

Gerald "Gerry" McNulty

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Ann Sandri

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

McNulty, Gerald “Gerry”

Transcript – McNulty, Gerald “Gerry”

Interviewee: Gerald “Gerry” McNulty

Interviewer: Gus Nolan

Interview Date: August 13, 2018

Location: Marist Archives and Special Collections

Topic: Marist College History

Subject Headings: McNulty, Gerald
Marist Brothers—United States—History
Marist College—History
Marist College (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.)
Marist College—Social Aspects

Summary: Gerry discusses his early life and what led him to Marist College. He speaks about his early career with his wife in upstate New York and the many different positions he held prior to coming back to Marist. Gerry also talks about the Communications program here at the college and where it started up to current day and where he would like to see it go in the future.

Gus Nolan ([00:00:00](#)):

Today is Monday, August 13th, and we have the opportunity of interviewing a long time Marist Associate Professor, graduate of the college. And he's here to talk about his experience at Marist, particularly his teaching experience. Good Afternoon, Gerry.

Gerry McNulty ([00:00:47](#)):

Good afternoon, Gus. Thank you so much for this opportunity. I'm flattered, actually,

Gus Nolan ([00:00:52](#)):

Let me step back a bit. This is Gerry McNulty. Gerry is not sufficient. He has a second name, although they call him a lot of other names here.

Gerry McNulty ([00:01:00](#)):

They did!

Gus Nolan ([00:01:00](#)):

We're happy to say Gerry McNulty is with us. Gerry, this comes in several big parts - like before Marist, Marist, after Marist, and crystal ball about Marist, where it's going, et cetera. It'll take maybe an hour so get ready, hold you arms of the chair there and let's take off. As the beginning, could you just give me a short overview, kind of a thumbnail review of your early life - where you born, brought up, siblings?

Gerry McNulty ([00:01:36](#)):

Sure. I was born in July of 1957. I was born in a hospital in Bayshore, which is in Suffolk County, Long Island. And just three or four miles away from my hometown, which was Deer Park, part of the Town of Balin, so Deer Park, Long Island. And I grew up there. I went to schools - elementary, middle school, and high school there. I was -

Gus Nolan ([00:02:03](#)):

What was the high school?

Gerry McNulty ([00:02:04](#)):

The high school is Deer Park High School, the public school.

Gus Nolan ([00:02:08](#)):

Okay.

Gerry McNulty ([00:02:08](#)):

And I was a - oh, I would say slightly better than average student. I was not an exemplary student, but I had fairly typical experiences as a kid. I played little league baseball and I played high school - junior high and high school football.

Gus Nolan ([00:02:25](#)):

Are you an only child?

Gerry McNulty ([00:02:30](#)):

Oh no, gosh, I am one of eight children. And my parents were married in 1939 and had four children and then took a breather for about seven or eight years, and then had another four children. So we were two groups of siblings a little bit apart.

Gus Nolan ([00:02:49](#)):

Where are you on the eight?

Gerry McNulty ([00:02:50](#)):

I am number six.

Gus Nolan ([00:02:52](#)):

Oh, at the end of the booth almost.

Gerry McNulty ([00:02:54](#)):

Yes. And interestingly enough, my parents had two girls and then two boys, and then two boys, and then two girls.

Gus Nolan ([00:03:04](#)):

Wow. That's amazing. Besides the sports, what else about high school? Did you work at summer jobs?

Gerry McNulty ([00:03:14](#)):

Oh, I had many summer jobs. My uncle actually - we lived right next door to my uncle's gas station, which had been previously owned by my grandfather. When it was just about a gravel and dirt road in the 1920s, the very early 1920s, I think my grandfather established a - you couldn't really call it a gas station, I think they called them filling stations then. It was literally a single pump, a hand operated pump for gasoline in 1921. And he owned this piece of property, which was eventually broken up and given into pieces to my uncle and my mom. And so we all worked - the kids, we all kind of worked for our uncle in the gas station, pumping gas and helping to ...

Gus Nolan ([00:04:04](#)):

Did it eventually become a Gulf or a Shell?

Gerry McNulty ([00:04:05](#)):

It was a Mobil station for many years, probably over 50 years until it was sold. And I was active in things like history, like a history club in high school, I was very interested in history. I took economics. I took an elective class on politics and government. So pretty routine stuff.

Gus Nolan ([00:04:29](#)):

After high school, when did college enter the scene? Were you going to look for a college, or?

Gerry McNulty ([00:04:35](#)):

I was looking at college. You know, in those days I was going to graduate in 1975, and I can only say that I'm lucky that the Vietnam War ended pretty much at that time in 1974. So young men like myself were not concerned with the draft, it was basically over. But I was very interested in college, and I began to look at some colleges. I really had no idea what I was doing. And I think it was far less sophisticated than it is today. And so my parents were not college educated. My father had dropped out of school in the eighth grade. My mother had been taken out of school by her father in the sixth grade, who determined that that was enough education for her. So they grew up in a very different time. They were born - my parents were born in 1916 and 1918 respectively. So they were -

Gus Nolan ([00:05:31](#)):

In the USA or in a foreign country?

Gerry McNulty ([00:05:32](#)):

In the USA. Yeah. So they knew people's kids who had gone to college, but they had no experience whatsoever with it. So they didn't quite know what to do with me. My brother, who was just two years older than me began to go to a commuter college nearby. And when I told them that I wanted to go away to school, they just kind of shrugged and said you have to ask people at the high school, they didn't know how anything works. So I went to see the guidance counselor in the high school. I really didn't know how anything worked either. And she was very helpful and talked to me about some different types of schools, which still bewildered me the differences between a university and a liberal arts college.

Gerry McNulty ([00:06:14](#)):

And she actually handed me a little - I think we call them view books today. A little pamphlet about Marist. And I honestly liked the photographs in it, and I asked one of my older brothers - I had a brother who was two years older, and another brother who was 10 years older - if he would take me to Marist so I could see it. So he drove me in his Corvette. We took a ride one Saturday, and we came up to see the campus. And even then the campus, we talk about how beautiful it is now, but even it was much, much smaller. Even then, though it was very comfortable, very attractive spot, sort of on the Hudson River.

Gus Nolan ([00:06:53](#)):

What year is this now?

Gerry McNulty ([00:06:53](#)):

That would've been in probably 1974. Probably, maybe September or October of 1974.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:01](#)):

Looking back history, the historical development of ours, Donnelly was probably up and some of the dormitories.

Gerry McNulty ([00:07:10](#)):

Yeah. We saw the three dormitories. We took a tour and we stopped into the admissions office. We had scheduled a tour, and we took a little, you know, maybe 30 minute, I don't remember, but a short tour. We saw the three dormitories in the campus center building. Donnelly Hall was certainly there.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:26](#)):

It didn't take long to take a tour.

Gerry McNulty ([00:07:27](#)):

It didn't take long to take a tour, no. And I was lucky enough to talk to just a couple of students that day very briefly.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:36](#)):

So you didn't know anybody?

Gerry McNulty ([00:07:37](#)):

I didn't know anybody who came here. And again, my brother had just gotten out of the Navy, the US Navy. He was 10 years older than me. He had spent four years in the Navy. He had not gone to college. So this was all, he just was, you know, I'm the driver. He didn't know anything about it. So it was new.

Gus Nolan ([00:07:54](#)):

Coming into Marist, let's begin there. What did you want to study?

Gerry McNulty ([00:07:59](#)):

I wanted to study American History. And my plan was I think a very typical plan of a lot of kids, maybe even today still. So I projected in my mind that I would study American history, play on the football team. And that was one of the things that I actually got a phone call from one of the assistant coaches who told me that I could play on the football team. Now, I had no real idea of the differences in college football.

Gus Nolan ([00:08:32](#)):

We were only a club.

Gerry McNulty ([00:08:33](#)):

It was a club football team, and I weighed 160 pounds. But when I was a very naive young man, and when this assistant coach told me that I could come up and I could suit up and play on the team as a walk on, I was pretty much, that was what I wanted to do. So I decided that I would try Marist and I signed up. And I came up with the intention of being a history major. And that summer, I believe I got a letter or some type of information from the college that they had very recently changed some of the major fields. And they had created a new major called American Studies. And American Studies was a kind of hybrid of history, social sciences, politics, humanities that were focused on American history in government.

Gus Nolan ([00:09:23](#)):

Was Tom Casey --

Gerry McNulty ([00:09:24](#)):

With Tom Casey, with Professor Casey. And so I immediately wrote back to them and said, put me into the American Studies program. So that's how I started in September of 1975. Actually August, I came in August to practice with the football team.

Gus Nolan ([00:09:37](#)):

Where did you live?

Gerry McNulty ([00:09:39](#)):

I lived in Champagnat.

Gus Nolan ([00:09:41](#)):

You did?

Gerry McNulty ([00:09:42](#)):

On the sixth floor of Champagnat, where I proceeded to live for the next three years. Three and a half years. On the same floor.

Gus Nolan ([00:09:49](#)):

Same room?

Gerry McNulty ([00:09:51](#)):

Not quite in the same room. I think I changed rooms every semester until maybe I think four rooms in freshman and sophomore year. And then in junior year, I decided that moving was too much of a hassle. So my roommate and I picked a room and we stayed in it all through junior year, so we didn't have to move our stuff. We finally got smart enough to realize we're packing things up and then moving back in again to go down the hall.

Gus Nolan ([00:10:20](#)):

Did you stay with American Studies?

Gerry McNulty ([00:10:23](#)):

So I did not. I stayed with American Studies, I think through about three semesters. And I took quite a few classes in American history, in political science, traditional history classes, like the American Indian, you know, that looked at different ethnographies and aspects of -- but I got lured away by the communication and journalism folks. And in the middle of my sophomore year, I changed my major to communication.

Gus Nolan ([00:10:55](#)):

Oh, okay. Speak about some of your communication teachers. Did you have Dr. Lanning?

Gerry McNulty (00:11:05):

I did not have Dr. Lanning. I had, of course, Professor Nolan.

Gus Nolan (00:11:10):

I remember you well.

Gerry McNulty (00:11:12):

I think I had, I had you Gus for certainly two classes and maybe three, or even four. I'd have to go back and look. But it probably was three, at least. Bob Norman, of course. And Bob Norman. I certainly had for maybe three classes.

Gus Nolan (00:11:30):

You would, yes.

Gerry McNulty (00:11:31):

Now, you know, look, actually previous to that in the - when I was an American Studies major - I had Professor Casey again, I think two or three times very quickly during freshman and sophomore year. And Dr. Toscano, who was terrific also. And Tom Casey was excellent. Tom Casey was my first advisor. He was a wonderful man. When I think of it now, and of course I have this job now where I deal with students and I think of how patient he was with all of us, and certainly I was one of those very intolerant and patient young people. And Professor Casey was wonderful. "Oh, come in, sit down," you know, "tell me what's wrong," and talking to us.

Gus Nolan (00:12:11):

Did you have Sue Lawrence?

Gerry McNulty (00:12:13):

I did not, no. Sue Lawrence came immediately after I graduated. She came, I think in the fall of '79.

Gus Nolan (00:12:21):

She came with Dennis Murray, right? Yeah.

Gerry McNulty (00:12:28):

Yeah, I can tell you, I can tell you an interesting tidbit of a Dennis Murray story, and I can, we can do that maybe later, or whenever you wish.

Gus Nolan (00:12:35):

Well, start now because I may forget.

Gerry McNulty (00:12:40):

Okay. So it does, it does connect to the journalism side. So actually in my freshman year, maybe I'll back up and do a little bit of that sequence. So in my freshman year, I had come to Marist with an object that

not too many students had. So I owned a 35 millimeter camera, and there were maybe a dozen students on the entire campus who owned in the 19 mid '70s, a 35 millimeter camera. And so, and I had a very modest but a so what's called a middle telephoto lens. So I got recruited pretty quickly to take photographs by one of the girls who lived down the hall from me, who was involved with the yearbook. So in the middle of freshman year, in my first semester even, I was being asked to "go over here and take some photos of this club, and go over to the soccer field and take some photos. And how about the track and cross country team? Can you take a picture of the team itself and we'll put, and can you do the basketball team?" And so very quickly, I found myself involved in the yearbook club, and I was taking photographs throughout freshman year. By the end of freshman year, my photographs, I guess, got noticed, and it was a very small environment in those days. Of course, there were about 900 of us living on the campus. So it was quite small. So we really did get to know one another quite a bit. And so one of the folks who was involved with the newspaper had heard that I was doing all this photography for the yearbook, and this was probably the end of freshman year and said, "Oh, we need pictures for the newspaper. Can you help us?" And I thought "Sure, I'll say yes to everything." And I started to take some pictures for the newspaper. And then the following fall, which would've been my sophomore year, I got named the photo editor for the yearbook and then also like a contributing photo editor for The Circle at the same time. They just needed - honestly, they needed people and they needed the help and whatnot, you know, but it was fun. It was a lot of fun to do. And so I was running around doing all this photography, and that's how I got involved in the school newspaper, of which I eventually became an editor in my senior year. So anyway, fast forward quickly to that senior year time in 1979, I was actually an intern in the spring of 79. I was an intern at the Associated Press, and several of my friends were still very active on the newspaper. And one of them was Larry Striegel, who unlike me, stayed in the newspaper business to this day. So 40 years he's in the business, and Larry was really our leader in many ways. He was in my class and my graduating class, and he had become the editor of the school paper as a sophomore, and stayed very active with it all through then, and kind of gave up the top editorship and let other people do it. But he was a really a natural for the newspaper, uh, industry. So Larry had, we, we did a lot of reporting on many different types of things about the campus and campus governance and whatnot. And of course, it was a very different era because we were coming right after the days of Watergate. So to be a reporter was a big deal, and to be able to be empowered and ask questions. So we were routinely asking questions and interacting with actually the trustees in those days. We would write them letters, and we would call them up, and they would call us back. We would go to the president's office and, you know, have a meeting with President Foy and so forth. And we had of course heard there was going to be a change, and President Foy was going to step down. And this was in, this was maybe in February or March of 1979. And we heard, let's say through the grapevine, who the lucky winner was - a gentleman by the name of Dennis Murray, who was from California, who we learned had been somewhat involved with a congressional race, or was seeking a congressional position in some fashion, right? A budding politician. But he was, I think a Provo or an assistant Provo at a college there. So this is long before, there is no internet. We're literally trying to look up names and books and directories of academic profiles and whatnot, and learn about him. And Larry Striegel, who had previously done an internship at the Associated Press, said to a couple of us one day, "We should call 'em up!"

Gus Nolan ([00:16:59](#)):

Dennis Murray?

Gerry McNulty ([00:17:02](#)):

Dennis Murray. And of course, we're looking at each other like this was the most obvious thing. But we actually didn't really do that as student reporters. We, our reporting was really on the campus, so would go down the hall to see somebody, or make an appointment the next Tuesday and go to a professor's office and talk to him. And this guy was in California, but we looked at each other and we said we could call him up, we could get a, collect a bunch of quarters on the payphone. And so Larry talked to somebody he knew who was on the inside and got a phone number for Dennis. And we scrounged up a whole bunch of quarters, and two or three of us just stood at the payphone in the hallway, and we dialed this number. He answered the phone. It was like a direct line to his office at the college where he was working. Well, needless to say, he was surprised. You know, he was very polite. Who are you? We said, "We're the editors of the student newspaper." And he talked to - I give him credit, he talked to us for several minutes. He answered a few questions, and then I think he got a little like, "Okay guys, well I'll, you know, I'll be there in a few months and I'll talk to you again." But that was, for us it was fun.

Gus Nolan ([00:18:22](#)):

Right, let's - it shows a number of things about your career here, and it kind of set the pace for what was gonna happen for the next 30 years or whatever. Move on, you graduate, what do you do after graduation?

Gerry McNulty ([00:18:40](#)):

I graduated, and I got my first job in July, just a couple of months after graduation at a very small newspaper, in Port Jervis, which is to about 20 miles or 25 miles to our southwest in, on the Delaware River in Orange County, on the border of Orange and Sullivan Counties. It was called the Port Jervis Union Gazette. Very small city called Port Jervis there. And I was a, a reporter, you know, 22 years old, 21 years old, even at that time, and it was a small staff. I think we had five reporters, one photographer, and two or three, maybe three, full-time editors. It was a daily, it was a five day daily that published Monday through Friday. And it was co-owned by a company called, or was owned rather, by a company called Ottaway. Ottaway was a division of Dow Jones, and the Dow Jones Company owned the much larger city paper nearby called Middletown, the Middletown newspaper. So our weekend editions were basically stuffers, they used to call them wire pickups. So it was really the Middletown paper that produced the weekend newspaper. But we, we produced a newspaper that was anywhere from maybe 18 to 24, 26 pages from Monday to Friday covering Port Jervis and local news and sports and government. And I was there, I think two days when my boss called me up at about 10:30 at night, three days maybe. My boss called me up at 10:30 at night in my little tiny apartment and said, I have a story for you. Do you know where the airport is? I, no, I had just literally arrived in the town like three, four days before then my clothes all in boxes. And he said, well, you take, go down this road and you this street, and you go down this road and you go, and that's where the airport is. Go there. A plane has crashed there. So that was my, about three days on the job. And I was sent there to cover a plane crash. And the plane was a very small plane, like a six seater plane that had crash landed and there were no fatalities, but both of the people in the plane were pretty, pretty bruised up, and I was trying to interview some of the emergency service personnel, and they, they talked to me a little bit cuz they knew the local paper. And it wasn't a real terrible scene. It was, you know, people were okay. They were all gonna survive. And then the one guy, it was sort of one of my many quick introductions to journalism. There the one emergency services guy said, you're probably not gonna be able to talk to the pilot. I don't think he wants to talk. And I said, is he in bad shape? He said, no, he's mostly embarrassed. I said, was he embarrassed that he did something stupid to crash the plane? He said, no, the other passenger in the plane is not his wife, it's his secretary,

Gus Nolan (00:21:28):

<laugh>. Oh, I see. That's the beginning.

Gerry McNulty (00:21:33):

Introduction to the journalism business is you gotta be prepared for anything. <laugh>.

Gus Nolan (00:21:39):

Move on to, uh, Gannett. How do you get into them?

Gerry McNulty (00:21:44):

Oh, well after the Port Jervis Union Gazette, actually, I was only at that newspaper for about a year, a little less than a year, about 11 months. And my fiancé Kathy had obtained a full-time job with the Associated Press in Montpelier, Vermont. So I went up there to join her. So that would've been very early maybe, February, I think, of 1980. So she got a full-time job there with the AP Bureau covering mostly state government. And I went up there, I did not have a job, and I just was doing some freelancing. And after a few months, I actually got a temporary position at the AP Bureau, also <laugh>. So there we were, the two of us working together in a four person bureau covering state news and regional wide, nationwide news and state government out of Montpelier Bureau. And I spent about a year working roughly side by side with her. We are doing different shifts. The bureau was open about 17, 18 hours a day. So very often we were on opposite shifts. And my job was a temporary filler position, and somebody with more experience was actually hired to fill up the position. So I went shopping and got a position with the Montpelier, the Times Argus it's called, which is a local daily newspaper in the capital city. It's called the Barre Montpelier Times Argus, there are two cities that are less than 10 miles apart, Barre and Montpelier Vermont. And so I was a reporter there for about three years, and then was fortunate enough to get a spot on the copy desk. So it was a bit of a promotion. And very shortly after I was on the copy desk, maybe three months, the city editor left and the boss asked me to do that. So I found myself, 26 year old city editor of a newspaper with seven or eight, maybe nine, something like eight or nine full-time reporters, two staff photographers, and a couple of assistant editors. So I really, I really didn't quite know what I was doing, but the boss said, you'll, you'll be fine. And so I was in that job for,

Gus Nolan (00:24:00):

Were you getting finances of what from home? <Laugh>

Gerry McNulty (00:24:03):

No, no, no. We had, our two children were born in Vermont. We bought a very small home, and proceeded to, I'm a little bit on the handy side, so we proceeded to paint the whole thing and redecorate the whole thing. And one day I stepped over the very small front porch that was a wooden front porch that was maybe 10 feet by six feet or eight feet. And one day I moved a chair and stepped across, and my foot went right through the bottom of it. Well, this was an 85, 95 year old, you know, farm cottage. So, that summer we rebuilt the floor on the front porch. So we did a lot of that stuff. Very good. And then in 1985, it was time to come back to the Hudson Valley. Cathy and I had both done internships with the Poughkeepsie Journal while we were students. And so we knew a number of people who were editors and writers at the Poughkeepsie Journal. And in 1985, we moved back to the Hudson Valley, and we bought a home in Red Hook, and we went to work at the Poughkeepsie Journal

Gus Nolan ([00:25:05](#)):

Both together at that time. You both got jobs?

Gerry McNulty ([00:25:08](#)):

Yeah, we both got jobs. We were actually interviewed together by the boss at the same time in his office, which I don't think would be done today. He said, you both come on in I'll talk to you both. He hired us on the spot,

Gus Nolan ([00:25:22](#)):

Give me one or two experiences at Poughkeepsie Journal.

Gerry McNulty ([00:25:28](#)):

Oh, Poughkeepsie Journal. You know, they were very different experiences. For my wife and myself, she was a writer and she stayed there probably 23, 24 years. I was at the Journal for just about 11 years. So I joined on the copy desk staff. So I was working the night shift. So the copy editors are the guys who come in at about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, collect the stories and information, collect the photographs. We would conduct a news meeting, usually at four thirty or five o'clock, make all of our choices for layout and design, and then proceed to build, do the layout, build the pages, copy, edit the stories, and produce the paper. A process that in the old days was called putting the paper to bed. And we were there until at least one o'clock in the morning, many nights later

Gus Nolan ([00:26:16](#)):

Was technology very much in place?

Gerry McNulty ([00:26:18](#)):

You know, I, in my time there, I came in 1985, and within about six months of my arrival, the, the company purchased the very first electronic page machines. Now, if you say that phrase to somebody today, they really have no idea what it is. So your desktop computer is an electronic page machine. I see. But at that time, the V DT terminal that people typed on was nothing but an electronic typewriter. It couldn't create documents. All it did was show letters on a screen. Yeah. So these were the very, first, they were made by a company called Harris Technologies. And we were actually an experimental site. And every few weeks, these guys from Harris Technologies would come in and interview the senior editor on how well the machines were doing and they were difficult to use. There was a lot of memorization, a lot of what are called pneumatic commands. And we had to memorize all this business of how to put a rule on a page, how to make the column go down six inches. You'd have to type in hand, type in a code to make the column go drop six inches and then stop. So it was rudimentary technology, but we, and probably one of the most interesting, it wasn't a lot of fun, but most interesting was, I think it was 1988. So we had an off year election in 1988, and the pagination machines crashed on election night.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:39](#)):

Really?

Gerry McNulty ([00:27:41](#)):

They failed the IT people came in, you know, late at night, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, tried to restart several times the mainframe that, not mainframe, but I guess the server computers that ran them, they couldn't get them to work. And so there we were in the middle of the night, 11 o'clock, one o'clock in the morning.

Gus Nolan ([00:27:58](#)):

Did the enemy do this?

Gerry McNulty ([00:28:00](#)):

No, no, the enemy didn't do it. And we had to just literally start from scratch and having the type setters sat down at machines and typed in and hand set, you know. So now we had, for at least a year, we had gotten away from all this business of typing and hand setting all this prototype, and through these past up machines. And now at one o'clock in the morning, we had to start from scratch. And we sat there until four in the morning and inputting these stories and trying to get the newspaper out, <laugh>. So it's an interesting time of transition of technology. It wasn't a lot of fun. But we got the paper out and we printed a paper that next day that reported the headlines of the election.

Gus Nolan ([00:28:37](#)):

Is there a history of the the Poughkeepsie Journal written yet?

Gerry McNulty ([00:28:40](#)):

<laugh>, you know, there isn't a specific history, although, while I was there, we had two very, very, interesting and I think important anniversaries. So one of them was the bicentennial of the newspaper itself. And so we did a lot of reflective coverage, looking at the newspaper's role in history from 1785 to 1985. So it wasn't a true in all-encompassing history, but it was essentially a special edition. But it was really interesting for me to work on those pages and we were able to see and reproduce many, many pages and stories from all throughout the eighteen hundreds and the early nineteen hundreds. The newspaper has a wonderful and colorful history. It's also gone by many names. It was originally called the Country Journal and Advertiser, and then it was called the Poughkeepsie American, and then it was called the Poughkeepsie Eagle. And then it was changed back after the 1940s to the Poughkeepsie Journal. So, and it was you know, involved, it was heavily involved in all of the politics and government of the time in the nineteenth century. I mean, Lincoln's funeral train rode right past Poughkeepsie. Alexander Hamilton was quoted in the Country Journal and Advertiser in 1788.

Gus Nolan ([00:30:04](#)):

Yeah. I wasn't here for Lincoln, . I was here for FDRs.

Gerry McNulty ([00:30:08](#)):

Yeah. And FDR, you know, very colorful.

Gus Nolan ([00:30:11](#)):

So let's turn the page. And talk about with this history of, in your experience in journalism, why did you ever come to Marist?

Gerry McNulty ([00:30:21](#)):

Why, why? They told me I could play football <laugh>.

Gus Nolan ([00:30:25](#)):

No, no, no, no. This is the classroom.

Gerry McNulty ([00:30:29](#)):

Oh, that part. So in 1996. Okay. So it was time for a career change for me, I think. So I had gone through several different positions at the Poughkeepsie Journal. I arrived there in 1985. I joined the copy desk about six months later. I was named Copy Desk Chief. And so I was now running this group of about six or seven editors. I did that for a couple of years. I was given another position, a promotion to Sunday editor in 1989. That was, I always say that that was the best job I ever had. That was a lot of fun. I could really just goof around on Tuesday and Wednesday and think about different things that I was gonna do with the Sunday paper. It made for very long Friday nights. And then I would produce the Sunday newspaper on a long Friday and Saturday shift. It was much more creative than daily news coverage. And then in late 1989, October of 1989, the third city editor in a row quit, city Editor is a famously horrible job in the newspaper business. It's the chief assignment editor who supervises the day to day news coverage. So it's sort of the news equivalent of being the press secretary that we see in Washington being. So I, once went to a workshop, a professional news workshop where a guy who had been a city editor in a big city paper at two different papers said it's a lot like being pecked to death by a thousand chickens. And I thought that was, you know, the death of a thousand cuts. So I became city editor and I supervised, I had a staff of about 13 reporters and four or five photographers and coordinated with, and a couple of other departments, sports and features departments that we coordinated with. And, much to the surprise, I think of, certainly my boss and a number of my colleagues. I held that job for seven years. Wow. And we won something like eight to 10 New York State press awards a year for the next seven years.

Gus Nolan ([00:32:36](#)):

Where is the Poughkeepsie Journal in the Gannett line?

Gerry McNulty ([00:32:40](#)):

So the, in the Gannett line or in newspaper industry standards, the Poughkeepsie Journal would be considered, what is usually called a community level. And community level is an average daily circulation of below 50,000. The next category below that is sort of a small town or small community, and that's like below 10,000. So that's very small. So the journal was right at the top of that. Our daily circulation usually would be right around forty-six, forty-eight in those days. In the eighties, nineties. It's much lower than that now, unfortunately. So we were right at the top of this sort of second tier. I see. And then above that were what were called Metro Division. Metro Division were newspapers that went up to about a hundred thousand and above that were called the Supers of the Major Metros. And that's literally your New York Times, Daily News, LA Times, the really big, and there's only a dozen of those in the country. So we were a very good, very competitive newspaper in in those days and very active, very active.

Gus Nolan ([00:33:43](#)):

So coming to Marist now...

Gerry McNulty ([00:33:44](#)):

So I was in that job for seven years, and quite frankly, got tired and burned out <laugh>. I would say, you know, I had some opportunities to go to other newspapers to move up and take some different positions. But my children were teenagers. I really loved the Hudson Valley. I did not want to leave. And so my old teacher, Bob Norman, was retiring, and I had been somewhat active as an alumni involved in a number of things. And there had recently been a man named Dr. Guy Lometti hired as the Dean. And I had met him only once, very briefly, at an event. And I just called him up one day and being a kind of bossy alumnus, called him up. And I said, what are you gonna do about Bob Norman retiring? And he, and he didn't know who I was, and he said, well, we're looking into that. And I asked him if I could chat with him about that. And I actually at the time, was becoming very friendly with a faculty member, Bob Grossman, who was in the business school. But Bob had come to the Poughkeepsie Journal to try to learn about the world of journalism and got himself signed up for, I guess we could call it sort of a fellowship or an externship. And he came in as a professional, and he worked with us for a number of months, one summer. And Bob and I got along very well, and I said to Bob, you don't know, you know, do you know these folks in communication? He didn't really know them very much, but he said, I'll put in a good word for you. And so I set up a lunch meeting with Guy Lometti, Dr. Dean Lometti, and I pitched him on the idea that he should not miss the opportunity to hire somebody from the professional world, because Bob Norman, I loved him. He was a terrific teacher, but, you know, and all the people he knew was very helpful. But Bob really was mostly a teacher and an academic. And I had been supervising interns now for almost 10 years as a professional.

Gus Nolan ([00:35:42](#)):

And he was in radio also.

Gerry McNulty ([00:35:43](#)):

Yeah. And I said what you really need is to, you know, you really need to hire somebody who's coming from the professions, from television or newspaper or radio to do this job, not another professor. So that the students have that balance, they have the academics, and they also have a professional person. And he looked across the table and said, how about you?

Gus Nolan ([00:36:01](#)):

Yeah. Oh, surprised that they just think that way, <laugh>.

Gerry McNulty ([00:36:06](#)):

And so the next thing you know, we were talking about "how about me?" And we talked about it for maybe a month, and then I said okay, I said, maybe, maybe I can do this.

Gus Nolan ([00:36:19](#)):

<laugh>, what year would this be now?

Gerry McNulty ([00:36:21](#)):

1996.

Gus Nolan ([00:36:22](#)):

96, okay. Yeah. We were already in Lowell Thomas, pretty well established there at the time. Were you coming on to teach journalism was that the...

Gerry McNulty ([00:36:36](#)):

No, I was coming on as a full-time administrator to run the internship program. So the Communication Internship program had enrolled maybe 110 or 120 students per year. When I arrived in 1996, that had been the number maybe for the previous year. And when I tried to ask around, you know, how that compared, nobody had a real good handle on it. There was some discussion about how the fashion kids maybe had a third of that, 30 or 40 interns a year. But certainly communication had the most. And so even Dean Lometti did not know exactly by comparison what was going on, but he knew he had an awful lot of kids. It was a lot of kids to handle. And it was getting away from, there were two instructors who were trying to do it part-time, and it was difficult for them. They were teaching full-time, et cetera. So that was my job to come in to assess how it was running and then to reorganize it. And so by the end of the first year, I mostly did a lot of shadowing, you know, with the instructors who were doing it. And by the end of the first year, went to see Guy Lometti and said, I think we could change this, and we could change that, and we could change these other things, aspects of registration, the way we prepare students. And you know, like a lot of deans, he said, well, that sounds good.

Gus Nolan ([00:37:58](#)):

Yes. <laugh> Okay, right ahead, <laugh>. Right, right. For some reason, I had you teaching journalism...

Gerry McNulty ([00:38:05](#)):

I did, I did teach, but my teaching role was essentially extra as an adjunct.

Gus Nolan ([00:38:10](#)):

Oh, I see.

Gerry McNulty ([00:38:11](#)):

So, because I had been a professional newspaper editor, I got signed on to teach Intro to Journalism classes.

Gus Nolan ([00:38:16](#)):

Clark was doing it.

Gerry McNulty ([00:38:17](#)):

Yes. Modele Clark at that time. And so I taught my very first semester even I taught a class and I had no previous teaching experience, so I learned a lot, shall we say? It's a way of putting it that I did a lot of things wrong that semester, but I learned.

Gus Nolan ([00:38:31](#)):

And you went to school, I mean, you had an idea what a teacher does.

Gerry McNulty ([00:38:33](#)):

Yeah. Maybe little. Yeah. But I had to learn about, I had to remember, and it took me several classes to remember what it was like to be a student. So I was coming from the outside world. I had spent just about 17 years in the newspaper business. I see. So I was kind of you know, I was ready to pound my fist on the table and say, rewrite that, fix that. And the students were students, they, they were 19. They were looking at me like, what are you, you know,

Gus Nolan ([00:38:59](#)):

<laugh> Alright. Focusing now on the interns, you've been here a while. And so give me what you would say is the major changes that have taken place.

Gerry McNulty ([00:39:18](#)):

Right. So the major change, I think that, and I would contrast it with almost 20 years earlier, roughly when I was a student. So when I was a student, my experience was that Professor Norman told us, a handful of us, I think I can help you. Here's what we'll do. We're gonna get in my car, we're gonna go to New York. We're gonna meet this person and this other person, and you'll talk to them, and they might call you back and you'll be an intern. And so we were relatively passive. We had an interest, we had virtually no knowledge of the professional world. And he was the connection, the go between. And I think that in 1979, that was a very routine manner of operation. I don't know that as a primary level of information, but that's my presumption after many years in the internship field that I've seen other, you know, academics talk about how unsophisticated things were in the 1960s and seventies. Yeah. And then as we moved forward through the eighties and nineties, more and more internships, you know, grew companies became more comfortable doing it. At the time that I did it, it was, it was very unusual. Very few companies took on interns. It was not a common practice. It was an unusual thing that was practiced largely by very elite schools. So we often hear about this famous writer, or that famous TV producer who was an intern at the White House because she went to Smith College in 1962. Yes. But nobody else did, you know, got to do that. So by the 1970s, eighties, it's becoming a more commonplace practice, but this also means much more competition and the need for more information to be exchanged for students to employers, et cetera. So by the time I came in, in 1996, things had gotten relatively complicated. You know, as an editor, I was bringing in interns from Marist, from SUNY New Paltz, from other schools. And, and by 1996 as a, as a newspaper editor, I was saying to the kids, you need to have this on your resume. You need to do this. You know, this is the level of competition. You're gonna come in. I'm gonna have 10 candidates, I'm gonna pick three. And some of the students were prepared and others were not. So it's that type of, of thing I think that I saw when I came in from an organizational level. And, you know, when I met with Dean Lometti and I said, what we need to do is really reform our program so that we are properly preparing our students so that we instruct them on what they need to know to be good candidates, so that we inform them that this is a competition, it's not a gift.

Gus Nolan ([00:41:55](#)):

Right.

Gerry McNulty ([00:41:55](#)):

So that we make them active participants. So that was a complete structural change, you know, uh, for students. And so we did that. We made those changes. We created, I shouldn't say created. So we modified a class. There was a preexisting class that the career services staff here at Marist had created. And I got involved in helping to modify the curriculum in that so that it focused somewhat, uh, heavily

for communication majors on their needs to get into television, to get into you know, journalism or advertising.

Gus Nolan ([00:42:28](#)):

Was there, at your time that they went full time, in other words, the whole semester versus just taking one course as it were?

Gerry McNulty ([00:42:36](#)):

Yes. Yes. In fact. And that's an important, I think distinction to make. So in the 1970s when I was an intern, most of the internships were, were full-time commitments for the length of a semester. For the most part. So certainly it was, in my case, many of my friends who were journalism majors, one or two who were broadcasting, concentration, they went to New York and they worked four or five days a week at a radio station for an entire semester. They did not take any classes. So that was common practice. And that did change as the internships became more commonplace and companies opened up. By the middle 1990s when I made my transition, it was pretty common for students to do part-time. <affirmative>, they could still do full-time, and today they still can do full-time, but it became much more common for students to go two days a week while they were taking classes. Something that in on the academic side is referred to as parallel, parallel internship and study. So doing them simultaneously, and actually that became much more common. So today, for example, I will have approximately 200 or 205 placements in a calendar year. Out of those 205 placements, I maybe have a dozen kids who do full time. Everybody else does two days a week, three days a week. Really. And takes classes. So it changed across the industry.

Gus Nolan ([00:44:05](#)):

How about somebody like IBM?

Gerry McNulty ([00:44:08](#)):

So IBM, you know, is no longer a significant partner for us here, because they have changed their business structures.

Gus Nolan ([00:44:15](#)):

Oh, I see.

Gerry McNulty ([00:44:16](#)):

But in, in the 1980s and nineties, they supported full-time students, for quite a few years.

Gus Nolan ([00:44:23](#)):

And paid them as well.

Gerry McNulty ([00:44:24](#)):

And paid them, yup, and paid internships. Exactly. And that began to dissipate, I would say probably in the early two thousands.

Gus Nolan ([00:44:34](#)):

How many, what percentage get paid Now, any?

Gerry McNulty ([00:44:39](#)):

Overall in the media industries, no one really is able to put a hard figure on it because so many, it's so hard to do a thorough survey. My observation, I would say that you're in the, in the 30, 40% range of paid, meaning that you're a good 60, 70% unpaid still. Still a majority unpaid, but it is much higher paid percentage today than it was even five years ago. So in recent years, there have been a number of lawsuits and legal challenges brought by students or former students, essentially complaints that they were ill-treated as unpaid interns. And as a reaction to that, numerous companies, particularly large companies, have instituted paid programs, you know, in response to that. So notably places like NBC, CBS Broadcasting, Viacom, which runs the MTV, Comedy Central Channel, Nickelodeon channel, those companies, and I don't think, it's not a secret. Those companies paid not a nickel as to a student as recently as five, six years ago. So I would have a dozen kids or more a year interning with MTV, Nickelodeon, not a nickel, not subway fare, nothing. Okay. And about four years ago, maybe five years ago, MTV decided, all right, we maybe are on the wrong side of this equation, and lots of companies are getting sued. And all of a sudden it became, okay, it's 12 bucks an hour and 14 bucks an hour. Which is better for the students. But, that took, it took a long time coming.

Gus Nolan ([00:46:24](#)):

How about evaluating what they do? Are there any grades for this?

Gerry McNulty ([00:46:29](#)):

We use the pass/fail system. In our situation. So the criteria for pass/fail are the completion of a predetermined or stated number of work hours and a series of reflection analysis assignments. So, and the writing assignments and the reflection analysis assignments, I think is something that, you know, folks who, like myself on the academic side of field experience, we like to talk about and we understand are very important. And this is almost invisible to certainly parents <laugh> who don't do these writing assignments. So they don't see it. And it's invisible, I think, to the average person. So they don't necessarily understand the value of that. So there is a difference, really, and this is the way that I put it both to students and to parents, is that we don't give college credit to students for working at a radio station. They could get paid 12 bucks or 15 bucks an hour to work at a radio station. That's a job. Yeah. We give them college credit because they worked at the radio station and then thought about what they learned, what they observed, they contrasted and compared that with their previous experiences, they delineated that in a series of writing assignments. They came to some conclusions about their own personal development and the state of that company and industry. So we give college credit for thinking, we give college credit for learning.

Gus Nolan ([00:48:07](#)):

And it's put down on paper.

Gerry McNulty ([00:48:08](#)):

It's put down on paper, and it's a series of writing assignments. And now we actually use these discussion board tools as well. So we have both a, it's a terrific tool with the online learning. We have both a private and public aspect to this. So of course, the students write their so-called private papers. They write their reports and they synthesize what they're learning, and they talk about that. But on a public discussion board, the students will be given a prompt a question such as, who's your favorite and why? And then the students will read one another's work. So now a student in the television station reads, he reads Adam's entry and he realizes Adam's writing all about working side by side with a sports

writer. And he's describing, and Adam's thinking, well, I'm working over here in an ad agency now, now this is an opportunity on the discussion board for Adam to say, could you ask him this question? And so the students have this whole public aspect of learning about what others are doing, because we have the online tool availability there. So that's a terrific add on.

Gus Nolan ([00:49:08](#)):

That's a terrific power than, having your numbers. <affirmative> If you have 200 candidates, 200 interns out there <affirmative> and then writing 200 papers. Do you have a team evaluating these?

Gerry McNulty ([00:49:21](#)):

We don't have a team, no. It's myself. And I have a part-time assistant who works about 15 hours a week. So before this recording session, I just came from this morning reading about, I don't know how many I got done, maybe 16, 16 or 17 final papers. So final papers are

Gus Nolan ([00:49:44](#)):

For this summer?

Gerry McNulty ([00:49:45](#)):

For this summer, we have about 52 students enrolled this summer. So the final paper is a written, it's one of these private assignments in which the students talk about, they summarize what they have seen, who they have met, what their tasks were. And then there's a whole section there, the last two or three pages where they, they are required to talk about themselves. What did they learn? What was difficult for them? What would they do differently? Will they stay in this profession?

Gus Nolan ([00:50:10](#)):

Very interesting. I suppose

Gerry McNulty ([00:50:11](#)):

It's revealing, shall we say. And one of the things that happens in these papers routinely and is perfectly normal and understandable, is the high percentage, and we're talking 40% maybe, of students who say, I don't think I want to do this.

Gus Nolan ([00:50:29](#)):

Right. Very good.

Gerry McNulty ([00:50:30](#)):

But, you know, that's actually a very valuable experience to have long before the rent check is on the line. You learn what it's like to be in an ad agency, how the people got their jobs there, who they are, whether you want to do the work or not, and you decide, or it's a TV station, or it's a news online set. Now you've gained that experience, that exposure to the field. Now you're able to make contrasting decisions about what you want to do with your life. That's a valuable thing, even though you kind of are a little grumbling. Like, I spent three months doing this, but how else would you learn? How else would, you know?

Gus Nolan ([00:51:08](#)):

Twenty years and then being frustrated by something else. Yeah. All right. This is 2018, where is Marist gonna be 10 years from now?

Gerry McNulty ([00:51:18](#)):

Gosh...

Gus Nolan ([00:51:20](#)):

Five years from now?

Gerry McNulty ([00:51:21](#)):

You know, I mean,

Gus Nolan ([00:51:22](#)):

You've seen such a change...

Gerry McNulty ([00:51:22](#)):

I have seen such a change. When I was a student in 1979, there were maybe 16, 1,700 students enrolled. There were not even a thousand of us living on campus. And today there are over 5,000 undergraduates enrolled. And the campus is literally three times the size it was when I was a student. Now that's 40 years ago. It's a long time. But I think in another 10 years, I imagine that Marist will continue to expand as well as deepen. My own program in the school of communication, I think is an excellent example of this notion of deepening the quality and enriching the experience. The students have no idea. Of course, we can't tell them what it was like 30 or 40 years ago, but they have no idea. They have such a multitude of options in front of them as current students to be involved in clubs and activities, and

Gus Nolan ([00:52:19](#)):

Even on the graduate level.

Gerry McNulty ([00:52:20](#)):

Oh my goodness, it's tremendous. But, but the world is more complex. Really. It is. Than it was 40 years ago. Their world is as they enter the professions. So I think that Marist will continue to grow and expand. I think that, the communication world is not going away. I don't see it getting any easier. I know there've been a number of items written and projections made about how you don't have to study journalism to be a journalist. Well, you never did. There were lots of people who went into journalism from law school and everything else who didn't study it. But you know what, it helps a lot to know First Amendment law. It helps a lot to know writing structure and grammar. So you can come at this from different directions, but any education is helpful. So, you know, I mean, the guy who founded Apple, Steve Jobs was not a computer whiz, not necessarily, but he was a brilliant, he had a lot of problems, but he was a brilliant guy and he built that company. So it's all about learning yourself, education. And I think Marist has done a great job in that regard. In the school of Communication, one of the strengths is that we have this notion of cross discipline in our students. Many, many of our students have dual concentrations, and they go off into the work world. And as alums, I talk to them and they're changing jobs, and they're changing job tracks and doing different things. It's terrific. So I think we're gonna be successful for many years to come.

Gus Nolan (00:53:46):

Two questions. One, positive, negative. What are some of the disappointments you've had here?

Gerry McNulty (00:53:53):

Some of the disappointments I've had?

Gus Nolan (00:53:55):

There must be something.

Gerry McNulty (00:53:56):

Yeah. You know, I would say that I think this is, for me it is a disappointment. I think it's a shame more than anything else? I think that Marist is not necessarily seen from the outside as a valuable academic player. And so we have, we honestly do have high turnover on our faculty, you know, and I'm not, I don't come from the academic world. I was a professional person. So it's difficult for me to see all of the nuances involved in that. But we, I've seen just for years and years, I can't tell you how many search committees I'm just on them every year. So we have so many folks who come in from the outside who have, who are not Marist people, so to speak, which is, you know, which is normal. And they come in and they work for a year or two and they just move on and move up. And we have difficulty retaining them. So I don't quite understand what it is about Marist. I'm a fan and I'm here for 22 years. And it seems to me like a very successful place, but it doesn't necessarily equate to people who go to grad school and University of Illinois. They come, they stay for a year, they're gone. So I don't know what they're looking for.

Gus Nolan (00:55:12):

<laugh>. It's kind of a stepping stone for many, apparently.

Gerry McNulty (00:55:14):

Maybe Yeah. Yeah. I'm not sure what it is. And we have our share of people who spend 20 and 30 years here, but

Gus Nolan (00:55:21):

We wish they would leave. I did eventually leave. They pay me to stay home now, <laugh>. What's one of the better things you've experienced?

Gerry McNulty (00:55:33):

I would say really the growth, I would say the growth. If you had my friends, my classmates, even today, literally some of them will show up, you know, and walk around the campus and just, especially if they haven't been here in say, 10 or 15 years, absolutely flabbergasted, they'll walk halfway across from the dorms up headed toward the library. And they, and I've seen this on their faces, actually stand there by the library and they look down to the, and they point down the hill and they go, that was a parking lot. Yeah. And it's beautiful now, <laugh>. And then they see the dormitory, the new dormitory buildings, and they just can't believe it. And I, you know, I sometimes can't believe it when I think of what this was. Do you know that when I was a freshman one day, this was 1975, 76, 1 day one of the seniors knocks on our door, I can't remember his name now. And he says, I gotta put this poster thing up. Everybody's gotta go to this meeting. Well like, okay, well what we were freshman, we did what we were told. You

know, like, what is it? What is it? It was a little thing that said, was one of the Marist Brothers was holding a meeting and I can't remember now, I can't remember his name. He was here for just a couple of years at that time, and then left to teach somewhere else, so I can't remember his name. And said Brother so and so was holding a meeting and we want everybody to come. So we all showed up in the theater and there were people standing in the back, 300 seats. And there were easily a hundred or more people standing in the back. And we, and it was the title of the poster was The Future of Marist. So it was spring semester, it was maybe March or April. So we all go in there and then the next thing you know, we see that there's some students up there and they introduce themselves as being workers for admissions. And they begin to talk. And they said that we've been having trouble getting students acceptances and, and enrolling students. And the college is struggling. Now we are freshmen, mostly freshmen, sophomores, younger underclassmen in this meeting. So we don't really understand what's going on. And these were all students. It was a student meeting that they had kind of organized, you know, in those days there was a lot of students self-organizing to take action to do things. So these, this group of kids just began to talk and say, you guys are all going home for the summer. You need to go home and you need to talk about Marist and you need to get people to apply to college. Because this college cannot survive unless people sign up and come up here to go to school. And enrollment was dropping. And I think a lot of us looked around and went kind of, we got the message like, we liked it, we liked the school. We felt we were doing well. We knew it was a very small school, it was a small place. But we kind of understood the overriding message was we need to be successful. And sometimes you gotta step up and talk about your own. And when I think about that, versus today 5,000 kids, you can't find a parking space. We went in the right direction.

Gus Nolan ([00:58:44](#)):

We like to have a drink with you sometime and explain to you about the backdrop of that story.

Gerry McNulty ([00:58:48](#)):

Oh, you probably know a lot more about it than I do. <laugh>.

Gus Nolan ([00:58:52](#)):

I do. But what would you say is how come Marist has succeeded as it has in your lifetime in 40 years, you know, some 70 to 18, 20 and 20, you know, what's the principle yeast that brought this thing to growth?

Gerry McNulty ([00:59:16](#)):

I think that when I came, I felt in a short time, a few weeks' time, talking to different faculty members, talking to different students, I felt that I belonged. I felt a sense of community. And at that time, I can remember writing, you know, in those days we literally wrote letters. I mean, I wrote letter to my friend Earl up at the State University Dear Earl, and sent him a letter, are there any concerts at your place? Write back to me. And it wasn't the same for a number of my friends who went to big state universities or went to private universities. They didn't talk about their experience. They talked about going to school and they talked about going to frat parties. I had a friend who went to Rutgers and I went down to Rutgers one weekend and went to three different frat houses. And it was cool and fun and exciting and parties. But it wasn't like Marist and Marist when the crew guys would decide that they would have a party outside the crew house. They would invite everybody. And 150 kids would go down to the crew house on the river and have a bar-b-que.

Gus Nolan ([01:00:27](#)):

That's not story about River Day. That's something else.

Gerry McNulty ([01:00:28](#)):

Well, not River Day. River Day, I can't tell those stories. No, I've been sworn off. But, there was a sense of community and I felt it from the very beginning. And then as I got involved in clubs and organizations, it became actually more intense. My very good friend Rich LaMorte, Father LaMorte, I think was instrumental in that in those days of bringing kids together and giving us a spiritual underpinning, so to speak, a message that we could use. Because there was a lot going on at those days. There was a lot in the church and many of us had opted out of traditional church services and whatnot. And Rich LaMorte I think was a good example of saying, here's what you need and take from it what will work for you and be part of it. And there were lots of people like Rich LaMorte in the faculty. When I think about that, there were some who were coaches also. And that's the part that brought me back in 96 when I came back. It was, you know, knowing people like Bob Norman and Tom Casey had been around and yourself and Jep Lanning, who had worked for years and years. And, and even when I first came, I remember thinking, I remember thinking like, guys like Vinny Tuscano and Jerry White, you know, those guys broke their butts. They worked for pennies, they worked for nothing. And when nobody would take these jobs and they did it for 20, 30 years and they built this place up and now it's a very good school. When they did it, it wasn't so good. But somebody had to do the hard work. You know, and I think it's that sense of community. I do honestly give Dennis Murray a lot of credit. I think he deserves a lot of credit for the organizational and for his attentiveness to it. And for 38 years,

Gus Nolan ([01:02:12](#)):

And the dream that he had to make it,

Gerry McNulty ([01:02:13](#)):

He had to dream big. And he did. He absolutely did.

Gus Nolan ([01:02:16](#)):

We have the river. So one of the things, and he capitalized on that marriage tradition.

Gerry McNulty ([01:02:22](#)):

He did. He did. And he made many, many smart choices, certainly at that time period. You know, he was a young man, he was trying different things. Not everything worked. I mean, but that's normal, you know, in the course of events like that over 38 years. But I think he helped to lay the groundwork. But I would say at the same time that, you know, the sense of community that was imbued by the Marist Brothers certainly predates Dennis Murray. Yeah. And I really think about that. And there aren't, of course, there really aren't, you know, many brothers left. But I remember that. And I think that is still here in a lot of ways. I think it's still here. And I try to promote it with my own students, my own interns, when I talk to them and I say, look, you're an intern here in four or five years, remember me because I'm gonna call you up and you are gonna take a Marist intern. You are gonna be the next one. You're gonna help. And they do, they do.

Gus Nolan ([01:03:17](#)):

Last Thursday, I had lunch at Shadows where 13 or 14 guys who are now 75 years old. They were all in my class. here, you know, and what's the glue that keeps this thing together? You know, it's, you touched certainly before about, there's a certain democracy. I mean, you know, it's not named, most of them not coming from rich families. Most of them are not, you know, they're now it's different.

Gerry McNulty ([01:03:50](#)):

It is different now.

Gus Nolan ([01:03:52](#)):

It is. I mean, 7% of the freshman class come from the first, the one percenters. You know, it's, it's staggering.

Gerry McNulty ([01:03:59](#)):

It's different.

Gus Nolan ([01:04:01](#)):

Another important question while we have time, is Marist Catholic College?

Gerry McNulty ([01:04:09](#)):

It's not a traditional Catholic college. No.

Gus Nolan ([01:04:13](#)):

I asked LaMorte that, I interviewed him <laugh> a long time ago. And he put it this way. He said, well, if any percent of the college was black, would you say it's a black college? If any percent was Jewish, would you say it's a Jewish college?

Gerry McNulty ([01:04:30](#)):

Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([01:04:31](#)):

There are more Catholic percentage here than in Notre Dame.

Gerry McNulty ([01:04:34](#)):

There are, it's a very high percentage's.

Gus Nolan ([01:04:37](#)):

Not, it's not religious, kind of in terms of practicing

Gerry McNulty ([01:04:41](#)):

Cultural, maybe we would say Catholic culture.

Gus Nolan ([01:04:43](#)):

They've been baptized, they're identified, they wanted to say they're Catholic, they don't deny it. Yes. It's just they don't like some of the things that, and I know there are some reasons why we would not be so happy with some things.

Gerry McNulty ([01:04:56](#)):

I would agree with that. And I think it, and I think it is, it is a college that sees itself as part of the Catholic tradition. And I see it that way myself. Yeah. I see Marist as being part of the Catholic tradition and in particular a part of, you know, of the tradition really as expressed by the Marist Brothers. And I, I do come back. I, again, I know to this word community, but that was the lesson that we really learned as students. I mean, I just, I think of that all the time. How, how often when I was a college student, we did things together.. And my contemporary friends from high school did not, they did not go to something where there were 50 or a hundred people from their college. They went to a frat thing, which was seen as a frat opportunity, not some part of the college. And when we put on a fun, like talking about Father LaMorte, he would say, we want to have a fundraiser. We would dash around to all the dorms and we would get 200 kids to show up at a fundraiser because it was a Marist thing and we would all participate. So that, I don't know how you quantify that, but it's, to me, it's a very, it's almost invisible, but it's a very definite part of the experience that we keep it together

Gus Nolan ([01:06:07](#)):

It seems to me there's a magnet here of like draws, like, I mean that or opposite. There's a certain, kids come on campus and they see this is a place I'd like to be. Not only physically, but you know, there's an openness of the students willing to help or hold the door let you through, you know.

Gerry McNulty ([01:06:27](#)):

I think that the way that it continues, and I really do hope this, you know, this continues for the future, is I see a very significant amount of effort and initiative on the part of the students to do, to help those who are less fortunate. I mean, it is a very common experience for every club to get involved, being a sponsor, to do fundraisers, to do outreach. And they, and they want to do it. And I think that that's more of, of an extension of, you know, back in my time, which was a long time ago, it was not as formal. We did things because we worked with the faculty members and we helped. And today we see a lot more of that initiative on the part of the students themselves. The student clubs step up and say, we're gonna do the children's home. We're gonna run two funding raising events in, or we're gonna make five grand for the children's home. And they don't really need help there. They're sophisticated enough to run the events themselves and raise the money.

Gus Nolan ([01:07:23](#)):

The biggest activity is Campus Ministry, which has 800 students. Not that they go to church, but they serve the lunches, the Meals on Wheels, you know, the Christmas tree thing, Thanksgiving, the fun drive, the run for food,

Gerry McNulty ([01:07:37](#)):

Isn't it almost all, isn't it really student run? I mean my experience with it is the students are really pushing all the buttons there. Perfect. Well do you have any more, <laugh>, we've gone through so many different avenues here. If there's something more you want to say before we bring this to a happy ending because it's been a joy to have the opportunity to talk to you and get your touch, unique touch about this whole place and the long history you've had here.

Gerry McNulty ([01:08:07](#)):

Well, thank you Gus, I appreciate again, being invited. You know, it's flattering and Marist has always been a very special place for me. I was a typical mixed up, you know, 18 year old kid who didn't know what he wanted to do. Let me show you the list. Made a big difference to me in my life. People you've joined, those people we've interviewed now. Oh geez. Wow.