

Spring 5-2019

Interview of Fred J. Foley, Jr., Ph.D.

Fred J. Foley Ph.D.

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FIELD NOTES

Interviewee: Dr. Fred Foley, Jr.
Interviewer: JeanMarie Turner
Interview date: March 20 & March 22, 2019
Interview location: Dr. Foley's Office, Room 360, Olney Hall, LaSalle University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Field notes written throughout March, April and finished in May, 2019

The Interviewee:

Dr. Foley was born in December of 1946 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He lived in Wisconsin until he was about three years old at which point his family moved to Memphis Tennessee where he lived for one year. Dr. Foley moved with his family to the Philadelphia area when he was about four. He moved with his family to Delaware County, a suburb of Philadelphia. Dr. Foley has lived in the Philadelphia area ever since. His father's was Fred Joseph Foley and his mother was Doris (maiden name: Nelson) Foley. His grandparents were Jack and Margaret (maiden name: Becker) Foley and Henry and Amanda (maiden name: Johnson) Nelson.

Dr. Foley attended St. Andrews Parish Catholic elementary school in Drexel Hill, PA and Monsignor Bonner High School in Upper Darby. He currently lives in Philadelphia with his wife, Marilyn Claire (maiden name: Mehler) Foley. He has three children and four grandchildren.

Dr. Foley attended St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA and graduated in 1968 with a B.A. in Politics. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University. It was St. Joseph's College when Dr. Foley attended school there as an ungraduated. He earned his M.A. in Politics from Princeton University in 1970 and his Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University in 1979. Dr. Foley has taught at St. Joseph's College, Philadelphia, Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia and has taught at LaSalle University since graduating from Princeton with his Master's degree. He began his long career at LaSalle University in 1970. It was LaSalle College when he began teaching there. Throughout his career at LaSalle he has been an Adjunct Instructor, Assistant Professor and Instructor in Political Science. He mainly taught Political Science classes from 1970 to 1978. Most of his career at LaSalle was in the Grants Research and Support, Fundraising and Development Administrative Department. He held positions of Assistant Director of Development, Director of Development, Vice President for Development, Director of Grants Research and Support and Grants Consultant from 1978 through 2016. Dr. Foley retired in 2015 from working full time in the Administration Division of the University, although he stayed on as a consultant for a short time to help transition and train new department employees. He returned shortly after retirement to be an Adjunct Professor in the Political Science Department. He is currently teaching part-time at LaSalle.

The courses Dr. Foley has taught or currently teaches at LaSalle include American Federal Government (Principles of American Government), The American Presidency and the Executive Branch, State and Local Government in the United States and United States Congress: The

Legislative Process. His publications include “The Stormy Reformation of Philadelphia’s Politics,” LaSalle Magazine, Winter, 1974, Book Review: Black Politics in Philadelphia. Edited by Miriam Ershowitz and Joseph Zikmund, American Political Science Review, Volume 69, March, 1975, pages 270-271, “Community Control and the Philadelphia Public Schools.” Urban Education, Winter, 1975, “Public Employee Unionism in Pennsylvania: Impacts on Local Power Distribution.” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, September, 1975, “Community Control: The Politics of Urban School Reform.” Polity, March, 1976, “The Effectiveness of Federal Programs: The Politics of Bureaucracy.” Polity, 1976. And “Unionization and the Public Sector: The Impact of Legislative and Judicial Action in Pennsylvania.” Region Magazine, 1976.

Dr. Foley’s dissertation title was “Decentralization and Community Control in the Philadelphia Public Schools in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s: The Politics of School Reform.” His dissertation advisors were Duane Lockard and Robert F. Lyke.

Dr. Foley has held many professional memberships and board affiliations. Currently he is Chair of the Christ the King Parish School Board and previously he held memberships or board affiliations with the following organizations: Council for Advancement and Support of Education, National Society of Fund-Raising Executives, American Political Science Association, Settlement Music School (Kardon-Northeast Branch), Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeast Pennsylvania and the James A. Finnegan Fellowship Foundation.

Dr. Foley was very helpful and enthusiastic doing the interview sessions and helping me with my project. He has spent a lot of time at LaSalle University, almost 50 years. He seems to have enjoyed his time at the University in both his teaching and administrative positions. His long career at LaSalle has given him a special and in depth insight into the University, it’s students, faculty, staff, neighborhood, and the City of Philadelphia. In the early part of the interview he expressed his desire to become a teacher. Although he spent many years in Administrative positions, he frequently taught part time throughout the years and, as a current Adjunct Professor in the Political Science Department, he is very much enjoying what he set out to do as a young man. Several times during the interview he mentioned how important “teaching excellence” is at LaSalle. A priority that was instilled by the Christian Brothers and still remains its mission today. This interview will add to LaSalle’s archives an interesting volume of information about the University from 1970 until 2019. There were many changes, expansions and improvements during this timeframe at the school, in the country and in the world. Dr. Foley has helped me document them through this interview.

The Interviewer:

I, JeanMarie McGinnis Turner (b. 1959 in Norristown, PA) grew up in the Borough of Norristown in Montgomery County, PA. I attended Montgomery County Community College and earned an Associate Degree in General Studies in 1979. I earned my B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting from LaSalle University, Philadelphia, PA in 1996. I have worked in various accounting positions since 1982. I am a Staff Accountant for the Township of Bensalem where I have been employed for 20 years. I am currently working on my M.A. in Public History

at LaSalle University. I have lived in Bucks County since 1986 with my husband Stephen. Our son Daniel was born in 1996 and currently resides in Michigan.

Background:

I first contacted Dr. Foley on February 18, 2019 via e-mail to ask him if he would be my interviewee for my Formal Field Interview for my Oral History Project. His name and information was given to me by my professor, Dr. Barbara Allen as a potential interviewee. I gave a few details about the class and what the interview would entail. Dr. Foley responded shortly to my request indicating that he would be happy to be my interviewee, that although schedules might be a challenge. He was available after his Monday-Wednesday-Friday class from 10:30 a.m. until about 12:30 p.m. Fortunately, I was able to adjust my schedule to meet with him during this timeframe. We arranged to meet on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. in his office in Olney Hall at the University. During this pre-meeting we introduced ourselves, I gave Dr. Foley information on what the interview would entail and we worked out a schedule for the two formal interview sessions. During the meeting and with a follow up e-mail we worked out the practical logistics regarding the interview, i.e. turning off cell phones, placing a “Do not Interrupt” sign on his office door and various other items of importance for a successful interview. We corresponded back and forth a few times to confirm our meeting dates and times before the actual interview sessions. I thanked Dr. Foley for his help and let him know I was looking forward to working together on this project. After the interview sessions I sent Dr. Foley an e-mail thanking him for his help. I also had to contact him via e-mail in late April to verify the spellings of some of his family members. Dr. Foley returned my e-mail requests very quickly and I was able to accurately spell the proper names in the transcript.

Prior to the interview sessions I composed a questionnaire consisting of approximately 125 questions. This questionnaire was evaluated by several classmates and Dr. Allen prior to the interview sessions. Suggestions for additional questions or improvements to existing questions were incorporated into the final list. I used approximately 90% of the pre-arranged questions during my interview. There were some I omitted during the interview as Dr. Foley covered them in an expanded answer to different question. My interview followed a chronological, life history format with a major portion on Dr. Foley’s experiences at LaSalle. As his almost 50-year career has been at LaSalle, it was appropriate for an extensive amount of the interview to focus around his time at the University. Dr. Foley provided me with an extensive resume prior to compiling my questions. I also found many articles on LaSalle Digital Commons that included events and information about Dr. Foley. These were my two primary sources for creating my interview questionnaire. I followed the formats and theories for an oral history based on the readings during the semester required for class, especially Donald Richie’s *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 2014). I also used the “*A Life-Story Interview Guide*”, pp. 310 to 323 to formulate personal background questions. I did not submit a copy of the questionnaire to Dr. Foley prior to the interview, nor did he request one.

At the end of each session Dr. Foley completed and signed the interview consent forms as the narrator. I completed and signed the interviewer consent form. I handed in these forms to Dr. Allen at the following class sessions.

Description of the Interview:

I arrived at Dr. Foley's office in Olney Hall on Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 10:15 a.m. and waited for Dr. Foley to return from class. We said hello, talked for a few minutes, went into his office, I set up and tested the recorder and we began the interview. We finished up at around 11:35 a.m. On Friday, March 22, 2019 I arrived at Dr. Foley's office in Olney Hall at 10:20 a.m. and waited for Dr. Foley to return from class. We said hello, talked for a few minutes, went into his office, I set up and tested the recorder and we began the interview. We finished up a few minutes before 12:00 p.m.

For each session, we took a few minutes to test my equipment and made sure it was recording properly. I started the recorder and we began the interview. The first session lasted fifty-five minutes and six seconds and the second session lasted one hour, seventeen minutes and forty-eight seconds. For both sessions, before starting I asked Dr. Foley if I could record the interview, he agreed for both sessions. We agreed to close the door to his office, place a "Do not interrupt" sign and put our cell phones on airplane mode to avoid any unplanned breaks in the interview. During both sessions we did not take any breaks. We did not experience any unnecessary or distracting noise or interruptions during the interview sessions. Toward the end of the second session, however, Dr. Foley did mention that he only had about 15 minutes left before he had to leave to pick up his grandchild. Fortunately, at this point we were just about finished. I asked one or two remaining questions and we finished up on schedule. During both sessions, Dr. Foley may have had the remnants of a cold or allergies. He occasionally sneezed and had to blow his nose. But mostly, Dr. Foley seemed very comfortable and at ease during the interview sessions. Dr. Foley had a Pepsi during the interviews and I had water.

Notes on recording:

I downloaded a Voice Recorder app on my Apple I-phone to do the interview. My phone was on battery power. I charged it to 100% shortly before leaving for the interview. I brought the charger with me in case the phone lost power. I tested it a few times at home to familiarize myself with how it worked. I attached it to a small tripod for the interview and set it on the table. When I returned home I downloaded the interview and saved it to two locations, my e-mail and my desktop computer at home. Over the next several weeks I transcribed the interview. I did the transcriptions in several shorter sessions as opposed to a couple long sessions.

Editing the Transcript:

My editing decisions included:

- 1) eliminating most repeated words, unless the words were repeated for emphasis
- 2) eliminating most false starts, unless the false starts seemed significant
- 3) placing a time indicator at top of each page
- 4) frequently eliminating transitional words such as "and," "so," and "because", "kind of", "yeah" "well" in order to make sentences shorter and easier to read.

- 5) placing . . . at the beginning and end of sentences or paragraphs when either I or the interviewee interrupted and talked over each other.
- 6) Did not include “laughter” in transcript.
- 7) Placing small areas of the transcript that were inaudible in ().