The fourth decade of ASIS was clearly a transitional time for both the profession and the organization. The field was shifting from its emphasis on mainframe-based, large centralized computers using batch processing to the more efficient online, interactive modes. Companies and service bureaus were formed, micro- and mini-computers began to proliferate, and end users became much more active in information searching and processing. Hardware became much smaller and less expensive, while at the same time becoming more powerful. Software companies grew, providing applications packages to replace in-house programming efforts. Traditional boundaries among disciplines began to fade and library schools added information to their titles.

For ASIS, the decade's external changes, as well as internal pressures, led to challenging times for the association. The loss of the contract for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Library and Information Services and subsequent financial difficulties required a reorganization that focused more responsibility on Society officers and volunteers. New ideas and creative management were the order of the day for ASIS to retain its position in the field.

As the decade neared its end, it was evident that ASIS would continue its active role as a professional society for the information field and would continue to provide opportunities for diverse groups of individuals to advance the state-of-the-art. The Mid-Year Meeting, focusing on a single topic of current interest to information professionals, became an annual ASIS activity. In 1976, in celebration of the bicentennial of the United States, ASIS sponsored a successful conference highlighting the role of information in the country's development. ASIS was an active participant in the planning and implementation of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Society representatives frequently testified before Congress and other governmental agencies on relevant issues in information science.

Also during this period, the Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science first appeared; continuing education courses and programs were expanded and conducted throughout the country; the awards program was strengthened and the Watson Davis Award for continuous service to the Society was established; and the first of what was to become a continuing series of online meetings was held by the Potomac Valley Chapter.

At the various private sector and governmental organizations in which I worked during this period, considerable work was being done to set up databases and information centers to facilitate the flow of information and to provide access to information sources outside the organization. While participating in these professional activities, I also became quite active in ASIS, working on conference planning committees and other national committees; serving
as chapter officer; and eventually serving on the Board of Directors.

In trying to recapture this period in my mind’s eye, I am amazed at the intertwining of the Society with my work and the information field in general. The opportunities I have had and the things that I have accomplished are due in large part to ASIS and its membership. In most of these endeavors, Si Newman, who more than any other person represented ASIS and the profession to me during those years, spent many hours working with me to accomplish our goals.

Edmond J. Sawyer
Washington, DC

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1969-1978

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ASIS members and representatives of other information and library organizations spent a Tuesday at the White House in 1975. The daylong meeting focused on the need for a White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services, subsequently held in 1979.