

**Eileen Bull**

**Marist College**

**Poughkeepsie, NY**

**Transcribed by Aubrey Geisler**

**For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections**

**Transcript – Eileen Bull****Interviewee:** Eileen Bull**Interviewer:** Gus Nolan**Interview Date:** 10/15/14**Location:** Marist College Archives and Special Collections**Topic:** Marist College History**See Also:****Subject Headings:** **Bull, Eileen**

Marist College – History

Marist College (Poughkeepsie, NY)

Marist College Faculty

**Summary:** Eileen Bull talks about the multiple roles she held at Marist College. She discusses her experiences as a counselor working at correctional facilities, such as Otisville and Green Haven and the controversies she experienced while Marist established itself there. Additionally, Eileen talks about her role while she was the Director of the Special Academic Programs.

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**00:17 Gus Nolan:** Good afternoon, Eileen. Today is October 15<sup>th</sup>, and we have an opportunity to interview Eileen Bull, who was a Marist employee here in various capacities for twenty years, and I think another ten. I might have the dates a little bit confused, but it's in that category.

**00:36 Eileen Bull:** Thirty-one years.

**00:37 GN:** Thirty-one. So it's twenty and eleven. Okay, let's start at the beginning, Eileen. Could you just give us a thumbnail view of your own? Where you were born, brought up, and so on? Not when.

**00:54 EB:** I was born and raised in the Hudson Valley, born actually in Newburgh, New York, and grew up in Montgomery, New York. My parents were from Brooklyn and Jersey City and came up here after their honeymoon, and we lived here ever since.

**01:11 GN:** And then, school. You went to school in Newburgh?

**01:14 EB:** I went to Valley Central in Montgomery. Graduated from high school there. Walden Elementary first and then went to SUNY Orange. Then to the State University at New Paltz, as it was called back then, and got my Master's here at Marist.

**01:32 GN:** Let's fill in some of those spots. During those years, what did you do? Did you have any hobbies? Did you work? Did you do any?

**01:40 EB:** I pretty much worked from the day I graduated from high school. I helped support, put myself through college, first in retail and then in a nursing home working with people. And I think that was there that I first started getting my real love for wanting to stay working with people and trying to make a difference, I would say.

**02:05 GN:** In school, what did you study? What was your favorite subject in high school?

**02:12 EB:** High school was history. I loved history, but when I went to college, I probably, with the help of a great psychology professor, started to lean into the field of psychology and did my Bachelor's and my Master's in psychology.

**02:30 GN:** Really. So the Master's was done here at Marist.

**02:33 EB:** Yes, it was.

**02:35 GN:** Well, living in the Hudson Valley, this question seems to be mute. But when did you first hear of Marist? As a child growing up?

**02:43 EB:** No. Believe it or not, living in Orange County, there was the separation of the Hudson River, and it really wasn't until I was in college that I started looking into Marist.

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**02:47 GN:** So from New Paltz to look back over here. When did you first make an application for a position here?

**03:06 EB:** Oh, I was on maternity leave from Orange County. I worked for the government there, ran some youth programs for them, and at the time, I saw a position come up for Marist as a counselor working at Otisville Correctional Facilities, and many years before, I had worked at Otisville when it was a drug rehab center. I did that with the state for four years, and it was basically after the Rockefeller Drug Laws were put into effect. And this was a way for people not to be sentenced to jail but to go to these facilities, which prior to that were juvenile facilities. Just the trends of the time, the juvenile facilities became smaller. They relied more on group homes. We became a drug rehab center, a live-in resident residential facility for co-ed; males and females thirteen to the age of twenty-one. So I was familiar with Otisville in terms of that nature. And then those facilities closed, and prisons came into those spots.

**04:21 GN:** Is that where the link is then from psychology to counseling. And so, what was the actual position that you applied for?

**04:30 EB:** The position was the counselor's position in Marist College. There was a coordinator, and our role was to work with the inmates there who were being recruited or coming into our program. Of course, they had to come up with recommendations they had to pass.

**04:50 GN:** This is not just a drug program.

**04:52 EB:** No, it was an education when Marist came in and was doing the college programs in the correctional facilities. We were also, at that time, very interesting; the federal facility had just opened. An invitation has been extended to us to also work at that facility.

**05:10 GN:** Was that Green Haven?

**05:12 EB:** No, that was at Otisville Federal. It was the first federal facility that the college entered into with a four-year degree program there. So basically, my role was to work with the students, from helping them fill out their missions packets and their financial aid, to making sure that they were doing what they needed to do within the class and getting if there were tutorials that were needed to make sure they were set up.

**05:44 GN:** What year was this? Was it '81?

**05:45 EB:** That was 1981.

**05:51 GN:** And with whom did you work?

**05:54 EB:** I worked with at the time Vinnie Tuscano and.

**06:00 GN:** Ed Donohue? Was he?

**06:03 EB:** Ed Donohue taught at that time. But at that point, he, as I understand, had worked more at Green Haven. Otisville was a

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good hour and twenty minutes from the college. It was out there. It was in the western part of Orange County. Some of the people, Cecil Denney (?) from computers., he set up a program out there, a computer program which was very interesting. I think it was the first for a federal facility to allow computers for inmates to use. But we had many hurdles there with doing that program. At Otisville, we did a certificate. And it was a certificate that Bill Eidle had put together dealing with courses in psychology and criminal justice. And I think the intent of the program was to help the individual as much as Marist would always do. Look to the individual to broaden their horizons to examine themselves and to reflect, and then look in ways to grow as an individual and for someone who could then give back to the community.

**07:21 GN:** Where is this program housed in the college, and who was the supervisor?

**07:23 EB:** Okay, it was housed in Special Academic Programs. And when I first came on, Frank Cassetta was the director.

**07:30 GN:** Yeah. And that was on campus here?

**07:38 EB:** Yes, it was housed in St Peter's. Well, first before being housed in St Peter's. We were housed in the bottom of Donnelly with the Registrar's Office. They had one part of the room, and we had the other. And then eventually, we wound up in St Peter's.

**07:55 GN:** Bill Eidle is down there too someplace.

**07:58 EB:** Yeah, he was. Psychology was right in the cubicles with us.

**08:02 GN:** Yeah, that was a [...] No one would believe what went on. So the interview, was there a formal interview that you went through?

**08:10 EB:** Yes, it was a matter of fact which is very typical in a college setting or corporate setting to have a group of people interview, and it was really my first time where I walked into a room, and there were eight people interviewing me, it was very interesting.

**08:25 GN:** Yeah, because, as you know, some of the people I've been interviewing when they first came here, it was very informal, and it was a little bit more than a handshake. But you know the one or two people involved. Because the need was so big, you could get a biology teacher, great, especially when he's getting his doctorate. Well, we're home free. Joseph Bettencourt is one such person. There was a guy called Thomas O'Meara who was a painter here. He told his story that he and Dennis applied at the same time to come to Marist, but I guess Dennis couldn't paint.

**09:13 EB:** I think I came a year after Dennis and a year or two after cause we would always tease who was going to retire first.

**09:22 GN:** Okay, moving on. You pretty much describe what position you were involved in helping students. Were you actually teaching at the time?

**09:32 EB:** Not at that point, no. And then, I went over to the position opened at Green Haven, which was a maximum-security facility,

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our largest program that the college had. We offered three degrees. We had over a hundred students there, and I was asked when Frank originally was director of the program and oversaw Green Haven as well. And then, as his role expanded as we expanded into different prisons, he became stationed just on campus, and I took over the Green Haven, which was at that point I was director of the H.E.O.P. Program, which was funding that the state had given us in addition to our other funding that we got to through financial aid.

**10:23 GN:** Did you actually have an office in Green Haven?

**10:24 EB:** I did an office with seven people. We had four counselors, myself, and an assistant director. We had a bilingual program where we hired a coordinator of that program and a counselor for that program.

**10:42 GN:** What were the hours? Was it a typical day? Or did you have special hours?

**10:45 EB:** No, it varied, and usually it was 8:30 to 4, but then there was evening coverage. Wherever we worked, we had to always have a Marist presence. So it was not uncommon to work two evenings a week.

**11:06 GN:** Any time on the weekends?

**11:08 EB:** Only if we had special events. And if we did, then we worked it. Graduations, any type of recognition program, we wanted to do an honors program or, you know, just achievement awards. Sometimes the state would come down with H.E.O.P., so we, you know, I mean, it wasn't uncommon to come in and work. Or at the federal facility, they were going through accreditation, and it was very nice. They included us in their big dinners, and often they were on Fridays.

**11:46 GN:** And rightful so. You have the most (?) parts of the program.

**11:53 EB:** A lot of resistance, a lot of resistance at first, but over the years, that changed.

**12:00 GN:** I want to get to that in a second. Also, say I have a certain image of that [...] I'm not saying this correctly; you were not treated particularly well on campus. Let me say this in terms of space, equipment, and assistance. I mean given a room in some place like you mentioned, St. Peter's. What was your reaction?

**12:26 EB:** We felt like we were step-children to the campus for many years. And I remember I was at Green Haven for three years, and then after that, I came and became the Director of Special Academic Programs and have a staff of about thirty people, and it was during that time, I mean our space, we couldn't. If we had a staff meeting, we had to go use another room on campus, but that really wasn't the problem. The problem was people traveled. These facilities were not all close to the college. And thus, if there were even half of us in that building, there was no place to work. And I remember, one time, I think, I just had our bathroom upstairs was literally falling through the floor, and I took pictures. We had squirrels that would constantly invade our offices, and it was very unpleasant. I, one day, marched over to Marc VanderHeyden, who was the Academic Vice president at the time, and I gave him pictures. I said you need to bring this to whoever you need to bring it to, but we cannot live under these conditions. And it wasn't until after the program ended that they redid the building very nicely. I think part of the Marist culture was to do good work quietly. We were bringing in a lot of revenue to the college, which helped it substantially. But again, it was not always looked at as a program that

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they wanted a great deal of spotlight or attention to, and you could understand that it was a very, very [...]

**14:15 GN:** I remember the students were very negative.

**14:18 EB:** And the community in many, many cases were very negative. Unless you were able to show them, a difference and get them involved in the program or, you know, even politicians we used to bring in.

**14:35 GN:** Statistically, you were showing financially; how much [...] putting these fellows through college getting their degrees and them getting a job would save the state [...]

**14:46 EB:** Thirty or some thousand a year.

**14:48 GN:** That over three or four years, they might be there for ten years. You know if they didn't do anything.

**14:54 EB:** Or the fact that the recidivism rate. Without an education, the recidivism rate was something like 70% of all people who left would come back, and it was the college studies. But at that time, I mean, just stepping back a little bit, we were involved in seven facilities; there were twenty-three colleges in the state involved in prison education. It basically started with Ed Waters way back right after Attica. And as I understand, the story I was told was that Ed was actually interviewed by inmates and by correctional higher-ups and asked, "What were you going to do?" And they said it was a very challenging interview, but that again, back in the day, H.E.O.P, with a handshake, said, "We'll help you write this proposal." And they sat down over dinner and wrote the proposal; how much different then. Now, we have hundreds of pages worth of proposals. But it was, I think, the fact that there were so many, enough colleges. There are twenty-three involved in prison education, and we had a board that I sat on with Albany. That's where the study. We started getting the studies done, and they were being done by the Department of Corrections' own research group and by the state education research groups. So they weren't biased by the colleges. They were there.

**16:29 GN:** No, the facts were on your side. We had some people from the state at graduations. Didn't we? From the penitential or the correctional things?

**16:42 EB:** We have a transitional program here on campus, and it first started out at Green Haven, where men would be paroled to campus. They weren't housed here. We would house them in apartments, but it was really the first time that the Department of Corrections or the Department of Parole, I should say, would allow two ex-offenders or two inmates to live together, and we had some successes with the program. We had [...] Some weren't as successful as we had hoped. We brought, I remember when we did the program at Danbury, we brought women to campus. One is now an attorney in Buffalo, but they were very successful.

**17:33 GN:** And we got some outstanding students. Lateef is a fella that came to mind; he was a civil leader in the town. I had him in class, so I knew the name so well, and I knew him. Not too long ago, a few years ago, I met a young man working in Home Depot, and he had Lateef on his thing. I said, was your father, Lateef? No, he says, but I know who you're talking about. So it was a recognition of a name.

**18:10 EB:** And even when he went inside to work back in the prisons with us. He was such a role model to the men, especially at

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Green Haven. To say, Walter Jarvis was another. We had several who were employed by us. And that was another amazing story about how they allowed it. Usually, ex-offenders were not allowed, or former inmates were not allowed to return to the facilities back then. They actually allowed them to be Marist employees at those facilities, so.

**18:44 GN:** Tell me something about these successes if they can come to mind without going too elaborately. As you look at that part of your career, there must be some good stories.

**18:55 EB:** I actually keep in touch, believe it or not, with about seven men from Green Haven. And most of them have done very long sentences, twenty-two years basically. Most of them may be one or two had a violent part to their sentence, but so many of them had drug-related. And most of the crimes were committed when they were young, eighteen, nineteen, and I stayed in touch with them. Don't hear from you know, once a month or something, but they always drop me a note. And all, every one of them doing well. You know, productive citizens within their community, some working in corporate but still very much involved with their civic responsibility and duties. And the interesting thing. There was one man, T.J., comes to mind. His son, he called me and said, I'm trying to get my son into the Marist High School. He said I just don't know if we can financially do it, and I wrote a letter, and his son went there and did very well and went on to college. So you know it wasn't just that we educated the inmate. We educated the person and their family.

**20:25 GN:** I have a little note here about the setback. I think that there is one major setback that they canceled so much of that, you know. That they pulled the plug for the public opinion idea why should we, despite the facts.

**20:39 EB:** This is it got into the hands of several politicians, and I tell you, we had to come out to Green Haven and never forget **Terence Michos**, who was a Marist alum who taught, and I think he still teaches public speaking here. He had gone out to Hollywood, had starred in a few movies, came back to the Poughkeepsie area, and worked for us, and at first, he was always very conservative in his political thoughts. But he saw the good that the program was doing, and we had a group that came through when there was a lot of backlash, a lot of negative publicity out there, and it was a group that came into Green Haven. And I'll never forget Terence, came out and he says, "Eileen, I am so mad. He said A; they locked up all the inmates that day, so there were no inmates that could talk to these people to tell them about the program." And he said, "They came through. They didn't want to hear anything. Their minds were made up. They wanted to know who funded those computers? Who paid for that?" He said, "They came in with closed minds, and they left with closed minds." He said, "How dare they." And then the state, I mean that's how our federal funding we'd never thought we'd lose it under Clinton. We lost the federal funding, and the Pell grants under, unfortunately, got attached to a crime bill. It was an amendment that got slipped in, and it was a block vote. They weren't voting separate amendments, and that's how we lost the Pell Dollars, and then the tap was basically they just wrote it out of the budget. It was very easy for them to do. And it was unfortunate. Later on, after that, we still were involved. The Federal Government, the Department of the Bureau of Federal Prisons, came to us and said, "We will give you money if you will provide us a program." So we still had a program at Danbury. It was much smaller. We could not use any federal grants or financial aid monies. It was just the monies that we negotiated with them. It was basically per class. We had so many students that could participate, which was a much smaller number, but we were successful there too. I had one young lady go on to Northeastern, and they gave her a full scholarship for her senior year. So you know, we were still able to help those students. Several years later, the Department of Corrections in New York State came back to us and asked us if we would, and this was in the late, right before I retired, 2007-2008. We were there for about six years, no excuse me, 2006 to 2012. And we ran a program for drug offenders under the age of 22 that were in medium-secure facilities, and we were up at Green and for a short time at

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Hudson Correctional. And we ran programs there and then worked with the students to get them. Because their sentences were much smaller, they would usually be there for about two years, three years and then help them; either apply to colleges or community colleges to finish up.

**24:21 GN:** Alright, let's move on. That's a very interesting chapter in your history and Marist history. And you know, I hope it gets its due attention as history moves on, you know. It's just not buried in the pages because a lot of good was done, and a lot of sacrifices were made to get it done.

**24:43 EB:** Oh yes. You know, but on the other hand, too, we were very [...] One of the most positive aspects was the leadership here. I mean, Dennis believed very strongly in the program. So did the Vice President believed very strongly. And you know we brought revenue; I mean, we helped turn those books around for Marist.

**25:06 GN:** Those were tough years. Moving on, what was the next position? When did you come back on campus?

**25:12 EB:** I came back to campus to be the Director of Special Academic Programs. And then, as those programs closed, I still had the federal facilities. I was moved over myself, and only one other person **Al Jurkowski** who ran the Job Corps Programs, were left. And he continued doing the Job Corps programs I oversaw those, my prison programs. And then an opening occurred in Goshen at the Goshen Center, and Marc VanderHeyden said to me, "Eileen, this is right in your backyard. We need you to go down and be the director for this site for Adult Ed."

**25:52 GN:** How long were you there?

**25:53 EB:** I was there for not really long. A year. And then **Eleanor Charwat** retired. Maybe a year and a half. And I came up as acting until they could find someone to take that position, and then I stayed on campus and worked for the (inaudible).

**26:18 GN:** You were never in Fishkill then?

**26:21 EB:** At the very end, I went to Fishkill. I stayed here on campus. Worked with the students. With the adult population. Helped do some of the staffing in terms of faculty working with the deans in terms of getting courses staffed at all, both at Goshen and at Fishkill. And oversaw those sites as well.

**26:46 GN:** I never understood Goshen. What was Goshen?

**26:50 EB:** Goshen started out as a very small program, but we were very successful in Goshen. And that's contrary. This is a little controversial to what some people felt. But there were times that Goshen would pay the rent for Fishkill. What happened, I think, at Goshen was that there were two things the program expanded quite rapidly and we had a lot of students.

**27:17 GN:** Academic programs, college programs?

**27:20 EB:** It was college programs.

**27:22 GN:** Professors went from here to there.

**27:24 EB:** Yes, and we had a Master's in Psychology there, which also grew quite large, probably larger than they perhaps wanted. Because the campus program wasn't growing as rapidly and the problem was the ride to Goshen was an hour and fifteen minutes, and many felt it was just too far from campus. And at the time, we were in one location, and then there was discussion that we were going to move to a bigger building, and then all of a sudden, it was decided, and I think at the time Dennis DeLong was the acting director of our school at the time. And it was decided. I think it was political. I think there were a lot in terms of the psychology program, but they just felt it was too far, and the program was growing too long, and they were going to be spread too thin to do the type of quality program that they were used to doing. I think that was part of it. And it was a long haul, and they didn't [...] And at the time, there was no revenue sharing, real revenue sharing. So if this program was bringing in a lot of money, there was no real [...] there was no tangible benefit to the people doing the work, and I think that was always a bone of contention, unfortunately.

**28:55 GN:** We used to have stories about Tony Campilii and his vacuum cleaner. At the end of the year, if you didn't use your budget (zump), it was gone. He went around with his vacuum cleaner and vac up all. We used to kid about that so much so that it's ridiculous that we begin to spend it. We couldn't carry it over.

**29:20 EB:** But it was a viable program for about eight years, and then there was a decision made on campus.

**29:28 GN:** Give me some numbers. Were you two hundred?

**29:30 EB:** I'd say we were, no more about, I would say, the grad program at one time probably had about fifty students, and then the undergrad was probably about one hundred and thirty.

**29:46 GN:** And was it the basic course? Was it the core course? What was it?

**29:48 EB:** It was. We did the liberal arts degree, which was the integrative major at my time, in integrative studies. We did that. We did the paralegal program there. We did a weekend social work program for a while and a Master's in psychology. We were very fortunate because I had there was a great crew at Goshen, and we worked with those students from the moment they came to an open house until they graduated, and so many of them went into Master's programs because of their relationship with just the staff there gave them such a good feeling about Marist. They would come up here to the program for their masters as well in communications.

**30:40 GN:** What were some of the negative things, though? See, you were off-campus, and down there, we didn't hear all you heard?

**30:46 EB:** Library services were difficult.

**30:50 GN:** You're putting it mildly. The library here wasn't great, though.

**30:53 EB:** Yeah, to get some type of even a book exchange was almost impossible. You know, in terms of, we were isolated. It was very hard even if we would throw a Christmas kind of banquet thing, and it would be like pulling teeth even to get the Deans to come

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down. Yeah, it was far, but I remember when we closed. It was several years later that someone in the administration high up said to me, "You know, Eileen, that closure was just strictly political." And I think it was to keep the faculty, in all honesty, happy. There had been at that time on campus where there had been some unrest with the faculty.

**31:38 GN:** You could be assigned to go there. You never got assigned to go to Green Haven, but you did get assigned to Goshen.

Well, I should take that back.

**31:49 EB:** Faculty were actually hired at the point to teach there as part of the contract, which was a good thing and a bad thing because if you didn't want to be there, it was obvious.

**32:03 GN:** Alright, come back home to campus. What do you do here?

**32:07 EB:** What I did here was I came back and worked with the students, worked with the staff, oversaw the staff, the councilors, et cetera. I did the budgets for that department. I've worked with Tony Campilii for so many years. So we had very good work. I would do the projections of the budgets of all of the programs that we had because every program was like a cost center.

**32:34 GN:** Where were you housed now?

**32:35 EB:** We were over. Oh my goodness, where do we start? I think, in the early days, we were across the street in the old publishing business. Yeah, when we put the classrooms up. Then what was the last? I'm trying to think of the building. Not Lowell Thomas; what's the next building?

**33:00 GN:** Dyson.

**33:02 EB:** Dyson. We were in Dyson. Then we split. We were in the end of the hallway at Dyson. And then, at the time, we went through three directors or three deans. They weren't Deans.

**33:23 GN:** Was Charawat still on board when you came back? Ellie Charawat.

**33:31 EB:** Only for a short time, and then she left, and then I took her position, and then we hired a man by the name of Griff Walling. Griff stayed about three and a half years. And then another search took place. And then we brought in Dennis DeLong. After Dennis, nobody stayed. We went through more directors in a short period of time, and then it was decided that we would split. And we became the School of Global and Professional Studies, and we were on the academic side. And Admissions took over to go over the admissions and the recruiting side of the operations.

**34:16 GN:** So I missed that whole thing. I am out of here in '02 or '03. You know, so all of this is further downstream.

**34:23 EB:** I think what happened too. We were a forerunner for many years in Adult Education. But I think it was other schools that started to see it, and it was within the journals within the various organizations, collegiate organizations. Amongst colleges, the adult population became a targeted group, and I think several things happened. Schools around us were able to put in degrees possibly that

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more adults wanted rather than a liberal arts degree. At one point, we used to do a B.A. in business. We couldn't do that once the new accreditation came in for the School of Business. So basically, we could not offer a business degree. No, because of the fact that they are all of their faculty had to have well, I guess it was a ratio, but the majority of the faculty have to hold doctorates. And they were needed, and then at the same time, the M.B.A Program was starting to grow, and the M.P.A Program was to grow. So thus, the faculty didn't want to come teach at an extension site. At that point, we didn't have online courses. The college in itself, in terms of admissions, was growing. At one time, adults took classes in the evening. Students took the class during the day and because of the space needs and the classroom needs of the traditional students who was our bread and butter, let's face it. You know, it got more and more difficult to get adult students into classes in the evening or even during the day was all most impossible.

**36:09 GN:** You probably won't believe it, but you talk about the adult students; in a sense, we cater to them at night so much so at one time we closed school for two weeks in the summer when I.B.M went on vacation.

**36:22 EB:** Oh my goodness.

**36:23 GN:** And we said, we were just doing a revamping here. We never admitted that it was because they weren't going to be here that we closed down.

**36:33 EB:** You know we always had strong ties with (I.B.M). We did programs out. I did programs out with I.B.M, worked with the students out there. We had a large [...] You know for many years programs out there. Then they came to the Fishkill extension. And they flourished, and you know when I.B.M changed their whole dynamic and subcontracting out, and the benefits were gone that the lucrative benefits, I should say where you know you could go pursue any major et cetera. Then they got very specific of how many courses a year you could take, et cetera.

**37:15 GN:** That's a little unknown story. That kind fills in a lot of empty things. How did Marist get to where it is today? Well, there's a long story about struggling in some of those years.

**37:32 EB:** I think the other thing, and that's where [...] When I was on campus, and the fund, the revenue, and the enrolment for adult education started, it was of two; terrible things happening to I.B.M. Our numbers dipped tremendously, and there were many factors to that. And one of the things it was decided was that we would then oversee summer school. And we took over winter intersession, and that's when we started putting the online courses in the summer, and there was a dual purpose for the online courses. They were done in ten-week sessions for the adult students because they are on two ten-week sessions. So they could tack two courses each in a ten-week period and still keep up to twenty-four credits a year. And then the other part of that section for traditional students to take online courses, and then it grew. I developed a program. I don't know if it was good or bad. It was a good revenue source. We started out with like five courses in the winter session, and it ran longer than the usual ten days session that college used to do. We started it right at finals, and it ended like the day before classes started on campus. And it was a pilot project that started out with like four or five courses, and then it grew tremendously. Now the winter intersession, I think, is almost all-online if I am not mistaken.

**39:23 GN:** A lot of extensions, and in other words, the last day of classes is not the last day of papers necessarily to be in. Sometimes, they extended it to get papers done. So things have changed. Well on that subject things have changed. Let's talk about that. As you look back, you know you've seen Marist go through all of these changes. What strikes you as maybe some of the more significant

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changes in the development of Marist? Where do you begin?

**39:59 EB:** Where do you begin is exactly right. You know, it's interesting looking back in the early 80s when I was on campus and only having three buildings. And it was truly a Marist family because you knew everybody. Everybody knew you. You knew everybody. You know it was a much smaller place and that as we began to grow. We needed to grow, and I often struggled with that. I also said that things changed when so many of the former Marist Brothers began to retire. Even though they may have left the Brotherhood, they still had the philosophy. They still had the sense of spirit, and I truly felt that we went through a period of time when there was very few left that presence was greatly missed because [...] But we had to grow. To survive. It's a catch-22. On the one hand, to survive in this, to stay in higher academia and to excel as much as we have, and to become so competitive and put our name out there, there were a lot of hard decisions that maybe you and I or myself would say you know would the Marist Brothers really want this? Or are we becoming more corporate culture here rather you know what it was? But I think we do a wonderful job with students. I think we still have a very dedicated faculty. Who will go the extra mile whenever they're asked to and sometimes not even need to be asked. I know what I'm at when I am out, especially when I'm in the northeast and or I have a lot of relatives in the southern Jersey area, and they are just.

**42:07 GN:** There was a time when they didn't know Marist.

**42:09 EB:** They didn't know Marist, no. They said to me, "My goodness, Eileen worked for Marist College." And the rave reviews of so many of the students who went there or they had friends that went there. The family knew of the college and just as I mean to have such a great reputation and for the students who come, I still think we have a wonderful [...] I think we do a really good job in terms of the students. Yeah, is the population much different than it used to be? I think so. I think at one time, we dealt with more middle-class blue-collar, you know, sometimes you didn't know how these poor kids were ever going to pay the bill, and they weren't the top scholars. But on the other hand, they left here. They were like a sponge and soaked up everything they could get.

**43:07 GN:** Tell you this, I asked Father LaMorte, who is the chaplain here, and I said, "What would you say about the students?" Well, he said, "When I first came here, maybe one kid had an automobile and had been hit by a train several times. You know." He said, "Now they all have automobiles and, moreover, the latest model." He can't afford the car that they have.

**43:30 EB:** We can't afford [...]

**43:36 GN:** That they come with this expectancy. You know that this is the way. That part of it is true. Financially they have much better established than we were. Their parents went to college. They probably have much better incomes. On the other hand, they seem to draw each other. I mean, they still open the door for you. They still remain the same simple kids in that sense.

**44:05 EB:** I think Gus, it's not just here at Marist but everywhere. There's a generation of entitlement. And the parents because they have gone to college and they are a lot savvier than you know generations before, where their child was the first of the generation going to college.

**44:28 GN:** They have their own bathroom at home. And they expect to have their own bathroom here. The other part on this same subject, you know, we've got eleven thousand applications for a thousand seats in the freshmen class. Sean Carlos tells me we could

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fill it with all Marist applicants. The first three thousand are just Marist people who are sending more. So their father went here. Their mother went here. Their brother went here. And he says, "But we can't do that." We have a full-time office in California for admissions and recruiting from the West Coast and Hawaii, so that part of it is there. So now, part of this is the leadership. I mean, Dennis is following Foy, who follows Paul Ambrose. I don't know if you have ever met these people.

**45:22 EB:** I met Foy.

**45:23 GN:** You met Foy, and Foy is still around and still has his ear to the ground. He comes in with his cane, and you know, I was with him at a study session this morning. You know he's very much alert and involved, and so that's one part of it. But what else do you see in terms of how did this happen? You mentioned the faculty.

**45:47 EB:** I think of the leadership of the college, the vision. I really do. And as the college began to grow and became more selective. The vision and I contribute a lot of that to Dennis Murray, you know. And the trustees.

**46:10 GN:** I mean, the river has always been there, but we didn't see it for years because Dennis had to take down some trees. To make it so visible.

**46:20 EB:** But I credit him for a great deal and the trustees and the leadership too. I think in the faculty [...] I think we have some top-notch people in terms of the executive V.P. You know, I think.

**46:40 GN:** Roy Merolli did an excellent job. I talked with him in one of these sessions, and he talks about the whole spirit of the place. What brought him into it? To stay with it, you know. Even after retirement, he's teaching here. Plus, the other thing too is that we do have this scene called the Hudson River, and Vassar doesn't have that.

**47:07 EB:** The other thing is, you know, Poughkeepsie isn't your most ideal college city either. We have been able to, and I just think it's good work. I think I'm always amazed when you sit through Baccalaureate, the award ceremony to hear of the awards and the Fulbright's and the students and where they're going. You know you sit there, and you just go wow. You know it's the wow factor. You know who was responsible for this. Yeah, it's in the student's genes to be motivated, not so much motivated, but to have the smarts. The genetic intelligence. It's the direction. It's the people here at Marist, the faculty. I still have a very strong feeling that the faculty helped push and motivate the students to become. You see it from the time they become freshmen and when they walk out of here as seniors. I think it's just not even the staff. I mean, we have a very dedicated staff, especially in academic support and in all of those areas over when Deborah DiCaprio's area. You have such [...]

**48:28 GN:** I spoke to Deb as well. She was talking; of course, the difference in the students is as much they have, in a sense, been pampered. One of the problems is drugs, not drugs. But not drugs necessarily off the marketplace [...] The family prescribes energy and all of this state a certain kind to keep them going at this pace. It's the culture that has changed so much.

**48:56 EB:** And that's just part of society. That you know, I don't think you can [...] you know we are microscopic of society.

**49:05 GN:** Of course, the other thing is we're only seventy miles from New York City, which you know to the population down there.

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There is a Marist tradition of high schools that have affected this. All of that, I think, would be part of it.

**49:20 EB:** Well, I think that the fact that so many of our students go abroad. But again, they have A. the opportunity we have great programs abroad, but also financially, they can afford it. And what an experience that is for the students.

**49:39 GN:** Of course, Dr. Belanger would not agree with the way it is being done. He doesn't like tourism. He wants them to go to Spain and stay there for a year and learn the language. Go to France. So it would turn over if he saw that half of the senior graduating class had had some years, had some months outside the USA.

**50:00 EB:** But how many colleges again?

**50:04 GN:** We're the one percent of those with the biggest abroad program. [...] That being said, what does Marist need? If you had the chance to talk to the board, what would you say in terms of what I think would be a good idea if? I'm telling you what some of the people have told me before. Security has been here, and they said, you know what? We need a building for security like you didn't have a building for your staff. They'd have no place where they can meet. You know, for a whole bring them all together so that but he says, so we all so need a parking lot.

**50:49 EB:** We always need parking.

**50:51 GN:** They have looked, and they like to put one up in the well down there below Sheahan. You know, on the way down to the McCann Center, there's that. You can put five or six-story buildings. Costs seventeen thousand dollars a car space to put that up. We're not like likely to get a donor to do that.

**51:13 EB:** We have been used to having a campus where you can still park somewhere very close to the perimeters, which many colleges don't have.

**51:23 GN:** Fordham, you have to walk forever.

**51:25 EB:** And you pay for your parking pass. My sister worked for Brookdale Community, and they had to buy a parking pass. I would say I'm glad to hear we're doing something of a new science building. I always thought our sciences [...] We did an excellent job in Donnelly in that small little area. And that was something I think we should have ten years ago and maybe with this new program coming. I also, [...] it's always been my pet peeve. I would love to see a Master's in Social Work here. Our students have advanced standing when they graduate from the social work program, and then we lose them to other colleges, and they just have to go in and do one year. But I understand the politics there. The psychology department is much larger than the social work department. The social work numbers are low, and I think in this day and age, we are going to need more and more people working in those fields, and I would love to see a Master's in Social Work. I think sometimes a little bit more, and this is what you know, I still have the adult students in the back of my mind always but not just for the adult students. But what are programs to keep students here? To keep them into our masters? How do we feed our own students into our Master's program? Or don't we want to do that? I mean, that's the question. I guess it has to be raised at a level more than you and I are speaking. But sometimes, I feel that we kinda miss the buck on things. Yeah, I think if the field were going with the Physician's Assistant. Yeah, I'm very happy to see that. But I always used to say,

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"Why don't we do something? There is all these RN at the associate's level." How come we can't bring them in at the bachelor's level and give them a master's in health care or something? A specific master's in healthcare not with two courses under the Public Administration or a sequence of three courses but because we know that's a field that's constantly growing. Yeah, I think it'll be interesting to see what we're going to do with the Ridge building, the mansion.

**00:00 GN:** We had to put up a building next to it called the Hotel. You know, there are no elevators in the building as there are now. You know, both rooms are limited, so all of that it's a nice place for a dinner, a conference, show movies, have a picnic outside on the lawn, and view the Hudson. Alright, one last question, not that I want to end this. But just time is running out. Basically, it's this; Is college worth the investment? It's costing forty-five thousand dollars. That's money. It's costing a lot of effort in terms to come for four years and do these things. Cost giving up home and coming away and so on? Tell me why it's worth it.

**00:00 EB:** I think for many reasons. One, it's a child's future. I really do; I think a strong education is a key to success, key to leadership, and key in just the development of the individual. Second, you see the transformation that takes place. You see the transformation. And if you talk to people who've been in school, they'll tell you it was probably the most formative years for them was going from high school to college. And I think to compete in a global society and to compete with other countries. Education is key. I still believe in the liberal arts education to make people think and write. To be able to write and articulate what they need to say. And that scares me today with all the texting and all the social media stuff.

**00:00 GN:** There's a new language out there, LOL.

**00:00 EB:** Yeah, but I feel its education is always. I mean, people spend thirty thousand dollars on a car. And how long does the car last a person? What do they do trade in three years or buy another one? They're willing to spend money, even leasing. They'll put two-thousand, three-thousand down and then lease for four hundred a month. I mean, for a short period of time, that's money just thrown out. Whereas education is still an investment, can every student afford to go to a private college? No. But I think [...] Marist is not in the position where they really need a lot of transfer students. But I think I often told people, "Get your first two years at a community college if you can't afford four years at a private school." And if you have to go to a state school, go but then do your masters at a private school get that final whatever you need or do your first two years and then try to transfer into a private school, where you'll get the individualized attention, especially for someone like at Marist. I had a daughter. She went to Buffalo and then came back, couldn't get her classes, and came back here.

**00:00 GN:** Two hundred bucks in a class.

**00:00 EB:** When she got to be a junior, there was no guarantee that you'd even graduate in five years because you couldn't. And the faculty didn't care; they were union. This was their job. This is how many you have in class; This is how many sessions you teach. It was cut and dry. She says, "You know, mom. I finally came back to Marist. I came to Marist." And she says, "I want to tell you, it was the faculty here." She said, "What a difference." And you know, the experience and the pushing to go to the next level within your work explored it a little a little further.

**00:00 GN:** It's amazing. It just comes to me now that I eventually fired a professor because I went to his class in November. And there were only twenty-five kids. But he didn't know the names of all of them. You know somebody can in, and he ask his name

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because he was late and he wanted to write it down. I said I can't imagine this. What are you, a visitor here? It's like, it just surprised me. Well, in summary, it seems like it's been a good ride for you.

**00:00 EB:** I mean, there were definitely rough moments. I mean, I filed a grievance against the school at one point. It went to the E.O.C. I withdrew it because the college did what they needed to do. It had to do with pay discrimination or title discrimination. Work duties were much greater than another colleague who practically did nothing, and the college corrected it. But I took a really bum rap for that for probably three years. And unfortunately, sometimes, the full truth never comes out. In terms of, I was one who withdrew this suit. And that many people didn't know. You know there are often times [...] I went to apply for a position, and I was told I was tainted for that. Rather than look at my merit, you know. But on the other hand, when all is said and done. I was very fortunate. I was fortunate to be given the leadership and the trust, and I mean [...] You know Dennis would pick up the phone and call me. Tony would give me heart attacks half the time cause he'd say, "We're down in revenue, Eileen." And I said, "Tony, you're missing a program. I keep very close track of it." He said, "Come right over." And I come over. He'd come over, and we'd always find it. We had such close working, but they knew the importance that yes, we needed to do programs, but we needed to make money. There was a return. We had [...] you just couldn't do it out of love from your heart totally. You could still do good work, but you could, you know.

**00:00 GN:** I already used my retirement money to get new T.V. cameras because Gus, no, no, you'll find it so. But there were struggling years, and in your case, of course, you know.

**00:00 EB:** I think there's growing pains too as the college got bigger and bigger and.

**00:00 GN:** Lost some of its real concern.

**00:00 EB:** Yeah, and you know, but then I'd look back, and I said I had my retirement party was amazing. There were over one hundred people there. Roy Merolli came in. Dennis stayed the entire time. It was just, and I said were [...] I have to say; I know how many people lost their jobs, who were rooted out in their fifties, late-fifties working in corporate America. You know how many people were devastated. You saw it with I.B.M; you know people with Master's, fifty-six, fifty-seven years old and all of a sudden, faced with nothing. And you know I was blessed to be able to work in an environment that ninety-five percent of the time was supportive.

**00:00 GN:** You'd look at it now, and you'd say you were part of this.

**00:00 EB:** I was part of a small being. Lets you know if you look at the total picture; S.A.P. was just a small little thing. They had a lot of bigger problems than my toilet going through the floor (laughter).