

**PROFESSOR EDWIN O. STENE:
A PASSION FOR PEOPLE AND PUBLIC SERVICE**

by Judith Galas, University of Kansas, 1992

When Edwin O. Stene, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of Kansas, put together one of his last vitae in 1977, he listed as his two major contributions to education: the establishment of KU's Master's in Public Administration program and the 200 alumni who, by that time, had moved across the country to become city managers.

Stene directed KU's MPA program from its beginning in 1948 to 1970 and again from 1973 to 1974. During those 23 years, more than 300 students received their master's in public administration and the program had become recognized as one of the top city management programs in the country. "His students' success, that's what Stene is proud of most," says his wife, Elin Jorgensen Stene, whom he married in 1963. She describes her husband as a quiet, modest man, who simply did what he loved to do—teach.

If not ambitious for himself, Stene was passionately ambitious for his students. A man with little ego, he was determined to build the egos of his students. If not driven by a personal desire to be noticed, he was passionately driven to have his program recognized as a major contributor to the development of city management and as a beacon for public service based on a devotion to ethical government. Stene's life's passions were few, but powerful: his program, his students, and public service, plus the personal ingredients of good friends, family, and music. Now an invalid and confined to a wheelchair, the 91-year-old Stene was unable to describe his program or its contributions himself, but more than a dozen people contributed to the picture of a man who has left a permanent mark on his students and KU's MP A program.

People remembered many different things about Stene. Each had slightly different stories, depending on whether they knew him as a university colleague, or as a teacher and life-long mentor, or as a dear friend, husband or father. With few exceptions, most everyone who knew Stene in the 1970s told about the night they watched him correctly name at least 100 former students who were attending the KU banquet at the annual meeting of the International City Managers Association. Each tried to recapture that moment when the crowd fixed its attention on Stene's unerring recall of names. Stene, they said, looked into each man's face (there were only men then), announced his name and the name of his spouse. He told where the graduate had interned and where he was working. Sometimes he stopped and added some extra tidbit and exchanged a laugh. Many obviously found reassurance in knowing that Stene still knew them, still cared enough to remember their histories, still maintained those mentoring ties that gave them faith in themselves, in their futures and in their roles as city managers.

His students had left KU believing they were taking on one of the most noble of professions. City management had become their passion, because it was his passion. The sounds of their names reminded them of their college days when they had been so eager to plunge into the demanding life of public service. That everyone remembered the roll call and offered it as a way to describe the man, speaks to how much they admired and valued Stene's personal style. That Stene could give that performance speaks to what he admired and valued so much—his students, his connections to them, and the life they had chosen.

Stene began building those personal and professional connections when he arrived at KU in 1934 in the midst of the Depression. KU and Kansas had just endured a 50-percent budget reduction. The university was small then— about 3,000 students. The Department of Political Science had a faculty of four. Francis Heller, professor emeritus of law and political science, said Stene taught the routine courses— American Politics, State Government, and Public Administration. There was little intellectual give-and-take among the small faculty, each with their separate specialties. Dr. Fred Guild, the one member who shared some of Stene's interest in local government, worked full time in Topeka as a legislative researcher. Stene, Heller says, published little of note during his early years and hadn't yet developed a strong reputation among the students. It wasn't until after the war that the department could even boast many graduate students.

In the 1930s and 40s, however, Stene had managed to offer short courses to city managers desperate for any information that would help them manage their communities in those lean and trying times. When World War II ended in 1945, Chancellor Deane W. Malott brought Dr. Ethan Allen to KU from Washington, D.C. to direct the reactivated and revitalized Bureau of Government Research. A year later Allen followed Dr. Walter Sandelius as chairman of the Department of Political Science. Stene found in Allen a professional partner. The Bureau, which ran as an independent division of the university, increased Stene's and Allen's opportunities to reach out to local government, and city managers in Missouri and Kansas were telling the two professors they needed help and information fast.

City after city was switching to a manager/council form of government, and the need for experienced managers far outstripped the supply. Post-war changes had intensified even experienced managers' needs for advanced training. These "brick and mortar" men, skilled in sewer repair and street paving, were unschooled in administration and interpersonal relations. "We didn't have computers or human relations training," says Virgil Basgall, who retired as Emporia's city manager in 1982.

After the war, men who'd seen a little more of the world were coming back home and wanting a little more than what they'd left behind. Basgall says those post-war changes forced managers to worry about sanitation pick-ups, city ambulance services, and unions (2). Basgall, who only a few years before had been a journalism major, was city manager of Fort Hays when he, Kansas City's L.P.

Cookingham, and six other city managers urged Allen and Stene to start a management training program at KU. Their appeal made Stene realize the time was ripe for change, and he knew he wanted to be part of and influence those changes. Allen saw the development of specialized city management courses as a way to build the graduate program in political science.

In April 1948, Allen and Stene offered a managers' school, a three-day program of discussions and workshops in city management. The school was open to managers from Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Colorado. The brochure describes it as the "first school for city managers to be offered in this area, and the third in the nation. In planning the program, emphasis has been placed on staff functions and good principles of public management." Lunch was \$1.00, dinner \$1.50. Participants stayed at the Eldridge Hotel and met in the Pine Room of the Kansas Union. Sponsored by the Bureau of Government Research and University Extension, the First Annual City Managers' School discussed staffing and training, council/manager relations, time management, communication skills, and employee morale. The participants also talked about the value of in-service training and about internships and how interns could help KU help city managers tackle their growing need for skilled assistants.

Stene and Allen were laying the foundation for KU's Master's in Public Administration Program, which was starting that fall with a \$50,000 grant from New York's Carnegie Corporation and a handful of students. "That \$50,000 was like \$500,000 today," recalls Mary Allen, widow of Allen who died in 1968. "Ethan usually didn't talk much about work. When he closed the door to his office, he came home. But I remember the day I went to pick him up, and as he came to the car he said, 'Ed's going to apply for a Carnegie grant for 50,000.' He supported Ed, wholeheartedly."

The program's first home was a recycled World War II Quonset hut from the Sunflower Village in Desoto. Plunked behind Strong Hall where the Spencer Research Library now stands, the Quonset housed the Bureau of Government Research at the west end and the Bureau of Business Research at the east. Mary Allen recalls the sign over the door said "Goverment," but people didn't seem to mind the missing "n" or the chilly drafts that forced them to wear overcoats in the winter. "They were just so happy to get the hut," she says. Dr. James Drury, now a retired professor of political science, had a desk there. Allen smiles when she recalls, "Drury said he didn't mind the cold; he just didn't like that the wind kept blowing off his hat."

The five-year grant provided for an innovative apprentice training program in city management. Each year six students would be accepted into the 18-month program. The trainees were expected to have had undergraduate courses in American government, general economics, sociology, accounting, and college algebra. Stene was willing, however, to let students complete a few of these courses after being admitted to the graduate program. "Of course a degree in civil engineering is a

major asset,” Stene wrote, “especially when one sets out to obtain his first managership.”(3)

The first nine months, the trainees tackled the course work that exposed them to the theory and philosophy of city management. Trainees who hadn’t majored in engineering were expected to take municipal engineering administration, and everyone took classes that covered municipal public law, municipal administration, and urban planning. They also took courses in human relations, what Stene described as “an intensive group-dynamics approach to human relations in management. On the whole the course program is designed for the general administrator, not for the technical specialist,” Stene wrote.(3) Almost 50 years later, the program still focuses on preparing generalists. In the second nine months, students tackled reality and put those theories and courses to the test as interns in Kansas and western Missouri cities. During this internship, students wrote their thesis on a project they had undertaken for their city.

When he had authorized the grant in the spring of 1948, Robert M. Lester, secretary of the Carnegie Foundation of New York, wrote: “The undertaking has unusual promise, it seems to us, of significant results. We shall follow the developments with interest.” KU picked up the cost of the students’ campus education, but the Carnegie grant provided the stipends that would support them while they were interns. Allen and Stene had created the program to answer the crying need for trained city managers, but few cities, they thought, would be willing to support a non-resident intern during the program’s experimental years. “My fellowships are inadequate, however, for married students without other resources,” Stene later wrote in 1952, “and so cooperating cities agreed to supplement this stipend, and to pay small stipends to trainees other than fellows.”(4)

By 1952, 15 students had received their degree of Master of Public Administration; six had completed limited portions of the program, including a Seminar for Apprentices; and 15 were enrolled. Of the 21 graduates and former-students, 10 had been or were city managers, and 18 cities had taken one or more interns.(5) Cookingham, Basgall, and a few others welcomed the experiment and Stene’s interns. By the time the grant ran out in 1954, cities had learned the interns were a great bargain and, as Stene had hoped, they willingly picked up the interns’ salaries. In fact, cities were eager for interns, and Stene had no trouble placing his students. “I fully intend to employ two interns this June,” a city manager wrote Stene in 1963. “I already have several other applications, but my experience with your graduates in the past leads me to believe that I should look to your program for both men if possible.” By 1963, Kansas City, Missouri, had employed 15 interns and University City, Missouri, had hired eight. In Kansas, Junction City and Lawrence each had six, and El Dorado, Wichita, Hutchinson, Pittsburg, Newton, Manhattan, Salina, Winfield, Garden City and Russell each had hired at least one.

The program required the trainees to return to KU for weekend seminars about every six weeks. They gave written and oral reports, dissected each others’

experiences, and learned how to think through the challenges that beset them.(4) The seminars were grounded on the belief that one person's problems from yesterday will be another's headache tomorrow. The seminars centered on the case method of study, which Stene discovered in 1947 when Chancellor Malott sent him to Harvard as a special fellow at Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration.

Malott had spent several years at the Harvard Business School, the last years as an assistant dean. Harvard's Business School converted to the case method while Malott was there, and he was so impressed with case studies that he obtained a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to send some KU faculty to Harvard to learn the case method. The case method combined what Stene valued: careful thinking, complex problem solving, attention to human failings and needs, devotion to ethical guidelines and decision making only after all sides have been heard. He was hooked on the method—forever.

The case method, says Dr. John Nalbandian, a member of the present MPA faculty, represented a revolution in teaching. "It reflected a historical evolution in the academic approach to management and administration." In the 30s, people approached management as an administrative science with specific principles that could be discovered and applied. "The manager was seen as a scientist," says Nalbandian. "But the case method rejected this idea and instead emphasized problem solving." In the preface to his 1964 book, Case Problems in City Management, Stene endorsed the case study approach. "...the case method stimulates interest, promotes attitudes of problem-solving rather than memorization, and above all makes theoretical concepts and generalizations more meaningful to students than do the more traditional methods of teaching." (6)

Stene believed experience was the best teacher and that learning was more effective when it was tested by and applied to real-life situations. The case method gave him the means of challenging his students to think through management problems and to defend their ideas in open debate with their peers. "Class discussion," he wrote, "is focused on the case, which is a narrative account of a group of related events centered on a more or less precise problem situation."(7) Stene also believed the case and the lively discussions it encouraged accelerated students' professional learning. The case gave students realistic images of the situations they would work in and of the types of problems, especially the human problems, they would face. The discussions also helped the student see there was no single solution to a problem and that most problems could be resolved in a number of satisfactory ways. Most important, the case method developed the ethical attitudes that Stene was devoted to and that would be so important to students' future responsibilities. "Responsibility," Stene wrote, "means that every person must justify his behavior as a contributor to organized effort; the person who exercises authority over others is under proportionately greater obligation to justify this action."

KU's Frances Heller, emeritus professor of law and political science, describes Stene as an average professor until he went to Harvard. "He came back a changed person," says Heller. "He had found his niche."⁽⁵⁾ Stene, the concrete, practical problem solver, who had been a little too shy and too quiet to be a powerful lecturer, now blossomed in the classroom. At the age of 48, he had finally found a teaching style that highlighted his skills for listening and conversation and that allowed him to focus on what he loved—his students and the skills they'd need to be successful. Leland Nelson, a graduate of the class of '52 and the retired city manager of University Park, Texas, says Stene's approach was frustrating, but beneficial. "Most of us were used to just reading and writing in our courses, but with the case method you looked at situations and learned techniques. You learned that nothing is black or white. It's gray or some other color." Nelson says Stene taught students how to think through situations and how to come to conclusions based on ethics. "You have to have integrity," Nelson says. "When you work for the public you live in a glass house and you must have high ethics."

Ethics. The word comes up frequently when people speak of Stene. "An individual," Stene wrote, "is guided by his own ethical standards." Stene and Allen did everything they could to make sure students began their careers carrying the highest standards possible. "When the Kansas program was being established," says George Schrader, 1955 MPA graduate and former Dallas city manager, "the managers wanted to be sure it was an applied program, that is, a city managers' program, not an academic program. Throughout our undergraduate studies, we read and assimilated information and we were furnished answers, but Stene gave us nothing but questions." "What distinguished the KU managers," according to Schrader, "was a philosophy of service—we were evangelists. Stene was developing advocates for public service. He focused our attention on relative values and gave attention to ethics." "Stene talked about the manager's role in making democracy work through the council," says Schrader, "in helping the city be the best that the citizens wanted it to be." "Stene knew that the manager had to be responsible to all the citizens not just those who were supporters." George Schrader believes that Ed Stene had a monumental impact on the kind and level of government in the United States. Schrader says, "At one time, his students were managers in several of the largest cities. "There will probably never be another individual who will have such an impact."

Dr. Donald Stone, long-time friend and colleague of Stene and Distinguished Professor of Public Service at Carnegie-Mellon and national director of the Coalition to Improve Management in State and Local Government, says, "Ed Stene was one of the century's leaders in the development of professional education for public service practitioners in city management, and he steered KU toward becoming the leading institution to focus on this education." "Ethan Allen and Ed Stene found people who had exceptional academic credentials," says 1956 MPA graduate Bob Kipp, "and they molded them into a group that had a sense of profession." Kipp, former city manager of Kansas City, Missouri, and the current group vice president for Hallmark Cards, Inc., fondly recalls the lively discussions

students had at those weekend seminars.(6) “We shared important values, integrity, ethics, a sense of right and wrong and public service,” Kipp says. “What emerged over time was a common bond that had to do with shared underlying values and a sense of purpose.” Frequently the students met at Allen’s or Stene’s home. Kipp recalls an evening in Allen’s back yard as daylight faded into night. “We talked for a whole evening about political philosophy and what’s important. People went away inspired.”

“Stene was part of the reform movement of good government,” says Dick Chesney, a ’59 graduate and the deputy county administrator for Johnson County, KS. “Good government required good people to make the system work well.” Chesney describes Stene as a good-sized man, slow moving and serious with an even temper. “He was bookish, but warm and easy for students to talk to. He was open in his teaching and tolerant of student frailty.” In comparison, Allen was more dynamic. Ethan, says Chesney, took care of the internal KU policy and let Ed do his thing getting the program established. Without Ethan Allen, Chesney says, the program would not have developed the way it did. As the director of the Bureau of Government Research, Allen got the initial paperwork on the grant and the ongoing reports and budget through the university’s hierarchy. He taught some of the MPA courses, helped nurture the students, and kept the program running smoothly when Stene frequently traveled abroad as a government consultant or researcher. Some think Allen had more credibility with the administration. “Edwin Stene and Ethan Allen worked hand and glove,” says Drury. Stene focused on his teaching and the day-to-day responsibility of the program, and Allen networked with Strong Hall, the public, and other departments. By duties and temperament, they covered it.

“Allen was the task master,” recalls Kipp. “He was outspoken, direct, demanding, and critical. If he doubted your motivation, if he thought you were in this for personal glory, the money, the politics, he’d tell you were in the wrong place. He was that direct.” Stene, Kipp says, was non-directive, soft spoken, and easy going, with a tolerance for a wider set of opinions. “He had the attitude that things will take care of themselves in time. He believed there was a place for everyone in this world and that each person will find theirs.” Stene took the patient, but persistent approach with students, Kipp says, because he believed that eventually each student would come to the right point of view. “Both men, however, had the same objectives—good city management.”

KU’s program was among the first in the country to offer a master’s with the concentration in city management. The University of Pennsylvania offered a master’s, but without the close campus/student contact. The University of Southern California offered more advanced work, but to people already working in the public sector. Other programs would follow on their heels. None, however, offered the combination of ingredients students got at KU: the intensive case study method emphasizing local government; the hands-on experience in the field; and the bonds students developed with their classmates, with the students coming behind them, and with the alumni. Stene had hoped the visits back to campus during the

internship would forge deep connections between students and the program. “My return of the interns arouses the enthusiasm of the on-campus trainees,” he wrote. “...one can observe in the first-year students a new group spirit and a heightened interest in the entire program.” (10)

“There was great camaraderie in those early classes,” says Faye Watson, widow of Buford Watson, a ’58 MPA graduate and Lawrence city manager from 1970 until his death in October 1989. “Some of Buford’s best friends came from his class. We socialized and studied with those people.” It is the student/alumni network, officially known as KUCIMAT — Kansas University City Managers and Trainees— that still stands as one of the program’s strengths and that has helped Stene and KU leave their mark on the profession. “KUCIMAT happened gradually,” says Kipp. “My name wasn’t even there in the early years.” But as more and more graduates spread around the nation, the KU network grew, the program gained more national recognition, and the graduates started to organize and help each other. “We developed an influence that was strong enough to be resented,” Kipp says and chuckles. This strong professional network opened the doors to internships and eventually to jobs, a function it continues to serve. In the days before a strong KUCIMAT network, however, in the days before executive searches and hiring committees, Stene was the Dolly Levi of city management. He prided himself on being able to find the just-right match between one of his graduates and the towns and managers he’d come to know so well.

“They all called Stene for references,” Drury says. Elin Stene says she heard many a one-sided conversation. “He was the one they’d call when anyone needed a manager. Edwin would ask, “What type of person are you looking for? Are you looking for someone who can quiet the waters? Do you want someone with ideas who can stir things up? Do you want someone just like so-and-so?” Edwin would listen and then tell the caller he’d get back to him. Then he’d dig in his files, call some students, and see what matches he could suggest. “He always gave them three names. He’d describe the prospects’ personalities and their strengths. Then he’d leave it for the caller to choose.” She says the students appreciated his efforts. “They knew they wouldn’t have had that fine job without him.”

Stene helped George Pyle land his first city manager job in McCook, Nebraska. Pyle, who was the city manager for Hutchinson for 22 years before he retired in 1989, didn’t graduate from KU’s MPA program. He describes himself instead as an 18-month graduate of “Cookingham College.” Pyle was a “Butcher Boy,” or budget slasher for Kansas City’s respected city manager. Pyle got to know Stene when he invited Pyle to participate in a Seminar for Apprentices. “Stene knew what there was to know about city management, and he helped in the success of his students.” He also helped in the success of his “unofficial” students. In 1957 Butcher Boy Pyle was playing a lunchtime game of bridge in city hall. “One of the guys who had been invited to McCook for an interview said he wasn’t going to go up there after all. It was Friday noon, and I called Stene and told him Vic wasn’t going and to put in a good word for me.” Within the hour, Pyle, who didn’t have a master’s in public

administration or any city management experience, got a call from McCook's mayor. He had an appointment to interview in McCook the next day. "I was hired on the spot on Stene's good word." (8)

His good word, an abiding interest in his students, professional ties to city managers, and a passion for city management enabled Stene to run the MPA program almost single handedly. Drury says Stene ran the program from his coat pocket, but he worked way too hard. "You wouldn't believe what he got accomplished," says Drury. "I'd find him asleep at his desk, he tried to do too much." A part of each jam-packed week was devoted to keeping up a voluminous correspondence with his graduates. In those pre-computer days, the letters in the student files makes an impressive stack several inches thick. Those letters—the ones he received and sent—reflect the issues and approaches he discussed in class and the leads on jobs he always seem to have. His graduates relayed news about small, practical accomplishments—the new police radio, a zoning review, the curb-and-gutter project, the asphalt kettle that would be used to patch the winter-ravaged streets, the just-completed housing and land-use inventory.

There was confirmation that those human relations lessons were paying off. A graduate told Stene he'd asked critics of the city's police force to help organize and teach in a Police School. "The opposition is slowly melting," the young manager wrote. There was news of stress and possible failure: "One of the local chronic grippers told me that she was going to run me out," a young graduate wrote from his first city manager desk. Graduates who didn't write letters called. Don Stone, a graduate of the '70 MPA class, remembers many times when his meetings with Stene were interrupted by phone calls. "Those calls came in from troubled past students because they knew he'd be there for them as a resource. He'd talk them through whatever problem they were having." Stene, he says, was their rock, anchor and rudder.

Stene's ongoing, detailed interest in his students and their careers is what gives Drury the confidence to dismiss a 1978 story in Kansas Alumni News(11) that said Stene built the MP A program out of his own thwarted efforts to be a city manager in the '40s. "Stene was in it because he wanted to teach. He was approachable and took time to listen. He was their father image and they knew he could do something for them." Drury admits, however, that in the mid-1950s Stene did get an offer to be the executive secretary to the American Association of University Professors. In 1949, he was elected to the AAUP's national council and served a three-year term. "Ed was deeply involved with AAUP, but I don't know how serious he was about the offer." He wasn't serious enough to leave his program. He'd already gained a well-deserved reputation in city management circles for hard work and attention to personal details.

High energy and a warm, engaging style also had earned him top marks in his social life as well.(9) The Stenes were particularly successful at bridging the Town-and-Gown divisions that sometimes develop in university towns. No one, people say,

threw a better party or enjoyed a get-together more than the Stenes. If people reminisced about the ICMA roll-call-of-names first, they mentioned the parties at 1644 University Drive. The Stene home opened its doors to students, faculty, and friends in and out of city management. Jesse Anderson Stene, who died of cancer in 1961, and later Elin, were each enthusiastic and warm hostesses. Mary Allen describes Jesse as a quiet homemaker. Elin, she says, was a performer and an educator. By all reports, Elin and Edwin's home vibrated with good talk—everything from light chatter to philosophical debate and inspirational conversation.

It also vibrated with music, a source of joy and communication for the Stenes. Elin had been on KU's faculty since 1947 and was a full professor of music education when she married Edwin in 1963. During her parties she often could be found at one of the two grand pianos in the living room or at the organ the couple had bought for each other. Edwin would pull out his saxophone, and guests were given recorders because they were easy to play. If you couldn't play, you surely could sing, was Elin's philosophy. You had to participate somehow because the Stenes wouldn't let anyone just stand and listen. "Elin would have us singing," remembers Watson. "The highlight of those get-togethers was the music. Elin would sing and before you knew it, you were singing."

Dr. Ray Davis, chairman of the Department of Health Administration and former MPA director, also remembers the Stenes' parties with fondness. "In the old style, they invited people over and expected them to participate," Davis says. "What can you play? was the question. "They were participating people and had a participating attitude toward others." Davis, along with his wife and mother, attended a Stene New Year's Eve party in the early '70s. "Ed was playing the West Indies steel drum he'd just bought, and Elin was passing out the recorders. My mom was really impressed; she had a marvelous time. We all did. "Davis pauses and then smiles. "It was the best New Year's Eve ever."

For the Stenes, music was a way for people to come together, to get in touch. Elin remembers after Edwin proposed, his sister and brother-in-law came to Lawrence. "They wanted to check me out," she says. As a way to get better acquainted, Elin, Edwin and his brother-in-law played their harmonicas. Elin still has a picture of the trio. "We played the melodies by ear, following each other as best we could." Elin may have enhanced her husband's love of performance, but his ties to music go back to his youth. The museum in Edwin's hometown of Ashby, Minnesota, has an open book in a glass case. "The book was from the church," Elin says, "and as I looked at it, I saw written on one page, "Edwin Stene, organist, \$25." I asked him how long he had to play to earn \$25, and he said, "all summer."

A first-generation American, Edwin was born in western Minnesota on December 21, 1900. He spoke only Norwegian until he went to school. One of nine children, he worked in his father's hardware store. (10) He got his bachelor's degree in 1923 from the University of Minnesota and left to teach high school in South Dakota. By the time he was 26, he was superintendent of the Wentworth Public Schools. About

100 men competed for the job, says his son, Edwin A., but Stene got it and he hadn't even applied. On June 11, 1927, he married Jesse, a home economics teacher, whom he met when both were teaching at a consolidated high school in eastern South Dakota. "I don't know what Dad taught," says Edwin A. "All the early newspaper clippings only mention how well his school bands did and how much the parents appreciated his music instruction."

When the couple got ready to leave South Dakota so Stene could go back to Minnesota for his advanced degrees, he hopped into his 1927 Pontiac coup. He drove to some open fields and shot pheasant from the car, his foot on the front fender for balance. The birds would be the couple's meat supply. "You could shoot all the pheasant you wanted back then," Edwin A. says. Jesse canned every bird. Years later she would say she never found pheasant very special—she'd had her fill.

When he graduated with his Ph.D. in 1931, they moved to the University of Cincinnati, where Stene had gotten an instructor's job in political science. In 1934, the Stenes and their 3-year-old son moved to Lawrence. Edwin A. mostly recalls his parents' love of travel and the 1936 Ford that became their summer home. Edwin bought the car for \$670, minus a \$125 trade-in. That first summer they headed for South Dakota to pick up Jesse's mother and then traveled through the Black Hills and Yellowstone on their way to Washington. "We even stopped in Banff in Canada; and in 1936 not many people went to Banff." World War II and rubber rations kept the Stenes at home, but when the war was over, Stene bought tires and ground 4,700 miles into the treads rolling to the east coast and Canada.

Through the years he became a world traveler vacationing in Mexico, China, Australia and New Zealand. Visiting professorships and consulting trips expanded his travels: the University of the Philippines from 1954-55 for the University of Michigan, and again from 1957-58 for the Rockefeller Foundation; Switzerland in 1959 to speak at the United Nations; Indonesia in 1962 as a research consultant for the Indonesian Institute of Administration; Scandinavia in 1963 while on leave to study local government; the University of Hawaii in 1964 with the Ford Foundation; and Costa Rica in 1968 as a research advisor. He traveled for work and for vacations, but always for the joy of it. "He was interested in seeing new places, interested in the politics, and especially interested in the people," his son says. Drury says that in the six months before Jesse died, the couple went non-stop. "It seemed like they were trying to absorb as much of life's remaining moments as they could."

Stene had been promoted to full professor in 1949. Twenty years later he became a Distinguished Professor of Political Science, and officially retired two years later. His students gave him a grand sendoff at the 1970 ICMA annual meeting in San Diego and presented him with a bound volume of appreciative letters and a check for \$750 to buy a small fishing boat. He named the craft KUCIMAT I and sailed it in area lakes before permanently docking it at the couple's retirement home in Bella Vista, Arkansas.(11)

Stene may have officially retired in 1971, but this leave-taking quickly melted into little more than part-time retirement sandwiched between visiting professorships at Midwest universities: the University of Missouri—Kansas City, Purdue, the University of Illinois, and Wichita State University. His ability to adapt and to get along with people, coupled with his extensive experience, made him a popular visiting professor. In 1973 he was called back to KU to step in for a year as acting director of the program after the sudden heart attack of the program's new director Bill Cape in the spring of 1973. He left KU for good in 1974 when Bob Denhardt was hired to direct the program.

During his career he published 16 books and monographs, 45 professional articles, 32 book reviews, and special notes and forwards. He had served as editor of the *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* and on the editorial boards of *Southwestern Social Science Review*, *Midwest Journal of Public Administration*, *India's Administrative Change*, the *University of Georgia's Local Government Review*, and *Current Municipal Problems*. He had won numerous awards: honorary membership in the ICMA in 1959 and honorary membership in the Kansas Association of City Managers in 1960. He received the Distinguished Service Award in 1967 for "extraordinary contributions in advancing the art and science of public administration" from the Central States Conference on Public Administration. In 1976 he was the first recipient of the ICMA's Stephen B. Sweeney Award given to "an individual or institution in the academic world making the most significant contribution to the formal education of men and women in local government public management careers." In May 1979 the University of Kansas announced the creation of the Edwin O. Stene Distinguished Professorship in Political Science, (changed to Public Administration in 1983), with the support of KUCIMATS. Dr. Earl Nehring, then chairman of the Political Science Department, told the press: "Professor Stene developed an innovative approach to the education of professional administrators that set the pace for all subsequent programs, and his work has had a profound influence on local government administration throughout the United States."

The end of Stene's successful professional life started the program's decade-long struggle to survive his absence intact. The program had to learn how to operate without him. It had to build faculty support, locate resources, find a way to let the new director make his own contribution, and keep the KUCIMATS support and trust. The program traveled in several new directions. It expanded to include a general management and a health care option and offered joint degrees with the schools of Law and Architecture. "Nationally, public administration programs were growing during this time because government was growing," says Nalbandian, who was the program's last director from 1983 to 1984. New student enrollment tripled from 12 to 36. The program offered classes at the Capitol Complex Center in Topeka and the Regents Center in Overland Park and took on 50 part-time students. "We were trying to do too much," Nalbandian says. The alums saw an erosion of purpose. Nalbandian says the department refers to the alums from this transitional

time as the “lost generation of students.”(12) The alumni network broke down because the alums were out of touch with each other and with the new students.

Nalbandian says KU’s public administration program shared a common history with several other programs in the country. “They were all started by a special individual who built the program through his own fortitude and persistence. These men worked hard from the ’40s to the ’60s, and the test for all these programs was whether they could succeed that leadership.” Some didn’t survive the transition. “We floundered,” says Nalbandian, who credits the program’s resurgence to Ray Davis, the program’s director from 1977 to 1982. “Ray was put in to keep us in line, but he quickly became one of us,” he says. An outsider, who hadn’t taught in the MPA program before coming on as director, Davis faced a formidable task. “The program had been established by the force of one,” says Davis. “and the personal and professional relationships Stene had developed had atrophied. “The alums were confused. They didn’t know what was happening. The new director wasn’t Ed Stene, and we had to reassure them that the ship had a rudder and an anchor. We went through a real difficult time.” Nalbandian and Davis agree it took the program 10 years to get back on track, redefine what it was and where it was going.

Stene—only when asked— helped Davis struggle toward that redefinition. “Ed always maintained an interest in the program,” says Davis. “He was perceptive to the changes, the problems, and he was bright enough to know things weren’t going to continue in the same way.” Davis found Stene amazingly supportive and helpful. “I spent considerable time with him, and he always gave me good advice.” Part of that advice centered on program quality. Stene encouraged Davis not to forget the quality ingredients—the teaching, the idea of educating students to be versatile, and the program’s focus on city management. By 1984, the Public Administration Program split off from the Department of Political Science to become its own department with Nalbandian as its first chair. Davis had already taken the health component with him when he left in 1982 to become chairman of Health Administration, so in 1984 the program once again focused on the training of city managers. “That was the year we initiated a graduation banquet, we had the alums interview new students, we worked at rebuilding the connections between alums and students,” Nalbandian says. Stene went into permanent retirement shortly before the program settled into its new, but steady course. In the early ’80s, the Stenes sold their Lawrence home and settled in Bella Vista for good. They had a house on a level lot overlooking a lake with a great view of the sunsets. KUCIMAT I retired and KUCIMAT II trolled the waters in its place.

It didn’t take Stene long after settling into Bella Vista to bring his special skills to bear on the town of 20,000. This time the skills had nothing to do with city management, for it was Stene with his passion for music who stepped forward to play his sax. He organized the Saxofours and played gigs in the area. A flute and a piccolo, then a violin, a drum and a banjo joined the group. “They had this little ensemble,” Elin says, “and it’s still going. Only the men are younger and the ensemble grew into a big band that moved into a hall and now plays for money.(13)

“Edwin started that. The Bella Vista Big Band—I want people to know he started that.” Some people say when they last saw Ed Stene he and Elin were gliding across the dance floor at an ICMA meeting. “They usually were among the last to say goodnight.” “Ed loved to dance,” remembers Faye Watson, “especially the polka. I couldn’t polka, but he insisted, and he tromped on my feet the whole time.” She laughs and pauses. “He was affectionate. When he talked he held your hand and looked right at you.” The last time Watson saw him, Stene was in a wheelchair, but his flare for dressing showed in the knickers and silk hose he wore. “He used to wear a velveteen sport coat and tams, I remember lots of tams,” she says as she tilts her head and places an imaginary tam just above her right ear. Elin says she’d like most for people to remember that Edwin always believed in city management as a source for communities to be stronger and better. “He believed in local government and the achievements that come when people, the factions and the factors, work together to settle common problems.”

Stene will be 92 in December, 1992. Since August 1990 he has lived at the Bella Vista Care Home; Elin remains at the couple’s home. Diabetes has blurred his vision. Parkinson’s has taken most of his voice and weakened his body, but Elin says he’s not fighting his condition. “Diabetes and Parkinson’s— they’re just gradually eating away at him. He’s accepted that.” His hearing is “ good, so he can still listen to music, and Elin says he understands and follows most conversation. Once each night, she says, at the end of their visit, he speaks. “He can still say, ‘I love you.’”

The public administration program Stene built during three decades remains dominant within the city management profession and within universities offering public administration programs. Since 1988, Dr. Barbara S. Romzek has chaired the Public Administration department which houses the Edwin O. Stene Graduate Program and its eight faculty. Each year about 12 full-time students graduate from the internship option track and 15 part-time students complete their studies. In any given year the program averages 30 full-time students and another 75 part-time students who combine public sector careers with course work to improve their public sector credentials. More than 500 program graduates have managed in local governments nationwide and in Topeka for the state government. In Kansas, where 52 of the state’s 627 cities have a form of council-manager government, almost half of those cities are managed by a KUCIMAT. Four KUCIMATs have served as presidents of the 7,000-member International City Management Association, and even more have served on the ICMA’s board of directors. By 1988, ICMA had conferred more than 20 percent of its annual professional awards to KU’s alumni, who comprise only 3 percent of its membership. Kansas Alumni once quoted a colleague as saying Stene “is thought of as something of god around here.” (12)

Almost 20 years after his retirement, some might wonder if the “god” would reveal clay feet in these more trying times for cities. Special interest groups, affirmative action wrangles, the exhaustive process of studies and committees, hiring

consultants—would these daunt the man who believed all problems could be solved through careful examination of the issues? (14) Would the man who lovingly referred to “his boys” have found it in his professional heart to welcome women into the fold? “Ed was a product of his times, but he wasn’t fixed in his time,” says Nalbandian. “He would have been progressive enough to include women. He’d have stayed in touch with the new things.” In 1968, in his article “Goals for Cities,” Stene urged cities to set goals only after seeking out the voices of the city’s less heard members: “...residents of the slum neighborhoods, members of racial and ethnic minorities, and the younger people.” (13)

Romzek says the department, through its efforts to attract minorities and women, has succeeded in extending Stene’s commitment by opening local government careers to others. Today approximately 50 percent of the MPA students—full and part-time—are women and 8 percent are minorities. Among the city management internship track, 23 percent of the students are minorities. As communities become more diverse, the manager’s job becomes more complex, more difficult. Cities’ management teams, Romzek says, need the leadership of women and minorities to deal with this growing diversity. “We’re not changing the program’s values or emphasis,” she says, “we’re cultivating the commitment to public service into a broader group.” Stene’s passion for public service remains strong in the program that bears his name. (15)

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