

**William Dourdis**

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, New York

Transcribed by Wai Oo

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

## **Transcript – William Dourdis**

**Interviewee:** William Dourdis

**Interviewer:** Gus Nolan

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See Also:

**Subject Headings:**     Dourdis, William  
                              Marist College – History  
                              Marist College (Poughkeepsie, New York)  
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**Summary:** William Dourdis discusses his early years and his time at Marist. He touches on the social aspects of being a student at Marist, being a part of the football team and later coaching. He discusses his post-graduation career as a teacher and what he learned from Marist after attending the institution.

[00:05](#) **GN:** Today is July 6<sup>th</sup>. It's Wednesday morning. We're meeting in the Marist College library and we're having an interview with Bill Dourdis, a graduate of 19-

[00:14](#) **WD:** 70.

[00:15](#) **GN:** 70. Good morning, Bill.

[00:16](#) **WD:** Good morning.

[00:18](#) **GN:** Bill, I'm happy that you are able to join us for this interview. And you have seen the list of people who've gone before you. And we're happy that you're willing to add your voice to theirs and telling the story as best you remember it. And we'll try and be as truthful as possible in the development of Marist, how this place come to be what it is today. And certainly you're among those in the early classes that contributed greatly in any of a number of areas: sports, student governments or some specialty rather. Be that as it may. Let me start from the beginning. What would be a general thumbnail sketch of your background? You said you were born in Poughkeepsie. Could you take it from there?

[01:14](#) **WD:** Born and bred in Poughkeepsie right over by Vassar Hospital on the other end of town. I went to Poughkeepsie High School and played football and was little bit of a class clown and probably could've done better.

[01:30](#) **GN:** Alright. Back it up a little. So before Poughkeepsie High School, the grade school in Poughkeepsie?

[01:36](#) **WD:** Ellsworth Elementary School which is now a high-rise apartment as everything in Poughkeepsie has turned out to be. Yeah, I was downtown. I went to Mores Junior High School on Mansion Street. That is now a magnet school. It's up the block from the post office. And then ... Poughkeepsie High.

[01:59](#) **GN:** And Poughkeepsie High, were you an average student, a good student, better than average?

[02:07](#) **WD:** I was a good student who wasn't working up to my full potential and you know that you that cliché.

[02:15](#) **GN:** Find me a student in high school who is.

[02:18](#) **WD:** I probably had a seventy-seven average and it should have been closer to about a ninety-two. But class clown was a part of that and that.

[02:30](#) **GN:** But you enjoyed it.

[02:31](#) **WD:** Yeah. We had a good time.

[02:34](#) **GN:** Lets go to sports now. Did you play on a school team or did you pick up team for football?

[02:40](#) **WD:** No I played football in junior high and high school. I was a captain senior year. I ran track also and was captain of the track team in my senior year. And that was 1966.

[02:56](#) **GN:** I meant to say something more about the family and do you have brothers and sisters?

[03:00](#) **WD:** I have two younger sisters. One's two years younger and one's eight years younger. One still lives in the Poughkeepsie area and my middle sister is in California.

[03:14](#) **GN:** And growing up while in high school, did you have a particular interests? Football would be one and would take a lot of time. But did you have any other hobbies that might be your interests?

[03:27](#) **WD:** I played clarinet in the band at Poughkeepsie High School. And for the first year of my playing football I had to ... my father wouldn't sign the release form. I got a permission slip to play and I forged his signature. And as a result, I just told him that I was, you know, I was a band rehearsal because you know the band played at all the football games and you know we're in parades and stuff like that. And one of the other guys on the team would wash my uniform so that they didn't really know. And they didn't read the newspaper because they were too busy

working and both my mother and my father. And my aunt and grandmother lived with us in our house and when I had the opportunity to come to Marist, I lived on campus. Okay. Even though you could see my house from Champagnat Hall because I was that close but they needed the room because my youngest ... the younger sister was in the room, in my parents room until she was sixteen years old and that's when I moved out.

[04:45](#) **GN:** Did you have a chance through these high school years and for the summer ... did you work? Did you have a job?

[04:51](#) **WD:** Yeah. I worked at Vassar Hospital in the business office. I worked one summer in the kitchen with my father. he had been a cook there for twenty some odd, thirty some odd years and so he just walked across the street from our house to the hospital and it was a very short commute.

[05:16](#) **GN:** Transportation was not a big problem.

[05:18](#) **WD:** No and my mother didn't drive so he would always take his morning breaks to take her to work. She worked at the state hospital across the street there, which almost became a Marist property at some point or another. It goes around and comes around.

[05:35](#) **GN:** Moving on now. How is it that you came, I guess by proximity, to choose Marist? But tell us that story.

[05:43](#) **WD:** I wanted to be a Phys-Ed teacher in high school and they understood that if I could channel my energy, I would be successful. So instead of going to study hall where I wouldn't do anything except I become a discipline problem, I was making ninety-four cents an hour working in the kitchen, washing dishes and wiping off tables and mopping floors. And in another period, I would be working in the locker room, either sweeping the floor, mopping the floor, putting the socks and jocks in the big garbage can in the back and everything like that. I would sometimes take attendance for the teacher and or I would lead calisthenics or something like that and that's

what I wanted to do. So I had Phys-Ed that was supposed to have a three times a week, I had it twice a day. So you know that was the thing that got me into it. I applied at a couple of state schools, all of which had jacked up their entry requirements because it was the Vietnam War and you have to had at least an eighty-five and instead I had about a seventy-seven, seventy-eight, seventy-nine average. So I applied to Springfield College in Massachusetts which was the best Phys Ed school in the country and got accepted. But on the way home, my father said there's no way we can handle twenty seven hundred dollars a year for the tuition. And twenty seven hundred back then was what seven thousand ... was when now and now it's practically doubled that.

[07:35](#) **GN:** I can appreciate the difference.

[07:38](#) **WD:** So then, it became a question of well you're going to have to stay local and that meant either Duchess or Marist. And Marist had a football team.

[07:49](#) **GN:** Lo and behold.

[07:50](#) **WD:** That took care of that decision, real quick.

[07:55](#) **GN:** What year? That would be 1967 maybe.

[07:59](#) **WD:** I graduated in '66 from my high school.

[08:04](#) **GN:** And so you came here in the September of '66. Okay and did you live on-campus?

[08:11](#) **WD:** I lived on campus in Leo Hall, third floor.

[08:14](#) **GN:** OK. Was the building full at the time? Do you recall?

[08:22](#) **WD:** No. All the rooms on my floor were.

[08:24](#) **GN:** Okay. This is a growing period of Marist. Sheahan went up first then Leo and then Champagnat. Was Leo ... You're on Leo now. Champagnat was not yet built? Or?

[08:38](#) **WD:** I wasn't sure about that.

[08:40](#) **GN:** That the big building that ...

[08:43](#) **WD:** I looked toward the other direction of campus where the football ... oh the rocks were at the time.

[08:48](#) **GN:** Yes, I have some interesting stories about football practice in the afternoon.

[08:53](#) **WD:** Oh I bet you. I have a couple too.

[08:56](#) **GN:** About how car lights were used to light up the field.

[09:01](#) **WD:** Standard operating procedure.

[09:03](#) **GN:** Another day was spent clearing away the rocks and so.

[09:06](#) **WD:** Quite a few days doing that. We had guys getting blisters because their cleats were not penetrating into the ground and they were ... It was like walking on blacktop and all the post were pushing up through the bottoms of the shoes. Some of the guys couldn't play because there were so many blisters and I remember paying five dollars for a pair of spot-built shoes.

[09:31](#) **GN:** Now the field. The field is essentially the same but it's been redone. Is that right?

[09:36](#) **WD:** And Leonidoff Field. We were part of the sod people that laid that out and did that too.

[09:43](#) **GN:** Okay. Before you get into the athletics, just talk about the academic part. The classes. Your major was going to be English?

[09:54](#) **WD:** English. I took a couple aptitude tests and they said, "I could probably teach." By my sophomore year, I had satisfied a lot of all the core requirements for liberal arts and whatnot and hadn't really declared any kind of a major at that point. I had gone through a battery of tests and they said that was probably a good tendency or my proclivities were more toward you know that kind of thing.

[10:26](#) **GN:** OK and in academic, people like John Schroder or Dr. Summer. Or?

[10:33](#) **WD:** Oh Dr. Summer. George Summer. I had him for linguistics. I had him for Shakespeare. Dr. Zuccarello for social studies ... history.

[10:48](#) **GN:** Did you take any sciences? Was Dr. LaPietra on the scene yet?

[10:53](#) **WD:** You know I don't think I had to.

[10:56](#) **GN:** Brian Desilets. His name would have been Brian Henry ... small guy.

[11:01](#) **WD:** No. I had Kevin Carolan for Math. I had to take a math course and Donohue.

[11:11](#) **GN:** Donohue for philosophy, I guess.

[11:13](#) **WD:** I also had Italo Beneen. "Why do I exist?"

[11:16](#) **GN:** Yes "Why. That is the question. Why do you asked the question?" Yes, he passed away about two years ago maybe now I think. Alright back to the athletic phase of things here. Who was your coach? Was Levine the coach?

[11:35](#) **WD:** Ronnie Levine. He was amazing.

[11:39](#) **GN:** He ... His coming here was kind of accidental and there's much as he had to be persuaded to come for two years to get a football team going. Were you Club at that time?

[11:51](#) **WD:** Yep.

[11:52](#) **GN:** Yeah and so that's that. He told in an interview I had with him. He mentioned that he had come here with the intention that he would stay for two years. After eleven years, he decided that it was time to step by and watch the process develop more.

[12:11](#) **WD:** I played for Ronny for four years and then I also coached for four years after that. And yeah, that was good times.

[12:24](#) **GN:** Yeah well, the good times now. Was there scheduling? Did you go to Philadelphia? did you go to Massachusetts? Did the team travel, the club team?

[12:34](#) **WD:** Yeah but it was by bus and it was close. Not like Kings College. We did something in Pennsylvania. I don't even remember that you know as far as.

[12:52](#) **GN:** Any particular game.

[12:53](#) **WD:** Adelphi on the island.



[12:55](#) **GN:** Did you play Iona?

[12:58](#) **WD:** Marist and Iona ... that was a high, high, high rivalry. Big time. Sienna, Manhattan you know what the hell's a Jasper you know that kind of thing. The Iona Gaels you know. Niagara, that was a big game.

[13:15](#) **GN:** Bob Norman did some of the announcing of those games as much as he could see them because the press box was not exactly there on the field.

[13:27](#) **WD:** Right, I remember interviewing Ed Providence who had gone out there as well too. Even before we had the field here I remember play a first couple of games down at Riverview Field which is now Stitzel Field, a block from my house.

[13:45](#) **GN:** Did you father ever see you play football?

[13:50](#) **WD:** Once or twice. Yeah, I think it was my second year of wrestling where he actually came on campus and saw me wrestle. Because he thought it was like that WWF stuff and all that funny stuff, you know. You know Bruno Sammartino thing so yeah.

[14:09](#) **GN:** And football. He saw one game maybe.

[14:12](#) **WD:** One or two.

[14:14](#) **GN:** Yeah okay. Your participation in football was four years then with Ron. And then after that you stayed on...

[14:23](#) **WD:** Another four as a coach.

[14:24](#) **GN:** As another coach staying on with him. What's your thought now? I mean have you ever stepped on the new field here?

[14:33](#) **WD:** Oh yeah. I have been here for a few games and stuff like that for the dedication of the Tenney stadium and that. And alumni stuff.

[14:42](#) **GN:** Yeah that's one of these we've come a long way baby.

[14:45](#) **WD:** Oh big time. Yeah well it ... I guess the classic football story was a band of

freshmen were coming on a tour and the tour guide said something about “Well we're going to take you down to the bee house.” Okay. And one of the naïve freshman kid said, “Wow this is probably big campus they have probably have A-House, B-House. There's probably even C and D.” Not realizing that that B was B.E.E as in...

[15:17](#) **GN:** The little insects that fly around ...

[15:19](#) **WD:** Okay and our locker room. It was not the McCann Center. It was a nail in this little shed about the size of my garage at home. And when we had, you know, a football camp in August and two-a-day practices early enough so that the coaches could run a session and work their day job and then come back and do it all over again. That was pretty cool. And wearing your clothes in the afternoon after having them be in the morning dew and everything and they were still soaking wet because there's not enough air circulation to drive them out, made for very interesting afternoon practice.

[16:06](#) **GN:** Yeah. Yu have some interesting tales to tell about the bee house and the locker room as it were so called. But that was the only option.

[16:15](#) **WD:** Yeah, it was football camp. It was like going to camp and you know, you know being out in the wilderness and that's what it was.

[16:24](#) **GN:** There was a sort of familiar practice. There is a night in the Fall when the lights went out. The whole eastern seaboard went down. I think you guys were responsible.

[16:36](#) **WD:** I was a senior in high school. That happened the year before because in our locker room, kids couldn't see anything so what they did was – somebody had matches, they took a garbage can with a whole bunch of papers and lit the garbage can so they could see to get their stuff to get out of the building. Ok. Well as the captain of the football team, the following morning, I had to go into the athletic director's office and plead my case on behalf of my peers who had done that.

[17:11](#) **GN:** Why? Were you trying to burn the place down?

[17:13](#) **WD:** No. It was unsafe but because of that, that was the greatest good for the greatest number at the time. And I accepted the responsibility for the fact that nobody had a flashlight but somebody had matches. So you go with what you've got and that's as good as it gets.

[17:31](#) **GN:** Yeah, I had heard that, I guess somebody had strung up the first series of lights for these evening practices, made an attempt to and it was just coincidental that that whole thing came to pass when the lights went on, they all went out.

[17:49](#) **WD:** Okay. Well that was another time. Yeah, I remember that too. That was in the corner of the field of Donnelly Hall and. Yea, that was probably ... something happened. That was freshman year because I remembered Larry Lane and John Murphy and Clancy were all part of that crowd.

[18:12](#) **GN:** This is kind of a philosophical question but it's a ... When the word came out that there was going to be a development here at Marist, a list of priorities were set up – a new classroom building, a library, an addition to the library, improvement in this and at the end was a stadium. I said to myself, “Well. What are we going to do with the stadium, you know?” So it was one of my last priorities and listing which is the next things would be the most important. I would change that now and say, I think that has been one of the most significant contributions to the campus. And I think you have ... You said you've been here for Saturday afternoon with the new stadium set up. You know the marching band coming on. They ... We don't have a tunnel to come out of like Notre Dame does.

[19:08](#) **WD:** That's fine.

[19:10](#) **GN:** But we do have a stadium under which there's locker rooms, you know. Do you feel it was a worthwhile contribution that ...? With that, nine million dollars went to the building of the stadium. Do you think it was worth the effort and the money?

[19:26](#) **WD:** Yeah. But you get a backup a little bit and also remember the McCann Center. You know the old gym. We'd have the 45' x 40' wrestling mat out there and there was just enough room for people to sit down Indian style around the edge of the mat.

[19:50](#) **GN:** The Marian building –

[19:53](#) **WD:** And they use to pound on that. That was it. That's what my father saw at one of my first wrestling matches. To see that and remember the bee house and then see the McCann center. Whoa. We had... My sister and I went halvesies on season tickets for you know the basketball games.

[20:15](#) **GN:** Yes.

[20:16](#) **WD:** And everything. So you know, just marveled at the size of the pool. It was bigger than the whole gym was over on the other side of campus. And all that because we even remembered the old pool that Andy Pavolco had to take care of.

[20:30](#) **GN:** That was the bottom of the hill there. Next to the road going down.

[20:33](#) **WD:** That's where we used to have the Clam Bakes --

[20:38](#) **GN:** And all that stuff, this is a step in progress. The McCann Center is up and now the next thing is the stadium, you know. And yeah, I talked about it to some of the athletic people here before and they were talking about how now we can go to the West Coast and play a whoever San Diego or something out there, you know. That we fly across the country. That's the new thing but you can't come to Marist if you don't know it exists, you know.

[21:09](#) **WD:** Well. Marist was all you know the local kids ... the day hops. We had the kids from Albany and the kids from Long Island. And they're all the ones who didn't go to Iona or Adelphi or anybody that we played in football, Manhattan anything like that.

[20:28](#) **GN:** Yeah. Now, I think well more than half the students do not come from New York. You know. You know that is the big draw from a wider area. Although Connecticut,

Massachusetts, New Jersey has its representation here. Yeah but so does Illinois and Texas and California. You know that we do have draws for whatever reason. I guess if you're not going to make it in one of the big schools, you know here's a place where you can make it and shine in your own way, you know. So you have these young kids coming.

[22:01](#) **WD:** When I was teaching English at Ketcham high school, you know a lot of the football players, different sports didn't matter, they had such delusions of grandeur figuring they're going to go to these big mama thirty-five-thousand students' schools and play Division One Football and get drafted or recruited or signing bonus, sneaker contract or something like that. And I said you know you're going to be practice fodder. You're going to be sitting on the bench. Okay. Go to a smaller school you know where they want you, they need you, they can use you. You'll play, you'll learn, be successful the other way you're just a drop in the big, big, big, big bucket.

[22:52](#) **GN:** Yeah, it's amazing that they do have this, you know, attraction for that kind of student now. I mean when I see on a Saturday afternoon there's one hundred kids lined up there with the uniforms. Some of them won't get into the game for sure. Even in three years, they won't get it in. In their last year, they'll be cycled in and out just so that it was worth some of the effort. But to be part of the team, I guess to go the way to be with them, to go through the practices, to learn it and there was something to be said about that. What are the remembrances? While you were at Marist, the academic, the football, sports, aspects of it, any other thing comes to mind? Social, friendships, activities, theater, I don't know, choir, choral music ... You never played music here and anything.

[23:58](#) **WD:** No, after high school it was end of band. It was football, football, football. You know that was it. You got recruited by a couple of football players who were also wrestlers. One of the things, in order to a varsity letter, Marist had a policy where you had to practice with another team out of your season and something that you didn't do ... You had to do it for three

days. And I went out for the crew team as a bunch of us did. And you know they got us and got us to understand how to, you know, feather an oar and catch the water and do all that. And then they actually took us out on the boat and every other oarsman was a varsity oarsman. The other ones were these other kids who ... The purpose of it was to gain an understanding and appreciation for what was involved and it didn't really hit until they made us ... It was Coach Arold, Paul Arold. He made us go from the railroad bridge to the Hudson Bridge at a pretty good clip. When it was over, he pulled alongside in his motor, little motor boat there and threw us an orange a piece. And my arms and legs were so gumby at that point. I couldn't even ... I didn't have enough strength. Everything was tingling all over the place. I didn't have the strength to peel the orange in my fingers. So I had to practically eat the thing like an apple. Yeah because my mouth was the only thing that I hadn't used. I probably should have because I almost caught a crab. And you gain ... and then you know I could run, I could do this, I could do that. But you know, it's a whole other different set of muscles. And when I was coaching wrestling at Ketcham, I remember a kid come off the football team after the whole season you figured he's in halfway decent shape and twenty minutes out on the mat and he's huffing and puffing like he hadn't been out there in a month. So it's those little things. You know we had a graduating class of 305. You know compared it to this year it's almost a thousand. And this is a very closely-knit group. I remember making phone calls for you know as a class agent for the Marist phoneathon things. And all you had to do is say, "Hi this is Bill Dourdis from Marist. Oh hi how you doing." People remember. Yeah you know that kind of recognition, name recognition you don't get. You know in it a big school where you're just another number. You're a slot. You're a commodity.

[27:16](#) **GN:** Well the bonding part. You didn't know what is bonding. I mean that's the word you used today is as it were, you know. But the togetherness you know. And the dormitory has a lot to do it. I think the cafeteria has a lot to do it. The regime of being on time, I mean I remember

when I was teaching here at times ... We had to let a student know that you just couldn't live here. You had to come to class, you know that the ...

[27:43](#) **WD:** Mandatory attendance, we had that.

[27:46](#) **GN:** There was a small Brother. Paul was his name. He was kind of a sheriff. I don't know what the kids call him exactly, you know. But he had an inclination for law enforcement, you know of the first order.

[27:59](#) **WD:** That's fine. You had that ... I mean at that point there was a dress code, It was coat and tie for class and everything like that and over the four years we saw that that you know you don't need a jacket as long as you had a collared shirt on and you can do away with the tie another year. And then the year that I left was the year that they started to have women on campus because this was an all-boys school before that so that was a little bit of a change too.

[28:32](#) **GN:** Did you have Marist brothers in your class? Student brothers in those days.

[28:38](#) **WD:** Jim Steinmeyer was one and then he was a colleague of mine we taught together in the same department at Ketcham him in English down there.

[28:47](#) **GN:** He didn't drag you into the theater thing then. Nothing to do with the theatrical?

[28:50](#) **WD:** No. I remember in elementary school. They had me. Or was it junior high, I can remember they wanted me. I was typecast for something but I couldn't remember lines well enough and throughout the teaching, I had always paraphrased everything. You didn't have to memorize it verbatim as far as I was concerned because as long as you got the concept and you've got pretty good idea what it's all about me and you could kind of you know get it started and let them finish it.

[29:24](#) **GN:** But Jim Steinmeyer's dedication to the theater.

[29:27](#) **WD:** exactly

[29:28](#) **GN:** Is something different. I mean, his life is ... He has great plans hopefully someday

developing you know Marist on the Hudson Theatre or something.

[29:41](#) **WD:** He's going to the Marist Hall of Fame in September.

[29:45](#) **GN:** Yeah that's a good thing. We're pretty much on Marist and talking about your experiences here. And now we've kind of slipped into teaching and the post-Marist and one of the two thing you have said there who things just said there now: the phoneathon. Have you been involved in that once or twice or several times?

[30:05](#) **WD:** Quite a few times but not lately because I don't get the call. I get ... I get calls but they're using juniors, seniors. They're paying these kids to do this as part of work-study or something like that. And they're I guess they're doing fine but it's not the same as when you know a Doc Doherty is in the next booth over there at the developmental place there we were in ... This one across from the library, Adrian.

[30:38](#) **GN:** It's gone now.

[30:40](#) **WD:** Yeah and we're sitting in there and that was when he was a detective lieutenant on the police force and he'd have his gun right there. He's on the phone and also patting his gun as if to say if you don't send the money, I am going to shoot you through this phone here. And his class, the class of '69 always raised more money than the class of '70 and I always attributed that to Doc Doherty already because he probably got his whole bunch of phone calls in a couple of nights.

[31:09](#) **GN:** The threats he could bring to pass. Yes.

[31:11](#) **WD:** He wasn't a threat. Normal conversation. But everybody knew who Doc was and what he did. Yeah okay. So it was a subliminal message. I'd always used to say make sure that we can use ... sign the check legibly so we can name the building after you. You know that kind of thing because you know we want people to give.

[31:33](#) **GN:** Did you know a Dan Mahoney? He was in that class Doc's class. He's in California



at the moment and he was here about ... oh I did him in August. In fact, I have his sign ... at the end of this, we'll ask you to sign a paper that says that Marist did interview with you and we're not making this up and you know it's just kind of a verification for it. You have a unique position to be able to talk about the campus holistically. You know when you come on now ... Of course these days getting on is not so easy. The main gate has been cut down and the new wall is going up.

[32:20](#) **WD:** Got a tunnel coming through.

[32:21](#) **GN:** A new tunnel is coming in too and Route 9 is going to be stopped for Friday, I guess. That is this week. There'll be a bypass going around it. What used to be the old chem lab?

[32:33](#) **WD:** Bech Road, Bech Street. Whatever it is right around the corner. It's the old chem cards place, plastic cards.

[32:43](#) **GN:** Which we took down. We own that and I don't know if it's going to be anything built on it. There's been talks about built on it.

[32:52](#) **WD:** There's going to be a yard or garden or greenery or...

[32:56](#) **GN:** I think the plans for a music or a performance building which would be for a number of different theatrical performances, singers will go somewhere but it won't be there. And then a new cafeteria as well I think is on the agenda. But when you go on campus, what strikes you now? Are you more impressed by this building that we would have...?

[33:24](#) **WD:** This is quite a shock too. I mean I said that about McCann Center also. It's well ... You know matching funds is a great way to go. Okay, that helps a lot. So you get twice the bang for the buck. That's a good commercial we get people who you know worked for people I don't know if they still do that anymore.

[33:47](#) **GN:** Well. Fundraising is still a big operation you know. We are a tuition-driven college though most of the income is from the tuition of the students. But besides that there are these

grants. There are these requests that they're working so. So building-wise.

[34:07](#) **WD:** Yeah that Rich Shack (?) across the river there from Esopus. Not too bad, not too shabby.

[34:17](#) **GN:** What will be used for as time goes on remains to be seen, some kind of conference center. I hope that it gets a little.

[34:24](#) **WD:** There may be a Marist day line to be able to back and forth across there and take the shortcut.

[34:29](#) **GN:** There you go. The Hancock building. You will have to see that will be a new experience I think to see that. It's got a room in there. That will be a classroom, an incubator for business people who want to start their businesses and actually have the teletype of Wall Street. You know the stock market things are going right around the top of the ... We've come a long way when you see something like that you know.

[34:58](#) **WD:** For sure.

[35:00](#) **GN:** The other things about it ... I'd like you to talk about if you would. How Marist has or has it influence you in your own .... you know your own career as a teacher? Do you recall principles here of well, the art of teaching, a concern for the student, the realization of the difficulties they have in comprehending what you're saying? When you speak about your own education here ... how has it worked into your teaching career?

[35:40](#) **WD:** Liberal arts is a good base to start. And you know having an academic program that makes sense and you can follow it and do all that, cover all the bases is a big deal if you know a lot about one thing but don't know about a whole lot about a whole lot of stuff ... Yeah, you're going to be in more trouble. Okay you need that well-roundedness and they emphasize that here very well. Frank Hazard was the head of the Department for Education and everything like that and their placement and all that ... cause I did that for a couple of semesters here as well after I

retired. It's a good thing. You had to have lesson plans. I remember one day I had a fourteen-page lesson plan for ... I was a student teaching in Kingston and I had it choreographed to the point where I knew that I would ask such so and so ... Tony a question and then Colleen would object to his answer and they would go back and forth. And I know that would happen at 8:20 and it was just ... It was that well-choreographed and my supervisor looked at it and says, "This is amazing. It's impressive." But what he also did is that he took it and he ripped it up in front of me. And he opened up a grammar book and closed his eyes and he pointed and he says, "Alright. You've got twenty minutes to figure out the difference between lie and lay and teach to the class and you got forty minutes to handle that and I will not say a word. You're on your own. Okay?" And it was the best for lesson in terms of being able to think on your feet and given you a broad base of a whole lot of things instead of in one area. And that's helped me tremendously. You know being organized and you know when we had mandatory study here at Marist ... We had to sit at our desk for two hours in the evening and you know. And then it was as long as you were in your room studying you know you're fine because you can do that. You know you'd be focused on that ... And that kind of structure and stricture is an important thing.

[38:19](#) **GN:** No radio and TV while you were in your room.

[38:20](#) **WD:** Right. Yeah but I guess that came later. Yeah but that was very helpful. Marist has made a name for itself. I'm remember when they put that big M on the other side of the river. There are some of the people who were involved in that and the names we left out on purpose. But you know.

[38:48](#) **GN:** That was a bonding experience. I mean you were proud to.

[38:51](#) **WD:** I was actually. I was on the resident's board and I voted to allow them to buy the paint to do that. I don't know if that was within the realm of being able to do that but we did and it was an intimidating thing for a lot of other people are coming to see that. That thing's probably

stood about ninety-feet tall, a big red M across the river. You could see that for miles and you know and stuff like that. And now having grown up in this area and this is my sixty-third year here, seeing this little or this big city at the end of my city, it's grown in leaps and bounds. Yeah and the footprint is getting bigger ... And when they built nine floors of Champagnat, you know they say well if you can't go left or right or there's not enough room for anything else, the only way you can go is up. You know we thought it would end up being like New York City. But they've maintained the character. And you know for the river and all of that and everything is situated nicely so they've done a very interesting job at this end of town.

[40:11](#) **GN:** Yeah. Now when you were talking there, did it bother you as student? Did you feel that you were like at a semi-West Point here? That you know, there was too much structure and you are under the thing ... You all shared it and this is the way life is for us.

[40:30](#) **WD:** Yeah and that's it. You know you know different times, different places. You do different things, you act different ways, and everything like that so. And this is one of them. You know this is no joke. This is serious stuff. Yeah, you can have fun doing it but there has to be you know that element ... You know we used to pray before class and do all that stuff. And it kind of fell by the wayside but you know, we also understood that it didn't dilute the dogma. You know that was still the same.

[41:03](#) **GN:** That's a nice way of saying it.

[41:06](#) **WD:** And what it allowed is yeah, you got to get your act together. You've got to be respectable, and just do what you're supposed to do.

[41:20](#) **GN:** I would take it that you would not hesitate advising or sending students here. I mean your remembrances and stuff like that.

[41:28](#) **WD:** I am a cheerleader without the pompoms.

[41:31](#) **GN:** This would be a place to come. We're getting.

[41:36](#) **WD:** Marist ring...

[41:40](#) **GN:** Moving on now I want to get a few more things than before. Let me put it this way if you had a chance to speak to the Board of Trustees. Let's go two ways: what would you encourage them to do? Maybe that we're not doing. Is there something that you feel out there? Or is there ... The other part of that: what do you think is unique about Marist that has led to this kind of what used to be a small, little, unknown place to develop to this campus that it is and to the reputation that it has, you know? What's the ingredient? What's the thrust of that spirit? Have you any way of identifying that? Or would you say anything more should be done?

[42:30](#) **WD:** You mention the word, bonding before and that's a start. The memories and that's a big thing. Those are etched in your mind and you can't escape them. You'll think about them. You'll dream about them and you'll be in a situation or whatever. Embracing that and remembering all the people who were here is really what it's all about. Offering opportunities for them to come back is a good thing. I can remember one year I was going to go out to see my sister in California and I called over there. And Joan Gasparovic at the time was over there and she said Here's... I said I'm going to be in California and I'm going to be there about a week so anybody want me to call or contact or anything like that. So she gave me a printout of a couple dozen people whatever. Some you know ... I've played football with. I've been in class with and stuff like that. And picture me at my sister's kitchen table with this green and white striped spreadsheet printout and using my sister's dime ... I had this she gave me like this to her like a credit card or a phone card kind of thing I could use that but I said if we call these people from New York in California that's three dollars, four dollars a phone call. Yeah but if I'm there, it's a dime or fifteen cent maybe a quarter if I spend ten minutes on the phone with them something like that so I'd be willing to do that. And if Marist could somehow keep in touch with the alumni to the point where when they come in contact with other alumni to take to make that you know a

direct shot back to campus. Somehow, I called and I said, “Look I'm not calling for money. It's not you know Marist Fun time or anything like that. I happened to be an area I don't know if we can ever get together anything like that but calling to say hi see if you know you get in the literature, you know any stuff that you want to report back to headquarters for stuff like that.” Interest ... keep it social, keep it casual and stuff like that where you know you're not pounding them. You're not hitting on him for anything. You know that kind of thing and just remember the good old times.

[45:29](#) **GN:** How could you think of opportunities for the bonding, how do you? See one of the problems that Debbie Bell and she is now Debbie someone but she came and she's in charge. She is the dean of student actually. She's Gerard Cox of now and I asked her about the problems that she has encountered with the students now that we're different from before. And one of them is the cell phones that they... So many of the kids come here with their cell phones and call back home you know and they keep very close contact with all that. And they don't embrace the guy next door or the girl next door and you know they hesitate to make new friends, you know, here. They're hanging on to the cord.

[46:23](#) **DW:** It's a distraction.

[46:26](#) **GN:** I was wondering how we might suggest bonding opportunities, you know. Going to football games or going to the theater in New York or for some of them going to New York is a big deal because they're coming from hither and yon you know.

[46:44](#) **WD:** But a concept that I used, I learned here was – I was part of the my high school reunion thing, we have reunions every five years and we set up regional coordinators and we found a couple of honcho people in DC, Florida, Texas, California, Chicago ... that type of thing and said here is that it's a list of the names of the people in your area. And you call them and see what you can do about letting them know and say we're going have a reunion c'mon back and

everything like that. The guy in Florida had twelve people on his list. He got seven on a plane that came up together. He figured out the percentage. Yeah you know that kind of a number, willing to do that kind of stuff. And even if it weren't for the reunion they could have done something together with each other down there, they're in contact because there's a vestige of their past in a place fifteen hundred miles away that they is still near and dear to them.

[48:01](#) **GN:** Yeah well that's one good thing that I think the annual reunion here ... Homecoming when you put this five-year cycles together I think that kind of brings it back together. Of course now, the difference when you graduate as you said there were three hundred ... now there are over a thousand so you don't know everybody in the class as much as you know them when you when you were here in the earlier years. Even there has to be subdivided with that it. We have the business majors over here, and the liberal arts majors over here, you know and the computer majors over here, you know that would become sharing that opportunity ... I'm talking. You should be talking.

[48:47](#) **WD:** Well we had study groups at the end of Leo Hall. There was a room there. We can get a half a dozen guys or eight guys and we'd sit around with popcorn and soda and you know talk about you know we have to make it through this midterm exam for somebody whatever ok and somebody got index cards and somebodies printed out a couple of pages of this or that or this and.

[49:15](#) **GN:** Former test that were used.

[49:16](#) **WD:** Not too many of those ... Nowadays, it's a whole different mentality, but back then it was ... I remember typing papers. It was a dollar for something like a dollar a page or something like that you know and I typed up somebodies because I had gotten a typewriter for a graduation present from high school to use when I went to college. I mean and now you know ...

[49:45](#) **GN:** But you could type which is already a step ahead.

[49:50](#) **WD:** Yeah and I used all my fingers instead of just my thumbs the way they do nowadays.

[49:53](#) **GN:** Very good. Are there any particular memories of Marist either while you were here or since you left and come back that are practically significant? Your graduation or the reunion in five years later or now in your retirement? Do you still have this opportunity to meld with some of these people?

[50:25](#) **WD:** Not as much. Now that I'm retired, it's grandparent mode. And I coached soccer for twenty-seven years when my girls were just starting out. They weren't boys and so like I couldn't coach them in football or wrestling and or anything like that. So they tried gymnastics but they were a little too brittle for that. They were hurting themselves. Then they did some volleyball and whatnot. And we got them involved in soccer, you know one of the local things. And I went to a game, their first game and saw that they were kind of buzzing around there and I said you know I know I don't know a lot about soccer but they're not doing it the way I've seen it on TV. And I had ... With my coaching experience I said, I could probably do a little bit better than that. And the assistant director heard me and he says, "Why don't you do that?" And I ended up becoming a student of the game and coached my kids through all that. He ended up offering me a job when he realized that I started to learn and knew enough about it. And I coached at J.V. at Poughkeepsie Middle School and at the high school and whatnot and then took them up through it. You know they were academic all-Americans, all-county all-League and all that stuff you know.

[51:56](#) **GN:** You have a wide ranges of athletic activities. It's not just football, it's wrestling, it's running...

[52:02](#) **WD:** I did soccer.

[52:03](#) **GN:** How about swimming?

[52:09](#) **WD:** Not too much.



[52:09](#) **GN:** and baseball?

[52:10](#) **WD:** In the summertime, we go out there and we cool off when we go on vacation and stuff like that. But that's really about it. I still jog a couple days a week.

[52:20](#) **GN:** You do?

[52:20](#) **WD:** Yup, got arthritis in my family and all the injuries that I had when I was playing football. Three things that I learned in Marist in four years: In a nutshell, it's all in the wrist which is everything is a technique that you need to master in order to be able to accomplish a task. It's all part of management which is delegation and organization and having the right people do the right things and I think that teamwork and whatnot organization. And you got to learn to play hurt. You got to learn to play hurt.

[52:58](#) **GN:** Suffering while play.

[53:00](#) **WD:** Put me in coach. Tape it in and go, you know. Not like today where it's all you know and give you a needle and you'll be fine. You know this ...

[53:09](#) **GN:** I bet you that has followed you into you professional as well about teaching sometimes when you're not so much in the mood you know. Teaching.

[53:16](#) **WD:** No it's that's a decision of the will. The same way that you go out there to play amateur football. I had an offer to play. Ronny sent my films to the Bills and I could have driven the White Bronco for O.J. Yeah, I turn down going to football camp in the pros because I had a job and I got married. And I wanted to teach. That's what I wanted to do. So you know that's where the focus was and I would set the alarm clock for 5:15 in the morning to get up at 5:15 in the morning to go teach at school. In thirty-three years, I've never hit the snooze button. And I learned that from college too because without mentioning names my roommate had his alarm clock right above his head. So that it became an unconscious response that when it went off, he just smashed it and he misses eight o'clock class. I had it on my dresser which was at the other

end so I had to get out of bed to get it. If I was already up, I was up. I was good to go. I'm not going to get back in there because I sort of got the adrenaline still flowing because I was, you know, excited, awoken by the alarm clock. So I mean that's it. You know it's like you're getting married you know you decided that you know all the things that they say in the ceremony ... That's what you're doing. You know you decide and you make it work and it's all teamwork.

[55:02](#) **GN:** Well, Bill. It's pretty much the end of our stay here. We're fifty-five minutes into it and it's very pleasant time talking to you and getting this ... this wide range of things that you've done and you know experienced here from the early days and that you willing to come in ... and bear with my deficiency. So appreciated it. I want to thank you and I hope that you stay in touch with Marist in the next ...

[55:30](#) **WD:** Yeah just keep in mind that this is not what I've done. This is what Marist has done for me. So thank you very much.

[55:36](#) **GN:** Well and you've been part of making Marist what it is. So we're very happy for that. Thank you.