

Interview with: FRED & BARBARA POLICASTRI

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Lily Jandrisevits

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Transcript: Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Interviewee: Fred and Barbara PolICASTRI

Interviewer: Gus Nolan and Joan Gasparovic Gambeski

Interview Date: 13 April 2022

Location: James A. Cannavino Library

Topic: Marist College History

Subject Headings: PolICASTRI, Fred
PolICASTRI, Barbara
Marist College Alumni
Marist College (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.)

Summary: Fred PolICASTRI, a Marist College Alumnus talks about his experience growing up in Brooklyn before moving to Lagrangeville and attending Dutchess Community College and Marist College. He talks about attending Marist for his undergraduate degree, before the college became a lay school, as well as returning for his master's degree. His wife, Barbara, also discusses what it was like supporting Fred during his time working and going to school. Fred further explains working at IBM and the changes he has seen the college undergo, as well as how he wants to see it continue to grow.

Gus Nolan ([00:00](#)):

Today is Wednesday, April 13th. We have the honor of an interview with an early graduate of Marist in terms of non-religious graduating. This is Fred PolICASTRI and his wife, Barbara, who've come to join us. And we're going to get his view of Marist from his own voice, what he thinks about it. So, we're still at the beginning. How about your early years? Could you say something about where you were born, family conditions at the time, that you remember.

Fred PolICASTRI ([00:44](#)):

I was born in Oneonta, New York, 1939 November.

GN ([00:49](#)):

Oh, you don't have to give the dates [laugh].

FP ([00:51](#)):

Gives my age, and my family was up there, my father worked for shoe factory. So, we're originally from Brooklyn, but anyway, within six months we went back to Brooklyn where I was raised pretty much. And in '57 I graduated high school.

GN ([01:09](#)):

Oh, you're jumping ahead now? Did you go to grade school?

FP ([01:12](#)):

Yes. Oh yes.

GN ([01:13](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yeah. And, for eight years, four years, what was it?

FP ([01:18](#)):

PS 160 was first, I think, six years.

GN ([01:22](#)):

Oh, you are in New York City now.

FP ([01:24](#)):

Brooklyn.

GN ([01:24](#)):

Brooklyn? Yeah. Oh yeah. Okay. I didn't know, were there recent happenings in New York?

FP ([01:29](#)):

Yes. Yeah. Used to go swimming in that swimming pool. I learned to swim in Sunset Swimming Pool. Where all this crazy stuff is going on.

GN ([01:37](#)):

Okay. Moving ahead, while in grade school, how was it? Did you like going to school?

FP ([01:46](#)):

I enjoyed school. Yeah. Unless I had to read something, I was not good at reading. I was one of those products of comic books.

GN ([01:54](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Oh, I see.

FP ([01:54](#)):

Classic comics to do my book reports.

GN ([01:57](#)):

Oh, I see.

FP ([01:57](#)):

But math and science I loved. Gym was my favorite subject.

GN ([02:01](#)):

Oh, okay. You did that after school as well? Speaking about that, any interest in sports, activities, through grade school?

FP ([02:12](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([02:13](#)):

Yeah. You played stick ball. You played--.

FP ([02:15](#)):

Stick ball, punch ball, kick the can, street hockey, basketball, softball.

GN ([02:21](#)):

General. You were an old-time kid all-around.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([02:25](#)):

We had a park around the corner. We did it all.

GN ([02:27](#)):

Okay. Other family members, any siblings, brothers, sisters?

FP ([02:30](#)):

I have an older brother who passed away. I have an older sister, who's living in Cornwall, have a younger sister living in Tannersville. And I have one living in Pennsylvania.

GN ([02:40](#)):

Okay. While you are growing up in Brooklyn, they were all part of the family or?

FP ([02:45](#)):

No, the family was kind of two pieces. My brother, my older brother, my older sister, and me.

Yes. And then me and my two younger sisters like ten and fifteen years apart, so, my mother and father decided to start another family. However, that happens.

GN ([03:00](#)):

Okay. I ask because I'm of the same situation. That is a family of eight. Well, I'm in the first four.

So, I consider myself, you know, one of the senior members of the family and no one else recognized that, but I did. That's the way it was. Moving on, while in grade school, any talent in terms of singing, music or theater or drama?

FP ([03:28](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

No, never on the stage. Pretty much get out of school and go the park.

GN ([03:34](#)):

Oh, okay. Move on from grade school. Where'd you go to high school?

FP ([03:39](#)):

Well, from grade school, I went to junior high.

GN ([03:42](#)):

I see.

FP ([03:42](#)):

And junior high was seventh, eighth and ninth.

GN ([03:44](#)):

Yes.

FP ([03:46](#)):

And there I started doing hand balancing, gymnastics. On my own, pretty much. But high school was, you know, the sophomore, junior and senior year.

GN ([03:57](#)):

Yeah. Where did you go for high school?

FP ([03:59](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Fort Hamilton High School, Shore Road, right near where the Verrazano bridge is now. Okay.

Wasn't there then.

GN ([04:05](#)):

No. Oh--.

FP ([04:06](#)):

Very exclusive. Very exclusive neighborhood. Beautiful.

GN ([04:10](#)):

Yeah. Okay. I think a lot of ships come to that passage there.

FP ([04:16](#)):

It's called the narrows down there. They called it the narrows.

GN ([04:19](#)):

Coming into New York comes through that part of the area. How about high school in terms of study? Did you get to read anymore or?

FP ([04:27](#)):

I still didn't like reading, but I was, I did very well in math and sciences.

GN ([04:32](#)):

Okay.

FP ([04:33](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

And I got an academic diploma in those days that was called--.

GN ([04:37](#)):

A Regents diploma.

FP ([04:39](#)):

Yeah. When you go off to college.

GN ([04:41](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Okay, again, back to high school. How about after school going to the park, did you ever have a job? Do you ever go deliver newspapers or anything?

FP ([04:56](#)):

My first job was, she's going to laugh, was delivering laundry. In the old days you had these bikes with a twenty-inch wheel in the front and twenty-six in the back and this gigantic basket that they put the laundry in.

GN ([05:10](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([05:10](#)):

And my first job, you get ten cents to deliver the basket and it was pouring rain. And the owner of the laundry said you will deliver this for ten cents. I did. And I quit.

GN ([05:20](#)):

Oh, one job.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([05:22](#)):

I didn't think it was for me [laugh] but then I worked in a bowling alley. Setting pins the old way where you stepped on the thing, the pins came up.

GN ([05:31](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([05:31](#)):

Put the pins up and I would do that after school, when I was like fifteen, sixteen.

GN ([05:35](#)):

Don't you have to jump up when the walls would be coming down, I was saying--.

FP ([05:40](#)):

Do that too.

GN ([05:41](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([05:42](#)):

Lot of black thumbs, lot of black fingernails.

GN ([05:45](#)):

Oh, okay.

FP ([05:46](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

But the money was good.

GN ([05:48](#)):

Yeah, that was good.

FP ([05:49](#)):

Could average two dollars an hour in those days.

GN ([05:52](#)):

Oh, okay. That's through the, or that's for the school year after school or the evenings you went there--.

FP ([05:59](#)):

Yeah, not every day, but you know.

GN ([06:01](#)):

Okay. Moving ahead to the summer, full-time job in the summer, any place?

FP ([06:06](#)):

No, my father didn't kick me enough to get me to work in the summer.

GN ([06:11](#)):

Okay.

FP ([06:11](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I kind of moved to Coney Island in the summer when the weather was nice, I'd hop on the BMT subway, go to Coney Island, come back when it got dark.

GN ([06:19](#)):

Oh, okay.

FP ([06:20](#)):

I don't know if they missed me or not, but--.

GN ([06:22](#)):

Ah, well, did you eat [laugh]?

FP ([06:24](#)):

Oh yeah. A lot of Brooklyn pizza.

GN ([06:27](#)):

Oh yeah.

FP ([06:28](#)):

And cannolis.

GN ([06:29](#)):

Okay. Where-- I want to get into the early years now. You're going through high school, and you have this career again, not much in terms of activities I get, singing choir, or travel.

FP ([06:47](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Gymnastics.

GN ([06:48](#)):

Gymnastics. But did you do anything with that? Did you perform publicly, did you, into a club or--?

FP ([06:54](#)):

We didn't have formal training. A few people got together and we formed our, what we called gym squads. And eventually we gained, we earned a major letter on each-- from Hamilton high school.

GN ([07:06](#)):

I see.

FP ([07:07](#)):

Which I was very proud of, but-- we pretty much did our own... To get the major letter, you had to do a routine on different apparatus and on the floor, but it was just fun to, high bar and the power bars.

GN ([07:19](#)):

Did you ever get hurt doing this? Sprained? No.

FP ([07:24](#)):

No [laugh].

GN ([07:24](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Okay. Moving on, after high school, where do we go? What's the first step out the-- what's your first job?

FP ([07:35](#)):

When I graduated high school, I didn't even know what college was, to be honest with you. A few friends of mine at the park were going to Brooklyn College, which was free in those days. But I went off to AT&T. 32 6th Avenue off Canal, street. And I got a job in the mail room to be trained, to be a technician, but that never happened. I left my parents, moved up-- we had a little summer house in Lagrangeville.

GN ([08:03](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([08:03](#)):

And we moved up there in 1958. So, I worked for about a year in New York City and then moved up here and then looked for employment. Had my own business doing construction and stuff like that.

GN ([08:16](#)):

Wow, just like that. Now, what do you () carpentry or--?

FP ([08:20](#)):

No, just general, you know, had an old Dodge with a big trunk and we'd go around looking for people that needed work done in the yard, you know, with a rake and shovel, digging ditches or whatever, just to try to make some money.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([08:32](#)):

So, you are kind of a carpenter, cutting the wood, measuring, you know what a two by four is, you know what a two by six is.

FP ([08:39](#)):

I know sixteen inch by center of--.

GN ([08:41](#)):

Yeah. Okay. How about a level? Do you know how to use a level? Yeah, get things straight [laugh].

FP ([08:48](#)):

But I did eventually go to work for Fargo. Fargo was an electrical connector place, right near what was then the Arlington High School. Now, I think it's, I'm not sure what it is.

Barbara PolICASTRI ([09:01](#)):

Middle school.

FP ([09:01](#)):

Is it a middle school now? But I worked there for a while and didn't like working in a factory.

And then I went to work for Al Zalco (?) who was a builder in LaGrange. And I learned to build houses with him.

GN ([09:17](#)):

About what year would this be?

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([09:20](#)):

This would be around '60, 1960, '59, '60.

GN ([09:24](#)):

Okay.

FP ([09:25](#)):

And then I ended up going to IBM as a subcontractor for Cummings Consultants and Precision Industrial Design. And I worked in IBM full-time, starting in '59, basically.

GN ([09:39](#)):

That way is because of the job you had working with this other fellow.

FP ([09:43](#)):

Yeah, I worked with him for a while.

GN ([09:48](#)):

Okay.

FP ([09:48](#)):

It gets a little convoluted, but I worked as a carpenter with him. I worked in Cummings Consultants. I worked for Fargo, Fargo was the one I had to leave in '59. I couldn't work there too much, but I got into IBM. I got my foot in the door as a subcontractor. And then I decided to go to college.

GN ([10:07](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

On South Road? Where did you go? To IBM?

FP ([10:10](#)):

South Road.

GN ([10:11](#)):

Okay. South Road about 1960 something now.

FP ([10:18](#)):

In that, '59 is when I started, you know, meanwhile still doing carpentry on the weekend. Okay.

But '59, I actually started in IBM as a contractor.

GN ([10:28](#)):

I see. Was that a full-time job then?

FP ([10:33](#)):

Initially it was a full-time job. And then I kind of talked to the manager there. I said, you know, I really want to go to college. One of my friends, his name was Bobby Fish (?). He was a nephew of Ham Fish.

GN ([10:44](#)):

Oh yeah.

FP ([10:45](#)):

And we had like a little hot rod club in Billings and Bobby was going to college to become a state trooper. I said, I think I could do that. So, I took a course at Dutchess, a math course, which

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I was pretty good at. And I passed it and I said, I think I'm going to become a college person. So, I applied to Dutchess full time as an engineering student and all the money I had saved, like \$700, I ran out in six months.

GN ([11:13](#)):

I see.

FP ([11:13](#)):

And I went back to this consultant firm at IBM, and I says, can I get a job part-time? So, they gave me a job part-time working like from eight to twelve at night, bursting the paper of that multiple leaf paper with the black carbon in it. And I was making money to just get myself to college and did that for quite a while.

GN ([11:33](#)):

Well, Dutchess was that expensive. How--?

FP ([11:35](#)):

It was real expensive, it was 110 a semester.

GN ([11:38](#)):

Oh, and in those days 110 is significant. Yeah.

FP ([11:42](#)):

It was culture shock to come to Marist, which was 360 a semester.

GN ([11:46](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yeah.

FP ([11:46](#)):

I said, oh, how am I going to do this? I have to get married and find a rich wife.

GN ([11:50](#)):

Oh, well, that's part of the joy of life. You dropped something in there that I want to go back to, you mentioned cars, how you were interested in automobiles.

FP ([12:00](#)):

Very much so.

GN ([12:01](#)):

Yeah. How did that start?

FP ([12:04](#)):

I just had a love for cars when I was a kid. I used to buy the post and look in the Life magazine, and just cut the car pictures out and make scrapbooks. And funny story, but I was a very picky eater. So, my mother would sit me on the window in Brooklyn and to feed me, she'd say, guess what the next car is and I'd be guessing and she'd put food in my mouth.

GN ([12:26](#)):

Oh.

FP ([12:27](#)):

To get me to eat.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([12:28](#)):

In those days, you could identify Buick, () Buick, Cadillac.

FP ([12:31](#)):

You could tell Chrysler products.

GN ([12:33](#)):

Yeah. Now, I don't know. I just know where it's running anyway, it has four wheels. It seems.

And so--. How about the interest in sports? Did you go to Yankee games or Brooklyn Dodgers or?

FP ([12:50](#)):

I was a Yankee fan in Brooklyn.

GN ([12:52](#)):

Oh.

FP ([12:53](#)):

So, you learn how to fight young [laugh]. My uncle Fonzie was an avid Dodger fan, and he would take me to Ebbets field. We didn't live that far from Ebbets field. We'd take the bus. He knew all the players. He knew this one that one. And you know, it was expensive to get in there.

It was \$2 to get there.

GN ([13:11](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([13:11](#)):

To sit in the green folding seats. But he tried to convert me to a Dodger fan, which I loved the Dodgers I did, but--.

GN ([13:19](#)):

Well, they weren't like the Yankees. They didn't have Joe DiMaggio, you know?

FP ([13:23](#)):

Yeah. But they had Campanella, they had Pee Wee Reese, they had Carl Furillo. We used to get in arguments. Was Campanella better than Yogi Berra, was Reese better than Rizzuto? And you ended up getting in a fist fight.

GN ([13:35](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

FP ([13:36](#)):

That's why my--.

GN ([13:37](#)):

Proving it by their statistics, by the eras, the batting average or--. How about travel, did you ever travel anywhere?

FP ([13:48](#)):

The only time I really traveled, you know, there was something on the internet recently. Where did you-- where was your favorite restaurant? Favorite restaurant was my house. My mother's

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

cooking [laugh] maybe my grandmother, but the only traveling we ever did that I remember was twice my father took us on vacation. Once to Narrowsburg and once to Rosendale up in Kingston. Yeah. That was our vacation for a week. But other than that, the only traveling we ever did was to go see my brother when he joined the army. We went down to Kentucky we went down to Tennessee and that was, that was our big trek. And we used to come up here on the weekends, starting in '48.

GN ([14:23](#)):

So, nothing overseas, nothing California--?

FP ([14:28](#)):

I wasn't sure where California was.

GN ([14:30](#)):

Well, not too many people get there [laugh].

FP ([14:33](#)):

I don't want to go now.

GN ([14:36](#)):

Let's go back to college. Moving from-- did you finish at Dutchess?

FP ([14:44](#)):

I graduated Dutchess with an engineering degree.

GN ([14:46](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Okay.

FP ([14:47](#)):

Pre-engineering they called it and I said, you know, I'm going to go off. I had then met who would be my future wife and I was going to go to, to Sandy Corporation out west and go to college there, but they wouldn't, they weren't advocating too much four year degrees. And so, I decided not to go and then I wanted to stay near the family. So, I said, what's close to engineering. I said, I'll go to Marist and major in physics [affirmative]. Not quite what I expected, but it was not--.

GN ([15:18](#)):

So did you--.

FP ([15:18](#)):

It was theoretical.

GN ([15:20](#)):

Brian Desilets, who did--.

FP ([15:22](#)):

Without Brian Desilets I never would've graduated.

GN ([15:25](#)):

Oh, okay. So, he--.

FP ([15:26](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I should say brother, but he's not a brother. I see-- I have seen him in church. I haven't seen him in a while. I'm not sure where he is.

GN ([15:34](#)):

Well, I think he's suffering a little bit of dementia, in his age. He's over 90 now must be 94 or so.

FP ([15:43](#)):

He was very alert. We would see him in church St. Columba. Every Sunday we would see him and his wife.

GN ([15:49](#)):

Well, not in the last two years.

FP ([15:50](#)):

Not in the last three, four years. I don't think.

GN ([15:53](#)):

Yeah. I can dodge for that.

FP ([15:56](#)):

He was my savior.

GN ([15:58](#)):

Okay. Yeah. And he was a good teacher and as much as he had you do what he just did.

FP ([16:05](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

He was good.

GN ([16:06](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([16:07](#)):

Brother Joseph Gregory...

GN ([16:08](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([16:09](#)):

Theoretical physics, he was tough.

GN ([16:11](#)):

Yeah. Well be careful of him now. He was in my class. We're classmates, and you know, he's a saint, but, like saints, they're hard to live with, you know, they're--.

FP ([16:25](#)):

Do you remember the one classroom, it was like raised. It was the big lecture hall.

GN ([16:32](#)):

Yes, indeed.

FP ([16:32](#)):

With the 1700 blackboards. Greenboards whatever--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([16:35](#)):

I built that, these hand were--. Yes. You see, only way, just let you know that.

BP ([16:40](#)):

Wow.

GN ([16:41](#)):

I didn't just hang around here, you know, in those days. So, but that lecture hall, which you speak-- and the raised seats going up around, and there's a podium down-- you found difficulty in that kind of setting?

FP ([16:57](#)):

No, the difficulty was, I worked IBM full-time when I went to Marist. I worked full-time, went to school and I tried to get classes when I would work. First shift, second shift, third shift at IBM where I was a computer operator, but I would come out a third shift and go to school and the sun would be shining in. And when you have the raised seats, it's very difficult to sleep in class because they can see you.

GN ([17:20](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([17:21](#)):

And then I would take notes in those notebooks and I would write down the physics formulas. How Einstein would derive relativity theory. And I'd be writing down and brother Joseph Gregory would say, mistake and then he would erase one board, slide it, erase another one.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

That's your fault. And then he would erase another one. It was tough going to class the morning after working.

GN ([17:45](#)):

Yeah, slipped another little thing. When you talk about different sections, is it 8:00 to 4:00? 4:00 to 12:00, 12:00 to 8:00? What is the cycle?

FP ([17:56](#)):

Dive in? Yeah, it was, I think from 12:00 to 8:00, 8:30, something like that. 8:30 to 4:00, 4:30 and then from 4:30--.

GN ([18:06](#)):

And that's the day shift 8:30 until 4:00 and then 4:30 to 12:00. Was there a night shift from 12:00 to 4:00?

FP ([18:13](#)):

Yeah. That's the one I used to work sometimes and come to school, you know like this.

GN ([18:17](#)):

Oh, I can imagine.

FP ([18:18](#)):

But you know what I remember, in one of the newer buildings, they had a rat scale.

GN ([18:25](#)):

Yeah.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP (18:26):

And you could get beer.

GN (18:27):

Yeah.

FP (18:27):

And I used to come into night class and get a beer and a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich.

GN (18:34):

Yeah.

FP (18:34):

But they don't have the beer anymore, do they [laugh]?

GN (18:35):

No, they--.

FP (18:38):

It was eighteen in those days.

GN (18:39):

It's not for sale on campus. It's on campus.

FP (18:42):

It is?

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([18:43](#)):

I can assure you that.

FP ([18:44](#)):

You have any? No.

GN ([18:45](#)):

Were you here for the great train robbery?

FP ([18:48](#)):

No.

GN ([18:49](#)):

The great train robberies. There was a freight car going to New York. It full of (). They fix up with another train to go down and soon found this train and it was loaded with beer, cases of beer. And they set up a chain of delivering beer up to Champagnat hall, Leo hall and they packed it sometimes in the ceiling. You know, this, you look in the historical records. You see the--.

FP ([19:19](#)):

Were you part of this?

GN ([19:21](#)):

I wasn't there. I had already graduated. These are students after me. We weren't drinking--.

FP ([19:27](#)):

The renegade students.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([19:28](#)):

No, no, no. But this is a-- the only thing it's a true story. So, I don't mind telling you, but let's come back to IBM and see if you reveal another secret. What did you do at IBM?

FP ([19:41](#)):

I started off as a computer operator.

GN ([19:44](#)):

What does that mean?

FP ([19:45](#)):

I ran the jobs. People would bring the deck of cards in those days with an orange () card in the front. I would run them through.

GN ([19:52](#)):

And some kind of point it slipped them out or somehow was that-- a sorter?

FP ([19:58](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([19:58](#)):

That would sort.

FP ([19:59](#)):

They, the old, I guess they called it EAM equipment and had sorters, and collators, and readers.

And we go into the seven oh nines and the 70, 90 machines--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([20:09](#)):

What do those cards contain?

FP ([20:11](#)):

Programs.

GN ([20:12](#)):

For what?

FP ([20:12](#)):

Mainly for train, to solve problems. I'm not sure what they were in those days, but the programmers would write and put their jobs in to solve. Again, I got hired because 360, the advent of 360, they needed people to build it. So, they were writing programs for 360 development, which I knew nothing about at the time.

GN ([20:34](#)):

Yeah, I'm with you for that, I don't know anything about 360. As far as I know, I know it is something else maybe.

FP ([20:39](#)):

Well, I ended up programming it when I got older cause I went from being a computer operator. I got hired in as a programmer. They moved me over to programming.

GN ([20:48](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

When I was a student at Marist as a brother, we had a tour of IBM. And we only had electrical machines in those days, typewriters. And we went into a room and we saw typewriters, just running, nobody behind them, set up just to see their use, to wear out, which ones would fail, which letters would be abused, and how they restrained and whatever like that. There was... but that's ancient history. We can't even buy an electric typewriter today. I don't think, you know.

FP ([21:19](#)):

I used to pistol shoot with his name was Judge Erve Medor (?). And he was a manager down there in the old days when they made machine guns down by the river [affirmative] and they had a shooting range there, I met him at the pistol range in Dutchess. So, IBM has a good history of helping out the war effort there.

GN ([21:40](#)):

Very good. Yeah. Well they always, they built rifles there before they would-- during the early world, WW two, I guess it would be. Okay. Back to college, what was the driving force to keep you going? Did you ever think you given it up? Was it worth it?

FP ([22:02](#)):

It was, in looking back, definitely worth it. Had someone to type my term papers. You know, if you had it typed, you got a letter grade higher. But many times I had the book in my hand ready to throw it out. Bob Norman was my English teacher [affirmative]. And I went through a period where I just couldn't handle it any more, full-time. My father had started an aluminum business, and I was helping him three days a week and I was working full-time I was going to school full-time. I was ready to quit.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([22:30](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([22:30](#)):

And Bob Norman, when I finally came back, he goes, I thought you quit. And I says, no, I'm not going to quit, I'm going to keep going. Then it was just pure, you know, me being, you know, I'm going to get that degree.

GN ([22:41](#)):

Okay. So that changed. But Bob Norman is English.

FP ([22:44](#)):

He was English.

GN ([22:44](#)):

Then you're doing pretty well with the physics with--.,

FP ([22:49](#)):

Well, I didn't come out with a 4.0,

GN ([22:51](#)):

Oh, very few do.

FP ([22:54](#)):

And it wasn't even a 3.0

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([22:56](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I myself--.

FP ([22:58](#)):

Was it a two point? Yeah, it was at least a two point.

GN ([23:01](#)):

Yes. Okay. What else were you good at? I mean, in terms of this business of staying in college and there's only one subject you're doing well, no, man, you had to take some math courses.

FP ([23:17](#)):

I didn't take many because I had all I needed pretty much.

GN ([23:20](#)):

From Dutchess.

FP ([23:21](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([23:21](#)):

Okay. So, you had to take some, did you take philosophy?

FP ([23:26](#)):

Yeah. When you signed at Marist back in those days, Marist was a Catholic affiliated-- and they said to me, are you Catholic? I said, yeah, I don't know. I don't want to say big mistake, but I said yes. Twelve hours of theology, twelve hours of philosophy.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([23:42](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([23:42](#)):

So, I have basically a minor in, but you know what? The theology, maybe the best courses I ever took.

GN ([23:49](#)):

That's it. Yeah. Who did you have for it?

FP ([23:52](#)):

You know, I want to say--.

GN ([23:54](#)):

Felix Michael, tall, thin guy.

FP ([23:57](#)):

No.

FP ([23:59](#)):

I can't remember. I want to say Messima (?), but I'm not sure if that was--.

GN ([24:04](#)):

What's the word?

FP ([24:06](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Father Messima?

GN ([24:07](#)):

Oh, okay. Yes.

FP ([24:09](#)):

You remember?

GN ([24:10](#)):

I done dialysis in priest too.

FP ([24:12](#)):

He was good.

GN ([24:14](#)):

I know the name, but I can't--.

FP ([24:16](#)):

Had him for a year. One year of theology. And first class, he said you got a Bible. He says, forget about that first half the Old Testament. You're just going to do the new Testament and we study the year, the apostles.

GN ([24:29](#)):

Okay. We're getting through college, you persevered to the end. And then, after you finish college, about '67, '68.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([24:47](#)):

'67.

GN ([24:48](#)):

Did you know much of the-- did you know Linus Foy?

FP ([24:52](#)):

Oh yes.

GN ([24:52](#)):

Yeah. You know of him? Did you know him personally?

FP ([24:55](#)):

Well, I would see him. He was there for graduation.

GN ([24:58](#)):

Okay.

FP ([24:59](#)):

I don't remember-- I don't know when brother got dropped, but I remember, yeah.

GN ([25:03](#)):

Okay.

FP ([25:04](#)):

There was a big thing going on there where a lot of the brothers left the order.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([25:09](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([25:09](#)):

We used to go to the brotherhood winery in Washingtonville.

GN ([25:12](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([25:12](#)):

And we used to see the brothers there and around that time, I don't know what happened, but a lot of the brothers left the order.

GN ([25:19](#)):

Yeah, a thing called Vatican II.

FP ([25:19](#)):

Yes.

GN ([25:21](#)):

That had--.

FP ([25:22](#)):

I didn't want to bring that up, but that was, yeah.

GN ([25:24](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I'm familiar with it. The presence of other people, Dr. Schroeder (?), did you know Dr. Schroeder?

FP ([25:34](#)):

He was the head of the night division. He's another man that really, really helped me get through because I just couldn't get my courses. And it was just mayhem to try to get, they didn't offer the courses I needed, and like I was never going to graduate.

GN ([25:47](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([25:47](#)):

But he was helpful.

GN ([25:52](#)):

John Schroeder--.

FP ([25:54](#)):

Schroeder is, I can't think of his name.

BP ([25:57](#)):

I know who.... [laugh].

FP ([25:59](#)):

Yeah, we're all gone brain--. Good friend of ours when I worked in the gym when I retired. His wife--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

BP ([26:06](#)):

Carol.

FP ([26:08](#)):

What's the last name? We know his daughter. His daughter married--.

BP ([26:12](#)):

Carol Schroeder.

GN ([26:13](#)):

Oh yeah. Well, his daughter corrected some of my essays.

FP ([26:16](#)):

Werber. His name is Werber. Cathy's their daughter, not Schroeder's daughter. He was a good man. Good man.

GN ([26:26](#)):

Okay. Do you know Lanning, Jephtha Lanning (?), Dr. Lang, Stephen Lang, Larry Sullivan (?)?

Now you were lucky you got the best here--.

FP ([26:36](#)):

I remember Brother Kelly was an economics teacher. Was it? No, no, that was Michael Kelly was a teacher.

GN ([26:47](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([26:47](#)):

But one of the brothers came in when I used to run jobs in IBM and you know, it's kind of free fall and your language is a little different at night. And he's in there. And I looked at him and we-- I was not using the best of words. And I looked at him, he's a brother. He's like, I change my, I got to change my vocabulary. And he's laughing over there because he's like anybody else.

Right.

GN ([27:08](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([27:08](#)):

But some of the brothers were programmers and they would come to IBM and run their jobs. This would have been at High Street in Poughkeepsie.

GN ([27:15](#)):

I see. All right. Let's pass from college and into the real world again. Now, after you finish Marist, you're full-time. IBM.

FP ([27:29](#)):

I had been full-time going through.

GN ([27:31](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And now you had nothing else to worry about. So, you--.

FP ([27:34](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Well, I did have something to worry about, before the last year of college I was married.

GN ([27:39](#)):

I see.

FP ([27:40](#)):

She says, "I'm tired of typing your papers and not getting anything. I want you to marry me.

Otherwise, I'm not typing your papers." So, I gave in [laugh], that's not going over big [laugh].

GN ([27:51](#)):

The ultimatum was there. Okay.

FP ([27:56](#)):

She'll get me later. No.

GN ([27:57](#)):

The thing about what else, you know, foreign language and all that stuff, the requirements to get out of college, all of that is passed now. What I'm surprised at, and I'll get to that later, is that you didn't have enough. You came back, to do more work.

FP ([28:16](#)):

Glutton for punishment.

GN ([28:17](#)):

Yeah. Well let's well, before we get there, well maybe we go there now. Ten years later, you're getting a master's degree. What drove you to come back to college? You didn't need--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([28:31](#)):

IBM had a program called SRI, Systems Research Institute. I had been programming for years and I was kind of getting, I hate to use word burned out because I had a really good job in IBM, but they offered me this job, you know, this opportunity to be down in New York and study in-- I was in the Xerox building on 42nd street and 3rd avenue. And it was a college level, you know, advanced, you know, graduate level work. So, I says, you know, I'll do it. And it was a, I think an eight or sixteen or twelve week program. I don't know, I was living in New York, my wife, and-- we had kids by then and they would come down every other week or I would come home. And I just took these courses there. And when I graduated from SRI, which was an IBM sponsored program, I had the opportunity to transfer some courses either to SUNY Binghamton. And just before it happened, Marist accepted, I think six or nine credits toward a master's degree. I think SUNY Binghamton took nine also. And I said, I didn't want to go to SUNY Binghamton. I could have got a master's in a year by doing SUNY Binghamton, but I was married. I don't want to-- so I started coming to Marist [affirmative]. And I got a computer science masters in comp sci [affirmative]. I was a program. It was the natural thing for you to--.

GN ([29:54](#)):

You came to the Donnelly building? That was round building there.

FP ([30:00](#)):

Some there, some in, was it Lowell? A lot of them at Western Printing.

GN ([30:05](#)):

Yeah.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([30:05](#)):

Which is now what ShopRite or whatever it was ShopRite, or Home Depot or--.

GN ([30:10](#)):

Yeah. And Lowell Thomas was up at that time.

FP ([30:13](#)):

I think Lowell Thomas was up before I left. Yeah.

GN ([30:15](#)):

Yeah. Okay. Just want to get the building straight as to what was there.

FP ([30:21](#)):

The library was there too. I think

GN ([30:23](#)):

The new, no-- '99 the new library. The old library.

FP ([30:28](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([30:28](#)):

Was, I forget where I am now. Yeah. But, it's, oh, was the chapel, it was attached to the chapel.

FP ([30:37](#)):

Yeah. I would go in there and study.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN (30:40):

Yeah. Now is, okay. Difficulties coming to Marist, like parking every day, was there a parking issue?

FP (30:53):

You saw me get a ticket ().

GN (30:54):

That was one day though, it's what one bad day, or were there a number of bad days?

FP (31:01):

But I would park down by what is it? The field.

GN (31:05):

Yeah.

FP (31:06):

And that it was a trek. Yeah. The McCann Center, it was always a spot there.

GN (31:11):

Yeah. But it's a long walk up, especially in snow and sleet.

FP (31:14):

I was a lot younger.

GN (31:16):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yeah. And, you were not always well greeted when you return to class if you're coming in a few minutes late, you know? But you wanted it, so you went and did the route.

FP ([31:29](#)):

What I missed doing graduate work was doing undergraduate work, every class you had to say a prayer in the beginning.

GN ([31:37](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([31:37](#)):

And those windows that used to open in Donnelly people would be out there smoking. And they call him in was saying the prayer and it'd always be a priest or usually a brother would start the prayer, which I joke with my wife. I needed the prayer. I needed it.

GN ([31:51](#)):

Yeah, well.

FP ([31:51](#)):

But I missed that.

GN ([31:52](#)):

It seems that worked. You're still here [laugh]. And, you seem to have it all together. So, I must admit that it did do some good work for you and for all of us because you just added little enthusiasm to the whole scene. I'm just going through the number of, you know, various faculty

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

members that you might have met over the course of the years, you know? And, I don't think there was much of a follow up right after graduation. There was no reason to be involved in Marist or was there?

FP ([32:29](#)):

I was just between my father's business, being married, raising kids.

GN ([32:34](#)):

Full-time job.

FP ([32:34](#)):

A full-time job, programming is demanding, you know?

GN ([32:37](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([32:38](#)):

I like to call it software engineer, but it's a lot of work. IBM is, you know, you're getting a good salary. You got to work for it.

GN ([32:47](#)):

What did you do for entertainment, movies, TV?

FP ([32:51](#)):

Well, we always liked going down to the beach. Well, for a while there, maybe twenty years, we did a lot of camping. Up in Vermont, lower Vermont. We had a travel trailer, a twenty-foot

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

trailer, and the kids loved going on the lake and swimming and fishing, but one of them liked fishing, but we would camp and my wife loved loading the camper. It would take, you know, all week to load the camper and I'd get the car ready, put the boat on the top and hook it up, make sure the engine was running, but that was fun. Camping.

GN ([33:22](#)):

Okay.

FP ([33:22](#)):

Got us very close with the kids. No cell phones, no TVs. Just dad and mom.

GN ([33:28](#)):

Yeah. Okay. And then you made wheel meals and cooked out in the fields as it were.

FP ([33:33](#)):

My wife loved cooking fish that I caught.

GN ([33:36](#)):

Fish. Okay. Okay.

FP ([33:38](#)):

She wouldn't, you know, de-bone them, and scale them, and cut the heads off. It only took about ten years for her to let me cook them in the trailer. Had to cook them outside.

GN ([33:49](#)):

Well, it's a special trade in itself, you know, it's not like--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([33:52](#)):

She's trainable. She--.

GN ([33:54](#)):

Okay. I just want to get to some comparisons. And of course I would bring Texaco into this as well. You worked at IBM and you know, the climate IBM. Okay. Describe your feelings about it. I mean, you couldn't get into the building unless you had your badge to show your badge.

Okay. Whereas while at Texaco, especially then, it seemed to be like a campus.

BP ([34:28](#)):

Yes.

GN ([34:28](#)):

The buildings were open. You could walk around to any building. You didn't have to show your badge to go in. You didn't even have a badge--.

BP ([34:35](#)):

Correct, right.

GN ([34:35](#)):

I don't think, and so on. I went to-- a very friendly, open place, encouraging. I mean, I don't know what field you were in. I worked with (?). He was in science. He did this well, no, he was more general manager of personnel, I guess you saw salary, sick leave, all that kind of stuff. You know, that's where I worked. I worked with him in that department, but I got the sense of IBM. I had two sabbaticals, three, actually two at IBM, one south road, one Kingston, two different

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

places, two different kinds of work, but the same IBM atmosphere about secrecy and, you know, closed shop. And, whereas Texaco entirely different, you know, your experience in coming to Marist, was it a joke, like, you know, this is a school, this is a-- you come into Donnelly and, you know, coming in through the windows [laugh], standing outside smoking, and then, you know, are you kidding? You know.

FP ([35:53](#)):

The first time I came into Marist to register, whatever. It was, hazing was allowed. And I saw these freshmen on their hands and knees with beanie caps on pushing a stone around the building.

GN ([36:08](#)):

Oh.

FP ([36:08](#)):

You remember Donnelly? You couldn't get lost. Right.

GN ([36:10](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([36:10](#)):

And then I saw other students, freshmen, counting the mosaic tiles as you come up the stairs.

And I said, thank God I'm coming in as a junior.

GN ([36:21](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yeah.

FP ([36:22](#)):

Cause no way would they get me to do that. My Brooklyn would come out for sure. But it was funny to see these kids doing this.

GN ([36:28](#)):

Yeah. Right.

FP ([36:30](#)):

But, no, Marist was not a joke. I was really happy to be in here. I really was, it was a little different than Dutchess. Dutchess was a little step up from high school. Marist was a college, you know, it was really quite class.

GN ([36:45](#)):

Make that difference in terms of--.

FP ([36:47](#)):

More professional.

GN ([36:49](#)):

More professional, and what you were required in the classroom or in the general atmosphere of the place?

FP ([36:57](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I think at Marist, you were on your own. Here's the assignment, do it, you know, I'm not going to tell you to do it. Dutchess, they were more, like I said, it was a step up from high school where they would encourage you and you know, you got to do the share, do that. I enjoy Dutchess don't get me wrong. It was probably more enjoyable in the class than Marist because it was easier.

GN ([37:19](#)):

Yeah. Okay. As you look at Marist today, okay. What strikes you most about the difference?

FP ([37:28](#)):

It's just unbelievable. The opportunity these students have. I mean, we had Adrian's lounge. We had Donnelly, this is absolutely gorgeous campus. I mean, aesthetically, but the opportunity they have, Joan has been so great showing us and bringing us up to speed on what goes on in the school. It's amazing. The opportunity that these younger people have.

GN ([37:51](#)):

Okay. So, buildings would be one thing. While you were here it was pretty much Donnelly and then Lowell Thomas maybe.

FP ([38:00](#)):

Adrian's lounge.

GN ([38:02](#)):

That was, that was your cafeteria as it were well, always your lunchroom or whatever.

FP ([38:07](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

It was the lecture hall.

GN ([38:09](#)):

Okay. Well, Adrian's lounge is a little different from the lecture hall, lecture hall in Donnelly is that big center room that you're talking about.

FP ([38:19](#)):

Well, there were, when we had the-- to get public speaking, you would go in there into Adrian and do the talking. It was like a big hall. You know, there was no cafeteria that I know of. I think the cafeteria was in Donnelly. I can't remember.

GN ([38:33](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. You're right about that part of it, but it was built to be the students--.

FP ([38:40](#)):

Like the student center.

GN ([38:41](#)):

Center. Yeah. I mean, the brothers were still here. Pretty much the force in terms of those in the concern, but now, the campus the buildings, so it's the atmosphere of it. Do you find it-- have you been to some other colleges where--?

FP ([39:01](#)):

Yeah, both our daughters have gone to college. One went to Colgate and one went to Siena.

GN ([39:07](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Oh.

FP (39:07):

And we've seen our grandchildren. Joan took us around when my older granddaughter was looking at going to college and we got the tour and it was just amazing. What was here. The cafeteria was really good [laugh].

GN (39:22):

Yeah.

FP (39:23):

Those tarts. But just the cafeteria, I mean the opportunity they have, the technology. The other granddaughter was into filmmaking. She's going to end up in California this year.

GN (39:37):

Yeah. That's where they all go.

FP (39:37):

She was interested in that also, but she, I says, come to Marist to be near grandma and grandpa, but she says no, going out west.

GN (39:48):

Yeah.

FP (39:48):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I guess the gold rush is out there [laugh]. I don't know what's going on with,-- she's going to, what is it? Loyola Marymount.

GN ([39:56](#)):

Also, the campus now, as you look around, there's quite a bit of difference in terms of let's say diversity.

FP ([40:03](#)):

Oh yeah.

GN ([40:04](#)):

Yeah. Were there any women here who you were here?

FP ([40:07](#)):

Yeah. Mrs. Fischer.

GN ([40:09](#)):

[Laugh] Yes. Okay. For students, student, ladies, woman.

FP ([40:13](#)):

No.

GN ([40:13](#)):

Not yet.

FP ([40:14](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

I think Marist and Vassar both allowed co-eds the year I graduated, which was probably good for me.

GN ([40:22](#)):

'67, '68.

FP ([40:22](#)):

No, I was married, that's right.

GN ([40:24](#)):

Yeah. Yeah [laugh]. Now women dominate here, they dominate in terms of numbers, they--.

FP ([40:31](#)):

Don't they dominate--?

GN ([40:33](#)):

Academically.

FP ([40:34](#)):

Period and everything, you know?

GN ([40:36](#)):

No, they're not president yet. We still have a male-- yeah.

FP ([40:41](#)):

I don't, I don't want to get into politics. I don't want to get into a heartbeat away.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([40:45](#)):

What do you think was the driving force? What did, what caused Marist to develop as it did, you know? What would you say behind it? Is it, well-- let me say a few things. You might say oh, it's President Murray. He might say Ron (?) set it up with IBM. And so which guy built on those shoulders.

FP ([41:07](#)):

Murray did a lot of--.

GN ([41:08](#)):

Murray comes along and he did his share. Okay.

FP ([41:12](#)):

He did a big share.

GN ([41:14](#)):

Yeah. But no one takes Murray's classes, you know, it was not because he was a great teacher, you know? So it's his ability to be able to do something.

FP ([41:24](#)):

I think he could see.

GN ([41:25](#)):

The vision.

FP ([41:26](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

The vision.

GN ([41:27](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([41:28](#)):

Whereas a lot of people, they're, you know?

GN ([41:31](#)):

Yeah. I mean, he opened up the Hudson, take the campus itself, you know, there was a river down there, but I don't know that we saw much of it in my day. We did have the racing and we went down and we looked over the things that we saw people with boats, but, it didn't have the national prominence that, you know, the well-- that it has now let's put it that way.

FP ([41:57](#)):

Well, who's-- I can't pronounce his name, but he does the poll.

GN ([42:02](#)):

Miringoff. Lee Miringoff.

FP ([42:04](#)):

Yeah. That's been, you know, nationwide.

GN ([42:09](#)):

Name recognition.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([42:10](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([42:10](#)):

That's right out there. Then of course the development academically in terms of master's degrees.

FP ([42:20](#)):

Doctorate now.

GN ([42:21](#)):

Doctorate now, physical ed, and so on, okay. Time is running on but let me get to the future.

What do you see in like the crystal ball, where is Marist ten, twenty years from now? Is there going to be a Marist?

FP ([42:40](#)):

I hope so.

GN ([42:41](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([42:42](#)):

And I hope it stays on track the way it's going and doesn't get involved with the, what's the word wokeness. I hope that doesn't overtake the college; you know?

GN ([42:53](#)):

Yeah.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([42:54](#)):

That's-- from what I'm hearing and reading, it's dissipating somewhat, and I hope the faster, the better, but I think Marist is on track to doing the right thing.

GN ([43:03](#)):

What part do you think others play in it? Like the alumni and the various kinds of activities, does sports play a part in it?

FP ([43:15](#)):

Definitely, definitely sports.

GN ([43:18](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([43:18](#)):

The women's basketball [laugh].

GN ([43:20](#)):

Yeah. That's a big item that brings us along to, you know, prominence. Again, girls want to come here, if not to play basketball then to see girls play basketball, which would be, you know one of those drawing forces, you know. I suppose. The question I really would like to say is what was the glue that kept you here? What, why did you stay, you know, when IBM--?

FP ([43:52](#)):

I had a job that I didn't need to go any further with my education.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([43:56](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([43:57](#)):

I probably didn't need a bachelor's degree to be a programmer.

GN ([44:02](#)):

Right.

FP ([44:03](#)):

It certainly helps you when you're up for promotion. Say your guy's got a bachelor's degree in physics.

GN ([44:08](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([44:08](#)):

But the master's degree, I just wanted it. I just wanted to do it. And I think it was an inspiration for my two children [affirmative]. Then I thought about getting a PhD [affirmative]. I was going to go on after that. And I says, too old, I was in my forties, late forties when I got my master's and I said, you know, I don't really need, other than for an ego when I said I don't--.

GN ([44:34](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([44:34](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

But I would've like to have PhD after my name.

GN ([44:37](#)):

Yeah. But, you as a person, being accepted, did you feel at home here, do you have a--?

FP ([44:45](#)):

Yes. I didn't stay involved after I graduated, because like I said, I was too busy doing other things. It was like, when I went to IBM, I felt honored to have that badge [affirmative]. And years later, they wanted me to be a manager and I felt so proud that they wanted me to lead.

Yeah. You know, so. But sometimes you have to contemplate what drove me to do this?

GN ([45:08](#)):

Well, what brings you back now with the anniversary, the 50th year. I mean--.

FP ([45:13](#)):

Joan brings me back [laugh].

GN ([45:15](#)):

Well, I know the goal that she has--.

FP ([45:18](#)):

She's been influential in getting me back to Marist.

GN ([45:20](#)):

Yeah. But she--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP ([45:21](#)):

And Cosimo's.

GN ([45:23](#)):

But she points out things that are here.

FP ([45:24](#)):

Yes.

GN ([45:25](#)):

It's not a, you know, con job, you know. Showing you something that doesn't exist. I think it's an eyeopener and you're wise enough to share it. I think that's good. So, I think that's kind of the last-- unless what would you like to say that I didn't say or ask, anything more that's, either of you?

FP ([45:55](#)):

I, you know, I don't know. Just it's an honor to be on the campus. It's a beautiful school. I've been to many colleges. Like I said, interviewing, going to my daughters and my granddaughters. And-

-.

BP ([46:04](#)):

Your sister graduated.

FP ([46:06](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yes. My younger sister graduated here. My nephew graduated here, Rice, Nathan Rice, Marlene Rice. I think my nephew Nathan still works here as security. But my brother-in-law--.

GN ([46:23](#)):

Do they feel the same way about Marist?

FP ([46:25](#)):

Never really, never really discussed it with them.

GN ([46:28](#)):

You just assume so because they keep coming.

Joan Gambeski ([46:37](#)):

So, this is, I'm Joan Gambeski.

GN ([46:42](#)):

Right, okay.

FP ([46:43](#)):

You didn't get introduced?

JG ([46:44](#)):

No. No, but I just, I would-- could we ask Barbara about what it was like during Fred's time at Marist, and supporting him, and managing a family, and being part of the Marist family?

GN ([47:01](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yeah.

BP ([47:02](#)):

I was always proud that he took it upon himself to keep going. Okay. He used to sit with the girls at the kitchen table while I was making dinner, doing homework together. And they were, they would just inspire each other. And I think that really, really made a difference.

GN ([47:19](#)):

Who is doing the homework, the children or him?

BP ([47:22](#)):

The three of them. All of them.

FP ([47:23](#)):

They were helping me.

GN ([47:25](#)):

I see all, they're all doing the homework. Okay. How about his scheduling? In other words, did that drive you crazy sometimes?

BP ([47:35](#)):

He would get home late and then he'd be too tired to eat. So, it could be late dinners.

GN ([47:41](#)):

Yeah. You make it, he doesn't want to eat, you know?

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

BP (47:45):

Right. He was too wound up.

GN (47:47):

Put it in the refrigerator, tomorrow's not as good as would've been today.

BP (47:49):

And he was king of the Advil family, headaches all the time.

FP (47:54):

My IBM kit.

BP (47:55):

Tired, yeah.

GN (47:57):

Okay.

JG (47:58):

But Barbara was from Beacon?

BP (48:00):

Yes.

JG (48:00):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

You grew up in Beacon. And what was your perception of Marist, if you had any, growing up as a young girl, young woman? And then now all of a sudden having a closer relationship with college through Fred.

BP ([48:18](#)):

There was no talk of college in my family. We were not well off. My dad struggled, working at the New York Rubber Company and other places. My sister was the oldest. She never, they would never talk to her about college. So, none of us really did college.

JG ([48:38](#)):

But did you have a perception of what Marist--?

BP ([48:41](#)):

I had no idea about what Marist was like, nothing. High school was it, you either became a nurse, a secretary, married a rich family.

GN ([48:50](#)):

Yeah.

BP ([48:50](#)):

That was it.

JG ([48:52](#)):

Right. But when you came, when Fred was a student here and you said like at the ceremony for the evening division students, and you would also receive a certificate of appreciation.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

BP ([49:05](#)):

That was an honor. I'll tell you that was really something.

FP ([49:09](#)):

PhD, putting Herby through.

GN ([49:11](#)):

Oh, I remember that ceremony?

FP ([49:14](#)):

She used my gown and cap.

BP ([49:15](#)):

My daughters came. It was wonderful. And graduation day, wasn't there a terrible lightning storm that was flashing behind--.

FP ([49:23](#)):

Yeah. That was for the graduate-- that was for undergraduate degree. We were sitting, looking at the glass of Donnelly and in the background, over in Highland, there's a storm going on and we're outside.

BP ([49:33](#)):

We just made it through.

JG ([49:35](#)):

Wow.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

FP (49:35):

The master's degree we were inside. It was a damp day. And all she wanted to do was get a picture of Rik Smits.

JG (49:45):

That was for your graduate, '88, you're in the same class, class of '88.

FP (49:49):

He had a-- my robe had to be altered because I'm so tall, but his, his robe was more like a long shirt. So, she goes over to him and say, could you take a picture with my daughter? So, he says, you want to put her on the chair? Because when he used, when he was walking around the hall, his girlfriend was 5'3, he was 7'4 and he'd be talking to her in Donnelly. Anyway, she goes over at him at graduation. Says, will you take a picture of my daughter; Natalie at the time was about 4'9. So, he wants to stand her on a chair, she goes, no, no, no. So he-- my daughter stands next to Rik and he puts his hand around her shoulder and his hand covered her whole body [laugh].

Nicest guy you want to meet, real gentleman.

GN (50:34):

I had him as a student. And he was, I mean, he'd have to duck to come into the classroom, you know, not the classroom because Donnelly had those big-- but into the ordinary room, you know, he would have to duck to come in.

FP (50:48):

Most doors I think are 6'7 or 6'8. And he was 7'4, so.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([50:54](#)):

So that'd be something.

JG ([50:56](#)):

So also, I remember you saying that you would do daily handstands. Now, for me understanding the gymnastics background, now, something you've been doing all your life.

FP ([51:08](#)):

Yeah. I can't--.

JG ([51:08](#)):

When did you become a runner and when did you become involved with the Mid-Hudson road runner's club?

FP ([51:14](#)):

I started running in about 1970. I used to work out, I was into weightlifting and all that other stuff. There's a gym in the Freedom Planes Presbyterian Church across from Arlington High School in '55. So, I got into weightlifting over there. It was a gym. And one of the elders of the church, Gus Johnson, got into running. This big, massive guy. And Arlington had the track. So, we used to go out and run around the track. It was grueling for me to run. Then we'd run around the perimeter. He introduced me to the 5k, which is 3.1 miles. So, I said, this is fun. It keeps the fat off. But when you run and you're trying to build up muscle weightlifting, you got just so much protein in your body can handle, you know? So, you lose the massiveness, which you can see what happened, anyway. But I enjoyed running in Mid-Hudson river runner. I don't remember how far back I joined that, but I'm still a member of the Mid-Hudson road runner--.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([52:08](#)):

Is it still active that field?

FP ([52:09](#)):

Yeah, I still run. I'm not as-- since COVID came out, people didn't get together. The gym closed up. I just kind of...

JG ([52:18](#)):

But you just ran a 5k.

FP ([52:20](#)):

I did the Dutchess classic with Pete Colaizzo's shirt [laugh].

JG ([52:26](#)):

In '22--?

FP ([52:29](#)):

'19.

JG ([52:29](#)):

'19, right. 2019.

FP ([52:30](#)):

And I did a respectable time. Thirty-five minutes, whatever. I don't remember.

BP ([52:34](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Everywhere we traveled since the children left for college and now are married, wherever we went, the Eiffel Tower, what?

FP ([52:44](#)):

Pisa, almost got arrested in Pisa.

BP ([52:46](#)):

He was always on his hands, taking a picture of him on his hands, against something famous.

JG ([52:51](#)):

Doing a handstand. Because you would do handstands daily and--.

FP ([52:56](#)):

Not to show off or anything.

JG ([52:57](#)):

No, no, no. But to keep your strength and balance, but with the photos, right? I couldn't imagine.

The paparazzi would come flocking.

FP ([53:06](#)):

I still, when I go to the gym, I still do a handstand against the wall and I'll kick away and I can still hold it. But you need, you need a lot of wrist strength to do it. I would walk on my hands as exercise up until I was almost 70. But when I was 70 years, 69, I went skiing and I dislocated the shoulder. And after that, I was afraid to walk on my hands because I was afraid it would give out.

BP ([53:30](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Didn't you walk down Dutchess stairs on your hands?

FP ([53:32](#)):

Yeah, that was my goal. There's the stairs from Bowne hall down to the parking lot, series of stairs. And I used to start, Bill Duke would be up there. Know Bill Duke, the actor. He'd be up there. He's going to be an actor and I'm going to be an engineer. Anyway. I would, every once in a while, I'd try to walk down the steps on my hands. And I was within three steps of making it and my forearms were red and rash and bleed. I never made it, but that was my goal. I was [laugh] I know, I sound a little bit odd.

GN ([54:07](#)):

No, you're kind of the great American boy still. I mean, you know, you don't seem to grow old. I don't know why--.

FP ([54:14](#)):

I look in the mirror. I see an older person.

GN ([54:17](#)):

Yeah well, I don't [laugh].

FP ([54:23](#)):

My grandson, always when he was little, four or five-year-old, grandpa, why do you have a comb? And I used to go like this. Just to shut him up you know.

BP ([54:34](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Comb your mustache, that's right.

FP ([54:36](#)):

I told him one day I says, you know, Tyler, you look just like grandpa, your face. He says, yeah but I got hair [laugh]. Love him.

GN ([54:47](#)):

And the other career that we're not talking about, road runners is one thing.

FP ([54:54](#)):

I belong to Knights of Columbus in Wappingers. And I was very active in the Dutchess County Pistol Association [affirmative]. I was, you know, an officer I was the treasurer, the vice president. I was the vice president for about nine years in the runners club. Again, I try to stay active, I don't know what I'm doing, but I try to stay active.

GN ([55:17](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([55:18](#)):

But they just got me the other day at the Knights of Columbus. They said, we need somebody to be a recorder [laugh]. I got to get one of these.

GN ([55:30](#)):

Yeah. They're handy.

FP ([55:34](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

But my life has been average, you know.

GN ([55:37](#)):

I think it's been super. I mean, average is a funny way to describe what you're doing. But of course, you have years to go yet. You're already 72, what is it?

FP ([55:47](#)):

82.

GN ([55:49](#)):

I missed ten years [laugh].

FP ([55:50](#)):

I wish you were right [laugh].

GN ([55:53](#)):

So do I. Well, let me put it this way. It goes fast enough, and you wonder where it all went, you know?

FP ([56:05](#)):

Pictures, save the pictures and you see what you did.

GN ([56:08](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([56:08](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

The thing we're going through now is downsizing. We see so many of our friends downsizing and it's traumatic for me. We have a colonial house with a full basement and I can't-- her father's jack is in there for jacking the car. I can't throw stuff out and we have friends going through this downsizing. It's the only traumatic thing I'm going through now.

GN ([56:33](#)):

Yeah.

FP ([56:34](#)):

I can't get rid of anything.

GN ([56:35](#)):

Well, good. I'm glad that's the disposition you have because in the next ten years, you've, you're going to find that--.

FP ([56:43](#)):

I'll probably slow down a little bit.

GN ([56:45](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And then you get a friend like this to make sure that you can get around, see this is the other part of it, you know [affirmative]. It will be nice if I can just scooter along out of here.

FP ([56:58](#)):

My big worry now is, will I be able to push the clutch in, on her little sports car that she don't drive? She bought it for me.

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([57:06](#)):

Yeah. Okay. You don't need them anymore.

FP ([57:09](#)):

Well, this car has one.

GN ([57:11](#)):

Just the one here works, you know, the break and the accelerator, but you know, there's good time left yet. So, don't abuse it, use it well, and--.

FP ([57:26](#)):

What's, Clint Eastwood, man's got to know his limitations. I know my limitations.

GN ([57:32](#)):

Oh yeah.

FP ([57:33](#)):

I can't go out in the yard and work all day, you know, an hour or two. Are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Yeah [laugh] I'm done.

GN ([57:41](#)):

Well, before you go out, it's still Thursday. I mean, some of us have a disease [laugh] we ever yeah, already for, let's have a little drink. Yeah, sure. But wisdom sometimes prevails and then you don't, which is the better part of it. Alright. I've kept you long enough. Joan, is there something more an eternity of this, how we get together. Thank you for bringing them in and

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

getting me in touch and our funny little exchanges back and forth, it worked out well. And it does not have to be the end. There'll be days ahead when you'll be coming on campus for one thing or another.

BP ([58:25](#)):

Thanks to Joan.

FP ([58:25](#)):

Thank you for coming to your 50th reunion. The class of '67.

FP ([58:31](#)):

I didn't wear my watch. I didn't wear my ring. I forgot my ring.

JG ([58:35](#)):

In 2017.

GN ([58:37](#)):

I was startled by that because I heard you did that. And that's why I wore my Marist hat.

JG ([58:42](#)):

Usually does.

FP ([58:43](#)):

I usually have my red hat and my red jacket, my Marist ring. My Marist watch. What's wrong with me?

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

GN ([58:51](#)):

What else can we sell him [laugh]?

FP ([58:55](#)):

I have multiple Marist running shirts.

BP ([58:58](#)):

Beautiful black sweatshirt with a fox.

FP ([59:02](#)):

Yeah, you bought me that nice velour shirt.

BP ([59:04](#)):

I did.

FP ([59:04](#)):

The fox on it. I have, we bought Natalie the fox hat.

BP ([59:11](#)):

The original fox hat.

JG ([59:12](#)):

Oh, that looks like a plush fox.

FP ([59:14](#)):

Fred & Barbara PolICASTRI

Yeah. It's a fox. I mean, for some reason she doesn't wear it anymore [laugh]. Well, but no, she's going to be 48, so.

GN ([59:22](#)):

Wow. Strange. All right. I think I have to shut this off, if I can.

BP ([59:27](#)):

Thank you very much.