

College Then vs. College Now

By

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An Oral History Interview With:  
John Paul Knorr

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At this time of the year most all seniors are thinking about college in some sort of way. I, myself, am too. I want to know what college was like back when my grandpa went to college back in 1959, and what he thought about how colleges were today. John Knorr, my grandpa, works with the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He allows college students who are studying in the horticulture area, come and study his walnut trees, that he does genetic and grafting work on. I admire this because it allows the students to get out of the classroom and do some hands on work. Once I started interviewing him I was very surprised about what he had to say.

**Desiree Knorr:** So, first off, what was it like your first day of college

**John Knorr:** (very happy and excited to talk) It was very nerve racking to say the least. Now days you have counselors and classes you take to prepare you for what you will experience. We didn't have that back then. The day before I graduated from high school the principle sat me down in his office and asked me what I wanted to do. I of course told him that I wanted to go to college and continue studying. He then said "Okay, best of luck." And that was as much prep as we got. And it wasn't all-bad either because not very many people went to college. In my graduating class only about 6 out of 76 kids went on to college.

**DK:** After you got to college, how did you feel about it?

**JK:** Like a number! I don't think one single person knew my name in that college. But as time goes by and you learn that you are not the only person like that, you get used to it.

**DK:** Do you personally think that has changed though out the years?

**JK:** (kind of indecisive) Yes and no. I think that it all depends on where you're going. At colleges like SCC and other community colleges I think you're treated more like an

individual then another number. But at the university they see some many kids it's probably hard to keep everyone's names straight.

**DK:** Do you think that's better for the kids that go to the community colleges or do you think they should be treated the same way they will be once they get out of college?

**JK:** I think it is just for the person to decide, but there are going be many times in life when people have do things on their own and I think the university really helps with that.

**DK:** What do you think is the best part about colleges these days?

**JK:** That if you want the extra help, you are able to get it. Granted they're not going to come and find you to help you, but if you make an effort they will help you.

**DK:** What's the worst?

**JK:** By far I would say the cost. I think that's why not everybody goes, other than lack of wanting to. I do know that students have lots of opportunities to get scholarships and grants and what not, but still the cost is crazy. I'm really glad that your schools counselor tells you guys about some of the scholarships out there, because it's expensive. But on the other hand when you know that you have to pay for your schooling, it gives you more of an incentive to do better.

**DK:** Are you glad that you made the choice to go to college?

**JK:** YES! (very happy) I would encourage anyone and everyone to go if they have to chance. It opens up so many doors! If I wouldn't have furthered my education I would probably not be where I am today!

**DK:** Now days parents try and convince their kids to go co college. Did yours?

**JK:** Umm...they didn't really know what to think about. My parents wanted me to do something good for myself, but since they had never went, they never knew what was going on. But since they knew that was what I had wanted they went with it.

**DK:** In closing, what is your advice for students that want to take their education to the next level?

**JK:** First off, don't slack off. It is so hard to make up stuff after you have already fallen behind. Second, study as hard as you can! Don't get caught up with the partying and having fun. And last, try to get as many scholarships and grants as you can. Nobody can really explain to you how expensive college is, and you never know when other things are going to come up. My last semester of college I ended up being short on one of my math classes, and in order to graduate on time I was going to have to add it to the rest of my classes for the last quarter. That was an added expense I wasn't planning, and stuff like that can happen anytime.

In conclusion, I now understand why Ms. Merryman and the rest of the teachers in school try to prepare us the way they do. They've been through college; they know what they're talking about. I'm so thankful that I am receiving all of the preparation that I will need in college, right here in high school. I also have more respect for the people that went to college with no preparation. It must have taken them a lot of will power to pull through and just do it. I just hope that I can do the same!