

2008

Interview of Joseph Colistra

Joseph Colistra
La Salle University

William T. Donohoe Jr.
La Salle University

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Field Notes

Narrator: Mr. Joseph Colistra

Interviewer: William T. Donohoe Jr.

Date: Thursday and Friday March 6th and 7th, 2008 6:45 A.M.

Location: Classroom of Mr. Colistra, La Salle College High School

Language: English

Mr. Joseph Colistra has been a faculty member and coach at La Salle for forty years. He is also a graduate of LSCHS in 1964. He is an accomplished teacher here at La Salle and also teaches economics at La Salle University, Arcadia University and Penn State Abington. Mr. Colistra has taught every history course at La Salle and served as the head varsity football coach from 1984-2005, and is the winningest coach in school history. I was able to meet with Joe early in the morning on Thursday and Friday March 6th and 7th at 6:45 in the morning. His classroom is in the original wing at La Salle, called McLean Hall.

It was a pleasure for me to sit down with one of my mentors. Mr. Colistra taught me as a sophomore and coached me in football sophomore through senior year. Since I came back to teach at La Salle he has a good friend and mentor. Any questions on content or methodology regarding history; he has the answer. It was also interesting interviewing Joe and his two very good friends: Dave Diehl and Joe Ciccimaro, in that each talked about the others. Joe had been interviewed many times before by newspaper writers for football but never in this capacity. He was extremely excited to sit down and talk with me about himself and La Salle High.

Mr. Colistra is an intimidating looking man; stocky, a beard and glasses. However, he is a gentle man with a thirst for knowledge and a passion for football. Mr. Colistra won a football scholarship to Villanova where he played and received an excellent education. For me Joe has been someone who has made my life easier over the past eight years. In his position as department chair, he has guided his colleagues into the twenty-first century regarding teaching and historical content.

The interview included questions about his childhood, his years at La Salle, his college experience and his career at La Salle High School. The questions asked were geared towards gaining an idea of the values of La Salle through the eyes of one of its loyalist sons. His perspective as a classroom teacher and a coach are very helpful to his colleagues and may also be helpful for someone studying the history of the high school in the twentieth century: Joe sure was a big part of that.