How have you seen the economic development profession evolve over the course of your career?

There wasn’t a profession when I started. Economic development was a brand new term in the 1960s. When many Northern cities experienced the civil unrest of those times, industries began to move out. Mayors weren’t sure what to do about that, so they began by putting someone in charge of keeping businesses in the city. That person was usually someone [who] already worked for the government. In some cases, it was a city planner [or] a public works engineer. For example, Ed DeLuca, the man who founded CUED, was an engineer by trade. Ken Fry, CUED’s first Executive Director when it moved to Washington from Philadelphia, was a newspaperman with the Milwaukee Journal. There weren’t any real professional economic development people because there was no organization, history or academic discipline then dealing with the problems of the city. There wasn’t any clear academic path that you could follow to become trained in economic development strategies. I guess the closest [academic discipline] would have been an MS in urban planning [or] urban affairs.

CUED was founded in the late-1960s by four or five people from larger cities—mostly on the East Coast—like New York, Milwaukee, Chicago and Philadelphia—that were having serious problems in keeping their businesses from fleeing to outlying suburbs. These men sort of made it up as they went along, trying ways to make things work, keeping those that did and jettisoning the rest. Their need to organize themselves into an organization was strictly about learning from your peers and avoiding their mistakes. The actual creation of the profession occurred on the day they jointly started working on similar problems in their cities. They were creating the discipline of urban economic development; they just didn’t know it at the time.

By the early-1970s, there were cities attempting to do fairly creative things to keep their businesses and economic development groups began to appear in city development departments. Many cities had a development department which oversaw everything from zoning and planning to redevelopment and public housing. These development departments included most of the physical activities affecting land use and development; and economic development became a part of that. In Milwaukee, economic development was initially within the mayor’s office. It was like the mayor’s personal SWAT team dealing, with complex urban development issues that still remain today. The Office of Economic Development reported directly to the mayor. With the creation of the Department of City Development, it was then placed in that Department of City Development so that the ED people could be next to the planners, building inspectors and those running housing and redevelopment Authorities. That model was then picked up by Cleveland and a number of other cities in the 1970s with many cities still using the same organizational approach.

Only in the early1980s was there any movement toward trying to create a professional training program for those interested in public sector economic development. Interestingly enough, this
was done initially with Northwestern University here in Evanston, IL. Northwestern’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management was one of the best known business schools in the country at that time, and it had a focus on nonprofit management [like] hospitals, other major non-profit institutions and government. It was then that CUED and the Kellogg School of Management formed a joint venture to create a Masters of Business Administration in Economic Development. That program began to turn out people who actually had some of the requirements of that discipline. [This was] mainly because their advisory board was composed of many of the founders of CUED. Some upstarts, like me, came in a little later.

They Kellogg School and other universities began curriculums that branched into real estate finance, the implications of public development on communities, affordable housing, the impacts of poverty on local and regional economies, and sound management and marketing expertise. [These curriculums were aimed at turning out practical business-oriented graduates with the skills necessary to develop and manage the economic development process. CUED board members were pressed to hire students for three month summer internships in city economic development offices throughout the country. I had two such interns; one is now running a major economic development office on the West Coast, the other is part of a seed and venture capital fund aimed at growing new economies in Midwest manufacturing states.

In the beginning of the discipline, if you want to call it that, it was pretty much “play-as-you-go.” It depended on where the money was. Even today, I think the discipline still tends to go that way. If the money comes from EDA infrastructure grants, [then] that’s where professionals go to get the [funding] they need for infrastructure projects. Initially, Federal dollars were was mostly about infrastructure. The early federal attempts at relieving poverty began with an agency created to work with the problems of Appalachia. This agency ultimately morphed into the Economic Development Administration which continued to focus primarily on rural poverty and joblessness. One of CUED’s most important victories was its successful attempt to open up EDA so its funds could also be used to attach urban economic issues. This was a game-changer for many communities that did not have the funds to build out industrial parks or improve road systems so as to attract new business investment.

In the 1970s, many cities needed money for planning. EDA came up with a special program that allowed cities to hire people for economic development planning [for] capacity-building [purposes]. That really helped, because most economic development people were hands-on. They were meeting with companies and trying to get city councils to provide incentives. They didn’t have a plan. Planning was reactive to the chaos in the cities. When large employers left, mayors went into a tizzy, and suddenly there had to be a new program built to [prevent that] from happening again.

Getting people who could do applied research, write grants and develop economic development strategies was a big plus for local economic development organizations. It made a huge difference over that decade, because a number of cities began to produce strategic economic development plans. Some, like the Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP), were required by the EDA. You had to make a case that an area or your city needed the EDA’s help, and you had to do it by digging up all kinds of demographic information and business information to show that this area of your community was in dire need of economic support. That was primarily
because EDA had morphed out of the Appalachian Development Commission, which really dealt primarily with poverty in the Appalachian region. It was definitely a rural program.

As the economic development profession grew in the early-1970s, [it] began to hammer at EDA to allow their programs to be used inside urban areas. That’s one of the reasons why EDA created the Overall Economic Development Plan requirement. It allowed EDA to determine which areas of cities were eligible for their aid. They used the requirements which they had used in the Appalachian region, which were primarily about poverty and unemployment. [You could receive funding] if you could make a case that your center-city had an economic situation similar to rural Appalachia. We could [make that case] because businesses—at least manufacturing business—had pretty much [abandoned] center-cities by that time. [They] left behind some scattered retail, but there were very few jobs. So the profession had to learn how to plan; as a result of that, EDA responded with “302 Planning Grants.” In the early-1970s, my operation in Milwaukee took advantage of that funding and we created ten new positions in our office with some help from a national “job stimulus” federal jobs program.

We were able to get ten Vietnam veterans and/or unemployed MBA’s working at the economic development division. We only had five people to start with, so we tripled our size. We took advantage of federal dollars to provide a planning capacity that we didn’t have before. Again, we had hands-on people who were actively working with businesses, but [they] were not really creating strategic plans or new programs. We really didn’t have any plans beyond business retention at that point.

So we did a lot of planning in the 1970s, and we had great growth in the economic development field with Northwestern [University] beginning to turn out its MBAs. Other places, like the Graduate School of Design at Harvard for example, were turning out some pretty qualified people as well. When I was in New Haven, I hired a graduate from Harvard and in less than a year he was pulled out of my office and handed the entire housing development program of the City of New Haven. There were more professionals coming out of universities…[particularly] universities out West. A number of them, especially in California, began to turn out [graduates] with economic development degrees. [Students earned] undergraduate [degrees] in business and then [enrolled in] a Masters program with real estate [courses] and some of the other pieces that you needed to know. Over that period of time CUED had grown from [about] a dozen cities that were actively working in economic development to [about] 600 cities. That’s really why CUED grew…because it was the only entity out there in those days that knew anything about urban economic development. AEDC was a competitive membership option, but it did not have the background and experience to help central cities struggling with a declining manufacturing sector and a growing unemployment problem.

AEDC had been [around since] the 1930s. They were primarily looking to draw industry from the North [while] possibly developing [industry] where they could. Southern states were still impoverished [and] still based mostly on an agricultural economy. AEDC was trying to bring industry down into those Southern states. That profession was very different from ours. In the cities we were trying to keep what we had; AEDC was looking to attract industry down to their areas. They’re the ones who helped develop the Industrial Revenue Bonding Program, for example. [They also developed] state-funded training programs that could be tailored specifically
to an industry’s requirements. We had really two very different economic development realities going on at that same time, and we had two organizations that reflected that duality.

Down the road, as more Southern states started to lose industry to Mexico and China, some of those folks had to start to learn what we urban folks were doing in trying to hold our industry [in the] North. So, the two professions began to merge closer and closer as their problems became more and more similar. And so AEDC and CUED merged in 2001. The difference between the Southern approach and the Northern approach has pretty much been washed away. We’re really all in the same business now, though there was very little involvement with each other in the early days. In the 1970s and 1980s the AEDC folks were trying to pull companies out of our cities while we were trying to hold them in. As far as CUED was concerned, AEDC people were the transgressors…they were the enemy.

There was very little chance we were ever going to get together on anything until the economy began to change. The AEDC folks began to spend more time hanging on to what they had. They began to talk to some of us, and we began to see we were in the same business. From the urban side, the profession had grown as a result of what was euphemistically called the “civil disturbances” of the 1960s. Whereas, the AEDC side, which began much earlier, grew out of the South’s need for a manufacturing economy. Some people give credit to the invention of air conditioning in the 1940s for finally giving the South a competitive advantage.

In any case, they were two different professions that came out of two different needs. Therefore, the people up North were working primarily in African-American neighborhoods and poverty-stricken neighborhoods. They had to be skilled more in the human relations side than our brothers in the South who were really talking about putting factories on large chunks of vacant land along railroads. So they didn’t have those kinds of problems then, [but] I think they have them now.

The professions grew side by side, but they grew differently. The need for economic development became much more of a catchphrase. Today, of course, it’s used by anybody and everybody…especially elected officials [who use it] to mean whatever they want it to mean. True economic development, as CUED found out, was not necessarily real estate. It was a lot more about employment, but the employment [in regards] to helping people create wealth. Those individuals, in turn, had the money to buy houses, to buy cars, and to go to restaurants. From those things, cities began to slowly come back. Much of the downtown revitalization of our central cities—though there is still a hemorrhaging population on the industrial side—[was the result of] new folks moving into downtown high-rise condos here in Evanston, in Chicago, or in Milwaukee. [They were] primarily people who went to the suburbs when things were bad. They had their kids who went to school, and then they got bored and had to come back. They [returned] to the city. The city recognized that and began to build residential districts for them within downtowns where the symphonies, operas, theaters and restaurants were. So the cities that were declared dead in the 1970s did come back, and they are coming back. Most urban economic development people are working very hard in order to encourage that movement back into the cities by the middleclass and the upper-middleclass.
However, we still haven’t solved the problems of employment, primarily in African-American neighborhoods and Hispanic neighborhoods. We still have unemployment rates twice as high for blacks as for whites. I don’t know if that’s true for Southern cities, but it’s pretty true in the Northern cities. We have a larger middleclass returning to the downtown, and we have bustling downtown neighborhoods now, but they have created their own set of problems. Economic development people who want to acquire properties, demolish buildings, and encourage new development downtown are suddenly surrounded by angry neighbors who don’t like all the noise [and] don’t want taller buildings. We brought the problems of redevelopment back into the downtowns after we figured out a way to handle it in the early days. Then, we were primarily moving out renters and poorer families who didn’t have much political pull, so cities were able to operate fairly efficiently through the acquisition, demolition, and redevelopment [process]. But, once we began to fill the downtowns with upper-class and middleclass people—many of them architects and planners who knew how this stuff worked— it became much more complicated to do stuff in cities.

The profession today is much broader. For example, I work primarily now in technology-based economic development with incubators, seed capital, research parks, technology transfers, [and] university-city relationships. When I started in Milwaukee, I was working on industrial retention. Then, when SBA became more aggressive I had to learn how to do minority business development. Then I had to learn how to revitalize commercial districts, because our commercial areas were crumbling and they were the main entry gates into the city. Then we had to learn how to do revenue bonding. Then HUD got in there and started throwing things like Model Cities and UDAGs at us, which required us to become financing experts. Today, suddenly everybody is talking about the new economy, the knowledge economy, knowledge-based businesses, and economic gardening. These are the things that folks like me are working on. But again, it is the next new thing and IEDC needs to continue to do a form of technology transfer, studying the newest and most successful ways to build knowledge communities and transferring that information to its members.

I have a wife in the economic development business who is a consultant in community development, but that [area] has not changed as much. She is still out there with the development corporations trying to bring in grocery stores [and] trying to get neighborhoods revitalized. Even though she and I are in the same business, we are at very different points on the spectrum. [My work] is usually top-down. For example, it is usually a university-city partnership where the city’s power and the university’s power are combined and they begin to redevelop an area of the city for an urban research park. The political situation is pretty much top-down with all of the power in the hands of major private sector entities and the city. Whereas, if you’re in community development, you’re working at this by getting the neighborhood organized, creating a community development corporation, gaining some government authorization to provide special financing, or getting grants through Community Development Block Grants. That is coming from the ground-up. The mayor’s office has little to do with that. Major economic development organizations don’t involve themselves in that kind of thing. But it is just as important in our cities that neighborhoods gain power over their own situation. They need people, like Diane Lupke and others, to help them revitalize their communities. If they wait for the city to do it, it’s going to take a long time. The city has much bigger issues on the table, like working with their hospitals and universities to try and capture as much of the new economy as they can. So, she
and I have some interesting discussions about whether top-down and bottom-up are equally effective in revitalizing our communities.

My background was in journalism, I had a Bachelors degree in Radio and Television Journalism. After I joined the economic development office in Milwaukee, I went on and got a Masters degree in Urban Affairs through the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. Diane knew what she wanted to do and got her degree in Business Planning and City Development. By the time she came along, there were programs out there for people in the business. The rest of us learned by doing. When I went for my Masters I learned a lot more about cities and their history, planning, statistics, and a lot of other stuff that I really should’ve known when I started. Of course, I knew none of that. Luckily, I hired a lot of people smarter than me and they made me look good <laughs>.

**What exactly was your role in CUED? How did your involvement with CUED affect your own career in economic development?**

I think I joined CUED in 1971. I worked for Ken Fry. He was one of the founders of CUED, and he was hired by CUED to be their first Washington-based executive director. CUED started in 1967 and was housed in Philadelphia. Joe Oberman was the first executive director. He did not want to go to Washington, but the CUED folks realized that they needed much closer access to the “federal spigot” if they were ever going to do anything of substance for the cities. So, they hired Ken Fry who was then the Commissioner of City Development for the City of Milwaukee. Fry was formerly the Director of Economic Development under whom I was hired and worked for in the beginning. When he became Deputy Commissioner of Development I was booted upstairs to be the economic development director at the tender age of 31. When he left to take the executive director position at CUED, he had to leave the board. Since I was the next ranking economic development person in Milwaukee, I was put on the board when I was very young. I was the youngest guy there on the board, so I began with a huge advantage. I was sitting next to people like Tom Kelly, Walt D’Alessio and Ken Patton. [Ken Patton was] working out of New York for [Mayor] John Lindsay. I had the advantage of being with these “old dogs” who were the ones that the mayors originally picked to start trying to solve the problems of the cities. By doing that, it gave me a lot more status in my own community.

In 1980, I was elected CUED President. I followed Walt D’Alessio, who was the first non-founder to be the President of CUED. I was a very young president, and that’s the year that Reagan was elected. The first thing he did was cut as much of EDA as he could. He chopped almost all of it. At that time we were an organization of about 500 or 600 members. We had gotten a lot of [our] membership because the EDA provided us funds that allowed us to buy more memberships through their planning grants. But the Reagan Administration cut the EDA’s urban budget especially. [This was for] practical [reasons], because the Republicans didn’t believe in federal money being used for local purposes. But [it was] also for political reasons, because the cities didn’t vote for Reagan.

We had a huge issue on the board. At that time we had union people on the board, we had former EDA officials on the board, [and] we had people who represented the railroads and regional development. We had a major schism forming between two factions. One faction [believed in]
fighting against Reagan’s cutbacks. The other faction, which is where I and the rest of the officers stood, wanted duck an all out battle and to wait for opportunities to come our way. We didn’t want to start thumping on the Reagan Administration. We wanted to work with them cooperatively. We wanted to teach them why we needed federal help to make things work. We wanted to bide our time until someone who didn’t think like Ronald Reagan [was elected]. Then we would be in good standing with HUD, EDA, and Congress.

By a fairly narrow margin, we managed to prevail with that attitude, approach, [and] policy. I think that it was the right decision and I believe it did a lot for CUED. A number of other nonprofits in Washington who had their funding cut went into the trenches and started firing back. All they did was “poison their own well” over time. The US Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities…they were having a much harder time getting anything done in Washington because of the administration. CUED showed that it was a professional organization, not a political one, [and] that was very important I think. Yes, most of the people working in the big cities were working for Democratic mayors. There’s no doubt about that. But at the same time, they were also working closely with the business community that was mostly Republican. So, we as professionals had to learn how to get along with the political side of what we did. We couldn’t afford to tick off the private sector. Nor could we afford to tick off the public sector for which we worked. We did spend most of our time fighting with people in our own organizations…[those people] in other parts of the city development process. Battles between economic development people and planning people working for the same city are legendary. But, that couple of years that I was Chair, we had to deal with that huge political issue, and I think we handled it well.

After Reagan, we were able to ramp up our organizations once again. We were able to get more federal money—EDA grants—which allowed cities to pay for more members to join CUED. CUED grew again mainly because it had a better working relationship with the Democratic administration. The Clinton Administration obviously worked with us. Bush was not quite as good, but Congress always kept EDA because it was really Congress’ program.

My involvement with CUED was primarily back in the early-1980s. [We were] trying to carefully sail through some troubled waters. This included our own mayors and members who felt very strongly about the Reagan Administration. It was tough to do business in the 1980s because of that. However, there was still some creative stuff, like [the] UDAG [program], around. If you were clever enough, there were still programs around that you could use. We had to learn how to become much more privately leveraged in the cities. That was one of the reasons why tax increment financing became the development tool of choice in the late-1980s and 1990s. It allowed cities to take their own taxes and invest those new taxes back into the ground to create more development opportunities. So, we didn’t need the federal dollars that Reagan had cut.

Since then, I’ve been a “dead president”…that’s what they call us <laughs>. I come to conferences, and it’s still interesting. I see some of my old friends, but of course there’s fewer and fewer since I started in 1971. This is what, forty years later? I don’t know most people in IEDC now, and that’s sort of fun, because they don’t know me either. So, I get a chance to talk to them about stuff, and they get a chance to talk to me, and I’m sort of just a [normal] guy. It’s been fun. I went through the other thing where I knew everybody, but now I don’t know
everybody, and that’s fine. I do special stuff for IEDC when I’m asked. I’ve been on the awards committee for about three or four years now.

Before I was named chair, one thing I did was change the whole pattern of the board [by] instituting six-year term limits. There were no term limits at that time. Also, we began requiring a two-year presidency, because you really only learn the job in the first year. You do something with it in the second year. Those were things that came out of my Planning and Policy Committee. That has set the stage for some of the rules that we work under now. They’ve gone back to the one-year presidency, which I don’t like. I think two years is better. But they do have term limits, which I think is good. I was on the board for sixteen years, [and] that’s too long for anybody to be on a single board. I was really glad to be able to finally escape and [return] to my chair here. The younger folks do it now. I’ve been at this a long time, and I started when I was young. I try to keep up with the younger folks and [continue] learning how to do stuff.

So, has it helped my career? Yes. Did it make it easier for me to “climb the ladder?” Yes. After Milwaukee, I never had to look for a job. I haven’t had to look for a job since 1969 because of my involvement in CUED. People saw me at conferences, they heard me at conferences, they saw me in the infrastructure, they saw me as the chair, [and] they saw me as an expert. Because of that I was afforded opportunities to consult outside of my regular work. That was a whole new thing for me, because without that consulting I probably never would have been able to collect the art that I’ve collected so far. But more importantly, people would call me and say, “We need you to work here. We want you to come and work for our city.” I was recruited from Milwaukee to New Haven, and then from New Haven to Evanston. I’ve been here the last twenty-five years because this is where my family lives. It certainly helped my career without a doubt. I was still very young. When I was CUED President, I think I was thirty-nine. It allows you to promote yourself by working hard and doing good things, but you are much more in the eye of your peers as well as those seeking people to work in economic development. If you do good work, and you work hard, you’ll get noticed and people will want you to work for them. It makes it a lot easier when you’re not looking for a job, because you can set the terms.

Does IEDC still offer the same networking opportunities and the ability to advance in the profession?

I think a little less so, [but] only because people hold office for only a year. They keep changing chairs, [and] you don’t really get to do much in a year. I understand why you do it…[it allows you] to get more people involved. But from an operative standpoint, being a chair for two years really gives you a chance to get out in front of a lot of things. There are people who I met years ago who are big wheels in governments, and I never would have met those people otherwise.

But IEDC is also a much larger organization. It has a much broader representation. We’re not just a bunch of city people. In the 1970s, one of the reasons people belonged to CUED was because nobody else really understood what they did. My mother never understood what I did. No one else understood what we were talking about. Now, that’s not true. Now we have a huge discipline containing some 4,000 members. Everyone now knows what economic development is. There’s less of an opportunity now, because there are so many more people in the business now. There weren’t that many experienced people around twenty years ago.
I would think the opportunity is a little less [now]. However, if you want to become better known in economic development, [don’t] just join IEDC, but become a part of it. Work on committees, give up your time, [and] get known by your peers, because what’s going to happen is someone is going to call somebody and say, “I need a person with certain skills. Who do you know?” I mean, I get called. I would never know such people unless of course I had a chance to serve on committees with others. That’s the benefit of being in IEDC. Going to conferences and going to the sessions is good stuff, but you build relationships with other people in your profession from all over the country and you learn from them. Ultimately, you advance your career through them.

**Were you involved with the merger between AEDC and CUED?**

No. I was involved in pre-merger discussions twice. Once, when I was chair back in 1980 and then [again] in the mid-1990s. I met with the AEDC people here in Chicago. They had their office in Chicago at that time. I was asked to sit down with them and see if there was any interest for CUED and AEDC to come together. Nothing much happened at that time for a couple of reasons. First, CUED didn’t have much money. AEDC had a little bit more, and they didn’t need us economically. Later, it was AEDC that needed more financial support, so they were incentivized to merge with us because we were stronger at that time. But when I met with them, they were stronger.

Second, we had a strong group of people in CUED who really did not want to lose the urban orientation of the organization. If you wanted to start a fight, just put a resolution on the table proposing that we take the word “urban” out of CUED. If we had, we could have gone after states and regions, [and] we could have [recruited] a lot more people into the organization. But those people who originally started the organization felt strongly that we could not afford to lose our urban focus, because that’s how we started, that’s what we were about, [and] that’s what we knew. Like me, those people began to drop off in the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, Jeff was able to use his political savvy to broker a relationship with AEDC. You can see the new name really has more AEDC in it than CUED, because the urban piece had to be taken out to [make it] a national organization. Urban economic development people wouldn’t have any relevancy to people in small towns and other places. It had to come, but it took a while to get there.

I think the merger still has some way to go for it to work well. I think it’s getting better as the older dogs retire, including people like myself. The young people coming up through the new IEDC don’t know the difference between AEDC and CUED anymore. Those are the people who will take the organization much further than it’s gone so far. There were reasons why we didn’t merge earlier. Those reasons finally fell away, and it was inevitable that we were going to come together sooner or later.

**Did you see any positives or negatives that came out of the merger?**

Well, I don’t know. Politics still exist [and] impact certain things like awards. There’s always a balance. The board is also balanced, and that’s alright. But there are still some politics. It’s still “we” and “they” for older members like me. We still look upon the AEDC people as not quite being in the same business that we are in, though I think that’s slowly wearing away. So, overall,
I would say that IEDC is stronger than either organization would have been alone. It’s just going take some time for the old prejudices to drop off and have them replaced by people with more open minds [like] the younger and smarter people. There are a lot of us who started out in this [profession] from a lot of other disciplines and built it by hand. So, we didn’t like it very much when we were looking at another organization. I think it’s working slowly, but it is working. And I think in another couple of years it will do fine.

**Where do you see IEDC going into the future?**

One of the directions it can go is international. This has been a difficult “row to hoe.” There have been two or three international committees that I’ve been on, including the present one. We are no longer a policy committee. In effect, we are an advisory committee, which I don’t care for. It’s very difficult to get our members, many of whom are in public city economic development organizations, to see a benefit in international members being part of IEDC. It’s difficult to get them to see the benefit of going to some place outside of the US to hear about economic development. A lot of our members have no interest in that whatsoever, because they know they’ll never be able to get the city government to pay for such a trip. Only people with money get to go to Europe or China. Taxpayers don’t like to see that.

So, it’s going to be difficult to expand IEDC into the international marketplace. We have relationships with EURADA, Mexico, and other national economic development organizations around the world. But, we don’t have a strong international track bringing in new international economic development approaches. It’s going to be difficult to get the international folks to join us…although some have, and that’s good. We don’t really reciprocate well. We really don’t know a lot about those other countries and how they do business. Those of us who did travel a lot, and did work all over the world, know economic development people from all over. They’re no different than we are, except that they have different kinds of governments and financing. But most of them are working in the same arenas, like foreign direct investment, which the US has done a poor job of. I think you probably saw the testimony that was given by [Rick] Weddle recently.

Innovation is the big word in Europe and much of the Western world. It’s got a far larger place in government planning [there] than it does in this country. There are 800 incubators, technology centers, and research parks in Poland alone. Poland’s about the size of Texas, if that. I belong to an organization called SPICE (Science Park and Innovation Center Experts). It has three or four members from each country who are involved in innovation, entrepreneurship, creating new businesses, [and] growing new economies…so I have a lot of friends who are from different parts of the world who are directly involved in that kind of work. They are in Berlin, Tallinn, Latvia, and Warsaw. There’s a lot going on out there. IEDC needs to have more of an international presence, more of an international sense, and more international connections. The hard part is that I don’t think our members really understand the benefits of IEDC [becoming more international]. We’ve been putting international tracks in most of our conferences, getting people to come here from other parts of the world, and I think all of that is very good. We can learn a lot from those folks. But those sessions are usually not very well attended. We have to find a way to make IEDC more interesting to other professionals outside of the US. We also
need to find a way to get our members to understand that they can learn a great deal from those people if they just listen.

So that’s the main direction I think IEDC is going to go. But they’re probably also going to expand their membership to the universities, new planning entities, and the green environmental [sector]. I think you’ll see IEDC make a strong move towards [recruiting] members who are actively working in sustainability. For example, the whole urban village idea of sustainable development and growth.

There’s an organization here in Chicago headed by the former Mayor of Milwaukee called The Congress for Sustainable Development. They have hundreds of members who should also be our members. We have to learn how to develop within this green environmental package. Evanston is establishing a green development ordinance requiring all new developments to achieve LEED Silver Certification, for example. Small developers said, “We can’t do that, because it’s not economical.” So, I was helpful in working through that with a separate negotiating committee [that] included the developers and environmentalists. We put together a deal that said, “OK, you don’t have to do the LEED Certification. It’s expensive. But you do have to meet a number of the city requirements depending on the size of your project.” And they were OK with that. I think we should target those who are in the leadership role in green involvement and development…not just for conference sessions, but for professional membership. I think we ought to add a strong piece of sustainability planning and development into our technical track that we require people to go through to get their CEcD designation.

So there are two directions [IEDC should take]. One is external…out toward other nations. The other is internal…toward a major change in the sustainable development requirement that’s going to be expected of members. I think all of our people need to know about that, and I think IEDC needs to lead in that area.

Are there any other stories or anecdotes you’d like to share?

Oh, probably none you could print <laughs>. There have been some interesting things going on. Well, I don’t’ know how many people know this, but Ed DeLuca, the man who founded our organization in Baltimore, was the Economic Development Director for the City of Baltimore back in the late-1960s…probably the first one in the country, or maybe the second one. But he lived in Pittsburg and he would commute. When he finished in Baltimore, he went to Pittsburg and became their economic development director. He was an engineer…a brilliant man who helped put together the Marshall Plan. We had some really good strong leaders, a great bunch of people who started this organization. They were very thoughtful [and] very intelligent folks. But none of us knew what we were doing, except Ed, because he had helped to rebuild Europe. He understood what you do when a city suddenly loses all of its industry. If you went to Germany in 1946 you’d find that they didn’t have any industry, because they’d all [been] bombed. He cut his teeth on that. When he came back from Germany he had at least some knowledge of the things we had to do.

It’s just those little tiny anecdotes about the fact that we really did not have a profession when we started. We helped create one. Now this is a large profession, and [many] probably don’t know
that. They probably think that economic development [started] back in the 1930s and that they taught it in schools. Well, they didn’t teach anything about urban economic development in the educational system. When we started, there was no place to go. We had to depend on reading books like Mumford’s *The City in History*. We read planning books, books on geography, books on statistics, and books on history. But there weren’t any economic development books.

The main thing that people need to understand is that IEDC represents a whole new profession that came out of major economic and social changes in this nation. It’s going through another major economic and social change now with both the environment and the recession. We need to change our profession to meet those particular needs. If we do nothing else, we’re adaptable, and maybe that sets us apart from everyone else.

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