When I think back to the early 80s and my involvement with MRS, I feel a special sense of pride in the Society, particularly toward the people with whom I worked at that time. In 1981, Clyde Northrup was vice president, Kathy Taylor was treasurer, and Harry Leamy and Woody White were program co-chairs. Other capable and dedicated people also contributed their talents to MRS; for example, Elton Kaufmann chaired the Corporate Participation Committee. I single out the above people because they all later became MRS presidents! In 1981, the future leadership of MRS was already in place. And it was from this group of people that I enjoyed the best support—they made things happen.

1981 was one of MRS’s early formative years. The Society was still very young, but showed all the signs of potential rapid growth. Behind that aspect of growth, however, there was no formal organization, no headquarters, and no logo. Ernest Hawk of Penn State University served as a part-time secretary, and Aram Tarpian of the Army Materials and Mechanics Research Center (Watertown, Massachusetts) was our part-time financial officer. Aram’s main job was taking care of the logistics of the Fall Meeting in Boston. This effort was a more-or-less one-man show.

As president, I was in charge of almost everything else and, from time to time, was required to be an entrepreneur. MRS was my “business.” I could produce as much as I wanted, but with no budget! I recall that in mid-1981 we were in the red, and had to wait for the Fall Meeting registration fees to come in to balance our books. On the other hand, our 1981 registration attendance broke the 1,000 mark, due to the outstanding effort of the program and symposium chairs.

Several things that occurred in 1981 deserve special mention. MRS proceedings were launched with the signing of a contract with Elsevier North Holland. I clearly remember my meeting in New York City with Charles Ellis, president of Elsevier North Holland—he was more enthusiastic about the deal than I was. Although our program co-chairs were confident about the high quality of the proceedings and were sure that they would sell well, I was a bit wary about committing MRS to buy a minimum number of copies from Elsevier. There was no reserved fund for it. It is now history that our contract with Elsevier was for three years only and that the MRS Proceedings program has been successful, the number of volumes having quickly reached three digits.

In 1981, MRS also initiated the Corporate Sponsors (now Corporate Affiliates) group. This group was formed to ensure a close technical liaison with leading industrial research and development centers and to broaden support for expanding MRS activities. Rudie Voorhoeve and Elton Kaufmann led the Corporate Sponsors drive, with the emphatic support of W.O. Baker of AT&T Bell Laboratories. Baker sent me a long letter to assist our effort in soliciting members. Since that time, Corporate Affiliates have been a major provider of funding support and an invaluable source of personnel for MRS voluntary service. The group now numbers about 300.

1981 was a great year for “firsts”—it was so easy at that time to get things started. I recall Kathy Taylor promoting her Graduate Student Awards program...