all assumed that what they read in their professional magazines was true or at least that what the vendors or consultants told them about their new technology would come true and so that's why they responded to our questions as they did.

I believe this was one of the first instances where we recognized the discrepancy between people's discourse about technology and how it was actually used or what value it actually had for an individual, a group, an organization.

### **ROB, THE FIELD-BUILDER**

Rob was not just doing all this research to write papers and get promotions: Rob was building a new field. Rob is the father of Social Informatics. I think he would want to be remembered that way. But it is only now that I can see the passion and energy he brought to this endeavor, and that the steps he took were the right ones.

In the 1980s, he and his colleagues were asking the two most fundamental questions that needed asking in order to build a new field:

*First: What is Information Technology? It's the most basic phenomenological question. What is the nature of the phenomenon that we are studying? Yet, most researchers – then and still today -- take the technology for granted.*

*Second: How and why does technology make a difference in our lives or, put another way, what does technology mean to us?*

And then Rob began to answer those questions in ways that no one else had. He was systematic and he was a critical thinker. He examined technology after technology over the decades. He spent a good part of his life theorizing IT. So what's the answer to "What is IT?" Well, those of us who know Rob know the litany.

*It's certainly not the engineered tool, nor is it the embodiment of designers' intentions. Instead, it's some kind of ensemble – it's a package, it's a web, it's a system, it's configurational, it's embedded in uses and contexts.*

And as for how it matters in our lives?

In the early days, he talked and wrote a lot about the social values embedded in the design and implementation of different kinds of technologies and the social conflicts that emerge between proponents of various sorts of technologies, particularly in education. He also focused heavily on how organizational politics and power relationships play critical roles in the deployment of new technologies, as did the whole Irvine school. Later, he focused more on ideology, cultural meanings, and discourse, arguing that neither utopian nor dystopian discourses had a speck of reality in them; how technologies play out in real organizations depends. But, he argued, the discourses of government and academia legitimate the meaning of certain technologies while media discourse popularizes that meaning.

These findings led to the idea that the mobilization of support for certain technologies is pushed along by computerization movements; organizations don't necessarily invest in IT because of rational evaluations of its costs and benefits; this is a novel idea that I hope others will take up.

### **ROB, THE MAN**

And so a field is born; Rob dedicated over 30 years of his life to furthering research and education on the relationship between it and social life; developing what he and others came to call the field of Social Informatics.

He was a tireless mobilizer, provocateur, ambassador, boundary-spanner, builder, institutionalizer, and embodiment of Social Informatics (SI). He was a constant recruiter/enroller of students and colleagues to join him in SI discourse. In his later years, he wrote "primers", wanting to provide easy entry points into SI research.

In all of this – in the research, the education, the field building -- there is no mistaking the dogged, smart human being, the man.

He was a man of ideas, a searcher of the truth, a lover of challenges.

He was the man you wanted on your side.

He was a colleague and a friend – all of us who knew him were intimates in his journey; his door was always open, inviting us to come talk, come walk, come have a cup of coffee with him.

### **I IMAGINE**

To end, I hope you will allow me a flight of fancy.

If you ever exchanged emails with Rob, you will know that he had a standard vacation message; it goes something like this: I will be travelling for a few days. I will receive about 250 – 300 msgs while I am gone ... when I return I'll try to read and respond to yours as soon as I can.

And so I imagine Rob's current vacation message:

I'm on vacation in Paradise; while I am gone I am getting 100 to 200 emails a day; even though I am accumulating thousands of emails, I will personally try to respond as soon as I can....Rob

## **II. BEYOND THE EMOTIONALISM AND DOWN TO THE FACTS: THE LEGACY OF ROB KLING**

**John Leslie King**

Much can be said about Rob Kling as a personality. He was warm, generous, brilliant, hilarious, shrewd and a dozen other things. Emotions run high when people who knew him well remember him. My task is to pull into the foreground a somewhat less emotional side of Rob that defines his academic legacy: his unwillingness to settle for hyperbole and speculation when the facts could be found. Without this trait, Rob's powerful insights would never have developed the traction that made him influential during his professional career and that created a strong current that survives his untimely passing. No tribute to Rob would be complete without a hard-nosed look at a hard-nosed intellect who created a truly significant new understanding of the relationship between information technology and human society.

The lens through which to see Rob's accomplishments is his effort over 30 years to construct something he called the "Irvine School." This essay characterizes the Irvine School and its consequences, and elaborates Rob's unique and essential role in its creation. The Irvine School arose from a serendipitous confluence of people at the University of California at Irvine in the late 1960's and early 1970's. It began to gel when Ken Kraemer, Jim Danziger and Rob Kling started their joint studies of information technology in complex organizations. The saga of the Irvine School is told elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The objective here is to examine the school's intellectual frame, summarize its findings, and trace the consequences of its accomplishments. In the process, the full measure of Rob's contribution is made clear.

### **THE FRAME**

The Irvine School considered the technical and the social to be inseparable in virtually all respects. This theme subsequently took shape as "the package" and eventually evolved into the well-known "web" construct of Kling and Scacchi.<sup>2</sup> More important was the deliberate preference

<sup>1</sup> The larger story of the Irvine School can be found in Kraemer, K.L. and J.L. King, "Social Analysis of Information Systems: The Irvine School, 1970-1994." *Informatization and the Public Sector*, Vol. 3, No. 2., June, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Kling, R., and Scacchi, W. "The web of computing: computer technology as social organization." *Advances in Computers*, 21 (1982), 3--91.

of the social over the technical in the work that arose around this theme. Rob's academic training had been entirely in electrical engineering and computer science, yet he was perhaps the strongest champion of the preference for the social. His advocacy legitimated the binding of the social and technical in the Irvine School's early work, and set the context for all that followed.

The Irvine School viewed innovations in social contexts as both technical and systematic. The technical perspective was not limited to information technology; it was recognized that many aspects of the social realm are highly technical as well. Innovation was also seen, not as a one-time affair, but as a systematic process. Together, these established a genuine socio-technical systems perspective that incorporated history in an effort to understand change over time. This perspective required multi-method research strategies, and innovations in research design. It was facilitated the core team being truly inter-disciplinary, with the team members learning each others' fields and skills.

The underlying research perspective was both critical and empirical, a relatively rare combination. The critical perspective made the group deeply skeptical of abundant but superficial claims about the affordances and effects of technology in social settings. Claims beyond opinion or speculation had to be grounded in empirical evidence. Yet, the perspective was not negatively critical: the empirical bias resulted in phenomenological acceptance of the world as it is, without the tendency to substitute ideological predispositions for fact. When IT was found to offer verifiable affordances or produce verifiable impacts, these were taken at face-value and incorporated into the emerging theoretical perspective. The resulting research program was intellectually quite honest.

Finally, although the research was very academic in the positive sense of that term, the group also had a strong affinity for policy and design issues. Ken had been trained in architecture and urban planning, Jim in political science and public administration, and Rob in the design aspects of computer science. In addition, the strong social bias in the group's socio-technical perspective, coupled with its tendency to see things as technical and systematic, predisposed the embrace of policy and administration as an inseparable part of the research milieu. The relationship between circumstances, innovation, policy, and implementation was multi-directional and intertwined, and no component could be understood without the others.

The credit for the group's early accomplishments cannot be easily parsed among the participants.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Rob's role during this period deserves special mention. Rob had the most extensive technical training in the group, and while his bias was clearly on the social side, he understood better than the others that a deep understanding of technology was essential to any socio-technical analysis. He set an example through his remarkable autodidactic ability to train himself in the social sciences, thus demonstrating the need and feasibility of "crossing over" in word and deed.<sup>4</sup> Others in the group benefited greatly from this example and did a good deal of crossing over in response. Rob was also instrumental in forming the technical and systematic perspectives that were so important in the group's early work. His training in technical systems made this natural for him, but he also was adept at seeing the technical and systematic features of the social. Rob's most impressive contribution was probably his remarkable energy. He did not merely incorporate his work into his life; his work and his life were indistinguishable from one another. He brought a great vitality to his work that was infectious, and that influenced those around him. These personal qualities proved to be important in the early days for the simple

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<sup>3</sup> Other participants in the early days also made important contributions: Alexander Mood, William Dutton, Walt Scacchi, Les Gasser, Alana Northrop, Joe Matthews, Dick Hackathorn, Bob Emrey, Annabelle Sartore, and Frances Mossman.

<sup>4</sup> As a personal note, Rob was largely responsible for my spending 20 years on the faculty of a computer science department, even though I was not trained as a computer scientist. He provided me with a demonstration that working at the intersection of fields is not only possible, but smart. I will always be grateful to him for this peculiar contribution to my education.

reason that the work the group took on was extremely difficult, and required unusual perseverance. Rob's energy was a major source of strength to the whole enterprise.

### KEY FINDINGS

The early findings from the Irvine School's research can be pulled together into a set of three broad themes. The first is that it is possible to capture the complexity inherent in socio-technical analysis. A common disappointment in socio-technical studies is the rhetorical recognition of complexity, followed by simplistic models and measures in the subsequent theoretical and empirical work. The first major research program undertaken by the Irvine School, the Urban Information Systems Research Project (URBIS) was built around a very complicated research design that required (and received from NSF) an unusually large amount of research funding. The research design was executed with precision over an initial three year period (it subsequently spanned more than a decade), and the results were painstakingly assembled and published in several major research books and dozens of journal articles. The research demonstrated that such work can be done, and set a high standard for subsequent research. A corollary finding was a significantly improved understanding of the role of policy and administration. Policies and their implementation were shown to be less likely to produce specific outcomes than to set a broader context in which outcomes would evolve. This understanding helped explain why it is so difficult to make accurate predictions of the effects of socio-technical change, but that the right perspectives and grounding make possible relatively accurate predictions of what will *not* occur.

A second class of findings has to do with the inherent politics of technology. The relationship between technological change and political behavior was far more nuanced than previously recognized, with technological context influencing politics and vice versa in an iterative fashion over time. This symbiotic relationship was quite clear in the case of "reinforcement politics," which demonstrated that political forces are far more influential on emergent technological architectures and applications than the other way around. This upended the popular notion that technological change would result in the rise of a technocratic class that would displace traditional political elites. It also established the important notion that all technological design embodied difficult challenges around what Rob came to call value conflicts and social choice. Both technology and politics were seen as derivative of deep human traits, and as manifestations of, rather than variables within, human behavior. This finding helped explain the deep embeddedness of technology in human affairs, and the poverty in the notion that technology merely has an impact *on* human affairs. In a way, it helped turn the whole idea of causality in socio-technical analysis around.

The third class of findings concerned the role of design in the creation and effects of socio-technical systems. Design was a dominant challenge of the early work, with the expectation that the results of the research would inform the design of technology and policies to yield greater payoffs from the resulting socio-technical systems<sup>5</sup>. Deliberately designed information systems often resulted in major implementation failure, while existing, embedded information systems worked well. Therefore, much of the early research concentrated on understanding the systematic interactions among the various aspects of socio-technical systems already operating *in vivo*, without much attention to their design priors. It was hoped that an improved understanding of these interactions would eventually inform design. Most elements of socio-technical system design were seen to be inherited from existing socio-technical systems with which any new systems must interact. Failures from design often occurred for the simple reason that the designs were created without understanding this larger, embedded context. This aspect of Rob's work was especially important, and is arguably the central theme of the "web of computing" genre he helped to create. This set of findings precipitated a much greater focus on design in later work of the Irvine School.

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<sup>5</sup> The early research of the Irvine School came from a now-discontinued National Science Foundation program called Research Applied to National Needs.

These findings characterize the first fifteen years of the Irvine School, from 1970 to 1985. The subsequent fifteen years of the Irvine School elaborated and expanded upon this base of findings. That subsequent work moved beyond the original sectoral focus of government organizations, and into manufacturing, transport, education, health care, and communications. The scope became much more international, involving regular interactions with researchers in more than a dozen countries. It also began to incorporate a much stronger grounding in economics and human-computer interaction. Eventually, it incorporated deeper investigations into the underlying nature of information itself.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

The work of the Irvine School unquestionably left a major mark on the diverse communities that study information technology in social settings. The simplest evidence is the extent to which the hundreds of publications of the Irvine School's members are cited in work of others spanning many fields. Still, the most important impact of the Irvine School is probably not in this direct influence on specific research projects or programs, but on the very enterprise of such study throughout the world. Dissemination occurred through the Diaspora of Irvine School members.

Doctoral students, visitors, and others naturally left UCI from time to time, and carried the views of the Irvine School with them.<sup>6</sup> The core group, however, figured it would be at UCI for the duration. In fact, this was not to be. Rob's departure for Indiana University in 1996 was a dramatic change for the Irvine School, and arguably the beginning of the end of the enterprise as a recognizable phenomenon. Departures of others to various institutions followed. A strong group remains at UCI that, together with Diaspora, carry on the tradition started by the Irvine School.

## **ROB'S LEGACY**

Rob's intellectual strengths were matched by his determination to change the world, starting with his own field of work, computer science. Individuals usually change their fields through extraordinary contributions within the field's main line of work. Rob's ambition was much more radical and daunting: he wanted to deflect computer science from what he saw as a fatally narrow focus. This was a difficult struggle, given that the computer science field was in search of academic identity and scientific legitimacy. Many believed that salvation could only be found in further narrowing and deepening the focus of the field's "core" work. Rob fought back, arguing for a broader understanding of technology-in-context. Many of his colleagues felt his crusade was folly, doomed from the start by the sheer magnitude of the task and the comparative weakness of one individual against the inertia of a whole field. Nevertheless, over a period of several decades, Rob succeeded through his role in the creation of the Irvine School.

The Irvine School's influence on the institutional order of research and higher education is powerful, foregrounding and legitimating a critical and empirical focus on the technical and systematic of socio-technical phenomena, and the research traditions it evolved for the purpose. It helped to create a tradition of funding for such research within the National Science Foundation and other agencies. It was instrumental in creating of a whole new class of academic programs that bring together research and pedagogical traditions of computer science, organizational information systems, information economics, library and information science, communications, and other fields that now can be found at more than 40 major universities. It plays a leadership

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<sup>6</sup> Among those who came later into the Irvine School orbit and remain at UCI are Debora Dunkle, Vijay Gurbaxani, and Alladi Venkatesh. Among those who became part of the Irvine School and subsequently departed UCI are Nick Vitalari, Kathleen Gregory Huddleston, Susan Leigh Star, Suzanne Iacono, Yannis Bakos, Jonathan Grudin, Barrie Nault, John King, and Mark Ackerman. This list does not include all the graduate students who participated in and were influenced by the Irvine School, or the many visitors who stayed at UCI for periods ranging from several weeks to several years.



role in the professional associations, journals, conferences, and doctoral consortia of all these fields. In all of these accomplishments, the Rob's signature is evident.

It is rare that one person changes the world. It sometimes happens due to succession to institutionalized power, and sometimes due to the accident of being in the right place at the right time. Neither instance is heroic. Heroism comes when someone changes the world deliberately and against the odds, through fervent belief in the rightness and necessity of his or her objectives. Such people succeed through extraordinary insight, stalwart perseverance, and the simple fact that they are right. The world finally catches up with them. Thus was the case of Rob. It is an honor to have served with one who changed the world.

### III. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON AN INTELLECTUAL: A SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF ROB KLING Ken Kraemer

I knew Rob from the time he came to UCI in 1973 until he left in 1996. He was a co-investigator on multiple projects, a co-author on papers and books, sailing buddy for a time, an always helpful advisor and a professional friend.

One of Rob's biggest contributions to Social Informatics was the notion of bringing multiple perspectives to bear as a way of understanding computers and human and organizational interaction. The idea was not new—it came from Graham Allison's book on the Cuban Missile Crisis, but Rob's application of it to the social worlds of computing was new. His first expression of the idea was in a CACM article titled "Social Analyses of Computing: Theoretical Perspectives in Recent Empirical Research", published in March 1980. This article is a classic and possibly his most cited article.

I would like to remember Rob today using his favorite idea of multiple perspectives as a way of reminding us all what a complex, rich, earthy and eccentric individual he was in addition to a great intellect. Several of these perspectives will be humorous, but I hope you will consider them appropriate and that they will stir your own remembrances of how unique he was. I have eight perspectives on Rob Kling.

1. **Social analysis Rob.** This perspective reflects my first encounter with Rob. It was 1973. He was two years out of Stanford, coming to UCI from Wisconsin. I had just been tenured and was trying to put together a project for large NSF funding. The project was to look at the use and impact of computers in cities and to try to understand how to manage computerization successfully.

Remember, this was the days of mainframe computing; minicomputers hardly existed yet; and PC was not even a gleam in anybody's eye. I was focused on what Rob used to call the "biz-school" variables—management policies like centralization and decentralization, top management involvement, charge-back systems and computer impacts like efficiency and effectiveness. Jim Danziger, a political scientist on our team, was concerned with questions such as who gets to decide what? And who gets what?

Rob was concerned about social and user issues. What was the impact of computers on work pressure, social status, social interaction, and quality of work life? Or what was the impact on the quality of services to citizens? And, how did practices such as user involvement in design, user participation in MIS committees, user training and so on affect the quality and usefulness of the systems developed? Rob was passionate about his concern for these variables and insisted on "variable parity"—similar to the concept of nuclear parity—for *his* variables.

By the time we were finished coming up with the variables we wanted to study, we had so many that we had to develop very extensive diagrams to show how they were all

interconnected to our dependent variables. We called them “wiring diagrams” because they resembled drawings for electrical circuits.

2. **Green Rob.** In the 70’s we were all concerned about the environment. We were all located in different parts of the campus and had frequent meetings, so Rob bought a motor scooter to drive around the campus to conserve on fuel and take up fewer parking spaces. One day Rob came a half-hour late to a lunch meeting looking awful. His hair was messed up, his face scratched and his leather jacket torn. He had been run off the road and into a ditch by a motorist, but was not seriously hurt. However, Rob was shaken by the experience and decided that he needed more heavy metal for protection in the future.

3. **Speaking of heavy metal, let me tell you about Musical Rob.** Unlike Bloomington, in Irvine all the houses look alike, and it was always a problem remembering which house was Rob’s. However, I soon learned to tell by opening my car window and seeing which house seemed to vibrate from the stereo being played inside.

Rob loved music of all kinds, and was a real aficionado of stereo systems.

Many of our “business” meetings at his house involved moving his big stereo speakers around the living room to get just the right acoustical effect. But, we always got down to business eventually, and Rob was always as intent about his academic business as he was about his music.

4. **Institutional Rob.** Rob was very consciously an institution-builder. He built the CORPS program in computer science. He helped to build UCI’s reputation as the Irvine School for social analysis. He helped to build the research center that I run—now called CRITO, but then called PPRO—into a national and internationally recognized center. He helped to build UCI through vigorous participation in many campus-wide committees. His commitment to UCI was tremendous and unwavering. When Rob left UCI, it ended abruptly. I remember this well because I felt a real personal loss at the time. But Rob’s institution building was not over—he shifted his whole energies to building Social Informatics at Indiana, which he did with renewed vigor and energy.

5. **Animal Lover Rob.** Rob owned a dog once. It was a black Labrador that he rescued from the animal shelter. He used to plan trips around southern California for the dog. For example, he would take the dog to different beaches—not just any part of the beach, but some part where there was something of special interest such as tide pools, unusual rocks, rip tides, surfers and so on. On other occasions, Rob would take the dog to different art museums for moving exhibits. He would always explain that these trips were not necessarily what Rob wanted to see, but what he felt would broaden the dog’s perspective.

6. **Advisor Rob.** Rob and I met every Wednesday morning for coffee at least 15 of our 23 years together to discuss intellectual, political, administrative and personal issues. We would spend about two hours at these meetings and we each came with our list of things to discuss. His list always seemed to be much longer than mine and he always went first—he used to say that he could not focus on my issues until he got his out of the way. On occasion, however, he did give way and I went first.

What I remember about those meetings was how they always stretched my thinking and perspective. Rob had the ability to hear about something for the first time and to think outside the box, bringing to the fore many more issues and options than I had considered, or even thought possible. Although Rob had more speaking time during these breakfasts, I know that I received the greater value from them, and have always been grateful for his advice and friendship.

7. **Energizer Rob.** This last perspective is not mine, but Roberta Lamb's. Roberta was a doctoral student of Rob's at UCI and is currently at the University of Hawaii. In a tribute to Rob that appeared in his journal, *The Information Society*, Roberta described Rob as "a focal point for a widely diffused community—someone toward who we could channel our energy for high impact—the way a magnifying glass concentrates light. ... Rob was an energizer. Just think about Rob as a big fuzzy pink bunny that keeps on going and going and going—exactly the kind of thing that would set him off in a full-body chuckle."

8. **I like to think of Rob that way.** He was an energizer his whole professional life. He is an energizer even now as evidenced by this tribute, those that have appeared in other places before now, and those still planned. I think Rob would have liked this view of himself including the humorous aspect of the "energizer bunny." Rob always took his work and social concerns seriously, but never took himself too seriously. And he always enjoyed a good laugh. I can hear him now.

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