

Interview with: LINDA SCORZA

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Lily Jandrisevits

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Transcript – Linda Scorza

Interviewee: Linda Scorza

Interviewer: Gus Nolan

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Summary: Linda Scorza talks about growing up in Poughkeepsie before attending Krissler Business Institute and then getting a secretarial job at Marist College in 1970. Eventually, after a time of transition, she started to work in the Office of Special Services. Linda talks about the changes and growth she has seen the office undergo in terms of serving students with physical and learning disabilities, as well as her hopes for the future expansion of the office.

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

Today is July the 8th, 2008. We're in the Marist College James Cannavino library. We're having an interview with Linda Scorza from the office of informational services.

[00:21](#) **Linda Scorza:**

Special services.

[00:22](#) **GN:**

Special services correct that. Well, good afternoon, Linda. Linda let's start from the beginning. I sent you an overview of some of the things I'd like you to talk about and we talk about life at Marist, life before Marist life, life at Marist, and what you might see in the future. So, let's start before Marist. Where were you born and where did you grow up?

[00:50](#) **LS:**

I was born and raised right here in Poughkeepsie, and you don't hear that a lot anymore.

[00:55](#) **GN:**

No, I don't, no. In the city of Poughkeepsie, town of Poughkeepsie?

[00:58](#) **LS:**

Town of Poughkeepsie.

[00:59](#) **GN:**

And more specifically. Out in north, south, east, or west?

[01:06](#) **LS:**

South side.

[01:10](#) **GN:**

South side, okay and did you grow up here?

[01:12](#) **LS:**

Linda Scorza

I did. I did, yeah.

[01:14](#) GN:

Where did you go to school, grade schools?

[01:16](#) LS:

I went to Arlington grade school on Raymond Avenue.

[01:21](#) GN:

It's still there, is it not?

[01:24](#) LS:

It is but it's got a different name now, as do all of them. Then the Arlington, well what was the Arlington junior high on forty-four. And then the Arlington senior high out on Freedom Plains.

[01:37](#) GN:

Okay. Now, in those school years I say what are some of the experiences that you had like, well were there particular like in subjects. Did you like math or science or English?

[01:51](#) LS:

Math was never one of my strong suits, so I'm going to rule that one out right away [laugh] it's funny because I think I liked history, I am a history buff, I liked English. Oh well let me say I like to write, I wasn't so fond of doing all of the parts of speech and all that kind of stuff.

[02:16](#) GN:

The grammar aspects are not too good.

[02:18](#) LS:

I could do it, but it wasn't a favorite thing of mine. Art classes I really liked.

[02:25](#) GN:

Did you ever do any more in art did you, have you ever painted on your own.

Linda Scorza

[02:31](#) LS:

No, but I do a lot of crafts and things like that so that's my creative side and I enjoyed doing that kind of stuff. I was in chorus for the four years.

[02:46](#) GN:

Chorus in high school? Anything else? Any other clubs or any athletic activities?

[02:55](#) LS:

Not really extracurricular you know I always loved gym and I was a great softball player and I enjoyed that. And I still love baseball to this day.

[03:07](#) GN:

Okay, are you a Mets fan?

[03:09](#) LS:

Absolutely how could you tell?

[03:10](#) GN:

Well, I-- you're wearing this Mets sweater no she's not wearing a Mets sweater she's working here today. What about other activities during your school years like in the summers. Did you ever get a job or did you go to camp or did you-- what were the kind of activities that you had?

[03:32](#) LS:

I seem to recall that we did camp. At the Y and that's where I learned to swim do all that kind of stuff. No, our summers were for having fun and just being kids and I remember my dad say you are going to be go to work soon enough you're going to be working for a lot of years. So, enjoy life while you can.

[03:55](#) GN:

That turned out to be true, didn't it [laugh]? And the later years in high school, you didn't work in

Linda Scorza

the summer you also played all through?

[04:07](#) LS:

Well, yeah there was always something to do.

[04:10](#) GN:

Very good. Okay. When did you well-- because you lived in Poughkeepsie this is a funny question when did you first hear of Marist?

[04:18](#) LS:

Well, after I graduated high school, I went to Krissler Business Institute right in Mansion Square Park. You know growing up we would always drive by Marist but there was always those roads trees. So, you really couldn't see in.

[04:36](#) GN:

In fact, there was a wall, maybe when you were very young there was a wall there.

[04:40](#) LS:

Yeah, but I do remember the trees and I do remember we had a neighbor who lived across the street. He was Jewish but he did take classes here, and this is before it became a lay school, and that's how I first heard about it. But as far as job possibilities, I didn't even consider it until you know I was getting ready to graduate from Krissler and they set up an interview for me.

[05:06](#) GN:

Oh okay, was that a direct step from Krissler to Marist you went right from one to the other.

When you came what were you applying for? Was there were clear cut job position?

[05:22](#) LS:

There was, it was for counseling and Dave Miller was here at the time. I don't know if you remember him or not. He was here for one month. And then he left and I tried not to take it

Linda Scorza

personally.

[05:36](#) GN:

I don't take it personally, he moved up to-- I think he went to New Paltz. Now in those days what was it like in terms of-- you were one of the rare woman hired full-time. I would take staff wise we were not-- this is about year 1972?

[05:58](#) LS:

1970.

[06:00](#) GN:

1970, okay. Did you know anybody working here?

[06:04](#) LS:

No, I didn't. It was such a small school at the time, of course, I can only recall maybe three or four women at Marist. Mary Striclen (?) was one, and Marge Button (?), and I remember Mary Sosa (?), I think.

[06:23](#) GN:

Do you remember Marge Button's job?

[06:24](#) LS:

She was in the copy center.

[06:26](#) GN:

She ran that like a machine.

[06:28](#) LS:

She did, so there weren't a lot of women but, there were some.

[06:35](#) GN:

When you came to apply, was there an interview? Did you see Dave Miller or Tony Campilii or?

Linda Scorza

06:42 LS:

I saw Tony Campilii, he wore many hats at the time and one of them was personnel director. And he's the one that I interviewed with. I came all prim and proper as I was instructed at Krisslers, with my suit on and my white gloves, you know, the whole nine yards. And I met him in Adrian. He was in Adrian at the time with a whole bunch of other offices. The computer center was in there, the registrar's office--.

07:10 GN:

The treasurer's office and even eventually Miringoff is going to go in there for a while. For public opinion but that comes later.

07:20 LS:

It does. But I interviewed with Tony. He asked me there are a couple questions that he asked me that I can remember but one was do you plan on staying? And obviously I was so, I'm still here.

07:37 GN:

No question was more truthfully answered in its entirety. Did you come by limousine, by taxi, did you have a car?

07:50 LS:

I have a feeling my dad dropped me off.

07:53 GN:

And would this be in the beginning of the school year like in September, or July, or November?

08:00 LS:

No Krisslers had, I guess, what you would call like a rolling graduation. I had taken the secretarial science classes in high school. So, when I went to Krisslers it was just kind of like a finishing school for me, just polishing my skills. So, I got through quicker than a lot of others

Linda Scorza

and as soon you got through-- fulfill the requirements, you could leave.

08:22 GN:

I see.

08:24 LS:

And that's what I did, and they set me up for a few interviews.

08:27 GN:

When you came, the skills you had were really kind of basic secretarial. Could you take dictation?

08:35 LS:

I still use it, yeah.

08:37 GN:

You do, you could type?

08:38 LS:

Yes.

08:38 GN:

Computers were not on the scene yet, not that even electric typewriters I guess.

08:43 LS:

No, I had an electric typewriter. I came and I shared the office with Helen Polered (?) who was John Sherlock's secretary in what was the placement office at the time. And I just got a little plastic chair. and a typing stand, and an old rickety electric typewriter, and that was my set up.

09:05 GN:

Well, you may define it as an old rickety, but it probably was an IBM.

09:10 LS:

Linda Scorza

It was.

[09:13](#) GN:

A beaten and well used and abused--.

[09:15](#) LS:

Yes, yes. I have to remember that.

[09:19](#) GN:

Okay and what precisely was going to be the job that you were going to have when you came?

[09:27](#) LS:

Well, you know, I don't really know. And I don't think it was all that well defined, I think it was going to just happen. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I think I remember Dave saying he wasn't all that sure. So, but being he was here only a month, we didn't really get to proceed with that.

[09:51](#) GN:

What's the process, who did you report to?

[09:54](#) LS:

I reported to Dave.

[09:56](#) GN:

And then when he left?

[09:57](#) LS:

And then they didn't know what to do with me, so I spent the summer typing Bill Perrotte's thesis, and that was fun and that took a long time. And when they finally decided they found a place for me, it was really working with the psychology department. We were in lower Donnelly at the time and there were only three people in the psychology department at the time: Dan Kirk,

Linda Scorza

Bill Eidle, Ed O'Keefe. So, I worked with them for a little while.

[10:28](#) GN:

So, you were kind of a dual secretary for several agencies.

[10:33](#) LS:

You'd be surprised all of the people I worked for all these years.

[10:38](#) GN:

When did this begin to change? When was there a more developed focus now that you would get involved in--.

[10:46](#) LS:

Well, after I moved over to psychology. After Bob, I think decided they wanted to expand the counseling center. Well, since Dave Miller was the only person in counseling, I guess they decided to make it a fledgling service I guess for the students but, they hired a full-time director, Kayla Moore, and that's kind of when my role kind started to change because I started doing more and more for that section. Psychology brought in another secretary. So, I was able to move over to counseling and then things kind of went on from there.

[11:28](#) GN:

Well, the counseling aspect of this is more for trying to direct students who are here in their strong suits as it were. They did pre-testing, and you-- did somebody work with them in terms of using the office to their advantage?

[11:52](#) LS:

I don't know if it was that sophisticated at the time, it's certainly-- I'm sure it's gotten to that point. But it was more personal counseling just, you know, I'm having an issue with a teacher, or just a personal situation, if they just needed to talk to somebody.

Linda Scorza

[12:14](#) GN:

In time, I remember doing a survey with Royce White and counseling was perceived by a good number of students as a kind of a negative. If you were going to go to counseling, you probably had a problem. It was not seen as something to go and see how they could help you, without having had a problem.

[12:36](#) LS:

And I don't know if that has ever changed. Counseling is actually-- shares a space with special services right now, and students are cautious. I think they always have been.

[12:53](#) GN:

Well, what's the progression, we've come a long way from your first days when there was virtually very little to where we are today.

[13:02](#) LS:

It was a progression for me. We physically located counseling, we went over to Champagnat, first floor and there were all kinds of offices over there, placement which was career services, the grants office was there, and special services was there, HEOP, upward bound and just-- I ended up working for a lot of those office. And Ellen Fischer, Doc Goldman, I don't know how that ever worked out. Special services, the grant took effect in 1973. It's a federally funded program, and it was a part time director. Ed Waters actually wrote the grant and started the office. But, Joe Hinds (?) was the director at the time when we were in Champagnat, he was part time, his secretary was part time. I remember her leaving, her name was Helen Cole and they came to me and they said, do you want to work for special survives? And this wasn't in place of, this was in addition to. And I said, do I have a choice? And they said no. So, that's how I got it.

[14:14](#) GN:

Linda Scorza

Well, that's answered by the first question, do you want to stay here a long time?

[14:16](#) LS:

There you go, funny how things work out. So, we eventually split, and I started with special services and it was one of the best things that has ever happened to me here.

[14:29](#) GN:

Well, what was the nature of the work that you did? Is it-- well you tell me.

[14:37](#) LS:

Between then and today?

[14:40](#) GN:

Well in the beginning, were you writing letters to people or--?

[14:45](#) LS:

Well, the grant was written to provide services to physically disabled students, and only physically disabled students, so the program was small. It was a premier program in the country. And because a lot of physically disabled students, the really severely disabled students, didn't have a place that was accessible to go to college. So that was one of the great things about this and it was nice being part of that. But I helped, Joe was blind. So, you know I certainly-- I wrote some stuff for him, and I certainly spent a long time reading to him and a lot of that. But it was more about the students than a lot of the other things. Just because of the nature of the disabilities. And we had a connection with Castle Point. At one point in time, we had what we used to call the hospital wing up on the second floor Champagnat, there were a lot of high-level quads up there that had nursing care 24/7. And they just needed things that nobody bated an eye at, they needed, you know-- the students in general, personal care attendants, or aides, we had more blind students.

Linda Scorza

[16:06](#) GN:

What year would you say this began that the need for the handicapped or the attention to the handicapped in this development?

[16:14](#) LS:

The need was there, I presume that's why Ed probably wrote the grant. But I went over there in about 1975. You know, it was already in the fledging program, but there were a lot students. I guess I have to define a lot, for that day and age, you know, twenty, twenty-five was a lot with the severity of the disabilities that they had.

[16:41](#) GN:

I'm going to see if you can recall this, there was, Dan Kirk spearheaded a handicap day, as it were where people were to be in wheelchairs, and they had volunteers faculty and students. And the object was to see how difficult it was to operate on campus.

[17:01](#) LS:

We did that for several years. And I know he did, but we also did it through special services for a good many years, it was one of our awareness recognition activities.

[17:10](#) GN:

That was the word, awareness recognition of--.

[17:11](#) LS:

It was fun.

[17:12](#) GN:

And with that came a gradual improvements in the campus. That it became handicap accessible.

[17:20](#) LS:

That's true. And it was a different time. Marist was in a different place. But people did things

Linda Scorza

then, and I'm not saying that they don't now, but you didn't have to ask you just saw that the need was there and it had to be done. People like Jack Chanecy (?), and you know they'd come in the office, we did this for you just because you needed it. I am very familiar with that.

[17:48](#) GN:

I didn't realize it went on for more than one or two years, you know, that awareness program.

[17:55](#) LS:

It did. We did a wheelchair sports invitational for many years, with outside agencies. A lot of awareness activities but our populations has changed a lot over the years.

[18:07](#) GN:

Well, let's direct some attention to that, as your staff, or the people working in the office came on, did they need any special skills? Or they had to be trained in particular ways to be able to do what had to be done?

[18:27](#) LS:

I don't know. With me it was baptism by fire, I just learned by doing and certainly Gale Canale, who's is the other secretary in office, she's the same and she is the person you see for the learning disabilities component of the program. So again, we just learned by doing but for administrative staff, certainly the directors has to be well educated in disabilities. In we-- maybe I should just back it up a little bit, we have four people on our staff that are funded by the federal grants. It's myself, the director, the counselor, and our support services coordinator. So, all those people really should have disabilities background of some sort, it varies I guess.

[19:15](#) GN:

But not to be disabled themselves.

[19:19](#) LS:

Linda Scorza

They don't have to be. It's certainly a plus as far as the government is concerned and we have had staff with disabilities over the years we've had a few.

[19:30](#) GN:

Yes, you had Ed Hinds of course was blind.

[19:37](#) LS:

Yeah, we had a few other people, we had a student assistant that worked with Joe for a couple years I guess, Rich Barbara (?), he was in a wheelchair. Dan Dropka (?) was a counselor, he was in a wheelchair. Tim Ryan was hearing impaired. We had a couple other students, I recall some.

[20:00](#) GN:

From the beginning to where we are now, has there been some literature produced that would explain what we can provide and where does that come from?

[20:13](#) LS:

Well, it's certainly on our website.

[20:17](#) GN:

But who created, we created it or does it come with the government package?

[20:20](#) LS:

No, we created it. The other side of the program is the learning disabilities component, so we have a wide variety of disabilities, we serve all disabilities and people tend to forget that they really only see the LD portion of the program now. But we have literature that we've created over the years, and we improved upon it, thrown it out and created a new depending on what-- where we are as the years progress. But we've got flyers on a wide range of disabilities, we've got a general brochure for the office, we've got one specific for the LD component because that's a program that you have to apply to and it has a special criteria and, you know, we just have lots of

Linda Scorza

stuff and as I say our website has a lot on it.

[21:07](#) GN:

Now backing up, the criteria that we have developed for that, that's all in house stuff. So, this is what we're doing in terms of this thing.

[21:17](#) LS:

And we established the LD component in 1982 so from '73 to '81 we were serving mostly physically disabled, and we had a smattering of LD students in there and we realized this was going to a growing population so Diane Herrera (?)--.

[21:31](#) GN:

How do you make that distinction, what's the distinction between one and the other?

[21:35](#) LS:

Well, they can be both. The students in say a wheelchair, or visual problems, or hearing I mean they can certainly have a learning disability. But there's testing, psychological testing and a spectrum of testing that's done to determine.

[21:54](#) GN:

There are some students who need more time to take an exam. I remember having a good number of those, and some students who need help in writing. That if it's going to be a written exam they have to have someone and they will dictate the writing. So that's all part of the process that has developed in the course of the years.

[22:14](#) LS:

You try to find out what it is that a student needs and hopefully they come from high school with that knowledge of the specifics, and we put as much of it into place as we can. I only say it like that because maybe something that they're used to having might not translate to college, so we

Linda Scorza

find an alternative for them.

22:38 GN:

Is there not necessary limits that have to be put on? The applications you receive for people with these handicaps with this disability.

22:54 LS:

I'm not quite sure how to answer that. Truthfully, when a student applies, they don't have to indicate any disability. And many students, whether they have a physically disability or they have a hidden disability, apply and they come, many make it through, they don't need assistance. But others that do, they'll just appear in our office and you know, I'm struggling. And we'll see what we can do for them, but the ones that apply to, specifically to the program, there is a set criteria and hopefully they have been receiving the services in high school. And again, some services, accommodations... Accommodations you have to provide by law, but other services, it depends. And that's when we sit down, our counselor, and speaks with them and determines what it is, exactly what it is they need.

23:50 GN:

Well at this point in time, more than likely, the high school counselor are well aware of what opportunities we have here. Versus what might be available in Sienna or some other places.

24:04 LS:

You like to think so, although you know, there are many students who have applied to Marist through general admission that have said, we never knew anything about your program. Whether it's the LD Program or special services and its entirety. And you wonder about that sometimes because maybe a guidance counselor, or an educational consultants, or whatever didn't tell them but this needs to be on them too, they have to do their homework. And if they have special

Linda Scorza

needs-- if you have special needs you think you should be looking for a place that is able to best support your needs.

[24:47](#) GN:

Well. Point of fact though, that has blossomed in terms of where we were with those kind of needs twenty years ago. And where it is now, and it almost would seem to be disproportionate to the growth of the college generally just taking a stab at it without any figures.

[25:10](#) LS:

But if you figure when we got our grant in '73, we were serving maybe twenty, twenty-five students if that many, and now the office serves around 300. So, it certainly has grown. But there are many more students with disabilities on this campus and they don't have to affiliate with our office. If they don't want to.

[25:36](#) GN:

They don't have to if they don't want-- it's their advantage, particularly if it's a learning disability and they need help and time for exams.

[25:44](#) LS:

If they need extended time for testing, there is certainly something. Although faculty. You know, they can provide it themselves if they've got a-- whether the students comes to their offices or there's an empty classroom next door they can make arrangements individually with the student they don't have to work through your office.

[26:04](#) GN:

That's interesting I just took for granted that it was-- when the services, if they needed, this is the way it would be guaranteed to them because sometimes you have professors who may not see the light because the sun is in their eyes or something.

Linda Scorza

[26:19](#) LS:

Well, you know that's happened sometimes over the years. But we've been here a long time, thirty-five years now, and the faculty know us, they work with us, and the new ones you know, we educate, they have questions, they ask. It almost always works out to benefit of the student you know there's some tough people, there always have been and there always will be, nothing is a rosy as we would like.

[26:55](#) GN:

Okay, I was going to inquire, but from what you're saying now it does not seem that you would get calls from high school counselors about the services.

[27:02](#) LS:

Well, we do. Again, that's traditionally Gale's side of the house if you will she fills the interviews for the LD component and special services in general.

[27:16](#) GN:

Now that you say that though, it seems to me, didn't Diane Herrera have limits on how many physically handicapped we could take?

[27:26](#) LS:

No, it was the learning-disabled students, again physical disabled don't have to indicate anything. Neither do learning disabled, nobody has to indicate on their application if they have a disability, and it's illegal to ask. When we started the program in '82 Jim Daly was the director of admissions and they worked together. They qualified it, we could only have twenty-five students something like that. Marist was afraid I think at the time being labeled a learning-disabled college and they didn't want to open the floodgates. But we've done a good job over the years, and we are a nationally known program. So, we do get a lot of inquiry every year.

Linda Scorza

[28:13](#) GN:

Okay, what is your experience and visitations from authorities outside of the college versus visiting the program? For instance, are there state officials, are there federal officials who see what the college-- how college is performing and how they're, like we have middle state on the academic side of it.

[28:41](#) LS: Right. And every year, of course, we get audited by the college auditors, Dark Angelo (?). And then we file annually our annual performance report with the government and that's the way to track the students, those we serve, what happened to them, did they graduate, did they go on higher education, did they drop out, did they transfer? There's a whole bunch of questions and information that we have to provide the government on each and every student that we serve throughout the year. And then one year we had a psych visit, and that was the government coming and knocking on our door to the program, and they do that that was back when Diane was still here, so it's been a long time. I'm told that might have. Not a psych visit because that's a very, very thorough investigation, but we might have a government audit. So that I never been through, so that will be a new experience if that comes to pass.

[29:43](#) GN:

Well, that's pretty much documentation just looking.

[29:47](#) LS:

It could be-- the auditors. Well, the documentation is confidential, so we keep that sealed or at least in the file but in a separate envelope so that it's not readily accessible to people, because it is medical information that really shouldn't be shared. But the auditors look to make-- the government requires that we have certain things in the files that, they love paper, so we have a paper trail for everything we do. Contacts, every time we-- one of the staff sees a person, the

Linda Scorza

student, we have to indicate on our records when, how long, and all that kind of stuff so that goes to the secretaries right on up.

30:33 GN:

But not the nature of the conversation?

30:34 LS:

Well. We have a little, we have a coded system on the bottom. Whether it's, you know academic assistance, counseling, reading assistance, writing assistance, general stuff, whatever and the testing goes into learning assistance and so it's a coded system that we've come up with. But we don't get too detailed in what we write down.

30:58 GN:

What about the-- talk if you would please about the tracking of the students. Through here and after here, do you see where they go, do you know what, is there any kind of follow up about graduate outstanding stories?

31:18 LS:

Unfortunately, not as much as I would like. You know, we're so busy dealing with the current class being very much in the present it's hard often to keep track of people. But that's not to say that they don't keep in touch. We don't make a formal effort to see what they're doing although this year we're going to try to institute a mentoring program. Having graduates work either local, and maybe long distance too, with students that are here, so it's a way to keep in touch. It's going to benefit a lot of people. So as I said, that will be one way to keep in touch. You know, the students call and there's student that graduated back in the 70s that I still keep in touch with and some of them have become my very best friends, so that's one of the side benefits.

32:16 GN:

Linda Scorza

A verity of different pursuits that they have gone into.

[32:19](#) LS:

We have a couple that have gone on, they own their own companies, one fulfilled his lifelong wish of working for Continental Airlines, and he's moving up in the ranks. And you know they're doing a lot of good things. But, with this population, you know, it's one thing for those that are physically disabled, unfortunately people still don't see past the disability but when you get to those of hidden disabilities it's really hard for them too. So, they struggle, so those are success stories just to see them, first of all to graduate, because a lot of them are told they can't, and to see them graduate and move on. The other side of the coin too, is especially with the physically disabled, the ones that are severely disabled, they pass on way too young. And we've had a lot of our students pass on, that's the downside.

[33:25](#) GN:

Talk about your office a little bit and. What has happened and changes there, like when did the computers come in, what did they-- did you go to computer training school and all of that we had?

[33:36](#) LS:

You're making me think here Gus, now come on. We got computers, probably in the mid-80s. I think that sounds about right.

[33:46](#) GN:

Sounds right.

[33:48](#) LS:

And we were over in Champagnat, Diane was still here at the time, and we only had one. And it was one for the office, but we were only really, three or four people, probably four people at the

Linda Scorza

time so the computer was right in front of my desk. And she'd come out to use it, she would say, once you start using computers you're really going to like them and you're not going to go back to anything else. But I still had my typewriter, just in case. But they're wonderful when they work and they do what you want them to do.

[34:21](#) GN:

And they remember things and they come back and they the store things.

[34:26](#) LS:

You know they do, they either store them and come back to haunt you sometimes, or they lose it you know they have done a lot of that too over the years. But now you know, everybody has one at their desk.

[34:37](#) GN:

And some of them use it.

[34:39](#) LS:

And some of them do. Imagine that. And we have laptops that the students use for testing. We're keeping up with the times.

[34:48](#) GN:

Okay, let's just change the direction, we're going to look ahead. You've been with this from the beginning and have seen it and been mothering it as it were to the present state. Has it matured or do you think there's more to come. You know, do you see this an expansion within the services that you're providing and more things happening. Or do you think we've kind of hitting the outside limits of what the college can do staying, the college with its present population.

[35:23](#) LS:

Well, the students are always going to be there, whether they identify themselves or not. And as

Linda Scorza

the Marist reputation grows and the office's reputation, I think we only have-- we can only say we're going to have more students. I don't know, I guess I can try to find a way to put it. But there's lots we can do, you know, as an office. But we're somewhat limited in boundaries, you know, our office is just so big so, you know, if you can expand, you can do a lot of wonderful things we're kind of crushed for space right now.

[36:09](#) GN:

It's hard to believe that considering where you were at the beginning. Where you are now.

[36:15](#) LS:

You know we have a lot of students that require accommodating testing, and many require separate rooms. But with the volume, that's a lot of students testing, especially around midterms and finals and its crunch time we go all over campus looking for space and it would be nice to have our own lab with computers and the tables with all of that, just having everything internalized.

[36:47](#) GN:

Is there a possibility of part-time help for those crunch times. I don't know where you could recruit. Maybe the mentoring program, getting some graduates.

[37:00](#) LS:

We use a lot of students, peer. We do have our full complement of staff, the learning disability specialists. We have a huge student population that we tap into, of course and use so. The manpower is really there and it's just, space is always a problem, and you know and that's not-- it's not anything that's new. Every office on this campus--.

[37:35](#) GN: Would tell you the same thing.

[37:36](#) LS: Exactly, they grow and more is expected of them.

Linda Scorza

[37:41](#) GN:

And the times change, the times in which we live to be able to do this. What might you say about your own training in this area? Have you been to conferences or do you have a opportunity to share your experiences with people doing the same thing and other institutions.

[38:05](#) LS:

Not really, I mean I came to the college not having any background and I just learned by doing. It was a great education because every person and their needs, while the disability may be the same but their needs are different, so that in its self is an education. I have gone to a few workshops over the years, but not a lot. You know, last one I think was last year on Asperger's, because that the incoming disability.

[38:40](#) GN:

Disease or problem.

[38:42](#) LS:

Yeah, whatever, that's the new disability right now and who knows what the future will present with the disabled veterans coming back, that might change do a complete--.

[38:52](#) GN:

That's another whole-- you probably won't be around for most of that. But at least the beginning of it, you might be here to set the--.

[38:59](#) LS:

I am counting the years now, I am looking forward for retirement but I have a few years ago yet.

[39:10](#) GN:

Where did you learn? The obligations you have like on secrecy and so on. Do you-- in house are

Linda Scorza

there conferences meetings and committee meetings to remind you of these things?

[39:24](#) LS:

No, I just basically learn that from any of my supervisors. Probably first time with Joe Hinds and they go-- the directors always go to conferences the administrative staff so they bring back anything that's new.

[39:44](#) GN:

Okay, that would be the linkage then.

[39:46](#) LS:

I guess you know a lot of the stuff, it's common sense, for one thing, you don't share the information. But the government has their regulations and counseling you know the counseling office is in house with us, at least housed with us for the time being. They have their own set of rules. So, it just gets passed from person to person, I guess.

[40:10](#) GN:

What about the Brady law and sharing any of this with their parents and so on, is all that closed down?

[40:16](#) LS:

Pretty much, we don't discuss anything with parents unless students sign a release. And we don't discuss anything with faculty. We have to be very careful in this day and age. It's just like with disability back in the 70s and 80s the students would jump in, nobody worried about liability or anything like that, people just did things. But as time got on, people got more cautious and, you know, lawsuits happened at colleges and whatever so now the same thing still happens with release of information. You know the strings are pulled tighter; you don't say anything unless you have that release in hand.

Linda Scorza

[40:57](#) GN:

Again, there would seem to be, for the benefit of the student. Well, I don't know if I'm wording this correctly. But applications for jobs, when they write for references and things for that sort, it is up to them to make known what their needs are.

[41:11](#) LS:

Absolutely. We're careful in what we release but usually if students apply for a job, it's always do I disclose or don't I? It's an individual thing. It's the same with all the students on campus, if it's a hidden disability, who do I tell? Do I have to tell anybody, do I have to tell my instructors? Well if you want to take test out of class. Yes, you better. But you don't have to tell your roommate you don't have to tell anybody if you don't want to.

[41:42](#) GN:

Well, that's the kind of interesting observation of-- that's the lay of the land I guess about privacy and we have to live by that here in the Hudson Valley. Okay, now the question you've been really waiting for see what you're going to say about this, in your thirty-seven years or whatever it is.

[42:05](#) LS:

Starting thirty-nine.

[42:08](#) GN:

Starting thirty-nine years, okay. Let's take one challenge for each of the decades.

[42:15](#) LS:

You didn't give me that question to mull over did you?

[42:22](#) GN:

What would you say were some of the challenging experiences? Would the difficulty of the job,

Linda Scorza

learning the job in terms of fulfilling what had to be done, or you know would, did you find difficulty with-- are some students more problems-- than you know, have you had that kind of reaction?

[42:47](#) LS:

Oh sure, that, no matter what decade you're talking about you're always going to find that.

[42:53](#) GN:

At Marist.

[42:58](#) LS:

You know. Imagine that. But you know, it's an interesting population to work with and I think it's why I have been here so long, there's a lot of variety and you never know what you're going to get. I remember one student, this is probably gone back to the 70s, he just figured that he was entitled to everything. He would-- I don't know if he was an injury in service, a service-related injury or what. He had an attitude, he wanted everybody to hop to and that wasn't the way it worked and that's the same with any student but he will always stick in my mind. But I don't know how different he is from a lot of other people that you get to know over the years.

[43:48](#) GN:

You have developed a certain sympathy though for their plight.

[43:43](#) LS:

I like to say empathy not going to go with sympathy.

[43:56](#) GN:

You empathize with them, alright, in a sympathetic way.

[44:06](#) LS:

There you go. Yeah because, I don't know, it might be a personal thing, Gus. With me, no matter

Linda Scorza

who it is, I put myself in their shoes or I try to do that, I mean obviously I don't know what it's like to be a high-level quad in a wheelchair or you have any of these kinds of disabilities, developmental disability, or psychiatric disability, or I can't see, or can't hear. I am really not going to know that kind of stuff. Not really, but I try to understand and if they you know. I tried I probably go overboard sometimes trying to help them you know.

[44:47](#) GN:

But you must see the conflict more readily than other people where they might have great intellectual abilities but not the physical ability to be able to has to harness that and for a career of whatever and hoping that you're going to have a solution to it.

[45:05](#) LS:

That would always be nice. A lot of times they just, this population just wants to know that somebody is listening. And I don't mean me, personally, but anybody. And just to kind of hear them and realize that there's one additional thing, if not more, that the traditional personal doesn't have to do. And just kind of keep all this stuff in mind. So, I try to do that kind of thing, doesn't always work though.

[45:40](#) GN:

Another tender area here, have you ever had or experienced a challenge with faculty? Either trying to get students into a class, or you don't do that maybe, or do you not?

[45:55](#) LS:

Well, personally I don't do that, but our office does that. And whether it is getting them into the class or-- you know we've had some that have not wanted to modify their requirements or maybe given an alternative format testing, you know. Or wouldn't let a student take a class because they might be going to publish someday so they didn't want, you know--.

Linda Scorza

[46:28](#) GN:

All these trumped-up reasons really.

[46:29](#) LS:

But you know you never know.

[46:32](#) GN:

Yeah. But on a practical level like. They don't like to take in, actually these students are probably not that way, more they're very capable. Don't like eight o'clock classes, could you get me a class around 11:30.

[46:46](#) LS:

Oh sure. You know we have learned that you don't call anybody before ten, at least. And even then you're waking them up

[46:57](#) GN:

That's always going to be there.

[46:59](#) LS:

That's never going to change. Whether there's a physical limitation that they can't get up early, but its more or not, I stayed up late parting. You know that's being, partying, you're stupid.

That's what it's all about, I guess.

[47:15](#) GN:

Do you deal with the difficulties in dormitory placement and things of that sort, has that been in your office as well as a problematic area?

[47:23](#) LS:

We do, every year we forward to housing a list of students and we try to keep it small, the list of students that might have special need whether they need a single sometimes we have some who

Linda Scorza

have had very severe asthma and they have had to have the air conditioning. You know, students with wheelchairs need a little more room, you know we had to make, try to find places for the students to keep scooters. And there's a variety of reasons we notify housing during the summer so when they make the placements they can take into consideration.

[48:01](#) GN:

Do you attempt to provide service for them if they need a help mate to get dressed or to move out or something?

[48:07](#) LS:

We used to, in the good old days that was that the personal care attendants or aids did. We moved away from that a long time ago, so now we pretty much instruct students to work with an outside agency.

[48:28](#) GN:

Work with an outside agency.

[48:31](#) LS:

Due to liability, I presume. You know, they don't want-- first I'm assuming that now in this day and age that they look at it as it not being a student responsibility. That's not what they're here for. So, a student aid, they're not here to assist a student to that degree. We have told students in the past we have given them a list of agencies to contact and they make the arrangements themselves so its changed to how we used to do that in the 70s and 80s. On a regular basis. We don't go near that at all.

[49:11](#) GN:

Now would follow through like with transportation?

[49:15](#) LS:

Linda Scorza

I'd guess security does provide transportation but again liability.

[49:21](#) GN:

Should they fall or something of that happen, there'd be difficulties. Okay, let's change the tone a little bit. What about the more rewarding things? What's some of the best things have happened to you?

[49:34](#) LS:

Oh my gosh. I will have to give that some thought, this is just a great office to work in. It's had its ups and downs I'm not going--.

[49:49](#) GN:

We've just been through the downs.

[49:52](#) LS:

It can't be all up in that length of time but again it's a great population to work with I have wonderful staff, for the most part, to work with over the years and I've learned so much and you know just personally. Just having been affiliated with the office, I picked up so much. On my own is that when my mom and dad became ill in later years that I was able to apply a lot of what I learned here, or I knew contacts or there were people that I could call, and you know I wasn't starting out cold. With disability issues and so that was a plus you know. I said before some of my very best friends, I had met through the office and they were students. So, and lifelong. It's a great thing and I still keep in touch with Joe Hinds who was the director back in the 70s.

[50:56](#) GN:

I have a funny story about Joe Hinds. I don't know if you remember this story you know. He was a good friend of Bob Norman and also Tom Casey. And he calls Tom Casey one time and Tom gets on and he says, I don't want to talk to you is your daughter home? And that was the

Linda Scorza

beginning. And he was getting a date to go to a movie, mind you. So, this seems strange for a man who was blind to make a date, so that is the Joe Hinds and the Tom Casey.

[51:33](#) LS:

Yes, and he's married Karen.

[51:36](#) GN:

Yes, and happily ever after and she's over there at Vassar, isn't she?

[51:39](#) LS:

Yes, she is.

[51:43](#) GN:

Something else positive, how about your superiors? Have you ever met Dennis Murray?

[51:51](#) LS:

Yes, I have.

[51:56](#) GN:

Did you know Foy as well Linus Foy? He was here for a few years.

[51:59](#) LS:

Yes, I did, he was here for a few years. He was a wonderful individual and he's the kind of person that I am sure you know if you passed him on campus he knew who you are, who you were and he knew your family members and he'd always asked how everybody was and I saw him actually this past February over at McCann Center at our annual kids day out and he visited for quite a while. And he actually remembered me after all this time, he was really nice.

[52:31](#) GN:

He's a good friend of mine, he lives in Stone Bridge, over in my area.

[52:33](#) LS:

Linda Scorza

Does he, I didn't know that.

[52:36](#) GN:

His brother is in from California, good family.

[52:39](#) LS:

He said he would stop by some time; I hope he does.

[52:42](#) GN:

I will drag him in

[52:43](#) LS:

Okay.

[52:46](#) GN:

What was, I on now, we were talking about people, meeting people, and then the superiors the people you've been reporting to. Who would you report to now?

[53:00](#) LS: Jean Viespar (?), and she's been here, it will be a year in August, Joe was here a good many years, Diane was maybe fifteen, I don't know. And Linda Cooper was here for thirteen, and Pat Cordon (?) interim director one year, and then Jean came. And you know I've been really, really lucky that I've had good supervisors. I always say that I work with them not that I work for them. And that's the way I like it we should be working together for a common goal.

[53:38](#) GN:

I meant to ask talking about family's and so on your brother.

[53:42](#) LS:

Yes, Frank he worked here for a number of years.

[53:48](#) LS:

He did, he did work in housekeeping for a while and then he moved over, well he had left but, he

Linda Scorza

had come back years later to work in Sodexo and he was there for I think for seven years, and he would work in housekeeping during the summer and the winter breaks.

[54:08](#) GN:

I have this funny thing I guess you didn't get it I thought I had sent it to you it has to do with the future, and I was saying if you were at a planning meeting for the future--.

[54:24](#) LS:

Yeah, I remember that question.

[54:26](#) GN:

Yeah, what are some changes that you think would be in order for the Marist to stay where it is and staying on the cutting edge as it were, these things that does--. Do you see some changes that would be advisable to bring, I kind of hinted at space?

[54:45](#) LS:

Yeah, you're going to put me in dangerous territory, aren't you Gus?

[54:50](#) GN:

Well, you can't make any improvements unless you got the data.

[54:54](#) LS:

Space is really a critical area. You know if we had more space I think we could hire more staff, it's a shortage in both areas.

[55:09](#) GN:

And space would be for office space to be able to interview and to counsel?

[55:16](#) LS:

Counsel, yeah. Deborah Reeves-Duncan is our counselor, and we carry-- last year we had 300 students on our roster and maybe close to a hundred of them were part of the LD Program. So

Linda Scorza

they work with an LD specialists but all the rest, should they choose to, have to see her so she's you know kind of overwhelmed at times, and her appointments are always back to back to back. So being able to bring another person in to share those responsibilities would be nice and we could certainly use more LD specialists, because that's a program that really, really can grow. Our support services coordinator is she's always bogged down, I mean we all are. So, staff and space is really a critical issue for us.

[56:17](#) GN:

Is there more training that would be needed or more people coming with particular talent that you would see?

[56:25](#) LS:

I think that's a good way to phrase it too, I mean, you know we all come from such varied and different backgrounds our specialists are either schoolteachers that have worked in special ed or some such place so, they've got that background. I think it always helps with the diversity.

[56:53](#) GN:

Looking ahead do you see retirement in the next ten years?

[56:59](#) LS:

Oh, I hope so. No, I am giving it maybe five or six years, I think. I mean I started when I was 19 years old.

[57:07](#) GN:

And what do you want to do then? It comes in a blink, let me tell you, you blink and it's here.

[57:15](#) LS:

I guess so, you know my dad always said don't wish for the years to go by because then they'll be gone by too fast. Very sound wisdom. You know, I have a month vacations every year and I

Linda Scorza

usually take the month of June off because I think it's not going to be hot and you know I can do things because I don't function well in this weather. So, my vacation this year has come and gone and this was the first year that it was a really tough coming back. I was just having fun and didn't go anywhere; I was just puttering around the house doing things, when I wanted to do them. And I had to come in here for, I'm also chief steward for CWA, so I'd come in for a couple of meetings, but you know saying, what are you doing here on your vacation? I said, not a problem because I go to that meeting and then go home, life was good.

[58:09](#) GN:

Anything we didn't talk about that you like to mention. I like your last expression, life is good. You say you had a good run here.

[58:18](#) LS:

I have, I've very lucky here. I've worked with such wonderful people I mean there's been a bump in the road here and there. And sometimes I'd wonder.

[58:30](#) GN:

It's hard to believe that but alright go ahead.

[58:36](#) LS:

Yeah, right. But all in all it's really been good and I was very lucky to end up here.

[58:42](#) GN:

Yeah. Let me just bring you just one outside observation my wife Liz said I was taking about doing this and she had a very positive respect, you were always such a good resposdee for the question that she would have to get from the office. So, she was always happy to be able to deal with you.

[59:00](#) LS:

Linda Scorza

Well, I appreciate that. My role has changed a lot in that regard because back in the good old days. You know back when the office was small, I did what Gale does I did Eileen Sivers (?), our support services coordinator, does providing the accommodations putting everything into place. So, I was multitasking. Doing plus my own job now. So, I was doing all three of those at once and then things got nuts so we kind of split it off in the three different direction so. Yes, I used to be the one that everybody would come to ask those question for admissions and all that kind of stuff now I say, go see Gale.

[59:40](#) GN:

Pass it on fifty-nine minutes and forty five seconds and that's it.