

LINUS RICHARD FOY (Part II)

**Marist College
Poughkeepsie, NY
Transcribed by Jamie Edwards
For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections**

Transcript – Linus Richard Foy (Part II)

Interviewee: Linus Richard Foy

Interviewer: Gus Nolan

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Summary: The second part of this interview concerns Linus Foy during his administrative and presidential years. Various topics are discussed, including the many changes Foy initiated and his vision of the future of the college. Contrasts between Foy and the other two college presidents are discussed, and how each played an important role in the growth of the college.

Gus Nolan: This is an interview with Dr. Linus Foy, part two. The date is October the 18th, and we are in the Archive room in the Library [on the Marist College campus].

In our last session we ended with Marist continued interests with the poor and the marginalized and we talked about the grant that Bill Murphy was able to get. In today's session, we would like to start now with a review of the presidency that you administered and the subsequent decisions that were made along the way. So the first question is: in your role as president, were there some specific goals and principles that guided your decisions?

Linus Richard Foy: At the very first, in 1958 and '59, I was determined that the college should have a good academic reputation. I'd been teaching in the secondary schools in New York City, and some of the Catholic colleges had reputations: there's a drinking college, or a weekend college. I was determined I didn't want that to happen. So that was my first goal: to make it strong academically. The other goals evolved as I got to know the college. It became clear that Paul Ambrose's vision of a commuting college - where the commuting student's income would more than offset the course of the scholastic aid - just was not going to work. So my vision, if you want, was to make it into a representative boarding college, which based most of its students out of the Metropolitan New York area. And that was, I would say, the next goal. Some other principles... when I first became president, I was very young. And I found out if you went and asked the other presidents questions, they were happy to share their wisdom with you. One of the presidents was the president of Ithaca College, and they had just recently abandoned their campus in Ithaca and moved outside and put up probably a thirty million dollar campus. So when I spoke to him, he said, "look, money, will never

be as cheap as it is now. Decide how big you're going to be, and then build as fast as possible to that size." And I had... my principle was that I didn't think you could give a comprehensive enough variety of courses unless you had between twelve hundred and fifteen hundred students. So my goal began how can I get to fifteen hundred? Can I get a mix of boarding students and day hops to do that? Another principle was that the college, in the long run, could not be dependent upon contributed services of the brothers. But that wouldn't be the make or break, the college had to operate as an independent financial institution. And it took a couple years to get that way, but I'd say by '64, '65 we were there. I think those were the main principles. We've already spoken about some before: trying to help out the poor and marginalized. We saw the college, particularly in those days of working with lower middle income students, the majority of students came from families where neither the father nor the mother were college graduates. So they were the first generation to get to college. We thought that was a good choice. We could service that type of student very easily and very well.

GN: Okay in retrospect, maybe this is kind of the same question looked at in another way, what would you say would be two or three of the most significant accomplishments? Looking now at the campus, at the buildings, at the growth of the college. What seeds did you think you planted that perhaps came to fruition best?

LRF: Probably the most important is restructuring the relationship between the Marist Brothers and the college. I became convinced that the brothers could not finance the college properly and couldn't staff it independently with no outside help. So we did that in two stages, and the first stage – and we spoke about this in the last interview – because the dormitories were being funded outside, they had to be owned by the college and the

property mortgaged. The section south of the Waterworks Road was transferred probably in 1961. In 1969, the situation with the brothers had changed radically. First of all, there were virtually no more student brothers. We had built two dormitories for them: the Benoit and Gregory Houses, and they were filling [only] one of them. It just looked as though the reservation of all the property north of the Waterworks Road for the use of the Marist Brothers just didn't make sense. On the other hand, many of the brothers outside the college felt that they were... somehow had lost the college. About two years previous to that, they became aware of the fact that there were more laymen on the board than religious and the thought came to them, "oh my god, we could lose the college." As I mentioned, the treasurer in Rome would have been happy to lose the college. He didn't want the responsibility of financing it. So one of the, if the want, the deals I made with Brother Kieran, who was then provincial, is that we would purchase the northern section of the campus and pay them a million dollars for it. And the million dollars, he wanted the million dollars. We said we would pay him twenty-five thousand dollars for the next forty years. And that's still in progress. In other words, that twenty-five thousand dollars still gets sent, and I think it was intended for the use of the retired brothers, I'm not certain.

GN: I guess probably one of the best kept secrets that's survived. I've never heard of that before...

LRF: Oh, he wanted to be able to tell his troops that he had gotten something for it. And at the same time, he knew that basically was useless as a scholasticate. That's not the way the training of student brothers was going. So it made sense to both of us to do that. So that's one of the significant accomplishments. The other accomplishment that we

spoke about last time was turning the college co-ed. And I'd like to turn back on that for just a minute because I happened to listen to last week's tape, but my notion is it looked as though we were forced into it by IBM by wanting to train its women and so on. When I was over in Europe on sabbatical, I did a lot of research on this and as I indicated, I found some Marist Brothers teaching boys and girls in grammar schools in southern France, which we never heard of. But I also did a lot of reading, and generally, the attitude towards education in Catholic circles was the pope had written an encyclical around the year 1900 which said co-education is wrong - there should be separate education. And some people think that culture, basically, is driven by religion. I came to the conclusion just the opposite: that very often, religions are driven by the culture. And in almost every culture, the status of women is lower than that of men. It certainly is if you look at their primogenital rules, the laws of succession for the kings, inheritance of land. And basically one the shocking facts I found out was even though almost nobody could read or write, and five percent of the men could sign their names, only two percent of the women could sign their names [in southern France] in 1817. And that indicated the value that people put on education of women, because you bought your education depending upon what you wanted, if you wanted the kid to learn arithmetic you had to do more. So I became convinced personally that the whole notion of co-education was coming out of a more basic feeling that women are not as valuable as men. And I just didn't feel that's right. So if you want my philosophical point was co-education made a lot more sense. It sort of indicates to women that they are just as valuable, and just as important as men.

GN: There was a point and time when we did some instruction of women. I personally actually taught the nurses at St. Francis' Hospital. They were getting their liberal arts credits from us. And there was the possibility of putting up a dormitory here for women at that time. Was that every really considered, or was that just scuttled off as it were?

LRF: My first year, Sister Ann Elizabeth, who was head of the nursing school, invited me up and charmed me with the notion that I [Marist] take it over. And with a very small research, I said no. The reason is that schools of nursing are very expensive to maintain. If you hire a history teacher, he can teach maybe one of his major subjects, then he could teach the core courses. When you hire a nurse, she teaches OBGYN, and she can't teach anything else. There are no core curricular courses, so it's very expensive. The interning, or the supervision of the students as they go through hospitals is expensive. I just felt it didn't make sense. And shortly after that time, Mount St. Mary's went into nursing, and it didn't make sense for me to go along with it. I think after I left, the college went into nursing, and abandoned it in about three years.

GN: A few years later, right.

LRF: So maybe I was right [laughter].

GN: Would you point us to some decisions now that if you had to do over, you might do differently? One might be, for instance, in hiring faculty or in governing the college, or in the decision of physically burying the cemetery. Were these good decisions? Were there some decisions, that if you had to look at it again, you might change?

LRF: Well like Frank Skeffington, I've never made a wrong decision [laughter]. I think when you make decisions you have to go back to the environment the time you made them. And I think most of our decisions were pretty good. One decision which I now

know is wrong, is I didn't want any varsity athletics. I found a strange correlation. When we finally did start varsity athletics, the intramurals blossomed. Before that, the intramurals weren't very strong. I had never been able to link the connection between intramurals and varsity athletics, but I was determined to downplay athletics. In fact, until I left, I believe we were always Division III. And I reluctantly had to go to Division II because Division III became... a strange thing. With the beginning of HEOP [Higher Education Opportunity Programs] schools that normally would not take good athletes were suddenly taking good athletes. And we found Ron Petro [the basketball coach] would wind up with a thirteen and eleven record, and the thirteen wins were blow-outs against teams that Ron was competing, I'd say fairly. The eleven losses were against teams that had really used teams that used assistance programs just to beef up their athletic programs. So in a certain sense, for self-protection, we moved up to Division II. Maybe I should have moved a little faster than that. I think one of the best decisions was to go to residential – to convert it from a commuting, to a commuting residential college. I think that really fueled the growth and got us to the fifteen hundred students a lot faster than we would of. We never could have done that if we just restricted ourselves to commuting students. And it gave a greater diversity to the student body.

GN: Surely the decision about the cemetery was the right one. Any retrospect? Some of the property would not have been developed if we had to remain with the old one. What was the problem in your view?

LRF: Let's talk about that. When I went to school here, the cemetery was at the southern edge of the property. It was located as far away from the main property as one would expect. One of the first things I did when I became president was to approach

New York Central. And I knew that they were trying to sell off property, and we didn't want them to sell off the seven acres south of the cemetery. So I went down to New York, spoke to the real estate people, and made a deal where they transferred the seven acres at another price – I think it was seven thousand dollars. At that stage, the cemetery from being on the periphery of the campus, really became in the middle of it. A couple of other things happened. That was the year that the so-called “arterial highway,” Route 9, going through Poughkeepsie was built. They were looking for a place to dump fill that was going through what had been a garbage dump. Nobody wanted the fill. One of my advisors, Jack Gartland, who advised in so much stuff, said that as a kid, he used to play around there and he never saw any ruined cars or anything there. That it all just looked like, if you want, plain vegetable garbage. So we took the gamble that we would take the fill. And the other part of the deal was they had to give us all the fill for the whole highway. The net result of that, was that section, just as you come off the entrance - south entrance – that used to be a hollow. We were able to fill that and actually level it out. Another thing, when we built Sheahan, the original design was to create four buildings which were exact replicas of Sheahan and they were going to be placed where the baseball field is now. And the contracts given out when we began digging for foundations, they found out that they would have to go very, very deep. So Brother Nilus suggested moving it out to the rocky section on the west and that's why Sheahan is over there. So this was sort of, for maybe ten years, this area wasn't really used. It was valuable but we didn't know what for. And then we began talking about the McCann Foundation, and the construction of the McCann Center. That was the only viable place where you could put it. So we then decided that we would move all the bodies over to

Esopus. And our lawyers said, “wait a minute.” St. Francis [Hospital] has had a very difficult problem. St. Francis wanted to expand to an old Dutch Reformed cemetery. They wanted to move it. To move a body, you had to go to the descendents, and get their permission. It took St. Francis almost twenty years to prove to the state that they had done their best. With the brothers, there were no descendents. So when you don’t have descendents, you have to go back to their parents, who were obviously dead. Their brothers and sisters, you know their blood brothers and sisters, and their descendents. And most of these folks lived in France, were born in France. You’d have to go back to France and explain to Frenchmen - who probably had never heard of this brother – why you needed their permission to move the body. And a lot of the times, these people would say, “oh, there’s money in this. They wouldn’t be coming to us unless there was some money in it someplace.” So it was basically impractical. Also, a couple things. When I was here as a student, particularly as a novice, we used to visit the cemetery every night. It was a routine. You’d go down there and say a few prayers, go back. And even scholastics would go over there. That wasn’t happening anymore, because there were no novices, there were no scholastics. So the cemetery was turning into... soon it would turn into what you see around this territory and even in Westchester: good old family cemeteries, overgrown, nobody every visits them. And yet, the brothers saw a beautiful cemetery in Esopus. So the decision was made not to move the cemetery, to leave it right where it is, to take its markings so nobody could ever build over it, to fill it, and then to put up a monument – which would indicate which brothers were buried here. And that’s basically why we had to do it. We didn’t really want to do that. We wanted to move the cemetery, but it made more sense to leave it there than to hold up the

construction of the college for twenty years while we were on a fruitless search for descendents.

GN: Anyone who's planned an executor of a will, I think, can appreciate the difficulties in finding heirs. I think on that thought, we can appreciate what you must have seen in, even in a number of brothers buried there. Must have been sixty or seventy brothers and—

LRF: I had a personal experience of that. My aunt, who was unmarried died in California, and my good-hearted brother took care of the funeral expenses. She knew she wanted to be buried here. She died, intestate [without a will] so he paid to have her body flown back here to Gate of Heaven [a cemetery in Valhalla, Westchester County, with the Foy family plot]. And then there was money – maybe she had three, thirty-five hundred dollars in the bank account. He couldn't take it down. What he had to do was go... she had ten brothers and sisters, he had to go to all of them. And the net result is that he never got reimbursed and the state of California has the three thousand dollars. So in personal experience... so when the lawyers told me about what was going to happen, with the brothers, I had a very good sense as to what was going to happen.

GN: Okay, moving on. You left the presidency at Marist College more than twenty years ago. Now through the years, you've continued to be involved in a number of ways. What compelled you to continue and to serve the college? And then would you comment on your role and the contributions you've made since leaving office either as a member of the board trustees, or as a friend of the college, or a graduate the institution?

LRF: Well, I spent twenty-one years here as president, so it's very hard to walk away. I looked in the... I had one thing that I had insisted on. I had seen several of the college

presidents who were given an honorary title of chancellor and allowed to stay on. One thing I did not want for whoever my successor would be was for me to say, “well gee, you’re doing it right, but we used to do it this way.” I had seen too much of that at other colleges. So I definitely warned the trustees that I would stay away from the place for at least three years. The new person had the right to come in and set their own goals and give it a different vision. And I did that; I wasn’t on the board. I was invited back in the fall of 1983 to be the first Linus Richard Foy Chair Holder. And I got permission from my employer to do that. I came back and taught two courses.

GN: The chair was in mathematics, or computer science?

LRF: Yes, computer science. The courses were one in math and one in computer science. But I still worked with Boyden, my employer, but they arranged to do both things so it was pretty crazy. I was getting older. After that, I just was friendly because I would go back to alumni meetings because a lot of the students knew me. The college was small, generally at every graduation class I personally knew at least sixty to seventy percent of all the students. So when you come back to alumni, they know you. You’re not exactly a strange person. And I did a lot of alumni. I didn’t really do that much donation, but I don’t have that much to give. Coming back I was the honorary trustee, that’s what a lifetime trustee is, you not counted as one of the real ones. So, theoretically, a voice but no vote. Basically, I’ve been on two major committees: one is the academics committee and the other one is the student life committee. And the academics committee, I always felt that I wanted somebody from academics. When I was president, I tried to get another college president on [the Board of Trustees]. I had him for a few

years from Iona, and we got Henrietta Smith as the faculty member who understood faculty events.

GN: Where was Henrietta Smith from?

LRF: Vassar. And she was a psych teacher and a very down to earth person. Before that, she had been recommended by Charlie Griffin, who had been the dean at that time and was a trustee here and was a terrific help to me, very. She was there, Henrietta was there. The academics committee... generally, people from business don't understand how faculties work, to be very honest. They are used to operating a business, they're used to hiring and firing people. Then you start talking about tenure, about dealing with the faculty, and they get really frustrated with this. So it's very helpful to have Henrietta do that. I sort of have been relegated to this position, you know, in terms of explaining to the - we call them "lay trustees," in the sense of non-academic trustees - as to how academics work. So that's been very useful. As far as the student life committee goes, I'm not as helpful because they have some terrific women on that committee. It's headed by Frannie Reese, you have Betty Wolf, Theodora Butnick, another one - Katherine Cullen, and they really have been extremely helpful in terms of talking about housing and decorations, student life. So I really don't have to work that hard at that one. But the academics you still have to work hard at because the trustees tend to get very frustrated. Once they understand what's going on, they do it, but they always feel comfortable if there's somebody besides the president and the dean on the board who tells them, "yes, that's the way academics works."

GN: That's interesting, that would move into this question, which is further down. What part did you play in the development of faculty governance at Marist? Do you remember

the key players in organizing of the Marist faculty? Was Dan Kirk a part of that, or Brennan, or--

LRF: --Probably Dan Kirk would have been more influential than anybody else.

GN: Was there another model of a college that we were imitating, or was it a kind of a new--

LRF: --Not really. It sort of grew out... at the very beginning, the faculty consisted of mostly of brothers. So it was relatively simple to just get the brothers together – that might have twelve or fourteen of them to sit down and say we’re thinking of doing this, thinking of doing that. And they’d say, yeah that sounds like a good idea, no let’s not do it. As the college grew, I think we... basically, again, I had gone to school with a lot of other presidents, in terms of getting their advice. Also, from my experience really at even St. Ann’s Academy, where the faculty did a lot, with all due respect to the principals, they weren’t really a very strong group. So you had some very brilliant and bright faculty and they informally ran St. Ann’s Academy. You were there, you probably understand—

GN: --Just as you said that now, comes to mind Bill Murphy and Jimmy Brady, Danny—

LRF: --Jimmy Brady, and Dan Kirk there, myself, Stokes at an earlier time. We virtually ran the thing: determined what the kids would take. Did a lot of things that way. The force for St. Ann’s was the faculty, not the administration.

GN: Comes to mind the Daniel Kirk’s creation of the scholarship program. He used to have a group of kids that he would take... New York State scholarships were the big thing to get--

LRF: --Yeah, I wound up heading that one year. Most of the kids at St. Ann's by and large were very lower, middle income kids. And they had not been exposed to shall we say some of the nicer things in life.

GN: --High culture.

LRF: A big thing then was what they called the Regents scholarships. Which now, is almost automatic. But in those days, if you got it, it was quite an accomplishment and you had to take competitive tests. And these tests very often involved cultural aspects. So the scholarship class, you took your ten or twelve brighter seniors and you could talk about anything. I remember taking them to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the women giving demonstrations and explaining all the details of the Naked Maja. Here I am, sitting in a Roman collar with a bunch of seventeen year-old kids in front of a naked woman. But another time we took them, I still remember, the Teahouse of Lotus Bloom. And that was the first play on Broadway any of those kids had ever seen. And after that, many of them went on their own, took their friends or girlfriends and so on. So they were opened up to visions. You can teach almost anything: what they wanted and what you wanted. But that was Dan, anyway Dan really started that. And I just sort of followed through. Here, we basically said we wanted the faculty involved. And we felt that the curriculum really should be handled by faculty. I may have gone overboard on that. I think what's happening now is that the structures are very — probably could create delays in the introduction of new programs.

GN: The process is having everything go through committee, and approve it by the plenary session [of faculty] and then move to the board?

LRF: Right. And what you have basically, particularly in fast moving programs – I’m not talking medieval history but let’s say computer science or communications – you have a faculty that are very well trained and are willing to teach what they know, but the knowledge is changing radically. And there’s a tendency for faculty to be conservative and stick with what we have. There’s a tendency of the students to say, “we want to see where you’re going. We heard that such and such a college is doing this.” So there’s a building tension there. Which may be good, but I would probably like to see a little quicker reaction. That doesn’t mean cut the faculty out. Because eventually, the faculty make the college. They’re the ones who make the college go, not anybody else.

GN: Okay, coming back to a personal matter. Would you care to share with us any decision, rather, to leave the brotherhood? You’ve remained Marist very much so and yet, would you want to comment on that?

LRF: I was in a strange position. I guess in the late ‘60s, the brothers had split into liberals and conservatives. Some people wanted to keep the brotherhood just the way it is, others wanted to go. There wasn’t two groups, the liberals were across the board spectrum from very liberal to crazy, conservatives were a broad spectrum super conservative to conservative. But basically, there was one group, which was very unhappy with the way the church and the brothers were going. There was another group that wanted to push it even faster. So I think I was seen... and Ed Cashin [Academic Vice President at Marist and a Marist Brother] was seen as people who were moderates but were forward looking. So we were elected to the general chapter very quickly. That was in 1967. Dave Kammer who was considered forward looking, myself, and Kieran represented the province. One of the key issues for the brothers then was: would the

priesthood be allowed? I didn't particularly care, I didn't think that was an issue over here. But it turned out to be an issue in places like Brazil, and in provinces where there were very few priests. And the brothers in many cases were the most educated people available, and a lot of bishops wanted to basically just bring them in. So when I got back, that first year at the end of '67, apparently Cashin had been painted with the brush that he was pro-priesthood, which I didn't think was fair. But I could see... what I could see is the people, people coming to me and say: if they were conservative, they'd come to me and say, "make those people do something," if they were liberal, they'd come to me and say, "make those people do something." And I said, "I don't want to spend my life making people do things." Because I can't. I've done my best. I also said, as what I saw was the brotherhood changing.

GN: Community life?

LRF: Not so much community life in terms of what it was going to do. People were going into different vocations rather than straight teaching. And when I looked at my own future, I said, "I've a doctorate in mathematics." I don't think I'm going to go out and work with the derelicts in Oakland, the way [Brother] Paddy Long did. I didn't think I would. So I just saw no particular future for me except taking care of people that had hardened. And said, "I'm going to stay right where I am," or said, "I'm going to be completely different." Then I kept saying, "I just saw myself being phased out in a certain sense."

GN: Okay and fitting into this change of position for yourself in the brotherhood for one thing but then leaving the presidency. How would you compare your position at Boyden

and the college presidency in terms of personal accomplishments and performance and stress, and what kind of job or which would you rather have?

LRF: I'd be more comfortable in academics. The Boyden position had a lot of challenges, but that's recruiting. And everybody thinks of recruiting as filling positions. The key to good recruiters is getting a job. In other words it's a sales position, just like in a lot of other situations. And the recruiters would never accept the top person somebody who wasn't a full-time recruiter. It's like, right now, faculties, they are not going to accept a president who doesn't have a doctorate. Unless he has a Nobel Prize, or a McArthur fellowship. But apart from that, somebody could be the brightest person in the world, if all he has is a bachelor or masters, the faculty's going to reject him. And whether that's fair or not, that's the way life is. That was true for Boyden so I could never have the top job. I always wound up the second job. But one of my abilities is organization. And what I found, where I was valuable to Boyden was I knew several languages. And Boyden's strength is in Europe. And most of the Americans don't know any languages; it's embarrassing to say. So people in Europe began to look to me as the person they could talk to. Even though we didn't speak in French or broken French, but they knew they could ship me stuff in French, or Spanish, or Italian and German and I would read it. So I became an important link. But Boyden itself, there was no future to become the top person. I also found that most of these people – I compare them with faculty. One of my jokes is that most faculty members could run a college if you just gave them maybe two, three hours on Friday afternoon. They could run it a lot better than the administration. Well most of the recruiters think they are great organizers, and they're generally terrible. They have a certain acid quality that they don't fit into the

structured organizations. That's why they moved down – the want to be independent. And that makes them very much like faculty. So my experience dealing with faculty helped me tremendously in dealing with recruiters.

GN: Okay, coming back to the campus and now in the afternoon of your life as it were. Looking at the three presidents we've had: Paul Ambrose before you, your own, and Dennis Murray as president now. Could you make some kind of comparison between their leadership and their presidencies? How would you compare Paul with yourself, with Dennis?

LRF: Well, we're three completely different types, and were probably in each case the right type at the right period. Paul had a very, shall we say, assertive personality. He had a dream of what the college was going to be like, and he would do anything possible to do it. And he did that within the limitations that were available to him: the limited amounts of money. He always was squirreling for money, or for people, or how to get the thing done. So he's probably the best throwback to Champagnat situation, where you build your own things and you do your own garden. He didn't do it, but he never quite got out of that situation. When I came, I'm really not very innovative. I usually depend upon other people for bright ideas. That's why people like Dan Kirk, who said he wanted to start the psych department, and he mentioned things he had done at St. Ann's. Bill Murphy just bubbled ideas. And my notion was to pick the right idea and then to organize to get it done. Now I had a vision: I wanted a college of fifteen hundred. I wanted it co-ed, I wanted it to service the community. I wanted a strong evening division. So I knew where I was going to go, the problem was how could I engineer it? And the question was financially how to engineer it, and I think I did a pretty good job on

that. But my vision of the college was to taper-off at some place around fifteen hundred full-time students. In fact, my last year here we actually cut back administration by five percent. Now Dennis' vision was wider. He's up to, if you want, three thousand. So he's basically rebuilt the college. I would thus define Dennis as the first professional administrator. He must more fits the pattern of a person who's really interested in administration and wants to do it. I was in more interested in teaching, I just happened to be yanked out and made a president, and probably never felt completely comfortable as president. Dennis always wanted to be a president, and he does the things, which a president does. So when you compare Dennis to me, it's certainly not fair. A lot of faculty always felt they could drop in on me and talk to me any time they felt like. This place is much larger, and you can't just drop in when you have five hundred faculty and staff. So people possibly who... have their noses out of joint... he's not as close as possible. But he has a vision of where he wants to bring the college and he has a vision of not allowing a college to rest on its laurels, but to force the college to move ahead. And then when he leaves, it's time for another president to have a slightly different vision.

GN: Okay that's it for now, we might get back to it later. But another point now. In your view, has the change and development and growth of the college affected positively or negatively, Marist ideals, that you and Paul envisioned?

LRF: [pause] I could answer either yes or no. You generally are a victim of – you're not a victim, but you live within a culture. And the period that I worked at, there was outside funding available for too many of the things for the disadvantaged. That was cut back, frankly, because there's a reaction against people in prisons. There's a feeling that

people are poor because they're shiftless. I don't agree with that. So I think the college has probably maximized its availability of outside funding. And yet, as you take the long view... back in the 60s and 70s, we were training the first generation college student. My long view now is I don't think you can survive in the sophisticated American society without some of the tools you get in a college education. So, to me, that's as essential as maybe, years ago, the grammar school education was. Now who are we servicing? I think right now, we tend to be servicing a higher proportion of upper middle income kids. And they need servicing, everyone needs servicing. So can Marist contribute something there? Yes. Will it be exactly the same as it was forty years ago? No it won't. But basically, the criterion as to whether Marist fails is when the student gets out, eight, ten years later, and says what Marist did for "me." From what I can see, I think they're doing pretty well.

GN: Could you look into the future? You talked about the next president. What would you think Marist would be like twenty-five years from now? Will technology be number one here still?

LRF: Well, eventually in technology once you get the lead, the others will catch up to you within a year or two. There's a very short life-span to become the dominant person. I think Marist has probably maximized its ability, and certainly Dennis [Murray] wants technology to be an important thing. The most radical change that I see coming is what's called distance learning. And that could be a tremendous shock to the faculty and to everybody else because just as with your voice – everybody says, "well no matter where I am, you can get me. I have my phone" – distance learning, you can teach people no matter where they are. So you can actually... you're not talking, you've lost the concept

of physical space, you now have a concept of communications. Now that's embryonic at the present time because the very simplistic view is all I need for distance learning is to take my course notes and put them on the computer. That doesn't work. You're talking about communicating with somebody that you don't see, or you rarely see, and you need different methods. Right now I say it's in its infancy. Distance learning is probably best when there's a highly motivated student. So somebody, for example, going for a master's degree is motivated. Is the eighteen year old or seventeen year old student motivated to sit and his or her house and stare at his computer to take fifteen credits? I don't think so. So how do you mix both of these? The technology is making a lot of things possible and I just don't know which way that's going to go.

GN: Will we have to provide some kind of interpersonal situations for them to come?

LRF: Yes. For most it's, now, I think somebody... the head of Rochester, I heard him speak once, the president. He said, "there are three thousand colleges and you can get a good education in twenty-eight hundred of them." He said, "and you're probably going to learn the same stuff because the faculty all come from the same undergraduate schools. And they use the same textbooks." So whether you come to Marist, or whether you go to Bard, or whether you go to Podunk U, or University of Minnesota, if you're taking calculus, you're probably going to learn the same stuff. But learning stuff is not as important as learning skills and as your development as a person. And that's basically where the residential college can be tremendous. That's why I think so much importance should be put on academic advisement, faculty, and staff relationship with students. And basically, student's relationships with each other. You have to look at these groups and

find out how they interact with each other. And I don't think you'll get that with distance learning.

GN: And Marist is rather in a unique place physically, isn't it, to provide an occasion for a wide suite of students to pass through here?

LRF: Yes, I think it will always have... first of all, physically, it's got a great location. It's just outside the metropolitan area. Well, very few students from metro New York want to go to California or Denver for their education. They want to get away from home, they don't want to get too far away from home – it's nice to get home to get your laundry done and pick up things like that – so this is perfect. You're away from the Island [Long Island], you're away from Jersey, you're away from Springfield, Mass., but you can be at any of these places in two or three hours. So Marist has a... you have to credit it with Dennis with creating a beautiful campus. Very impressive. But there could be other beautiful campuses. William and Mary is still beautiful. Williams [College] is beautiful. You know, the thing is, do you create an environment? One of things that we found, in the early 1960s, was we got students by word of mouth. Students talked to each other, and they're the ones who very often tell the kids in the classes behind them, "this is a good place to come. This is not a good place." And by large, I think our students have been our best recruiters.

GN: Perhaps there's been some question of points not addressed over these last two sessions. Do you have any observations that you would like to add?

LRF: Not at this time. I have... just a few words about the north campus. We did talk about my purchase of the seven acres [at south end of campus]. And in off campus, after we received it from the brothers and meant it to be developed, one of our thoughts was

we would put faculty housing there. In fact Dan Kirk built one with the idea that others be built. There was a pool there. We won't spend too much time on that, but apparently the pool was fed by a leaky pipe. [laughter] Which everybody thought was a natural spring. But basically, it had a part, from learning how to swim, it brought faculty together during the summer because a lot of faculty brought their wives and their families. And there was a natural--

GN: --Interaction?

LRF: --interaction which disappeared with the new McCann Center. Nobody does that. But the property just beyond that was property which was own by a contractor, Costanzi. We wanted to buy it, but... and we had a good working relationship, Brother Nilus helped him out when he was rebuilding [Route] 301 by letting him take out gravel from the brother's place there. What we did is we bought the back half of it, which nobody wanted. But again, we said, "Land, Henry George says land is only constant in the world." When somebody else takes that land, you're blocked. So we tried to expand north as far as we could. And of course in twenty years, we've been able to get the section moving towards Route 9, and also the property above that, and also property across the way. So getting more land I think is a major priority, or it's going to have to be for Dennis and for whoever comes. Just for potential usage, but basically, if the college stays at three thousand, it's got a pretty good size right where it is. I don't foresee the construction doubling or going to six thousand. I don't think that's in the works given the attitude. With three thousand, you can create a wide spectrum of programs.

GN: Do we have any interest in the New York State hospital there?

LRF: We are, we don't know what's going to happen. Our understanding is that the section from Route 9 to the river is going to be preserved as open space. That's good because that would mean that the work that Susan Roeller Brown is doing down at the waterfront would enable us to actually move right into that space. You'd have a huge green belt on the river. The other section is up for grabs. Apparently, it was given out. All of the state hospitals were given out to one broker. So we just don't know what's going to happen there. But we would love to get some of that land. We would have loved to get the land where Home Depot is, but the price – there was no way we could afford it because as a business section, that would settled the price and we can't afford that price. I don't think the buildings on a state hospital are very usable. They're really too old. But you look to see what you could get. I've often thought my own thought if we could do something with Esopus, but that's a twenty minute drive and that just not... It's not really, you know, could we actually put dormitories up there? What's happened now is students want to live on campus. There was a time when they all wanted to live off campus and do their own thing. They find now campus is where the action is. There are enough activities to keep them busy here. So the pressure is to live on campus, and not off.

GN: We would not refuse to accept a donation of property from one like Mr. Rich here if he chose to give the mansion to the college, would we?

LRF: I don't know. One of the interesting things, I've been studying the history of that property from 1750 to 2000. That's two hundred and fifty years. We always refer to it as Payne property, and the Payne mansion. He lived there less than six years, so you talk about somebody casting a long shadow. Although it's a very romantic thing, the question

is: what can it be used for? And if you were to take it over, if you were able to move the mansion over here you would still have to look at the operating costs of it. But obviously you're not going to move the mansion over here. And the property really is, in a certain sense, more valuable. It could always be a great bio-ecological lab because the railroad doesn't interrupt the land going down the river. So you have an excellent ecological study, but I'm sure they wouldn't turn it down.

GN: Okay, thank you very much.

LRF: Okay, thank you.

“END OF PART II OF INTERVIEW”