2007

Interview of Arthur Bangs, F.S.C., Ph.D.

Arthur Bangs F.S.C., Ph.D.
La Salle University, bangs@lasalle.edu

Caitlin Haug
La Salle University

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Field Notes

Interviewer: Caitlin Haug
Interviewee: Brother Arthur Bangs

Purpose: LaSalle University’s Oral History class is collecting interviews of elder faculty members to gain historical data, which pertains to the University and its continuing evolution. Brother Bangs attended LaSalle as a college student, while in the Brotherhood and then found himself as Professor and member of the counseling center beginning in the year 1969. At the age of 75 he is currently still teaching at LaSalle and his semi-retired.

I selected Brother Bangs from a lengthy list of faculty members to interview for oral history at the recommendation of a classmate. The following week, Professor Allen gave me Brother Bangs contact information and also informed me that she had spoken to Brother Bangs a few days prior. He was very open and excited for the opportunity to be a part of LaSalle’s archives and oral history research.

After about two more weeks, I made my initial phone call with Brother Bangs. I unfortunately got his voicemail and left a long winded message of who I was and why I was contacted him. I then left my contact information. The next day I made another attempt to contact the Brother and again left a voice message stating my reasons for calling. This Friday night around 9 P.M. I received a missed call. Once checking the message I realized it was Brother Bangs attempting to contact me. He then called me the following day, but I was busy at work and missed the call again. He also sent me an email trying to get a hold of me. Finally Saturday night Brother Bangs and I finally connected and had a very nice introductory phone call. Brother Bangs sounded excited from the get go and accepted my invitation to be interviewed. We threw out a few possible dates and then decided that Monday afternoon the 2nd of April would be the confirmed date to do the first interview.

At this point, I contacted Brother Joe to gain research material about Brother Bangs. Brother Joe was extremely helpful throughout my researching process. He was very flexible and even gave up two hours of his Sunday night, in order to show me a stack of papers, articles, and pictures all pertaining to Brother Arthur Bangs. Brother Joe was especially helpful, because he personally knew Brother Bangs. Brother Bangs not only gave me the stack of research material on Brother bangs, but gave me some insight on the type of person Brother bangs was and his overall demeanor.

I was then able to pull through the research material and create a rough outline of the topics I needed to discuss during the actual interview with Brother Bangs. Once I had the priorities of my interview established I began creating a long list of questions for the interview with Brother Bangs.

I then submitted this interview to Dr. Allen to gain some feedback and helpful advice. The following week I received some positive feedback along with a few added questions
that Dr. Allen suggested I use. I really liked all the additional questions and therefore, choose to use all these questions along with a few more questions of my own in the actual interview.

The Sunday before the interview I called Brother Bangs to confirm our interview. I again received his voice message left a message. Early on Monday morning I left Brother Bangs and email, which he responded to immediately confirming our meeting at 2 P.M. that day.

As I walked down the hallway headed to Brother Bangs office, I slowly passed an older gentlemen dressed head to toe in black. He was older but stood extremely erect, which possibly made him appear taller than he really was. He had a full head of beautiful gray hair that was well kept. This was an older man, who gave off an air of youth and ease. Suddenly, as we passed each other and made eye contact, this man asked me if my name was Caitlin. I then paused and laughed, as we both then realized the situation. Brother Bangs and I formally introduced ourselves with a smile and a firm handshake and headed to his office with Brother Bangs leading the way. For a 75 year old man, Brother Bangs has a quick step of some one far younger.

I entered into his small rectangular office and the first thing I noticed was his outstanding view. His back wall is a large window that overlooks a sports field. Presently there were girls playing some non varsity sport. I commented on what a great view that he had, and Brother Bangs agreed saying how he had just recently moved out of his counseling center office to this office. He mentioned how so far it had been a nice distraction to have the window to gaze out of.

His office was very simple as most college offices are. Brother Bangs had a dark brown rectangular desk with a basic green desk chair as his seat. His desk was covered with organized stacks of papers. Next to his desk was another chair which he told me to make myself at home in. As I sat down I took notice to the longer wall behind his desk. Along the entire back wall were book shelves that went to the top of the ceiling. These shelves were covered with thick textbooks, books, and large blue files containing his own personal research materials. He also had a group of pictures of himself and his family members in the center of this book shelf. At one point of the interview he makes note of these pictures, pointing out the communion pictures of himself, his niece, and other pictures of he and his brother Bob. Behind my chair is a white wall that has all of Brother Bangs's degrees proudly hanging on it. He also points out the West Catholic Alumni Award he received that hangs with his degrees and his P.H.D.

From the minute I met Brother Bangs in the hallway, we were both very much at ease. He admitted to feeling a bit funny talking about his self so much, but at the same time he embraced the experience and spoke far easier than the interviewer did. I ensured Brother Bangs that this need not be overly formal and to simply speak freely and descriptively. I then turned on the recorder and away the interview went.
The interview from a technical standpoint went very well. We were secluded in his office with the door closed, and experienced no interruptions. I was concerned while the actual interview was taking place that some points would be muffled, due to the amount of movement Brother Bangs was doing as he pointed to pictures and hanging awards. Once I played back the interview though my worrying was eased. Brother Bang's voice came out extremely clear and he turned out to be a very slow and loud speaker. More of the problem came from the interviewer, who tended to mumble her words and stutter. Brother Bangs rarely hesitated for more than a couple of seconds. There were no long pauses, but only quick seconds of thought and recollection. At times it was difficult because Brother Bangs did not fully understand the question that I was attempting to make, or just didn't have any solid thoughts on the question asked. All and all though, Brother Bangs gave some really insightful information on not only LaSalle but the Brotherhood within LaSalle.

The interview was only meant to be one hour long, but as over an hour had passed by and I still had many more topics and questions to cover we continued the interview without a break or interruption. Brother Bangs comes off as such an easy going man with many fun loving life stories to share. He had a great sense of humor that is far younger than his age, making it very easy to see how he must connect a great deal to his young college students of 2007.

Once the interview concluded, Brother Bangs instantly turned the interview over and began asking me several questions. At this point in time, I turned off the recorder but remained in Brother Bangs having a nice conversation for another fifteen minutes. I then thanked him again, and we shook hands as he walked me to his office door and we made our final good-byes.