

Adventures of a Million Miler:

**Four decades of professional work
in and out of academia**

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Gary B. Hansen

Dedication

This memoir is dedicated to my loving wife and companion, Helen Ure Hansen, without whose continuing assistance, sacrifices and forbearance the professional activities carried out over four decades could not have been undertaken or successfully completed.

Preface

What started out to be an ordinary academic career some 40-plus years ago somehow turned out to be rather extraordinary. While I may have had the expectation of enjoying the pleasures and facing the challenges of teaching students in a slow paced insular academic environment located in a beautiful mountain valley setting in Northern Utah, it did not quite turn out that way. Instead, it turned out to be a much more challenging career that included extensive travel throughout America and abroad, and a wider variety of consulting and service opportunities, activities, people, places and experiences than I ever dreamed of, anticipated or, perhaps, even wanted.

My professional career included traveling to most of the 50 states in the United States of America, and some 40 foreign countries in North America, Europe and Asia. In the decade of the 1990s alone, my consulting travels included frequent trips to Washington, D.C., 18 trips to Geneva, Switzerland, two trips to Tokyo, one trip to Beijing, 5 trips to Bangkok, one trip to Kathmandu, Nepal, one trip to Kiev, Ukraine, one trip to Aarhus, Denmark, two trips to Berlin, one trip to New Delhi, India, one trip to Dakka, Bangladesh, one trip to Turin, Italy, two trips to Skopje, Macedonia, 17 trips to Poland, 6 trips to Bulgaria, 11 trips to Hungary, and 8 trips to Romania. As a result, I accumulated over 1 million frequent flyer miles on Delta Airlines, and thousands of miles on a dozen other airlines. So, I believe the title of this memoir is both accurate and appropriate.

In looking back over my professional career from the vantage point of hindsight, it truly represents the “adventures of a million miler,” and included a wide variety of sights, sounds, smells and tastes, plus the opportunities and challenges of working with many different individuals, communities, types of officials, governments and cultures in a variety of countries and environments throughout the world. I believe that it also included the satisfaction of making a difference in *some* people’s lives, and the sadness of being unable to meet every need or expectation of loved ones, family members, friends, professional colleagues and clients. Nevertheless, this is my story.

The research and writing of this memoir has been very difficult and time consuming, covering several years of preparation before even commencing the writing. The process required going through thousands of pages of documents and correspondence spanning nearly 50 years. Organizing the material and writing the various chapters was equally daunting. I am deeply indebted to a number of wonderful and very competent people with whom I worked professionally and who contributed their time and talents to make the many projects included in this memoir successful, and for their help to me while carrying out this project, either by reading draft chapters, correcting some obvious errors, adding insights or information that I did not have or had forgotten, and providing encouragement to complete the project. Among those who deserve special credit and my enduring thanks for their friendship and assistance over the years covered in this memoir, or who were directly involved in some of the projects discussed, or in my professional development. These include Leonard J. Arrington, Reed R. Durtschi, John R. Cragun, Marion T. Bentley, Maria Heidkamp Kopits, James Perlmutter, Virginia Stacy, Sydney Smith Heimbrock, Gedeon Werner, Jane Daly, Garth L. Mangum, and R. Thayne Robson. Most important of all has been my wife Helen, who not only endured the difficulties and hardship my

work imposed on her and our family, she also read the entire manuscript, painful as it may have been, and made many suggestions and editorial contributions. I am also indebted to my daughter Karen, who spent many hours designing the Internet website that makes it possible for others to read parts of this memoir.

My experience in writing this memoir reminds me of what my cousin Wilford R. Gardner told me about how he felt when writing his memoir “A Fair to Middlin Physicist,” completed in May 2009. He said that he felt like he had a tiger by the tale, and that if he let go before it was finished, something bad might happen. I, too, have had some of the same feelings, trying to write my memoir.

Gary B. Hansen
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Table of Contents

Chapter

1. Introduction
2. Efforts to enlarge USU's land-grant mission
3. Promoting worker cooperatives and employee ownership
4. Introducing American LMR concepts in Poland and Hungary
5. Writing a "community economic renewal guide" and testing it in Hungary
6. Conceptualizing the "USDOL Adjustment model" and using it in Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Ukraine
7. The challenges of designing a project to assist displaced coal miners in Poland
8. Consulting work in Asia for the ILO, ADB and UNDP
9. My last consulting jobs

APPENDICES (Available through the links in the Introduction section of this website at: <http://www.garybhansen.com/>)

A. My Top Twenty-five: A Sampler

B. A selected list of papers, publications and speeches by Gary B. Hansen