

Barbara Carpenter

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Kyra Walker

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Barbara Carpenter

Transcript – Barbara Carpenter

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Summary:

Barbara Carpenter speaks about her background and reflects on her time at Marist College, including establishing the Learning Center and the various programs that it ran.

Gus Nolan (00:00):

Today is October 23rd, 2014. It's 1:30 in the afternoon down in the Marist College library. We have a chance to interview Barbara Carpenter, who is a retiree from the academic phase of Marist. She served as assistant dean of students and especially in the learning center for a good number of years. Good afternoon Barbara.

Barbara Carpenter (00:32):

Good Afternoon Gus.

GN (00:35):

Barbara, could you give us a little thumbnail sketch of your own biography? Where were you born, brought up, early education, like that? Just off the top.

BC (00:45):

Sure. I was born in a small town in Pennsylvania. Hazleton, Pennsylvania. I moved to Philadelphia when I was a child, and spent my childhood and early adulthood in Philadelphia. That's where I went to college, Chestnut Hill College. It was an all woman's--now it was an all-women's college, it no longer is. I graduated with an AB degree in French, and upon graduation I got a job teaching at a high school in the area of Plymouth--White Marsh High School. I taught French for three years. At that time the government was giving scholarships to language teachers to study further in the language, and there were two phases to it. The first phase was an institute in the United States and I went to University of Pittsburgh and got some graduate credits there. And then the second phase--if you were accepted--was in the target country. So I went to France, and that's where I met my husband. He was part of the group, and these were language teachers--French teachers--from all over the country.

GN (01:59):

He was also a major in French?

BC (02:01):

He was a French teacher too, much better than I ever was. So that's where we became acquainted. And when I returned to the States, we continued our communication, and eventually came engaged and got married. He was teaching in Illinois. So after I got married, I moved with him to Illinois and became pregnant pretty quickly. So I never got a job there.

GN (02:35):

Oh, you never teach in Illinois?

BC (02:36):

I never taught there, no. He taught, and then we decided to come back east because his family was from the Poughkeepsie area and my family of course was in Pennsylvania. So we decided to come east, and-

GN (02:50):

About what year was this?

BC (02:52):

That would have been '70. '68/'70. And I had one son, then we moved to Poughkeepsie and I had two other boys. So-

GN (03:09):

Before moving on and then growing up, talk a little bit about activities. Do you...in school, did you participate in drama, choir, any kind of athletics? Did you work after school or in the summers?

BC (03:24):

Oh yeah, of course. I had to work. Actually it was an uncle who provided the financial assistance for me to go to college. And of course at that time tuition wasn't...it's a fraction of what it is today. And you know, with his help and with student loans, I was able to graduate. From what I can remember, I guess I was involved in...in college, in activities that concerned drama from what I can remember. I mean, it was a long time ago. But that wasn't a primary thing. And the French major was--I guess this happens to other people too--it was kind of a mistake. I did well in French and I thought, 'well that's what I'll major in.' But I was never really comfortable in it. And it's kind of ironic since I met my husband, he was a French teacher.

GN (04:24):

Are you fluent in French or were you?

BC (04:25):

No, I don't think I ever was. No, I was able to teach it because you taught rules and grammar and things like that, but I was never comfortable in it. So, yeah.

GN (04:38):

Any hobbies related to it? Did you collect any records, French photos or literature or anything like that?

BC (04:46):

No.

GN (04:46):

So, do you have any brothers or sisters while you...growing up?

BC (04:54):

Yeah, I have a...I had a brother. I had a brother who was three years younger than I was and he died in 2010 of ALS, which was extremely sad.

GN (05:06):

Alright, let's move on. When did you first hear of Marist and how did that go? What's the genesis of that?

BC (05:13):

It's strange because I was teaching in Boces. I was teaching adult basic education in the evening at Boces on Salt Point Turnpike, and a friend of mine who was also teaching, said she saw a notice for a position

opening at Marist, and that was a reading specialist. And at that time I was taking graduate courses at New Paltz to get a masters in reading. So I applied and Dr. Eleanor Montaro--Eleanor Conklin--I don't know if you remember her. She was the director of the Learning Center at that time. And I was...my position was the reading specialist and I don't know if you can remember it. It was in the lower-level of the library, and you walked down a ramp? My office was right there and it looked like I was selling tickets. It was a window and with a little slit in it. So it certainly could have passed for that.

GN (06:19):

They were never...how formal was the interview to get the position? Were there several people outside of Eleanor?

BC (06:27):

It was just Eleanor, and this was part-time. It was a part-time position.

GN (06:30):

It was a part-time position.

BC (06:32):

But the one thing I do remember is when I started in 1980, I've been there a couple of days, maybe a week and president Murray wanted to meet with me in his office; and I just thought that was unbelievable. I mean, he asked all about me where I went to school and welcomed me to the college, and I just thought that was just an extraordinary thing for the president to be wanting to see a part-time person.

GN (07:01):

Right. How long was he here?

BC (07:04):

He must have been here--I was trying to think about that--two or three years, he had just started. So I think he had a vision of Marist that evolved into what it is today.

GN (07:14):

Well what were the responsibilities...what were you were applying to do in taking this position?

BC (07:24):

At that time the student population was very different from what it is now. I worked with a lot of athletes who needed help with reading and writing and there were some international students too that I helped with their English and that went on for several years. I did everything on a kind of an individual basis. Then Dr. Montaro moved to the English department, so there was an opening. And I'm just trying to think of this person's name and I can't remember what it was, she worked in the academic vice president's office and then she became the director of the Learning Center and she just stayed a couple of months I think. You probably would met-

GN (08:21):

Was it a full time position?

BC (08:23):

When I applied for directorship, it became a full-time position. And then the program started to, the Learning Center started to kind of evolve into kind of the freshmen program. That was our focus. And that's one...I'm sure you've heard of the validation students, that was way back then. And those were students who according to their grades in high school and their placement tests-

GN (08:50):

Were questionable? [Laughter]

BC (08:51):

Questionable academically. And we developed a college reading program and an introduction to math class and writing--introduction to writing. So we worked with those students quite a bit.

GN (09:07):

Yeah. I don't even remember being a participant in evaluating the little essays that had to write. Okay. We would sit with four in a group and we would judge it. One, two, three, four, one being the highest of all the lowest. Right. And it was amazing.

BC (09:22):

How close you all came.

GN (09:25):

One or two times, it was the exception. There was the four different numbers. It was amazing. Why would you guess, and I say 'well, he had a really good idea, he just doesn't express it well.' So, it was a...but most of the time, yeah, within a number of two, so that kind of moved the pile along about these students and this is what they have to do. There was the almost a remedial English that they had to take.

BC (09:54):

Yes, absolutely.

GN (09:56):

Do you know...is that commonplace? Do many colleges have what we would call here is the Learning Center?

BC (10:04):

Oh yeah. As time went on and more programs developed out of the Learning Center, I would go to conferences and then big universities would have the same thing. So I mean, this is...in a way, I think we were kind of ahead of ourselves as far as small colleges are concerned. I think probably big universities had big athletic programs and that's where they needed the remedial work. And I wouldn't say our work was remedial. I think it was more developmental than remedial. I don't think we would accept students who needed remedial work, they just needed more experience and more instruction. But no, I think it was, it's very common and more so today because there were all kinds of programs for-

GN (10:56):

Do you know if Marist still has it?

BC (10:58):

What?

GN (10:58):

Uh, the Learning Center?

BC (11:00):

Oh, sure. It's right upstairs.

GN (11:03):

I should know that, but I'm just....in terms of, yes. The last point is, I mean you hear about the qualifications of...I don't think I could get into Marist now. I mean, to listen to what they're saying. I certainly couldn't teach here, but I certainly, could I...in terms of what was required in those days--well I did manage to get through and get degrees. But so far as...another little point I think it is that we needed students. And so we were reaching out to offer a help for people who would be able to come. So that had to pay a fine.

BC (11:47):

We still dealt with the athletes and I have to--I think for the record--talk about one of our most famous students, and that was Rick Smith. Rick could speak English very well. He did well in his classes and he took regular classes. He didn't take any-

GN (12:08):

Yeah, I had his as a student.

GN (12:08):

But his writing needed work.

GN (12:10):

Well he was a foreign student, so English was not his language.

BC (12:14):

It was not his first language, but he wasn't passing the writing proficiency. So the athletic department asked me to work with him and, we worked very carefully for probably a semester and he did pass it when he took it again. So that's my claim to fame.

GN (12:33):

He's my claim to fame too, because when they asked me about 'how did your students make out?' Oh, I say the average make a hundred thousand a year.' I took his salary, 3 million or something, all the votes go up when you average it. So that would be it. Comment on almost the difficulty that you had in terms of space, equipment, help to getting the program moving. Because as you indicated, the office was limited and the facilities were minor.

BC (13:07):

Yeah. When we were located in the library, that was really the very, very beginning of the academic programs that the learning center developed. The classes that we taught were in regular classrooms. And of course we had a big tutoring program, and right outside of my little office--I moved into another office when I became a director--but there was a big, big room. I don't know if you can remember, you could go in through the back of Fontaine. There was a big room there. And that's where a lot of the tutoring, the one-on-one tutoring...and that was a student supportive program. We got tutors to tutor students. So, and that continues today. It's a very strong program here at Marist.

GN (14:00):

Wasn't it volunteer program at the beginning though?

BC (14:03):

A volunteer program?

GN (14:05):

I mean, were the professors paid for their activities?

BC (14:09):

No, these were students helping students.

GN (14:12):

Students helping students, yeah.

BC (14:14):

Yeah. And now...my memory is a little fuzzy here. I can't remember how that was financed. Whether...I think what happened was those student tutors were on the payroll. They got student, whatever-

GN (14:37):

Student aid or some kind of-

BC (14:37):

And then now that's changed where the students who are being tutored actually pay out of their pocket, the tutee to the tutor. So that...and there is no problem with that. I mean that went on when I was here and it continues today. But as far as the physical facilities, we soon moved into Donnelley and had bigger offices. There was me, there was Maryann Toscano, she was the math person and the tutor person. She was the one who developed the tutoring program. And then Vicky Sarkisian was the writing, reading/writing person. And they were in charge of the courses and the tutoring and it...we had a writing center too. So there was tutoring and writing too.

GN (15:27):

Yeah. You kind of hinted at another important point and maybe...I would say from where I sat, that you've had such an important part in the survival of so many of those students. And without the help that was being offered...and it was not an office that we've highly praised, it was kind of kept in the

shadows as it were. Do you remember some of...you mentioned Rick Smith, there must have been some unsuccessful stories too. Just one [laughter].

BC (16:06):

Wow. You know, I really can't think. I mean I got to know him very well because I met with him one-on-one for so long. The rest of the students, as far as my relationship with them, was they were in my class so I didn't really get to know them any more than that. Unsuccessful...now and then you would just have--as happens today I'm sure--you would just have students who would not measure up. They didn't have the motivation and some of them just didn't have the background.

GN (16:43):

On the other side, maybe we could talk about that. Do you think that it is just through high school or grade school, they just didn't pay attention to wanting to learn. There was no drive for it and they were just negligent. And later on when they saw that they had to learn how to ride, they could do the introduction, the body and the conclusion, that was part of where they were...I mean, you were the helping aid for them to get to that degree. Give me a number--about how many students were involved in a given year? Would there be two classes of 30? The class wouldn't be that big?

BC (17:25):

The validation students...I really don't want to overestimate, I would say like 50 maybe. And they were of varying degrees of ability, but some were put into a reading course. Some were put into a writing course and a reading course. Some were only put into the math course.

GN (17:48):

Did you have the Jim Dalys putting pressure on you to accept students or anybody?

BC (17:54):

Whatever they gave us, we took.

GN (17:56):

You took, okay.

BC (17:56):

And we were the office that took care of the placement testing too.

GN (18:01):

Yeah. Then who accepts them? I guess it's the admissions office that actually accepts them, and they will do it on their high school and on the recommendations?

BC (18:10):

Whatever criteria. Yeah.

GN (18:12):

Students were willing to learn or to move on. You stayed then in that position for the next 10 years?
When would you say you were a director?

BC (18:28):

I was director. I should have thought of this beforehand. I remained director for my entire career, but in addition to that, Marc Vanderhayden gave me the title of assistant dean for student academic affairs. And in that capacity I supervised the activities of the Learning Center, Career Services, H.E.O.P and Academic Advising. So-

GN (18:59):

Were you here all summer then too?

BC (19:01):

Yeah, that was it.

GN (19:03):

About 11 months?

BC (19:06):

12. Now I guess four-

GN (19:08):

You got three weeks off?

BC (19:09):

Right.

GN (19:10):

Yeah. We are very kind, yeah.

BC (19:12):

I know. [Laughter]

GN (19:14):

You put some Christmas holidays and things up that we did?

BC (19:17):

That's right. No. Marist was a wonderful place to work.

GN (19:22):

Say that again because there are a lot of people that say 'ehhh.'

BC (19:25):

Really?

GN (19:26):

Well, no. I like it. I'm dedicated. I mean, I'm all about it but there are people who lived here who lived here for 30 or 40 years and they talk about it. We used to be the kind of survival the first years, are we going to make it? And then there was the kind of confrontation with the president, he wanted this and we wanted that. And you know, salary was not a big increase, but the grounds were and so putting money into the estate rather than into that. So there was some conflict along the way. And then they moved on from there and they say...in later years it was matter of what you do today is kind of a stepping stone. Many would come here, it's hard to get a position here but once here you're set to go somewhere else. So that coming from Marist becomes one of those steps on a ladder going up. So you have three different modes in which the college has gone through and so on. And let's talk about this, the development of the college. Certainly you've seen some big changes.

BC (20:40):

Absolutely.

GN (20:41):

Yeah. What strikes you now as a first...when you first came here, its reputation was not well established I would say. And I guess my question: well why did you stay? And you kind of just answered it, it was a good place to work.

BC (21:03):

Yeah. And you know, we were doing good things. As you mentioned, probably a lot of faculty didn't realize that or didn't appreciate it, but we knew. I mean, we could tell by the students' reaction that good things were happening. We were helping students. I think it's important. If you don't want me to talk about this until later, let me know. But I think it's important to talk about the new programs that were developed under my directorship that are still in existence today and are as popular. And even according...I've talked to the new director-

GN (21:44):

I do want to hear about them.

BC (21:45):

One is the focus program. The focus program was...I guess the academic vice president, and I can't remember, I guess it was Mark at that time wanted the learning center, or me to focus on undeclared students--students who did not know their major when they first came. And I think that's probably three quarters of the students.

GN (22:09):

Their first year they kind of stay loose, keep from making a commitment.

BC (22:11):

These are undeclared. They just really didn't know. So the focus program was developed, and this was a course--a three credit course--where we combined a course that was developed by Ed O'Keefe called

self-management theory and application, and information on majors and a lot of academic advising; that teachers who taught the course were the academic advisors to students in the course. And there was a lot of one-on-one, very personalized support given to the students.

GN (22:50):

Were there multiple teachers for some of those courses? In other words they shared the curriculum as well? You would do this and I would do that?

BC (22:58):

Oh, you mean for one class?

GN (22:59):

Yeah.

BC (22:59):

No, usually one teacher. But we went beyond the learning center staff. We got teachers from other areas and most of the teachers were from those offices that I was in charge of because they had to learn the self-management model, which is like a psychological model to get the students a little bit more foundation. And I don't know what...managing themselves, deciding what the important things were. And it was...it's still going and apparently it's bigger than ever, and it's a voluntary thing. When the students come to orientation, they're given a presentation and then they sign up for it if they want it. And I don't know how many sections they have now, but there are a lot of them.

GN (23:55):

Who would be the teachers for that? Are they in the staff of the learning center?

BC (24:00):

The learning center director teaches and I think one of her, one of her staff teaches. And then there are teachers who have been teaching that course for a quite a while. They have to know the college real well. I mean the core is very different from when I was here. They have to know the core. They have to know the requirements for completing the core requirements. They got teachers from all different areas.

GN (24:32):

Yeah. I'm just trying to think...was Vanderheyden the academic vice president or Molloy or-

BC (24:40):

Vanderheyden.

GN (24:40):

He was when you came. Okay. And was he-

BC (24:47):

No, not when I came. Not when I came. It must have been Molloy when I came, but I didn't have much to do with him at that point because I was part-time and you know. So when Dr. Vanderheyden came, I got to know him a little bit more.

GN (25:00):

Okay. And now did you work with Ed O'Keefe as well in terms of this...there's another woman that worked with him-

New Speaker (25:08):

Donna Berger.

GN (25:08):

Donna Berger, right. They wrote a book on time management or self-management in terms of this.

BC (25:16):

Yeah. Well he brought that to us, and he thought that we could incorporate what we were doing into his model. And it worked out beautifully. He taught classes for years.

GN (25:32):

That's the one area of development, I would say there's a couple of areas. One of them of course would be the presidents. I guess Dennis Murray was president when you came. Before him was Foy, and Murray is still here. And so the leadership in terms of that, is evident. But besides that, he couldn't do it by himself. And then there are these other factors, Marist happens to be located 75 miles north of New York City. So there's a population, and the Marist Brothers have eight or ten schools. That could be...so the Marist tradition might be one thing. Its location on the Hudson is another I think, as part of the thing here. The faculty itself...there's a certain spirit. We keep saying that Marist kids seem to draw Marist kids. They kind of come up the same cut, you know. Would you comment on any of those that strikes you were pertinent? In other words, students affecting students? Is it hearsay? What would you say would be one of those?

BC (26:45):

Well, I think one of the comments that the staff always made was Marist students are just so polite and year after year after year, we would see their quality. Just the other day when we had that meeting for the insurance, the health insurance. I couldn't find the elevator so I climbed up two flights of stairs and as I was on the second level, a student opened the door. He was coming down and he stood there and waited for me until I got to the door. And you know, it just kind of gave me chills. I thought that's a Marist student, that's so much like a Marist student. And I think naturally the upperclassmen are going to have an influence on the others. I think over the years, the character of the Marist student really hasn't changed. It's always been very, very solid and very good. Probably because of the families they come from, but their academic qualifications are much higher now.

GN (27:53):

I talked to the chaplain about a week ago for a little more than...I was asking him the question, the difference between the Marist students now and then. And he says, 'well, one of the big things would be the financial.' In those days when he first came, one may have had a car and it had been hit by the train

a few times so I managed to get...now he says they all have cars, and cars that he can't afford. So that is a kind of a...but despite that, it remains kind of one spirit that pervades the place in terms of, as you indicated, you know...still holding the door for somebody to come through and to believe that. Then I think the other unique change would be the buildings that have gone up.

BC (28:44):

Oh, absolutely. I think I had the nicest office on campus. I was up in the third floor of the new library--of this library. And I don't...you probably were never in my office. The ceiling was what, maybe 20 feet. It was an end office. I had two windows and it was just glorious.

GN (29:07):

Oh, the library that was here before this one?

BC (29:09):

No, this one.

GN (29:10):

Oh, this one?

BC (29:11):

Yeah, the Learning Center is right up there.

GN (29:13):

Oh, okay. Now I haven't been there since, but as you speak, I have a similar story. I had one of the nicest offices looking out on the Hudson when I was a professor. Then I get promoted to be the chairman and we've put up Lowell Thomas, and then I had a view of a Route 9 with ambulances and trucks and everything you'd ever want to see passing by. So sometimes improvement are not as advantageous as you might think they are.

BC (29:51):

I think it's important that we talk about Marist's dedication to the community too. And that I can talk about through the two programs that I was responsible for. Two community programs: the School College program and the Bridge program.

GN (30:09):

The School College. Tell me about that.

BC (30:11):

School College. I don't know when it started. I probably could have told you a couple of years ago, I don't remember now, but it was pretty well established by the time I took it over. And that's where high school teachers are qualified to teach a college-level course at the high school. So that has grown apparently. It was getting bigger and bigger when I was there, but you just had to keep tabs on the teachers and have faculty from Marist go out and observe. So that was kind of the difficult part because it was getting so big. But that was, I think that was a good thing for Marist. It was good for Marist, that

reputation. And then the bridge program...and why can't I remember who was in charge of it? I think it was one of the brothers.

GN (31:06):

Oh, Ed O'Keefe? No, Peter O'Keefe.

BC (31:09):

Peter O'Keefe. That's right. And, I guess he kind of gave it up and I took it over and that was a wonderful program. I went to the different high schools and did there a presentation and students and parents would be interested in having the student come for a year--their senior year usually--and take a full slate of classes here at Marist. So that when they left Marist, they would have 35.

GN (31:42):

They would finish high school, they had one year under them.

BC (31:45):

Right, when they finished high school. Right. Now that has diminished. I don't even know if we have any bridge students anymore. Before I left, we still had a pretty good program. But it was...I think it was a financial thing because as Marist tuition increased, the bridge program, charged half tuition. But you know, that was a lot for some families who were still in-

GN (32:16):

Say if you're going to a Lorde's high school or something like that, that would be another added expense. No, I think it...just the by-product of this that...my wife would talk about the openness that so many of the schools had to the teacher-ed program for the kids coming for their year of experience teaching in classroom now. And of course now we have Marist teachers up and down the valley. So that's it. Not only that we have them in Hawaii. We have 25 high school teachers in Hawaii.

BC (32:55):

Who were students here on campus?

GN (32:57):

Yeah, they graduated from here and for the teacher education, they were able to be located in Hawaii, which was kind of a holiday. They liked it so much they stayed on and the end result is we still...we have a fuller...an office, an admissions office full-time in California to take students from Hawaii, Washington, California, Oregon...the West Coast. And so that...the broadening of it, the teacher-ed program, starting in the valley here and then spreading out. Most of them didn't want to leave outside, didn't want to leave New York. And because of the follow-up, and they were still on campus, they didn't want to have to drive to Connecticut. So most were placed somewhere along the river from all the way down to West point to up to Saugerties. And then Poughkeepsie High and east and west of the Hudson. So that was a...I mean she talks about...even now she meets students who were part of the program. This might be one of the... I was so interested that you wanted to come today or were willing to come today. Because there must be a certain delight in your life experience to have been part of this thing--this development. You look at Marist now and you say, 'well, I was part of it...in building it up. It must be a private joy in saying, 'we didn't pay you particularly well, but you had the benefits and a lot of people would like to

have opportunity to be here, as you indicated. There was teachers wanting to do that. Turning it over though, what would you say...if you had a chance to talk to the board of trustees, what in your view now as you see the college and have heard about it from outside experiences and so on...what is needed? Is there something that's still in want here?

BC (35:23):

That's difficult because I've been away from it for seven years.

GN (35:29):

Well, when you were here [laughter].

BC (35:30):

When I was here? When I was here, hm. Well...the Marist abroad program, when I was involved in that and went traveling in Europe to meet with students it was a tiny little program and that has just blossomed. So that's a wonderful thing. And I think it should continue to grow. I think it's a wonderful opportunity for students.

GN (35:57):

Yeah. Just a bit though. You remember Dr. Belanger? Joseph Belanger. He would turn in his grave now at what that is in this term. So many of the students go without being centered for any time. They're there for two or three months, and they're not really learning the language. He would want them to go to Spain and live in Spain, go to France and live in...go to Italy and live there...and live with the culture and so on. And tourism...[inaudible]have anyone tourism, you know, so he would be at the...but on the other hand, and I think you're indicating that...there is an enrichment, is there not?

BC (36:44):

Absolutely. And opens their mind, I mean they realize that there are people that are different from them...cultures that are different. I think that's very important. I don't know how many...are you interviewing? Well, I guess you wouldn't. I was going to say the director of the Marist abroad program. Yes, I've been here that long.

GN (37:05):

No.

BC (37:05):

But-

GN (37:08):

Oh, I know the figures. I mean, Marist now is in the one percent of students...we have I think half of the senior graduating class has spent some time in a foreign country. So I mean, it could be Mexico or it could be Spain or France, you know? But they've traveled there and two things, they could afford it a lot more easily now than they could in an earlier day. So there's that aspect of it. And what I think there's an enrichment that it would come from having been over there

BC (37:46):

And they go to very different countries too, not just the European countries?

GN (37:52):

Oh yeah. Australia, China. I the note the other day, there's something like 58 countries represented in the Marist student body now. We used to have two counties, Bronx County and Nassau, and Long Island. That was pretty much it, you know. More students outside of New York state than in New York state here. Yeah.

BC (38:19):

Well that I'm sure...that was a goal, I think. Wasn't it?

GN (38:24):

Diversity? Yeah. I heard from Shawn Keller, the admissions director, there's like 11,000 applications annually-- between 10 and 11, for the 1000 chairs that are available. We could fill it just with Marist applications, 3000 of those 10,000 are from children of Marist for one reason or another. Their father or their mother went to Marist, or their aunt or uncle was a Marist Brother there you know, some connection with Marist. And so...it will be too parochial to allow that to happen. You have to get Washington, Virginia, Georgia and all those foreign states involved in it. I have another question here. It costs \$45,000 a year to go to Marist. When you come here and you have to put in the four years of really energy and interest...the idea of getting through each of the classes. You can no longer live in the dormitory. You don't come to class here and...but half the semester, then you're finished. You know that's the part of it. Funny by-story here, Doc Doherty took-

BC (40:04):

Is he still teaching?

GN (40:04):

Yeah, but he was a student here. He took Spanish his first year with Mo Bibeau, Father Maurice Bibeau at that time. He came to the first class and he didn't come back half the year until...well actually until the final test. He comes in and Mo says to him in Spanish to close the door please. He didn't know what he said. He says 'you might as well leave now.' 'You know, it's over.' So, yeah...I mean, that's...and that story is told by a lot of people who have had him and Mo. So my point is...is it worth the investment? I mean, you hear now when they graduate there are no jobs. You hear when they've put in four years, they spent all this money, they wrote all these favors, they had to live with people from China or wherever else. And so the question is, is it really...is there not another way? And are we going to survive?

BC (41:17):

That is a very difficult question because you're talking to a person whose career was centered here at Marist, and I have a great devotion to it. But if you had asked my son--my middle son--that question, he would say no. He went to Bates College, and Bates was very expensive. He racked up a huge debt and he said he got a wonderful education there. He does not regret going, he said 'but I think if I had to do over again, I would have gone to a state school because of the money.' And he just thinks that in general, students are...they're spending an awful lot of money on college and they're walking out with huge, huge debts. Huge loans. Now your question was, is the 45,000 a year worth coming to Marist, worth the investment? I imagine there are families out there who can afford it and who like the intimacy of Marist

and the community spirit and the maybe the Catholic or...I mean it's still there. I don't know if there statistics on that but-

GN (42:35):

There are. You want them?

BC (42:35):

Yeah.

GN (42:36):

Okay. If 85% of the college was black, we would say it's a black college. If 85% was Chinese, would you say it's a Chinese college? 85% is Catholic.

GN (42:51):

Is it really 85? Well I think that has a big influence.

GN (42:53):

Okay. That's...14% of them are active. So-

New Speaker (43:00):

14%? How did they determine that?

GN (43:04):

They count the chapel. I mean who participates in the Catholic activities and so on. Now, even there is a change. The first-year freshmen are pretty active because they still have this obligation thing that they have to go. By the time they're sophomores and juniors, they don't need it. Seniors come back. This is LaMort, I've had this whole conversation with LaMort. Seniors tend to come back; they feel a need...there's something more that I used to have, and I don't have it now and-

BC (43:39):

Well they grow up a little bit too. [Chuckles]

GN (43:40):

Yeah. They mature and they're free. And now that they're free, 'why don't we choose this to do this thing again?' But the same I get with saying, well look they spend \$40,000 for a car, and after four or five years, what do you have? And to put that money into an education, now it's going to be 160,000 a year for four years, but you're going to buy another car. And when you...and from what you learn, not just the job that you have with the life that you live. Is it worth it? So, the argument is it's still surviving and it looks like it because they're still lined up there. So the belief is...and the general public, it certainly is if they can't afford it or managed to get it. Are you...looking back...what are your experience of how...your friends that you met here and the students that you had and so on? Pretty much a positive experience? You enjoyed the ride?

BC (45:05):

Absolutely. I still have very close friends who worked with me. Nancy Aronson is very close. The two people on my staff--Vicky and Marianne, we keep in touch and when birthdays come, we will meet over in Cosmos for lunch. And that's gone on for many, many years, even before I retired. The...just the other day when we had our meeting, our health insurance meeting. Just seeing the people there and how friendly everybody was, it was really a good feeling to get back and to see-

GN (45:48):

To touch base with these people.

BC (45:49):

Yeah, the people that you worked with and had connections with and-

GN (45:54):

I saw people there that...like there's a fellow John Ritter who...he was...and actually another one of my interviews. For different perspectives, I'm trying to get other people who played a part in the college and its development. How did we get here? One of the hobbies that I--it wouldn't be a hobby--but one of the tasks I was asked to do, was to develop a history and development of Marist in terms of a tutorial. So, I taught a PowerPoint presentation and on that it's just to see people who come here now who graduated 12 years ago. How did it happen? It's kind of...you have the Hancock building, you have the library. And you have the new academic building, the music building...all of those are a part of...here we are.

BC (46:52):

It's really amazing.

New Speaker (46:53):

Yeah. And especially because of people like you who took a chance and it was not a guarantee that this was going to be a great, happy ending. And you had a lot of inconvenience. I mean, Donnelley was pretty much the center at the beginning and then they moved that...the library over to what used to be a dormitory and put a middle floor into it so that there could be an upstairs and downstairs part of it. So that's part of it.

BC (47:26):

My youngest son went to nursery school here. And that was in the old gym next to Fontaine. I think it was the gym. It was a big, gray building?

GN (47:40):

Yeah. The Fontaine that was here at that time, yeah.

BC (47:48):

Right. The old Fontaine. Yeah.

GN (47:49):

Because there's a new Fontaine.

BC (47:51):

Oh, yeah. No, the old Fontaine. And it's now a dorm I think, right? Isn't it?

GN (47:57):

It's a dorm, right. It's been redone.

BC (47:59):

In the lower level, he was in nursery school. And that worked out beautifully because I worked while he was in school, and they accommodated the hours that I needed to have him come. In so many ways, Marist just kind of fit into my life beautifully. My husband taught here. He taught writing. He was teaching high school, but he enjoyed the Marist experience so much. He loved teaching here. He loved the students. He just loved the atmosphere. So-

GN (48:31):

And that was in a uni more than likely or was it-

BC (48:34):

Yeah, like a late class.

GN (48:37):

And again, uni classes was...while it used to be that they were older students, but that just faded. When we first started, it was just pretty much IBMers and older students. And then they allowed Day Hops as it were-

BC (48:53):

Day Hops. Right. That's an old term.

GN (48:59):

Yeah. Well, it's just been a pleasure. I really enjoyed talking to you.

BC (49:04):

Thank you very much. I hope I've given you some insight.

GN (49:06):

You did. No one could have responded as you did to...like that whole phase of the college, which was the backbone for the students who needed the help. Without the Learning Center and without someplace to go to get the help to write their paper, it would have been a disaster...in terms of Joe Bell's expression, disaster. But nevertheless, I mean, you were there and your staff was there and that's one part of the success story. Rick Smith's brought us to national claim in basketball. Bill O'Reilly-

New Speaker (49:51):

Bill O'Reilly, my gosh. I wonder if he'll ever come back to do a graduation? I remember he came to...he was the speaker at commencement one year. So disappointed in his speech.

GN (50:07):

Yeah. I must admit, I don't remember that occasion. He's been back since. He's been at football games, and he comes back at homecoming. That was two...one to two years ago. He did play football here in his own time, you know, and feels a part of it. I don't know if you saw the most recent Marist magazine and that big article on him that it's in there. So he is friendly to it. He...I guess he can give us a major contribution one of these days, but we're doing okay, you know?

BC (50:48):

Do you do presentations for Marist?

GN (50:56):

LCS? You know, the Learning...Lifelong Learning....I did one last year here. Nowadays it's in the...oh, the Morse?-

BC (51:14):

Locust Grove.

GN (51:15):

Yeah, Locust Grove, right. That's where....and then they....there's also a group out in Millbrook. There's a group, LCS, I made a presentation up there as well.

BC (51:28):

What was the presentation about? Marist.

GN (51:31):

That's the PowerPoint. Yeah.

BC (51:32):

Oh, okay. Okay. Yeah. I know I go to CSL too...CLS. And they had a course that I took this time about the Hudson River and its influence on the history of the Hudson Valley. And the very last lecture was about people who...in history who were born in this area and then they had a big segment on Vassar. And I sat there and I thought to myself, 'why can't Marist do a presentation too? But you're doing it.

GN (52:11):

Yeah. I did...this had to do with the history of development of the colleges. Vassar had one done by someone named Constantinople. Dr. Constantinople, she's a retired psychologist from...Vassar did it. There was one on the CIA, the Culinary Institute. There was one on Bard.

BC (52:37):

Oh, that must have been so interesting.

GN (52:37):

Individual days. And New Paltz, and it's just part of the discussion prior to it was things allowed...the recruiting part and how many applied while they can falsify their numbers because the state

college...you say you're applying to the state college at New Paltz so that they can also say, 'well it's a state college but if you didn't go to New Paltz you would've gone to Plattsburgh or maybe you would've gone to Albany maybe not, you know, stuff like that. There's variations in the theme as to how you want to interpret it. But we're pretty much by ourselves-here's Marist, here's what we've done. And we used to be here and here we are now, you know. Okay, I'm finished. Shut this off because we're talking.

"End of Interview"