CHAPTER TWO

SOME STUDENT ACTIVITIES

President Watkin's optimism about Illinois State's future, while justified by the accomplishments of the past several years, was actually a qualified optimism. There remained the limitations of financial resources which raised serious obstacles to the University's realization of the purpose assigned to it by the state's master planning for higher education: that is, to "continue to distinguish itself as a State and national leader in the art, science and content of education at all levels." The level of funding given to the University was inadequate to attain that goal and threatened its ability to provide quality instructional services to its students. Simply put, Illinois State University was underfunded in its operations and lacked the facilities required by its programs. Based on data assembled by the Board of Higher Education during the '70s, ISU consistently fell below state cost averages for all levels of instruction, despite the fact that it devoted a higher percentage of its annual budget to instruction and less to research and public service than a comparison group of state schools of similar size and complexity. The effects of inadequate financial resources, whether for operations or capital improvements, were felt everywhere across campus. Salaries for faculty, staff, and civil service were uncompetitive and in most years did not keep up with the rate of inflation. The student/faculty ratio was one of the highest in the state, which for faculty meant larger classes, especially for those teaching in University Studies and popular programs like business, accounting, communication, and computer science. Instructional resources and equipment were either outdated or scarce; book and periodical purchases were behind. Although three new buildings in 1973 and a new library in 1976 gave some
relief to the University's space needs, still programs in music, agriculture, physical education, recreation, and the laboratory sciences still could not fully serve their students because of space shortages. Maintenance on older buildings was minimal and frequently deferred, while the maintenance units responsible for the physical plant were housed in facilities designed for a campus half the size.

A combination of circumstances explains the University's underfunded condition. The University's budgets had never kept pace with institutional growth during the late '60s, a time when budget requests were in large measure determined by formulas based on projected enrollment and credit hour production. Rightly or wrongly, the University's enrollment generally exceeded its projections, but no additional funds were added to its budget base to support the greater number of students. And catch-up was not possible in the early '70s. The Board of Higher Education abandoned the old formula practice and instead followed a procedure of budget analysis which emphasized standard calculations for salary and price increases, productivity incentives for reallocation of resources, and special priorities for requests for new and expanded programs and program improvements. This policy became known as "incremental budgeting." Furthermore, the state's appropriations for higher education did not keep pace with the decade's rate of price inflation. For example, in the five years prior to President Watkins' coming, the University's operating budget increased 24 percent while the consumer price index rose nearly 39 percent. A simple calculation suggests the impact on the University of the difference between the two rates of increase. In 1972-73, the dollars available for each full time equivalent student was $1,855; in 1976-77 it was $2,216. But if the rate of inflation had been fully accounted for in the University's budget, the 1976-77 amount per student should have been $2,578. By this simple measure, the University's 1976-77 budget should have been over $6,000,000 greater than it actually was to offset inflation. The combination of these circumstances, then, produced difficulties for the administration, faculty, and staff as they sought to carry out those teaching, research, and public service functions expected of a large, multi-purpose institution.
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The solution, of course, was to gain additional funding for the University's academic and space needs beyond those increases granted to offset inflation. From the beginning of his administration in 1977, President Watkins attacked the budget problem. He carried the message to the governing boards and the public, as his predecessor Dr. Budig had, that because Illinois State was at a financial disadvantage at all levels compared to other Illinois public universities, it would be difficult if not impossible to continue to develop the quality and range of University programs needed by its students. In addition to funds requested to implement new degree programs, President Watkins submitted requests year after year for additional faculty positions to reduce class size and to meet student demands in popular programs, especially in business, computer science, communication, and fine arts. Major budget requests also called for the substantial improvement of faculty research and indirect instruction, replacement of outmoded instructional and laboratory equipment, further development of student academic support services, especially the High Potential Student program and the new administrative unit created in 1979, and the expansion of continuing education. To reduce the University's space deficiencies, new buildings or additions were proposed for fine arts, physical education, recreation, and physical plant. Moreover, funds were sought to remodel old Milner Library for the business college, Moulton Hall for physics and the health sciences, and Felmley for biology and chemistry. Finally, President Watkins pleaded for more money for faculty and civil service pay raises to recover some of the dollar's purchasing power lost to inflation. The BOR staff estimated that short-term inflationary price increases exceeded pay hikes by 30 percent, which represented a substantial personal loss for all people at ISU.

The University's requests for operating and capital budget increases in all these vital areas were large, ranging from $59.2 million in 1978-79 to $62.4 million in 1980-81. There was reason at first for the central administration and faculty to be cautiously optimistic that progress could be made in correcting ISU's underfunded condition and its space deficiencies. From the $41 million actually appropriated for 1977-78, the operating budget
increased 19 percent to $49 million by 1979-80. Among other things, that increase included funds to account for inflation, modest salary raises for faculty and civil service, and over $700,000 for new faculty positions needed to improve instruction in undergraduate programs. New funds, as well as internal reallocation, permitted the expansion of computer facilities, computerizing Milner Library's holdings, enabling participation in a state-wide computer network of university libraries to facilitate institutional sharing of book materials. In addition to these budgetary advances, certain capital projects were moved along by 1980: remodeling projects in Moulton and Felmley were completed, as well as that in old Milner library which allowed the college of business in early 1980 to occupy the building. It was renamed Williams Hall the next year in honor of Arthur R. Williams, first head of the department of business education. Equally important, an agricultural research laboratory building finally won state approval and funding, and construction began in early 1980.

President Watkins was also successful in resolving the problem of financing the operations of the University's Metcalf Elementary School and University High School. The lab schools had been a problem for a number of years before President Watkins. During the administrations of Samuel Braden and David Berlo, the cost and role of the lab schools in teacher education programs were challenged by the Board of Higher Education. When the demand for teachers sharply declined in the early '70s, an early draft of Master Plan-Phase Three called for the elimination of all lab schools in the state. The University was able to meet each challenge with persuasive arguments for retaining Metcalf and U-High, and arrangements had been worked out with local school districts, in which the 860 Metcalf and U-High students lived, to share some of the costs of operating the two schools. In early 1977, however, the Illinois Office of Education, in response to complaints, evaluated those contracts and decided that school districts could not pay the University for their students enrolled in the lab schools and still count them as part of the district's claim for state school aid. With that IOE decision, local districts were unable to agree to make future payments to the University, resulting in a projected
$500,000 shortfall in the lab schools' budget. Because the University itself could not absorb that sum, President Budig and Provost Horner decided on a two year phase out the lab schools. The community was dismayed by the announcement. The local newspaper, the *Pantagraph*, editorialized against the closing, the lab schools' Parent Teachers Association lobbied for a solution, and joint meetings of district and state school officials with University administrators were held. After intense lobbying and negotiations, the IOE relented half way on its earlier decision, which was of some help. But without additional funds from some source, the University might still be compelled to end its century long history of maintaining "model" or laboratory schools as an integral part of its teacher education programs.

President Watkins inherited the lab school problem and he found that there were good reasons besides tradition for saving Metcalf and U-High. The professional future of the 106 people who taught there was at stake. The lab schools were essential for research in learning and curriculum conducted by faculty of the college of education. While no longer necessary for the practice teaching required for certification, which was now accomplished in various school districts, the lab schools were nonetheless an indispensable way by which education majors could fulfill the state requirement of clinical observations prior to practice teaching in their senior year. If the lab schools closed, it would have been necessary each year to ask public schools of central Illinois to accommodate over 35,000 hours of observation time for ISU students, forcing those students to make long commutes as part of their semester schedule. As part of the effort to solve the lab school problem, Provost Horner appointed a committee to prepare a mission statement for Metcalf and U-High and directed Robert Burnham, dean of the college of education, to assume administrative responsibility for the two schools. These improvements coincided with a reorganization and program evaluation conducted by the college in preparation for an NCATE accreditation review in 1978. The real solution to the lab school problem, however, was provided by President Watkins and Ben Hubbard, acting dean of the college and an authority on state education financing.
They proposed to form the lab schools into an independent school district, thus making the schools eligible for assistance from the state's common school fund like any other public school system. Support from the Board of Regents and local representatives to the General Assembly, Gerald Bradley, Sam Vinson, John Maitland, and Gordon Ropp, brought about the passage of the necessary legislation in 1980. The funding problem of Metcalf and U-High was finally resolved.

During the years of these changes in the University's academic life, student interests and activities on and off campus frequently went in opposite directions. Or so it seemed at the time. According to the arguments of campus leaders, as expressed in the *Vidette*, Student Association Assembly, and Academic Senate, the University should make every effort to facilitate the job training of students instead of raising academic standards and revising general education requirements. Reform of academic policies was unneeded, they claimed, for it was poor advisement and teaching, performed by faculty too interested in research, that was responsible for any skill deficiencies among students, not their lack of preparation for university study. But if it was necessary to improve the quality of education, it should not be done at the expense of students. Because a college degree was essential in the job market, a public university like Illinois State should open its doors to all who could pay the tuition and provide the fullest opportunity for career preparation. When enrollment in courses in business, computer sciences, and other programs had to be limited because of excess demand, students angrily insisted that additional sections be opened even at the expense of the University's academic balance. A president of student government stated what was perhaps a common view: ISU should not try to be a Harvard of the midwest.

The emphasis which ISU undergraduates placed on vocationalism and an easy passage to their goal of a good paying job may have been deplorable to many, but those values were not
unique to this campus. National surveys of the attitudes of freshmen put ISU students in the mainstream on such issues as why they were in college ("get a better job") and the chief benefit of a college education ("to increase earnings"). ISU students, in common with students everywhere, were guided by other interests as well, which set them apart from the predecessors of the '60s. Most tended to be more concerned with themselves than with the problems of others. To that extent, it would seem that many lacked a social/community consciousness, tending to be more conservative in their political views (if they had any interest in political issues at all), in contrast to most students of a decade earlier. Generally, students of the post-Vietnam era placed a greater emphasis on their individual problems than on those of society. They insisted on their independence and equality within the university and residential communities. They complained about institutional rules and regulations as obstacles to their personal advancement. But what aroused their concern the most, and occasionally brought many of them together as a protest group when little else could, were threats from the university or the community to the free and full expression of their social lives.

Yet the appearances of narrow vocationalism, social indifference, and self-indulgence do not provide a fully consistent description of the students. Many pursued studies in the liberal and fine arts, because they found them stimulating, at the same time that they carefully prepared for jobs in applied fields. While social and political issues did not generate as much attention as in the past, nonetheless some students were active in the College Democrats and College Republicans, and showed an interest in the controversies of the day, such as the equal rights amendment, the CIA’s role in government, and nuclear energy. The Forum Committee, consisting of students and supported by student fees, arranged lectures by major national figures like William Colby, Mike Mansfield, Stewart Udall, and E. Howard Hunt, who attracted large audiences. In October, 1979 Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden gave an antinuclear energy talk to a packed union auditorium. A few students belonged to the Peace and Justice Coalition which came to life in 1978; the group sought to arouse student interest in a critical view of American
policies toward Cambodia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and in protesting draft registration. More students showed an interest in supporting the Illinois Public Interest Research Group, part of a Ralph Nadar-styled public advocacy of social and economic issues that were appearing on college campuses across the country. With support from the Student Association, the ISU promoters of IPIRG in early 1979 collected nearly 3600 signatures on petitions calling for a referendum on a refundable fee that would support IPIRG activities. Interestingly, the IPIRG fee passed 1373 to 1029 at a time when Student Association officers and students generally were complaining about other increases in the costs of their education. In the end, the Board of Regents on the advise of President Watkins rejected the IPIRG fee because the money collected would be controlled by the organization's state officers.

In still other ways students demonstrated that they were not entirely insensitive to societal needs, especially of people far less fortunate than themselves. They willingly gave their time and talent to public service activities in Bloomington-Normal, such as Project Oz, Sunnyside Center, and Western Avenue Community Center, and, of course, and community projects of local churches. Each year various student organizations, residence halls, and Greek societies (13 sororities and 15 fraternities by 1980) raised tens of thousands of dollars among themselves and from the community for worthy causes: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, American Heart Association, Home Sweet Home Mission, Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, McLean County Crippled Children's Camp, McLean County Mental Health Association, March of Dimes, National Epilepsy Foundation, St. Jude's Children Research Center, Salvation Army, Sickle Cell Enemia Foundation, United Negro College Fund, and Western Avenue Community Center. The importance of student humanitarian impulses and generosity was recognized in 1977 when the Bloomington-Normal United Way for the first time included them in its annual fund drive. And one wonders what area hospitals would do if students did not donate each year hundreds of pints of blood to the Red Cross; a four day drive in March, 1978 produced over 850 pints. Like college students everywhere, those who attended Illinois State
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were a study in contrasts.

A number of issues in campus life surfaced during the late '70s which vexed students, university administrators, and town officials. Some of the issues involved the perception held by student leaders of their role in university decision-making on matters directly affecting students. Other issues in campus life concerned the responsibilities of students as members of the local community, no matter whether they lived on or off campus. These issues came to be called the “party problems”. Then, too, there were issues among the students themselves which focused on the representative nature and effectiveness of student government. But whatever the specific issue, only rarely did the students coalesce into what could be called a “student body”.

The absence of student unity on most campus issues resulted in part from the disperse nature of the student population. Only four out of ten lived on campus in the residence halls, while the largest proportion of students were in apartments or Greek houses and a number commuted from home. Officers of the Student Association and its elected SA Assembly, the primary student organization, tried to provide cohesion and a single student voice on matters of interest to all students, but with little success. The same was true for student members of the Academic Senate, one of whom was always elected vice-chairman of that body. These student leaders, along with the student newspaper, complained about student indifference to campus politics. As proof, they pointed to low turnouts at the fall and spring elections when only 10 to 15 percent bothered to vote, and to surveys which showed that upwards of 80 percent of students knew little or nothing about student government. Perhaps one reason for that lack of concern was the challenge to SA's role on campus from other student groups, such as the Association of Residence Halls, Council of Greek Societies, Black Greek Council, Black Student Union, Association of Latin American Students, and the Honors Council, organizations which represented smaller constituencies sharing common interests.

The multiple centers around which students organized themselves produced controversies among the competing
groups and also raised disturbing questions of race relations on campus. Members of Greek societies were criticized in the *Vidette* for being too social, self-centered, and aloof from campus affairs. When the Greeks in the fall of 1977 suggested a revival of the ISU homecoming queen pageant, which had been dropped in 1968, the idea was immediately branded as sexist and archaic. The Greek members expressed outrage at the criticism, and one sorority even contemplated a legal suit against the student newspaper. While important to some students, to others it was a tempest in a teapot. As one student commented, “Why not, what’s the difference, who votes, who cares, who knows, it’s all bullshit anyway.” Arthur Cooper, president of the Black Student Union that year, however, touched the basic consideration in what was otherwise a minor issue: it was impossible for a homecoming queen to be representative of the entire student body, of which 12 percent were black students.

The homecoming queen issue reflected a deeper problem in the relations between minority students generally and black students in particular and the majority white students. Campus incidents of racial slurs and behavior angered black students, but it was the way their interests were disregarded by student government and the fee committees controlled by white students that aroused them the most. When the student-controlled Union Board in 1978 proposed earlier weekend closing hours for the student center, David Horton, BSU’s president, protested that the plan would discriminate against black students by cutting short their music-dancing “sets,” a major weekend attraction. The controversy between the Union Board and the BSU lasted throughout the fall, increasing racial tension between white and black students. Angered and alarmed, President Watkins revived the old Human Relations Committee to address the rising racial bigotry on campus and as a way to reaffirm the University’s commitment to equality. In the fall of 1979, the BSU along with the NAACP challenged the SA’s claim that it represented and spoke for all students. In a sense the SA became the object of minority frustrations with campus life. Several issues were of major concern to the BSU: the preoccupation of SA officers with the “party question” in Normal,
of importance to only a small number of white students, while black students encountered discrimination in various ways in the town, but especially in housing; the underrepresentation of minority students in the SA Assembly and fee boards which ignored minority concerns; the lack of minority programming offered by the student radio stations and the poor coverage of minority affairs in the *Vidette*. After months of heated exchanges and accusations back and forth among the student leaders, the Human Relations Committee and President Watkins addressed some of the BSU's complaints. Beginning in the summer of 1980, officers of both the Student Association and Black Student Union would be housed in the same building to improve communications; a pool of interested minority students willing to serve on committees would be established; and annual workshops would be conducted for students interested in shared governance. The situation was calmed by these actions, but only briefly, for ugly incidents of white bigotry and ignorance reappeared the next year, particularly in the residence halls. It would seem that the campus progress and sensitivity in interpersonal relations achieved in the 60's was entirely lost on some white students of a later generation. To Charles Morris, veteran campaigner for human equality, Black History Week of February, 1980 was an opportunity for the campus to recover the spirit of the civil rights movement. A year later, on January 15, 1981, the students of BSU and NAACP organized another reminder of the American dream: the first annual march from Illinois Wesleyan to ISU in honor of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the years from 1977 to 1980, university policy decisions on several matters aroused student leaders because the "what and the how" of the decisions ran counter to what they believed to be appropriate. At first it was the cancellation of the Rites of Spring. Some tried to make it an issue in the September student elections, but they failed because students generally ignored student elections no matter what the issue. Officers of the Student Association complained to President Watkins and Neal Gamsky, Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs, that students had not been consulted about terminating the event. Further, when they proposed an alternative "springfest,"
Student Affairs administrators imposed strict rules on the planning committee, including a maximum amount of fee money that could be spent, restrictions which were branded as "repressive." The announcement of "Springfest '78," to be held on the last Thursday and Friday of April, prompted a call to all students to gather on the campus for an "impromptu" celebration on Saturday in defiance of the administration's decision. Tension rose among student watchers, for they feared that problems might develop. A Vidette reporter claimed that 1,000 came to the quad to drink beer, use marijuana, and listen to live music, while Student Affairs people estimated the crowd at only 250. Whatever the number, it was an orderly, well-mannered affair, and the day passed without incident. Indeed, after 1977-78 the whole question of a springtime event with hard rock music quietly faded away. Efforts were made to make it an issue the next school year — the Fee Board particularly disliked being told how much fee money could be spent for student entertainment — but few on campus seemed interested. By the summer of 1980, Steve Henriksen, president of the Student Association, was ready to abandon the idea of an "Alternative Rites of Spring."

Perhaps the reason why Rites of Spring as an issue faded so easily was the appearance at the same time of two matters of more immediate interest, especially to the nearly 8,000 students living in the University's fifteen residence halls. Both issues involved revisions of residence hall policies, one concerning the use of alcohol and the other the designation of floors in specific residence halls as selective lifestyle areas. Both issues were sensitive, for they affected the personal choices and social arrangements of students who were required or preferred to live in the residence halls. And contrary to popular belief, many students found dormitory life both congenial and rewarding because of the facilities, availability of varied social and academic programs, and opportunities for personal friendships. Dorm life had its special inconveniences, of course, as when an electrical power failure in Watterson Towers on September 15, 1979 forced 2,200 students to live elsewhere for eight days while repairs were made. Within the orderly arrangements customary to dorm life, residents jealously guarded their individuality and
"rights." Almost at once, then, the proposed changes in policy provoked cries of protest. The preferences of the student-run Association of Residence Halls, and its role in policy making, quickly came into conflict with the recommendations and responsibilities of the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Residential Life.

The most volatile issue was the residence hall alcohol policy. That policy, dating from 1973, allowed students of legal age, which was 19 for beer and wine, to possess and consume alcohol in their rooms, and to have parties in lounges with the restriction that alcohol could not exceed half the party's cost (the "49%/51%" rule). Beer drinking was a common social activity among students everywhere, but under the University’s alcohol policy, drinking in the residence halls was getting out of hand. The drinking habits of Walker Hall men were particularly outrageous. Walker men held what they called “case day,” an annual event in which each resident was invited to accept the challenge of consuming an entire case of beer before the day was over. Each floor had a practice session in the fall semester as a preliminary for the major event in the spring when the entire building participated, the survivors earning their stripes as “Walker men.” In addition to Walker Hall, several other dorms were particularly troublesome because of large weekend parties resulting in severe behavioral problems, fighting, and considerable property damage. Ronald Dozier, McLean County’s states attorney general, was also concerned that sponsors of those parties were selling beer in violation of local liquor laws. And then there were the telling social, health, and academic consequences from drinking. Despite an active program to educate students on the ill-effects of excessive drinking conducted by Student Affairs and the University’s Committee on Responsible Drinking (CORD), referrals to the Counseling Center for alcohol abuse were on the increase, as were alcohol-related charges against students sent to the Student Judicial Office.

To residence hall managers and counselors and student leaders, a change in the alcohol policy was clearly needed. But what the new policy should be and who would make it were the vital questions. Throughout 1977-78, both sides studied the
problem. As expected, survey results showed that students favored little or no change. In the end the ORL recommendations were accepted. Over the objections of the ARH, which preferred only limited changes, the new policy banned beer kegs, limiting parties to the “bring your own” type in designated areas. If that change in policy wasn’t enough to prompt student protests, Residential Life also proposed at the very same time that the number of quiet lifestyle floors be increased from three to eleven, plus special floors for honor and art students. Residence hall students howled in protest, the ARH asked for delay, the Student Association conducted a survey which showed that few wanted selective lifestyle floors, and the student newspaper declared the ORL staff incompetent and guilty of “Gestapo” tactics and urged residents to demonstrate their opposition. Perhaps it was out of frustration over the pending changes in the social dynamics of dorm life that “animal house” food fights occurred in the food centers, or that the men of Manchester attempted a panty-raid on the women of Hewett. If so, such protests were of no avail. The changes were implemented in the fall of 1979.

But the matter was far from settled. During the summer of 1979, the state legislature raised the legal drinking age to 21 which compelled the University once more to revise its alcohol policy in time for the 1980 spring semester. Again the Association of Residence Halls and the Office of Residential Life assessed possibilities and offered differing proposals. Both acknowledged that the new legal age must be obeyed, but ORL wanted to concentrate those 21 year olds who wished to drink in designated dorm rooms, while the ARH wanted no restrictions on room assignments. Once more student leaders agitated the issue, but this time with greater intensity because of their conviction that student wishes were being ignored, or worse, that the University’s system of shared governance in which students were supposed to participate was in fact a sham and a waste of time. In late November, 1979 the ARH, supported by the Student Association, collected 3,000 signatures on petitions urging President Watkins to reject the proposal of Student Affairs. When President Watkins approved the plan instead, as another way to promote a healthier academic environment in
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the residence halls, Kevin Conlon, student member from ISU to the Board of Regents, brought the matter to the governing board in late January, 1980. Although board members expressed sympathy, they refused to direct President Watkins to reevaluate his decision. Still, student leaders persisted. Several days after the board meeting, Heidi Voorhees, Student Association president, told a Vidette reporter that dorm residents who were 21 should simply ignore the new policy, and the Association of Residence Halls concurred. Vice President Neal Gamsky responded by breaking off relations with the Student Association. There the issues of residence hall policies died.

But the difficulties arising from alcohol as a central element in student social life did not end. The party problem merely shifted from the residence halls to the town of Normal and involved the thousands of students living in apartments and Greek houses on the University’s periphery. Beer parties, attracting hundreds of people and resulting in scores of arrests, did not become a major issue between students and town officials until the fall of 1979. Before then, the concerns of Normal residents were generally those common to any university town in which a growing number of students lived off campus: noise, litter, congested traffic, tenant problems, an occasional large week-end fraternity crowd, and a few incidents of shoplifting and bad checks. Student complaints were also commonplace: high rents, high prices, suspicious merchants, a tough police force, insensitive townspeople, and lack of recreation. All these were irritants to be sure, but hardly enough to disrupt the tempo of community life, unnerve town officials, and propel students into open defiance. Instead, the tension that did exist in town-gown relations was below the surface of appearances.

That state of things changed rather abruptly in 1979. Within a year the difficulties between students and town officials would erupt in a student demonstration on October 2, 1980 and lay the ground for a second one, almost to the day, four years later. The focus of those difficulties was the weekend beer parties, those large, noisy gatherings of young people who wanted an evening of beer and good times. Although student partying was a social activity that might occur at any time, the big ones were usually outdoor affairs held in the fall and spring
of the school year. Parties were more numerous, larger, and noisier in August and September of 1979 than in the past, and local authorities, in response to resident complaints, took stern measures to enforce local ordinances. Arrests on alcohol-related charges soared compared to previous years. Led by Student Association officers, students packed meetings of the Normal Council, complaining of unfair police practices, especially the use of undercover agents. Cold weather ended the 1979 fall party season and eased the rising tension, but only for a few months. Outdoor partying resumed with the return of warm spring weather, and more alcohol-related and disorderly conduct arrests followed, many of them for violations of the new drinking age of 21. As the tension between students and police increased, the Normal Council, University administration, and Student Association formed a community improvement committee to explore ways to resolve the party issue. While Steve Henriksen, newly elected Student Association president, predicted a student-police confrontation, the end of the school year defused the situation.

The summer months provided only a temporary respite. When the students returned in August, 1980, despite warnings about the consequences of alcohol and other violations and the use of a student-run “party patrol,” there were more beer keg parties and more difficult situations between students and police than ever before. If the Normal police were intent on quelling the unruly parties, students were just as defiantly determined to have them. Friday, September 26, was the worse yet. A few days earlier, Normal’s police chief announced “Our intention is to stop these large, loud, uncontrollable parties. And I mean business.” With nearly the whole force on duty, and assisted by University police, Chief McQuire zealously went after the parties, using 30 officers to break up a particularly large one. The next day, Steve Henriksen, SA president, led a march of 40 students to City Hall to protest police tactics and brutality, calling for Chief McQuire’s resignation. A Vidette editorial warned that Chief McQuire was “courting confrontation” if police harrassment of students continued. While a meeting of town, university, and student representatives on Tuesday tried in vain to quiet the situation, other students were
organizing a “spontaneous” protest for later in the week. On Wednesday, at a meeting of the Academic Senate, Steve Henriksen once more demanded the resignation of Chief McQuire at the same time that he presented proposals to resolve the party issue. These calming efforts, however, were made too late. On Thursday night, October 2, about 150 students marched to City Hall where their numbers grew larger and noiser quite quickly. After presenting their demands, the organizers led the crowd off toward President Watkin’s house but got no farther than the intersection of College and Main where they simply blocked traffic for nearly an hour. On the march again, the students started back toward City Hall, their numbers growing to 1,500 as they passed Watterson Towers. Some 100 police from Normal, Bloomington, McLean County, University Security, and the State were available nearby in case of trouble, but none occurred. Normal’s city manager, Dave Anderson, talked to the students, stressing the need for cooperation while making it clear that Chief McQuire would not be fired. After three hours of marching and milling around, the crowd dispersed without incident.

It is not easy to provide an adequate explanation of why this outburst happened. As President Watkins remarked, “This was a very complex issue, a matter of rights and responsibilities of both students and residents.” Perhaps many students were not yet ready to accept fully the responsibilities of independent living; a Pantagraph editorial described them as “patently wet behind the ears,” recognizing no restraint on their behavior and acting in ways they would not dream of doing in their hometowns. But on other side, perhaps the Normal Council was too slow in recognizing the need to control the expansion of student apartments and Greek houses into residential neighborhoods where the student lifestyle would be unwelcomed; maybe both residents and town officials were too quick to turn to the police to make students behave the way they did in the old days when the town was “dry.” Whatever the significance of “local” factors, an additional element was added to the volatile mix when the statutory drinking age was raised to 21 years for beer and wine, signed into law in late summer of 1979, becoming effective January 1, 1980. What had been legal for a 19 year old
one day suddenly became illegal the next, and unquestionably
many who were affected refused to accept the change.

It was clear by the fall of 1980 that campus leaders lacked
the power to prevent changes, even those affecting student
social life, changes which administrators, faculty, and town
officials thought were essential to the University’s and the
community’s well-being. The times had changed, and the pen­
dulum of student influence was inexorably swinging back in
some aspects of student life as it was in academic affairs. Per­
haps it was more than just pageantry that presidential candidate
Ronald Reagan, spokesman for a more conservative America,
participated in the 1980 Homecoming parade just two weeks
after the student demonstration in downtown Normal. An
attempt was made to bring students out for the 1981 spring
student government elections as a show of support, but few
more voted than in previous elections. Activists of the Student
Association sought to organize students to enter the Normal
elections and take over town government as a way to curb the
Normal police, but it was largely empty talk. The more cynical
insisted that campus leaders sought student government offices,
claimed a role in university governance and town affairs, and
contrived issues only for the purpose of adding something to
their resumes in order to impress prospective employers. As
one writer commented, compared to the student power move­
ment and the vital political issues of the 1960s, the present
student concerns were just a lot of “bibble-babble.” But such
judgments were too harsh and off the mark, for the issues of the
late ‘70s were just as “real” as those of ‘60s. They were merely
derifferent. That difference was evident in the large number of
students who gathered on the quad in silent vigil on December
14, 1980 to express their grief over the tragic death of John
Lennon, former BeattIe and a symbol to their generation.
VICE PRESIDENTS AND PROVOSTS

James M. Horner
1975-1980

Leon E. Booth
1981-1983

Stanley G. Rives
1980

David A. Strand
1983-
Student Rally on Quad
April 1982

Student Demonstration
September 1984
Bone Student Center/Braden Auditorium
Dedication — February 1982

MacDonald's Dedication
Fall 1982

40c
Quad

Williams Hall

40d
Ropp Agriculture Building

Redbird Arena