Larry Kanfer

Well I was a senior in high school when my father took a position at the University of Illinois; back in 1973, so I didn’t have too much say in the matter

At the beginning, it was interesting because we had lived in Cincinnati, and I remember driving in on I-74 the very first time, and I saw the big sign on the highway – this was in ’73. And the sign said, “Champaign-Urbana, Home to I think it was 13 Standard Stations,” Standard Gas stations. It was kind of interesting. So I thought, “This is pretty small,”

I saw a potential and a beauty in central Illinois, to photograph the prairie,

I started my photography business, and I went door to door and I did portraits for people. When I graduated, I decided, well, I’ll give this business a year and see if I can really make a living out of it.

Champaign gave me the great opportunity to start my business and support me.

I remember one place that I worked as a photographer, the owner said, “Well, you could never sell photographs of a corn field. Why would anyone buy that?”

Really loved, loved the landscape and I wanted to photograph it. And the only way to do that is to do it myself. And that’s what I did.

I like photographing different spots in Champaign. For example, University and Prospect. A lot of people come down University Avenue; it’s a one-way. And it’s just the most beautiful drive, especially in the fall.

Downtown, that’s great. I like the fact that we don’t have a brand new downtown where everything is neat and clean; it has an historical background. You can look at something and I think you can think about the people before us when you see an old building. And so, I love the texture and the history in downtown

I made a very definite decision when I was living in Minneapolis that I want to retire here. And the reason I want to retire here is because the mix of the people, with the University, with the rural – and I think that mix is great. I think it’s a progressive, diverse community. I think it’s – my wishes would be that it remain that way and that we continue to look forward and use what we have here to our advantage