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Story by Ed Cohen • Photo by Jeff Ross

Meet Milt

The new president is tireless and wireless, gracious and tenacious, a card-carrying goal-getter, and one prize catch.

This is what happened when a member of the search committee for Nevada's next president asked one of the candidates, Milt Glick, about item No. 4 on page 11 of his 17-page *curriculum vitae*, the academic equivalent of a resume.

Glick took one look at his interrogator and said, "Oh, are you a lawyer?" and the whole room broke into laughter.

They all knew that the questioner was, in fact, a lawyer, Reno's Doug Hill, also a Regent at the time. But Glick, then the executive vice president and provost of Arizona State University, didn't know that. Or at least everyone in the room assumed he didn't (they were right). It was either a funny tension-puncturer on the part of the candidate or a sign of perceptiveness (probably both).

Over the next hour there would be plenty more entertaining remarks from the diminutive, bald, bearded academician seated at one end of the rectangle of tables. Plenty of substance and candor and optimism too. Not to mention self-confidence.

"He told us that this was a place that was really ready to make the next step," committee member and past chair of the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation board Mary-Ellen McMullen '73 (education, English) recalls, "and that he was the

person to help us get there."

They liked that answer. They liked his other answers. They liked Milt Glick so much that at the end of the interview they gave him something they hadn't given to any of the four other candidates they'd interviewed that day. A standing ovation.

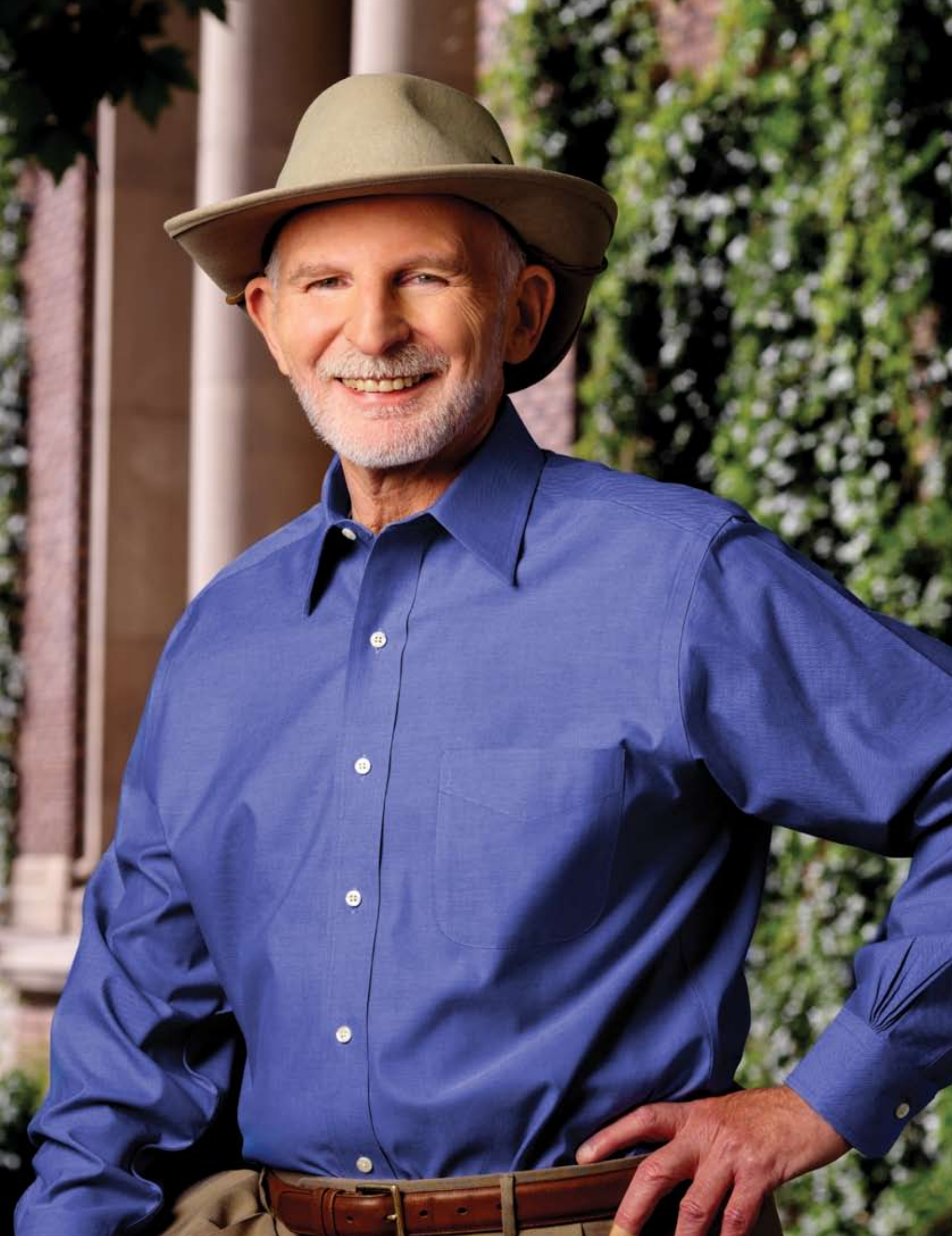
Three weeks later, he got the job.

On Aug. 1 Milton D. Glick, 69, officially took office as Nevada's 15th president. He succeeds John Lilley — who resigned last December to become president of his alma mater, Baylor University in Waco, Texas — and Joe Crowley, who happily returned to semiretirement after adding to his record 23 years as president (1978-2001) with another eight months of interim service. The Glick inauguration is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 29, on the Quad.

For the new president, a jeweler's son who has been a college student, professor or university administrator for more than 50 years, the appointment is a capstone of his academic service. But this is more than a personal triumph.

After a famously successful 15 years as the No. 2 at Arizona State — and after that unlikely standing ovation — people not only in Nevada but all over the country are eager to see what the talented Dr. Glick will do for an encore.

Continues on page 8



[The courtship]

He says he cannot remember ever having applied for a job; they always found him. So it was with his latest.

An executive search consultant hired by the Board of Regents approached Glick last winter to see if he'd be interested in being considered for the job. To Alberto Pimentel, vice president of A.T. Kearney, an executive search firm in Los Angeles, it seemed to be a near-perfect match. But he wasn't optimistic.

For more than a decade presidential recruiters had come calling on Glick, and he'd shown no interest in leaving Arizona State.

Pimentel says Glick was a hot property because of the advances Arizona State had made during his tenure and because he was seen by many in higher education as the primary architect of those advances.

Here's a partial list of them: a 20 percent improvement in freshman retention rate, a 15 percent improvement in graduation rate, a doubling of the number of minorities enrolled. The main campus in Tempe, a suburb of Phoenix, is now the largest in the United States with about 52,500 students expected this fall.

The number of National Merit Scholars had risen from about a dozen in 1991 to more than 500 last year, the fourth-largest concentration of these scholars in any public university. Sponsored research funding has tripled.

Convinced that having a piece of ASU in close proximity will spur economic development, the City of Phoenix is underwriting a new branch campus downtown, and Scottsdale, to the northeast, is building an innovation park.

With Glick as provost, the chief academic officer of a university, ASU recruited 10 faculty with prestigious national academy memberships and one Nobel Laureate. The school's most recent fundraising campaign, announced with a goal of \$300 million, surpassed \$500 million.

Glick insists he doesn't deserve all of the credit — "It took lots of people. . . . I just got to be the conductor." Others at the school say he did most of the day-to-day heavy lifting. Whatever the correct glory

apportionment, he was enjoying his role so much that he routinely gave presidential headhunters the brush-off.

Until last winter.

About the same time John Lilley was announcing he was leaving Reno for Waco, Glick announced he would step down as provost and executive vice president the following July and start a new job. As ASU's first University Professor, he would be given free reign to teach in any part of the university. He'd also remain on hand to serve as a mentor to administrators and take on the proverbial "special projects."

Most academicians would consider this a dream job. But those who know Glick — who works 12-hour days and has called retirement "a social disease" — know that he might not have viewed it that way.

THE PRESIDENT'S PREFERENCES

Favorite books:

- *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership* by Steven B. Sample (president of USC)
- *The Innovator's Dilemma* by Clayton M. Christensen
- *Leadership Jazz* by Max DePree

Fiction: political novels and mysteries

Favorite TV show: *The West Wing*

Favorite movie: *Casablanca*

Favorite sports: football and basketball

Enter search consultant Pimentel and the Nevada opening. Suddenly the departing provost had a choice: wind down into the comforts of teaching or crank up with the pressures and opportunities of a presidency. Pimentel telephoned.

"He didn't say no. He didn't say yes."

The search consultant says Glick studied up on Nevada and was intrigued but still not convinced he wanted the job. He agreed to come for an interview.

It wasn't just the standing ovation that won Glick over, Pimentel says. It was his impression of people's goals for the University. Both on campus and off, he sensed not only enthusiasm for the place but a desire for it to become much more.

This was exciting to him.

Not long after accepting the Regents' offer, he had dinner with a longtime

friend, Andy Hurwitz, former chair of the Arizona Board of Regents and now a justice of the Arizona Supreme Court. The judge says he asked his friend about the new job.

"I said, 'So tell me about this.' And two hours later he was still talking."

[The other courtships]

Milton Don Glick grew up in Rock Island, Ill., part of the Quad Cities area along the Illinois-Iowa border. His father — who was born in McGill, Nev., where the family ran a café — had a jewelry store across the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa. Milton — whose only sibling was a brother, 10 years younger and now deceased — wanted to become a jeweler like his dad. But his parents wouldn't hear of it. They wanted him to go to college.

He enrolled at Augustana College, a private liberal arts school in Rock Island, and earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1959. He then pursued a doctorate at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in the specialized area of crystallography.

One day early in the academic year, a freshman from the Midwest, Peggy Porter, came into the office of Glick's college roommate. His roommate was the T.A. in charge of a chemistry lab she was taking. She was dropping off her lab results. Glick happened to be there. They eventually began dating.

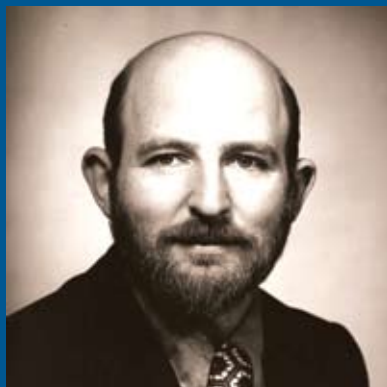
Glick taught her how to use the key-punch machines to enter data in connection with his research. In the days before direct keyboard interfaces, programmers had to feed stacks of cards into computers to tell them what to do. Each card had to be prepared individually using the machine, which punched precise holes corresponding to instructions.

A typical date for Milt, the would-be crystallographer, and his girlfriend, the math major, would find them depositing a stack of cards for the campus computer to run while they went out to a movie. They'd return afterward and get the results.

The couple married after Peggy graduated in 1965. She became a high school math teacher and later earned a master's in economics. During several stops along



Growing up in Rock Island, Ill...



a chemistry professor at Wayne State University in Detroit in 1973...



and with wife, Peggy, just before being introduced as president in May.

her husband's career route she worked as a financial analyst while also being the mother of their two sons. David Glick, 36, is now senior manager of software development for Amazon.com in Seattle. Sandy Glick, 34, works as an economic consultant in Washington, D.C., specializing in postal rate-setting.

The market for college professors was strong in the '60s. After earning his doctorate and spending a year as a post-doc at Cornell University, Milt Glick found a faculty position in the chemistry department at Wayne State University in Detroit in 1966.

Twelve years passed with the Glicks becoming active members of their new community. When all of the city's old-line synagogues followed their members out to the suburbs, they joined with a handful of other Jewish families, including that of future Michigan Sen. Carl Levin, to found a new one in downtown Detroit.

Professor Glick advanced through the academic ranks at Wayne State while making a name for himself in his research field of X-ray crystallography. Almost from the moment he arrived, he was heavily involved in faculty governance issues. He served as secretary of the faculty senate and then in the highest elective post, vice chair (the Wayne State provost automatically served as chair).

When the chairmanship of the chemistry department opened up, a committee recommended Glick for the job.

Many professors avoid such appointments because of the meetings and paperwork and politics of the job. But

Glick didn't have to be coerced. He says he'd already come to the conclusion that he was a good scientist but would never be selected for membership in the elite National Academy of Sciences.

"I wasn't creative enough, and I didn't eat sleep and drink science, and that's what you have to do to be a real top scientist." He says he realized his talents lay more in "helping people who were smarter and more creative than me be successful."

In 1983, after 17 years at Wayne State, the Glicks left Detroit for Columbia, Mo., where Milt had been hired as dean of the University of Missouri College of Arts and Science. It was the school's largest college and, as he soon found out, was out of favor with faculty and administrators from other colleges.

Glick says the previous dean had refused to implement budget cuts and got away with it by threatening to eliminate courses that students in other colleges needed to take to graduate. Faced with the need to cut the college's budget by \$1 million, Glick chose a different path. He met with the deans of the other colleges and asked them which courses were absolutely essential. He then trimmed where it would harm the overall university least.

That bitter medicine swallowed, he set out on an agenda for improvement. Among other initiatives, he pushed for the development of a writing-across-the-curriculum program to improve students' writing skills throughout the university. The program became a model

copied at other schools.

He found a way to put a networked computer on the desk of every faculty member in the college. Except for a few outliers, every college professor today has a computer in the office, but in the mid-1980s, the notion was almost unheard of. At that time, not every faculty member at Missouri had an office telephone line, Glick recalls.

The arts and science dean's forward thinking began to draw attention, and within a few years recruiters began calling to ask if he would be interested in taking the next step up the administrative ladder, to provost. He says he was reluctant to uproot his family again and for two years declined to move. Finally, in 1988, after turning down two previous offers, he accepted the provost's position at Iowa State University in Ames, which is in the center of Iowa, about 200 miles west of the Quad Cities, where he had grown up.

Michael Crow, then director of Iowa State's Institute for Physical Research and Technology, served on the search committee that chose Glick. He recalls the interview and Glick's subsequent performance as provost:

"What everybody saw, including me, was just this total dedication. He's very smart, very analytical and very tough."

[Dr. No]

Glick served three years in Ames, the last eight months as interim president, before accepting the position of senior vice president and provost at Arizona State.

CoverStory

The provost position is regarded by many as the toughest in higher education because provosts are the ones who have to say no. No to promotions. No to curriculum changes. No to budget requests.

Early on at Arizona State, Glick was told he had to cut \$15 million from the university's budget. To demonstrate to faculty that he had nothing to hide, he broke protocol and invited skeptical leaders of the faculty senate to help design the model to achieve this.

The move signaled Glick's long-held belief in transparency. It didn't mean he was soft.

As he recalls in an article he wrote for the journal *New Directions for Higher Education*, a dean told him he'd come to the university to build, not destroy the college. He wanted to know what would happen to a dean who refused to go along with the budget cuts. Glick says he told him, "I would call you a good friend, a man of principles, and defender of the faith. However, I would no longer call you dean."

In other instances, compromise and diplomacy were the order of the day. When members of the Board of Regents suggested doing away with tenure to make faculty more accountable, Glick worked with the faculty to devise a post-tenure review system. The system met the board's concerns while preserving faculty members' sense of job security and academic freedom.

When students complained that they couldn't complete requirements for their degrees because classes they needed were full, Glick came up with this solution: Any student who was within a year of graduating and couldn't get into a needed class could telephone him directly. He would rectify the situation.

Hurwitz, the former head of the Arizona Board of Regents, says the idea worked because a lot of the stories turned out to be apocryphal. There sometimes was a section of the class open, but it met at an undesirable time, like 8 in the morning. In other instances the professor wanted to limit the class to 20. Glick would tell the instructor to accept a few more.

[The bowling ball]

At just under 5 feet, 6 inches tall, Milt Glick is possibly the shortest president in Nevada history. One of the lightest, too. He says he weighs 150-155 pounds.

You'd never know it to look at him, but he says that in the '60s he weighed 200 pounds. "I used to just roll down the street." He bought a pair of size 40 slacks — and never wore them. They were for motivation. By playing a lot of squash and following the protein-rich Stillman Diet, he says, he lost 50 pounds in four months.

And he's kept it off, although while dean at Missouri, the staff grew concerned about his eating habits.

"I had an assistant who used to post signs around the building, 'Please do not feed the dean.'"

Ask people to describe Milt Glick and you continually hear terms like quick-witted, forthright, honest, trustworthy,

compassionate, insightful. Anyone who can lose one-fourth of his weight in four months, and isn't being held prisoner or battling a potentially fatal illness, obviously doesn't lack for self-discipline. He's frugal. He speaks softly. He sings.

Unpretentious would be an understatement. A week before officially taking office, he showed up for a meeting on campus looking more like the stereotypical Old West prospector than a president, in old blue jeans, a plain green T-shirt, a floppy blue hat and a scruffy gray beard.

More than anything else, though, Glick is known for being dedicated to his work — really loving it — and tireless in pursuit of goals.

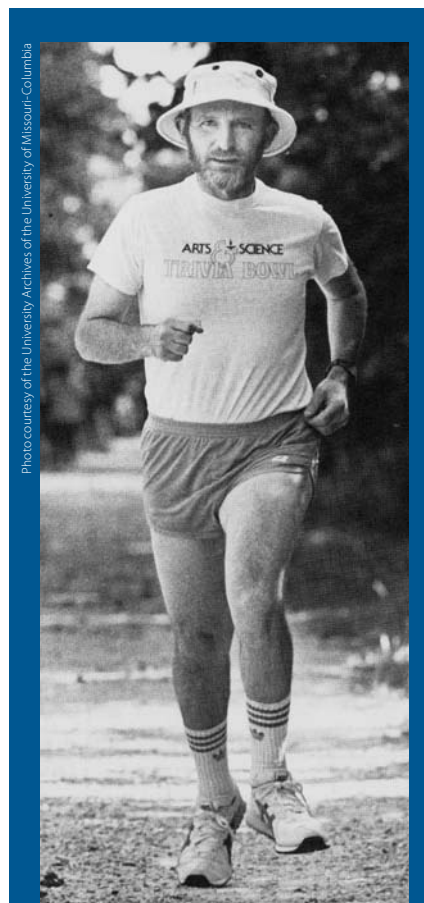
Peggy Glick says she learned early on in their marriage that her husband would always be working. One time he took her along to a national meeting of crystallographers in Gatlinburg, Tenn. It was their honeymoon.

A typical day for Glick at ASU, colleagues say, would begin at 6 a.m. and last past 6 p.m. When his sons were living at home, Glick always made it a point to be home for dinner with his family, but an hour later he'd resume working, usually on a computer.

Glick has two trademark bits of apparel: his broad-brimmed hats, which he wears to protect his face and pate from the sun, and the small electronic device he wears in a holster on his right hip. It's called a BlackBerry, and it's a brand of combination Internet connection and cell phone. He uses it mostly for email. When faced with a question he can't answer, he'll tap out a sentence or two on the calculator-size keyboard to the person he knows has the answer. At ASU, all of his senior staff members and many others were tethered this way.

Glick estimates he reads, sends or responds to 200 to 300 emails a day. During the rare vacation, he doesn't shut off his BlackBerry or go on an email fast. He'd have too much of a backlog to deal with when he went back online.

He says he purchased his original BlackBerry around 1999. At his going-away party at ASU, his staff gave it back to him, bronzed.



Running Missouri's College of Arts and Science in 1987.

[The sponge]

One of the members of the presidential search committee remarked that Glick was the right person for the job because, “He’s been where we are, and he is where we have to go.” The notion was that Glick would do at Nevada what he did at Arizona State.

If that’s what the committee members thought, they may be disappointed because Glick says he has no intention of airing a rerun in Reno.

“I think it’s the kiss of death . . . to come in and say, ‘Well, here’s how we did it at the last place,’” he says, “because when you do that the faculty kind of say, ‘Well if you liked it so much there, why are you here?’”

The new president says he would be happy to see Nevada experience the degree of progress made at ASU, but it won’t be the same kind of progress. One reason: He’s in a different city and state.

The Nevada equivalent of Arizona State wouldn’t be Nevada, Reno, it would be UNLV, a younger public university based in a booming metropolis — Las Vegas, in this case, instead of Phoenix. Nevada, Reno is more like the University of Arizona, that state’s historic flagship, land-grant college with agriculture extension operations and a medical school.

Glick says his intention is to “build on the strong extant foundation” and tailor the institution to fit Reno and Nevada.

Exactly what that means is a matter for conjecture at this point because the new president isn’t offering any specifics. This would come as no surprise to his former colleagues. They say expect him to be a sponge his first six months, soaking up as much knowledge as possible. After that he’ll set a course for measurable objectives.

Here’s what *can* be said about the likely course of the Glick presidency based on his philosophies and what he’s said since accepting the job:

He will compete with UNLV but in the sense of trying to make this university as good as it can be while UNLV is doing the same. He also plans to collaborate at every opportunity. That’s the approach he took with the University of Arizona when he was at ASU, and the rivalry be-

came so cordial that Arizona’s president, two months removed from a heart attack, drove up from Tucson to attend a tribute dinner for Glick.

“Our primary competition is not UNLV,” Glick insists, “but all the good research and land-grant universities in the country.”

‘I think it’s the kiss of death . . . to come in and say, ‘Well, here’s how we did it at the last place.’

Regarding potential competition with UNLV for appropriations from the Nevada legislature, he says, that can’t be a zero-sum game, in which one school prospers at the expense of the other. “In the long run we have to build a bigger pie.”

Besides lobbying for public funds, the new president knows he’ll be spending a lot more time out of the office trying to raise money from private sources than he did as provost. He says that’s another reason for taking time to soak up information. He’ll need to know the University’s story before he can tell it to potential supporters.

As a career-long employee of public universities, he’s sure to insist that Nevada remain true to its mission of providing educational opportunity to all. One of the accomplishments he was most proud of at Arizona State was how the university improved the quality of its student body by adding National Merit Scholars at the top rather than culling less-accomplished students from the bottom.

His strategic plan, when he develops one, is likely to be so succinct it can fit on an index card. At ASU he would literally carry around in his shirt pocket a laminated card listing institutional objectives, mostly related to student success. He’s been known to carry two-dozen such cards. (Instead of 3 x 5s, he has them cut down to 3 x 4 for a better fit.) Not all are reminders of institutional goals, he acknowledges. Mixed in might be a few notes along the lines of, “Pick up gallon of milk.”

Whatever differences the world may notice between Milt Glick the president

and Milt Glick the provost are likely to involve risk-taking. When asked if he would criticize any element of his career as an administrator, he says he may have been too risk-averse. He always wanted to leave his organization in good financial shape, and he always did. But his eyes were opened to the potential of entrepre-

neurship and strategic risk-taking by his second boss at ASU, Michael Crow.

Yes, that Michael Crow, the one who served on the search committee at Iowa State and reported to Glick there. Glick describes Crow as one of the smartest people he has ever met and marvels at some of the accomplishments of the first four years of his presidency. Those include construction of 1 million square feet of new research space. Incidentally, this was Crow’s advice to Glick about being a president: “Go up another 20,000 feet in elevation and try to stay there. Try to stay focused on the big picture.”

Nevada’s new president says he expects it will take him five to seven years to make a major difference and institutionalize improvements so they endure over time. No one who worked with him at Arizona State has any doubts that he’ll succeed in that. And the early indications at least sound encouraging.

Glick reported to work on his first official day in office — at 7 a.m., not 6 — booted up his computer with the dual monitors, and dove into his in-box. Later on, music could be heard coming from the open door.

The selections started with folk songs by ’60s singer-songwriter Joan Baez followed by show tunes. The first Baez recording? The anthem of the civil rights movement, “We Shall Overcome.”

Out in the adjoining offices, the staff could hear a male voice singing along loud and clear.

Ed Cohen is the University’s director of communications and publications and editor of this magazine.