

Doherty, John F., 06 December 2007

John F. Doherty

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, New York

Transcribed by Ann Sandri

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

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Transcript: John F. Doherty

Interviewee: John F. Doherty

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- Doherty, John F.
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Summary:

John (Doc) Doherty discusses his early years and his arrival at Marist as the Class of '69. He discusses his role in the City of Poughkeepsie's Police Department as a Lieutenant of the Detectives and later as the Captain of the Detectives. He also describes his return to Marist College as a tenured Professor of Criminal Justice. He gives his insights as a student in the 60s and 70s and as a professor in the 2000s and compares the growth and development, strengths, and weaknesses of the college.

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[00:40](#) **GN:** Today is Thursday, December 6th and we're meeting in the Marist College Library. We're having an interview with Dr. John Doherty and we're proved to have him because he's not only a graduate, a student, a former student of Marist but he's a Professor. Good afternoon, John.

[00:59](#) **JD:** Good afternoon, Gus.

[01:01](#) **GN:** John, could you give me some personal data? Like for instance, when were you born and where?

[01:06](#) **JD:** I was born in New York City, Manhattan in 1947 and two years of that my family moved out to Queens instead of the country to a place called Hollis.

[01:20](#) **GN:** And where did you go to grade school then?

[01:23](#) **JD:** I went to Incarnation Grade School on Francis Lewis Boulevard in Bel Air, Queens. And then for high school, I went to...

[01:33](#) **GN:** What year did you graduate from grade school?

[01:36](#) **JD:** 1961.

[01:38](#) **GN:** And then you went to Archbishop Molloy High School?

[01:42](#) **JD:** That is correct.

[01:43](#) **GN:** That was relatively a new school at that time was it not? The building was new.

[01:48](#) **JD:** The building was new. It has just been built a few years prior to that. They moved from St. Ann's in Manhattan. They went out to Jamaica, Queens halfway between the two airports.

[02:04](#) **GN:** And the St. Ann's was Stanners and when they went to Molloy they remained to to be Stanners.

They did not become Molloy men. No, they are Stanners. Did you have any particular interest in high school, John?

[02:21](#) **JD:** No

[02:22](#) **GN:** Sports or...?

[02:23](#) **JD:** I played intermural basketball. I played freshman basketball but I never played. I sat on the bench.

[02:39](#) **GN:** I see. Then moving on to high school when it came time to graduate, what made you think of Marist College?

[02:45](#) **JD:** Well. The guidance counselors at Archbishop Molloy pretty much told me that because of my poor

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academic record and lack of extracurricular activities, there weren't many colleges that would be accepting me.

So they stabbed me with the new place up here at Poughkeepsie, Marist College.

[03:03](#) **GN:** And we're very happy to take you. I am sure.

[03:07](#) **JD:** They waited till my father's check cleared.

[03:13](#) **GN:** What were the experiences here in your first years at Marist? Were there ... Was it a big class?

Were you in the hundreds?

[03:21](#) **JD:** We were at the time the largest class to enter Marist. It was about three hundreds. And it was all-male. We were all assigned to Leo Hall as our dormitory which fit just about all three hundred of us. I was assigned to the fifth floor with then-Brother Richard LaPietra as my proctor.

[03:44](#) **GN:** And dormitory life was somewhat like the army. Were you up in the morning and?

[03:52](#) **JD:** There was one telephone at the end of the hallway next to the elevator for fifty different guys that were living there and you had to fight over the phone. And before cell phone and portable phones, you just waited and you put your dime in and then every three minutes or so, you put another nickel in.

[04:12](#) **GN:** That's a rather interesting piece of history to think that the Marist had phones in the hallway at the times. Moving on through the college years could you describe the tenor of those years? What was going on in the world and what was on at Marist?

[04:28](#) **JD:** It was a very trying time in the world. War in Vietnam was at its height. And that capsulized every decision that we made being an all-male college. We knew that we were out of the draft and out of service as long as we stayed in college. But we knew that at some point we would be out of college. Some of my friends fled to Canada. Some of my friend bought women's underwear at (?) to go on their draft physical... Some purposely fail courses so they wouldn't have to go. It was also a time of great civil unrest here in the country. There were number of cities rioting along racial lines.

[05:18](#) **GN:** That would be 1968 convention. Was it not?

[05:22](#) **JD:** Chicago. As a matter of fact, my yearbook, my Marist yearbook has a full-page colored picture of one of the protesters at the Democratic convention after he was hit on the head by the police with a nightstick bleeding. Yeah it was a time. There were certain areas of the city of Poughkeepsie where all our favorite bars

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were... that we could not walk in to because of the racial tension. As a matter of fact Poughkeepsie in 1967 had its own little mini riot that went on for a couple of days.

[05:58](#) **GN:** Back to more peaceful place like the campus and you're living here during those years. Tell us about your own occupation. Did you have a job on campus?

[06:10](#) **JD:** I did. I ran the ... At first, I worked at the post office. And eventually by the time the summer between sophomore and junior year and junior and senior year, I ran the post office and stayed up here on campus which was a great opportunities for me because I would close the post office and then walk around campus delivering mail. And they gave me a great opportunity to meet the secretaries and the Brothers and the faculty. And then the afternoon I would sit in Brother Linus Foy's office discussing the problems of the college with him.

[06:47](#) **GN:** So that was the beginning of your solo interaction as it were with the administration and the presidency here at the college. Okay and then ended... When you come to the end of your senior year, you were not happy or looking forward to leaving.

[07:05](#) **JD:** No. Not at all

[07:06](#) **GN:** OK and what was the relation with you and the draft at the time?

[07:12](#) **JD:** I'm from Hollis, Queens. My draft board was in Jamaica, Queens which had a ton of young non-college students I knew it wasn't going to be immediately. I actually tried to join the military as many of my classmates had including my roommate Don Driliste but my eyes were bad enough to keep me out of the officer core but not out of the draft. I became a police officer in the city of Poughkeepsie which was not my first thought. My first thought was to go down to New York City where all my relatives were cops. But they had a hiring freeze so bartending at Brown Derby which was another job I had in my junior and senior year. I got to meet over the summer months way lots of the city of Poughkeepsie cops and eventually they talked me into going on the job in Poughkeepsie.

[08:09](#) **GN:** And when did that happen? How many years after high school were you on the police force?

[08:14](#) **JD:** I started on January 8th, 1970 two which was about six months after I graduated from Marist. But I wasn't the best student so I didn't really graduate in May like everybody else did. I had to take two classes in

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summer school that summer. And the chief of Poughkeepsie always knew. Although I vehemently denied it that I was going to leave the minute New York City called and I swore him I wasn't but he know so. Behind my back and without my knowledge, he had my draft board changed from Jamaica, Queens up here to Poughkeepsie so that he'd have a more control over my life. So if I left Poughkeepsie I was probably going to get drafted the next day.

[09:08](#) **GN:** I see. It was kind of a mixed blessing in his own way. But nevertheless. Then life on police corps here, the police department here. And reflect on that in terms of the College did you have any interaction with college students?

[09:22](#) **JD:** Almost immediately. I was asked to serve on the Alumni Board. It was very small back then. Don Murphy was the part-time alumni director and he and I had actually worked together during ... I also ... One of the other things I did hear, I was president of the senior class. So Don Murphy's the alumni director who approached me about a communion breakfast the alumni wanted to throw for the new graduating class. So we work together on that and got to be friends, started to hang around together. So when I was on the alumni, I would come back here to campus a lot for meetings and I stayed in. I was very close with the following class—the class behind me. The whole class I knew because back then Marist was small enough where you know all the students. And Mike Towers who was the President of that class and I are still remain very good friends. The first move ... Well I was ... Tom Wade was the dean and he arranged for me, a Town of Poughkeepsie police officer named Joe Callow and somebody from the sheriff office I don't remember to give a talk opposite the theater back then I think it was called Room 249 on being a police officer in the 60s and 70s. When I left, when I went outside, I had a decal on my windows ... and somebody who didn't like police and not many people liked police in the 60s and 70s saw it fit to break all my headlights and taillights which the college actually reimbursed me for. So it wasn't that bad. But my strongest memory of that time period was in May of 1971, it would be after the students were killed in Kent State University, there was a major demonstration in Poughkeepsie.

[11:21](#) **GN:** Was that at the armory?

[11:23](#) **JD:** Yes it was. It was at the armory. And because I am sort of a large guy, they immediately put me in

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this newly formed tactical unit. And our job was to hide and the police had a separate ... it's like a rule of law ... the youth bureau that part of the police bureau that deals with juveniles has to be separate from the main headquarters. So right across on the armory in the basement of that building across the street there used to be an office building and apartment housing was the juveniles unit so they suited up in our tactical gear, you know riot helmet, riot shields, riot sticks and just as the parade the protesters came down and we came out as a show of force. As Vassar College, Bennett College. New Paltz University went by, they didn't know who I was. I was just another cop but when the Marist contingent came by they noticed who I was and catcalls, yellings and screamings. Not a Marist student. But one of the other actually it turns out to be ... He wasn't a student anyway. He was just a Poughkeepsie resident as he went by he spit on my riot helmet and for the next four hours I would watch it slowly dribble down in front of me.

[12:45](#) **GN:** Passing on to other things, John. You really downplay some of your abilities and like in the academia. But certain leadership has always been an excellent and outstanding quality even from your election to the student body here to the police force putting you on that particular brigade. Talk a little bit about your life in the police department and your promotions and going to school and ... Were you in the FBI School at some time? Rather taking courses and comment on that a little.

[13:22](#) **JD:** Not because of my thirst for knowledge but for a federal program, the LEAA was formed in the 1960s because.

[13:36](#) **GN:** LEAA is...

[13:37](#) **JD:** Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. it was part of the Omnibus Crime Bill. One thing discovered based on the rioting in the cities and the rising amount of crime and other things that were going on that the people hated the cops. So they came up with this suggestion. Police departments start looking to hire females, minorities, and college-educated. People. LEAA set aside a great amount of money to either forgive loans for those who were in any criminal justice field who went to college or to pay for students who were in college if they promise to become cops so because I realize I could get a master's degree. Without much money out of my pocket I went to CW Post which is a school at Long Island University. And they had a satellite campus up in Palmyra(?), New York. So on weekends and nights I went and I earned a Master's in Criminal

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Justice from the LIU. A few years later, our PBA, our unions entered into an agreement with the city of Poughkeepsie they would pay originally for a degree in Police Sciences and Criminal Justice eventually that became anything degree in any field and I came back here to Marist I got a second master's degree this one in public administrations. And that was all paid for by the city so. Based on that and the fact that my brother enrolled as a student here at Marist after graduating from Rockland Community College, he was majoring in criminal justice over the course of time he was here, I got to meet Dr. Barbara Lavin who was chairman ... chairperson of the criminal justice department. And I started to guest-lecturing for her. I started substituting for her in class when she went to different conferences.

[15:37](#) **GN:** You are still on the police department?

[15:38](#) **JD:** Yes. I was.

[15:39](#) **GN:** And now you had moved up. And you were a sergeant or?

[15:43](#) **JD:** By that time, I was a captain. Now five years after I went on and became a sergeant then you have to wait a few years to take the test then I became a lieutenant in 1977. And then I was promoted to Lieutenant of detectives in 1980 and then Captain of detectives in 1984. And that's the rank I retired at. So I was head of the detective bureau.

[16:10](#) **GN:** Did you ever real officially leave the department? Or have you always been associated with the Poughkeepsie Police Department?

[16:16](#) **JD:** No, I ... there was an older detective that used to come. He was very good friends with the Chief of Police and he used to come to walk with the police at the old main wall. But he was lonely and he would come hours early than his meeting with the chef. And he started ... And by that time, the Poughkeepsie police found asbestos through city wall. And we had a trail what was supposed to be temporary for six months. It turned out to be for six years. So this poor detective had come because nothing to do. No friends. He kind of sits in the detective bureau. It got so bad ... He'd come in the front door and we all bailed out the back door to get away from him. So the day I retired. I beg the police officers. If they ever saw me coming into the police station that they would shoot me. So I don't go back much.

[17:09](#) **GN:** I see. Well then moving it along. How long a time then are you in a lull between leaving the police

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department and becoming an adjunct professor? Was that a continuum?

[17:23](#) **JD:** I became an adjunct professor while I was still on the police department. That first semester I was teaching to the Department of Criminal Justice here at Marist was expanding, they were going to hire a third full-time person. And the ad was written not necessarily for me but it currently didn't hurt me. The ad was written PhD preferred, practical experience required. So I had the practical experience. I had two Master's Degrees. There were only two people applying for the job back in 1990. Me and a guy from Chicago. And he dropped out halfway through the process. And they tell me I was the front runner but they ended up hiring me.

[18:06](#) **GN:** Well that's interesting. And then you move from adjunct to full time professor in that instance. Now did that take some courage in your part to commit yourself to do this because you know that eventually you would have to go back and study again?

[18:24](#) **JD:** Yeah. It did but I also knew ... A couple things that come in to play ... Throughout my police career teaching at different police academies and certainly as an adjunct, I really was smitten with the idea of teaching I just loved getting up more or less performed. I also have not put a nickel away for either of my kids to go to college. When I heard that one of the benefits of working here is that they could go here for free. I thought that was important. The chief of police at the time that I eventually retired wasn't going anywhere ... So I knew I had gone as high in rank as I could without staying a very, very long time. So it was like the perfect storm. All those things came together and Marist offered me the job. You got to remember this too, Gus. When you retire from police, fire or the military, we withdraw our pension from day one. So when I was forty-two, I started getting half my pay for the rest of my life. So it wasn't such a gamble I took ... When I went home and told Kathy, my wife that I was leaving the police department where I was pretty much the second highest-ranking guy making a good salary and coming to Marist and starting a new career, she wanted to take me up to the state hospital and get me examined. Because my pay cut was more than half but that was supplemented of course by the retirement.

[19:51](#) **GN:** Moving on to your times here now. The courses ... Was there an array of courses? Were you coming into criminal justice? Is that the department?

[20:03](#) **JD:** Yes.

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[20:04](#) **GN:** And there's an array of courses that have to be taught?

[20:07](#) **JD:** And they had me developed in my first year, three new classes. Back then, we called it the "Police-Community Relations." Now it's called "Policing in America." They had me develop a course on probations, corrections and parole and another one on the federal criminal justice system. After a few years, I realize since I was teaching upper-level courses I wasn't getting to know the students until their junior and senior year. So I asked to teach Intro which most full-time professors in my profession don't like to do because it's like the entry level. I really loved teaching intro and I liked getting to know the students in their freshman year. And then, you're friends with them for the whole four years.

[20:54](#) **GN:** How big a group was that at the time? Criminal justice.

[20:57](#) **JD:** Back then. I would say maybe ...

[20:59](#) **GN:** Two classes?

[21:00](#) **JD:** Eighty or a hundred.

[21:02](#) **GN:** Who were the key administrators? Both in the college and the department?

[21:07](#) **JD:** Barbara Lavin was the chair of the department. And the chairperson of the – now we call the Psychology Department here was Bill Eidle. So that was the Social-Behavioral Sciences ... Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Marc VanderHeyden was the academic vice president.

[21:28](#) **GN:** President Murray was here?

[21:29](#) **JD:** He was here

[21:31](#) **GN:** But Foy was here when you were a student.

[21:32](#) **JD:** Yeah when I was a student, Foy was here.

[21:36](#) **GN:** What would you say about a comparison between the life of the professor and the life of a police officer? There are certain responsibilities and burdens and there is a certain angst every time you go to class you're going to be on the mark?

[21:56](#) **JD:** I love being a cop. And I love talking about being a cop. So I do not find teaching Criminal Justice to be strenuous. The other good news is almost everybody in my class, male and female want to be there taking courses they want. So It's not like I am teaching statistics or philosophy or something they don't have ... They

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don't see the relevancy for. They want to be there so. What I enjoyed immediately was not carrying a beeper and not getting phone calls in the and night, not working shifts. But then, art of the deal was I was hired as a tenure-track assistant professor. I had to go get the Ph D. So I spent first four five years commuting up to SUNY Albany and to the CUNY in New York City College of John Jay. So I didn't have much time at home as I thought I would when I retired. But the good thing about teaching is, I always say that the salary is not good but the hourly rate might be fine.

[23:10](#) **GN:** I see. You do get time-off?

[23:11](#) **JD:** Oh yeah. A lot more time then I'm used to.

[23:16](#) **GN:** OK, alright moving on to another point now. You're a rather unique position, having been both a student and now professor here. So let's talk about some of the developments on the campus. And in that we might start with the very first in the academic, you know. How would you compare the requirements of a student who came in your time back in '65 as to the students who come now in '08, '07?

[23:43](#) **JD:** And I say this all the time to everybody, I am a tenured faculty member. I was the chair of the department for six years and there's no way in hell I could get into Marist today because of the standards of the grade point average coming out of high school, their standing in their class, their scores on the SATs. So academically, it's grown in leaps and bounds. It's a much better institution academically. Not that I felt in any way that my education back in the 60s was not superb. The other thing that I think we had back in the 60s that is not here as much now is the professors back then were maybe two three four years older than we were. And it was great friendships that blossomed and still remained today with many of the faculty, I'm good friends with my students. I stay in touch with some of them, not all of them. But I don't think there's a comradery as there was back then. Maybe it was because of the turbulent times and maybe it's because they were just a little bit older than we were. Maybe because They were ... They were just starting out as professors the same year we were starting out as college students.

[25:05](#) **GN:** I want to get back to that later on the differences between the professors then and now. But what about in your day the options that you had, the freedom to select ... Was there much of that? Do you ... Now it's pretty much regimented if you take a major in Communications or a major in Math, there's a whole list of

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course prerequisites and so on. Your day was selection by popularity or?

[25:32](#) **JD:** No, there was certain regiments. Back then you had to take a foreign language. And that was certainly not my choice. I had taken Latin in high school which is ... You know you can take all day to read one paragraph if you wanted to. And then suddenly I am thrust into Spanish here. And they're talking and I'm not understanding it and I kept failing Spanish. I went to summer school every year. I think we had to take a certain amount of math. I think we had to take a certain amount of literature and I think we had to take religion back then. It was regimented. But there was probably more options. One of the great benefits of being in the mailman here at Marist running the post offices is that I got to know everybody in what was then called the recorder's office and any class I wanted suddenly ...

[26:26](#) **GN:** I am sure O'Brian was there to help you though it

[26:29](#) **JD:** Betty O'Brian.

[26:30](#) **GN:** Betty O'Brian. Right.

[26:34](#) **JD:** Well then, when I began my senior year ... You're right ... Nancy showed up.

[26:40](#) **GN:** The life of the student academically ... You talked about this in terms of the dormitory you had study periods?

[26:47](#) **JD:** Yes back in my ... freshman year I think it went from 7:30 to 10:30, Sunday through Thursday nights we had to be at our desk. And both, the brother that lived at the end of the floor every floor ... And there was like an upperclassman who was like a hired proctor is what we called them. They would walk down the hallway making sure we were at our desk. Then at 10:30, you were allowed out of your room till 11 when lights went out. So that first year was very, very structured. I'm not sure it was that way for all freshmen or just my class. After that it really started to loosen up. There was ... Marist did a thing called *responsible with attendances* which led us, the student to decide which classes we want to go to and when we wanted to do

[27:44](#) **GN:** And how often you wanted to go?

[27:46](#) **JD:** And that was ... That was that downfall for me because I never went to class

[27:52](#) **GN:** What about the percentage of students on campus and not coming again? In other words, broaders(?) and living at home.

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[28:02](#) **JD:** I would say then that 90% of the student body lived here on campus. The commuting students or 'brown baggers' as we used to call them, they were very small in number. Maybe a little more than that. There was also separate, an evening division that pretty much catered to IBM. And. So those were older students and we didn't have very much dealings with them. They appeared in the yearbook, you know, dispersed with the rest of us. We had a large number of our class that have died. And I think part of it is because the evening divisions students were so much older than we were.

[28:50](#) **GN:** Oh I see ... So the registration now of the classes of the alumni board, they would say deceased because they were much older than you were.

[28:57](#) **JD:** Right now, there are many of my classmates who are my age who went through ... who died John Calabrese, Dan (Daniel) Coffey, Franky Cram ... There's a lot of them so we're getting older and some of us are dying. The asterisks are much more than it would be for a normal class that didn't have the evening division.

[29:21](#) **GN:** I wonder if you could confirm this little statement I am going to make. There was a time at Marist when the summer school closed for two weeks. And it was in conjunction with the IBM Plant closing for two weeks. Do you remember anything like that?

[29:37](#) **JD:** Not at all.

[29:38](#) **GN:** Because the summer school was primarily for IBM. And the IBM who were closing the plant, they were going on vacation. So we closed the college for two weeks.

[29:49](#) **JD:** No, I don't remember that at all.

[29:51](#) **GN:** Okay moving on to graduation from the school in your time and today, you had difficulty because of the draft and so on. But taken the student body and now, I thought you fellows got a wonderful education. There's a different way in which we can probably measure education. Perhaps today they're more technically advanced. Would you confirm that in terms of ...? Are they exposed to ... Do they require the ability to be able to use a computer for instance? And are there course requirements built into to those things which were non-existent in ...?

[30:41](#) **JD:** Right, there are. Every student has to take information literacy courses now. To teach them that. But

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in an odd way it's almost a waste because the today's generation students live with computers. They don't remember a time when there weren't computers. I often think they could teach us the classes that were trying to teach them on the use of computers. They're coming out with much more ability. And I see this just in the seventeen years I've been here in things like the writing styles that they're learning much more in high school. They're coming in ... Many of them with Advanced Placement credits and so that not everybody is doing a 120 credits here at Marist College like it used to be ... They're coming with advanced placement and their club exams

[31:32](#) **GN:** Yeah. And they're coming in with half-degrees we call them the associate degrees from community college around. Also the diversity of the population of the college now ... When you were here, we said eighty percent, ninety percent were living on campus and eighty-five of us lived on Long Island more than likely. Whereas now perhaps more than half the college is not from New York.

[32:01](#) **JD:** That true. The other thing of course is gender. When I went here it was all-male. There are two females in my yearbook. One of them. I never met her. I think she was part of the evening division. And one was a girl named Barbara Joseph who ended up marrying Don Brown from class of '68. But she ... I don't remember her in being in any of my classes. So geographically we're much more diverse gender-wise we're much more diverse. Ethnically, we're probably pretty close to where we were I think. And I know that's a major concern of the admissions office and administration trying to get more diversity ethnically.

[32:52](#) **GN:** Right and we don't need any more women though,

[32:54](#) **JD:** No, we are not. Just the opposite.

[32:57](#) **GN:** It has go the other way. Which brings us to the social development ... And we looked at the academic. What was Marist like as an all-guys campus? In other words, the weekends where do they go to dance? Was there a dance? Where was...?

[33:14](#) **JD:** We had two sister schools. Mount St Mary's in Newburgh which was an all-female college and Ladycliff College down in...

[33:23](#) **GN:** West Point Area.

[33:24](#) **JD:** Yeah outside of West Point. Unfortunately Ladycliff closed and is now the museum for West Point.

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So if you were lucky enough to have a roommate with a car, you would hitch a ride with him to different places. We had mixers they called. And there were dance here on campus at least once a month ... Probably more often than that and we would invite these colleges to come ... And they'd come up by the bus load or car load.

[33:52](#) **GN:** Now as the Student President, did you arrange for those? Were you as a student...?

[33:55](#) **JD:** Yeah. My first political activity if you would I was the social chairman for the student government. So I arranged many of those mixers, parties, band concerts ... But I also remember many years hitching down to Mount Saint, down to Newburg. Not so much as the college of Mount Saint Mary's but the bars surrounding Mount Saint Mary's and Ladycliff that we knew the young girls would be at.

[34:24](#) **GN:** You don't remember those names ... Now those bars do you?

[34:26](#) **JD:** I do. Believe it or not. The one on Route 9W. Right by Mount Saint Mary's was the Faux Paus And the one by Ladycliff ...

[34:40](#) **GN:** was Mayacopa?

[34:41](#) **JD:** No the one by Ladycliff was called Snuffy's. I remember they had Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer on tap and best hamburgers in the world. There were times when we would go down there to have a couple of drinks and get a hamburger even if we didn't find any girls.

[34:58](#) **GN:** Do you remember a place called Frank's.

[34:59](#) **JD:** Oh I do right across the street.

[35:01](#) **GN:** Was that operant when you were here?

[35:00](#) **JD:** Yes it was. That was known as the Freshman because freshmen were not allowed to have cars and you could walk right across the street to Frank's. And you got to remember back then the drinking age was eighteen so 99% of the student body was over eighteen. And the good news was the nursing school at St Francis and at Vassar hospital. And I believe there were some nurses up there from the state hospital. They would hang out at Frank's and we as freshmen just walk across the street and go over there ... So that was our social activity and a rite of passage. By the time, you or your roommate got a car. We'd started to go to Brown Derby which is an upper-class hangout. But many of the nights, I remember walking home from the Brown

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Derby or walking to the Brown Derby because I didn't have a car when I was a student here not until my ...

[36:00](#) **GN:** Later on, some place opened between the Brown Derby and the campus on Delafield Street. I don't know if it was ever officially a bar and then there was the caboose. I don't remember the name of the place called ...

[36:11](#) **JD:** Now the one right close to Marist was Phil's. And no uncertain terms, he let it be known ... He did not want Marist students there and the way he did that was he had a big sign requiring a Sheriff's ID card and the only way to get a Sheriff's ID card is if you're a resident of Dutchess County. He did not want us now. The place you're talking is about the Caboose is actually opened ... It was an existing bar. It was an old ... very old Italian neighborhood bar called Nate's. It actually had a bocce ballcourt in the backyard there. Two Marist people Don Murphy who was class of '64 – he's the part time alumni director I was talking about and Andy Drozd from the class of '68 bought that in the very early 70s and changed it from a neighborhood bar to a college bar. It became a very popular Marist hangout. It's still a Marist hangout bar but under a new name, it's officially that Renaissance Pub. All Marist students know as Reenie's.

[37:18](#) **GN:** On the social activities, how about special events? How about river day?

[37:22](#) **JD:** River Day fell to president of the senior class which was basically the first nice day of the spring to declare a River Day.

[37:33](#) **GN:** Do you remember a time when there was no River Day before you?

[37:36](#) **JD:** No.

[37:36](#) **GN:** It was always here.

[37:38](#) **JD:** It was here when I got here.

[37:39](#) **GN:** So it preceded you. And it was an all-day affair or just in the evening?

[37:44](#) **JD:** Usually it started in the area of three o'clock pretty much after classes. And the reason that we gave Abbott was to appease the river gods...

[37:58](#) **GN:** Had to have something philosophical.

[37:59](#) **JD:** Yeah. So the senior class president would declare River Day and we'd send out runners. And they'd put leaflets under people's doors. And word would spread and much more than half the college probably three-

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quarters of the college would show up down at the riverfront. And typically as I remember in those days, those who were holding River Day would stand on the railroad tracks, I think we put them up on a pedestal kind of thing and address the masses down below. And some years unfortunately there was trouble. People drank too much got carried away, started...

[38:36](#) **GN:** Fell off the rocks

[38:37](#) **JD:** Fell off the rocks, started rocking the school bus that were bring the crew teams down from the high schools.

[38:42](#) **GN:** I can't believe in behavior like that in college students here.

[38:46](#) **JD:** Must have been some outside agitators.

[38:48](#) **GN:** They coming all the time. Do you remember anything in world ... Marist world ... that might be considered cultural? Plays or musicals or that kind of thing?

[39:00](#) **JD:** I remember when Jerry Cox came. He was not here in my freshman year. When he came as a Marist Brother introduced to the best of my knowledge the theater guild .They were very, very active. They would put on three, four different plays a years. Part of my job as social chairman was to bring in groups. One year, Jeff Kegel was the ... he was the year ahead of me. He rented a gigantic tent and brought in a group called The Beau Brummels which by rock and roll standards were a very big-name group back then. We hired the Vanilla Fudge who went on to become the Mamas and the Papas. We hired them when they were unknown. We also brought in Your Father's Mustache which is like a banjo singalong. Yes there was plenty going on. Movies all the time ...Brother Joe Belanger would.

[39:57](#) **GN:** Foreign films?

[39:58](#) **JD:** Yeah. Well, you know. I never went to those but they came though the post offices when I was there. They were always coming though.

[40:07](#) **GN:** Were they on fire or something?

[40:09](#) **JD:** To this day I can't speak a word of Spanish. I'm never going to try French even though I took it for four years here. So yeah. I think they were foreign films.

[40:21](#) **GN:** Moving on to another aspect - Campus growth. Can you go from your earliest years and

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recollections when you arrived in the athletic fields for instance the gym if there was one, the swimming pool.

Comment on those please.

[40:37](#) **JD:** My first Recollection is when I arrived, my father drove me up from Queens. They were still putting the finishing touches on the cafeteria in the Student Center which was attached to the new building, Champagnat. They were painting on the walls as we waited on line to get our food. Already in existence as a dormitory was Leo hall and prior to that just by a few years was Sheahan hall. Donnelly Hall had existed not as large as it is now. It was smaller and I always remember. Outside of each class room are almost like patios, terraces where you would go out the back

[41:17](#) **GN:** Windows would open onto this parapet that went around it...

[41:22](#) **JD:** And of course Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel was dead-center there. Marian Hall existed as the gymnasium, a very small gymnasium. And if Marist Basketball held a game there, there was no room for spectators to sit. You had to stand because the wall was that close to the lines around. Attached to that was Brother Tarcisius' print shop. And I think there were some maintenance stuff there.

[41:55](#) **GN:** There was a carpenter shop there as well. I believe the other side were garages.

[42:00](#) **JD:** Yeah right. That's where Andy's gang used to hang out and then you cross River Road to what we now call the north part of campus and the only thing that existed there was a swimming pool. Freezing-cold water, it must have been fed by a natural spring or something. It was always cold but very popular in the summer with students and alumni and probably outsiders for all I know. And north of that eventually, Andy's gang use to go up there to maintenance crew moved to some shacks on that end and that was the only thing that existed on that side of the property. South of Donnelly, I think maybe certainly by the time my junior or senior year we played ... They built Leonidoff Field prior to that we used to rent Stitzel Field. Back then, it was called Riverview Field down in the city of Poughkeepsie for our football games.

[42:54](#) **GN:** Do you remember a cemetery on the property?

[42:56](#) **JD:** I do. Right around where the McCann Center is now.

[43:00](#) **GN:** Then they buried the cemetery.

[43:03](#) **JD:** Yeah Marist if I am not mistaken there's a ...

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[43:05](#) **GN:** Tombstone.

[43:05](#) **JD:** The tombstone said, Buried nearby and a list of brothers. And then there was the old bee house when the Brothers use to raise bees. That's where the football team kept its equipment and would practice. We'd go up to our Lady of Lourdes High School and rent that for our basketball games. I am trying to think what else. The McCann center wasn't there. None of the parking lots were there. So it was a very small-contained campus at some point. I'm going to say in my second year maybe my third year with great fanfare... The Marist Brothers knocked down the white wall that surrounded the campus showing that we want to become a part of the Poughkeepsie community.

[43:50](#) **GN:** Now we've put up a nice black fence.

[43:52](#) **JD:** Yeah but that's to funnel the kids to where we want them to cross Route Nine. It was one lane each direction and where it met the Old Clay's Gas Station, there was a blinking light. It wasn't even a functioning traffic light. It would blink red in one direction for use to be I guess Delafield Street and yellow for those on Route Nine to use caution.

[44:14](#) **GN:** There was a small diner over there someplace.

[44:16](#) **JD:** Vicky's Diner and her husband we used to call him Dishpan Dan. Yeah, that was a very popular place. That was some of Marist darkest moments there. The students would go over there and eat and with a prearranged signal everyone would bolt out without paying.

[44:35](#) **GN:** Well. Things have changed I believe somewhat in that area now. So you were here then for the development of the campus as we now have it. In other words, the library and the McCann Center going up and the Lowell Thomas and Dyson and Fontaine so you've seen all of these things.

[44:57](#) **JF:** Yes.

[44:58](#) **GN:** So it's a different place now then it was.

[45:00](#) **JD:** It's a much different place, much larger which it has to be. The student body now is three times what it was when I went here. The graduating class is three times what it was when I went here. So we're building much more townhouses we've taken over the other side of the river. Not river. The other side of Route Nine to make room for them. Yeah and most of this change comes since Dennis Murray came here.

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[45:29 GN](#): Right. And what do you see is the future is Marist going to continue to grow expansively like that with more buildings and taking, building more dormitories. Is that possible? Or have we reached pretty much the end of it?

[45:44 JD](#): One of my hats that I wear now is that I am the Chairman of the Faculty Affairs Committee. And I'm invited to all the Board of Trustees meetings. And I have the sense from listening the last two years there that we've found our niche. Marist College will always be Marist College. I mean we have all ... Everything we need to become a university ... Enough books in the library ... Enough Master's Degrees in that ... But it's my sense that the Board of Trustees believes we get a very great student ... We turned away many, many more people than we accepted. And that's our little niche so I don't think we're going to grow much more beyond now. I think we'll develop certainly online programs and technology offered courses that way. But the traditional student, that eighteen-year-old kid, this is what they like and that's where I think they'll go so I don't think there'll be. There's plans for a new dining facility closer to the river with views. There's plans for a new academic building when they finish this next round of townhouses. They are building across the route nine. They're going to knock down Benoit & Gregory and the Hancock building is going up there. There's plans this summer to do about eight million dollars' worth of renovation to the McCann Center. And then far out there's plans for perhaps another academic building.

[47:22 GN](#): And there's plans also I think the president has explained. Greenway as it were, a view that you would have up Violet Avenue someplace and you'd see right down to the campus and the chapel and the library of course with the principal features on this. Moving ahead to this ... Do we have to do much more with technology to stay in the cutting edge?

[47:50 JD](#): Well, I mean. Marist prides itself on how technologically advanced it is. We have ... We have a very long, very good relationship with IBM so I think we have amongst of us the technology platform that we could possibly have. We have to stay cutting edge so I do think we have to improve as new things happen. It never ceases to amaze me that forty years ago I had to wait on line with forty other kids to get a telephone. Now no matter where you go on this campus. Everybody got a cellphone to their ear. That's ... all they do is talk

[48:31 GN](#): So the technology ... But the technology changes and we don't know what's going to come

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tomorrow and what will come along with it. Which brings us to this point now about ... The present strengths of Marist ... you'd say if there were several of them. They would be these...?

[48:51](#) **JD:** It's faculty. I think there's an excellent group of men and women here who are top-notch in their field dedicated to Marist dedicated to the students. Certainly our location. I mean you couldn't ask for a more beautiful location the college right on the Hudson river in the heart of history. Close enough to New York City where you'd get down there in an hour and a half close enough to Albany in an hour and a half. Boston in three hours. So it's a beautiful setting. Extraordinarily beautiful campus. Maintained very, very well. That's one of our ... Our students I think are one of our strengths, they are good, decent kids. They're probably worth more wealth than my classmates came from. But they have the same values, the same ways of doing things. They are our children. There's no doubt that. I would say that's a strength. Technologically, I think were advanced from other colleges and one of our strengths I do believe I just want to agree with the Board of Trustees is. We're not going to grow bigger than what we are now about four thousand students cause if you get much bigger then that there's all sorts of concerns. Parking concerns when we get so big. One of the great strengths of Marist is we cap out at twenty-five and you get in the upper-type seminar classes, they cap at seventeen or so. So within weeks probably not even that long, the faculty member knows every student in the class by name and the students know the faculty member. And that kind of camaraderie like it used to be in the old days.

[50:38](#) **GN:** And they know each other, the students.

[50:39](#) **JD:** They know each other currently but we would lose that if we became a university with lecture halls that fit six hundred and then...

[50:48](#) **GN:** We've tested that once or twice classes in the theatre lecturer and then break up into small groups. It was not our cup of tea. It really doesn't go that way here. Weaknesses, we have too. What would you think they might be? Older, aging faculty, perhaps?

[51:09](#) **JD:** Well there's plenty of new faculty coming in. I wish Marist paid more money to its faculty that would certainly help in our recruitment. They just in the last year have started to lighten the teaching load. We used the term four-four. So there's four courses each faculty member is expected to teach every semester. They've just reduced that to four-three. For exceptional research, you can get a three-three load. So that lack of

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pay ... The benefit are excellent probably right up there with the top tiers of colleges when it comes to benefits. The pay tends to be on the low side.

[52:01](#) **GN:** Let me tell you as a retired person. The benefits of the retiree are unique and as much as the college's program for developing a retirement fund with TIAA-CREF and its participation in putting ten-eleven percent of our salary. It certainly enhances one's ability later. The change though in terms of what you would like to see increases in salary ... Where would that money come from? Is there some kind of breakup that we could do? Do we spend too much on periodicals? Some periodicals are never opened...

[52:48](#) **JD:** Well, the college just announced its capital campaign which they hope to raise seventy-five million dollars certainly some of that could be used for compensation and endowed shares. I don't think. One of our strong points is our library. I don't think they should be cutting any money there. And the beauty of the campuses we can't be cutting it on maintenances. And I know this from sitting in on the Board of Trustees meeting, the board is very reluctant to raise tuition other than the cost of living kind of raised. Because we do so well in enrolment that we're afraid if we take it way that we may not.

[53:34](#) **GN:** Is there a danger that the college will with the prominence of the girls basketball... It's open to women here. Tip more than it is. Will there be some natural restraints put in there?

[53:51](#) **JD:** Yeah. They're always new majors or expanding on other majors that tend to be more male-dominated. For example, they say that about criminal justice. When I came here, that was true. It almost typically an all-male shop. And most of them, they wanted to be ... they wanted to go on to be town cops. My classes now I would say I don't know this for a fact I would say criminal justice is about half female, half male. I remember a couple years ... There's a talk about bringing back the engineering program that we used to have here with partnership with

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

[54:29](#) **JD:** Yeah 'cause that would be more male-dominated. But I know the computers and ... information technology, they're afraid that it'd be too male-dominated. So they are actively recruiting females to go into their thing. IBM I understand is trying to do the same thing to get more females.

[54:51](#) **GN:** Is there something we didn't talk about that you would like? We're closing in on the last few

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minutes here.

[54:59](#) **JD:** Well in 1961, I started my relationship with the Marist Brothers and they got me into college and I've stayed very loyal and active in the alumni. My brothers say – I have three brothers at home. They say that I went up to Poughkeepsie and I never went home. And that is certainly true and it's never. I've never regretted that at all. Never regretted coming to Marist College. Staying here in Poughkeepsie. Settling in Poughkeepsie. Marrying and being a father here in Poughkeepsie. I have always stayed close to Marist whether I stayed a cop or became a professor. I was on the alumni executive board for a number of years and it's been a fabulous experience. It's not just my experience. Almost everybody ... almost everywhere. Not everybody of course loved their experience in Marist and stayed very, very close to.

[55:54](#) **GN:** So it's been a good run for you, isn't it?

[55:58](#) **JD:** It's been an excellent run.

[56:02](#) **GN:** And do you anticipate it going on? Or when you get twenty years in, will you put your hat on the shelf?

[56:04](#) **JD:** Nah. I'll stay doing this as long as they allow me to and I am physically, mentally able to. I just love this job. This is a great, great job. The only thing better than being a cop Gus is being paid to talk to about it.

[56:18](#) **GN:** Well I think we're very, very grateful to you, Doc for coming in again and going through this interview. You gave us an overview of the college that no one else can give us. We weren't there as students when you were there ... We're not in the classroom now. So you can see it from two angles. So we're very grateful. So thank you very much.

[56:42](#) **JD:** Thank you, Gus.