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## Interview of John McCloskey by John Fallon

John McCloskey  
*La Salle University*

John Fallon  
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**An Interview with John “Jack” L. McCloskey**  
**By John M Fallon**  
**Field Notes**

**Interviewee:** John “Jack” L. McCloskey

**Interviewer:** John M. Fallon

**Interview dates:** The afternoons of April 8, 12, and 18, 2011.

**Interview location:** Mr. McCloskey’s home at 577 Ben Pine Circle, New Hope, Pa 18938 (McCloskey’s home is in Buckingham with a New Hope mailing address.)

**The Interviewee:**

John McCloskey was born on December 29, 1920 in Philadelphia’s Olney section. Born into a working-class Irish Catholic family, McCloskey moved to Cornwell Heights, Pennsylvania, in Buck County, in 1924. He graduated from Northeast Catholic High School in 1938. He held several jobs before settling in at Crown Cork & Seal’s seamless can manufacturing plant located at I Street and Erie Avenue in Philadelphia’s Kensington section. He joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942. He was selected to instruct future pilots in the operation of B-17 Bombers. He attained the rank of First Lieutenant. Following his time in the Army, McCloskey used to GI Bill to attend La Salle College where he graduated with a degree in accounting in 1948. He did this while working full-time as the student manager of the College’s campus store and supporting his family which included his wife Betty, and his first two sons, John and James. After graduation McCloskey was made full manager of the campus store. During this time he taught Military Science in the college’s ROTC program. In 1955, he was made Assistant to the President under Brother Stanislaws. At this time he also had begun work on his MBA in marketing at Temple University. He served in that post until 1959 when he was made Vice-President of Public Affairs. In 1986, he would step down as vice-president but continued to serve La Salle the Director of Public Relations, 1986-1988, and then as Assistant Vice-President for Development until he finally retired in 1992. Ultimately, he and his wife had four children: John, James, Kathy, and Dan. In addition to his years at La Salle McCloskey was also extremely active in the Philadelphia community assisting in numerous educational projects and donating his time to many Catholic charities. His service has been honored in many ways. In 1991 he received two distinct designations. He was Affiliated as a Honorary Christian Brother at La Salle, a honor that is not given out lightly. Also, in 1991 he was named a knight in the Order of St. Gregory, a Papal distinction given for outstanding service. On the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, McCloskey received letters of recognition from President and First Lady, Barrack and Michelle Obama, Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, U.S. Senator Robert Casey, as well as from Philadelphia officials. He is currently retired and living in Bucks County. He

spends every morning at St. Joseph's Manor, a nursing care facility, with his wife of over sixty-seven years, Betty.

### **The Interviewer:**

I, John Fallon, was born in 1984 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 2009 I received a BA in History from Temple University and I am currently working a MA in History at La Salle University. I have strong ties to Philadelphia's Irish Catholic community.

### **Background:**

This Interview steams from a graduate seminar in oral history at La Salle University. The university Archivist, Brother Joseph Grabenstein suggested that John McCloskey would be a good interviewee, which he certainly was. Brother Grabenstein was kind enough to offer assistance in finding background materials on McCloskey from his file in the archive. Most of the papers in that file are portions of La Salle publications or personal papers and memoirs that McCloskey has deposited there. In early April, 2011, I phoned McCloskey and explained to him the project and what it involved. He was more than happy to participate.

### **Description of the Interview:**

The interviewee was conducted in three parts on April 8, 12, and 18, 2011. This was done to accommodate McCloskey's schedule which had him visiting his wife every morning until lunch time. The first two sessions lasted close to two hours, each one resulting in about one and a half hours of recorded interview. The third sessions was much shorter, only about forty-five minutes and produced about twenty-five minutes of recorded interview. All three sessions took place in the sun-room of him Buckingham Township home. McCloskey and I were the only people present. McCloskey sat relaxed and answered the questions in amazing detail. Even at ninety years old McCloskey is still of clear mind and good health. He never seemed to tire during the process, but the interviews were still kept short. The only problem that arose was McCloskey did not always hear my question clearly the first time they were asked. This is evident on the audio recording, however, in the transcript the most complete form of the question only appears once, even if it was asked multiple times.

### **Note on recording:**

This interview was recorded using a Sony digital voice recorder, model number ICD-PX820. No additional microphone was used. The recording was transferred to HP desktop computer via USB cable and converted into a *mp3* file and subsequently

transferred to a CD as a data file. The Sony recorder also came with playback software that was used as an aid in transcription.

### **Editing the Transcript**

- A) While editing the transcript the following were omitted unless they provided context, emotion, or emphasis: repeated words, false starts, and ‘filler’ words. For McCloskey, common “filler” words are “you know”, “so”, “in other words”, “I mean”, and “because”. The decision to include some of these, but not all, in the transcript was made purely on a stylistic basis.
- B) Time stamps have been placed alongside the first line of transcribed dialogue on every page as well as the very last line of the transcript. They appear in hour: minuet: second format.
- C) Dashes (—) are used to denote that the speaker was interrupted, cut-off, or changed his thought mid-sentence.
- D) Non verbal and inaudible expressions as well as missing words are placed in brackets. McCloskey has a story telling method that uses the tone of his voice to indicate who is speaking rather than stating “he said” or “she said”. Where appropriate these cues have also been placed in brackets.
- E) While transcribing the interviewee’s responses an attempt was made to preserve dialect and style as best as possible.
- F) Unless otherwise indicated, the source of all information in the annotations is John McCloskey himself, or his personal papers which are on deposit at the La Salle University Archive. For clarification of names, positions held, and dates served of La Salle Faculty and Administration the digitized volumes of La Salle’s yearbook, *The Explorer*, were consulted. These can be accessed in hardcopy in the university archives or online at:  
<http://www.lasalle.edu/digital/explorer.php>