Interview with:
Dr. Andrew Molloy

Marist College
Poughkeepsie, NY
Transcribed by Rita Popot
For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Interviewee: Dr. Andrew Molloy

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Summary: Dr. Andrew Molloy discusses his time attending Marist College and becoming a Marist Brother before teaching as a chemistry professor and becoming Academic Dean of the school. He talks about the different changes he has seen the college undergo, including the development of the computer science program, Marist's partnership with IBM, and the introduction of women to the college. He also talks about the strengths he sees in the student body, and the importance he sees in the availability of the faculty to the students.

Gus Nolan: Good morning. This is an interview with Dr. Andrew Molloy. It's the twelfth month of the year, seventh day, Pearl Harbor anniversary, 60th anniversary, the year is 2001. We're interviewing Dr. Molloy in the Marist College library, in the Special Collections area in the basement. Good morning, Dr. Molloy.

Dr. Andrew Molloy: Good morning, Gus.

GN: Andrew, could you give us your full name please?

AM: I have to think about that [Laughter.] If I give you my full name, I don't know whether you're going to understand it, it's very unusual. My name is, Andrew Arthur Joseph Peter Miller Ackermann Molloy. The Andrew is something that is a carry over when I was a Brother. Prior to that, when I, when I talked to my mother about all these names that I had, it turns out that the Joseph is a common name that was my middle name. Peter was a confirmation name. Miller was the doctor's name who brought me into the world, my mother insisted on that. And I'm an adopted child, so now, so Ackermann was my biological father's name, my mother was married first. Molloy came on when she married a soldier who went off to fight in World War II, Molloy in the 40's and I was a young kid.

GN: Could you repeat your name please? [Laughter]

AM: [Laughter] It's Andrew Arthur Joseph Peter Miller Ackermann Molloy. And the Ackermann is spelled with two N's. So, you asked a question, I'm not sure that the rest of the questions…

GN: I'll skip the next question; it says were you named after any member of the family?

AM: [Laughter] Well, I said a response I guess to that.

GN: Where were you born and when?

AM: Siddenham Hospital in Manhattan, on March 19, 1930.

Andrew Molloy

GN: OK, do you have any siblings?

AM: One brother.

GN: Okay, what is his status, is he still with us or has he passed?

AM: Oh yes, he's living down in Jersey, in fact, taking care of my mother at this time. His name in William John Molloy, and his son graduated from Marist College.

GN: Uh huh.

AM: Michel Molloy, I think he graduated in '91.

GN: You mentioned your mother, what's your mother's name?

AM: Edythe, the family name is Strygner; both her parents came from Poland. Her first married name was Ackermann, and then her current married name is Molloy. Her middle name is Mary.

GN: Where did you grow up?

AM: Well, after the first six months in New York City, my father actually had tuberculosis when they were married and he became quite sick and so at that particular time in American history people with tuberculosis went up the Adirondacks, and so we moved up to the Adirondacks and lived in a home close to Saranac Lake. He participated in some of the sanitarium activities up there, I guess. Then, we lived in Saranac, and I went to school there for the first, I guess, for the first half of the first grade, in a Catholic school up there. Then, we moved to a place close to Paul Smith's, where Paul Smith's College now is, there is a little college there now. We lived there, and my father was an architect. So, when he began to have remission we moved to Paul Smiths, and then we moved to a small town of Bloomingdale, which was between Saranac Lake and Paul Smith's. I went to school in a schoolhouse where they had the first and the second grade in one class, third and fourth is the next class, and so on. We lived there until my mother's mother and father, who had retired from work in New York City, came up and have a home between

Bloomingdale and Saranac. First, her mother died on Christmas, her father died on Easter, and her husband died in August, and those three things, she had a nervous breakdown, and we had went to New York and lived out in Long Island, so I think you said something about where you were, so there were other changes in time after that I don't remember.

GN: Let's talk just in high school, where did you go to high school?

AM: OK. I went to high school at Cardinal Hayes. For the first year, I was at the Holy Family which was a… [voice drops out]

GN: An extension school?

AM: An extensions school, which was up near Capital Hill Avenue in the Bronx. Then, I went, the second year, I went to the main building for… and was in the orchestra, playing the cello. Which I went there after having learned the violin in two months in the summer before going to my sophomore year. [Laughter] You have no idea how much I learned, and when I got there they handed me a cello and said we need cellists. So, I used to take the cello home from the school to my home in Park Chester, in the subways, and over the weekend, and then bring it back again on Monday morning. And so I stayed there, but I really wasn't happy playing the cello. It was during the war years that we gave a couple of concerts for war bonds and things like that. In fact, that's when I saw a movie my mother didn't know about, or wanted me to see, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and we played a war bond rally there, and then we stayed for the picture afterward, we got away with something. hen in the sophomore year Brother…. [drifts off]

GN: Aden Francis?

AM: Aden Francis, twirled his chords in my classroom, and the next thing I knew, I was booked on train up to Esopus, and I did my third year of high school in Esopus and then in 1945, came over to Poughkeepsie here, the property here.

GN: This is the start of your studying to become a Marist Brother?

AM: That's right, and I was here in 46 and completed my high school studies at the end of '46 got a diploma from St. Ann's Hermitage, I guess.

GN: When we talk about graduate education we're going to talk about post-Marist. So, let's leave that on hold for a minute, we'll come back to it. Let's move more to your personal life. When did you marry Rosemary and where?

AM: 1966 in Hartford Connecticut. I can't, I can't remember the name of the church, but what was different about it at the time was that the fact that she arranged to have trumpets played at the beginning of mass instead of the end of mass, I guess it was the beginning of having things like that, unusual thing, happen and Pricells' Wedding March was played and things like that.

GN: I'm going to tell her that you don't remember the name of the church. [Laughter]

AM: Don't you dare, I can see the church in my mind, but I can't remember its name.

GN: Tell us briefly about your children now.

AM: Ok, I have four sons. Andrew is the oldest, I guess he, he must be 34 now. There are two weeks in the year when if somebody asks me the names of my children and how old are they, for example, in next October on the, I think it's about the 12th of October if you ask me that question, I'll say well Andrew is 34, Richard is 33, Steven is 32, and Joseph is 31. Then, a week later, Andrew's age jumps by a year. So, I have the four sons.

GN: What are they doing now?

AM: Well, Andrew graduated from the School of Forestry, Environmental School of Forestry at Syracuse, which is a state-run center. It used to be part of Syracuse University, but I guess they decided to cut it off and the state took it over. He graduated from there, and then he got his master's degree, and he is now working at Syracuse University. He got his degree in field

biology, and he's now working as a computer specialist taking care of the all the computers for two of the schools in Syracuse University, the Human Resources school and the Architecture school. How things turn out, and that's what he's doing now. Richard graduated from RPI and then went to Notre Dame and was completing a doctorate at Notre Dame and is a… he even fought in some boxing championships up there for two years and won his level championship in his second year. Got his degree in chemical engineering and is now working in Houston Texas as a, working for Exxon Mobile in a research capacity.

GN: His degree is a PhD?

AM: Yes, he has a PhD, Andrew has his masters. Stephen graduated RPI with a bachelor's degree and then went to the University of California, I think it was Berkeley. He got his degree in electrical engineering and got his Ph.D. in electrical engineering and computing, and is now working a small firm in Silicon Valley, they live out there now. Some gauge of it is he pays something like $1800 a month rent.

GN: Per room? [Laughter]

AM: They can't even look at buying a house, he has a little child now, they can't even look at buying house, more than a kind of a little thing on an eighth of an acre which would start as a shack and it goes for $450, 000. So, I mean he can't get anything, so they resigned to having the rent go up, but life was just totally different. And finally that brings me to Joseph, the youngest; he graduated from Marist, I think it was in 19… [voice trails off]

GN: Roughly?

AM: 1991, I think.

GN: Yes.

AM: I think he graduated something like that, a ‘91 or ‘94 in the fine arts, in part. Then, he’s now working for American Airlines, he’s been with them five years, dreams of going on to graduate school. Recently decided he thinks he wants to become a teacher, between the career and the turmoil of working this out. He has a little girl, Molly Joe, who’s two and a half years old, I don’t know how that’s going to work out, but anyway.

GN: Some of Joseph’s work is at Marist College in the Dean’s office. I think I remember seeing that not long ago. Let’s talk about your own studies at Marist. When did you begin your studies at Marist?

AM: I guess it would’ve been, I took the habit in ’46, so ’47 is when I actually came to the old Marian College before it became Marist, and that’s when I began my studies here. Then so,’47 I took the habit, ’48. I graduated in ’51 because we had school in the summertime as well. Ours was the first class to graduate from this college in chemistry, and there were four of us. George Lang, Michael Talty, and Gene Donovan.

GN: Three out of the four have doctorates out of that class, then.

AM: Yes and we had there were only, that’s four, oh Martin Healy was the fifth one. There were ten of us who were in the class that entered Marist at that time, and we were chosen five of you will take chemistry and five of you will take mathematics.

GN: That was the way it was done?

AM: That’s correct, well, that’s the way it was in those days. And George Holsten and Jimmy Consella, Marty Heart, and I get rusty on the others. I think it was John Electrus had come back from cooking, and he was in that class.

GN: When you finished Marist what was your next tour of duty?

Andrew Molloy

AM: I was assigned to teach at Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, and I stayed there for two years and I taught a myriad of subjects. I started off teaching Latin and algebra and division. Then, the next year, I taught chemistry and physics and civics, and I was there two years and that's what I did there. Then I was assigned to go to Bishop DePaul high school in…

GN: New York City?

AM: 152nd street and Amsterdam Ave. I taught there for three years. I taught, essentially, physics and chemistry, religion. I think that's what I taught at that particular place.

GN: When did you start your studies for graduate school?

AM: Well, in the summers when I was putting it off, actually, without thinking about it I knew that if I wanted to go on in chemistry ever, I'd have to have some mathematics. So, I took my first class in calculus up in Lawrence, Massachusetts, from Brother Leonard. Then, when I was moved to… I went to Fordham University each summer and picked up special courses there to prepare me for it, without, you know, not any real sense of the imminence of that. Then, suddenly at the end of, at the end of, I started teaching in '51, probably in 1956, I went to Catholic University. We were assigned; Richard LaPietra, Joe Gregory and myself were assigned.

GN: What did you study at Catholic University?

AM: Chemistry.

GN: For how long were you there?

AM: Until 1960, and in 1960, I did not have the degree in the end, but all the research was done, and I came back, I was assigned back here to the college and told you write your thesis you serve as a proctor in the dorms, and then you prepare to move the chemistry lab from Greystone over to the newly-opened Donnelly hall.

GN: Could you say something about the preparation for the dormitory work? Did you do any of that in Catholic University?

AM: Part of the arrangement that the Brothers had with Catholic University was, in lieu of tuition, we would, be those of us who were assigned there, would run one the large dormitories. In those days, it meant you had a room on a gigantic floor with perhaps 40 or 50 students and then the whole building was run by your group, and one of the people was in charge with that situation. Mine was predominantly a Spanish floor, and I used to shout out at night somewhere around 10:00 'por favor, cierra la puerto', something like that which I think means 'please shut your doors' [Laughter] and then things would get quiet so they could have study time. So, essentially I was broken in there, weekends until till 2:00 in the morning when they checked in.

GN: So, when you came to Marist you had some preparation for dormitory supervision?

AM: Oh yes.

GN: Yes.

AM: I think, I'm a little hazy on the sequence here, but I think my first, the first, I'm not sure whether Sheahan Hall went up before Donnelly or after Donnelly.

GN: After.

AM: After? Ok, then my fist assignment in the dormitory was, I think, in Donnelly Hall.

GN: Donnelly was used as a dormitory.

AM: Yes, that's where their rooms were eventually turned over to the business department and now Tony Campilli's office, are up where the dormitory were.

GN: What were your courses here when you came to teach at Marist? Do you remember?

AM: Very vaguely, but there is one I'll always remember. What happened is I started out teaching, I think I started out teaching organic chemistry and maybe, that's the only one I'm

really sure of, and some other courses. But then, about a month and half into the school year, Brother Adrian [August] died, and I took over his class of 110 students in general chemistry. As Brother John Kelly says to date, the day I walked into the classroom their life changed in chemistry. Because I told them I said, I can't teach unless you let me use the text that I'm familiar with and the…complained the texts I chose, the one I displaced was nowhere near as difficult a text, and everyone gasped when they got the book and life began. But then, the other course I taught, I was assigned I was told I was going to teach Calculus, and I said, well that's good because I really don't know much calculus, but if you give me the books and I have a chance to prepare I can… the best way to learn the subject is to teach it because it forces you to not only to learn the material, but try to anticipate the questions that are going to be asked. Well, two nights before class began Brother Linus, Linus' brother...

GN: Vinny.

AM: Vinny, came to me and said, "I want you to take over my class in Calculus III."

GN: Oh.

AM: Said, "There are 10 people in there, and if I take them over they're going to kill me or I'll kill them, you've got to take it over." Well, he was a senior brother what was I going to do? So, I was teaching Calc III and I hadn't had any Calculus since that summer course.

GN: In Lawrence [Laughter]

AM: In high school, my first year going out which is nine or ten years before. Needless to say that was the worst semester of my life, in terms of living, because I would work till three in the morning trying to prepare that one class everyday of the week. I don't know how we got through it, but I finally realized that I had to let the class do all the work because they had good courses

in Calculus I and II, so they were ready to go. I would try to get the solutions to questions they came up.

GN: Yes, OK. Back to the science department, can you talk about some of the people who composed the chemistry in those first years? What are some names that come to mind?

AM: Oh, OK. One of the early names was Dr. Bob Hooper who was hired and joined the staff. He later left and went to Worchester Poly Tech. Brother Leo, not Brother, Leo Richard came in to teach analytical chemistry for us. He was the head of the analytical labs at IBM, he was really excellent and Cliff Whyan came in to help with the labs in analytical chemistry. Then, we hired a wonderful dear lady who had her PhD from New York University, one of the Universities in New York, Florence Tabor, and Dr. Florence Tabor. She taught biochemistry, she gave a wonderful course in biochemistry. So, I taught the general chemistry, I taught the organic chemistry, Leo taught the analytical chemistry…

GN: Was Richard here yet?

AM: In the first year, we didn't have physical chemistry. The second year, La Pietra [Richard] taught physical chemistry and he might also have taught the general chemistry and then Lawrence taught the biochemistry. Then, shortly after that things began to change, and we got…Richard [LaPietra] got sent to Japan to teach a course in chemistry for six months, and then Rose Mary, who had gotten a masters degree at Catholic University, was teaching down in Mt. St. Mary's college and I was teaching down at Mt. St. Mary's College in the nursing chemistry, on top of everything else. I went back and forth twice a week or three times a week. So, the powers that be arranged for her to come up and replace Richard when he left. And then Marjorie Crawford came on and took over the organic chemistry from Vassar College, and then I can see his face, but I'm not going to be able to give you his name, but Richard will he taught, another

faculty member from Vassar came and taught physical chemistry at Marist. I can't give you the reason why, what, how things ended up in terms of things. But, those were the key people in the chemistry department from 1960, when I came, to when I left in 1966.

GN: OK when you left, you went to Elmira? Was that a direct…

AM: I first went to IBM for the summer, and then I went to Elmira and was at Elmira for fourteen years.

GN: What was your role at Elmira, or roles? What did you do at Elmira?

AM: Well, naturally, I took a job in the chemistry department and ended up teaching organic chemistry to them, and they asked me to teach analytical chemistry and instrumental analysis, so I taught those. I also taught in their liberal studies program which was an innovative program that they put in which I had one group of 14 students for 14 credits of their class load. And we were, as faculty, taken over to Greece and over that area which was the cradle, it was supposed to be the cradle of 'The Republic' Plato's Republic. So, there were four areas of main emphasis in that program, in Plato's Republic was one of them. Another book that was a key part of it was the Book of Tea, I think it was called, which opened the door to the Orient. At this stage, I can't remember the other two books which… but then we had a full curriculum for them, while I taught chemistry. Then, in the second year, they decided to put in a course for all sophomores in science called, Liberal Science to balance the Liberal Studies that was taught in the first year, but would only be account for six credits of their sophomore year. So, the department worked on that and then started the lectures of the year, and I was elected to continue the lectures after the first month. We had all the members of the science department present at every lecture with 180 students.

GN: Describe Elmira in more general terms, what kind of a college was it?

Andrew Molloy

AM: Well when I went there, it was the oldest women's college in the United States, giving a bachelors degree it predated Vassar College until the end. While I was there, it changed into a female / male college, and the way Marist went the other way, I guess somewhere in the late 50s, I'm not sure, no...

GN: Early 60s

AM: The 60s, yes, the 60s sometime. After I left, I think it was between '66 and '70, somewhere in there, the first women were first admitted to the evening school and taken into its entry classes. So, that changed the nature of the college there. My role went on in that science program for about two years.

GN: How big would the faculty be, totally?

AM: I would say about 70, 60-70, and the enrollment probably, when I went there, was close to 1,000, dwindled down to about 700 before they went co-ed. Then, they went back up again to about 1,000 /1,100 and then just around the time that I left it slowly fell down. In the last three years that I was there, I served as director of their field experience program, and supervised their placement program. And then, I took over as the acting Academic Dean when the dean left to become president of Albright College, and then they didn't find anybody at the end of the first year, so I applied in the second year there. A woman was chosen during that particular search in the last three weeks one of the candidates dropped out and by the three, and they put a woman up and brought her onboard and she got the job, Marie … She was a very fine person, and then I became the dean, they appointed me as the Dean of Graduate and Evening Studies at that particular time. I was on the presidents cabinet here until I got a little cut out piece of paper on my desk with just a check on it, which was the advertisement from the Chronicle where the academic deanship at Marist college. It's incredible, if you were to go back and find out the kind

of ad that was placed in there for that position and the kind of ad placed by Marist in there, when it is hiring its vice presidents.

GN: Quite a contrast.

AM: Contrast this; the ad was small, that big by about that big.

GN: Who put that on your desk, do you know?

AM: I found out later that the president did. So Leonard Grant was his name, by the way, the president before him had been there a long time was Dr. Murray who took the college when it was on the verge of collapse and brought it back up to over a 1000 students. In the early days, if anybody wanted paper clips they had to go to the president's office to get his authorization in order to buy paper clips. He ran…

GN: A strict ship?

AM: Oh yes, but he turned the place around, there's no question about it. Then he gradually delegated things to other people, but he always was on top.

GN: Let's come to Marist in your application. You applied to become the academic vice president here. Dennis Murray was the President…

AM: President, and I guess Dennis that would have been in '79…

GN: Yes.

AM: When I think he came as president in '79.

GN: Yes, early '79.

AM: And so, I guess the search, the search began somewhere I guess, Lou Zuccarello resigned, and that's somewhere in your notes, but he resigned perhaps indicating that the year 1979 was going to be his last year. I think he said at the time that it was so Dennis could choose his own academic…

GN: Vice president.

AM: Well, it wasn't vice president, it was academic dean. So, it was in the period, I guess, from January on when the search began, and actually I got a call from Tom Casey and I was in the cabinet meeting with the president at the time, and he said, "Do you really want to be considered for this position? We have a national search going on here." I must confess, he got my Polish Irish up, "You really want to be one of those… You're in a big league here, you can't." So, I said, "Yes, I'd like to be considered," and then I never heard anything for months and months. During the third semester at Elmira, we have a six week semester, and during that semester, there is always a musical put on, and the musical being put on was *Fiddler on the Roof*, and I had taken on the part of the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*, so I was letting my hair grow in that situation, and so finally, one day out of the blue, I got a telephone call asking me if I would come up for an interview. I came up and Richard La Pietra met me, and I walked into a room and I think there were ten people in there. After about two and half hours, I walked out and thank you very much, I went right back to Marist, I never met Dennis, I never met anybody. Richard said, "I think things went OK." Never heard a word yet, and a buddy at Elmira, he was the chief financial officer he was the one that Tony Campilli found here, and he was looking for a job, and he came down to my office one day and he said, "I've just gotten word that I got the job down South at some university as the financial officer," he said, "What word do you have?" I said, "We've given up on it." Probably, we hadn't had a word now in over a month and a half, so I'm pretty sure it's nothing. The next day, I got a telephone call inviting me to come up and meet the president. So, here after reading this the call that came with my hair long and everything else, I couldn't cut it I couldn't do anything, I had to go just the way I was. So, I had an interview with Dennis, met Marilyn, and then after that I went back. And then finally, then a month went on

again, I didn't hear a single word, and then all of a sudden we were up, we were going in for the dress rehearsal, I was really pretty shaggy by that time. So anyway, just left it the way it was and met Dennis again. Then, Rosemary and I were down at a motel in Newburgh, and I got a call from Dennis saying, "Would you consider serving as the Academic Dean?" This fellow [sitting on a bench at this particular time] and he said, "Well, I'm leaving for Florida tomorrow. I'd appreciate if you could give me your response in the morning if that's at all possible." So [inaudible] I talked to Rosemary for about an hour and a half and I said, "Look we had decided that if a job comes up for me, we would take it." So, I called him right back and he said, "OK, go in tomorrow. Tomorrow I want you to go visit the chairman of the Board of Trustees and three other members of the Board of Trustees and call my office and you make the arrangements for going to the visit." I said, "Alright" [Laughter] Next thing, I got a call an hour later changing everything, said, "My secretary will have it all arranged for you, just come up to her office and she will give you an itinerary." So, I went around and met Jack Gartland and all the folks. Then, that was it.

GN: Ok, once you're here, what was the reality of moving into the office versus the envisioned thoughts that you had about it? Were there major contrasts? What did you think the role of the Academic Dean would be as compared to what the reality was, were there some contrasts?

AM: There were some, there were some things that were, that came, were totally unexpected. First of all, it was arriving on the campus and going to the office and found out there was like the cellar in the movie *Arsenic and Old Lace,* which had the Panama Canal being built in the cellar where they were taking up all the pipes so there were just ditches down there, the whole bottom floor. So, there was really nobody around, so I went over and sat in the library for the first three days trying to figure out how I was going to get in nobody was around. So, that was an initial

shock, but then I had in all the conversations. I had understood that Student Services were going to be combined into the academic area in an integrated kind of way. I thought that was a good thing, you know. I thought that would have allowed for certain base influences of student services [inaudible]. Well, shortly, very shortly, after I was here at the very first board meeting, I was told to give my reasons why I thought this was good, and Jerry was going to give the reasons why he didn't think it was good. Why? There, I was asked, right at that moment, and I really was not prepared, and we were just trying to figure out what was going on here. That was a real, I had a certain expectations and thinking about what kind of ways could we go in to make that happen? And then, suddenly, that just wasn't there. So, that was one of the first real changes that happened. The other was I didn't really understand the growth spurt that was hitting Marist when I arrived. It was most significant, and we didn't seem to have any place for anybody. So, I would characterize the five years that I was in it was really coping with very rapid growth and apparently zero space to absorb it. You know, where do you put a faculty member? What new faculty members can you get? How do you preserve the liberal arts tradition of the college when a very valuable thing was happening when the computer science program was declared the flagship that was supposed to… and it rightly should. I believe that the tie into IBM and that whole program was most logical. We were located ideally for it, and it allowed us to do things that we would never have been able to do in terms of technology, so I thought that was very, very valuable. I was worried about the, how the liberal arts were going to be preserved in that period of time, and we're right in the turmoil of putting in a new core when I was there. And I thought that was pretty well-set, only to discover when I arrived that there was a great division among the faculty on that. And after studying it, I thought it had tremendous value, and I naively thought that everybody was behind it, but then discovered that some of the major voices on

campus weren't behind it 100%, and I remember hosting three big sessions over at [home] trying to provide an environment, when my thinking of the old days at Marist was that we all got together and we just talked about things. Marist was changing, it was changing. I think they were useful meetings, and the core program went through, but then the core program had a heavy influence in philosophy in there, and as the numbers are growing rapidly, there where clearly not enough philosophy teachers. But with technical programs like computer science and communications growing, there was a real grasping for faculty for those areas. I was trying to balance that the core of the college is supposed to be the core program, and as we're growing too fast I was worried about the number of adjuncts, were five people posted to them. There is a part they cannot deliver because they cannot be at their regular jobs and be here for the students. They couldn't do that, and I didn't think that the core size of the philosophy faculty at that time was enough to go. So, that was one of the areas that was very unpopular when I, I think that was probably not a decision that was hailed as being too wise by the President at that time who was really, really trying to build up two major programs, one being computer science and, subsequent to that, the communications program.

GN: What was going on, on campus building wise during this time? Do you recall anything there? Are we in the dormitory construction, or is Lowell Thomas completed or is Dyson up yet?

AM: Oh no Dyson, the Dyson building, the buildings that weren't there when I arrived were all the buildings that are on this end of the property, no the other end, the other…Lowell Thomas, Dyson, and Fontaine

GN: Lowell Thomas was not there.

AM: Nope, no, not when I came.

GN: Right.

AM: I forget what year it was that Lowell Thomas gave the lecture; you can figure it out somewhat by…

GN: ’83 ’84 I think something like that.

AM: ’84? OK, so, it was probably built somewhere in ’83. Like I said, I came in ’80. Now, on the other side of the property, I have worked personally on Fontaine, and on the chapel, and on Donnelly. And Adrian was there, was built while I was away and three [inaudible] and also Gartland no no, what are the…

GN: Gartland Commons, the North end.

AM: No, no.

GN: The townhouses.

AM: Yes, the townhouses. I remember how tentative we were as we moved into building those town houses, as to whether what would happen if Marist was not able to fill and was a down turn. Therefore, they had to be designed in such a way that they could be condominiums. They had that as a fallback plan, and that line of thought permeated so many early buildings of student resident facilities because of the uncertainty of the times and how would Marist fare. Well, Marist fared very well, and so they filled these and spilled over, and filled these and spilled over continuously to this day. But, I remember that was caution, but there was a great deal more confidence that is clearly evident in the decision making that occurs today. Their times were a little bit tentative. Colleges were having deficits and things like that, and Dennis was steering us through a very rocky waters in the particular period of time.

GN: Ok, after your role as key administrator you returned to full time teaching? OK. Were there major adjustments for you to make returning to the classroom?

Andrew Molloy

AM: Well, when you consider that I am a trained organic chemist at the time I returned to teaching Organic Chemistry, was well absconded in the hands of Dr. Larry Menapace, and I was not going to be teaching any organic chemistry. I became the analytical chemist, so it was it was really… I enjoyed it because I always enjoyed working with my hands and so on like all that. But, again it was, it was not taking advantage of the 20 years I've been an organic teacher. It's a lot different preparing classes when you've taught a class for 20 years. I always threw all my notes away every year and started a fresh, but it was always a new experience to me. But it was a lot newer experience then picking up and teaching the analytical chemistry, and I bless the fact that when I was at Elmira, six to seven years before that, before coming to Marist, and starting this teaching again here, that I had taught the analytical chemistry for a year. But, we didn't have much instrumentation things like that at Elmira, and we picked up more instrumentation here, so I had to adjust to that. Clearly, our science facilities were in bad shape, and so I was permitted free hand to be. I guess, there was still some chips out from being Academic Dean or something and so I was able to rebuild the science labs.

GN: Now you did physically yourself, with your own hands?

AM: Yes, with the help of another student who was relative of Larry Menapace, a young fellow who worked with… My sons came in and helped me knock down the walls of the, many of the old walls…

GN: Of the Donnelly building?

AM: And so, we just reconfigured it and put larger offices in for the faculty and added with out terribly important which we had I think at the time that I started the renovation, I think we had one chemistry hood, which is needed for the exhausting when you're working with follicle chemicals that are poisonous and you need to work out of a place where the person who's using

them is not going to be breathing it in and that's what the chemical hood is for. I think we put in eight, and that was major, they were expensive, close to $5,000 each, and I didn't have any budget, and I think Dennis must have pulled his hair out that I was doing that because he kept getting requests from Tony Tarrantino, who was in charge of maintenance on the college ground before, but somehow they found the money and I was able to go do that and then after that I became the chair, George Hooper resigned, and I took over as chair in the science dept.

GN: Would you comment on the roles, would you rather be the administrator or classroom teacher? Which one do you find more satisfying?

AM: Oh I love the teaching. I taught when, I taught when I was Academic Vice President here. I taught when I was the chair, I really didn't, then happily, this sounds terrible, happily for me, Larry decided to take a sabbatical, and when with organic chemistry, he was going to take the fall semester, and then I would… no, he would take the spring semester and then I would take over the spring semester. Then we talked and I said that it really would be a lot easier on the students if they had a same teacher who started them off in the course, because it's a year long course, come January be the same one that had at the first part just continued. He agreed, so I had a chance to teach organic chemistry. Now, the point is, I had not now been a teacher of organic chemistry for something like more than 10, 12, 15 years. So, the hours that I put in to teach that one course outweighed what I put into it, but I loved it, except my health gave out.

GN: Now, you play the significant role in spearheading, I would say, the teaching of science in the whole Mid-Hudson area. What do you feel was accomplished, for instance, by the role that you played in Science on the Move and the training of teachers? Do you have any comments on that?

Andrew Molloy

AM: That was a tremendous experience for all of us, for all of us that were engaged in it. The happy idea was that almost all the Marist science faculty where involved in the project and that particular program. But what we were fundamentally trying to do was to implement a philosophy and approach to teaching of the sciences, which was really fundamental to the science. Namely, science is a really laboratory hands on situation; you do the experiment, you get results, you try to figure out what the results mean and then you try to redesign the experiment and explore those things which didn't seem to make sense for which contradictory to original hypothesis, and that's what science is about. So, the goal was to get the high school teachers to come in because, to recognize, we were always, the colleges inherited the students coming from the high school. But the high school, they all had books, the lab books and things like that where you fill-in blanks which actually drove what you had to get. What is the weight of this? Oh, that's this, I'll weigh this, put that number there. Next one, what is the weight here? Things like that which they didn't have to work out what they would have to do. It was really all laid out, and the word that was used, unfortunately, was "cookbook," design too much. And so, we're trying to break that mold, and we were able to get involved with about 300 teachers in the Mid-Hudson valley from Dutchess County, Ulster County, and Orange County, and ran summer workshops and workshops during the year and then got the latest… The other thing was the high school teachers, there were a tremendous disparity between what they had to work with in different schools. In some schools, the budget per student in science in a given class was $5 or $6 for the year, and which meant a relatively small amount of money. In another school they had over $150,000 available for the teaching of science in terms of that. Some teachers had practically nothing, so what we did was, they had old equipment, and when something broke down it ended up on the shelf. So, what we did is bring all brand new, much of it computerized, and provided

the computers and equipment and taught the teachers how to use it and how to use this approach, and I think it really dramatically affected the way teachers thought about teaching their subjects. There were some who wouldn't change at all, but that's always the case, and there were some that were so excited you could hardly hold them down, and there was the whole spectrum in between, but I would say the majority of the teachers were extremely positively affected by it engaged the students in this kind of approach which was, I think, very appropriate. So, it is still gong on today, even through we are not doing many parts of the program now, but it's still going on today. Teachers are coming to the college, picking up equipment themselves, and taking it back to their schools so they can keep the thing going, and many of the schools have bought the equipment we've trained teachers on because the teachers had time to try it out and work with it and design experiments though the summer. So, before they, when they asked for the money to buy things, they now were asking having had experience rather than seeing in the catalogue, saying, "Well I'd like to have one of those." They'd love to get their hands on it but they never had it, but then it broke it ended up on the shelf because there was no money to fix it. We always fixed everything. And the other thing was that we started the program, just to show you the change that took place, one of the biggest questions was, "How do you expect the school boards to allow the schools to have individual phone jacks in each classroom? They'll never do that. They believe teachers would use that to have phones in their rooms to do their private things or something." It was that and with the end, by the end of the time when we ceased the program, it changed completely. They had phones and internet access. What is that?

GN: Internet Access?

AM: Internet access in every room. All the computers that we gave them could be plugged in and used and learned together back to the college. So the teachers could ask us, students could send data from one school to another. It just opened doors, it changed in that way.

GN: OK, let's come home and talk about some changes here at Marist. Over your long period here, there have been many changes. What are some of the major changes that you are most happy about?

AM: Well, I think I'm most happy about the overall difference [with] the library. That is one of the grandest things that happened at Marist. I don't think you can really fully gauge its overall impact, I think that's one thing, really marvelous things that's happened. I think the appearance of the campus and the constant attention to the refurbishment of the buildings, not to let them all get….

GN: Disintegrated.

AM: Disintegrated. All the agony that was involved in trying to maintain that, I think that was another very positive thing. I think that our acquisitions of land in this period of time have been very fortuitous for us. Our ability to put up the buildings and the residences that we have had, all this physical growth to allow this other growth to take place and go along with that growth.

GN: What about students?

AM: I think the introduction of the computer science program was absolutely essential to contributing to making Marist the attractive and outstanding institution it is today. Those were some of the things that I feel.

GN: What about the student body have you seen, first the coming of 'co-eds' and the development of more requirements?

Andrew Molloy

AM: To tell you the truth, this is a very corny kind of way to say it: I want to say that we just have good kids coming up to Marist over the course of the years. The nature of that group hasn't undergone too much change, and I hope it doesn't. They're, it's a different, and they are little ways that it shoes up... I walk on campus and students start talking to me or I'll meet some students in a place and say, 'Hi, how are you?' There is a quality of friendliness about the students, they seem to feel good about this place, they seem to be, and they seem to have lots of friends. We're not without our problems in the student body. I think the problems that we have are the problems of the going people today, they're not different on lots of campuses but the quality of the individual kids coming in as people are still there, and I think it's because we're still drawing them, the large majority, and the same sources that we are expanding where we're going. We've tapped into similar sources in those geographical areas where we haven't been before, and therefore ( ). They're talented, but I think there's been a general increase in talent in our young people today, so we are getting our share of the talented. I honestly would care less if our profile of students would jump 50 points. I wouldn't worry about that. What I've always loved about Marist students, when they came and when they left, I could sit back and I could see the change that occurred in their growth over the four years. When you've got a kid at Harvard, they come in as geniuses, they leave as geniuses, or whatever it is, you get them to grow the thickness of a… ( )... You just have to stay out of their way while they go ahead. And who do they have as teachers? They have lots of graduate statistics over there, and they live on a reputation of wonderful people in terms of being researchers, but not as being teachers. And that interaction and things that happen, I think that our kids are special in that way. I hope we don't succumb to going after the kind of situation where we gauge our progress by great leaps in the erudition of the incoming students.

GN: OK, to keep the balance, though, is there anything that has changed that you're less pleased about?

--SWITCH TO AUDIO 2--

In terms of Marist College or the students? Is there some area there that you think you'd like to comment on?

AM: Yes, there's one major thing that I've worried about. Where is Marist going? What is the vision of it in the future? What is it going to become? Is it going to become Harvard? What is it going to become? Taking into view the kind of students we have, the heritage we have, and the past goals that we have, what is the picture of Marist going to be? I'm worried about that which I naively interpret as mixed signals being given. I very much believe in that the most important quality about our faculty has been the quality of their teaching and their ability to be with the students, and that the students are a significant part of their lives as faculty. I think that has gone into making Marist a special kind of place with a special kind of spirit. There is significant need for us to move in the direction of scholarship on the part of the faculty, but I am troubled by what I consider a swing too far over to that which leads and almost forces faculty to give primary attention or primary attention to doing research, which is what exists at all these other universities and places. That they don't have the luxury to spend time with students. They don't have the luxury to prepare a class to the extent that they could if they had more time. I see a genuine tension pulling in two ways when the faculty loads are such as they are, and the expectations over this regard are what they are. I mean, do you want to become like Vassar? They cut the faculty loads completely in half so that they have half time to give to some of that. And then have a reasonable expectation over time of what will be viewed as being active in the area of scholarship. That is a tension that we haven't dealt with, and I don't know how we can

deal with it primarily because it would be further diluting what I think is already too diluted. We have too many adjunct faculty members on this staff, and if you tried to cut the full-time faculty members time of teaching down in order to give them more time to address the research and things, it's only going to exacerbate where the new faculty are going to come from, and more pressure will build to build that area. Vassar and these other researchers, they don't have these large numbers of adjunct faculty, and if they do, I submit that translates to erosion to the quality of teaching that is going on at the institute, and people will want to go to that kind of institution because we go to it. But, if you want to come to a place where you feel you're important as a student and you feel that your relationship with a faculty member can build, then come to Marist because that's the place where you will find that. Yes, faculty are doing research, and you'll get a chance to work with them. The message is you're worth more to them and mentoring you in doing research, is more significant to them than being able to come up with a publication. But you're being able to be engage in what is real and learn that the components and elements of research are, so if at the end of four years at Marist, you say I want to go out and work in these fields, you'll be well prepared for it and then you can go into this research and work with people who really are not so much concerned about that essence research takes on significance for them. I don't want to see Marist lose the sense of itself, and I'm not speaking against research, I think it has to come back into… and for those that are good at it and good at teaching, well, keep them, give them freer reign. But, don't make those that make that work with the students with their teaching, and with their mentoring in research, don't make them feel less significant because they're not publishing at the rate that you want, that's necessary for this to become known as a research institution. I don't want that to happen.

Andrew Molloy

GN: I will name two or three things now that I'd like you to comment on. What do you think is our best, most important treasure for the future that we might capitalize on. Is it our location? Is it the heritage and the tradition that go with the college? Is its place in technology and its grasp on the technical developments and its keeping abreast of that? Ten years from now what do you think will be our greatest claim to fame coming off those foundations?

AM: I thought I was simply going to answer yes to all those situations. Certainly we're not going to change location; we're not going to change that. I trust we're never going to change our name to Poughkeepsie University.

GN: Or Mid Hudson High.

AM: Whatever, because I think that ten years from now Marist has to have its heritage playing key rolls in just the sense of the place. I'm not exactly sure how you preserve that heritage so that that spirit continues. But I think that requires a lot of careful thought because I think that if they lose sense of that I think we're going to slip into being just another college. Nice location, things like that, not really something special.

GN: I think your presence here today is one step towards preserving that. Developing the archives so that we'll know what our heritage is. But let us continue on. What about the technology part?

AM: I think it is critical for Marist to stay with the most current technology it is most capable of through its association with a group like IBM. I know that is been costly over the years, but it is also providing faculty at Marist with the distinctive opportunity to use the most modern tools to adapt them to assist them in helping students learn. Because the biggest thing that students are going to face in their lives, as society continues is to try to learn how to cope with the different things, to learn things they've just got to become good learners. And if technology is going to

facilitate that process they're knowledge of that technology will help them to be outstanding in their capacity to learn and then it doesn't matter what their major was, which is my own personal feeling, it doesn't matter really what you major in, that's only the vehicle to help you understand what learning is about and helping you build the confidence cause you've got something in writing that says hey I'm good at learning it says so right here. But it says you learn biology, that's irrelevant I took something and I learned it. Why can't I learn anything else? I can, and I can excel in it and I don't think you're going to be able to function in that kind of emerging society. If you fall behind in where technology is going, I also think that you have to forfeit the responsibility and the possible role of having to exert some influence and to want directions and to want things that technology is being applied to. So, I think technology it is very, I have marveled at how you know Marist is able to update it's technology, it's computer technology, one area of technology on campus, over the years because I was unsure at the very beginning, could we keep up with his tremendous, I mean in two years its obsolete and get all new ones. Is it worth it? I think it is. I think our students should be proud and I think all of those are positive factors that [arranged this]. But I think, I still do think, the most important thing for us to work on is that we be still known in ten years from now by the kids that walked out and come back five years later and talk about their teachers.

GN: Good, thank you very much Andrew.

-END OF CD 1-