

John Mather

Durham College

John enrolled in Durham in the first class in 1967; on graduation, he was hired by Durham in the computer centre. He retired in xxx but at the time of this interview is still teaching one day a week at Durham.

That first year, we carpooled to school: Just a bunch of portables -- 5 or 6 of them -- no gear, chalkboards essentially, cold and drafty. I was Student #51.

I wasn't going to go to university. My parents didn't have any money but they could afford the \$175 tuition and to make me lunch once in a week and pay Gary for gas.

In those days, you went to school 30 hours a week and faculty taught 30 hours a week, give or take. It was really thought that if you were at work you should be working, right?

(The teaching) was out of a book and you flip the pages. There was no computer gear. When we finally got some, it was this big board and you programmed it with wiring and you put your cards in and when it got to a certain point (you told it) that you should add now, or subtract now, or whatever. There was no way to program it in anyway the first year. The second year, we had stuff that you could practice a little bit on. But the first two years, essentially nothing. It was just out of the book.

But it was a fun place. The students have changed a lot. I think they are not quite as into it as I think our students were. But I still run into kids now. They say, "Yeah, I'll be the first person in my family to graduate." And you can tell them at graduation; there whole family is there.

When I started on staff (right after graduation, May 19, 1969) nobody needed to have a degree necessarily but you were supposed to have the experience of the business that you're in, or the subject material.

(The VP Finance) used to keep the accounting in a little book. I'd say, 'We need to buy a modem so we can send out payroll.' It was \$175. And he looked through the book and I see him flipping pages ... "Yeah, I think we can handle that. I'll just have to find an account to take it out of." So, if you wanted money, you had to run down the hall, to see him with the story. We always balanced our budget because near the end of the year he'd suddenly say, "No, guess we can't do that."