

Saunders, Judith september 25,17

Judith Saunders

Marist College
Poughkeepsie, NY
Transcribed by Ann Sandri
For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

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Marist College (Poughkeepsie, New York)

Marist College Social Aspects

Summary: Judith Saunders reflects on her schooling experience in California, her job search before Marist, and finally the experiences she has gained from being an English professor at Marist.

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00:09 GN: Good morning. Today is Monday the 25 of September, and we have the opportunity to interview Dr. Saunders who is a retired professor in the English department Good Morning Dr Saunders.

00:22 JS: Good morning Dr. Nolan.

00:26 GN: As you know this is an interview for the Marist historical archives we're trying to get a picture of really about you might answered the question how did Marist happen? As you know it was a farm and now it's an academy as it were. And so the transition from one to the other there is not as many parts to this puzzle I don't know how it fits in. You were here for a good long time, and you've seen a good part of it. Let's started at the beginning i notices you come from the West Coast California going to you is just a don't nail of your early life where did you grow up.

01:08 JS: Well let's summarize here I was born in Chicago and all my family had been in the Midwest Illinois and Indiana for at least a couple of generations and I don't think they ever contemplated moving, but my father who was in the civil service with the government and he worked for the Bureau of the budget. Which in first grade when they asked what does your father do, I announce he worked for the beer of the budget. But anyway the beer of the budget had some layoffs and suddenly he had to find a new civil service position and the only one he could find that was suitable was in San Francisco. So the family moved to the west coast when I was eight or not quite eight, no just eight. So I grew up in the Bay Area and I ended up going to be educated in the university of California system because it was so inexpensive and it was right there. So I went to Berkeley and then the San Diego campus for my doctorate, and I came east because that was where I happened to get jobs.

02:14 GN: There's five hundred miles between Berkeley and San Diego is there. What drew you

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south just the same university system, the courses you wanted?

02:27 JS: Probably because I mean I could have just stayed at Berkeley all the way through for graduate school. But I think one of the things that drew me to the San Diego campus it was newer, younger, very young doctoral program, smaller. Where the Berkeley program had five hundred people and you could easily get lost there. I thought it would be an opportunity to work with people in a more personal way, but also they didn't have an English department, a French Department, a German depart they had a literature department and everybody was in it. And they demanded that their graduate students really master more than one language and do graduate level work in a second language. And since I had studied abroad for two years in Germany and had a second major, actually it was a double major in English and German. I was happy about that because at Berkeley they wouldn't let me take any graduate courses outside my area, declared area, and at San Diego they demanded I do so. And they also made you take linguistic courses that interested me. So I just thought maybe it suited my background a little better.

03:39 GN: What else about growing up something outside of school hobbies, you were in clubs, activities, work? How do you fill in the after school hours?

03:53 JS: Because we were in California my parents gave us all swimming lessons. and that was very important to me I've always been a big swimmer as well as hiker throughout my adult life that's been one of the pleasures of my life. I'm very grateful that happened and I was also always been interested in animals and pets so I did a lot of roaming in the then fairly untamed new suburban part of northern California and I would bring home frogs and various kinds of lizards and Build terrariums and cages and catch flies to feed them. so and I was always sort of the taking the initiative among my siblings to hound our parents to get us different kinds of pets like rabbits and guinea pigs and dogs and cats.

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04:37 GN: How come you didn't be com a biologist or zoologist or?

04:40 JS: I didn't want to cut them up. I didn't even think of it being a veterinarian because I didn't think the blood and gore part would suit me. and I was otherwise I think I was a pretty introspective person. And always interested in reading and writing

04:59 GN: Yeah I like to get to that in a little bit into this well moving on after college the PhD in San Diego did you teach in that area, did you work in that area when did you come east?

05:14 JS: I came east because it had started to become very difficult to get jobs. I was really kind of a scholar gypsy. I kind of bumped around from one sabbatical replacement to another you know short term gig. I had taught ten years in the Boston New York area and then I got a position as the associate academic dean at Marymount College in Tarrytown and I was there for three years and that's where I was when I saw the ad the New York Times that Marist college needed an Americanist which of course is my area and it was right there so I thought Whoa that's for me and also I already sort of worked for Marist because I was although I was employed full time as an associate. DEAN I was working part time in the. Heop for Marist working in doing a gig in green haven the maximum security facility teaching there.

06:12 GN: Yeah I thought that was part of the question what was the genesis of you then coming to Marist its really rooted in these activities these positions and fillingin

06:23 JS: Right and I think it was a summer hire somebody had left unexpectedly and I certainly couldn't have been the only person to answer the ad but I think the fact that I already had worked for Marist probably worked in my favor because the other people the people in the search committee a couple of them that worked in green Haven and we talked about the unusual challenges of working in a prison and I think they got a sense of my head being screwed on all right in terms of pedagogy from the exchange we had about that.

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06:55 GN: that interview kind of thing is that with Ed Donohue . Who are the people involved was Richard LaPietra

07:02 JS: No it was an English department thing

07:05 GN: Oh I see not George Summer

07:11 JS: no I mean he could have been but he had chosen not to take part in that search. Bob Lewis was there Jan Casey I don't know about Jan. Bob Lewis Don Anderson and somebody Con.

07:28 GN: I see ok then coming on Marist you came fulltime.

07:32 JS: Yeah

07:33 GN: OK and what did you do? You taught.

07:37 JS: yeah we had four course loads and every, semester four course.

07:42 GN: Could you put a year in this about is it 86.

07:44 JS: it was eighty six I came in fall of eighty six and. I taught the sort of usual load a combination of freshman writing freshman composition courses. Two hundred level American lit sequence for majors a few upper levels here and there. My area specialization is American lit especially nineteenth and twentieth century and I had already developed a special interest in contemporary poetry so I would teach contemporary poetry maybe modern poetry the upper level things in the American Renaissance

08:20 GN: I thought the New England to tradition and literature writing might have been the magnet as it were to come east.

08:28 JS: That was just a bonus

08:29 GN: just happened yeah

08:33 JS: just happened. Well so many of the people I knew. especially the people in Berkeley

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they were very aware that we lived in a wonderful place in terms of climate and cultural excitement in their big goal was to live in Berkeley or as close to Berkeley as they could or California the rest of their lives and I was always aware that you had to go where the jobs were I thought well you pick a climate when you're old you're going to retire. when you're young you go where you have to go. and I applied for jobs everywhere when I think I shutter when I think the places I applied. I applied to Moscow Idaho and University of Montana and I thank my lucky stars I did happen to get jobs there.

09:16 GN: There's two areas I want to go in now. One has to do with students and one has a do with faculty. since we started talking about teaching and students and so on. When you first arrived at Marist well you knew something about it but I don't think we had this same kind of attraction and the public as it has now and so I guess there must have been some difficulty in adjusting to our needs, the needs of the students and kind of getting them on track. So like how would you rate the quality of students you had in their ability to write to read and to understand In those years eighty six to ninety six.

10:03 JS: Well of course the student body has changed, a lot of that is because the recruiting has become has grown to a broader wider geographical area. when I first came it seemed that half the students I met said they were from Long Island NY. and when you would ask, I had always been accustomed to ask people why did you choose Marist and everybody here was just dumbfounded that I would ask and I get the impression that admissions went around every high school within a five hundred mile area and beat people over the head until they agreed to come. it was very Geographically limited and when they started recruiting even just further upstate in more rural areas I found the student body more diverse and more interesting just for that reason we had to have people from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Vermont New, Hampshire and of course now

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with people looking at colleges on the Internet to virtual tours you no longer have to be surprised that somebody comes from Texas or California. In those days if somebody was from Texas you would say why and it would turn out oh are divorced parent divorce one of the parents lives here bla, bla, bla. But also when I first came a lot of the students were still first generation college and that's no longer the case. So that doesn't necessarily make them brighter or more prepared, better prepared but it makes the whole family more sophisticated about what college is. And that's not always good it makes them they can be more critical, and more manipulative in terms of trying to work the system but. Certainly since fairst has gotten a bigger name and gotten more know own and part of that is recruiting you know nationally. We have had a chance to get more students who are better prepared.

11:56 GN: Yeah OK and I think that sweep I mean there's been some criticism raised about why do we send the football team to California to play a football game. A hundred people aboard an air craft you know that's quite an expensive but the other side of that coin is you know we have ninety full time students from California here now if they didn't know about us they couldn't come you know and so for them also it's a Star In East Coast to go to, a place to go from where the internships and the opportunities being to blossom. So that's it. So currently now would you say that we can require more of students coming and then we did before?

12:48 JS: You mean higher standards their mission that's hard for me to say because faculty don't really have any oversight over admissions.

12:56 GN: Do you believe what they say?

12:58 JS: Well no, Yeah I mean they I think that the data about S.A.T.'s is definitely fudged because they leave out all the lower levels they find some reason not to put that in so I don't know I mean I think certainly the students are more sophisticated. They're probably is a bigger

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percentage of students who are better prepared and a little more able than certainly there was in 1986 but.

13:28 GN: There's little independents now as well is there not

13:31 JS: More what?

13:32 GN: Independence there are. They feel confident on their own. Not really because they're

13:40 JS: no their calling parents ten times a day on their cellphones.

13:43 GN: This is true were we are going to go to next that on the other hand you know one of the problems of the future here is that the bonding is very weak they stay friends with their home and they're on the phone to coming out of class they don't know the next person

14:01 JS: Texting, texting but I always noticed that the students here were very attached to their homes and apparently the first week of classes there was always a lot of homesickness and there still is. And I had a student very early on the first year or so who was going had arranged to go on study abroad to Dublin and she was very excited about it she had Irish ancestry should the read here in the green eyes and the freckles. And then September she was suddenly in my office wanting to put together a schedule for campus I said what happened when push came to shove she couldn't barely go so far away from home even though she lived on campus she certainly isn't living at home, but just the idea of being that far. Wait it wasn't family pressure, I talked to her she couldn't bear the idea of going that far away. I had another student very talented, very smart, seemingly very independent wanted to go into the Peace Corps and she had so much family pressure against her going that far away that she didn't do it she desisted gave up her application. so I think that they've always been very attached to their families and now technology has enabled them to keep that attachment you know going. there was one kid very sweet guy and every almost every day in my college writing class his phone would ring and he'd

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be embarrassed and have to shut it off and finally somebody said you know someone said so and so mother can't remember that he has a class At 11'oclock on Tuesdays and Thursday. He'd would always talk to mom at eleven o'clock a there he was in the class and I thought this is sounds strange.

15:43 GN: Another side of that coin now this next week on the sixth we're going to dedicate a room Joe Jalany and he had a part to play in the abroad program for a number of years and there's a story about one person involved now in this home coming. Jeff encourage to go to Europe to go to England right he didn't want to go you should go it will be good for you to go. **Along with** the sure he did go. Today he is the head of N.B.C. in London

16:16 JS: Oh that's wonderful

16:17 GN: Yeah it went and I paid off, he's entunaly grateful for the opportunity to be go out into that

16:27 JS: Well to be fair Think about all the students we have who are doing this freshman year in Florence think that would suggest forty sixty eight people in every class who are so confident socially and intellectually enough to do that and with parents who are confident enough in their children's ability to survive. So let them do that imagine your freshman year abroad a lot of parents have trouble letting go with the idea that even their kids are going to live away from home so I think that suggests that you're probably right that there's a number of there are a number of students here who really are very socially independent

17:10 GN: OK. Emphases now on not the students so much the faculty. I want to hear. there's obviously been a change in the disposition of the faculty over the thirty years that you've been here or more how would you describe that

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17:32 JS: When I first came there was still a core of what was called the brothers even though most of the brothers turned out to be ex brothers who were married the brothers were what I would consider the political and at the heart of the institution and what political I really mean they ran things academically they tended to dominate that they were always on the major committees and they had a decisive voice and. Policy curriculum they tended to be department chairs have an important positions. There were not a whole lot of women the faculty The hadn't been higher women for very many years so that women still felt a little bit beleaguered I when I would go into faculty meetings where there was going to be some election there would always be a woman outside in the bushes whispering vote for women. And that would never happen now I mean we have so many more women. And the other thing I noticed that I found I mean it didn't surprise me to find that there was a heart of brothers here and I think they gave it a tone that ethical standards that was very pleasing to me. there were Maris didn't have the kind of ethical problems especially. Sexually predatory activity that one finds in a lot of other places. And one had the sense that somebody who was. Doing something that was in any way you know cheating behavior that that would not be countenance that that person would probably be got rid of. But what did surprise me and I hadn't expected was that the place is what I would call parochial in its conception of a larger professional academic world that many of the people not just the X. Brothers had really never taught anyplace but Marist and many of them hadn't ever been graduate students on a full time basis so as to soak up a kind of graduate student culture they'd gotten their degrees the hard way working full time at Marist or maybe someplace else before they came here going at night and picking up a course in the summer and therefore they were not very familiar with what I considered sort of ordinary practices of the larger academic universe and that led to conceptions and policies that seemed strange Byzantine as a parochial to me and

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even just the fact that so many people were. Frozen in rank maybe they hadn't gotten a doctorate and so they could never move on from being an assistant professor or they had never published anything much so they were stuck at the assistant or associate rank with apparently no thought that that would ever change and but these were the wise elders and you couldn't have them not be in charge so you had people with a low rank sitting on major committees being department chairs and I had never ever seen that in any college or university I had ever been at being a full professor was a qualification a minimum qualification for being a major committee serving a department chair and here you had the. Assistant professors maybe chairing a department and of course the job of department chairing turned into a kind of a clerical thing because the assistant professor can't go telling full professors what to do but of course there were no full professors to do the jobs and we're still stuck with the leftovers of that we still have not made a ruling that you have to have a higher rank in order to do those jobs because we still have enough people even though over the years of course the faculty that were here both lay and. Brothers and gradually retired and left the ranks and been replaced with newer people of course the families grown in size and so you do have more people who are aware of that larger world and professional practices and standards elsewhere. But that doesn't necessarily mean that they don't imbibe Marist culture pretty quickly and they still don't necessarily move up the ranks very quickly and we still have a. What many would consider a dearth of people at the top you could have a department of ten fourteen people and only have two full professors

21:57 GN: Yeah that's a very interesting insight Yeah I heard that said or you just said it now you know it no other way. In much idea that many who come here now with advanced degrees you know oh you're not going to stay here very long you know it's a kind of a stepping stone or

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another place that this does not have the breath and depth and I was surprised that you didn't bring up another point which would be the scholarship involved here

22:32 JS: Well that's part of it I mean wired and in a way Marist was sort of provincial and yet not provincially that Marist was sometimes maybe too honest for its own good a lot of places that would have might have been like Marist would have just promoted those assistant professors Doctorate or no Doctorate and OK this is way It is here these are our full professors they've earned the rank and through other means. But they didn't do that but there was a kind of a sense that. It was impossible it was hard and that there weren't enough people who'd been places where everybody did sort of engage in research and writing and some people felt that they'd come here and been told flat out that it would never be expected and so on and it gets very hard to change those expectations especially when you're going to keep the teaching requirements very high although Marist has cut back in certain other burdens use to lay on faculty I was just amazed when I first came here that they would expect faculty to do things in the summer for free you know come in advice students and registrar for courses I mean that's your one time to go out and get your butt in gear sit down at the typewriter and get something written. And you're supposed to you know when the people at kids isn't supposed to hire a babysitter and go in and you know register students or correct essays that they've written for placement or score mathematics tests for placement and they don't do that so much anymore and they would be similar sort expectations for faculty. But and also there was the eight hours office hours which is unique in my experience and even having it cut back to four is still unique I've never been any place where factually didn't simply decide themselves how many office hours they thought they needed and there's something very push a push a button.

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24:38 GN: automatic system in other words as long as you put your time

24:41 JS: You will be, almost as if you're not really. To be trusted. Just to do the right thing and see I mean most places fact we have more hours during periods in the semester when they know students were going to come in and needed vising and fewer hours other times here are no you're not supposed to be able to and one of the upshots of the eight hours a week just to digress a little was that people didn't keep their office hours regular because they couldn't because you never get any meetings done if everybody always viewed their office hours as sacrosanct so you constantly see notes all over were to the well I won't be of hours every day is a rank and tenure meeting I mean with the dean. So students couldn't count on find you there anyway so the whole point of it was sort of undermined but I mean I think a lot of things did to get back to your question a lot of things kind of made it difficult for people to scholarship but the first year I was here by sheer chance you know how things when you publish them you don't know exactly when something's except what you don't know when something will be accepted you might send it out several places or it might get taken immediately and then once it's taken you don't know how long before it will appear and by chance I got four articles published during my first year at marist all written before of course and I had been told that the raises that were given at the end of the year would be based partly or entirely on marist and so of course I thought well I'll get more than other people because I have four articles that are really good year and to my amazement I got the same as everybody else everybody got the same and when I kind of inquired Well we give so little that we can't afford to give anybody more I mean that somebody would really get ripped off so every Well I have no quarrel with that but then why say it's for marist if you do what they say

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is meritorious and then you don't get any more. Because that certainly wasn't a carrot to help people you know want to do want to do more well the whole thing about being frozen in rank I was dumbfounded to find out that these people got raises just like everybody else any place I'd ever been if you were stuck. Being an associate professor one of the things that was supposed to get you in gear to do whatever you had to do to be promoted to full was you couldn't get any more raises there would be and here there weren't any caps on what you could earn at a particular rank so there was no there was no reward system in place to make people interested in how pushing as well as not a culture of people talking about it, helping each other

27:17 GN: two points one of them I just have to tell you about this incident I was involved in a crew come in to rate freshmen essays four of us sat at a table and we had to rate it one two three for one was the highest for was the lowest like A.B.C.D. One paper got four with each one gave it a different grade one two three four I said how the heck could you say this is a good paper Well the idea she did say it to well, graphically it was perfect so you really have such a divergence of opinion about what is good in terms of trying to rate an essay I mean this is just kind of applying for a position trying to get into the college or we can sharpen her up she's got rough edges there's an idea here. That that part of the other part. How do you answer this question. You came as a scholar who it the glue that kept you here for those thirty years could you really didn't have the same kind of well there was some other influences or associations or contacts or spirit or whatever that kept interested in marriage and not seeking something you know you don't find was

28:43 JS: OK Well first of all I think during the first part of my ears it mirrors. I was not

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particularly active by my standards in a scholarly way I would publish at least one thing a year but it might be small might be just a book review or encyclopedia entry or a poem or two because I did get very involved quite early on in a lot of the major committees but I think one of the things that was very intellectually stimulated me and contributed to my own growth as a thinker and a teacher and a scholar was the cluster program that was started by Vinod to Scotto just a couple years after I got here he invited six of us I think to cluster together all our courses so we would give these incoming freshman a group of about forty or so fifty as it was going to be twenty five any section we had bigger classes than. A sort of inner disciplinary integrated experience and after that first year we decide I won't go into it too much but it turned out to be too overwhelming for the faculty and for the students but we decided it had enough going for it that we carried on and we kept calling it a cluster program by clustering together three or even just two courses and so three faculty members would get together and get the registrar to enroll the same cohort of students and say well when I could clustered with Vici Ingalls, and **linda Cool** same group of freshman would be in my college writing to Vicki's sex evolution and behavior and Linda cools introduction anthropology so that way they would be getting their writing require a science requirement a social science requirement Met and we would meet ahead of time and put together all our readings and syllabi and assignments to support each other and we would go to all of each of these classes with very few exceptions and so we knew what was going on and it was a wonderful thing for a teacher because first. He would see somebody in Action Day after day after day and you get so many tips how the person poses questions how long to wait for an answer you know what to do when something awkward happens and it's wonderful for the person at the front of the room because you have two people in the back who have done the homework and are glad to be there so you know the day before Thanksgiving break or something

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when normally you'd have a dead class you've got two people in the back to kind of keep discussion going move things along and you're learning something about these other disciplines and you're reading things about other disciplines and you're trying to find ways to make connections to your own your and to grade assignments together conceive of assignments together was very intellectually stimulating and I so I over the course of ten or twelve fifteen eighteen years at Marist I did collaborative teaching with people in science mathematics history art. Just a whole lot of subjects that you wouldn't think necessarily let themselves I mean like mathematics and writing but we had them writing term papers about the lives of famous mathematician things like that and it has it's certainly stimulated my creative life and also my intellectual life because it really got me going in Darwinian literary criticism which has been one of my major areas of publication for the last two decades.

32:14 GN: An earlier question I was going to ask for the related to this you know. Has your own teaching style been affected by your own experience in other words you teach the same way now as he used to. George Summer told me once the only to teaches is for he stand there and tell the student what he knew and I said I don't know sometimes it good to get a reaction from the students because they have insights that might help you well he wasn't so sure about you know that's personal observations

32:43 JS: Yeah well I learned so much from all the different. People I talk with in a collaborative way and it was interesting it was exciting and I remember Eileen Appleby the sociologist. She we would have meetings as faculty periodically to see how the cluster thing was panning out for everybody and everybody was excited by it but everybody also said it was a lot

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of work and I think the clusters I was in were the only ones where everybody really went to all each other's classes we felt strongly that if you don't go to each of the classes you don't really know what's going on or how the students are reacting what's happening and Eileen mean said this is a wonderful wonderful thing it's great for the students they have the sense that they're exploring they see faculty making their way in an unfamiliar territory we're modeling all kinds of great things for the students and she says and it's all off our backs you know we're giving this extra time to go to all these classes that nobody's paying us for. So the college is reaping this enormous reward for free but the thing is we got so much out of it ourselves here that we were willing to do that yeah that.

33:53 GN: And it opens up another light for me up understanding you and this I see this thing about read **You know what maybe too don't you know I use one of the old lenses** I am saying what in the world

34:10 JS: Well lead me to that if I ha never collaborate with vici Ingalls I probably would never written that book

34:16 GN: Yeah I was just saying to myself how you sat down to actually Bob Lewis, myself John Scileppi, bill Eidle we are in a little book club we read and Darwin has been a subject a good bit about the whole evolutionary process you **know molecule the whole** world is development of the whole genesis of mankind and whether you know the whole it's so interesting and the whole world open I can see you know going to other classes and seeing they told you didn't

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34:53 JS: I had always been interested in evolution and I've been interested in the emergence socio biology discipline back in the seventy's before I ever got to Marist But being here just awakened that and the discipline had moved on just enough that I didn't jump on board in a scholarly way right away but. I found that just so intellectually. Invigorating and stimulating and I also really then that's one quote When you ask what keeps me here and what is it about the faculty the faculty. That are willing to give that extra time who have that kind of intellectuals electoral curiosity and who would go on which of these classes and just really be interested in showing the students hey you know this is something new and interesting and Eileen Appleby would come into my class when we read Edith Wharton age of innocence and she say we're going to diagram the social networks of all the major characters and who social networks the most homogeneous who's the most heterogeneous who's denser who says larger who's a smaller What are the implications for the plot and so on it and the kids are like really wow you can really do that you can talk about English in a sociology class here and vice versa and so we were giving something that. Was pioneering an adventurous intellectually for the students and that I had colleagues who wanted to do that who felt that that was. A wonderful experience for them pedagogically and in every other way and enriching that I feel I have always felt very grateful to Maris that I was able to have that kind of interdisciplinary teaching experience which I don't think I could have had anyplace else and it was the best part of my years of marist.

36:43 GN: OK. Speaking to one of your colleagues about this whole problem about Marist again it's own tradition though an on. The first part of it was describe to me would Marist survive the first years where we going to make it. And it Was a kind of a team effort we're all together pretty

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as a faculty and this kind of thing I team taught with Larry Sullivan you know I had a theology degree and he had English well he had and I had English. So it interactive so that sharing so much so that the students confused. A student gave him a thing will you give this to Larry Sullivan h said who do you think I am. so thinking I was him professor Nolan will you give this to Larry Sullivan and it was just. That you know seems to have always passed by a faculty kind of against Murray. there was a the anti Murray period which we're doing more for wall and foundations then where was for salary it was I kind of complained about the money was because he made a beautiful campus but we did get rich while he was doing it. we survived we come I head a long way and now it's kind of you know place where a lot of people. I was going to say is that same spirit you talk about sharing time in. **Geology** is much present now or is there a faculty or the very fact of the buildings are separated so much has something to do with it.

38:25 JS: Oh yeah I think certainly it is been administration policy is sort of divide and conquer and the buildings are part of it and also the fact that we do have a faculty that's more secular and comes from all over and there are good things about that because Marist is more mainstream in its outlook academically speaking and professionally speaking but there. Bad things about that because I think the whole culture academic and not academic We live in is a kind of Me First narcissistic culture. things like Facebook certainly contributed to. and you know you don't find the SAT as self sacrificing. Stepping up to the plate as much anymore and Granted there was probably too much of that before it's like you were just posed to bleed on the altar for marist forever and there are count the cost and that wasn't really right but and a lot of the people who were there in those years when we survived which was just before I got there they feel strongly that the survival was built off their backs and it was never properly acknowledged or

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compensated. And now I think maybe the legacy is that part of the legacy as well this is wider cultural context I mentioned is that people are really out for number one you know if it's good for me I'll do it and if it's not I won't and I think the students are that way it's a shame but I don't think it's just Marist but I think Marist when it struck me at the beginning is more different from the surrounding culture than it is now and a lot of what's been lost is good you know including that strong ethical heart. I remember when Jan Casey retired which was probably in the early ninety's even then she said. The marist I came to was a kinder gentler marist than the one I'm leaving so it already started to shift.

40:24 GN: OK how about the future what do you see happening do you think looking into the crystal ball will marist be here in ten years or twenty years. Will we be able overcome some other, is college education still need will the country still buy it ill what your take on this

40:46 JS: well I think Marist will certainly be here in ten years and probably. Twenty It may not be the same because things do change quickly but I don't think that onsite Campuses are going to go away just because of the possibility of getting to degrees online I think young people are still going to need that three or four or five year sort of bridge between living at home and getting a job and hopefully ideally with some kind of education happening and I don't see any big trend back towards people going to get trained to be plumbers and electricians although God knows we are trying to educate too big of a percentage of the population at the college and university level but I don't imagine that changing nobody wants to be put blue collar anymore nobody wants or their son and daughter fixing toilets and I don't know what we're going to do because you can't outsource that stuff India but I think marist will survive. It could be that some really. Horrific

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things could happen for instance Dennis Murray's dream of you have just a few full time tenured faculty kind of supervising an army of adjunct making a bunch of courses and then the adjunct delivering the content of much of it online even if the students live on campus I hope that wouldn't happen but it could go that way a bit because one of the few ways you can definitely save money is on faculty you know so that I mean I think nationwide it's a poor time to go into college teaching. You're probably going to when I look at the students I taught were college teachers they're mostly adjunct and that's pitiful. Smart people with their heads glued on right will not go to graduate school now unless they have economic means of their own so you're going to have a professorial that's increasingly not very bright because the brighter people are going to do something else they're going to see This Is Really Stupid and for the same reason people who don't want to be badgered night and day by helicopter parents are going to become high school or middle school teachers or elementary teachers here so I think the education field is going to go like that.

43:04 GN: But I think the institution of the college. We just put up four new dorms or the forth is being completed now and I was talking Eleanor who is the president Dennis Murray's Secretary and she was talking about experiences that she had I said why we put four and there are no new students coming

43:33 JS: because we don't have enough housing right now

43:35 GN: we don't have enough room on camp we have them in a hotel downtown still and they coming on campus but they're not three in a room now they're individual most of the

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students now grow up with their own room many with their own bathroom and so the concept of. Example women call about she wanted her daughter to be on campus and she well there's just no room well I'm going to call the president I want my daughter on campus so. says to her every time you call you're going to get me you know and the answer is going to be the same there was no room for Jesus at the inn and there's no room for your daughter here when there is room we'll let her in and these dormitories are apparently wrenching that kind of need. they do want their students. Here they don't want them home all the time. It's nice to go away

44:35 JS: but it has to be the Right standard I mean that's other thing and this is another whole topic but it all the student debt the burden of student debt but it's partly because the students and their parents want to standard of living that is so different from what people used to expect when they went away to college and you know you have to have I understand you have to have a refrigerator, a computer if you go to college now but do you need a stereo set you know an i Pad this or that or the other refrigerator or a or microwave or a room of your own a but to be fair Marist house was extremely inferior they had those built up triples I remember Edward Donohue going in seeing where his kid had to live and saying oh my gosh this is just ungodly so and the dorms that their building in part replacing they're going to knock down Garland and so on so that it's I mean I think they're going to build new structures there maybe then replace it but that gets back to the whole issue How is Mary survived one way it survived by constantly admitting more students but the faculty has not grown proportionately in relation to student body nor have classroom buildings and faculty office space and all the rest of it so that. I never saw the getting bigger financially was a good answer now Heaven knows finances in my area of expertise but I thought stay small stay small that way you can become more a lead in terms of the students you

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admit you don't have the problem of all we don't have enough faculty just stay small for crying out loud but somehow they couldn't conceive of making a budget come out except always admit more and more and then you can never get rid of those dregs down at the bottom who are sort of dragging down your student body it's very disconcerting and you can't keep your really really super bright people when they senses in the classroom with morons. a lot of people complain that you've got the bimodal and it's the haves and the have nots in terms of brains and preparation and I always thought that Marist could become a much more stable concern by becoming smaller instead of bigger but I just we if we get much bigger then if you can't get that many students you really will die you can have a big bottom bottoming out so I think there's a big danger in this oh we'll just get ten percent bigger every year

47:03 GN: Yeah you could become a community college kind of situation or you just you know holding on for a while

47:11 JS: Well then the whole thing to if you stay this expensive even though we are a good deal compared to other private. If we're not really offering anything that suny New Paltz doesn't offer right across the river and we cost so much more why Will parents send their students here instead of there.

47:28 GN: We have the Hudson. It's the seen that's selled themit's not the only thing it was certainly is an attraction that those people who come on campus are the applications are forever Topping out they haven't been in the classroom yet but they've been on the campus they have seen that kind of thing. hat you take of this online learning and so on do you buy into that have

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you done it

48:00 JS: I don't buy into it for a lot of reasons. And one of the reasons is that marist forces faculty to sign away all their rights to every all materials that they put up and so lots of things that you might say in the classroom are things you might say later in an article or a book so you don't want to write that down because you've just signed away the rights to it to marist So I've talked to fact they say how do you dear you know do this course when you losing control your work as well I don't put up my work I just put up stuff from book they put up other junk and then the idea it's much more labor intensive as everybody says because you have to be the whole point of having everybody a classroom if somebody asks a question and you answer it and all the other people have that question hear the answer all once this way you're typing it up fifteen eighteen twenty times maybe in the middle of the night you know at home which is nonsense and going and having to print out all the papers yourself and then the ethical dilemma is outrageous that you don't know who wrote that paper or did that math homework you don't know who took that test, marist wouldn't put in a requirement that you must go to a public library or someplace to have the test proctored you just taking it on faith I had the one woman who since left in communication they started their master's program online and she taught a certain individual in two courses and pretty soon he wanted a recommendation from her for he wanted to join the F.B.I. And get a security clearance and she said I realized I was in no position to do it I didn't know if he'd done that work I don't know anything about the connection between the name and the stuff that had come in for all I know it was all fraud untill I think the fraud thing the misrepresentation whose work is that's a bottom line ethical problem has to be solved before I would be in favor of it and the issue of you've lost control of your work why would anybody put

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anything out of an original idea so the students who are taking the online course aren't getting the same course they would get from me in person they're just getting bits from a textbook.

50:19 GN: Good point

50:20 JS: And there's also just sorry to interrupt you but the lockstep business that they hire one person they give that person extra money to set up a course and then if somebody else wants to come and teach their course because it's a standard course they're. Expected to teach what the other person set up in terms of the readings the assignments but that's not the way it works in real life on campus Just because Don Anderson taught America lit I last semester doesn't mean I have to use his syllabus but if I were to do it online and follow his footsteps I'd be expected to do that because it would be very expensive for someone to set it up again on to set it up again so you get that business of talk about yellowing lecture notes you know something recycled by a person who didn't even make those decisions and choices

51:05 GN: Yeah the technical and legal aspects involved in it and then the time effort has to. Sometimes a lack of original your kind of locked into what is what has been accepted.

51:24 JS: And some things just aren't really very well taught that way apparently and I remember I was at a meeting it was about I guess budget and money and what faculty could expect in the way of technological help and some of the people who teach most online for management were saying that they wanted the college to buy them two laptops apiece because they since they had to do so much work at home and the guy was saying but that's the whole

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point of a laptop it's portable have you ever thought about what it would be like every day to carry a briefcase full of books a laptop case you know a thermos a lunch bag and all that back nobody's going to do that he said that people use their own laptop at home and they use the marist laptop at work and they think Marist should be funding the one at home two even though it's theoretically portable people do not carry laptops back and forth and course the business people are just well you're a bunch of lazy jerks but I could not having been in that position I didn't quite feel that they were lazy I could see that that would be a burden every day taking your laptop back and forth hey if the college want you to work all evening at home at two o'clock get up answer those emails. They should give you the machine.

52:36 GN: OK. Two little Question at the end. If you were invited to talk to the board of trustees about what you think one of the most importin needs of Marist or one of three what would you tell them

52:55 JS: Well one thing would be if they are sincere in wanting to have a better published faculty they must have more sensible reward system in place and the reward system currently in place is insane it is completely out of step with every other university in America in order to get a one semester course release for which first of all is reviewed every year. Let me start with what happens at other places every three to five years you are reviewed to see whether you qualify for a course release for extraordinary scholarly productivity and if you qualify you don't just get one release a year you get two one each semester or at marist you only get one and the requirement is usually within that three year period you have to publish an article at Maris you have to publish three articles every two years to get a one semester release and that carrot is impossible I head

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the Academic Vice president say he doesn't understand why more people haven't qualified for the release because it's just such a wonderful reward well for most people that's not a reasonable goal you can't teach a seven course load and publish three articles every two years and first you can't know they're going to come out at that space even a book only get you two years two releases which is nutty so that's the first thing I would say is you must bring your rewards for scholarly productivity into line with usual practice and you will have more and you will have better I mean the other thing I've heard the A.V. P. is some people are publishing garbage what you expect if you have to publish that much that fast so that would be one thing. I don't know if that is really what they want but that is what they say they want. And along the same lines they've got to be more careful in terms of just because something has to hardcovers doesn't mean it's really an academic book they've got to crack down on what's essentially. Pretty close to vanity press and self publishing stop giving credit for that. Because that's just embarrassing and it's not any it's going to enhance the colleges reputation. What else would I say. They should look more closely at Florence and that freshman year broad you know I don't think that freshman year abroad is a good idea. I think They've got to do a study of what happens to people when they come back to campus not just are they retained What's the retention data but also. Have they gotten the kind of education in Florence they would have gotten here are they up to speed and so on I'm not sure that there's sufficient oversight because it's just too handy first of all it's a novelty and so that's oh we have something special that nobody else has but that's not necessarily proof of excellence and it's handy because you can say the people what we don't have a dorm room for you on campus but guess what we have one across the Atlantic Ocean wouldn't you like to be in that one be in Florence and I don't I think that it's there are so many. You know then you can you can actually sixty more people what a wonderful revenue stream and so on it but they've got to

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look more closely to the students who come back today knowing Italian and probably. So those would be the three things

56:20 GN: on the other hand. What are some of the essential things that Marist should maintain there is a certain spirit I think here however it's done. That its kind of passes on students help student stood. There seems to be a certain theme or. Whatever you want to call it spirit Marist students are kind of typical to one and another by enlarge g I've been other places and whatever happens it. You just meet them. They still hold the door for you be enlarge.

56:58 JS: Well I think it would be very important to preserve the college heritage. Which means to actually emphasize the fact that the culture is Roman Catholic I think that's what brings students here I think it's what draws parents to this college of course we can't go back to being formally associated with the church I'm not suggesting that but I think that should not be. Disparaged in the interest of oh we should have more of this kind of person more that kind of person or The other kind of person I think that it's because we are rather homogenously that there is that kind of feeling in the student body and maybe it seems politically incorrect the college wouldn't quite know how to put that but I think prided in having a certain character is not misplaced and is not incorrect in any way.

57:54 GN: OK Is there anything you'd like to say that I didn't ask you why you did a fine sweep of your early years. You teaching Background your view of scholarship the needs and what we have here something that you want to add to final period

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58:14 JS: I don't think so I think we've covered all and more that I feel that I thought we were

58:19 GN: Well just done by saying thank you very much I try to get some struggle to get you because of your commitment to conferences and trips and writing and scholarship but thank God you did come we have it and it will be cherished I know some people want to hear it pretty soon I won't mention name. Thank you very much

58:40 JS: You're welcome thank you