

Interviewee: Kevin Carolan
Interviewer: Gus Nolan

June 10, 2002
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John Martin “Kevin” Carolan

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Erin Kelly

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

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Summary: Within the following interview, Kevin Carolan speaks of his forty years teaching at Marist College as an Associate Professor of Mathematics. Kevin Carolan speaks of his early educational years and his introduction to Marist College through the Marist Brothers at Esopus. After completing his undergraduate degree in mathematics at Marist College and his graduate studies at Catholic University, Kevin Carolan returned to Marist College in 1962 to teach mathematics. Among teaching most of the courses offered in the Mathematics major within his forty year span at Marist, Kevin Carolan also encouraged the cooperation between the college and IBM to improve Marist’s computer technology. Within the interview, Kevin Carolan also speaks about the physical development of the college as well as the leaderships of the college under former President Linus Foy and President Dennis Murray. The interview ends with Kevin Carolan’s stance on where he hopes Marist College will be in the future in terms of distance learning.

“BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW”

Gus Nolan: Good morning. This is an interview with Kevin Carolan, retired Associate Professor of Mathematics at Marist College. The interview is being done for the Archives of the college and today is June 10th. It's about 10:30 in the morning and we're speaking to Professor Carolan. Good morning Kevin.

Kevin Carolan: Good morning Gus.

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

KMC: My baptismal name is John Martin Carolan.

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

KMC: Yes, my father's name is John and my uncle was named Martin and he's my mother's brother.

GN: Where and when were you born?

KMC: December 6, 1931 in New York City.

GN: Okay, and the borough?

KMC: Manhattan.

GN: Manhattan, okay. Do you have any siblings?

KMC: Yes.

GN: And could you name them?

KMC: I have a brother Peter who's deceased and I have three sisters, Peggy, Anne and Mary.

GN: Okay, and your parents' names and what did your father do?

KMC: My father was a manager for the Service Transportation System, which was the bus transportation system in New York City. He originally was the

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doorman at the Plaza Hotel in New York but when World War II started, he went to work for the Service Transportation Company and my mother was pretty much a housewife. She did work part-time in the New York Ballet School cleaning in the evenings.

GN: And your mother's name?

KMC: Bridget Halley but she went by Delia so everybody knew her as Delia although her baptismal name was Bridget.

GN: Alright. What about your early education? Where did you go to grade school and high school?

KMC: I went to St. Anselm's grade school in the south Bronx and then I went to St. Anne's Academy in New York City and I spent one year there and then I went to Esopus across the river with the Marist Brothers.

GN: So that's your entrance into Marist Brothers, the beginning of the formation program?

KMC: That's right.

GN: And what year was that?

KMC: That was 1947.

GN: And do you recall any significant experiences while you were in Esopus? Some of your dramatic performances at the house?

KMC: Some of my... [Laughter] I played opposite Jep Lanning in *Breezy Money* so that was my...

GN: Your high career? [Laughter]

KMC: First and last stage performance.

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GN: Okay, and then when did you leave Esopus to come to Poughkeepsie?

KMC: Well, we went... We actually went to Tyngsboro so we spent two years in Esopus, sophomore and junior year and then we really had senior year in Tyngsboro.

GN: What year was that that you went up there?

KMC: I guess maybe '49.

GN: '49 and '50 in Tyngsboro?

KMC: Yea.

GN: And then you began your college life really when you came back to Poughkeepsie as a Scholastic in '50, '51?

KMC: Right.

GN: Okay. While you were at the college here, at Marian College, do you have outstanding remembrances of activities you had, keys, particular obligations that you had to take care of?

KMC: Yea, I used to take care of the grotto. That was the key that I had and I guess it's been changed now. It's not the same as it was then and...

GN: And what did you study while at the college? Your major?

KMC: I majored in Mathematics.

GN: And on completing your college courses here, did you graduate from Marian or did you leave early?

KMC: No, I graduated. I graduated in '54.

GN: Okay, and then what was your first teaching assignment?

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KMC: Well, my first assignment was really cooking. I cooked in Esopus for a year and it ended up that there was some sort of a complication and ended up that I ended up teaching Religion and Latin besides cooking so that was my...

GN: In Esopus?

KMC: In Esopus was my first teaching assignment.

GN: And then going out to the Apostolate, to the schools? Where did you go first?

KMC: I went to Cardinal Hayes in the Bronx.

GN: And for how long were you there?

KMC: From '55 to '61.

GN: And at what point do you go to Catholic University for graduate?

KMC: '61.

GN: In '61?

KMC: Yea and then I came to Marist in '62.

GN: Okay, let's go back to your personal life outside the Marist Brothers. When did you marry Donna? Donna is your wife I believe. [Laughter]

KMC: That was August of 1974.

GN: Okay. Can you say something about her and her background and her career?

KMC: Well, she's from Montana. I was introduced to her through Marty Lang, who did teach at Marist College and at that time was at Fairfield University and he was in charge at the Religious Education Department at Fairfield and Donna was going to Fairfield to get her Master's degree in Religious Education and

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about the same time that I left and Marty sort of was instrumental in introducing us to each other so...

GN: And what has she done since that in keeping with her Religious Education?

KMC: Well, when we got married, she was a Religious Education coordinator at St. Mary's in Poughkeepsie. I forget for how long she was there as a... maybe two years. Maybe two years. I don't think it was three years that she was a religious education coordinator. And then when Sean came along... Well it couldn't have been... She stayed at home full-time for both the birth of Sean and Sarah. And then about the time that Sarah was five or six, Donna got a teaching position at St. Mary's School in Fishkill, New York and she was there for... I think it was maybe three years or something at that time.

GN: Alright. Now in the last ten years, what kind of work has she been doing?

KMC: Well the last... After she left St. Mary's in Fishkill, she became a principal in St. Martin dePorres in Poughkeepsie and she did that for about six years and then after that she was in charge of... She was a district Superintendent for Dutchess and Ulster Counties and she did that until last year and this past year, she's been principaling St. Joseph's Parish in Croton Falls.

KMC: And what about the children? You mentioned Sean and Sarah.

GN: Right.

KMC: What are they doing now and what do they do?

GN: Well, right now Sarah's going for her Master's in Elementary Ed at NYU and Sean is a financial analyst for Louis Vuitton in lower Tennessee, which is a high class holding company for companies that specialize in luxury goods.

GN: Right.

KMC: That's what he's doing.

GN: Does he take care of your financial investments? [Laughter]

KMC: No.

GN: We'll pass on that. Okay, let's talk about your coming to Marist to teach.

How did that come about? Where were you and were you at C.U. and then you were assigned to come to Marist to be a Mathematics instructor?

KMC: Yea, I was at... Well, I taught at Cardinal Hayes from '55 to '61 and then the understanding was that I would come to Marist.

GN: Yes.

KMC: So I went to... Gone to Catholic University to pursue some graduate studies and then they were having some problems at Marist and it worked out well for me that I come in '62.

GN: So in '62 you came?

KMC: Right, yea.

GN: So then you retired this year so you had the full forty years.

KMC: Full forty years, yea.

GN: Let's talk about your forty years at Marist and some of the outstanding accomplishments that we could point to. Let's start from the beginning. What were some of the first assignments? You had teaching assignments and committee work. Do you remember those things?

KMC: Well, I... When I first came here, it was a very small department so it ended up that I ended up teaching practically every course that we have for what

was offered, that we'd be offering. I think about the only ones that I didn't teach were Differential Equations and Geometry.

GN: How many Mathematic majors were there in those years?

KMC: Oh, we had a fairly good... We used to average about fifteen majors a year. We had at that time, we probably had more majors than we do now even though the college is a lot larger, we ended up having more majors. When I first came here, there were a lot of student Brothers and there was a need for Mathematics teachers so there was... It was fairly large. I think it was maybe fifteen to twenty-five majors a year and I remember one year it got damaged and maybe about twelve and I became very much concerned about it. But right now, we have, maybe we average five or six a year. That's about what we would have so...

GN: The two other areas I'm interested to hear you talk about, one is your interest in computer technology and getting involved in computers and languages, computer language. Can you say something about that? How did that come about?

KMC: That came about when I was teaching at, well probably at Cardinal Hayes. I was very good friends with Larry Hanshumaker and he was very interested in computers. At that time it was seen that, you know, the mathematics of the future, you're going to be using computers so that was very much something that I was very interested in. I got interested in it almost from the beginning and...

GN: Well when you came to Marist, computers were not the thing that they were to become in their significance.

KMC: Well, we did have a computer and you could do things in Fortran for Mathematics so I ended up learning Fortran and you know, the students... What I had when I first came here, they would write programs in Fortran for things like Statistics and so forth so we were able to use whatever was available at that point in time. I think the... The advantage that I saw for Marist was that none of the things about Mathematics or mathematicians tend to be exclusive. That it's looked on as being a sign of genius to be strong in math. If you're strong in math then you're smarter than other people and I think with what the Marist traditions, I thought a chance to make Mathematics more inclusive and I thought that computers would be a way to do that. I thought with our heritage that we could be in the fore front, sort of saying that, instead of being an exclusive discipline, we're going to try to make it as inclusive as we possibly can. So that's part of the reason that I very much became interested in it. I saw an opportunity to make Mathematics more accessible to other people.

GN: In those days it seems to me there were widespread opportunities for seminars and courses that were given to faculty and administrators and to secretarial staff just to get into... and you, I recall, played a part in that. Did you not?

KMC: Yea. Well, when I... This interest in computers goes back since certainly from...

GN: The Cardinal Hayes days?

KMC: Yea, Cardinal Hayes and almost as soon as I started teaching, I felt that that was the way to go and I guess I lost my train of thought now on it.

GN: I was trying to put the teaching, the seminars that we had, the classes that were given. I think you wrote a manual for some of that.

KMC: Right, yea. Well, we ended up leapfrogging some computer generations, that we went from the 1401, which was like almost in the dark ages of computers and we jumped right into what you would call timesharing and in between we had skipped a lot of steps that were occurring there. And it was a timesharing system so you were actually able to access the computers so it was a question of training faculty and the staff on how they could actually use the, you know...

GN: To get into the big machine?

KMC: To get into the big machine and what would be involved in that so that was that.

GN: And at that time Linus Foy was playing a part in this as well, was he not?

KMC: Yea, Linus was... Linus was the President. He had been very much involved I guess getting the 1401 and I guess with the financial situation, it was tough at that time. So here we had a machine that we had paid for and was still getting the paychecks out which is the most important thing. [Laughter]

GN: Yea.

KMC: So there was no reason to really get rid of it except that he realized that it would have to change. So in the meantime when I became the Associate Dean with Richard LaPietra, one of the first things that we try to do was to see what we could do about upgrading the computer system and it ended up that Richard

referred me or I don't know, to this Steve Dunwell, who was an IBM Fellow and he was instrumental in developing the 360, which sort of set a standard for IBM that took them a long time to, you know, to surpass. And as a result of the work that he did for IBM, they made him a Fellow, which means that he can do whatever he wants to and he decided to get into what you would call a shared educational computer system, which they gave the acronym SECOS to. And I was on that board of directors and at that time it seemed that the only way that Marist could move to this technology would be to, you know, be part of some sort of an educational cooperative with other schools and so forth. So I was on the Board of Directors and eventually it reached the stage where SECOS couldn't make it with the organization that they had and then at that time, we had enough use on Marist. Marist, where we were using enough things on a system, that we ended up becoming a host for this shared educational computer system so that's how we moved. We moved from like the dark ages if you want, right into the...

GN: The cutting edge kind of...

KMC: To the cutting edge. So we had this computer system and it ended up that Marist sort of took over what that shared educational computer system was and we ended up hiring staff from there. We ended up hiring Cecil Denney, Ron Rosen and a couple of the other people who were...

GN: They were key in it.

KMC: Who are on that staff and we ended up hiring those and they were extremely talented and they were, you know, excellent in developing computer

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systems. So they, for a minimal cost, were able to develop a very sophisticated system for a college of our size.

GN: Good. Let's go back to that think that you just slipped in there. When Dr. LaPietra became the Dean, there were two Associate Deans with him, you and Jerry Cox.

KMC: That's right.

GN: Okay, and what was your role? How did you see your role in those days as an Associate Dean? What was your responsibility?

KMC: Okay, I was responsible for Academic Services. So the Academic Services that I was responsible for was for the computer center, the library, the Registrar's office and I was also responsible for institutional research. So they were the areas that I...

GN: Yea, yea.

KMC: The administrative areas that I had responsibility for.

GN: And also space.

KMC: Space, [Laughter] yea, that's right. I...

GN: You were the space cadet actually.

KMC: Yea, the...

GN: Assignment of space in classrooms and all that.

KMC: Yea, I...

GN: You supervised the assignments of those things.

KMC: Not so much the assignment, more the long-range planning that the... I did a study on this with the needs, the physical space needs that we had for the library and based on the basis of that study, Linus went ahead with the move...

GN: From Donnelly to over here?

KMC: The move the library from Donnelly to the Fontaine building, so that was... And it was more the study that I had done, you know, saying how much space we needed, how much we had, what the needs were, that Linus felt that he had enough to go to the Board of Trustees and say that we have to go in this.

GN: Were you there also when we moved to Western Printing? Was that part of your experience?

KMC: No.

GN: The classrooms set up over in Western Printing and so that came after you I guess then.

KMC: Yea, yea. That was during Andrew's time, Andrew Molloy.

GN: Okay. Moving onto the development of the college, maybe we can talk about a number of phases that we went through. We went through a core program at one time. Well, before the core program, we had a student option of choosing sixty credits of their own, sixty-sixty program, the department assigning another sixty but then the department is the choosers. The student was allowed to choose a good number of what they wanted to do.

KMC: Right.

GN: And then we moved from there to the core program. Were you in an administrative post when this was going on or is this Lou Zuccarello's area and post-LaPietra?

KMC: The sixty-sixty was during our era I think. You know, we had some sort of a core and then we went to the sixty-sixty and I'm trying to think now...

GN: It must be Lou then, that Zuccarello's administration that actually implemented that with the various breakdown in Philosophy, six credits in Philosophy, six in Mathematics, six in Literature.

KMC: Yea, I think so. I don't recall that I was involved with that.

GN: Right. When you were back in the classroom then, having left the administrative role, you were there for the movement from the core then to the divisions, the departments and then the divisions and then finally the schools. Have you seen any impact of that change on the college and what would be your comments about it? Did we gain something by doing that or lose something by doing that?

KMC: Well, I think that I very much appreciated coming to Marist when it was a small college and where I would have relationships with a lot of people in different...

GN: A lot of interpersonal kinds of...

KMC: And from a very broad, you know, you would know Historians and English teachers and Religion teachers so I found that...

GN: We had some outstanding English teachers as I recall in that time.

KMC: That's right. [Laughter]

GN: Yes.

KMC: I guess I found that moving to things like the divisions that we sort of lost that but I guess maybe that was inevitable but I think yea, it gives you a very different sort of feel for the college that now I'm in a school where you really have Mathematics, which most people treat as a liberal art and probably the, you know, the feeling that most mathematicians would have would be towards the liberal art and we're in a school with computer scientists who end up being, you know, really professional and not having an understanding for the liberal arts. A lot of them haven't come from a liberal arts environment so they only know, you know, that sort of professional atmosphere if you want.

GN: Okay, another development of the college would be the physical, the McCann Center and then from the McCann Center, the library, the new Fontaine building, the Lowell Thomas. Where were you in the process of some of these? Where were you when the McCann building was going up? Were you in an administrative post? Were you on any decisions about that?

KMC: No, no. I wasn't involved in that. I think for the first part of my tenure in administration, I think from '69 to '76, I was with Richard LaPietra and for the last part, from about '76 to '79, Lou Zuccarello was the academic dean at that point in time and when he was the academic dean, I was responsible for the computer center. I wasn't responsible for the library at that time. Vince Tuscano...

GN: I see.

KMC: Had taken over that and yea, so primarily it was the computer center that I was responsible for and that would've been part of the transit, transition moving, you know, getting SECOS people on board, supervising that...

GN: As you look at the college now, what strikes you as some of the biggest physical changes, the most impressive, you're surprised that this happened? Would it be Fontaine, Lowell Thomas, the library? Where would you see the greatest...?

KMC: Oh, I guess the library would have to be the most striking change. I think going from the library that I knew as a student and then when I came here and the library was the current computer center in Donnelly Hall and then to have it move from there to Fontaine, which we looked on as being a big jump at that point in time and then the going to the place across the street for, you know, for the foundry and then come back, yea, that would be certainly...

GN: And then when you were a student, where was the library?

KMC: It was in the President's [Laughter] building.

GN: The third floor in Fontaine.

KMC: Yea, yea.

GN: Now they have the Greystone rather.

KMC: Yea, it was the Greystone building.

GN: Yea, okay. Let's talk about the students. When you first came here, you were talking about a lot of the students were really Marist Brothers in training although they were, began to expand I think about in 1960 or so to lay students coming in as well. Can you describe what you would say to be the character of

those students and their traditions versus what you have experienced in your last year of teaching? Is there a big contrast in that?

KMC: Well, yea there would be because of the student Brothers. You know, when I first came here they were... You know, I'm certain that most of the classes that I had, I would say there was a very high percentage so they gave a certain dimension which a certain feel like that you would have that you don't have now. You don't have that...

GN: Well, they didn't have any women in those classes, did they?

KMC: Yea, we started taking in women, not when I first... I forget what year we started taking in women. It maybe was about '66, somewhere around there but it... In the beginning, yea, there were no women. Yea, so those changes were...

GN: And now they dominate. I mean, more than fifty percent of the student body would be women.

KMC: Yea, yea. But I...

GN: Do you think they're as well trained now for your classes in Mathematics as they were then or do you have to do more remedial work now or are they more advanced?

KMC: They're certainly not more advanced. You know, it ends up that I'm sort of teaching different courses now than when I first started here. When I first started here I was teaching a lot of courses for Math... A lot of courses for Mathematics majors. Now I don't teach that many courses for Mathematics majors so there's been a change of the courses that I teach and it's one of the things that's happened to Mathematics that, you know... I think I mentioned that

we had maybe fifteen majors so you would end up teaching two or three upper-level Math courses. Well now, pretty much there aren't enough upper-level Math courses to go around the department so you might teach an upper-level Math course every other year if you're lucky. So there's been a change in that way and I guess I could remember when I came here that one of the... There was a lot of concerns about one of the teachers who was teaching Statistics and that still is a problem right now but you know, you know what's being taught, how it's being taught and stuff like that.

GN: Yea.

KMC: So some of those things, you know a change but it's not like I'm teaching the same sort of Mathematics that I was when I first came here.

GN: Well, a subject like Statistics is applied in various fields.

KMC: That's right.

GN: You know, you have Communication people do it for polling...

KMC: Right.

GN: And the Psychologists do it for their own reasons...

KMC: Right.

GN: So it's kind of a different focus sometimes...

KMC: Right. That's right.

GN: As to what the content would be, you know, what they emphasize.

KMC: Right, yea, yea. So...

GN: Now on a large scale also, would you care to offer us some of your observations about a contrasting in the two presidents that you knew so well like

Dr. Foy and President Murray. Let's talk about Foy. What do you think Foy's greatest contributions were to the college?

KMC: Well, I think he was an educator and I think he really encouraged the faculty to develop and I think he really did develop the faculty.

GN: He took the college from where Paul left it in '58 and brought it to '70, '58, '68, '78. Twenty years and in that time made some...

KMC: Yea and as far as I was concerned, he was very much a kindred spirit. In fact, he had the he had the same attitudes towards computing that I did. In fact, I guess I was speaking to Artin one day and I said something and he said "You sound just like Richard Foy."

GN: Yea.

KMC: And so, in one sense I...

GN: Verified what your feeling was...

KMC: Yea, yea. So I...

GN: Was Foy open to the faculty? Were you allowed to... Did you make an appointment to go see him or could you... Was he available? Did he come to the lunch room? Did you see him in the corridors? Was Foy around as you recall?

KMC: Yea, yea. Yea, I thought he was available. The college was small at that time so there weren't that many...

GN: Big responsibilities.

KMC: There weren't that many buildings and so forth so, yea. I think the fact that, you know, I was a Marist Brother and he was a Marist Brother at the same time so I might've had more of an advantage than other people to... So...

GN: Okay, and Dr. Murray. How do you see him as the President and the leadership under his domain? What would be one of the key points that Murray has brought to the college?

KMC: Well, I think he was able to capitalize on a lot of the work that Linus did. Certainly the work that Linus did in computing.

GN: Such as the IBM?

KMC: Yea, well actually getting, you know, moving toward where we were in the position of having a very sophisticated machine and we were actually offering courses and so forth so that when Murray came in and said that he wanted to go in the direction of Computer Science, we already had approval for the courses so it really didn't take much to, you know, to come in with that particular part. I think I'd say Murray is better at development, raising funds than Linus was. I understand that he has a very good reputation for that, you know, outside of Marist, has been a great fundraiser. But then I don't think he's quite the educator that Linus was and I don't think he's developed a faculty to the stage that I thought Linus did.

GN: Can you correct or confirm an idea that I have here? Did Marist make itself available for IBM employees in setting up specific courses, bringing them here and making the campus available like in the summer programs and the night programs. Do you remember anything about that in the course of time?

KMC: The only thing I recall is that one of the graduates when I first came here sort of complimented me or Linus about the fact that we were offering these courses and that gave these IBMers the chance to get degrees and that was

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something that Linus had done and I think he had pushed but he already... That was already in place by the time that I got here. So my recollection of that time was that it was more in providing the opportunity for IBM employees to get a degree and, you know, Marist went out of its way to do that I think in the evening and so forth that I guess Vassar wasn't interested in and probably New Paltz wasn't in a position to do it. So that was something that...

GN: Yea, yea.

KMC: So I'm conscious of that. I can sort of remember the fellow who sort of thanked me but I really didn't have anything to do with it. Linus already had that set up.

GN: Good. From your perspective now, as you retire officially even though you'll continue to teach, you'll look back at over forty years. What would you say were maybe two or three of the most significant contributions you feel you made? How have you... What satisfaction do you get out of having been here for forty years? Would it be in some of the administrative things you did or the general classroom opportunities that students you taught, the classes? Is there any area that you are very satisfied with?

KMC: Well, I guess I'd have to be satisfied with the way, you know, the computing has developed at Marist but that's been sort of bittersweet, that there's a part of it that I'm not satisfied with that I figured out departmental party that at the last meeting, Lynn gave an opening presentation and she said that I was really the father of Computer Science at Marist College, that I had sort of designed the courses, taught the courses. In the beginning I was really doing

pretty much everything that was required to keep that going and I guess the... I never really thought of myself as being the father of Computer Science and point of fact, the... At the time Murray came in, there was a great deal of hostility in liberal arts colleges against Computer Science.

GN: Yea.

KMC: And I could remember Don Calista saying that it's too bad that Linus wasn't around to see the Computer Science program established and I sort of thought to myself that if Linus was around, it never would've gotten established because the faculty would be balking at it but when Murray came in, there was a need. You know, they realized that we're in trouble so I think they... that sort of changed the attitudes. So it was this question of accepting it reluctantly.

GN: Yea, but if you had not done those things in those days and we just tried to remain a pure liberal arts without any, where would we be now? I mean, I probably would not be here.

KMC: Yea, yea.

GN: So the survival really has been a good part of it. That would be one area. And something else? You know, your accomplishments in terms of all the classes that you've taught, there must be some satisfaction out of that. Have you have an idea as to how many students you taught?

KMC: No, no. Yea, I've had...

GN: Thousands obviously.

KMC: Yea, yea. Yea, but one of the problems with Mathematics is that it takes forever to accomplish something in Mathematics. That the George Ball, who sort

of was the fault in him, forefather of a lot of things that have happened in Computer Science. While his work went unread almost for about eighty years so I sort of know that the trend of the future is that people in Mathematics are going to be using the computer and I just wish that was more advanced but I don't think I know enough about the history of Mathematics that I'm not going to live long enough to see it so...

GN: Oh, you're not feeling well? [Laughter]

KMC: I'm feeling well. Just speaking, you know, seventy-five years for something to occur so...

GN: While I guess the other side of that is what would you wished have happened and I think you're saying it, that there would be more of an openness for the integration of computers and Math.

KMC: Yea, and I guess one of the things that sort of struck me as I've been thinking about this is when I first came here, that was in '62. That was about six years after Sputnik.

GN: Yea.

KMC: And at that time, the United States was very much concerned about this scientific and Mathematics train so you know, for example we... You know, the Russians were able to put up Sputnik and what we put up didn't work and it ended up that we had all these... Ended up bringing in all these German scientists to...

GN: Move ahead in this.

KMC: Move ahead in Mathematics and Science. So then the feeling was that we had to prepare students, math students, for graduate school and that's what... I was very, you know, trying to say well okay, I was going to be in the forefront in doing that but when I started teaching the students here, I realize that it just wasn't going to work out, that there was I think somebody said "It's like to put a German head on a British Body" but that's what graduate school is. That you're taking dramatic ideas and you're trying to put it on somebody who has a British body if you want. So I realized that that wouldn't work out and that's where I got into saying well here, I have the opportunity to do something with computers and that hopefully, we could approach that in some sort of an American fashion in this particular case over here. But the upshot was that, you know, I had to go to graduate school to learn these courses that you just can't teach to American kids. I don't think you could teach them to any other kids as far as that's concerned. But now, now we have all the faculty that we have. They've all gone through graduate school and they're all part of that particular culture.

GN: Yea.

KMC: But the need right now from what I read is for Mathematics to become aware of what's going on at the secondary level. So here I had... I came from the secondary level. I had to learn all these things about teaching abstract courses which you can only teach to a very small minority of the population. And now that I'm getting out, the need is for somebody who has a background with...

GN: To go back to the high school. [Laughter]

KMC: To be able to teach Math to high school kids and the feeling was that if you learn the abstract stuff, you could pick up the stuff that you needed in high school and I think they're finding out that it doesn't work that way, that they're really very much different mindsets that... In the graduate school, you're interested in proving theorems and at the high school level, you're interested in solving problems and if you can solve problems, you might not be able to prove theorems and if you can prove theorems, you might not be able to solve problems and that's the... It's very much a different mindset so...

GN: Looking down the road for a future for Marist, what's in your mind's eye? Do you see Marist continuing to profit by its location, which seems to be very fortuitous? Or is it going to take distant learning roads? Will it be getting more involved in distance learning and less students coming to campus or do you see a balance there somehow?

KMC: I really haven't thought that much about it. I guess it's just been one of the things about people in Mathematics, we tend to be in our little ivory towers [Laughter] so I tend to be, you know, concerned about what I was doing in computer math and taking whatever I would need to be able to accomplish that. I'd like to really continue doing something like that. As I mentioned, when I first got started with computers at Marist in a serious sense, it was really in some sort of a timesharing environment and I'd really like to be able to do something like that, you know, with the accessibility now to be able to make the language that I like and think is very powerful and to make that available to as poor of an audience as possible. And I'd just like to do something like that and that would

be what I would be involved with and I'm not much... I really haven't thought that much about distance learning.

GN: We're on the verge and this we are, of a new class coming in Marist, it's more popular than ever it seems in the students who want to come here and there are several reasons for that and certainly we have an attractive campus and we're well located. But on the other hand, we're in a new age where we could give courses to people far away. Are you more pleased with or you think mathematicians are more pleased with a class in front of them or can you speak to an empty box as it were or, you know, a picture and computer and have... Is it effective to do it that way?

KMC: I don't know. I think that I probably need...

GN: They need a teacher.

KMC: Students to be there but then on the other hand, I... To think of what I'd like to be able to do is to be able to set up some sort of a website if you want where people could go and they could get whatever the information is. Now I don't think on that as being necessarily a course that I'm offering but I would think of that more as being a way to sort of transmit information and knowledge and that would be the way that I would be... You know, if that, that would be my view, to set up some sort of a website and almost have out there the things that I develop and if somebody's interested in it, they have a way of accessing that data and they would be...

GN: You'd be more comfortable with that kind of approach to it?

KMC: Yea, yea. So in that case, I really don't know the people who might be using it so in that sense it's... But then it's almost like trying to write a book, that when you write a book you're basically putting down something that somebody's going to read and they wouldn't be there for you except that the, you know, probably the experiences that you've had are based on teaching experiences.

GN: Good. Finally, are there any things I didn't ask or we didn't touch that you'd like to just add to this in terms of maybe what Marist has offered you, opportunities, interpersonal friendships and relationships, a place to make your place of work for the last forty years? Are you leaving it with, you know, a sense of it was a good ride and you were happy to have been here?

KMC: Yea, I would say it was a good ride. I think, again, at the last departmental meeting, I was saying that I think sometimes people make a little bit too much about the fact that, you know, Marist Brothers built Marist College and I sort of use the analogy that when I was in charge of the computer center, the professional staff that we had left and it ended up that I had three students who were really running the computer center. One of them was Ross Mauri who's now a vice-president in IBM. Another one is Jeff Meisner, who's a manager down at IBM and the other fellow was Joe Evangelista and he said that he really appreciated working in the computer center because if he didn't do that he'd be tossing pizzas. [Laughter] You know, trade his way through school so I... So the way that I look on it, instead of doing some sort of another job, we had the... It was great to be able to do something that was related to what you were going to be doing later on so that's a wonderful experience. And then certainly being able

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to do something in an area like computing where that becomes important that
yea, that's sort of a feeling and I probably feel sorry that the present faculty
doesn't have that experience and it looks like they may not have that experience.

So yea, I would say that was a great run.

GN: Good. Thank you very much Kevin.

KMC: Thank you.

“END OF INTERVIEW”