



Carolina Population Center

In 1966, the Carolina Population Center was founded at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. To celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2006, a project was conducted to document the history of the Center. This transcript is an excerpt from an oral history interview.

Interviewee: Barry M. Popkin

Interview conducted by: Grace Camblos

Interview date: December 16, 2005

Barry Popkin has been a CPC Fellow since 1978.

GC: How has the Center evolved since you've been here?

BP: I think it has evolved. We added an element that I wasn't necessarily happy with initially, but now I'm the major funder and user of the spatial core, which is a very important added service. We added the statistical core under Udry which is very helpful for young faculty and postdoctoral and even trainees. We added a biomedical core, which hasn't been quite as successful yet in some ways. But we've truly added some facilities. Moreover, we've evolved the library from a physical entity to more and more an information services and processing unit. And we added the graphics core, which has been immensely popular and helpful as the field has changed, in all of our work.

And those are elements - each of those came out of, in some way, the leadership of the Center. The spatial core was something the Center leadership told us we needed and we didn't think we needed. Ron Rindfuss pushed that on us in many ways, got some fellows to say they needed it. But it was really more of his seeing that was a vision for the field. As it has turned out, it has been very important for my research and certainly has helped a number of young fellows and others. So, it's proven its worth. Another director brought in the graphics core and it has completely proven its worth over time. So I think there are things that have come from the leadership. But in the end, to me, the biggest thing is we've become very big. We've retained pretty much our "can do" helpful environment...during that. So it's still a place that I want to be and I want to keep my research. And I know as I continue to push my research dreams, it will help me achieve them.