

EDUCATING MATTERS...

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAN NICKLE

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There are few times in one's life when an opportunity presents itself to sit down and have a one-on-one, heart-to-heart conversation with someone that you look up to and inspires you to be and do more than you are. Recently I had the chance to do just that. I went to Lakewood to interview Dan Nickle where he is getting ready to retire as Building Official. I thought that it would be great for the membership to get some insight into Dan's background and his plans for the future. I didn't know quite what to expect as I entered the room pen in hand, notebook, tape recorder and about 25 questions that I just had to get answered. My motives were also self serving because I wanted to go behind the scenes and find out what Dan knows and how he learned it so that I might possibly gain some knowledge as to how one becomes so dedicated, involved and respected in this industry.

I was going to summarize my interview for a newsletter article but instead decided that since I recorded the conversation, each of you should be privy to the same experience that I had so I am presenting to you my interview with Dan Nickle.

Shaunna (S): Tell me about Dan Nickle before his Building Department days.

Dan (D): Wow, I can't remember back that long...I've been doing this since 1973. My work history prior to that was primarily with the Military and then with the Missouri Public Service Commission as an Engineering Technician. There is not a lot to my professional life before my building department days. This July is 34 years that I've been doing this. I started in Kansas City, Missouri as a Plans Examiner. I did that for 3 years and was promoted to Chief Plans Examiner, which I did for about another 3 years and was then promoted to Supervisor of Building Inspections, doing that for about 2 years and then came to Lakewood as the Building Official in 1982.

S: Why Colorado? What brought you from Missouri?

D: The opportunity to become a building official. ICBO was contacted about a replacement for a building official here and the Kansas City office was the closest office at that time so they were called and I was recommended from ICBO. It has turned out pretty well. I've been here a little over 25 years and I'm ready to retire.

S: What got you started in the building industry as a plans examiner? Why that field?

D: I had a little bit of experience in construction primarily just working with my father, who built a number of homes. I needed a job and applied for the position in Kansas City and got hired. I couldn't even spell ICBO when I worked for them.

S: When you were in Kansas City is that when you got involved with ICBO or were you even involved with them back then?

D: I went to work for the City of Kansas City Missouri and through that employment I got involved in ICBO. In 1974 I took the only certification exam that ICBO had at that time, which was for a Building Inspector. There were three of us that helped. In 1978 I passed the plans examiner certification, which was new at that time. In 1981 there was the CABO building official certification exam so I took that.

S: Do you still keep in contact with folks from your Kansas City days?

D: Yes, I'm an honorary member of the Kansas City Chapter. I was president of that chapter in 1978 and that was my first annual meeting in Denver that year. It was also my first time to attend the code hearings and speak to code changes. In 1979 I also attended the annual meeting in Anchorage and then didn't attend another meeting until 1982 when I came to work for Lakewood.

I served on and chaired the Kansas City Code Change Committee so I was pretty involved in code change back then. When I moved to Lakewood I got involved in the chapter and that is probably the one thing that has helped me out more than anything is my involvement and association with the Colorado Chapter. Obviously they were really strong in code change back then as they continue to be today. Probably the highlight of everything is the Education Institute, which probably means more to me than my job in Lakewood or my service on the ICBO Board or the ICC Board. I wouldn't trade the institute for any of that. I think it has had a pretty good impact on the level of code knowledge and code enforcement not only in the state of Colorado but adjoining states as well. We get pretty good participation.

S: The Colorado Chapter of ICBO was already in place before you moved here?

D: Oh yes, it was born back in 1953 and I'm not sure exactly what their name was; it seems like it was the Rocky Mountain Chapter of ICBO or something like that. It was the Colorado Chapter of ICBO when I moved here and it was a really good chapter with very active people involved. It was really a blessing to me to have that resource.

S: You were able to just move from Kansas City to here and get right involved in the chapter?

D: Yes, it really helped me a lot early on in my life as a building official to have all of those resources. There were a bunch of really good folks there.

S: Who do you remember being involved in the Chapter back then?

D: Pete Tyree was kind of "the guy", but there were a lot of people involved: Gerry George, Tom Thompson, Dave Tyree, Steve Thomas... A number of people that are still around today being active were active back then. I'd have to go back to look at membership rosters to come up with names, Marv Fisher comes to mind. He was a really good friend of Beryl Wallace.

S: What about ICBO? When you got involved with ICBO what were they like? Were they the big organization like they are now as ICC?

D: Yep it was still a big organization that handled pretty much everything west of the Mississippi River. It was a big group then because it was the biggest model code group around and the best, no question about that. I started in 1985 by being appointed to the Resolutions committee and then in 1986 to the Education committee. I served on that for about 4 years or more. I eventually chaired that committee. I ran for the ICBO board in 1993 and was unsuccessful. I repeated that in 1994 and was successful and then in 1997 I was elected to the Executive Board as Second Vice President; at which time I was also appointed to the ICC board, before the consolidation. I served on both boards and then in 2000 I was chairman of both boards.

S: Wow, How did you do that?

D: It was a busy year. The year 2000 was the year we published the first International Building Code. I ended my service on the ICC Board in 2002 and it was just months before the formal consolidation. It was a busy time from 1994 to 2002. 1994 was the year that ICC was formed and then I served on the board in 1998.

S: So you were involved in the consolidation?

D: You Bet.

S: Who else do you remember being involved in that?

D: Well, the entire ICBO board of directors as well as the other two model code groups. Everything had to have the blessing of the respective memberships. There were a lot of meetings, arguments, and disagreements. Things kind of came to a head in San Francisco at our annual meeting in 2000 when the membership overwhelmingly voted that the only way that they would agree to become a member of the consolidated ICC was if we maintained the governmental code development process. It took that vote by the ICBO membership to get BOCA and Southern's attention to the fact that we were serious about the code development process. That did it. Before

that meeting was over, southern had come around and at that point it was final action and that was all that we could get committed to but that is really the heart of it. It's the final vote by governmental members that makes the difference. Bob Fowler, who is kind of considered to be the father of ICC because he was the one that really pushed the other two model code groups and got everybody talking and got everyone to come to an agreement in 1994 to go to ICC instead of CABO (Council of American Building Officials), which is where they would go and do a lot of stuff together but they were still 3 separate code organizations; so they got away from CABO and went to ICC at Fowler's prompting. He was very instrumental in getting Southern to come around to the governmental consensus process. Bill Tingey, Bob Fowler and I met in the hallway outside of the assembly room in San Francisco and that is kind of where things really came together. Both of those guys are gone. Bob died in a motorcycle accident and Bill died of Cancer. Bill was appointed the first CEO of ICC, which was something he really did want but he didn't really get to enjoy it because he died about a year later. Bob Fowler didn't live to see the consolidation, which was so disheartening because he was really the main guy.

S: In San Francisco you said that the membership voted overwhelmingly to keep that governmental process. Was that everyone, including Southern or just ICBO membership?

D: No, just ICBO members. Our members were saying, "If we are going to merge then this is what has to take place." Southern agreed to support it, not in detail but in principal. Nothing else was talked about then other than that the final vote be by governmental members.

S: So now that everyone is consolidated into ICC, what is your involvement?

D: I served on the board until 2002 and then went back and served one year on an ICC Education committee but got too busy with my job and the Colorado Chapter so I resigned. I've been there and done that and I thought that it was time for others to step up and have a chance to get involved because there is a lot of satisfaction in that type of work, no doubt about it.

S: What about the Colorado Chapter? Education aside, what have you done since you got involved in 1982.

D: I got involved in code change in 1982 and I did that up until the time I was elected to the board of directors in 1994. At that time I just didn't have the time to devote to code changes and then the institute took priority over everything for me.

S: So let's talk about education. I see that you were involved with education with ICBO, ICC and CCICC; why education?

D: That is what we needed most. There was such a demand for it. There was no affordable code training in Colorado. People could go to California or we could hire instructors from ICBO to come from California and most of that was cost prohibitive to the majority of the jurisdictions in Colorado, which are smaller jurisdictions. A lot of places couldn't send their folks to California or Nevada or Phoenix for training

S: So how did you do it? How did you get the Institute started?

D: Well, the original group to put it together was Pete Tyree, Greg Keith and I. Our first education committee meeting was in a temporary building in Parker and that was probably in 1984. Greg Keith was kind of the brains behind the thing. He is an extremely intelligent individual and at that point he just developed a curriculum that is amazing how much we have stuck to that today. We've added course paths. The first half of the day we did a general assembly where we had everyone together and had someone speak on something and then we broke out into separate classes for the balance of the week and we only had six course paths or something like that. But the basic format for the institute was pretty much ironed out that first year and all of that credit goes to Greg Keith. Greg has been teaching every year since the first institute in 1986 and he hasn't missed a lick. I think Tom Thompson is another person who hasn't missed an institute as far as teaching is concerned. I was looking at the first brochure of courses and instructors for the first institute yesterday and when I looked through there I found Pete Tyree,

who has been here every year, Greg Keith has been here every year, Dave Tyree was there that first year and has been most of the years although he did miss a couple. Tom Thompson and Wally Prebis have been there every year. Richard Boon was there that first year and has been here a number of years since then. There are a number of people that have been here for a number of years.

S: So the three of you just got together and said, “Ok we are going to start offering some education to Colorado folks”?

D: It was the function of the chapter; we didn’t just do it on our own. The chapter agreed that something needed to be done so we went forward and I think there were folks that thought we might be getting in over our heads but ever since that first year it has gotten a little bigger and a little better.

S: What did ICBO then and ICC now think of it in the beginning?

D: When we first started we had a number of ICBO folks help teach. I remember John Beranger, who was past president of ICBO taught a class, John Trowel, was an engineer for ICBO and he came in and taught. John Noccee who was president of ICBO ES and is now ICC ES, taught. We had a number of ICBO participants. I think that they were a little surprised as time went along as to what we were able to accomplish. By the time ICC was formed this Education Institute was one of the, if not the, biggest educational opportunities of its types in the country and ICC was aware of it and we didn’t have a lot of attendance from the other two model code groups but it had a national reputation at that time. We have used ICBO and ICC instructors from time to time but in an effort to keep things affordable we look to volunteers. The bottom line commitment is the quality of education. There have been a few glitches here and there but I think the training has been outstanding and we have been able to maintain the low registration fee rate primarily because of the growth. We started that first year with a cost of \$225.00 for the week and I think we are up to only \$265.00 now, over 20 years later.

S: That’s really amazing

D: It really is. When you stop to think about it what else can you do for basically the same price you could do 23 years ago? One thing that has helped is the addition of exhibitors to the institute. That generates a lot of revenue.

We knew that we were going to get to the point where we would max out the facility and growth would be forced to stop and the addition of exhibitors was something that we could do to generate revenues instead of raising the rates for registration.

S: What has changed the most in the 23 years of the institute?

D: We’ve always had good turnout with volunteers and the chapter has always been behind it, especially after the first couple of years when they were convinced we really had something. I would say that it is so much easier now than it was in earlier years with things being computerized. The first couple of years we were at the Embassy Hotel and we were pleased with the way things went off and when we went to sign a contract for the following year they tried to be nice but they didn’t want us to come back. We had used a lot of their meeting space and taken up all of the decent classrooms that they had at the hotel but everyone that attended that first year was local. Nobody rented a hotel room so they didn’t like that. They make their money off of hotel rooms. What we had to do for 1987 was to go where we are now, which at that time was the Sheraton. We just laid our cards out on the table and said, “this year was our first year and this is what we did, this is what we think we are going to do...” at that time the economy was going south and there were a lot of vacant hotel rooms and the Sheraton said let’s try it for one year and see what happens. We tried it for one year and we came through exactly as we told them we would so they said, “ok, let’s try it another year.” And we continued on a year to year contract until we started to experience a little conflict with meeting dates and we said that we want the first full year in March, that’s what we really want and they said ok, you’ll just have to sign contracts out far enough to guarantee that. We originally started like 5 years out and now we are 7 years out. We did have some conflicts along the way where they had booked some things way out

into the future and they couldn't change those dates so we had to change ours and that is why we are now signed out so far, to avoid those possible conflicts. One year we had a misunderstanding and we printed brochures for one week and they had us scheduled for a different week so we had to scramble to reprint and re-mail brochures but it all worked out. When Sheraton switched to Marriot we had to re-train some folks and it was kind of difficult but now they list us as a low maintenance conference where they just stay out of our way. I think that a lot of the employees take vacation that week because we don't have a lot of demands. We go in and handle our own registration and audio/visual equipment, etc... It is really a well oiled machine now. Many of the people that have been involved have been involved for so long and nobody in the world could do a better job than JD Potter does in handling that equipment. He is just absolutely fantastic. We always have a group of people that show up to handle the registration desk and also to help JD. Gerry was involved with that for a number of years and still gets involved. We've added equipment. When we first started generating money we started buying overheads and slide projectors and now that stuff is getting replaced with LCDs and computers. The one thing that has helped make it a more professional production is the advent of the LCD projectors and everything is computerized and that has certainly made the registration a lot easier, especially with the number of attendees that we have now. It's been a transition from a real low cost, low key production to what we have now.

S: What advice do you have to Dave Horras, who has taken over the reigns as chairman of the education committee?

D: I can't give any advice to Dave. He probably knows as well or better than I do how to run that Institute. I was thrilled to death at his willingness to step up and start chairing that committee and taking over that responsibility. I think that the committee needs to keep the proper perspective. The bottom line is we want the best quality training that we can provide and it has to be affordable. We started it primarily for education and training of our members. It has evolved to more than that but it didn't have to. The focuses still need to be on our membership; the jurisdictions in Colorado, the training that we provide to the contractors, architects and engineers of Colorado. Every architect or engineer that takes a class at the institute makes it easier for the building departments to deal with. It is a win-win situation for everyone. Even though they may not be members of the chapter it is a benefit to chapter members for them to get that training. As long as they maintain that focus, we really have great people in this chapter and they can take it and run with it forever. Dave is going to do an incredibly good job. He is on top of it and thank God he is.

S: Will you stay active with in the chapter?

D: Today I want to. A year from now I may have a totally different attitude about the whole thing. As long as I feel good and feel like I have something to contribute I would like to stay active in education and public relations and I would even like to get back into code change and development. My first building code was the 1970 Uniform Building Code and I have a lot of perspective on a lot of how the codes were developed and why certain things were in the code. We have lost a lot of that with the conversion but the basics of fire and life safety of the building codes haven't changed. The way that we provide it may have changed. I started before smoke detectors were in the code. Performance codes have probably been one of the major changes. Set aside from the fact that we consolidated the three model code groups into one, that is really major but the advent of the performance codes took a lot of the bureaucracy if you will, out of the code enforcement and have been a blessing to the architects, engineers, contractors and the code officials.

S: Tell me about Wilderness on Wheels

D: I don't know how long I've been going up there. My first involvement was when the City of Lakewood did a give a day program up there and we worked on the boardwalk. They only did it one year and I'm not sure how we got involved in it but there were a few folks that had been involved and thought that the chapter would be a natural to go up and continue that work. The Wilderness on Wheels thing is not something that I started, I just happened to be there that one

year as a volunteer and we've been up there ever since. We've had a number of volunteers over the years including Gerry George. We have gotten down to a core of talented and skilled craftsman in the chapter like Wayne Hoban, Steve Byers and JD Potter who it would be hard to do without. I don't really deserve a lot of credit for Wilderness because there are a lot of hard working people in the chapter who make it happen. As a result of my involvement just coordinating it I was elected to their Board of Trustees a couple of years ago but the people that do the work are the ones that really make it a go and nobody works harder than JD and Steve.

S: What about the chapter golf tournament?

D: I think this is like our 27th year of the golf year. I had never played golf or even picked up a golf club until I moved to Colorado and Wally Prebis was the guy behind the golf tournament. He started it and we held it down at his club at Prairie Park Country Club in Larkspur. About 10 years ago it got to be prohibitive expense wise at that country club so we started having it at Fox Hollow in Lakewood. Since I was from the City of Lakewood and I knew the pro at the course it was kind of natural that I got involved in helping Wally but he is still the guy on that golf tournament. We keep it affordable by having it as a budget item. The chapter builds relationships with contractors and suppliers that attend. We have folks that attend from the south east US like Oklahoma and Iowa. It's a fun thing and a lot of people have been coming for a lot of years. I wish we had more chapter member participation because it really is a fun time. You don't have to be a good golfer to have fun or to win. We put everything in flights and give away a lot of door prizes.

S: Who have you looked up to over the years in this industry? Who did you learn from?

D: That's a tough one, there have been so many. My first boss in Kansas City, Jack White, he was the building official and chairman of ICBO in 1973 I believe, he was a couple years behind Pete Tyree. Pete would have to go on that list along with Tom Thompson, Gerry George... It's hard when you start naming names because there are a lot of people out there.

S: What were your best learning tools?

D: Participation in the code development process. That is where you learn the codes and that's something that I think has helped me over the years, especially with my staff. Although over the last few years I haven't gotten to stay up technically with codes but when I started as a building official it was beneficial for me to know those codes. I had come up as a plans examiner and did some field inspection and was really focused on the code. Had I not had as strong of knowledge of the code coming into this job it would have been much more difficult. I think that there is a certain amount of respect that was paid to that technical knowledge when getting this position

S: How do you stay motivated for so long?

D: Participation; serving on the boards, being involved in the institute. Quite frankly, there comes the time when you don't have the drive anymore and when that happens you announce that you are going to retire. That is what I'm doing. I want to stay involved but I don't want a lot of the responsibility like chairing the education committee, serving on somebody's board. I want to be involved and be a worker or gopher to do whatever needs to be done like mop the floor but I don't have the capacity to take on the responsibility anymore. It's someone else's turn to learn.

S: With your experience and knowledge locally and nationally, what should those carrying the torch forward remember? You went through transitions; you know the history behind the decisions, what are the important things to remember?

D: first of all, if they want to get involved they need to be committed. If they can't commit and pull their wait then I would encourage them to step aside and let somebody else step in because there are a lot of good people out there and there is always someone who will get the work done. I would encourage involvement by everyone. People think that they can't do this or that but they can. If they have that desire then they need to do it. Three years before I ran for the board of directors of ICBO I was asked about that possibility and I said that there was just no way but then

3 years later I was on the board. It was somewhat of a challenge and you have to have that desire to get involved and participate.

S: What are your feelings on the Governance and Regionalism issues?

D: Bluntly, I'm really disappointed at the way we are heading. Regional governance doesn't have any part in things other than maybe for educational purposes. I understand that it is easier to provide education when you can consolidate areas into regions and get it out to those regions. The governance; the board of directors used to have districts and the members had to be from each district but several years ago we discovered that the people that really wanted to serve and participated weren't necessarily from a certain district so you had people on the board that were there just because of geography and not because of desire or qualifications. I think that is what would happen with ICC. I think that there is a fear among folks of the Northeast and Southeast that they are being left behind and I think that is what's behind the movement of electing board members by district. Those people could solve that problem by putting forth good candidates and certainly they have good candidates, there is no question about that, but those people need to step forward and accept that challenge and let the membership decide who the best people are to lead the organization.

S: Where do you see it headed?

D: It's going to be a bylaw change that won't be voted on this year, but in Minneapolis. My concern is that there will be a lot of people voting on it that haven't been around that long and don't know all of the issues and history.

There are people who probably have more interest in having their city, state or chapter represented on the board than they do having the most qualified individual there. If the election were held on the west coast it would not pass at all and part of that is that there are still a lot of people around that understand what ICBO went through before.

S: What do we need to know about the upcoming ABM in Reno so that we can make some informed decisions?

D: I would hope that those folks in Reno would get behind the chapter's bylaw change or in the alternative would get behind an acceptable offer from the ICC Board to amend their board policies to ensure that the only way we would ever change from the governmental consensus process is by a super majority of the membership. Also, for our chapter members it will be important to get solidly behind Gerry George in his quest for the office of Secretary/Treasurer of the ICC Board.

S: Let's talk now about being a Code Official. You've been a building official for Lakewood for over 25 years. You don't find that kind of longevity every day. How do you stay at it so long?

D: It comes back to knowing the value of the work that you do. I think you almost have to be in the position to understand it and get your arms around it; the life-safety aspect of it. Not everyone knows how important our job is but the people doing it understand it and it is an important contribution. It keeps you motivated when you are doing things for people and they don't even know it or understands it but you know it and you understand it and it is important.

S: How do you feel about supervising others?

D: That is probably the hardest part about being a building official is the supervision. We tend to be technical people and I think fortunately, or unfortunately, that is the way most Building Officials get their position, by being technical as opposed to being a manager and you do see that changing to some degree. There is a push in a lot of cases to fill the building official positions with architects and engineers. I don't necessarily agree that that's the way to go. I think it is important to have a manager and certainly my technical skills outweigh my managerial skills, I can't argue that. I think supervising folks and managing people is harder than managing politicians. Dealing with your staff can be more difficult than dealing with your City Council. If I didn't have to supervise staff

I might stick around another few years. Actually, I have a great staff. But there are always issues that come up or things that have to get taken care of and everyone doesn't have a good day everyday and sometimes when they have a bad day they may create a situation that may take a couple of days to resolve and smooth over so it's a really a demanding part of the job.

S: You must be doing a good job. While I've been sitting here interviewing you, you have had someone stop in and say hi that you said you haven't seen in a long time but she worked for you for a few years.

D: yes, that is rewarding too; those relationships that you have over the years.

S: So the political aspect is easier?

D: That varies quite a bit. We are fortunate here to have a lot of support from the folks above me and there is a good amount of insulation between us and the politicians but you still have to be able to address and deal with their concerns, which are legitimate because that is why they are elected. I have been fortunate to have elected officials that, while they may not necessarily understand all of the codes they understand the need for codes and that has been beneficial. I realize there are jurisdictions that don't have that support and without that it would have been very difficult to stick around for 25 years.

S: What is your least favorite part of being a building official?

D: Supervising

S: And your most favorite?

D: Oh, the golf tournament. No, I really like to deal with code issues. When you are presented with a code problem and you have the opportunity to sit down with your staff and come up with a solution, I really enjoy that.

S: How do you keep your staff educated?

D: In Lakewood I am a first line supervisor. I work with them and have contact with them on a daily basis. We also send them to the Institute. Half of my staff has been here over 15 years.

S: That says something for you.

D: I really work with them to find not only the training that I think that they need but the training that they want. If they are really interested in getting certified in something, they are going to do a better job enforcing that than if I tell them to get certified in something that they aren't interested in. It is important for them to have their own goals as well as me having goals for them. They respond a lot better.

S: What advise do you have for the person who is going to come in here and fill your shoes?

D: Have a good time. There is no question in my mind that there are a lot of people out there who are extremely well qualified and whoever gets this position will do an outstanding job. We are pretty low key around here and we have a good time. We don't get too serious about the unimportant things. I would say they need to come in and get to know staff well and have a good time and they will be successful.

S: What is your actual retirement date?

D: My actual retirement date is September 14, which is my 66th birthday but my last day of work is August 31st

S: What is next for Dan Nickle?

D: I don't know. Glea and I have decided not to do anything for a year as far as thinking of relocating anywhere. We are going to take a year and see how things play out and where our interests run. I suspect that I'll have to do something. I may volunteer more at Wilderness on Wheels. I want to stay active in the chapter and volunteer with the Institute. I enjoy my involvement on the Public Relations committee and I'd like to get more involved in the code

changes, maybe just sit in the corner and listen but be there. I may go to Home Depot or Wal-Mart and get a job or something like that. There are a lot of opportunities out there. I'm not sure that I want to do part time work in this business but you never know. I may get away from it for a year and then want to do something like that. I'm excited about retiring. We are going to travel and play golf and see what happens.

S: Tell me about Glea.

D: Glea has been extremely supportive over the years. She was thrilled to death a couple of years ago when she got the Sis Wallace award. She was so surprised. She's certainly supported my involvement on the ICBO and ICC boards and especially the Chapter Institute. It goes back for years, the nights and weekends that we sat around the dining room table putting on labels or making out packets, making name tags, etc. She spent untold hours, days, evenings and weekends working on that and I know that she is proud of the Institute and that she has been a part of it.

S: Are you going to drive her crazy being home all of the time now?

D: She says I am. She's probably looking for employment right now.

S: Besides Glea, who knows you best?

D: Probably Wally Prebis. Wally and I have been really close for the past 15 years. He and I have had a routine for the past number of years to have lunch together on Mondays and Fridays. We haven't been able to do that all of the time but more often than not we will have lunch at least once a week and lie to each other about what good jobs we are doing and that sort of thing, solve the worlds problems together. But I've probably spent more time with Wally than anyone else outside of the family; he's one of the good guys.

S: Tell me something that I don't know about you, which is printable.

D: I don't know. Everything over the past 30 years has revolved around code and plan review and that sort of thing that it's hard to think of something outside of that to tell you. I got locked up for a night at a hotel in Kuwait once. We were traveling for the World Organization of Building Officials meeting and we missed a connection in Kuwait City and they wouldn't let us leave the airport because we didn't have visas for Kuwait so they have this hotel on the airport grounds just for that purpose. Glea and I and a couple others we were traveling with were escorted to the hotel, which had armed guards at the doors and we couldn't leave. We spent the night and the next day. They sent people to escort us to our plane. They were nice and they were cordial but there was no question that they were not letting us out of their sight until we moved on to our destination and they had told us, "If there's a plane that flies out tomorrow you will be on it but you need to understand that sometimes we have sand storms and so you could be here for a few days." That was kind of an interesting twist to our trip. It was only a few years after Desert Storm so that is why they were the way that they were.

S: You tell me what else you want us to know.

D: This is a great profession. If you like it, work hard at it and enjoy it. If you don't, get out. I'm not saying that people that don't like it can't do a good job but if your heart's not in it and you don't have that commitment you are not going to be the best that you can be. If it's not your cup of tea then go find your cup of tea. Don't be in the profession just because it's a job that you get a paycheck for. I think it's too important of a job to not have a commitment.

The End...to this chapter anyway.