

Spring 2019

Interview of Stephen Andrilli, Ph.D.

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FIELD NOTES

INTERVIEWER: Jane Highley

INTERVIEWEE: Stephen Andrilli, Ph.D.

INTERVIEW DATES: March 6, 2019 and March 25, 2019

INTERVIEW LOCATION: Holroyd Hall (Room 139)

Field notes compiled on April 17, 2019

The Interviewee

Stephen Francis Andrilli was born on August 15, 1952 in Bryn Mawr, PA. He was born to Francis and Leatrice Andrilli. Dr. Andrilli is the oldest of four children; his three sisters are Carol (now Carol Strosser), Patricia (now Patricia Kempczynski), and Barbara (now Barbara Parkes). Aside from a few years of living in Gettysburg, Dr. Andrilli has lived in the Philadelphia area for most of his life. He attended St. Jerome School, where he finished 8th grade. He then attended LaSalle College High School, where he graduated in 1969 at age 16. He entered La Salle University (La Salle College) in 1969 and graduated with a B.A. in Mathematics in 1973. From La Salle, he went directly to Rutgers University, where he earned a Master's in 1975 and a Ph.D. in 1979, both in Mathematics. His dissertation is titled "On the Uniqueness of O'Nan's Sporadic Simple Group." He taught for two years at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, MD, and then joined La Salle University's Mathematics and Computer Science Department in 1980, where he was hired as Assistant Professor. He became Associate Professor in 1992 and then Professor in 2017. Among many publications, he is the co-author of two textbooks: *Elementary Linear Algebra* (5th edition) and *Linear Methods: A General Education Course*. In 1990, Dr. Andrilli was awarded the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching. In addition to teaching math courses at all undergraduate levels, Dr. Andrilli also taught courses in the Education Department and was the supervising professor for education students pursuing a career in math education. Being a "coach" for these pre-service student-teachers for 19 years has been the greatest source of pride and joy for Dr. Andrilli. He supervised 89 undergraduate and graduate students as they were beginning to learn the craft of teaching math at local secondary schools. With his wife Ene, Dr. Andrilli loves to travel, and has made many trips to Europe, including a pilgrimage through Italy with two priests and many parishioners. He looks forward to visiting Estonia, which is where Ene and her family are from.

The Interviewer

I, Jane Highley, was born in Busan, the largest port-city in South Korea in 1978. My Korean name is Soo Hyun Kim. I became a naturalized American citizen in 2002 and changed my name to Jane Soohyun Kim. In 2005, I changed my name again to Jane Soohyun Highley after getting

married to Timothy Highley, Jr., who is an Associate Professor in the Math and Computer Science Department at La Salle University. I was a double-major in English Literature and History and earned a B.A. from the College of Letters and Sciences at the University of California, Davis, in 2000. Two years later, I earned a M.S.Ed. in Secondary Education (English and Social Studies) from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. I currently hold a Level II certification from the Pennsylvania Department of Education in both English Language Arts and Social Studies for grades 7-12. Aside from taking a four-year hiatus to devote time for my family, I have been teaching middle and high school social studies since 2002. I have taught in urban and suburban schools and in private and public schools. Currently, I am teaching AP U.S. Government & Politics, AP Human Geography, and Modern American History at an independent school in the Philadelphia suburbs. In 2017, I earned a fellowship from the James Madison Memorial Fellowship, which offers \$24,000 to teachers who seek to become outstanding teachers of the U.S. Constitution at the secondary level. This competitive fellowship is awarded to one middle or high school teacher per state per year. Through this fellowship, I am currently pursuing a Master's in American History at La Salle University.

Background

When I told my husband that I had to find someone to interview for this oral history project, preferably someone from La Salle, he immediately thought of Dr. Andrilli, his colleague. He also noticed that there was a dearth of Lasallian interviews from his department on Digital Commons. Dr. Andrilli seemed like a good choice, not only because he is a long-time faculty member but also an alumnus. I asked him if he would be interested in this oral history endeavor; he enthusiastically said yes and we made plans to meet in person to talk about the project. We met at the Barnes and Noble bookstore in Willow Grove on February 8, 2019. I discussed the scope of the oral history project to give him a general idea of what to expect from start to finish. He shared extensive anecdotes of his childhood, his teen years, and his tenure as a La Salle professor during that first meeting. With that information, along with my own research about him, I compiled and sent him a preliminary list of questions so that he would have an idea of what to expect. Many of these questions were modeled after the materials I had read and discussed in class with Dr. Barbara Allen. Dr. Andrilli and I agreed to meet for two interview sessions of approximately one hour each, one before spring break and one after the break.

Description of the Interviews

For both interviews, we met in Dr. Andrilli's office, which is Room 139 of Holroyd Hall. The first interview took place on March 6, 2019 (which was also Ash Wednesday) and began at around 4 PM and lasted just over an hour. Even though it had been raining for most of the afternoon, there was no thunder or any other external noise that could disrupt the recording. He was dressed professionally—button-down shirt, tie, and slacks. I sat across from him and positioned

my phone on his desk for optimal audio quality. After he shared his story about his dissertation defense, we ended that session. We debriefed off-the-record for several minutes and then chatted about other things: my kids, teaching, home life. Then I thanked him and left his office.

The second interview took place on March 25, 2019 and began at around 3:30 PM; this interview lasted about one hour and 42 minutes. Before we began recording, I asked Dr. Andrilli to sign the legal release form. While he was doing that, I set up my phone and reviewed my questions and the CV that he had sent me in February. When we started the interview, he wanted to start off with a list of topics that he wanted to share because he had thought of them after our first session. When the interview ended, we chatted about our respective families. We were walking together towards the exit when he noticed that he was missing his car keys. After searching for about 10 minutes, he gave up and walked out with me. I was headed toward the parking lot by the library and he was headed toward the community dinner that held at the student union. As we were walking outside, he found his keys: they were in the sleeve of his jacket. He surmised that they must have fallen off his key ring as he was putting on his jacket. Relieved, we said good-bye in front of the student union building; I told him that I would share the Digital Commons link to this oral history project when it became available.

Notes on the recording

I recorded both times using the app called HD Audio Recorder, which is native to my LG G6 smartphone. The app worked without any problems or quality issues. The two interviews were saved on my phone as m4a files, which I saved to my Google Drive. On my Macbook Pro, I used a free online app to convert my m4a files to wav files, which was an easy process. I then uploaded those files onto Canvas as a temporary holding place until I was later ready to upload them onto Digital Commons. While writing the log, I used www.otranscribe.com, which is a fantastic tool for this purpose.

Notes on the log

For the first 16 minutes of the first interview, I wrote a transcript of the interview. For ease of reading, I made the following editing decisions:

1. Omitted “filler” words unless they added meaning or emphasis
2. Included at least one timestamp on each page on the transcribed portion of the log and several timestamps on thereafter
3. Used commas to indicate brief pauses and periods after the speaker is clearly finished talking
4. Omitted minor interruptions and pauses unless they added meaning or emphasis
5. Limited the use of ellipses unless they seemed necessary to retain the integrity of the speaker’s meaning

For the remaining first interview and the entire second interview, I wrote an interview log. For the log, I made the following editing decisions:

1. Omitted stories and/or explanations that did not directly or significantly contribute to the life-narrative or biographical arc
2. Omitted information that was repeated in a previous part of either interview
3. Included timestamps several times throughout each page of the log to indicate how much time has elapsed