

**Kathleen Manning**

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, New York

Transcribed by Oo Wei Yen

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

**Transcript: Kathleen Manning**

**Interviewee:** Kathleen Manning

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**Summary:** Kathy Manning talks about her early years and her life as a student at Marist College, the activities and positions she was involved in as part of student life. She talks about courses she studied and the professors and administrators she encountered. She reflects on changes Marist has experienced over the decades, answers the question of whether college and universities remain viable investments and discusses the role of technology in social life amongst students and education.

[00:08](#) **Gus Nolen:** Today is Monday November 21<sup>st</sup>. We have the opportunity to interview one of our graduates, Kathy Manning.

Good afternoon Kathy.

[00:16](#) **Kathy Manning:** Good afternoon.

[00:18](#) **GN:** Kathy, this is an interview that we're going to put into the oral archives along with the seventy or so that I just showed you of the name people we've seen before you. It is just to give to give for future reference, a kind of historical record of Marist from people who play a significant role in coming here and then continuing after in their various careers. So what I'd like to do this kind of put together a number of questions of before Marist, Marist, and after Marist for you. See how you would respond to these in terms of your thoughts off the record... I mean it is for the record but it's not a written record that you read to us. So let me start with that.

Where were you born and brought up in grade school and so on?

[01:13](#) **KM:** I was born in New Jersey in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. December 14<sup>th</sup> 1954.

[01:22](#) **GN:** The details like '64 is not important.

[00:25](#) **KM:** Oh '54 and I was raised in Clark, New Jersey and actually went to a Catholic school, St. Agnes Elementary School and then Mother Seton Regional High School.

[01:34](#) **GN:** Okay, through your grade school, were there any particular activity that you were in? In the choir, the play? Any kind of activities that were of interest to you?

[01:48](#) **KM:** Yeah, I think that I always ended up being one of the kids that the nuns used to ask do things you know. So I think my leadership was tapped pretty early on I remember being in the Girl Scouts and people always talking about, you know, my maturity and as a leader and all of that. So yes. And I was in in high school and I guess starting and in elementary school, I started singing and so I spent a lot of time singing in high school and, you know, seventh and eighth grade.

[02:23](#) **GN:** Were you in a play? Did you have a star role?

[02:25](#) **KM:** Yeah actually I was. I was in high school in Hello Dolly. I was the Floozy at the dinner and it was actually one of my regrets that I never did musical theater here at Marist, but I did do a lot of plays in in high school.

[02:42](#) **GN:** While in high school, how did you fill in the summer? Did you work? Were you a life guard? Did you do anything of that sort of activities?

[02:54](#) **KM:** No, not really. I did work a couple of summers. You know when I was a kid, it was hard to get jobs and I was born in December so I was always a little bit younger and you know in terms of getting a work permit and those kinds of things but I did work retail in Woodbridge center in New Jersey in the Ohrbach's which doesn't even exist anymore. But Woodbridge Center does but so I did work retail. At Marist, I was a work-study student and worked a lot, as a student.

[03:30](#) **GN:** Well, one point when you get out of high school, what were the conditions? Were we at war or at peace or?

[03:36](#) **KM:** Yeah it was still... The Vietnam War was still going on and so a lot of... My brother who's a couple of years older than me, he's four or five years older than me got drafted, you know, to go into the army. He never fought in Vietnam. He was stationed in Korea. But a lot of friends, women weren't drafted at the time and I went to an all-girls' Catholic high school but a lot of friends were being drafted or going to college to get the deferment because people just do not want to go to Vietnam. So there are a lot of social unrest, a lot of activism on college campuses that kind of thing, when I was a student. You know it was the sixties. You know it was an interesting time to be alive in the sixties. I just thought the sixties were great. You know everything from the music to their activism you know to how people participated in the democratic process. I just thought I was a little young for the 60s. I graduated elementary school in 1968 but I still I think that was one of the things that really shaped me was having grown up in that time period.

[04:50](#) **GN:** Now what's the genesis of you coming to Marist? How do you do hear about it and come here? What's the story?

[04:55](#) **KM:** You know I have a kind of typical story. I had no idea where I wanted to go to college and so I went into the guidance office and the guidance counselor said I think this would be a great place for you and I came because I was I originally wanted to

study marine biology and they had an environmental biology program that ended up not being as strong as I would have liked it to be. But I still love to the biology program that was here and I got to Marist. And I remember coming on campus and absolutely loving it you know and really feeling a sense of when I came up for orientation in the summer feeling a sense of community and a sense of being home and so I loved it right from the start.

[05:44](#) **GN:** That's a big step. We were in the embryonic stage of just starting to make a commitment to come. Were there dormitories yet?

[05:54](#) **KM:** Yeah, I mean there was. I lived in Leo my first year and then I lived in Gregory House in my sophomore and junior years. And you had to apply to be in Gregory and then I lived in Champagnat my last year. And yeah, you know to me Marist didn't feel like it was just starting. It was about thirty years old at the time so I guess. You know it was still relatively new. I remember Marist as being very well organized, you know that people you know I just had lunch with Shaileen Kopec ... that there were people like Shaileen Kopec on campus who was you know very professional just ran things well and other people that I worked with. But yeah there still was a lot of growing to be done. I mean Marist is a completely different place today.

[06:48](#) **GN:** How did you get interested in marine biology? I mean is it ...you lived near Jersey near the ocean?

[06:53](#) **KM:** Yeah, I remember. Taking biology class when I was a sophomore in high school and being really afraid of dissecting the fetal pig. Well once I got into biology, I absolutely loved it so I took advanced biology in high school and then decided to become a biology major. Unlike ... Even people when I was in school and you know in the early 70s, people change their majors a lot. I never changed my major, I started a biology major. I ended as biology major. I ended up not going into it but it still shapes my thinking in lots of ways.

[07:28](#) **GN:** Very interesting. Then studies at Marist, biology was your major. So other things do you remember... was there a core program?

[07:39](#) **KM:** Yeah, well they were. There were two streams of biology. There are the folks who maybe were going to go into teaching and then the other stream where the folks who are maybe going to go to medical school or go on for advanced degrees you know or veterinary school which some of my classmates did. So I was in, you know, a group that was going to go on for graduate school even though I never did that in biology. And they were amazing people to take classes with Peter Pless and Rich Valinotti and Patrice Connolly. I mean they were just they were brilliant and so.

[08:12](#) **GN:** Patrice Connolly

[08:15](#) **KM:** I got to be in classes with people who asked great questions and you know, really raised the level of intellectual engagement in the classroom and Peter Pless and Rich Valinotti were both the valedictorian, salutatorian from my class and I took classes with them.

[08:30](#) **GN:** That was a very demanding major.

[08:32](#) **KM:** It was. Yeah, I wish that I had done better my G.P.A. You know it isn't as good as I would like it to be because I also was very involved in campus activities so I always joke that I had two majors in college; my biology major, my campus activities major. You know so I said I double majored but it was it was very demanding and I just loved it. I thought it was great.

[08:54](#) **GN:** Do you remember Bill Perrotte?

[08:55](#) **KM:** Yes, I took. What did I take with him... Ecology I took with him and I took Brother Turley for microbiology and George Hooper. I took for Genetics.

[09:12](#) **GN:** Boy, you had the whole swing of people there.

[09:15](#) **KM:** And yeah and Bettencourt I had and Menapace I had for organic chemistry. Yeah, I had some great... I had some great professors and they really built a sense of community with us.

[09:30](#) **GN:** That lab down there used to be the centering point. People live in that one after the other 24/7.

[09:36](#) **KM:** Especially when you're taking embryology and you had to memorize all those slides or histology you know when you had to make all of those slides. Yeah it was. It was a great community.

[09:49](#) **GN:** Well I guess it was more community than physical properties that we had to offer you. Did we have any microscope?

[09:59](#) **KM:** Yes, it wasn't that long ago. I do remember the chemistry lab not having much you know. It didn't have any kind of you know the electronic you know type things that you have now and yeah, the facilities weren't great. I remember coming back when they redid Donnelly and you know and opened it up again. Yeah and it just was so different from when I was here. I worked in Donnelly when I was a senior. And I remember listening to the building's settled. You know it would have these loud cracks and it was a building that needed some work and the library was in Donnelly at that point so. But yeah, we still learned. You know we still learned a lot.

[10:50](#) **GN:** Talk a little bit more about the kinds of assignments and did you ... Were papers due or experiments followed through from? Fruit flies, I remember, used to be a big issue.

[11:07](#) **KM:** I never took the fruit fly classes that George Hooper was so famous for. That was but I do remember taking a class. I can't remember the woman's name. It was animal physiology and we operated on rats. You know. Live rats actually Phyllis Mandreski who I recently saw at homecoming. She and I were at lab partners and Phyllis said that I got her through those course, that course and I think Phyllis got me through that course and we were probably a good pair. But I remember Marist always at least in biology, it was all hands-on, you know. It wasn't just that you studied physiology but that you actually dissected. You know or that you actually operated on a live rat. I remember how excited we were to do that work you know or whether it was chemistry lab. You know you were. You know you're actually doing something.

[12:03](#) **GN:** Were there more woman in that then men?

[12:05](#) **KM:** No, there were many more men. But the women were really held their own you know. So even though it was the 70s and that's you know when. I was talking to Shaileen. She was talking about the women in those classes as being strong leaders in that kind of thing. And I just remembered it in not being... It was never going to be any other way you know that these were smart women that asked good questions in class. They weren't reticent to do that so there were more men than women but the women were tough. The women were good.

[12:44](#) **GN:** Those black borders were well-used. I can remember that.

[12:46](#) **KM:** Yeah, I remember. Yeah, I actually remember... Who was it? Somebody used to throw the eraser, a chemistry professor George McAlonie.

[13:00](#) **GN:** Yeah McAlonie I used to say McAlonie but it was wrong. McAlonie.

[13:03](#) **KM:** McAlonie right. And he used to fill up the blackboard then throw the eraser into the student. For somebody, yeah, you're making me remember things that I've completely forgotten about.

[13:19](#) **GN:** I still can't get over the drive that you have. Remembering those things considering the condition you lived under because women were not in a high percentage here either in student body or teachers or whatever. Whereas now you dominate.

[13:36](#) **KM:** Right yeah, I think and you know my field now is higher education. You know I have my doctorate in higher-ed and student affairs. Women are 56% percent of college students now. That's across the world, you know. Women dominate in higher ed. Yeah, I remember a couple of things. I ran for College Union board president when I was a junior and I knew that I was the first woman who had ever done that but I really didn't think much of it I think because I had gone to an all-girls Catholic high school. So women's leadership was not unusual to me at all but I remember somebody that I worked with in the campus center. I was a work-study student in the campus center and I was talking to this guy, my fellow co-worker about running for office and he said, "Oh well you're a much better candidate than the man that I was running against but I'm not going to vote for you because you're a woman." He probably said because you're a girl and I remember thinking, "you're kidding?" You know this was the era of women's liberation. You

know this was to me I thought that some of those battles were behind us. Well you know because I was naive and I won anyway but I just that was the first time that I really was met with...

[15:00](#) **GN:** It was verbalized. Somebody said it out loud.

[15:03](#) **KM:** Somebody said it out loud ... That was exactly it. That and then the other thing that I remember for Marist back then was I was on the sailing team for a short period of time and women couldn't steer the boat. They could be crew but they were never allowed to steer the boat and I just thought that was the stupidest thing in the entire world. What a way to choose you know who takes leadership in the boat by gender. Also yeah it was... it was different back then.

[15:29](#) **GN:** Other things I have here while at Marist you've touched on it already, the social life. Did you make friends? Are they long-time friends you know? You kind of say that you've met up with these since. But there was a bonding as I suppose that went on while here.

[15:47](#) **KM:** Yeah, I think some of that came from the feeder schools because a lot of people knew each other before they got here or went to similar kinds of schools you know the Catholic feeder schools. So I think that there was a commonality before you even got onto campus but yeah, I remember especially in Gregory House you know which only had, thirty-three people so it was a very small community and we very deliberately worked on community that was...

[16:19](#) **GN:** Benoit was right next to you?

[16:21](#) **KM:** Benoit was right next to us.

[16:23](#) **GN:** But there was no association between you.

[16:24](#) **KM:** No, not really. I mean it was the 70s where racial relations were pretty tense. So Benoit was the Black house on campus and on and then Gregory was ... We ran a free university and we were deliberately trying to live as a community. So no, there wasn't a lot of interaction between Benoit and Gregory but Gregory, we really did try and I think Benoit did this as well you know really tried to get along. I remember in Gregory if you didn't get along with somebody who was in the house, that was the roommate that you were going to be assigned to because the RA in the building assigned the roommates. It was different from other places on campus where you chose your roommate. So you know is it Parker Palmer who says that community is when you have to live with the person that you most don't get along with. And that's what Gregory was trying to do and it was an interesting place.

[17:28](#) **GN:** Well Frost says, "Home is a place where you go, they have to let you in." The same kind of... you know. We'll have to take of you one of ours. If you want to live here, you're going to live with your friends whether you like them or not or they'll be friends. Most of the time, you don't like the person because they don't know them.

[17:47](#) **KM:** Right, right and you had you had to work it out in Gregory. It wasn't ... people didn't work it out for you. You had to work it out because that was a commitment that you have made to the community.

[18:59](#) **GN:** OK. You talk about activities on campus in terms of running for?

[18:05](#) **KM:** College union board.

[18:06](#) **GN:** What do they do?

[18:08](#) **KM:** We had... I'm not going to be able to remember them now but we had about seven committees so we had film, social, performing arts, fine arts which is sort of more gallery type things. I think we had a travel group. There were seven different committees so I was the president and I presided over these different committees.

[18:31](#) **GN:** Did you have a budget?

[18:32](#) **KM:** Yeah, we had a pretty big budget. I think at that time two hundred fifty thousand dollars rings in my head but I don't know whether that's true or not that sounds that sounds a little high.

[18:42](#) **GN:** That might have been a bill you ran up.

[18:44](#) **KM:** Yeah, right exactly. That would've been a lot of money back and so I might be thinking of some of my campus activities someplace else. But it was a lot of money for us at the time and so we ran at the time. Social events on campus and film and I remember it was never enough. You know there are always complaints from people about. You know you're not doing it very well and so there is a constituency that answer to.

[19:07](#) **GN:** Alright. You're finishing Marist. What happens next?

[19:10](#) **KM:** I went straight from Marist to get my masters in counseling and student personnel at SUNY Albany so I literally took my campus activities and working in the college you know in the campus center. I took that experience.

[19:31](#) **GN:** That's the bridge and then.

[19:32](#) **KM:** I decided. It was also 1976. It was a recession going on. I had a B.A in biology and without very good grades, I graduated like a 2.9 or something like that I knew you know I wasn't.

[19:48](#) **GN:** It's almost a cum laude but it's not.

[19:50](#) **KM:** Right. Exactly, exactly. And so I loved campus activities. I loved the organizing. I loved, you know, I loved the leadership so I went right from here to SUNY Albany and then that was a two-year program and I got my Masters and then from there I became a residence hall director and then Director of Student Activities and then Assistant Dean of Students and I did other things after that but yeah the bridge.

[20:15](#) **GN:** So yeah the thing that was triggered here by these activities that you were involved in.

[20:22](#) **KM:** Absolutely yeah. I credit Marist with many things and one of them is my career that I... Who knows what path you would have taken. But I definitely got into higher education administration and student affairs because of my work at Marist.

[20:42](#) **GN:** How was this all financed? Marist and the...

[20:45](#) **KM:** Yeah that's an interesting question. I was a presidential scholar when I was at Marist and then I had some loans and they were national direct student loans at the time ... our national defense student loans I think they were still called then. So my bill for Marist per semester was \$600 and my parents paid that \$600 and I paid everything else. And then my Masters' was paid for by the State of New York so and I also had a graduate assistantship. I worked and but I was poor as a Masters' student. I had much more money when I was an undergraduate. I didn't have much but I had more than I did as a as a master's student.

[21:28](#) **GN:** You talk about the presidential scholarship. Did you know Foy?

[21:31](#) **KM:** Yes. I was on the president's advisory committee when I was a student and so it was in my junior year. I wanted to say there was a change in this the schedule of classes. As students, as student leaders, we weren't consulted so we held a student strike. It was Ed Kissling and myself and a bunch of other people. And then after that President Foy started a President's Advisory Council with the president, the student government, the president of college union board, faculty representatives, administration representatives and we used to meet in... I think about once a month in the top of Greystone and that was an amazing experience for a twenty-year-old to have. We would talk about to tuition increases and we would talk about, you know, the mission of the institution and I remember Brother LaPietra used to run some of those meeting sometimes and he was just brilliant you know. So was Linus Foy and I remember you know just talking about different hiring that they would or different structures you know so.

[22:44](#) **GN:** Both of them are summa cum laude from here. You could see it. They just had leadership and Foy is still alive and well. He's my good friend. He lives down on my street.

[22:56](#) **KM:** Shaileen was talking about that at lunch. Yeah that's wonderful. He wrote me a letter of recommendation from my master's program. I have always wanted to read it.

[23:07](#) **GN:** He will probably remember you coming and bringing peace because not everybody would be so peaceful maybe at those meetings.

[23:13](#) **KM:** Yeah. I think sometimes. I was more like a deer in the headlights at those meetings but we did try to bring in the student

voice.

[23:22](#) **GN:** The change to which you spoke of the scheduling... Did we go from three sessions a week to two, something like that?

[23:27](#) **KM:** Yes and there were those two long sessions on Wednesdays. Yeah and we just thought that that was not the best configuration but it was more... I remember Ed Kissling gave a speech at different at a press conference that we organized as well as some other events. And he said this is a matter of representation you know this is a matter of student voice. And I don't know if he would remember that. I remember him being very articulate about what those what those issues were.

[23:57](#) **GN:** It was good insight. Now you would take it for granted but in those days, the authority rules.

[24:04](#) **KM:** And I remembered Tom Wade was the Dean of students at the time and he wrote a letter to our parents saying how what wonderful leadership we had exerted... How reasonable, not reasonable we were... But you know how professional we were and I remember my parents saying, "What did you do? Why am I getting this letter from the dean of students?"

[24:27](#) **GN:** Moving on. One of the reasons that this whole operation goes on here trying to explain Marist. How did this happen ... this surprise. And I was wondering what your take on it would be? What strikes you most now? Between then and now?

[24:50](#) **KM:** You know I haven't been as in touch with Marist as I'd like to but I've watched it from the outside and you know, I have a PhD in higher education so it's always been interesting to me to have seen the things that I saw when I was a student. Marist was always fifteen years ahead of their time. They were always... I think because Marist what you know is not a rich institution so they got into adult classes before other people did. So you know fifteen years after I graduated I would work places and we're beginning to talk about you know we should get into this adult market. And so from another fifteen years after I graduated Marist and worked at different colleges, they were always doing things that I had seen done at Marist and so I never realized until after I graduated. How entrepreneurial and how forward-looking Marist was. And how much they took advantage of I remember... I worked for continuing Ed when I was a senior and so I used to interact all the time with the MBA students and the students who were in the nighttime business and they were all IBM. You know and how Marist had really seen that as a need and then developed. You know developed those classes and those programs. So to have the foresight you know to do that and that's the same thing that I keep seeing with Marist whenever I hear about anything that they're doing. They're not just looking for a silver bullet. They're not just looking for. Oh this looks like a good idea. It's something that relates back to the mission and it's something that makes sense in terms of the overall Poughkeepsie area. You know whether it's I.B.M or you know the beauty of this area and they're willing to be out there as a forerunner. They're willing to be out there being the first to try it and I've worked at institutions you know that are much bigger than Marist that you didn't, that don't have that.

[27:01](#) **GN:** But see. Part of that I think for us was survival.

[27:03](#) **KM:** Exactly.

[27:05](#) **GN:** And women are here today because of I.B.M. women who want to get courses to complete degrees so they came at night, but not during the day. And then we went through a whole cycle. They're here you know.

[27:19](#) **KM:** We might as well have them get an M.B.A.

[27:22](#) **GN:** We have, you know. We have to open the doors. And some would say that was big mistake we made but I don't think so.

[27:29](#) **KM:** Oh was that right? Some people say that? Oh that's ridiculous.

[27:32](#) **GN:** Well because the tip you know. Women dominate now in a lot of ways dominate in sports. I mean the girls' basketball team you know has a certain reputation for they just seven out of eight years now they have been in the N.C.A.A. So that's kind of is a part of that. But under development thing you look on campus now and because you came for homecoming, so you have a chance see the full-fledged parade, the game stadium and all of this kind of thing you know which you know is such a surprise to me even now when I come on. I never cease to be astounded by the buildings. Like the Hancock Center.

[28:19](#) **KM:** Yeah I remember coming up couple of years ago I think when they opened up the communications building, Lowell



Thomas, right and thinking, “Wow, this place is really changing.” Because that whole side, you know because I lived in Gregory so I lived on that side of campus when you know.

[28:36](#) **GN:** It's a farm area.

[28:37](#) **KM:** It was a farm and the pool. I don't know if you remember the built-in pool, you know. That was the road to Franks, you know the bar across the street but that side of campus was a long way from the center of campus you know which was more Champagnat and the Campus Center so we really felt like we were living on the edge of campus. So when they started developing that side of campus, I remember thinking wow this is really different. And then now you know with the townhouses and just lots of things that they've done but you know if you don't keep doing that you're not going to survive and I think Marist has done a great job of you know of maintaining its values and its core beliefs while still developing and having, you know, good educational opportunities, you know, for people.

[29:30](#) **GN:** I want to get back to the core and values in a minute. The other side of the campus. The other side of route nine.

[29:36](#) **KM:** Right, I was here over there for homecoming. Yeah.

[29:40](#) **GN:** The dormitories that are up there and now the tunnel.

[29:43](#) **KM:** Right. We went through the tunnel.

[29:47](#) **GN:** What do they call it? I think it's a walkway. Somebody used the word tunnel and it was crossed out we don't recognize it as a tunnel. It's a walkway under Route Nine. So that would be it. I was going to move a little bit into what we'd like to call philosophical questions about it. And this value thing becomes one of them. You know the values of Marist, the motto is Orare et Laborare which is to pray and to work. But it is no longer to pray, it's to think and to work. But did you pick up on that? In other words, the idea of school and class opportunity to learn was that engendered into you or came with high school, you just kind of move on with it.

[30:43](#) **KM:** You know I came with it from high school as I think some of us did. I'm not going to say all of us did. It was a, you know, in the 70s because of the draft and because of a lot of other things, there were students who had different reasons for being in school. And studying wasn't always one of them. You know, I wasn't the best student but I loved the classroom. But I remember sitting in the cafeteria. We didn't call it the dining hall in those days sitting in the cafeteria with Fred Lambert who ... he had been the director of residence life and then he was the assistant dean of students I think. And the motto was on the paper placemats you know that held the ashtray that was when people could smoke in the dining, the ashtrays in the salt and pepper shakers in that kind of thing and having a conversation with him about what the motto meant. And he had been a former Marist Brother so he had that perspective as well. So yeah not only did I get that feeling from you know, just campus culture in general. But it wasn't unusual to have those conversations and I don't know about other students. I mean I had relationships with administrators. I was nurtured, mentored and friends with people like Fred Lambert, Dolly Botha and Shaileen Kopec and.

[32:09](#) **GN:** President Foy.

[32:11](#) **KM:** And President Foy, right. You know, always on committees with people. When you think about it nineteen, twenty-year-old you know and that's what colleges supposed to be but so yeah so. And I remember when I partied too much and my RA would call that to my attention, you know that you could do better than this. I remember a classmate of mine, Chrisoula Combs who was a very hard-working biology major and she would say to me, “You know you could get all A's if you tried.” So there was there was a culture of contemplation. There was a culture of thinking, there was a culture of working hard in the classroom not across all majors but certainly in the major that I was in. And I think there also was a service mentality and you know whether that came from the Catholic Church. It certainly existed in Gregory where there were friends who are still friends of mine to this day organizing boycotts, you know to support the farm workers of America so you know.

[33:23](#) **GN:** Cement factory thing up there in Kingston was another one. I think in that they...

[33:27](#) **KM:** Yeah. We weren't involved in that but we were boycotting Lettuce & Gallo Wine & Grapes. And you know it was post-sixties you know so we did those kinds of things. But I do think that Marist you got the impression that you were supposed to do something with your life. You know that you weren't just supposed to sit and watch T.V. for the rest of your life. You know that whether it was service or whether it was doing something you know for the good of people. You know people went in to the Marist lay volunteers. I had a lot of friends who went into the Marist lay volunteers after we graduated.

[34:05](#) **GN:** Bill O'Reilly is one of those.

[34:07](#) **KM:** Did he do that? I didn't know he did it.

[34:09](#) **GN:** He tells it every now and then. He's a former teacher. He did a year or two I think in Opa-locka in one of Marist schools.

[34:14](#) **KM:** Oh I didn't realize that.

[34:16](#) **GN:** That gave him a crown to wear that. He also has this.

[34:21](#) **KM:** That sounds a little liberal...

[34:22](#) **GN:** Sometimes he bashes us. He has his good points. I don't always agree with him but he was here for homecoming.

[34:31](#) **KM:** Right, right. I didn't ... I didn't see him. His politics are very different from mine. Well see that was one of the other things was both my high school and Marist were incredibly progressive and you know both in terms of social values and you know, living values so I never felt that you know... I think that all kind of got rolled in with you're supposed to do something you know with your life. It's not just supposed to be ... You know your life really is supposed to have meaning. And I definitely got that for Marist and that was more I think from the people that I went to school with. You know that Jim Kennedys and Charlie Tackness and the other folks that I lived in Gregory House with.

[35:18](#) **GN:** Well it kind of just permeated the whole atmosphere.

[35:22](#) **KM:** It really did.

[35:24](#) **GN:** Also there's a certain democracy about it all. That president Foy used to teach Math, you know so. He has his feet on the ground. And LaPietra also you know taught chemistry. So that they never lost their common touches at work. I'm saying these great things but it's my view because I worked here too with them, you know. I saw what they were doing.

[35:50](#) **KM:** I remember when we did that student strike Linus Foy wrote a letter and I remember it didn't have the initials of his secretary. You know in those days you would put you know L F or you know or L R F and then you know colon and then the secretary's initials in lower case of course. And that was that notation wasn't on the memo and I remember somebody in that group saying, "He typed this up." You know and it was in the typing days and I remember being in meetings with him with his shirt sleeves rolled up you know or seeing him walk across campus and people calling him by his first name. So it was. There was much more of a down to earth, "we're all in this together." There was the Marist Brothers' construction crew you know you knew that people literally rolled up their sleeves and built a campus.

[36:46](#) **GN:** These hands built that chapel. I don't know if you know that.

[36:49](#) **KM:** Yeah I was right. I remember hearing that and you know and I have actually a picture of that poster of the Marist brother construction crew. So that was the legacy that you were a part of ... was you were meant to build great things.

[37:05](#) **GN:** Well we were part of this thing which to this day I can't quite believe happened, you know.

[37:10](#) **KM:** You mean the college.

[37:11](#) **GN:** Yeah.

[37:13](#) **KM:** right. That's right. I just think this is the most. One of my areas of research in higher ed is campus cultures. Yeah and so I actually should write about this because... are you in this picture?

[37:30](#) **GN:** No.

[37:32](#) **KM:** But you built.

[37:34](#) **GN:** I know that was my group, I was praying. They were on retreat and they took them off for an afternoon to have that picture taken. Kathy is looking at the famous picture that appeared in TIME magazine back in 1975-80, something like that.

[37:51](#) **KM:** I think it was a little earlier than that because I was here in the maybe. It was... I don't think it was during my time as a student. It was 72 to 76. Because I remember people talking about it and then.

[38:04](#) **GN:** The construction group thing is what struck my mind about it. Bringing that up. The Marist bother construction group.

[38:11](#) **KM:** Yeah you know you were meant to build great things. That was, you know. That was what you did.

[38:18](#) **GN:** Alright, you're in education now and you've been there for a good period of time and you must hear the questions raised. And I want to know your response. Is college worth the effort? Is it worth energy or the investment which is time and money and if so why?

[38:37](#) **KM:** Yeah that's a great question. Yeah, I do think. It's worth both the investment of money I think it's definitely worth the investment of time and effort. You know if you still look at the earnings of college graduates, it's way above high school. Yeah, I mean it's a good investment. I do think that higher education needs reform. I think what's going on now with the corporatization of higher ed and presidents getting into you know corporate type salaries and that kind of thing. I mean that actually strikes me as very un-Marist-like. You know when I hear my own institution the University of Vermont, the salaries just keep getting ... our current president makes over three hundred thousand dollars or multimillion-dollar presidents of different institutions. And you know we're not working in corporations. You know we are working in educational settings so I think that there's a lot of reform that needs to happen so that we get off of that road and back on, you know the road that was plowed for me when I was at Marist. But yeah, I absolutely think that it's worth it. College transforms people's lives.

[39:57](#) **GN:** In what way?

[39:58](#) **KM:** And you know. Well I was a first-generation college student so my mother worked in a pharmaceutical factory. My father was a truck driver for a brewery my entire life and I have three degrees, you know. I have a B.A. from Marist. I have a M.S. from SUNY Albany. I have a PhD from Indiana University and I've been a, I'm a full professor at the University of Vermont and have worked there for twenty years.

[40:27](#) **GN:** What do you do there?

[40:28](#) **KM:** I teach higher education and student affairs.

[40:30](#) **GN:** You do? I was going to ask about the teaching whether you were an administrator or teacher never got to that.

[40:35](#) **KM:** Yeah I was an administrator and now I'm a professor. So how do you get there if not, you know, college. And so I absolutely and just and I just sees ... You know I've worked with students for thirty years and I see the way that college transforms their lives and you know they just see the possibilities that they never would have been able to see if not for going to college and when I was at Marist, we're all first-generation college students. And I don't think I knew anyone whose parents had gone to college so you know this was opening doors for us that would never have been opened any other way. You know I could have gotten into the military, well at the time I couldn't have gotten into the military. It just wouldn't have happened any other way. So I'm always grateful to my parents you know for enable and allowing me to do that and also grateful to my high school teachers who were like you're going to college you know and then also I'm grateful you know to the work I put in. So I absolutely think that it's worth the effort. I actually believe that we should be opening access in higher education to more and more and more people because we should all be educated you know ... as much as we possibly could be.

[41:59](#) **GN:** If you're interested, you can come and we will manage to pay it somehow.

[42:04](#) **KM:** Yeah it should be more about that and it's really moving away from that but that's the way it has been for years.

[42:11](#) **GN:** I like the idea about you know enriching yourself that you see things that you never saw before you're exposed to all kinds

of thoughts, ideas rather than being stuck at a single channel you know and framing it along that way.

[42:28](#) **KM:** And that's what education is supposed to do. I mean that's certainly what my education did, you know, all along the way to.

[42:37](#) **GN:** Keeping along this track and something you mentioned earlier, what you would say about the future of...? What should we be doing or what should we change? What changes would you recommend Marist might look at?

[42:57](#) **KM:** Yeah that's a little hard for me to say because I'm not intimately familiar with it. But I can answer it from a higher education perspective. There's a lot of internationalization that's happening and actually Marist was ... That was from the beginning. Brother Belanger, he tried to get me to go abroad. It's one of my biggest regrets that I didn't go abroad during my time in college but I just couldn't imagine how you even did that. If you talk about that, that was one of the doors that I just couldn't imagine opening for me since then I've traveled the world but yeah, the internationalization is huge now.

[43:42](#) **GN:** And at the point, let me just point this out. You might have known that around here, Marist appears more than Marist College you know and there's a move to try to make it, Marist University. Because the word college on diplomas for foreign students often implies high school.

[43:03](#) **KM:** Oh that's interesting.

[43:07](#) **GN:** And so you know people coming from Australia or people coming from China, even Italy and Ireland, you know St. Joseph colleges in Australia, Sydney is a high school.

[44:19](#) **KM:** Trinity. Well there's Trinity College in Dublin.

[44:24](#) **GN:** That's more university. Well though Trinity College is a university. Well the Marist brothers have a place called college but it's not a college you know. It's really a high school so the terminology is one of the things for opening up this vision you know were saying more than just a high school. We're college and we have the masters degrees and we have about seven different Marist degrees know so that would be one point but. Where are we going? One thing is diversify bring people in from foreign places.

[45:02](#) **KM:** Yeah. I would hope that they wouldn't change the name. I disagree with the movement and that a lot of colleges are changing their names to university in and this is from somebody who studies rights and teaches about higher education. A lot of it is more prestige you know. A lot of it is you know sort of reputational. And Boston College hasn't changed their name and they've ... And Dartmouth College hasn't changed their name either so I would hope that people would sort of stick with it. There's a tradition to your name that people really should honor and every place doesn't have to be a university and in my mind I go with Clark Kerr's definition of a university in the multi-university and I prefer for me you know a place like Marist should be more of a college and then you sort of fight you know the people who think it's a high school.

[46:04](#) **GN:** Maybe that's not such an important point as to keep familiarity.

[46:06](#) **KM:** Yeah well and also just the tradition and yeah and the heritage. And also you know every place doesn't need to be a university. There are some places where they need to be a college I mean one of the things I loved about Marist was its size. And it's a lot bigger now than when I went but I loved to the fact that you didn't get lost. You know that there was.

[46:25](#) **GN:** You know a lot of people.

[46:26](#) **KM:** You knew everybody and there was a real value to that and I get the sense that's still a value today.

[46:34](#) **GN:** One danger we have now is finance. I wouldn't be able to get in here for two reasons; I would be able to get an academically, I would be able to get here financially.

[46:43](#) **KM:** Me either probably.

[46:45](#) **GN:** The tide has gone up, raised all the boats. Not that they're geniuses but at least they score well in what they do. You're hitting two nails there with that same hammer. You are saying that really stay small and stay where you are with the values that you have.

[47:05](#) **KM:** Yeah and it's mostly because I do believe that there is ... My graduate program is small. You know we accept eighteen to twenty students a year and we purposely want to stay small because there's things that we can do with a smaller classes that can't do with a larger class. There's things you can do with a larger class. But I do think that there's a real value to being sustainable you know like what's really sustainable in terms of the size and not getting bigger than that and not getting smaller than that but what's sustainable for the kind of education that you want to provide and the values that you want to espouse because all of that starts to get harder to do. Yeah, I went to Indiana University which was school of thirty thousand people and they had very strong values and in particular areas as well. You know but it's a lot harder to do as you get bigger.

[48:01](#) **GN:** Is your university private or is it state?

[48:04](#) **KM:** It's state but we operate a lot like a private institution, we don't have much state funding so our tuition is comparable to a private institution.

[48:15](#) **GN:** Do you deal more graduates students?

[48:17](#) **KM:** Yes only graduate students.

[48:20](#) **GN:** You see one of the problems here now is the business of bonding and trying to get them to because of that cell phone that they have and the constant communications they are not making friends.

[48:35](#) **KM:** Yeah that's a problem with this generation. And I remember when I worked at Emerson College as an assistant dean of students, I used to do orientation. And I put together a list of orientation leaders and I would ask them what their hobbies were and for the first time and this was back in the early 80s, students said, T.V. And I remember thinking, "T.V? That's a hobby? T.V." When I was at Marist, I remember huddling in one person's room because they were the person with the one T.V. And there were times where and at that same place, student said to me, "Oh yeah. We don't... we don't form friends here." And I thought, "Oh my God." I formed some of the best friends of my life in college. How could you miss out on that opportunity? So yeah, I think technology as well as just if you've read any of that you know Bowling Alone, Robert Bellah and he and his colleagues, they talk about the disintegration of community in American life. And you know I would hope that Marist would be one of those places that fights against that because that was one of the things that was most meaningful for me and you know that came out of the tradition of the Marist Brothers and lots of other things. So that would be...

[49:55](#) **GN:** There are efforts being made I asked Debbie, she use to be Debbie Bells. Decaprio I think her name is now.

[50:03](#) **KM:** The vice president for student affairs?

[50:04](#) **GN:** Yeah. I asked, what changes have you noticed about this and what are you doing about it. And related to that how about the facilities are they available to the students. Now I didn't know this but the football field out there is open till two in the morning with the lights on for intermurals. They have games going all the time. All kinds of, there's like twenty-seven different intermural games so there's a whole in-house kind of operation working towards what you had naturally right. We didn't have lights. We didn't have a field.

[50:39](#) **KM:** We had a field but it certainly wasn't open. But yeah but to their credit students do a lot more group studying than we did. So there're areas and they text each other you know and stay connected that way. They're much more connected to their parents. Good parts and bad parts I came to Marist then I think, I mean I went home a Thanksgiving I never and never heard from my parents I mean there were payphones you know so it was hard to connect but I remember never hearing from my parents. So you know I think that things have shifted but it still is important to have that sense of community on campus. And you know the research and higher ed talks about one of the one of the biggest reasons why students stay on campus is because of the friendships that they formed. Alexander Saxton talked about it all goes back to friendships. So how do you make sure that that happens in the residence halls in lots of places? I almost left Marist my for my junior years. I almost transferred and it was about it was about money and I remember my parents came

up for parents' weekend and met some my friends and saw what I was doing leadership-wise and they said, "You know we'll find the money somehow." Because it was about my friendships that I had that I had formed here because I could get the academics in other places but they recognized the sense of community and my father always talked about all those wonderful friends that you have. You know that wonderful environment that you have up in up in Marist. He recognized it. So yeah, I think that it's more of a struggle for students today but I still think that they form some of that.

[52:35](#) **GN:** I'm sure they do. It's a new problem that has to be addressed in new ways. As we live in this day and age, we can't end this without talking about technology in education. What do you think about distance learning?

[52:53](#) **KM:** You know I like distance. I've actually taught online classes, you know. It's probably out of the people at your interview, I might be want to one of the few that actually has experienced it. I'm in favor of it and it's mostly because it opens doors for education for people that would not be able to get it. Yeah so you know when people say, "Oh it's not real college." It might be the only college for some of the people who are going so when University of Phoenix which is for profit started and they were like, "Oh you know it's you know this isn't real college," something I don't know what the percentages but the majority of people who take those online classes, they're new to higher education. They are brand-new, never been in college before that's hard to argue against. I mean there's completion rate problems and a lot of other things but I do believe that you know if you can reach out to some other people who normally would not be able to do it any other way whether it's we're rural communities or rural community in other countries. Africa is not building bricks and mortar colleges and universities. They're building technology.

[54:07](#) **GN:** They don't have to string lines for telephone.

[54:10](#) **KM:** Yeah they're just... they're building technology infrastructure because they don't have the kind of environment and never will you know in terms of rural environments. So I think that there's a lot of work to be done with distance education but I think that there's a lot to be said for it as well.

[54:28](#) **GN:** Of course you stand with the graduate program and of course I talked to Dennis Murray about that here and he's for more of the graduate. But he really wants the undergraduate to come and experience the campus as much as possible. If it's that or something, that has to give them a chance or something.

[54:50](#) **KM:** But it depends on what your niche is. You know if Marist niche is that residential college experience then yeah you want to be able to keep that niche going and I think that sort of its bread and butter and that's what it's good at. So in that sense I agree with him but you know. There's this attitude in higher education that, oh you know distance learning is evil and we shouldn't be doing it. I think that can be a very elitist perspective you know about the ways that technology can really enable people to get a degree and people that just don't have the opportunity to do it any other way. So for me it's about you know egalitarianism and access which is very much the values that were taught to me when I was at Marist.

[55:40](#) **GN:** And finally, ten years from now where will we be?

[55:44](#) **KM:** Where will Marist be?

[55:46](#) **GN:** Where will Marist be.

[55:49](#) **KM:** I think that Marist will continue I hope to reach out to international communities. I know that there's a campus in Italy. That there will be other campuses in other places you know and, in many ways, just further advance Brother Belanger's vision, you know. He had all of those students going to all of those different places so to have Marist and the Marist brothers as well you know we're an international order. You know so to continue that internationalization and what I hope Marist even ten years from now still continues its mission that it's always had of educating you know opening education you know to people who you know whether it's first generation college students or you know students who need more financial help you know through institutional aid but not to get, you know not to only look for the best and the brightest and the richest but to really open up the opportunity to people like myself.

[56:53](#) **GN:** Leave that to the Jesuits for the brightest, the richest, you know. And we'll take the humble folks like we are we started and there's no use pretending we're other. But I think to be who you are so much of the point of this. Well it's really have been a fifty-eight minutes we have only have two minutes to kind of bring this to a close but I do want to thank you for coming out.

[57:18](#) **KM:** Oh thank you it's an honor.

[57:19](#) **GN:** Get the chances to see you insight into it and I think Dennis very interested in some of the observations.

[57:28](#) **KM:** Oh OK. Oh I'd love to give back to Marist in any way I can.

[57:30](#) **GN:** Oh very good ok Kathy thank you very much.

[7:32](#) **KM:** Oh thank you.