

Ted Prenting

Marist College
Poughkeepsie, NY
Transcribed by Nancy Decker
For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Transcript - Ted Prenting

Interviewee: Ted Prenting

Interviewer: Gus Nolan

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Marist College (Poughkeepsie, New York)

Summary: The following interview occurs with Theodore Prenting, former professor in the business department. The interview includes his life before Marist, developing the business proposal for Marist college, working in Chicago at IBM, coming back to Marist as professor and system analyst. He also speaks about Marist Faculty Governance, the changes that occurred at the college, being at the college during Foy and Dennis presidency. At the end of the interview, Ted Prenting speaks about the future of Marist.

Gus Nolan: Good morning Ted.

Ted Prenting: Good morning.

GN: We would like to have some general biographical information from you please.

What's your full name Ted?

TP: Theodore Otto Prenting.

GN: Were you named for any member of the family?

TP: Yes, I think you can tell that by the names; Theodore, for an uncle, and Otto, for my grandfather.

GN: Where were you born and when?

TP: Brooklyn, New York, May twenty-three, nineteen thirty-three.

GN: Do you have any siblings and what are their names?

TP: Yes, a sister, Marta Bastion, lives in Royal Oak, Michigan. Grew up here in Poughkeepsie, we'll be getting into that.

GN: Where did you grow up?

TP: In Poughkeepsie, we moved here when I was about three years old and therefore I went through the schools of Poughkeepsie and to the best of my knowledge, I think there were only two faculty, myself, and Bill Eidle that actually grew up in Poughkeepsie and went through Poughkeepsie schools. The only ones I ever met anyway.

GN: Interesting.

TP: We moved here and I grew up here in Poughkeepsie.

GN: What were your parent's names and what did your father do?

TP: My fathers name was Peter Prenting, mother, Mary Prenting. My father came here to become the plant manager of a corporation, United States Hoffman Machinery

Corporation, in nineteen thirty-six and that's what brought us here to Poughkeepsie. During the Second World War period, US Hoffman, produced forty millimeter projectiles for the Navy from one tiny plant here in Poughkeepsie, on Violet Avenue where Great Eastern Lithograph is today. In the course of three years, that plant, working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, produced sixteen million projectiles for the air craft shells. It was quite an operation. My mother, was at that time, a homemaker until after the war. They started their own business. My father changed careers, he was an engineer, but went into the dry cleaning business, because that's what the company made; they made commercial laundry dry cleaning machinery. He was very familiar with it and he figured O.K. I'll do this on the retail end and he went into the dry cleaning business. My sister and I and my mother worked in that along with about twenty, twenty-five employees.

GN: Step back a bit, talk about that plant, how big was that plant, do you know numerically, did a hundred people work there?

TP: At Hoffman, US Hoffman?

GN: Yes.

TP: Normally, in peace time, it was probably about a hundred, hundred fifty people; in war time, it was six hundred people that worked there. It was one of the six largest plants in Poughkeepsie.

GN: You mentioned Poughkeepsie schools; can you say something more about it? What is your recollection of grade schools and high schools and the teachers that you had?

TP: As will come out later, you can imagine; we got a very good education.

Poughkeepsie had at that time, excellent school system. I went to Krieger School which was considered one of the two top schools in the city. Really, the kids that went there, most of the parents were professional people so they gave a lot of attention to education. Our teachers were phenomenal. I remember in grade school, we had separate teachers for Math, for English; my English teacher was also a graduate from the University of Chicago; where I went later. In high school, Poughkeepsie High School, at that time, families paid tuition to the City of Poughkeepsie to have their children go to Poughkeepsie High School, because it had such an excellent reputation, not only in New York State but nation wide. People in Millbrook, where many wealthy families lived, would pay tuition to have their children go there and they taught Latin, Greek, and had separate programs for college tech, for college art's preparation; just a phenomenal school and the teachers were superb. When you got out of there, I would think it would be safe to say that if a student graduated from Poughkeepsie High at that time, they had at least the equivalent of a junior college education; compared to today.

GN: What would be the year that you graduated from Poughkeepsie High School?

TP: Nineteen fifty-one, I graduated from Poughkeepsie High.

GN: How does the transfer occur for you, going from this area to Chicago for graduate studies?

TP: I don't know, I guess I was a minority at the time; most of my class went on to college as you might expect from a school like Poughkeepsie. Even though I had a very good academic record at the school, much to the chagrin of my parents, I did not want to go to college right away, I just kind of had school, enough of it and I thought this is not the best thing for me to do; I'm not ready to go. So I decided to go in [my father had

started this dry cleaning business] I decided to go in business with him and I went to school down in Washington to study the technology really of the dry cleaning business, because it is very much chemically oriented. Not like today's band box operations and especially larger operations. I was with him in that business for about a year and a half; not thinking the Korean War was on and the draft was there; and I promptly was drafted around my nineteenth birthday into the army. Served my time in the army, in fact I extended for a year in order to get some decent activity other than just lugging a pup tent for two years. And got into the quartermaster core and was doing accounting work and logistics and so on. When I got out of the army, I went back into business with my father, but at that point I knew I should go to college. I started writing to some schools; I think I wrote to about thirty colleges. In the meantime, while I was in the army, I had started, you may recall La Salle Extension University, and it was similar to international correspondence schools. They had two year programs of study in business and then you could do it in engineering or law or anything. I did it in Business Management. I completed the two year program there while I was in the army, and took other courses while I was in the army as well. When I got out and applied to these colleges, I asked about thirty schools, can I get some credit? I was way ahead of my time, didn't realize it; that had not been developed yet; the idea of life experience credits. At any rate, I heard from I believe it was, six of the thirty schools. Three of them I think just said, no we have nothing for you, and you will not get any extra credit; one school gave me a God Bless You; [Laughter] another school said that they would give me some advance standing once I got out there. Then, I got a letter from the University of Chicago, and they said, under Robert Maynard Hutchins period, he was a believer and

demonstrate what you know and what you can do and we'll give you a degree. I took a battery; it turned out that what they had was a program where you took a battery of exams, three days of exams, about eight hours each day, in each of the five divisions of the college of the university. If you passed all of those exams, you would be permitted to go on for advanced study that is for a Masters Degree. In other words, they were satisfied that you had achieved the equivalent of a Baccalaureate Degree. If you failed or didn't succeed, didn't pass up to two exams, you could start in a graduate program, but you would have to make up those failed areas, which would probably take another year or two to do. Well, I was happy to find that out. You have to imagine what happened to me; around, I think I had finished my exams around November of nineteen fifty-eight.

Around the early part of December, I got a certificate from the chancellor's office that said I had been accepted which I wanted to do, in the MBA program; the University of Chicago, a master's degree. [Laughter] Of course I was flabbergasted. I went out there, I told my parents, I said, "I don't know, I may be back in a week." I drove out to Chicago. I went to register for classes, and I thought well, I have to register at the college, got there and they said, no, no, you go over to the graduate school of business. So I went to the graduate school of business, registered, started taking classes and discovered along the way; I think it was probably when I got that certificate, I think it said that I had passed all five exams; so that I had nothing to do and subsequently I did inquire about well; is this going to hurt me that I don't have a baccalaureate degree?

Well first when they looked at this, this was even rare for the University of Chicago; to have someone come in that hadn't done any; now, by the way, I had to prove that I had taken other course work besides the exams. You had to be over twenty-five years of age

to qualify in the program; I think the military service helped somewhat in that, although that wasn't a major factor. One day I decided I better inquire whether this Baccalaureate Degree is going to be a problem not having it. I wound up in the Chancellor's office again and he said, "What are you doing in the Graduate School of Business?" He said, "You don't belong there." I thought, uh oh, now I'm really in trouble. I thought this whole thing is going to blow apart. Well at any rate, he got on the telephone with the Dean at the Graduate School of Business and there was a very spirited conversation between the two of them, and the next thing I knew, the man said, "Everything is fine." [Laughter] There were grades over at the Graduate School of Business on me, so I was doing O.K. and he said "My only question for you is do you speak a foreign language?" I said, "I think I could pass an exam in German." He said, "Well, if you could, we could probably sit for an exam for a qualifying exam and get the Baccalaureate Degree", but he said, "Frankly, in order to satisfy some other things, you will probably take a year to do that, why do you want to do it? Then go on for a PHD?" I thought O.K. leave well enough alone and went on and finished my MBA.

GN: How long were you at the University of Chicago?

TP: I did, it was a two year program.

GN: It was a two year program.

TP: I finished it in eighteen months; I went through summers, because I had to pay everything my self. I had some money from the GI Bill; I worked as a research assistant with one of the professors and had some savings from when I was in the army.

GN: O.K., before we get to Marist, let's consider two or three other things; you might say, the better half. When did you marry Bernie and where were you married?

TP: Bernie is from Cincinnati, Ohio and I knew her through the family; and we married in nineteen, is this a test question? [Laughter]

GN: Yes it is and I'm going to tell her.

TP: Nineteen sixty-two, August, twenty-five. [Laughter] I always' thank God for that because it was a date I could remember, with Christmas on the twenty-fifth.

GN: What about your children now?

TP: Two children, a son Peter, lives here in Poughkeepsie and works at Price Chopper; and a daughter, Mary Nell, she's married and has two children of her own. She works as a stock broker with one of the companies here in Poughkeepsie.

GN: Tell us about your retirement, what's your principle interest and how do you occupy your time now, since you retired from Marist?

TP: Very fully. I continued the work that I started about twenty years before my retirement at Marist. I was asked if I was interested in getting into labor arbitration, mediation work. I said "Yes sounds interesting", the year I was teaching and the hands on experience seemed to be literally very fruitful and it didn't turn out to be so. My students in class noticed it, I think after my first case that I went out on; I was just that much enlivened with the whole process, but at any rate, it turned out to be a very interesting opportunity and activity to get into, post retirement, so that I would say that right now, on a part-time basis, probably half time, I am doing labor arbitration, mediation work for American Arbitration Association, Federal Mediation Conciliation Service. I'm a hearing officer for the Port Authority of New York, New Jersey, so it sometimes got me down to the World Trade Center, I'm lucky I wasn't there; that's where we held hearings, so that's kept me busy and mediation work as well for the State of New

York, particularly public employees.

GN: Let's come to Marist now; when did you first come to Marist, Thomas?

TP: My first contact with Marist was when I came back after I got my graduate degree at Chicago, I started working at IBM in Poughkeepsie, because one of the shortcomings I saw at the time of the Business Program in Chicago was there was nothing to speak of in the area of computers, and computers were the wave of the future. So I thought this would be a good opportunity to get with a computer company. I came back here to Poughkeepsie, not because it was Poughkeepsie but because that's where the offer was from to work for IBM. Almost as soon as I arrived, I thought I'd like to keep on teaching, because I felt it was a good way to keep your hand in, know what's current, keep yourself abreast of things; so I wrote a letter to the President of Marist College, didn't know who that was, but to the president's office and asked whether I could teach in the Business Program. I didn't get a response for; I think I sent the letter in August, I think it was in November, I got a telephone call; I didn't get it, my mother did. I was living at home at the time, and she just got the message from Linus Foy, the President, and he said, "Yes" when I finally talked to him, "We don't really have a Business Program [a major] but we'd like to have one, would you write a proposal for a Business Program at the College?" I said, "Sure, I'd be happy to, I asked him when do you want it?" He said, "As soon as you can give it to me, but not later than December." I said, "When do you want to start this program?" He said, "January." [Laughter] That proved to be much faster than what things later developed as I learned in the Faculty Committees, as things went. At any rate, I delivered the proposal and unbeknownst to me at the time, Linus had also asked a couple of other people to write proposal's for him, one

of whom was the person that developed the Business Program for the Air Force Academy in Colorado; at that time, the new Air Force Academy. Linus liked both proposals, but he particularly liked one that I had presented because it had a course in there called *Business and Public Policy*, so it really brought the business world together with the public sector. Later, that course today in the curriculum is called *Business and Society*, and even broadened further. It was in keeping with the liberal arts, kind of college tradition. That proposal was accepted, and then I started teaching in the Business Program, that January, January of nineteen sixty-one. For the next two and one half years, I taught a different management course and an economics course I believe it was and something else. A different course every single semester for six semesters until I left to go back to Chicago.

GN: Were you an adjunct at that time?

TP: I was an adjunct, but there was no business faculty, the only full time person, was Brother Cornelius Russell. He taught Accounting, and I think he was also at that time serving as comptroller at the college, I'm not certain that coincided at that time. The other accounting professor was an adjunct, was Sal Catalano, also at IBM, and then there was a lawyer that taught the Business Law Course. The faculty was, the one lawyer, the accountant and I was teaching all the Management Courses. Later, Tony Campilii, the current Vice President of Finance and Administration, Tony Campilii was in the college and in my classes at that time. He now refers to it, because I'm the only instructor he had in the entire Business Program other than Accounting, he refers to it as the apprentice school of management; rightfully so. [Laughter] That's what he experienced.

GN: You talked about going back to Chicago, what was that about? You went back to

the Chicago University?

TP: I had an offer I couldn't refuse. This was a time when no one left IBM, in fact if you did leave; it was known that you would not be allowed to return. I did not have that, they told me they would be happy to have me back any time; restore my pension and seniority, if I came back. I was working on a research project at the University of Chicago with a professor that subsequently went to Harvard to head up their School of Design. The organization I went with, at that time, was known as Armor Research Foundation; it was a well known contract research development organization. The chief competitors, people might know, would be Stanford Research Institute and Batelle Memorial Institute, in Ohio. Armor Research Foundation is a wholly owned affiliate of Illinois Institute of Technology. Strictly does, a completely separate component, totally dedicated to contract research development work for government and industry. They were interested in a research project that had been started by this professor that I was working on, at the University of Chicago, as a let's call it, a profit making venture, that they saw potential for it to interest companies. What it was all about was using the relatively new field of operations research, to look at mass production of products in a systematic way; as an operations research model. To simulate a system like building an automobile. I mean that would be a typical case. What goes into building a car, all the components, all the labor involvement, the machinery and so on. How they integrate that as a system and make it work more efficiently. We were working on that at Chicago, Armor Research Foundation wanted to pick it up as a project. When they were looking for a project manager for that, they called the professor at Chicago, found he was at Harvard and they asked him, "Do you know somebody, who can we get?" "Yes, Ted

Prenting the only problem is, he's working at IBM, so you're going to have to do a little work to convince him." At any rate, I got a call one day at my manager's office; while I'm with my manager at IBM, and this Professor from Harvard called me, Maury Kilbridge and he said, "Ted, they have something at Chicago that looks like it might be interesting for you." I talked a little with him, he described what it was, but I couldn't talk much because I'm right in the manager's office and as I said, nobody left IBM at that time. He said, "You not your usual appraise self, he said I take it your in the office of somebody", and I said, "You got it." [Laughter] At any rate, long story short, I finally took that offer. It was very good both money wise and primarily, what I was going to be doing, working with, at that time, would be about half a dozen companies or more.

Eventually, we went world wide with it, to Europe to Japan and developed a workman's companies. Our first client's company by the way, was IBM, and I was paid much better for doing the work for them there than I was at IBM. [Laughter]

GN: How long are you going to stay here now?

TP: Five years, we stayed there for five years, in Chicago.

GN: Did your family move out?

TP: Yes, we moved out. Our son Peter was on the way; my wife had just moved here after we got married in sixty-two and we moved out there in sixty-three. She moved here from Cincinnati, in August we were married to live here in November I presented her with the suggestion, what do you think about moving to Chicago? In January we were living in an apartment in Chicago. She had three drivers' licenses for a period of time.

GN: O.K., then Dr. Edward Cashin appears on the scene. Did he go to Chicago specifically to get you or was there an opportunity of searching for faculty; the question

really is, how did you get back here?

TP: We were at a point both at work, I saw the [as a manager out there] I saw the handwriting on the wall; that the Vietnam War was going to be winding down and our government contracts were kind of collapsing. That our business activity was not going to be where it was; that we were going to be having problems. It's just the phenomenon of the economy, the times and the nature of the work that we did. I started looking for work outside of the organization. Also, our son Peter was ready to go to school, and I knew that we had to get out of the city of Chicago which had a very bad school system at the time. It was a matter of either we make the move now, we move out of Chicago, take another job, or, if I stayed there; we've got to make a move anyway to get into probably to one of the suburbs that had a better school system. So I thought, O.K., let me see what the opportunities are in the job market first, play that out a little bit and see what happens. One of the thoughts was I like teaching; and I thought, well, let me see what I might do. I wrote a letter to, I believe it was, to Linus, and I inquired whether there might be any an opportunities teaching in the Business Program; and that was what brought Ed Cashin out? They were going to be looking for somebody, but exactly how that was going to be done and how it would be funded, etcetera, was something a little up in the air. But at any rate, Ed Cashin was, I believe on a trip; to the best of my knowledge, I believe Lou Zuccarello was with him, interviewing somebody else in Detroit at the same time. Ed came out to Chicago and we had a luncheon interview at Millers Pub. I remember; it was a kind of quiet place, downtown in the loop where I wouldn't be seen with anybody from IIT Research, which was then the name of Armor Research Foundation.

GN: It doesn't surprise me that Lou would be with him; we interviewed Lou Zuccarello

last week and he mentioned that Ed Cashin was the reason why he had come here. He had been his teacher in high school and a fondness for associating with him then he came here to teach and be part of his team for researching faculty.

TP: Oh, O.K. alright, that was the connection.

GN: So you do take the offer to come back to Marist, is that true?

TP: Yes.

GN: When you come back, what's the role and what are the hats that you wear now?

TP: What happened during the course of looking at the salary that could be paid; that was a problem. I had a family, two children and even though we did not have a rich life style, never-the-less they are costs when you have a family. The offer that Linus could make was very low, considerably below what I was making in Chicago, and I knew that I just couldn't swing it for that with a family. So I inquired, look, I know you have a computer installed; my job at IBM was as a systems analyst; have you got any applications on the year, for example student records and all that stuff; is anything on the computer? No. Well what about the possibility of my coming in and doing that in vacation periods? In other words, I would work a twelve-month year, rather than a faculty contract where they disappear in May for three months. What about letting me do that and the same thing at Christmas, and so on, during the holiday vacation periods and serve as the systems analyst for the college and get additional compensation that is guaranteed? So, it wasn't up to what I was getting in Chicago, but at least that brought it up to a level that it was going to be doable. So I came here I was appointed as a Assistant Professor of Business and Economics, and, Systems Analyst for the college. The Systems Analyst position, I retained for eight years after I got here, along with

what I was doing in the classroom.

GN: What inspired you to come back to Marist, because now you do have experience, and a little reputation and Marist is really an unknown college. Was there something unique about it that attracted you?

TP: That's hard to say; I'm not sure if part of it was, I guess it is a mixed bag of things; just a combination. I knew the college, I knew the people, and I liked them very much. I knew the setting of the college, I think I really enjoyed the time that I had here as a part-time faculty member and I thought I certainly would like the people that I would be working with on a full-time basis. I liked the area, Poughkeepsie, my wife knew it; I had family, my mother was still here, my father had died in the mean time but my mother was still alive here. I thought it would be a nice place to raise a family. Certainly as good as any that would be around; I had a lot of contacts here, so I thought if I was going into a program I could be useful, helpful to the school, because of the contacts I had in the community. I think that was the main thing; I don't think I even applied to any other schools. Now, in the back of my mind there may have been a concern, also the fact that I did not have a PHD. So I think that would have made it more difficult at other schools, certainly any universities that would make it very difficult; because I just had the MBA.

GN: When you came and you start to work in the creation of the Business Program of the MBA, was there a model that you're having in your mind to establish here, or was this be cut out of a new cloth? Did you see this as an opportunity for creating something unique?

TP: Well, the origin of the MBA was; I spoke to Ed Cashin about it during my interview already in Chicago and that came because of my experience at IBM. The MBA

was a relatively new degree at that time. It had only started about nineteen, the earliest ones, maybe about nineteen fifty-six or something like that, the mid fifties I'd say, when they started developing a little bit. The MBA was created to provide a management background for people in the engineering field. That was its start, and I noticed that at IBM in fact I was in about the first class of people at IBM that were hired MBA's; there were thirty-two of us that were hired at one shot and I think it was the first group at IBM.

I noticed when I was there, all the people in the technical areas eventually the way you moved up there was, you moved up in management; but then the engineers had no management background. I just saw that, here's Marist, positioned in a community with a huge IBM population; they had a Business Program, it just made a whole lot of sense, to mount an MBA program to service that need for a large engineering population. As far as the model for the program, there were really two models that were in existence at the time. One was very mathematically oriented and you might think I'd go that route, because it was operations research oriented in statistics. The other was very behaviorally oriented. I opted for the behavioral, because that is always my strong feeling; in fact when I went to the University of Chicago, in the MBA, I had a dual concentration in Production Management and Human Resource [what's today called] Human Resources. Because I had spent enough time in organizations and in companies, in manufacturing particular to know that you don't get anything done if you don't know how to work with people. And so I had a very strong inclination to a people oriented program; and part of it goes back perhaps to even what Linus had talked about in starting the original Business Program here. He said, "I want a management oriented program." So I think what he was after, despite the fact that he's a mathematician, going back around; he was also after the

human dimension of it. I might say that obviously, this also fits in much better with a liberal arts college and environment, and with a strength of the college that I knew existed in the Behavioral Sciences, so it was a natural match. So that was the model and then the actual, the program that I was using was that model, behaviorally oriented one was very much, I make no bones about it, something which has been in use. I'd say the two programs that were principles in that area, were Columbia and Chicago, and they were also by the way, not case oriented programs. They tended to have more theoretical underpinnings, primarily economics.

GN: Is this in step with the Psychology MBA? The psychology master's degree and the development of the MBA? Was Danny Kirk working on this?

TP: Yes, exact same time. We also saw that there could potentially be cross over possibilities, that never came about. I don't really know why, whether that wasn't pursued or whether it was this classic thing of faculties having different development backgrounds or so, I don't know. The interesting thing is [all the major] the well known management books, are written by psychologists that have very little business background actually. A person, a good example of that, is Ed O'Keefe at the college; that did a lot of work talking psychology and bringing it to business people. But that the cross over hasn't been really done very well. Business people aren't apparently attuned enough to some of the psychology to make that crossover, and we never did wind up having common courses. Early in the program, come to think of it, I think we did have a few courses you could take as electives. If you wanted to, you can take electives in the psychology program.

GN: What were some of the key difficulties that you might have had, I'm thinking in terms of those early years when finance was limited; were you able to get adequate

faculty, were you able to get adequate library resources, were there any problems, an obstacles is the word, pursuing these programs?

TP: There were problems. I wouldn't say they made the job impossible, they made it very difficult. The problem was one, that we had huge class sizes. We did not get adequate lines in faculty. As you might imagine, the Business Program is very popular. So when I was here the first, I don't know; eight, ten years or more, my class sizes were regularly forty-five to fifty in a class. I always envied faculty who could talk about knowing the names of their students. You can imagine teaching four courses and they were very likely four different courses. Every semester you had two hundred different people in class. It was impossible to get to know all these people and certainly to be able to follow them up a little bit in their careers was very, very difficult. We didn't have enough faculty advising, I think every faculty member at that time had something like sixty-five advisee's if not more. So, that was a problem and the origin of the problem to some extent it was financial for the college; there were limited resources. But there was another very big issue that we had to fight, and fortunately it was never acrimonious; but we knew that it existed; and that was the liberal arts verses business. That existed for certainly the first at least eight to ten year period. There was always the problem if you wanted to introduce something new, I still remember that when we expanded the original Core Business Program to include some concentrations. Faculty thought, uh oh, this is going to mean a dramatic increase in needs for business faculty, and of course there would be a need for some additional, but hardly of the magnitude that was being imagined.

GN: I can mention some names that would strike your memory I'm sure, in terms of

that concern that the college might go all business and use a lot of the liberal arts like Dr. Belanger and Dr. Somner and Dr..., but fortunately as you indicated, there was always that support of spirit that your programs passed by the faculty and were sent on to the Board of Trustees. So you did have that kind of support.

TP: Yes definitely and really a good rapport with faculty. There was never, even to say it was never acrimonious is almost blowing it up to high, it was always a good rapport and I think a major reason was that there was a very, very strong sentiment, spirit, in the business faculty for the liberal arts tradition and we did not want to have this become a business college. No question about it, we did not have that in mind. I think perhaps maybe other people didn't want to believe that, but I think that there were others that I think recognized that and saw that. This went on to the point that when the college in the seventies, every other department, to the best of my knowledge, did away with a Core; the Business Program is the only major that kept the core for the entire time, so that when it was reinstated in the whole college later, there was no change for business, we always had one we never had to worry about that.

GN: Entirely different field, how about the governance? You played a part in the organization of the Marist Faculty Governance. Was this a unique structure that you were creating or again, was it being modeled after some other university that you knew of?

TP: Well, the model for governance was really in place when I got here; and it was a, I'd say a fairly active faculty model of governance. The faculty was involved in it, very active Academic Affairs Committee, Faculty Affairs Committee, and other sabbaticals, and what have you; the only thing that I think a number of people recognized and that

was during the period when the college was having difficulties, was that we did not have what people would feel really was a sufficiently strong faculty leader, in terms of the chairperson of faculty. At the time it was Tom Casey, but the arrangement was that there was a faculty, the chairperson of the faculty was rather a figure head position, it was a visibility thing, it was the persona of the faculty, but it really didn't have any power because there was nothing underneath it. The power of the faculty lay in the two committees; the Faculty Affairs Committee for anything academic, pardon me, Faculty Affairs for anything regarding faculty, the Academic Affairs Committee, regarding anything concerning academic and curriculum. These two committees could never get together. I can recall, many, many instances and I'm sure you can recall them, where a program would want to go in, and first you would have a war, literally, over which committee was going to handle that, and then heaven forbid that you had to get together to try and resolve it. The problem for the chair of the faculty was the chair didn't have any power base. One of the things that was done in the new model that we introduced, and I think they just built on, looking at the short coming we had here; I don't think we, there were faculty, come to think of it, that did look outside to other models and they came up and they did notice a Faculty Executive Committee, and that's what we came up with. We said, O.K., why don't we have a Faculty Executive Committee, made up of the heads of the chairs of the major faculty committees, and the chair of the Faculty Executive Committee, would be the chair of the faculty, so that that person, actually has a group to which they have a rapport, and in addition that really have a representation of faculty that they are clearly representing the faculty. That was the change that was made. I think it was really a modification of the local situation, personally.

GN: Other changes on the college campus had to do with the arrival of co-eds. Did that impacts your department?

TP: Not in any way, I don't think different from the college as a whole. We probably did not get as, we did not grow as quickly in the number of women in the classes, because at that time, women were still not going into the business field as extensively; that grew later. Certainly in the last half of my career here, women predominated; I mean they were the majority in classes, and excellent students. I recall on campus, campus wide, one of the things that was hoped for, was that the appearance of our students would be better if there were women on campus. That turned out, not to be true. That did not happen. [Laughter]

GN: They didn't raise the standards? [Laughter]

TP: They didn't raise the standards, no I think they came down to whatever the prevailing moment was in high school, carried over to college, so that didn't change.

GN: O.K., let's now talk about the administration. You experienced two distinct, I think, different administrators as president; since Linus Foy was president when you came and then you were here also for the arrival of Dr. Dennis Murray. Could you briefly comment on each of those president's, in terms of their leadership and their impact on the college as you recall them now?

TP: The background, first of all, I have to go back to the fact when I first came here, that was a very interesting transitional period. When I arrived in September of nineteen sixty-eight, I thought of it as I was driving here today; Ed Cashin had, I believe, left the college, or was on a sabbatical. Linus Foy was in Rome and would subsequently leave the Brothers. And so there was a period, I arrived here and all the things I was supposed

to be doing, I was expecting that some people might, either Ed Cashin or Linus, would kind of clue in people as to what I'm supposed to be doing. They weren't even here, so I sort of had to gingerly find my way around, especially doing the systems analyst work, where I was working with all the administrative offices on the campus; and learning my way in academia with faculty. That was a really big transition, plus then over the time, that was the period when many of the brothers left the brothers and so on, and I think all of that had some bearing on Linus' operation as a president, and just in general what was going on, on the campus. The college, just before I arrived; well, a few years earlier, had completed the dormitories, so the resident population was here; but it was still heavily a commuter campus with, I forget what the break down was, it was perhaps half and half or resident commuter, maybe more commuter, so that was a very different view of the campus from today. The campus was not well kept, and granted there was a money problem. When I recall that huge parking lot we had before Donnelly Hall, I mean that defined the Marist campus, the parking lot. [Laughter] There was really not attractive buildings and so on. So I think really what it was, is probably largely because of financial concerns, that there was a difficulty moving out of this period of your growing, your growing programs, but you really don't have the where with all to do it right, to put it that way. Also, I think there may have been, I don't know, on the board at the time, perhaps maybe people didn't want to take the risks that a later board was willing to do when Dennis Murray came in. I think there's a great concern with money and a very conservative board. I know some of the people on the board, I don't know that I should mention names, but I know that, I can imagine, I didn't know that for a fact, but I can imagine that it could have been very difficult for Linus to do some of the things that

he might have wanted to do, but couldn't, simply because of a board that was very concerned about keeping Marist as a going entity, and rightfully so. I can't dispute that, and during the time, we had some economic ups and downs as well. The economy as a whole, impacted on the college. With Linus, the one thing that I think that everyone appreciated in Linus, he was very open, straight forward, you know where he stood. I know as chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee at the time, later as chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, we all knew we had sensitive problems about faculty, including sometimes where there were going to be freezes on salary for faculty during this time; and that made for rough going. But through it, I can say that Linus always understood, I can still remember he would say, "I understand what you're saying, it's a role you have to play", [Laughter] we respected one another, so the relationship was always excellent and that was true I think with all faculty.

GN: Just to come back to one point that you had made, I don't know if you recall, on the physical arrangements of the college campus; the opening line in the Middle States Report in their first visit is "The best time to approach Marist is at night, when Donnelly is lit up, you don't see the parking lot and you don't see the area around. [Laughter]

TP: Yes, right. There was one academic building Donnelly Hall, the offices for faculty were converted, student dorm rooms, including, I still remember in some of the faculty offices, the beds were still in the rooms and the faculty were using the desks that the students formerly used.

GN: But the beds were Murphy Beds; they were up against the wall.

TP: They were Murphy Beds, correct. My office, my first office was in the sixth floor of Champagnat and the space, the gap between the glass and the frame was a quarter of

an inch, so that in the winter time I was in a corner room, the temperature would never go over fifty degrees. Because of my work as a systems analyst, I had to stay here, I had to do work here. I would work in my overcoat and often would go home when it was that cold, it really was just impossible to work. Students I remember with the heaters in the classrooms, they were those steam driven heaters, the noise, the knocking, the rattling, I mean it was not a good experience.

GN: It was a start.

TP: It was a start.

GN: O.K., could you change the focus a little now, let's talk about after Linus, Dennis Murray comes aboard and you worked with him for a number of years. What's you take on this?

TP: Dennis came in very clearly; I will put it in business terms; to be a marketing president, and he did it in spades and has done it in spades, there's no question about it. Hats off to him; I think that was phenomenal, what he has accomplished and it became obvious very clearly. One thing I think he is not given credit for, something that he saw; I guess we were too close to it, one of the earliest things he did, was to establish this close relationship with IBM. I know how some of us railed against it at the time because we thought we were going to be sell our souls to IBM, he was absolutely right. Here was a big computer company right in our backyard, we ought to capitalize on that and that ought to be a focal point and a help in the growth of the college and that turned out to be a very, very, major factor. He had an eye for what had to be done on the campus and I think it was very single minded about how that was going to be done and the steps to be taken. I had a conversation with somebody just the other day and they talked about how

long it took to get the library here. I understand that; I do remember, every single faculty meeting; what do we need, from almost the time when Dennis came here, we need a new library. We knew that the thing was desperately out-dated; I still remember the students, as a matter of fact, that's how I heard about it last night. A student that had graduated from here said that he left the college because of the library, it was just, and it was terrible. Why didn't we have it? Well, in order to pay for that we needed to first build revenue producing buildings, that's the dormitories and things of this nature. The library is not a revenue producing. Now, we learned that if you do it right, it can get students in I mean it's the big selling point today with students I'm sure and I think faculty appreciated that too; and I'm sure Dennis did, but I think it was clearly market driven, marketing driven his plans for the college, and I think he succeeded. Not only that he did it, but that it's first class; I mean that's obvious. The difficulty on the other side of the coin, I still remember, and there were a lot of concerns, especially in the earlier years with him, and then I was chair of the faculty and there were uncomfortable periods with it, was not so much there were misunderstandings sometimes where we got in discussions about faculty salaries and things of that nature, but I think a major one was, that a faculty that felt he was not giving enough attention to the academic area that was the bottom line. I mean, scrap everything, strip everything away, I think faculty felt the old line, how often have you heard it; this is a bricks and mortar president. The buildings got there but the academic program was being slighted and to the extent of students of poorer quality as well, I mean there was no question about that in the earlier years. I think that, that has changed over time, but that was clearly a problem and the faculty had problems with that, and that was true and as there representative I got flack from that too. [Laughter]

GN: What do you see now as the future of Marist, do you think that technology will continue to be a dominant force here and how will it affect the students that come? Will they be of a mind to follow that line or will we revert somewhat more to liberal arts, or is there a conflict on the horizon?

TP: I'm going to draw on a variety of backgrounds, including my computer background, with a preface and say that I think the emphasis of the use of, put it that way, particularly the use of the computer in technology and education would be increased, no question about it. But I think that it's extremely important, and I hope it comes out that way in education generally and at Marist, that technology will not be a driving force, that it will be viewed as a tool to be used in the pursuit of knowledge. People still have to think, people have to do the analysis that goes in to what drives the computer or what drives any technology. We need to give that away to other people; anybody ultimately can build a box, and anybody can use the box. You have to have brains to build the box and what goes in there, and that's what's needed in the colleges. That's frightening to me, even in the grade schools and high schools; that I think there is an over emphasis on using a computer, just in order to key in information. There is beginning to be, not beginning, it's probably there; there is some misuse of the computer, that it is just an interesting device for storing things, accumulating things, but not really using it for good purposes. You have to have some model that you are using as to what you are going to use it for. No question, it will continue to grow, I am not downplaying the least if anything, it will grow in use, but I think that it is extremely important that the balance be kept and that we understand that we still need to train people in thinking. It's awfully scary, with the boxes themselves, all this stuff is, now my manufacturing

background; we're producing all this stuff off shore. There is a knowledge that goes with being able to produce this stuff; if we can't produce it ourselves, we want to worry about security problems; that's a real one. We can't build this stuff anymore. Ask any American company to build the stuff that you and I use at home, they couldn't do it.

They wouldn't have the production where with all to do it. We've lost that. These are crucial questions. And why, because we are in awe, awed by the technology, but we really are not willing to give the time to what goes into it.

GN: Looking back, what would you pinpoint as some of your own personal accomplishments? What do you take greatest satisfaction in, in your time here at Marist?

TP: I would say, several; one was, I certainly education wise, in the Business Program at the college. You can't have worked on something like that, have it be your baby in effect, and see it grow and not have a great interest in it and satisfaction from seeing where it's come to; and since this is in-house, it is my understanding from the Management Program that they have achieved AACSB accreditation, they do expect to get it, which would be a real feat for the college. AACSB is the American Assembly Collegiate Schools of Business Accreditation; it's like sterling on silver and it probably is about four times as valuable as having Middle States Accreditation. There's a lot of things that go with it that are going to be very, very useful, helpful to business students. The college has been working on it for five years to get this, which is normal, it's not uncommon, and I understand from the visitation team that they just had, they expect that they will give a positive portal. That is, that certainly is a key one; just you hope that you've had some impact on students, helped them and their lives. One of the short comings as I said, we had so many students, that we did not have the, I envy as I say, the

faculty that today, know their students and know what happened to them; for us it was very difficult. I had some of that with the students that were in the MBA program, because I was the sole advisor for MBA students, so I see them and they see me, and they know me and they were very friendly, but I unfortunately I don't really have an opportunity really to interact or follow what they're doing. On the other side, I would say that I feel some good, despite some of the heat that I had to take in what I was able, I think to accomplish for faculty. There were many things that are unknown as well as known, of things that we were able to do for the faculty, in terms of their, to better their lives; benefits and things of that nature, which are no small thing, and this affected everybody in the college. Including administrators, because administrators got basically what faculty got and staff as well, so I think that was a factor. The other thing would be, certainly the association with people, I'm not putting these in any priority, I think a lot of great people that I've worked with; and then another one is the, is the fact that I got into this other field that I enjoy very much, of labor arbitration mediation work and so on, otherwise I wouldn't have done, which turned out to be kind of a nice thing as you get into retirement period.

GN: Right, there's a little footnote; you may or may not know it, people don't like change and you brought some change, like to the library, and at the beginning it was not well received. Where would the library be today if we didn't have some of your input into changing the methodology of taking books out for one thing?

TP: Yes, yes

GN: And I think that runs across the campus in many offices where your direction and advice has been instrumental.

TP: The whole student records area of registration, so on I... when I look at the extension sites, I was the one that developed the extension sites both in Fishkill and in Goshen; kind of a prime mover behind those. We started out with the MBA program, now at John Jay High School in the Wappingers School District, and I saw that this is not really the greatest location for this, so we first moved them into a shopping center and we were one of the first to have classes in a shopping center. You know, kind of looking ahead.

GN: Well thank you very much Ted, maybe we will have another occasion to meet and talk about some other areas that have yet to be probed.

TP: O.K.

GN: Thank you very much, appreciate it.

TP: Thank you Gus.