

**Leslie Bates**

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Ann Sandri

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

**Bates, Leslie**

Transcript – Leslie Bates

**Interviewee:** Leslie Bates

**Interviewer(s):** Gus Nolan and Jan Stivers

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Marist College History

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Marist College (Poughkeepsie, New York)

**Summary:** In this interview Leslie tells us about her upbringing, moving around the country and what ultimately brought her to Marist. She talks about the work she does at Marist, mainly the procurement of the Marist Magazine as well as other publications she has worked on. Leslie also talks about the influence that the Marist Brothers had on the college and whether or not that still lives on. She shares her wishes for the future of the Marist Magazine as well as the college itself.

Gus Nolan (00:00:02):

Well, good morning, Leslie. Today is November 17th, and we have chance to interview Leslie Bates, who's been at Marist for a number of years. About how many? 20?

Leslie Bates (00:00:22):

I, it's been 29. I started at Marist September 1st, 1993.

Gus Nolan (00:00:30):

I'll do the math and you're right. <laugh>. Well, the idea, I don't know if you quite understand what this is about, John Ansley, when he first came here, thought it would be a good idea to develop an oral history of Marist College. And he wanted someone volunteer to kind of do some of these interviews. So back, and you can look here and see, I started somewhere back, maybe those names you are familiar with.

Leslie Bates (00:01:07):

Oh, yes.

Gus Nolan (00:01:09):

Those are some of the people we started with down through the years. And I forget who we did most recently. Well we did a board member, John, John Klein. John Klein, and the board who is a former student, so he had to say yes, otherwise I would change his grade. <laugh>.

Gus Nolan (00:01:34):

Joe Kirtland recently, Yeah and Frank Backus.

Gus Nolan (00:01:39):

<affirmative> People have been here 20 years. And so I said, whoa, how did I miss these people? You know? And you are among them. Maybe I did it the first time, and I don't even remember. It was so long ago. So that is part of it. What the idea is to get a history of Marist College from the people who participated in the development of Marist College, from their own voices. And so it's not what someone said, it's what they said happened or they thought about the college. And so that's the project. Now how we do it is there's really like four parts. That is the early years, then education, grade school, high school, college, then the third part coming to Marist, how'd you get here in the first place? And your experiences here. And that's where I want to spend most of the time talking about, the books that, or this one at least, many of them, <laugh>, how does it happen? Who puts it together? And how does it come to be? And then finally, of what we call the crystal ball, where do you think we are going? You see? And what would you say about that? So that being said, let me just start at the beginning. Could you briefly give us a short biography of you, really? Where were you born, brought up family members, speak, <laugh>.

Leslie Bates (00:03:13):

Well, I was born in Baltimore.

Gus Nolan (00:03:17):

You don't have to give us the year <laugh>.

Leslie Bates (00:03:21):

And grew up in Baltimore, and then my family moved to California. I was then, I was went to elementary school and junior high in Palo Alto, California. Which is in the Bay Area. Yeah. It's where Stanford University is. And then my family moved to back to New York. Well, not back. We hadn't lived in New York, moved to Long Island. My dad got different jobs. We moved to Huntington, Long Island, and then we moved to South Carolina, which is where my father is from. So by that time I was headed into college. And so I went to the College of Charleston.

Gus Nolan (00:04:15):

Okay. Let's step back a little. <affirmative>, the family. Are you an only child? Do you have brothers and sisters?

Leslie Bates (00:04:21):

Oh, I have. I have, five siblings. One passed away, but I have one brother and three sisters.

Gus Nolan (00:04:32):

<affirmative>. Okay, and growing up, how would you describe your childhood? Would you say it was a happy time now?

Leslie Bates (00:04:43):

Oh, yes. Oh, yeah.

Gus Nolan (00:04:45):

And going to school, you did fairly well in school. So I'm not surprised, but I just, maybe you could comment on that.

Leslie Bates (00:04:53):

Sure. It was a happy childhood. My, my siblings and I were all really close. And we did a lot of things together. When I lived in Palo Alto, I had a friend who was very creative in what we would do. She was my best friend. She's now a book illustrator, she's an artist. But our afterschool activities were drawing and making up stories. And so, and sewing, you know, we were always doing something creative. <affirmative>. And we both look back on that as a really special time. She went on...

Gus Nolan (00:05:33):

Who works you into that? Were your parents, were your mother or father of inclined to do those kind of hobbies or activities or...

Leslie Bates (00:05:43):

Yes. My mother was an artist. She was a painter. <affirmative>. She did, she was into oil painting, <affirmative>. And when, you know, she had to take care of six kids, but when she had time, she would take art classes. And she had some gallery shows in California. And my father was a doctor. He was an

MD and he went into hospital administration and he was the head of the hospital in Palo Alto at the time. It was called the Palo Alto Stanford Hospital Center. And he was in charge of it then.

Gus Nolan ([00:06:25](#)):

Was that the reason for the moves back and forth?

Leslie Bates ([00:06:27](#)):

Yes.

Gus Nolan ([00:06:27](#)):

The job in hospital center?

Leslie Bates ([00:06:29](#)):

Exactly. Yes.

Gus Nolan ([00:06:31](#)):

Okay, moving on to high school, activities. Were you in sports in any way or other, or were you in belonging to the choir or the drama club, or anything you want to say about that?

Leslie Bates ([00:06:46](#)):

I was in a choir in high school. <affirmative>, I went to high school, public high school in Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island. They had an excellent choir, and it was a joy to be in it. And we went on a European tour. We had the opportunity to go to Europe and to stay with families in...

Gus Nolan ([00:07:07](#)):

About, what year was that?

Leslie Bates ([00:07:08](#)):

That was 1970, probably 71 or 72.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:15](#)):

A kind of a peaceful time in the world. Well, was there conflicts going on in Vietnam or rather?

Leslie Bates ([00:07:21](#)):

Well, I guess Vietnam was going on.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:23](#)):

Yeah, but it didn't affect Europe so much. You're going to Europe. Were the concerts in music halls or centers well on these, on these tours, or they were more local?

Leslie Bates ([00:07:39](#)):

One of them was a concert hall, I guess some might have been in schools. I remember a concert hall and we flew back in those days, you could fly on Icelandic Airways, it was really cheap. But you went through

Reykjavik. We actually had a concert set up in Reykjavik and there was a military base there and perhaps still is there. And we did a concert at the military base. It was really fun. It was a wonderful experience.

Gus Nolan ([00:08:11](#)):

Are you involved in music now in choirs, or?

Leslie Bates ([00:08:15](#)):

No, in recent years I've been, I took up the guitar, but I haven't, I've set it aside again, I just... It's hard to find the time to practice.

Gus Nolan ([00:08:25](#)):

Okay, back to college, what was your interest in that, and was it still in the art world as it were, or, more than what did you ever think of going into medicine?

Leslie Bates ([00:08:41](#)):

I never did. I never thought about medicine, but I always thought I wanted to be a journalist. And when I was a kid, I used to create a little newsletter in my family, and I went around to my sister's and brother and would ask, you know, write little stories and draw little pictures. So, when I got to college, I majored in English. The college I went to did not have a journalism program. So I majored in English, and I wrote a column for the college newspaper. One thing I will say, going back to high school and activities, I was in the choir, but I was also on three varsity teams. I played varsity lacrosse, varsity basketball, and varsity volleyball. And the interesting thing about that was, at the time, it seemed colleges were not interested in women athletes.

Gus Nolan ([00:09:37](#)):

This is before Title I, Title IX, I mean.

Leslie Bates ([00:09:40](#)):

Right. And there was a teacher at our school who functioned as sort of a liaison with Princeton University. And that was where I wanted to go. And I applied, but I got in as an alternate. And he later told me that had I been the editor of the school paper, I would've gotten in. But because I played sports, I didn't get in. And they did accept the editor of our school newspaper, whose, I knew academically, her grades were not as high as mine. So that's kind of unfair.

Gus Nolan ([00:10:16](#)):

Mean cut <laugh>.

Gus Nolan ([00:10:19](#)):

It wouldn't happen today, I don't think.

Leslie Bates ([00:10:21](#)):

I don't think so. But I love sports. That was fun.

Gus Nolan ([00:10:24](#)):

Very good. Do you still have an interest? Do you know or follow Marist sports? Do you know?

Leslie Bates ([00:10:32](#)):

I follow, I somewhat, yeah. Yes. I'm interested in seeing how they do.

Gus Nolan ([00:10:40](#)):

I've lost contact with it for some reason. I just,

Jan Stivers ([00:10:45](#)):

That is part of your job description too, right?

Leslie Bates ([00:10:48](#)):

Well, yes. Yes. I don't have a sports editor, so I have to, I have no staff, so I have to, but I rely on the athletics department to help me. They have a sports information director, Mike Ferraro. He's terrific.

Gus Nolan ([00:11:03](#)):

I'm gonna let Jan ask a few questions. We're just taking random things. <affirmative>, there's a sequence, but I like the way you kind of brought so many different things in that I never expected, you know, athletics and choir and self-journalism. I mean, <laugh> in a sense it all makes a lot. But, I would not have thought of organizing in terms of those, but I,

Jan Stivers ([00:11:29](#)):

It's very coherent. So tell us how you came to Marist. Where were you before this and what brought you here?

Leslie Bates ([00:11:36](#)):

Okay. Well, let's see. I was, after college, I had several different jobs, but one of them brought me. I was working in Washington, DC at a weekly paper there. And after that, I had some jobs at a PR agency at a magazine. So anyway, I was working, where was I working? Where, when you live in DC a lot of people go to the, when they want to go to the beach on the weekend, they go to the Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. <affirmative> a couple hour drive. So my friends and I went there. I was actually trying to fix up two of my friends, this nice guy, and this nice woman. And so we went to the beach and they didn't hit it off, but while we were at the beach, I met this guy. We were out for dinner, and we were having a drink at a bar in this really nice restaurant. And his name was Terry Edwards and we ended up getting married and <laugh> not right, right then. But we started dating and he lives up here in Wappingers Falls. And after we, he proposed to me and we decided I'd move up here. So I moved up here, and then I was looking for a job, and I saw that Marist had an opening for the editor of the magazine. So I said, well, I'd love to have that job. So I applied and I got it.

Jan Stivers ([00:13:18](#)):

That's very interesting.

Gus Nolan ([00:13:20](#)):

Do you know, who was there before you? Or was there anybody? I don't remember anybody in your office as it were who had the same stature that you have.

Leslie Bates ([00:13:33](#)):

It was,

Gus Nolan ([00:13:37](#)):

I mean, it's 40 years ago now. I suppose it

Leslie Bates ([00:13:39](#)):

It was a young man named Jim. I don't know, because I didn't know him. Oh, wait, I do know who was right before me was Modele Clark. Do you remember Modele Clark? He was in the job before I was, yeah. And then he went on to....

Gus Nolan ([00:14:01](#)):

To be a minister Kingston. Isn't he?

Leslie Bates ([00:14:02](#)):

He joined the faculty here? Or maybe he was already on it. Oh,

Gus Nolan ([00:14:06](#)):

Oh, I didn't know. I'm glad you said that, I had no idea there was that connection. Yeah, because I know Modele, I thought I know him pretty well, but <laugh>, I, we didn't know that

Leslie Bates ([00:14:14](#)):

There was another gentleman before him, but I'm sorry, I don't remember his name. I never met him.

Jan Stivers ([00:14:22](#)):

So was Marist Magazine already an established publication?

Leslie Bates ([00:14:26](#)):

Yes.

Jan Stivers ([00:14:27](#)):

And you were invited to

Leslie Bates ([00:14:29](#)):

Yes.

Jan Stivers ([00:14:29](#)):

You were recruited to?

Gus Nolan ([00:14:32](#)):

And it wasn't like this. I think it was when it,

Leslie Bates ([00:14:35](#)):



It was a magazine, but it, I think it probably didn't have as many pages, but it was a magazine. I think it's been around since, well, actually it, this evolved from a publication called Marist Today.

Gus Nolan ([00:14:51](#)):

Oh.

Leslie Bates ([00:14:52](#)):

John will have copies in the Archives. I'm trying to think who was in charge of that. Linda, she's on the mast head. I don't know.

Leslie Bates ([00:15:03](#)):

<affirmative> Shaileen hired me, you know, Shaileen Kopek?

Gus Nolan ([00:15:06](#)):

Okay. Yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:15:07](#)):

She was the head of Advancement when I was hired.

Gus Nolan ([00:15:11](#)):

Okay, did you, to get that job, I would've thought you would come with a portfolio or lots of things you had done before. Was that part of the game?

Leslie Bates ([00:15:25](#)):

Yes. I'm, I don't actually remember, but I'm sure she asked to see what I had done before. And I'm sure I brought copies. Because back then we weren't on the internet like we are today. I could have just emailed her things, but I probably brought in some hard copies of things.

Gus Nolan ([00:15:43](#)):

That's how I'd let her say some questions, and then I come right in and, take over<laugh>.

Jan Stivers ([00:15:48](#)):

You're developing the same ideas. One of the things that Gus did want to get to is the nature of your work today. How does the magazine, how is the content developed?

Leslie Bates ([00:16:02](#)):

Well, I don't have any staff, so I have to come up with everything. And as you can imagine, one person would be hard put to write everything that you would need to fill pages. So, about half the magazine consists of class notes that are submitted by alumni. So there is an alumni office, of course, Amy Woods is in charge of that. And alumni send their notes in over the internet, and Amy's assistant will edit them, and then I edit them again. So that will take up about half of the magazine. And we also include stories about alumni, what they're doing. So the rest of it consists of stories. I might think of a story and go interview people and write the story. Or my boss might say, "Hey, why don't you do a story about such and such?"

Gus Nolan ([00:17:05](#)):

Who's your boss?

Leslie Bates ([00:17:06](#)):

Right now? Chris DelGiorno

Gus Nolan ([00:17:08](#)):

Oh, okay. Because you're in that development area.

Leslie Bates ([00:17:11](#)):

Exactly.

Gus Nolan ([00:17:12](#)):

And as such. Is there a brain trust? Do you sit down prior to the beginning of the month to say, what will the next issue deal with? Or how does it, what's the genesis of it? You know?

Leslie Bates ([00:17:26](#)):

A lot of magazines function that way, and that's a good approach. We aren't doing that right now, I think because our budget only allows two issues a year. And the stories stack up. For example, if you look at Marist's biggest news over the past year, it would be the president's inauguration. What else would it be? Marist Poll activities, there's students who won Fulbright's,

Gus Nolan ([00:18:00](#)):

Dyson Center

Leslie Bates ([00:18:00](#)):

A professor, you know, so all those stories happen throughout the year. So I keep 'em on a list. These are things I should cover in the next magazine. So by the time the magazine rolls around, I've got a long list, you know, or the, the basketball team won the championship or something like, you know, all the biggest things that happen.

Gus Nolan ([00:18:21](#)):

Who does the research for the data that comes into it?

Leslie Bates ([00:18:25](#)):

That's a good question. If I'm writing this story, I'll go do the research. I go interview the professor or the student. But now Marist has, well, we've had a media relations director, and right now his name is Anthony Proia. And he writes stories that you'll see up on the internet on marist.edu. He gathers all the stories he can find about Marist accomplishments and he writes those for his own office. He works in the marketing office.

Gus Nolan ([00:19:02](#)):

On campus?

Leslie Bates (00:19:02):

Yes. <affirmative>. Yes. We, we have a marketing department now, Marketing and Communications. Yes.

Gus Nolan (00:19:10):

I just arrived on the scene. <laugh>, these are new things, you know.

Leslie Bates (00:19:14):

Yeah, it is new. There's a new VP named Daryl Richard <affirmative>. He's the VP of the Marketing and Communications. He's a Marist graduate, and he just started the job in October. <affirmative>.

Gus Nolan (00:19:28):

Yeah. Very good.

Leslie Bates (00:19:29):

So, yes. So they have a full-time photographer. They have a full-time graphic designer. They, I believe they have a full-time writer, and Anthony is within their department. So anyway, when I see his stories, a lot of times it's a story I'll pick up because it's the same story. You know, we have two students who won Fulbright's. If he's already written it, then I'll just copy his story. Yeah. And he's fine with that. I mean, we're all on the same team. Yeah. It's repurposing the content. And they have a full-time photographer who's already gone and taken portraits of the students and no need for me to pay a photographer \$150 an hour to go get new portraits when he's already taken them. So that's where a lot of the content comes from.

Jan Stivers (00:20:24):

So, Leslie, how does, I'm sorry to interrupt. How does the focus of what you do out of the advancement office differ from what's being done in the media office?

Leslie Bates (00:20:37):

What's different is we like to focus on philanthropy. So I will use stories that they put out about Marist's accomplishments, the good news about Marist, but also we will have a section on philanthropy where I meet with Chris DelGiorno and he tells me the recent gifts and pledges that have come in, you know, the \$250,000 gift from an anonymous donor to support the Dyson Center. And we want to publicize those gifts and honor those donors. So, marketing won't, they don't, they're, that's not their thing, but that's what we want to do.

Gus Nolan (00:21:24):

I see. Talk about the budgeting. Is it the same, or in other words, it has to grow, I suppose, with the price of printing going up and the price of everything else. And, I just, there's so many questions. How many issues are published anyway? How many get these things? There's 40,000 alumni. Did 40,000 get them?

Leslie Bates (00:21:53):

Well, it used to be up until a couple years ago, we sent it to all alumni. They're now almost 50,000. But, it is expensive because you pay for the printing and you pay for the mailing. When the pandemic hit in 2020, spring of 2020, I was told to stop publishing the print version. I was told that people don't want to

read print, they want to read online. And they said, no more budget, no more print. So we didn't put out a print issue. And the idea was to create an online issue. And so we asked the IT department, they said, well, it will be a year and a half before we are able to create this for you because we're busy. Yeah. So it took a year and a half to create the online version. So then we put out the first online, was it a year and a half? I guess it was about two years, a year and a half. We put out the first online edition in January, 2022. And so we're, we're aiming for every six months. But now, this, this fall, Chris came to me and said, let's do a print edition. I can find the money. And I like the print too. I think there are many alumni who do. So we're going to do a print issue coming up here in the next month. Hopefully by Christmas it'll be out. But budget that magically, Chris is handling that now, I'm not. I used to handle it, but now I don't have to. I just go to Chris and say, can I do this? And he has to find me the money.

Gus Nolan ([00:23:41](#)):

Yeah. Okay. I just, after they're published, are they in the library? Are all your,

Leslie Bates ([00:23:55](#)):

I feel sure John has them in the Archives.

Gus Nolan ([00:23:57](#)):

John has. Okay. Cause I, you know, I was saying, I don't remember coming across them. You know, in other words, <affirmative>, I have several at home. I don't even know if this is one of them. I think it is.

Leslie Bates ([00:24:12](#)):

I think we would've mailed you.

Gus Nolan ([00:24:14](#)):

Oh yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:24:14](#)):

As alumni,

Gus Nolan ([00:24:15](#)):

I get them regularly. And there's those in particular that, you know, I really tied into the, one of the sofas just drove me crazy, you know, about, Richard Rich going up the mansion steps now going in, and then the pictures of the mansion.

Leslie Bates ([00:24:34](#)):

We had a special issue.

Gus Nolan ([00:24:36](#)):

About that time

Leslie Bates ([00:24:37](#)):

When the mansion was given to Marist.

Gus Nolan ([00:24:40](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:24:40](#)):

With all the pictures.

Jan Stivers ([00:24:42](#)):

That leads me to a related question, <affirmative>, we've been focusing on the magazine. What other publications are you responsible for?

Leslie Bates ([00:24:49](#)):

Well, I created this one also. I'm responsible for an annual report every year. We call it the Report of Gifts. And this is the most recent one we decided to do. Something fancier with more stories about donors and students who are impacted by the gifts. So I created that.

Gus Nolan ([00:25:12](#)):

Is this the photographer who does the calendar? Who does this?

Leslie Bates ([00:25:17](#)):

Who prints it?

Jan Stivers ([00:25:19](#)):

No, no. The photography.

Gus Nolan ([00:25:20](#)):

The photography on the calendar. The Marist calendar. Do you do that?

Leslie Bates ([00:25:25](#)):

No, I don't do the, the calendar.

Gus Nolan ([00:25:27](#)):

Oh, okay.

Leslie Bates ([00:25:27](#)):

I think that must be an admissions.

Gus Nolan ([00:25:29](#)):

Yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:25:30](#)):

<affirmative>, I think actually,

Gus Nolan ([00:25:31](#)):

<inaudible> Yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:25:33](#)):

Ted, I forgot his last name.

Jan Stivers ([00:25:36](#)):

Spiegel, something like that?

Leslie Bates ([00:25:37](#)):

What's the name?

Jan Stivers ([00:25:38](#)):

Spiegel?

Leslie Bates ([00:25:38](#)):

Yes. Yes. Over the years he's done that, he's done the photography for it. I don't know what their plans are currently. And I do, other things, I don't know if you're aware of that dinner they had in the spring, the Bob Costas, award, I forgot what it was called. Excellence in Sports Broadcasting. Well, they had a program for it and ads were sold for it to raise money for Marist. And I created that. I didn't design it, but I hired a designer and worked with the designer. And I created the I guess I'll say coordinated production of the inauguration program that...

Gus Nolan ([00:26:24](#)):

Go back to the first one, what's the timeline on that? When is the concept created now for this occasion? Do you need six months or do you need..

Leslie Bates ([00:26:34](#)):

For which one?

Gus Nolan ([00:26:35](#)):

The sports one.

Leslie Bates ([00:26:38](#)):

Oh, we probably started that two months ahead of time.

Gus Nolan ([00:26:41](#)):

Two months.

Leslie Bates ([00:26:42](#)):

That was a pretty simple one. <affirmative> Yeah. So I'll do various publications like that.

Gus Nolan ([00:26:50](#)):

How long will this take?

Leslie Bates ([00:26:52](#)):

Oh, we started planning that one, Oh boy, about a year ahead of time.

Gus Nolan ([00:26:59](#)):

Who gets all these numbers that are in here?

Leslie Bates ([00:27:01](#)):

Who gets them? Chris goes out and gets those though.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:05](#)):

I mean, I know the donors

Jan Stivers ([00:27:07](#)):

They are sent to the donors. Right. Everybody.

Leslie Bates ([00:27:09](#)):

Oh, oh, I see. Who receives it. Yes. We sent it to the donors who were listed there, except for the donors who were under a hundred dollars. We, I think they're not listed in there. We kind of had to watch the budget as far as printing and mailing. So, but we mailed it to all the donors over \$100.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:34](#)):

Yeah. Can you say what a ballpark figure would be the published?

Leslie Bates ([00:27:40](#)):

The money?

Gus Nolan ([00:27:40](#)):

A hundred thousand?

Leslie Bates ([00:27:42](#)):

Oh, I don't remember. I could, I don't remember. I,

Gus Nolan ([00:27:45](#)):

I just, I,

Leslie Bates ([00:27:46](#)):

But I, I don't think it was that. No, no.

Jan Stivers ([00:27:50](#)):

I'm gonna take you in a different direction.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:52](#)):

Yes, please. <laugh>

Jan Stivers ([00:27:53](#)):

Gus has a background in this field, and so you like the nuts and bolts, and I'm going to go in a different direction, but you get that too. So you have written in all of these publications about everything that touches Marist. What themes emerge?

Leslie Bates ([00:28:10](#)):

Oh, that's a good question. My goodness. Well, the things I see about Marist that are, I guess I'd say unique or special would be how the students are at Marist, guides students to be community service oriented. And they are. And I think that's a big plus. And that's been true since I got here. There are always, the students are always, you know, the Hunger Walk and always raising money. St. Jude and all that.

Gus Nolan ([00:28:48](#)):

The Christmas tree and all that.

Leslie Bates ([00:28:50](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:28:50](#)):

But we've been, like within the communications area where they do projects for local nonprofits.

Leslie Bates ([00:28:58](#)):

Yes. I remember doing a story about communications two years, Dr. Gaeke's <affirmative>, Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership. When she first started that, I wrote a feature about it. That's really a neat program.

Jan Stivers ([00:29:15](#)):

Are there qualities about Marist College as an institution that you try to highlight?

Leslie Bates ([00:29:26](#)):

There are certain things over the years we've tried to highlight like technology, because Marist has been so strong, it seems, with the partnership with IBM, I guess that started in 1988. And it's, you know, we seem to have a very strong information technology platform. So we've always tried to emphasize that. And academics, community service, study abroad, we tried to showcase that because we're very strong in that. You know, I think isn't there a really high figure of students who study abroad?

Jan Stivers ([00:30:09](#)):

Yeah there is. Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([00:30:10](#)):

Let me just step back a little on the IBM. When I was a student here, okay, we went to IBM to see how the typewriters were made, the electric typewriters, you know, and there was a room where there were just, nobody was there, just the machines were working. To see which letters failed first, you know, in terms of the machines, you know, and what had to be improved and so on. So, I mean, that's, we were



in touch with IBM. Paul Ambrose had set up this thing. IBM, I've been moved, you know, with the interpretation to it, because in those days, even IBMers were being moved around depending on needs and so on, you know, so, it was not a financial thing so much at all. But we were benefited by the new technology, basic as it was. Nevertheless, the door was opened, you know, and we went down to see them. I have to interrupt again. Sorry. <laugh>.

Leslie Bates ([00:31:13](#)):

That's interesting though.

Jan Stivers ([00:31:15](#)):

Yeah. I know that your office is not a public relations office, I understand that, but are there some issues that are challenging to cover, that are delicate?

Leslie Bates ([00:31:25](#)):

That's a good question. I'm trying to think of some examples.

Jan Stivers ([00:31:36](#)):

I was wondering about sometimes when we've lost a student to an accident or something

Leslie Bates ([00:31:41](#)):

Oh, well, that's certainly, we don't publish often enough to actually keep up with news. For example, if there were something like that that happened, I wouldn't try to cover it as news. Like, you know, yesterday this happened. Because of course, by the time people get the magazine, they will have already heard about it and read about it. And a lot more would've developed since I wrote the story or the recent terrible tragedy. On Family Weekend, I didn't, I'm not covering that because it's, you know, my, the magazine isn't even going to come out until another couple of weeks. And that was, you know, it's already been out there. There might be something that would need to be covered <affirmative> but I think our schedule really doesn't lend itself to something like that. I suppose one could, you know, I think other college magazines have found ways to deal with that, you know, we're

Jan Stivers ([00:33:01](#)):

With the abrupt departure of President Yellen.

Leslie Bates ([00:33:04](#)):

Oh, that's a very good one, and you know what? I didn't put anything in the magazine about that. I think, you know, our tendency is just to, since we come out only twice a year to put in the good news, yeah. You know, I didn't, yeah. I mean, we did feature him, his inauguration, but no.

Jan Stivers ([00:33:31](#)):

Well, let me turn that question around then and ask about the most satisfying things or the most gratifying stories.

Leslie Bates ([00:33:39](#)):

Huh?

Jan Stivers ([00:33:41](#)):

I loved the one you did about the music department.

Leslie Bates ([00:33:44](#)):

Oh, wow. That's so neat that you remember that. That was fun. And

Jan Stivers ([00:33:49](#)):

And the feature on, is it the Dorothy Willis? Am I getting it?

Leslie Bates ([00:33:54](#)):

Oh, that was awesome. Yeah. That's fantastic. I'm glad you reminded me of that. I loved that. This was a woman who went to Marist, I believe it was in the seventies, and Oh, how many children? 10. She had 10 children. And we had the most, I found this picture in a file drawer of her

Gus Nolan ([00:34:17](#)):

Looking out the window.

Leslie Bates ([00:34:18](#)):

Yes.

Gus Nolan ([00:34:19](#)):

Looking at the kids. Yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:34:20](#)):

Yes. Okay. And when you see the picture, you just say, this is a story that has to be told. Yeah. And luckily we were able to interview her. And she did come to campus. I got to meet her and she even took a modern day portrait with two of her daughters. They tried to recreate the picture <laugh>. That was just fabulous. I loved that story. I'm trying to think of some others.

Gus Nolan ([00:34:47](#)):

Is she the first woman?

Jan Stivers ([00:34:48](#)):

She's the first female graduate, I think. You know, in the evening division was...

Leslie Bates ([00:34:56](#)):

I know there's some others.

Jan Stivers ([00:34:57](#)):

There was a difficult, a bit of a difficulty in there that you were able to help people to be aware of, but indirectly, and that was the divorce that left her, I think needing to find a way to support the family. Yeah. And I thought maybe she had left school because of an unplanned pregnancy left her own.

Leslie Bates ([00:35:21](#)):

Yeah. I didn't know. And one thing about that is, you know, a reporter could dig deeper and find that out, but although we're not in the PR department, I don't want to, I don't want to be doing investigative reporting with our alumni. We're trying to build bridges. And keep them interested and engaged with the college. And I don't want to offend someone by, and

Jan Stivers ([00:35:51](#)):

She volunteered the information about "Well, I, you know, I needed to support my family." With income of my own.

Leslie Bates ([00:36:01](#)):

So when I come up against something like that, I, you know, I just weigh it, like, do I really need to go there? You know, and dig up stuff and superiors might take it out anyway, you know?

Gus Nolan ([00:36:17](#)):

Is there a difference between focusing on a person, individual stories such as this and then you did one on Peter O'Keefe one time and his mountain climbing, after he had retired.

Leslie Bates ([00:36:30](#)):

Oh, yes, Mount Kilimanjaro.

Gus Nolan ([00:36:31](#)):

Yeah, and that kind of individual things versus corporate, like, you know <affirmative> things that the college is doing with IBM or, you know, things that are happening in terms of well even the travel abroad, you know, kind of a general phrase of how many students go abroad every year. You know, all of that is kind of talking about I suppose individual. It's easier to focus, but I'm not sure, which way the source of information comes to you.

Leslie Bates ([00:37:13](#)):

Well, I'm always keeping in mind the resources that I have. And for me to write a story about someone in a corporate environment, there's a lot of research that would probably need to be done. I would have to interview them and research the corporation. And it just, some of these topics are bigger than others. But if I'm writing a story about you mountain climbing, I can interview you and I may not need to interview anyone else. Yeah. I did that on, when I spoke with Steve Sansola, I interviewed him for, in that one <affirmative>. And I was able to interview him and, you know, get a lot of information Yeah. Without having to reach out to, you know, if you're really doing a profile and you have a lot of time, you could reach out to their friends or their boss or their family and say, you know, what about, what do you think of this person?

Gus Nolan ([00:38:17](#)):

Well he was here a long time, so I mean, he has a history of the background and the development, how things have changed over his coming here, you know, between the early days and where we are now, you know?

Leslie Bates ([00:38:29](#)):

Yeah. There was a lot of material. But I like the individual stories. To me, they're interesting.  
<affirmative>.

Gus Nolan ([00:38:37](#)):

There is a little more heart in them, I think.

Leslie Bates ([00:38:40](#)):

Again, yeah.

Jan Stivers ([00:38:42](#)):

You gave us a, a good understanding of one big change that happened in the Marist Magazine, which is, that went online for a long time. Are there other changes that you want to talk about over the time that you've been here? How would you put your stamp on it?

Leslie Bates ([00:39:00](#)):

That's an interesting question. It's had the same designer since I came, so that was not a change. Although he, in conjunction with him, I did redesign it. You know, we sped it up. But I think it's interesting that over that he was already designing it when I got here, and he's still designing it. And I think that's pretty cool. His name is Richard Dion. He lives in Dover Plains. <affirmative>. And, changes I don't think, maybe this is bad to say. I don't think that much has changed.

Jan Stivers ([00:39:43](#)):

You know that, I don't think that's bad to say. I think that may be that's indication of stability and value.  
<affirmative>.

Leslie Bates ([00:39:50](#)):

I think it's nice when alumni can, if alumni can go into it and see, kind of rely on it. They see something familiar. You know, this, we have this Marist Drive section in the beginning, and the class notes are at the end and the features are in the middle.

Gus Nolan ([00:40:12](#)):

<affirmative>, Is there an association of public college publishers? Are you associated with Vassar in any way? Or West Point, or any, you know, do you ever meet collectively and share insights?

Leslie Bates ([00:40:28](#)):

There is a trade organization called the Council for the Advancement, oh dear, Case Advancement and Support of Education. And it's for advancement offices. And they have an online editors group. It's for editors of alumni magazines. I, and that's been very helpful. And they have conferences. I've gone to those. And we, you can ask a question if you have a question or you need a recommendation about a printer or a graphic designer, or your budget. You know, how much should I be paying these people to mail my magazine? And that's been helpful. I have met with the editor at Vassar. There was a writer I met with and an editor. It was a couple years ago. I don't know if she's still there, probably. And I met with an editor from the Culinary, a good friend of mine is in charge of the publications at the Culinary. Ah, okay. So, we have done it. It'd be nice to do it more often actually.

Gus Nolan (00:41:39):

Yeah. You've been here for 30 years, are you looking forward to another 30 <laugh>? And do you, well you have an assistant coming along that, how might this be continued?

Leslie Bates (00:41:57):

Well, I think it would be great if there were an assistant that would be nice, because then there would be some continuity. You know, if I leave whoever comes in, there's nobody to ask. Because there's no secretary, no assistant, no one else in my department works on it except, the Alumni Affairs secretary, Debbie Gander, who writes the class notes. She's familiar with that piece of it. But, that would be helpful. But I think what's going to happen is when I leave, they'll just hire a new editor and then plunk that person down. But I think that's a time, I think when people will say, well, while we're starting over, let's redesign it, or let's try something new. You know?

Gus Nolan (00:42:50):

A long time ago, there was this kind of story when Shaileen first came on board to be Director of the Alumni, you know, and <laugh>, there was like nobody who did it before. You know, there was no Alumni Day or Homecoming or any, you know, so she had it created out of new cloth, you know. And so, fortunately, you know, that's, that problem has been handled. But I'm just wondering as we go forward, you know, this is such an important function of keeping above water and getting these things out. You know, you can't start with someone who's never done anything like this before. I think that's...

Leslie Bates (00:43:35):

I agree.

Jan Stivers (00:43:35):

It's interesting that you were hired by Shaileen and I know that you served on a committee for Women in Leadership at Marist.

Leslie Bates (00:43:44):

Yes. Yes.

Jan Stivers (00:43:46):

So can you tell us about the challenges that women in leadership face here at Marist? And maybe also about resources that are available?

Leslie Bates (00:43:54):

To help? Well, yes. The group, the Women's Mentor Program.

Gus Nolan (00:43:58):

Should I leave <laugh>?

Leslie Bates (00:44:02):

No, no, that was delightful. It, I don't know why. It's kind of gone now. We could revive it. Challenges...

Leslie Bates ([00:44:20](#)):

I guess nothing's coming to mind

Gus Nolan ([00:44:23](#)):

Well, one issue that did come up, I think when she announced that she was pregnant and she was going to have to leave, and Tom Wade said right away, oh, no, you know, I'll make a deal with you. You know, do as you can while you can, you know, do a part-time. It was kind of a whole new, the college apparently had never done anything like that, you know? So that, that was one of the, you know, features that came about kind of accidentally, you know. But, here we are now, and I think you have a similar story.

Jan Stivers ([00:45:00](#)):

I didn't have as much success. It was difficult for me, really. And, um, if not in terms of tenure and promotion, and this is not my interview, but the people that I was working with really didn't have a concept of a mother who needed to get kids on the bus or get them off the bus, or have flexibility. <affirmative> So that was, those were hard years when my children were, they were tough years. But, let me ask President Weinman has identified inclusivity and diversity, a goal of making Marist a more inclusive and diverse institution. Is there a role for College Advancement in promoting that goal?

Leslie Bates ([00:45:49](#)):

I think absolutely. I think we can see and will see, more support for programs that will level the playing field. For example, the President's Fund for Equity in the Marist experience, that was the fund that he and his wife established a year ago. And it's to support tutoring and internships and attachment courses where students would have difficulty participating because of the expense involved, like commuting to an internship. Yeah. So I think there ways to bring in support that will give everybody equal opportunity. And I'm not on the fund, I'm not a major gift officer, one of our people who go out and actually ask for money. But you could certainly see where that would support those objectives. But I all, I, my role would be to make sure that we show Marist's Diversity and Inclusion in the magazine. And I Oh, yeah. Have kept that in mind for years I've been trying to show it.

Gus Nolan ([00:47:18](#)):

Bring that forward.

Leslie Bates ([00:47:19](#)):

Yeah. To bring it forward.

Gus Nolan ([00:47:24](#)):

We're moving into the new phase of this, the crystal ball kind of things. Say where are we going? As you see Marist now, one of the problems apparently is the lack of students in the Northeast. People that we've talked to say high schools are diminishing in their population. Grade schools have closed here and there, you know, there's just not the population that we used to have to draw from. And so the problem will be, first of all, do we have the students to come? And the students that are out there, how would

they want to come to Marist rather than to Harvard or Yale? Well, if they really knew they'd come to Marist. I mean.

Leslie Bates ([00:48:11](#)):

That's right. <laugh>,

Gus Nolan ([00:48:15](#)):

I was wondering how you see it. Do you have a view into its development or 10 years from now, will Marist be here?

Leslie Bates ([00:48:27](#)):

Well, that's so scary. I mean, it's scary to think that it wouldn't be.

Gus Nolan ([00:48:30](#)):

Yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:48:31](#)):

I'm sure it will be here. I mean, when we look at President Weinman and all, and his level of commitment and the faculty, the level of commitment that I see among the faculty who I've met, I think people would be determined to make sure Marist is here. Yeah. I don't know. I think admissions experts would know of course, much better than I how that Marist would go about bringing in more students. I imagine you have to go farther afield <affirmative> and recruit.

Jan Stivers ([00:49:14](#)):

What you'd like to see, how would you like to see Marist develop?

Leslie Bates ([00:49:20](#)):

I would like to see this focus on, I'd like to see the focus on community service and caring for others continue. And I would like to see that developed. I would like to see somehow that students learn and practice to care for each other because of what we're seeing in the world today. We need to develop, we need to develop that muscle of caring for others and taking care of people.

Gus Nolan ([00:50:03](#)):

Yeah. Can I step back a little bit? You talked about your familiarity with Marist faculty. I was wondering if there might be some way in which that might be enhanced, that there would be more interaction between administrators and faculty and staff. We used to have a big dining room where we could gather, you know, maybe we could go to Kevin and say, "Kevin, could we get a building now where we could, you know, interchange socially?" And, as things stand now, I guess that's not so easy to do. Or maybe there are areas that it is happening that I don't know about.

Leslie Bates ([00:50:43](#)):

I think that's a wonderful idea. I think it could be instituted just very easily. I don't know what office would set it up exactly. Just start something, say we're going to have a lunch or a meet and greet or on Wednesday for staff and faculty. Maybe just start with, do it by department or maybe invite all the faculty. I guess it would have to be a period when they were free, which would be what, the Wednesday

midday period. Yeah. It, it'd be hard for the faculty, I think, to find time. But the staff, you know, you'd have to give your staff time to go do this. But that would be so valuable because the relationships that you build in these groups, such as the Women's Mentor Program, I mean, I still want to reach out to these women who are on the program committee, even though we're not meeting and say, Hey, let's, you know, I miss you guys. Let's get together. But it's so important. Or I served on a HR committee when they were revamping the benefits a couple years ago. And people I built relationships with on that committee are people I feel comfortable calling now. If I have a question, you know, I can just call and they know who I am. And I know who they are. It's just so helpful. When you know people.

Jan Stivers ([00:52:14](#)):

And of course, part of our mission always says a sense of community is one of our, the three, three major values.

Leslie Bates ([00:52:22](#)):

True. True. I think that would be awesome. I would love to do that. Yeah. And then you would get to meet faculty who you don't, people you, you see walking on the campus, you don't know who they are. I mean, it would be wonderful. And that wouldn't cost anything except, you know, a Sodexo lunch.

Gus Nolan ([00:52:41](#)):

Yeah. I have to make the time for it. I mean, the, for a short period of time, we used to have interdepartmental breakfasts, you know, that we would meet together during like the first period if you weren't teaching. You know, when there would coffee and donuts or something <affirmative> in some room. I guess it was in the Old Fontaine, that was the library before that, you know and it worked very well for that period of time. <affirmative>. But now that I think of it, maybe Kevin here, I come with an idea for you <laugh>.

Leslie Bates ([00:53:12](#)):

It's a great idea. I love that idea. Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([00:53:16](#)):

Just change the tone a little bit. Were there some disappointments that you had here that you can mention briefly? So, so we're not just smiling through it all.

Leslie Bates ([00:53:30](#)):

Are you digging for dirt Gus?

Gus Nolan ([00:53:32](#)):

<laugh>? No, I want to know if...

Leslie Bates ([00:53:34](#)):

Being an investigative reporter?

Gus Nolan ([00:53:35](#)):

Some tears shed quietly, that you know...



Jan Stivers ([00:53:40](#)):

This is for the archives, not for advancement. <laugh>.

Leslie Bates ([00:53:44](#)):

Yeah. I have to watch what I say.

Gus Nolan ([00:53:45](#)):

This is the truth part of it. Now, "I hate this damn place" <laugh>.

Leslie Bates ([00:53:50](#)):

I could never say that.

Gus Nolan ([00:53:51](#)):

No. I, for that point is good

Jan Stivers ([00:53:54](#)):

Missed opportunities. Things that you wished could have happened, but for various reasons didn't happen.

Gus Nolan ([00:54:00](#)):

That's a better way of putting it. Yeah.

Leslie Bates ([00:54:06](#)):

I would've liked to see more resources put into the Marist Magazine effort such as, really an another person, to be a, I mean, if I had a reporter, a writer, <affirmative>, I say, oh, could you go interview John Bartlett? Because he just started, he just created the fashion director. He's just, he's going to be having a pop-up shop in Tribeca down in the city. He's designed accessories that have been, are being made by the local woman's collective called Unshaded. And it benefits former addicts. The women who work there are paid to sew things. And so he's having these items made in his new line that he designed. And that's a great story. And if I had a reporter, I'd say, you know, "Hey, go interview John Bartlett and go down to his event and take some pictures." But, you know, for me to do that, it's a big commitment. But I might do it anyway. But yeah. That I think I would've liked to see that happen. Add you know, one person to the staff.

Gus Nolan ([00:55:26](#)):

We have to have another meeting with Kevin and Chris and let them know. Where we are and where we're going. See,

Leslie Bates ([00:55:35](#)):

Well, I'm sure Chris would actually support me in that. I bet. Someone would have to give him the budget to do it, because he's already using his budget for everything in advancement.

Gus Nolan ([00:55:48](#)):

Yeah. You're the thinker here, I'm just going to read stuff.

Jan Stivers ([00:55:52](#)):

Anything that we should have asked you? We forgot to ask you. Anything you were hoping to talk about today?

Leslie Bates ([00:55:57](#)):

Well, I was thinking I would be talking, I would be mentioning the Marist Brothers a little bit. I, I'm just very grateful that when I came here, I was able to meet Brother Paul and I interacted with Brother Paul and Brother Joe Belanger was here, and I interviewed him and Brother Richard. So I got to know those three gentlemen. Tom Casey, I got to interview him.

Gus Nolan ([00:56:27](#)):

Richard is it Brother Richard Rancourt or is it Richard LaPietra?

Leslie Bates ([00:56:32](#)):

Oh Brother Richard Rancourt. Oh, yeah. But Dr. LaPietra was here also. Yeah. I met him also and interviewed him.

Gus Nolan ([00:56:39](#)):

Actually often we do say that about one of these questions about is there any Marist produced here yet? You know, is, I don't think there are any Marist Brothers teaching per se. We have some in the campus ministry that do that thing that we talked about, involvement, you know? But, yes. And as a former Marist, I have to agree with you.<Laugh>.

Leslie Bates ([00:57:02](#)):

Right.

Jan Stivers ([00:57:03](#)):

Do you sense the presence of the Marist or the influence of the Marist Brothers on in Marist today? Is it detectable?

Leslie Bates ([00:57:12](#)):

That's a good question. Well, I don't know. I guess I'm thinking, I wonder if the students feel any of it. Yeah. I mean, I remember seeing Brother Paul in his long black, what do you call it,

Gus Nolan ([00:57:34](#)):

Cassock?

Leslie Bates ([00:57:34](#)):

Yes. Yeah. Yeah. And he always looks so

Gus Nolan ([00:57:38](#)):

One graduation he used to have, he was in Africa for a while, and there it's white. And so at one graduation, he was there with his white, and some said, oh, the Pope has come, you know, <laugh>.

Leslie Bates ([00:57:52](#)):

Oh, that's funny. Yeah. See, I, I didn't grow up in the Catholic schools. So I never went to a school where they were brothers or any religious round and teaching. And so to me it was very special to see them. And you just felt like they were kind of guiding. What a wonderful presence.

Gus Nolan ([00:58:15](#)):

You said something correcting me when I was being a little foolish about I hate Marist. You turned it back and said, oh no, I love what there's something about...

Leslie Bates ([00:58:25](#)):

I said, I could never say that.

Gus Nolan ([00:58:26](#)):

That's important to you, how, what is that? How do you, how do you articulate that feeling?

Leslie Bates ([00:58:36](#)):

It's not easy to articulate, but you both probably, I would guess you feel it. You, how long have you been here, Jan?

Jan Stivers ([00:58:43](#)):

A total of 40 years, currently

Leslie Bates ([00:58:46](#)):

Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness. That's amazing. And you've, you graduated in the fifties?

Gus Nolan ([00:58:54](#)):

52. And I came here 47.

Leslie Bates ([00:58:58](#)):

So you've been that, that's 50 years.

Gus Nolan ([00:59:01](#)):

Oh, more than that. Yeah. Isn't it?

Jan Stivers ([00:59:03](#)):

No. Way more.

Gus Nolan ([00:59:04](#)):

I was born than 47.

Leslie Bates ([00:59:06](#)):

See I'm not a math.

Gus Nolan ([00:59:08](#)):

September 1st, 1944, I started a service as a student.

Leslie Bates ([00:59:14](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Gus Nolan ([00:59:15](#)):

Yeah. So most of my life, yeah. I lived 14 years in New York City, in the Bronx, you know. Oh. And after that on the Hudson Valley, you know, 41 years or something like that here.

Leslie Bates ([00:59:29](#)):

So we don't know how I'd describe it, just as it just is a special place. Yeah. I guess part of that has been the longevity of some of the staff and the faculty. I kind of, I'm kind of sorry to see so many of them not here anymore. I mean, when you think about what I'll call old timers, you know, like include myself in that. But there aren't that many, you know, everyone is new and they don't, I don't know. I just, I like it when you see a lot of familiar faces. People have been here a long time, but nothing can stay the same.

Gus Nolan ([01:00:11](#)):

It was a delight in how you kind of the personification of what we've been talking about. There's a certain Marist spirit that has been perpetuated through the work that you're doing and through your own activities and even your thoughts about what we might do to enhance this, I think we can move forward with some other ideas and say, you know, let's make some of this happen.

Jan Stivers ([01:00:35](#)):

We're just getting the word out about what is an amazing place this is, yeah. You just, yeah. Making sure that people are aware of it. We're, we're grateful for that work you do.

Leslie Bates ([01:00:47](#)):

Oh, thank you. Well, I, yeah. I need to keep doing it. Yeah. As you hear about things that are happening, feel free to let me know, you know, if story, ideas, profiles, anything like that, I have

Jan Stivers ([01:00:59](#)):

But shall we? Thank you very, very

Leslie Bates ([01:01:03](#)):

It's been my pleasure. Thank you. Terrific.