

Jan Stivers

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

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For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Transcript – Jan Stivers

Interviewee: Jan Stivers

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Marist College (Poughkeepsie, NY)

Marist College Faculty

Summary: Jan Stivers reflects on her early education experiences, her transition to Marist, how Marist has changed over the years, and her experiences in the Special Education field.

00:54 **Gus Nolan:** Today is Wednesday July twenty third we have a chance to interview Dr. Jan Stivers she is the school of psychology I guess it is teacher education program.

01:09 **Jan Stivers:** School of behavioral scientists.

01:13 **GN:** Good morning Jan.

01:14 **JS:** Good morning Gus.

01:15 **GN:** Jan this is a project they were doing for the Marist archives with oral interviews from individuals with Marist a number of years you certainly qualify. I think seven or eight years ago you got your twenty years award.

01:33 **JS:** Which was five years late because I was here as a part time faculty member for five years first.

01:38 **GN:** Right. More than qualifies then and what we're trying to do is get a brief picture of Marist and the story about how did this happen, how did this place come about to be what it is now about to be what it is now. You certain played a part in that and we want to hear what you have to say about it. But first something about yourself. Could you give us just a thumbnail view of where you were born, brought up the Early Childhood, going to school?

02:12 **JS:** Well in thinking about that question today I realize that my background is probably more like your generation of Marist faculty members. The generation ahead of me instead the generation behind me because my parents were absolutely working class and we don't really see that the people that were hiring today are coming from families where going to college was expected. So my father was in the army that was his ticket out of poverty. He did not graduate from high school he got a GED while he was in the Army. My mom did graduate. We have twenty eight cousins only three of us have been to college. That's my brother my sister and myself. So and my going to college was a surprise to my parents. I went to Mount Saint Mary College a private college rather than to the community college because we could afford the tuition more than we could afford a car for me to go to the community college. So going to college wasn't an expectation except for my brother certainly wasn't an expectation within the broader family. My child I moved around a lot I hated it.

03:54 **GN:** That growing up period though you were a good student or far student? Did you play in the band, music instrument, sing in the choir? Anything like that?

04:05 **JS:** I did Student Government I loved that sort of stuff. You know I was president of the student council that kind of stuff I liked all that stuff. No there was there was no money for music lessons and it was no and I have no musical talent. You know Girl Scouts that kind of stuff. Life in the military offer a number of kind of community activities we weren't deprived in any way. But my own experience is different from that of most of my colleagues today and similar to some of my students and I think that can be helpful. We still occasionally have a student whose first to her family to college occasionally.

05:02 **GN:** There's more of those now if some of the migrants get this far north you know there in this Cecilia LaPietra has a whole contingent that she's giving English as a second language too and I think that and they live down there down Haverstraw about fifty miles below us on the Hudson you know and I'm sure some of them will eventually wind their way perhaps just shot into the future. But that's the future let stay with the present. Why did you want to teach, would law have been the way for you to go to with the family?

05:46 **JS:** You know it was just a very, very traditional working class background and you know my parents did agree to send me to college but the phrase that was used over and over again was what would be good for you have something to fall back on in case you husband anything ever happened to your husband that was not. I mean I have heard that a lot among my contemporaries not here at school in the family so the idea was that you would get something to support yourself.

06:20 **GN:** All right moving did you work in the summer or have any jobs along the way?

06:26 **JS:** Always worked in garden shops from the time I was fourteen I loved.

06:32 **GN:** You know flowers and things of that sort?

06:34 **JS:** I know commoner, geranium beds by the gross. Not so much floral shops, but garden centers.

06:44 **GN:** Little did I know, I could have come to you for this kind of thing.

06:48 **JS:** I worked in Agway.

06:52 **GN:** And that's pretty much the summer activities through the years there wouldn't be much chances for that.

06:57 **JS:** No we worked all year long.

06:59 **GN:** Saturdays or the holidays?

07:01 **JS:** Saturdays and one or two afternoons, evenings that was a lot of five to nine siffts and we would work five to nine siffts.

07:11 **GN:** OK quick forward now how did you learn about Marist? What's the connection for you coming here? You were in new Paltz area first were you not?

07:22 **JS:** I am trying to think I know what the connection was. I took courses and Suny New Paltz after I had graduated from Mount Saint Mary when I was teaching when I was a teacher. If you had a student teacher would get a tuition waiver so I would have tuition waver so I would take a course. One of those courses was taught by an instructor who also taught here at Marist an adjunct when he was hired for a position. As a principal in Yonkers and had to leave the area relocate. He suggested that I pick up his course here in the middle of the semester and I never left. So I finished his course and Bill Lidel asked me if I could continue with it the following semester and then pick up another one.

08:21 **GN:** That was in the previous century?

08:32 **JS:** Yes it certainly was.

08:25 **GN:** Back about the 1980's?

08:26 **JS:** This would have been 1980.

08:29 **GN:** Is that so. I just picked that out of the blue. When did you apply for full time position was Bill Eidle instrumental in saying why don't you come for this position?

08:40 **JS:** Yes, And Liz because Liz Nolan because I had been working as a part timer and at this time. Oh this is a good bit of history. I'm glad I'm glad you brought this up. So Marist teacher education programs at the secondary level have been there forever. That was part of the foundation at the elementary level. They were offered in collaboration with Mount Saint Mary College so foundational courses were offered here on this campus and then the upper level courses the methods courses were offered at Mount Saint Mary and then there was I think or some unpleasantness when Marist started a nursing program which Mount St Mary's saw as an indirect competition and they decided to bring an end to the collaborative relationship. So then Liz had the idea of instituting a collaboration with Vassar and we needed a faculty member for that so I came on I think still as a part timer to help write that proposal. Then apply for the opening that was created as a result of that.

10:05 **GN:** Applying and interviewing in those days is quite different from what it is now you would know that.

10:13 **JS:** It is there was no national search.

10:17 **GN:** No national search. OK were you interviewed by anybody on board other than Bill?

10:23 **JS:** Oh yeah. I was I think it was five or six people and the last one of whom was Andy Malloy. There was also a clear. I did not have a PhD. at that time. And Bill called me ABD that was the first time I'd ever even heard those letters. I didn't know what it meant. But there was a clear expectation that I would finish this degree quickly. So I was part of that group that I think said OK you know everybody has to have the doctorate now.

11:03 **GN:** OK who was present at the time?

11:07 **JS:** Dennis was.

11:09 **GN:** Dennis Murray was here and Andy Malloy was in as academic dean.

11:17 **JS:** Andy did something wonderful. When I was hired he asked me if there was and anything else I would like I guess was a

confirmatory meeting I don't what kind of meeting it was. But a meeting when we were discussing the position and I said they had at some point in the next couple of years we would like to adopt a second child and I would like to be able to take a maternity leave then and he had the foresight to put it into the contract. And of course he was gone by the time our second child arrived. And without that I don't think I would have gotten the leave. Made a huge difference.

12:02 **GN:** I will have to tell Rosemary that maybe she knows. Ok let's talk about the students when you first came here. What do you find? What's the caliber of them, what was their ability, what was their interest, what was their motivation, was it really strong or just something to do they took teacher ed.

12:27 **JS:** I think the students when I first came were more like me when I was a young person certainly than they are today. Now at the same time that I was teaching here I was also working part time at Vassar and so the differences were very, very sharp for me. And nevertheless the range of student ability in my classes at Vassar were similar very, very similar to the range in my students at Marist the distribution was different but I always had some people in my classes at Marist who could hold their own with the best of my people at Vassar without a doubt and also some who struggled. But Liz will remember this too, we used to interview each student as part of the application for student teaching one on one interview and we don't have the manpower for that anymore. But there were a number we say why you want to go into teaching and they'd say well it's a good career for a woman for a mother I will be off when my children are off I will have their schedule you don't hear that anymore and nobody says that anymore. The desire to go into teaching is much more related to certainly it has its roots in a desire to nurture no denying that. There is a social justice calling.

14:02 **GN:** Tells me today now what is the feeling that you have about these students. Are they more advanced, less dedicated?

14:11 **JS:** Oh no absolutely not less dedicated No. They are much better writers. Oh my lord I spend much less time on any kind of writing instruction there will be a few who struggle but they are excellent writers they have wonderful work habits they are very, very grade conscious very focused on making sure what it is they have to do to get that A. Boy oh boy you know if you assign a ninety five you better be prepared to justify where those five points were lost. Very much that way. But you know what I would say Gus the biggest difference the one that I appreciate most is their ability to engage with me as another person as somebody to talk with I don't mean this disrespectful in any way. But like I'm another mind you know I am not Professor. I am somebody to examine ideas with, think things through with. They engage with person to person in a way that I don't recall in the earlier years.

15:21 **GN:** In a desire for the A do they put the same effort into get it. I don't think the previous students, they would like to have gotten A, but they wouldn't. I am just off the top.

15:32 **JS:** I, no I think that they do. I think one time when I was a young faculty member maybe I was here five, seven years. I think I did a little survey in my classes and I asked questions like that: What's an acceptable grade to you? What do you expect to earn in this class? those sorts of things and I was really surprised at how many of them would be satisfied with B and B- that was OK. Those kids will come to Marist any more.

16:04 **GN:** Well B was comfy and that was we praise. I always have that problem its good, but not that good. You know so C+ it wasn't C+ Gus for nothing.

16:19 **JS:** We could have an interesting discussion about that because there was an interesting piece a couple of e-mail exchanges about grade distribution and great inflation and my contribution to that discussion is why would we expect a normal distribution of A's though F's in are class at Marist we have good students we know that we have dedicated teachers we have a ton of services we have they're willing to meet with us when they have difficulty and we are willing to meet with them. If the best we can do is see something's wrong.

17:04 **GN:** Tell me this Marist has changed over the years I would think you'd readily say that dramatically so. What strikes you and some of the more critical or obvious importin changes? I could second yes the campus, or buildings, or the smart classrooms, or office space, or students.

17:30 **JS:** Student for sure. I think for me it's the sense that we have taken a place on a national stage. Maybe stages isn't the right word but we are we are a player in a much larger environment than we were before. When I go to conferences people know where Marist is who we are. MIPO has done a lot of that for Sure. I think that well when we did the search for the A.V.P. that all so showed me that we just act in a much larger arena then than we did before. I think it's a wonderful thing it's a really wonderful thing. So our reputation our ability to draw more broadly for students and for faculty those are big changes.

18:36 **GN:** What cause that lift up, that move from the local college of the mid-Hudson area to as you say on the national stage?

18:46 **JS:** I imagine it was many things but I would have to say that probably Dennis' vision was the most important one. Yeah séance of drive and would that be different from Linus for example?

19:01 **GN:** Yes Landis was a Depression baby and consequently of Finance was always something to be hunger was you know. Dennis never knew that you know any of this will come from a different background consequently money was no obstacle. Well the beginning it was but he was intent on getting money and was able to make it. That's my take on it. However Dennis didn't do it alone. You see there's a whole host of that but I would say that the Marist spirit of dedication was part of it but that's my saying it you know.

19:50 **JS:** Well I had something to say and that I don't want to go to that Maris spirit of dedication now.

19:56 **GN:** Well I really want on the changes that have taken because that students and the spirit of Marist is one thing but the campus is another. And the advances within the college technically have made a place just now we're told we have touched screen computers. There's a constant rising up of our ability to operate.

20:21 **JS:** Yes and of course I'm on learning which mixed bag for sure. But talk about a global reach and the possibility of reaching those who could not access to education otherwise. I don't know if that's who we are reaching but certainly we can bring a Marist education to those who could not access it any other way. So that would be another huge thing we have you know we tend to think those of us who work face to face on campuses that this is Marist, but this is one part of Marist we have the campus in Florence, we have all of the on line programs, we have the whole online programs, we have the hybrid programs.

21:09 **GN:** Yeah so there's a mutable a ray of operations going on. Now just as the students of change and the campus has change the faculty has changed say something about your perception of faculty.

21:26 **JS:** So first let me talk about we have new hires in our department and they are wonderful. They are younger, not young. Many have many years' experience in classroom teaching then coming into higher ed so they were there and there may be late forty's, early fifty's. They are everything you would want to be absolutely dedicated to kids still. Thinking people who want to do some research and some writing. I have such respect and hope for them. In other departments as an outsider looking in what I'm observing is hiring of folks with a strong record of publication and an expectation that they will carry that forward. And I have heard who knows if this is right but it's not unusual to promise someone a two day schedule. And I think that that does represent a risk. I think college has done other things to offset that but hiring faculty who are who expected from the date of hire to be producing to be publishing.

23:06 **GN:** It's a prestigious factor that would be married into the name of the college.

23:11 **JS:** But it might come at the cost of the kinds of relationships with students the heart of Marist. That's the heart, that's how we educate them.

23:25 **GN:** Yeah that's an interesting point. So I mean my point was simply that they are better qualified when they come they have their degrees already and so they're free to do more of this the person I have in mind is John McAdams who just retired after ten years but still talks about the projects and the research and the students involved with this math research and teaching of math you know that I am impressed with that kind of thing you know and that that goes on here. You know I think is inspirational. You know.

24:04 **JS:** I think the place to really look at it is in science a school of science and I don't know who you're interviewing in school science but man their collaboration with students are phenomenal. John does kudos to John. He involved students his presentations at a conference in wonderful ways. It's a fabulous experience for the student. I think what they do in the science this is a little different in

that they're doing basic research and the students are often developing the research question carrying out the investigation writing up the results. It's a different the nature of the collaboration is different. I think that that's a very, very promising model.

24:57 **GN:** Yeah. I'm just a sidebar on that Richard LaPietra, Barbara LaPietra endowment is college is for that kind but how much is for that kind of education a personal education for these better students to be able to work with the scientists and participate in their research and it a great story. This summer about a guy from Hawaii who is involved in such a program. You know so that really again is something important. But if there's something missing in this advance in terms of scholarship and publications so on.

25:40 **JS:** I think there's a risk there's a risk. I don't know that it's the thing now but there's a risk we have with faculty members who commute from several states away. They come on campus middle of the day Tuesday and they leave in the afternoon on Thursday. They have discharged that responsibility. You could not say they aren't teaching classes or not meeting with students or not keeping their office hours. But clearly there are limits on what they're able the way they are able to become involved with the life of the students.

26:23 **GN:** How does the faculty look by this in terms of fairness does everybody, get a fair shot at these benefits? Or is because of accreditation, or credits, or accomplishments better deals are made?

26:44 **JS:** It's possible I don't hear those complaints because I am one of those with a benefit. I have a release for research for research. Meaning I teach three courses per semester instead of three-four load and I do that because I have that release because I publish every year. I think that there is a problem with the way that set up and I don't know how to fix it. That problem is you have to first have to produce the research while you're teaching three-four then you're kind of rewarded for that with a lower load. And that allows you to keep on producing it. But you do have to keep on producing in order to keep your three-three. I think that a huge and important. You are asking about fairness a huge important thing was when we went to three-four for every one instead of the rejections for people who were teaching grad courses. I was a beneficiary then. So people who were doing what I was doing on a three-three all of us and they went to a three-four they weren't very happy about it but. Absolutely that was applicable thing to do, that was the right thing to do.

28:04 **GN:** But now the same time committee work is not rewarded in other words you will have assigned to committee's that are time involvement, and energy involvement it's just dedication in turn the college thanks you but that's it.

28:23 **JS:** No change in thirty years, right Gus. Services doesn't count.

28:28 **GN:** some things remain the same

28:29 **JS:** However if you're smart and thoughtful about it service can be its own reward. You can have wonderful satisfying relationships with colleagues, you can feel like you're making a difference for kids. I think we have to warn some of our very young faculty from doing too much service. It is rewarding and so you are willing to take it on but you can have all the services in the world if you don't have those two articles you're not getting tenure. It's not going to happen. And now I'm hearing two to three.

29:15 **GN:** You play several important role, but I'm just on faculty benefits and faculty life and experience of faculty. What would you say is some of the major accomplishments that have been achieved? Is this four-three and three-three do the people who don't have tenure and have permanent as long as we need them employment still operating here?

29:47 **JS:** You mean like the professional lecturers, term contracts? Yes and I think that that's a good thing in that it gives college flexibility to hire people who you might not bring on otherwise. So I think people with credentials in the field. So OK there's a lot that's up in that question about faculty life. I think three-four for all has improved things. I think the higher teaching associates, five courses per semester, no expectation of research. I think that has improved things. I think increases in salaries have improved things. I don't think we had enough improvement in starting salaries. I think we have in my field anyway. We have a hard time recruiting because our starting salaries are so much lower than other colleges, but then positions for which people are qualified in the field. For example Director of Special Education. So I think are beginning salaries in my field are way too low. But I no longer feel under paid.

You know the longest time all of my colleagues were making so much more money than I was. Colleagues at other colleges people in my neighborhood who are you know going in to teach their second grade and working thirty hours a week and doing the same thing forever. So the discrepancy was huge. But there was another discrepancy and I was kept in mind which was I was a hell of a lot happier.

31:52 **GN:** Well I like to get to that later on in this interview here. But like there just certain jobs bring with it more money. I all most fell over when I saw a friend of mine who works for a long rail road the average salary is eighty seven thousand to be a conductor. At no time did Linus Foy you know at no time did Linus Foy make anything or a dean whatever make salaries like that here.

32:20 **JS:** Well Bill idles son graduated from Marist and took a job on Long Island and immediately made twenty thousand dollars then I was making as a professor with a PhD.

32:34 **GN:** We'll come back to that. What is life?

32:39 **JS:** Well I think what has changed for faculty life. So I think a salary that suggests that the college values your efforts, doesn't see you as easily replace.

32:58 **GN:** Let me give you a foot note the pension system at Marist this wonderful the T.I.A. prep if your still in it and has contributed to it and they will provide to you for a nice afterlife from Marist. So let me say that coming down the pipe I think Dan will be happy to have you around.

33:20 **JS:** And so when you were asking about what has changed, I would say that is one of several things that we would attribute to right Roy Merolli. Who I really hope you're going to interview. I think in getting through decent raises there was a message of respect of valuing the faculty.

33:46 **GN:** Yeah I wish they would do that for the adjunct now as well, but then maybe that's next. Another point of view it has to do with again what we spoke about earlier kind of the image of Marist on the national scene. Certainly we have to save some of that would come from the P.R. Program that public relations in terms of public opinion Lee Miringoff His name on N.B.C. Marist, N.B.C. News we've seen this you know analyst times. So the image of Marist is out there, but what other feeling do you get the girls sport team I guess is another one of the happy experiences that we've had you know. You've been to conferences, you been across the country and M doesn't nearly mean Michigan it can mean Marist. What's the image people have of it?

34:48 **JS:** Well they still think we're Catholic and so that's something we have to talk about well we have Catholic traditions Catholic roots. We carry forward all of the values of the Maris brothers and we include that very explicitly in our mission statement but now we're no longer a Catholic institution other than in are traditions and our values. So that's one of the things I don't know if that's just are name. I would say another has been the relationship with I.B.M. Although I think that there is less of that but a couple a couple years ago that was in my field teacher education moved to try to do a lot with simulations, avatars. And at that time I was working with people like Emory Riddle and they knew of Marist. I think maybe there's less of that now. I would say another thing in terms of local community you ask about globally but people do know that adults can get education here at Marist there are graduate programs that we serve the needs of working adults that's know to.

36:02 **GN:** Dennis has a view that the online Education is more for the graduate student and he'd rather have as many as possible on campus for the undergraduate class would you be of that mind to.

36:17 **JS:** Restricting online to graduate.

36:20 **GN:** Not restricting, but mostly the emphasize would be here. We're going to come back to a question related to that in a minute but.

36:29 **JS:** I completely agree. I do think it's very useful for them to have some experience with online learning on campus so that they can know what a good online learning is I have taken many classes and I am in the ninety nine percent that dropout in many of them. But recently I took a very, very good one and learned a lot and I think if our kids could have that experience of a Marist online course

so that they would know how to participate what they can expect what they should look for in good online learning that would be an advantage. But by in large we're going to come to this I hope it all comes down to our ability to have a relationship with these tend young people with these people at this stage in their lives where their development is zooming and we can have that relationship better face to face.

37:22 **GN:** All right let me come to the central question is college education worth the investment? It's a three point two question. There's a financial investment, there's a time working papers and all those other things, there's a social investment you're leaving your home you're coming to another institution. You've around for thirty years here comment on that.

37:50 **JS:** This is an investment in yourself. It's an investment in yourself you know. Some of Federal initiatives to look to evaluate or assess the effectiveness of college by the outcome measure of first year salary. That's so far misses the point. It's an investment in. How you think you know I do tell my students in the very first day of class the classes that I taught twenty years ago or the course that I taught twenty years ago that had the same number contents all different. So twenty years from now if I'm still teaching I am not still going to be still teaching twenty years but down the road what I'm teaching you today that content is not going to be what you need you know. But the critical thinking skills that I'm teaching you are going to help you know not just in school but in your whole life your life as a parent, your life as a spouse, your life as a member of a community like Marist. Your ability to think things through to weigh the evidence to consider different outcomes to look at things from other perspectives, to think about unintended consequences of what looks like a great plan of action. Those the things that I can give them that will last and those things come from a relationship from the ability to have a conversation.

39:25 **GN:** Where is this relationship which you speak now? Doesn't take place in the class between teacher and student?

39:30 **JS:** In the classroom. But certainly outside of the classroom too absolutely. But clearly I can't meet everybody outside of the class room. One of my favorite things to do is to ask kids to join me for dinner over here in our beautiful wonderful dining hall. But I can't do that with all the students that is see every semester I would like to but I can't. So it happens inside the classroom and it doesn't have to happen with me in other word if I can in my class model the kind of careful listening and then really thoughtful questioning of the student then when I get a discussion going on whole class discussion going there are beautiful moments when I can just step back and I watched them do the saying. It's the most beautiful thing in the world it is.

40:30 **GN:** So the investment financially is almost.

40:35 **JS:** You know Gus I swear to god if I could just videotape one of those clips where somebody says one of my students say to another I don't see it that way can you explain it to me because I'm seeing it differently. And then the first student has to really struggle to figure out what he thinks and then how to say it and how to provide evidence for it to defend you know to support it. If I could just videotape that we could send that to parents with their tuition bill and they would say it's worth it.

41:15 **GN:** So then time spent in the library doing the research, writing. You've already talked about the advance already among of the students when they come here better prepared to do this.

41:29 **JS:** They are yes they absolutely are. So the time spent absolutely especially because I think Marist is going in a wonderful direction of service learning for a portion of our education and we have a new center for civic engagement and service and service learning and that will mean that they begin to see learning is not happening with books in the library only but it's sparked by a problem that they see outside. Then they come back to the library to get themselves grounded in some understanding so that they can then integrate it with what's going on outside. So absolutely the investment of time especially when we do this service learning civic engagement connection absolutely the investment of time and I don't think college is the only place you can get this. I imagine that there are some wonderful apprenticeships especially if you can do them not just a master and an apprentice but within a community kind of like a guild. I think you could achieve the same thing but in America today college is the most convenient and I think that the best way, richest way.

42:48 **GN:** Also coming to college there out of local parochial neighborhood you coming here and you get a cross-section of ethnic groups cross-sectional.

42:59 **JS:** Which we need to work on. We need to get better there.

43:02 **GN:** Right. But even as it is its better than staying home just you know on Brereton Avenue in the Bronx I just picked that name out of air. I didn't realize that there was going to have that over tone to that.

43:21 **JS:** No but I have a little story that I tell about that when we talk about the advantage of bringing in especially kids, especially socioeconomic diversity kids who come from poverty. There are times in my classes where I don't have anybody who's not middle class or upper middle class. And there's one case that we do that involves teacher burnout in zero tolerance policies, and behavior codes, and that kind of stuff. And the kernel of the case is what to do about three little kindergarten boys who have stolen popcorn from a classmate's lunch bag or snack bag. When I had when I don't have a diverse class I'm doing all of the fighting with the kids. I'm saying well don't you think that maybe these five year olds likes it that way but is it possible that the five year olds don't regard this is stealing. Of course not anybody would know that it's stealing. Well is it possible the five year olds might consider food in a different category. No, no in was in her your lunch bag. You know there's no, but when I have a kid who grew up in the projects in my class all of a sudden that problem evaporates a kid explains it and the accepted from him.

44:49 **GN:** So college is worth it, is worth it should all of the student be here for the four years doing the same kind things that we're doing now what you said twenty years from now. Good bit of the content will have change but are there some students who two years in the real academic would be sufficient to let them learn welding, or painting or.

45:20 **JS:** Well, it's very American Gus to want to speed it all up. I work very hard to keep them here four years a lot of them I had a student who came to us with forty seven credits out of high school she was seventeen. She had forty seven college credits between A.P. and I.B. and all that stuff. No nineteen year old should be teachers of fourth grade class. There is certain amount of maturity just in that. Just in the human maturation. So I think you need these four years. I think four you this is good.

46:08 **GN:** Yeah these are not my idea the last one of your fellow colleagues who is retiring mention that her view is not everybody should be here four year academic program and she's in a different field of course then you but I tried to pursue that with her. We didn't get this last point about maturity but again with the practicality of it. You know they I had the story of Bill Moran who was one of my first graduates here who graduated with a master in English he went to I.B.M. And they said, well what can you do, anything I am a renaissance man but what can you do, nothing. He had to get back get a job teaching at Lord's for two years. He went into accounting and eventually became vice president of accounting at Merrill Lynch. Gave us a hundred thousand dollars last year. So money was not a problem but there was a different avenue that he traveled.

47:14 **JS:** So my son is major, my youngest Michael majoring in political philosophy. What is he going to do with that, but my feeling is I that is so terrific you get to read what you want to read you get to talk to people you want to talk you can get your job credentials at the graduate level that is what graduated education is for.

47:36 **GN:** All right we get to the end of this let me ask you.

47:40 **JS:** I had so much more to say we can't possibly out of time.

47:42 **GN:** But tell your own career at Marist it has certain different paths to it like your work on committees for middle evaluation the teacher education. And moving on to Hawaii and beyond.

48:04 **JS:** I got very short attention span Gus I am a little ADHD.

48:12 **GN:** What's been your best moments?

48:13 **JS:** Oh wow. Well I would say one of them was working to revise the mission statement for the last middle state study. And seeing that veterans like myself as well as newcomers share Marcellin values as they've been translated by the brothers. That's that was wonderful. I really loved that feeling like I could help with the. When I served as faculty co-chair of the search through the

academic vice president that led to Tom's accepting position feeling that I could be a hand there that, I could help there especially since that was conducted under an incredible time crunch the firm that we had hired to help us with that search kept saying she said this is a very ambitious timeline and she said this is an aggressive time and impossible time I but we did it. Feel like I could help here. That was also a really good time. The best times though but there are times in class you know when you can step back and you can see that you've laid the groundwork and they're taking it taking it and moving ahead with it on their own I have a student who wrote to me last week. She just finished her first year as a teacher in Hawaii and her principal came to her and ask her if she would be the grade level coordinator. There are twelve sixth grade teachers and she's going to be the grade level coordinator after one year after one year. That's a fine line moment. I had a student who wrote to me thanking me telling me you still had a little gift I gave him and the card that I wrote when he graduated. This kid he clearly has Asperger's. He is tattooed from chin to ankles. He carries skateboards with him wherever he goes he was physically uncomfortable in every single class fidgeting he would leave class ten or twelve times. Just couldn't stay in a seat. But you know we were able to help find his strength find a place a way of using them. His's teaching in a charter school has been hired for the second year. Those are those are the best moments of course.

51:08 **GN:** Turn the coin over are there disappointment?

51:17 **JS:** There have been times where I felt that college could have taken more of a risk, course it's not my dime there risking you know. But there were times when I think that we took a risk that we fail, I don't want to make comparisons that we failed to have a little faith and take a chance on a new program even though we didn't maybe have been numbers that would suggest that it would it would fly. We didn't have the market research. I think that there are a few thing that we missed. I think that we've made a few personnel decisions and not moved quickly enough to move people out of those positions and I think that's been damaging.

52:15 **GN:** If Dennis ask you to come to a board meeting and just talk to the board about what you think needs to be done here at Marist. What would you say?

52:27 **JS:** Needs to be done yet. Well I think we need to make a commitment to continue in the direction that we have started with the first year seminars because I think those first year seminars give us a chance to do the kind of teaching that is a good investment that makes the investment in college worthwhile. Small classes, big chunks of time, kids who get to know each other well, less emphasis on content more on critical thinking and speaking. So whatever we can do to expand that kind of teaching that would be important to do.

53:06 **GN:** How much of that is in place?

53:08 **JS:** Oh well everybody takes first year seminar every student takes first year seminar it's four credits and the content is not the purpose of the course. It's the critical thinking the research skills and writing skills presentation skills. So I think that's a really good thing. Another direction well I think maybe I'm thinking of this one because I'm talking to you but I think the college need to make a decision about how we recognize in advance our Catholic identity that's the wrong language I have the wrong language there but what do we do about Catholic Studies and what do we do about the Marcellin endowment. I think is such a resource and force for good. But right now I think it's kind of an afterthought add on to somebody responsibilities and could be a lot more than that.

54:11 **GN:** Yeah. Now anything I didn't ask you that you think?

54:16 **JS:** Yeah so I want back a little bit to the idea about the dedication that characterizes Marist spirit and I think that is the key. When you say how did this happen. I think it happened is because of faith in the ability of people to learn to do more than they thought they could do to but also to be helped to learn that. I was given assignments I was totally on unequipped to handle and I was helped to learn how to do them. And as a result I became a more valuable employee. The college made an investment in me and I became a better resource. Now I say that college but what I mean is some person like you, like Liz, like Bob Lewis taught me stuff so to me the key to the college is that we never had enough people we were always a lean operation. We never had access and so people always had to do things that were outside of their job description and outside of their comfort zone and then people help them to do it. And we

grew.

55:49 **GN:** Did you ever see my little presentation on the history and development of Marist

55:53 **JS:** No does it say something like that.

55:57 **GN:** Well it happens that was part of it is deals with bother Paul Ambrose who came here in one nine hundred forty six with degree in library science from Cathy University of Oregon and we were two year college at the time and he was told to develop a four year college. Between 1946 and 1950 he did that and he did that without endowment, without a faculty, without a secretary, typing with two fingers, no legal experience, but the other point is it's not like he didn't think he could do it. He was going to do it. That kind drive was Dennis in his own way has that same it can be it will be.

56:50 **JS:** Well let me tell you a little something I constantly quote to my own kids. One time I was in a meeting with brother Joe, Joseph Belanger and we were talking about some project that needed to happen and I remember thinking oh you know I can't do this and I think I thought I can't do this because it's just it's too much work, it would take too much for me to ramp up to be able to do that and he said work gets done because people do it. And he wasn't telling me look you know you're not above this. He wasn't scolding me. But I think he was saying you know you put your nose to the grindstone It looks huge but how do you eat an elephant you know once upon a time and so that work gets done because people do it. So that's kind of to me a part of the answer to how did this all happen. People, people did it people who it was not in their job description it was not in their academic preparation.

58:03 **GN:** Was part of a dream. That's the other part Jeff just said to Paul Ambrose What do you think about Marist now. Oh it's like Christmas Day He says every day I wake up it's a new surprise you know. Well Jan thank you very much we'll have to continue this at another time when more ideas come to you that we didn't get to today.