

Danielson

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floral business just two years ago, and he returned to college last fall to keep busy.

He was nervous about returning, he said. When he first contacted Robert Mathiasen, an adviser with UNL's Division of Continuing Studies, his nervousness was apparent.

Of their first meeting, Danielson recalled, "He said, 'You look a little uptight.' I said, 'I am.'"

"But you know, the interesting part is that's a very common thing. The people that I've talked to around my age that haven't finished, the first thing they say is, 'Well, I don't think I can study.' That's their biggest catch right there."

But Mathiasen said that once the details were straightened out, Danielson was eager to learn.

"Once he saw it was a reachable goal, he really went after it," Mathiasen said. "Those dreams kind of hang on forever. But if you want something long enough, the longer you wait, the more you want that goal."

After only a short time on campus, Danielson said he noticed that UNL had changed a bit since he began his college education in 1927.

"When I went to class (in 1927), I had to dress with a tie and a coat, except for hot weather," he said. "And you were always mister, you were not front-name."

To today's young students, the classroom of the 1920s sounds stifling. But for Mr. Danielson, it was a matter of manners.

"I always felt wearing a coat in class and using last names, mister and miss, gave some sort of a dignity to higher education," he said.

In 1992, dressed impeccably in a navy-blue jacket, red-and-blue striped tie, gold tie tack and gray

trousers, it is apparent that Mr. Danielson still believes manners make the man.

"He is quite a fine gentleman," said Roy Dillon, Danielson's academic adviser.

That's not to say that Mr. Danielson could not adapt to the new college life, Dillon said.

"He has been a pure joy to work with and is a classic example of non-traditional education and someone who wants to learn," he said.

Apparently, Danielson adjusted very well to the new atmosphere. He earned straight A's — and two A-pluses — for his 1991-92 credit hours.

The instructors who worked with Danielson are quick to praise him for those marks.

Jay Fitzgerald, an associate professor of horticulture who has known Danielson for about 12 years, said his work was exemplary.

Fitzgerald, who taught Danielson's Horticulture 130 class, called him a "perfect example of lifelong learning."

"Education is a two-way street; I learned as much or more from him as he did from me," Fitzgerald said. "And, those students (in the horticulture class) who availed themselves to get to know him probably learned more from him than from me."

In conjunction with his course work, Danielson produced a 162-page history of Nebraska's florist industry from 1885 to 1991.

He calls it, simply, "the book."

Dillon and others said the book was impressive.

"As he got involved in this experience, he gave of himself much more than what was expected of him," Dillon said.

In a letter to Danielson, Donald Edwards, the agriculture institute dean, called the history "a masterpiece."

Danielson was a bit surprised — pleasantly — by all the attention.

"I didn't know what they expected of me," he said. "... I just

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Mathiasen
Division of Continuing Studies
adviser

got that letter (from Edwards) this morning. I felt real happy about that. Isn't that something?"

Danielson said the history was exactly what he wanted to do with his studies at the university.

"I'll tell you what I had in mind... to have something from my experience that I could leave," he said. "I was happy with that because I'd been carrying that on my mind all these years: 'Isn't there something I can leave?'"

Over several months, Danielson spent time doing research in the library. Then, he re-established contacts with other Nebraska florists to finish the book. It earned him an A-plus.

"It was hard work," he said. "You spend a lot of hours, and all of a sudden, you get grades like that, and all that time sort of just evaporates. It was well worth it."

Modesty in Danielson demands that he credit others for helping him succeed. His wife, Josephine, helped with typing and editing. Faculty members, he said, went out of their way to be supportive.

Dillon said that much of Danielson's schoolwork was designed to emphasize his floral background. UNL officials examined the 1927 student catalog from the UNL Archives and compared it to Danielson's original transcript. The comparison revealed that only 21

hours remained in Danielson's degree path, which was called "liberal agriculture" in 1927.

With that information, Dillon said, he and Danielson designed a series of experiences, mostly through independent study, to capitalize on his floral experience.

Last fall, Danielson took seven hours in horticulture and five in agriculture science. This semester, he completed nine hours in agriculture education so quickly that all of his schoolwork was finished in March.

"It seems like this year in school was a dream," Danielson said. "It's already gone."

But it was far from easy, he said. In the fall, while doing research for his history book, he almost gave up.

"I thought, 'Why am I in this anyway? What am I trying to do? I don't need this.' Which I figured is typical, so I just kept right on going."

His lifelong work experience helped, he said. The book wasn't his only project about the floral industry.

Another paper called "Some Points on How to be Successful as a Retail Florist" also earned an A-plus.

In effect, Danielson's research for this paper consisted of lifelong practical experience.

His father bought the flower shop in 1929, and twin sons Robert and J. Arthur joined the staff soon after. Five years later, the brothers took over the shop and managed it until 1989. In 1990, J. Arthur died.

But the shop was not the only thing the twin Danielsons shared in their lifetime together. Their parents dressed them alike until they left home, Danielson said.

"We stayed that way until we started going with the girls at the university, and then we quit dressing alike," he said. "You look back on that now and it's kind of corny, but we didn't know anything else."

The Danielson twins also pioneered some organizational techniques at the flower shop that al-

lowed for extra free time. Danielson Floral Co. was the first flower shop in Lincoln to close on Sundays, Danielson said.

Other changes came, too. Over the years, student employees at the shop grew uncomfortable using last names to refer to their bosses. So the brothers decided to allow them to use Mr. Bob and Mr. Art.

"That lasted about two weeks, and we said, 'Let's forget it,'" Danielson said. "Then we went with first names. They didn't respect us any less. It was just one of those changes."

The southeast Lincoln house that Danielson has retired to is, appropriately, green — with furnishings to match: green carpet, green sofa, green chairs.

In these surroundings, Danielson admitted rather shyly that he planned to go through UNL's graduation ceremony.

"I went down and signed up for a robe and cap, so I guess I'll be there," he said.

But he couldn't predict how he would feel the moment the diploma was placed in his hand.

"I'm trying to avoid that," he said. "I just don't have any sentimentality."

After the ceremony, Josephine will serve dinner to a few guests at their home.

But Danielson is unsure what he'll do after all the hoopla dies down.

Maybe he'll golf a little more, he said, or take a cooking class.

"I might go back to the university again. I don't know. I'd have to see some place where I could do some good."

And he does have some ideas.

"What they really need is a good PR man for the horticulture department," he said, rubbing his chin.

"They do so many things, you can't believe it... I might even offer to do that, if they'll take me."

"I'm not a workaholic. But I don't like to be still if there's something pushing me."

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Activities sponsored by the UNL Alumni Association will begin on Thursday with an informal "Kickoff Cookout" in the Hollings Gardens at the Wick Alumni Center, 1520 R St., from 5 to 7 p.m.
Friday's activities include a 9 a.m. breakfast for the class of 1932; a chancellor's luncheon for all attending the reunion at noon in the Sheldon Art Gallery, followed by a choice of 1:30 p.m. tours; and a 6 p.m. dinner at the Wick Center with entertainment provided by the Scarlet & Cream Singers.
Saturday's activities include a 10 a.m. tour of the Lied Center for Performing Arts and a 1 p.m. tour of Morrill Hall.
For ticket information, contact the UNL Alumni Association.

Simanek
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to graduate, Osborne said. If the courts allow, he probably could finish school by taking classes this summer and next semester.
Baldwin will have a hearing sometime in the near future, Osborne said, and then all that happened will come out and Baldwin's fate lies in the hands of the court.
Baldwin will not receive help from any public fundraisers, such as the scrimmage donations given to Simanek, he said.
But Osborne said he and the football department would stand behind Baldwin, whatever happens.

