

Spring 2019

Interview of Richard Kestler, F.S.C., M.A.

Richard Kestler FSC

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FIELD NOTES: Interview of Brother Richard Kestler FSC.

Interviewee: Brother Richard Kestler FSC.

Interviewer: Alexandria M. Moraschi

Interview dates: March 27, 2019 (5pm); April 3, 2019 (5pm)

Interview location: Anselm Hall, Christian Brothers Retirement home, 1900 West Olney Ave, Philadelphia, PA

Field notes written on April 15, 2019 and edited May 1, 2019 before submission.

The Interviewee:

Brother Richard Kestler, FSC. was born John Kestler on January 8, 1942 to John and Alice Kestler. He grew up in the Oxford Circle section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Brother Richard attended elementary school at his parish of St. Martin of Tours and went on to La Salle College High School, graduating in 1960. By this time, he made the decision to join the Christian Brothers and began this process for about a year before attending La Salle College. He graduated in 1965 with a Bachelor's in Mathematics and gained a Master's in Theology soon after. Brother Richard also has master's degrees in Math from Fordham University and Education from Villanova University. He has been assigned to many high schools in the Philadelphia area as teachers and administrators including West Catholic High School, La Salle College High School, St. Gabriel's Hall, and Archbishop Carroll. As a Christian Brother, Brother Richard has helped the growth and success of the Philadelphia community and major surrounding schools. In 2018, he was awarded a member of the Papal Household by the Pope himself for the education of students and his assistance and selflessness in the Philadelphia community. He is in active retirement today and lives in Anselm Hall at La Salle University.

The Interviewer:

I, Alexandria (Ally) Mary Moraschi was born on March 25, 1996 in Camden, New Jersey and have lived in the suburban town of Marlton, NJ for most of my life. I am the oldest of four children including a sister who is two years younger than me and twin sister and brother who are in their last year of high school. I graduated La Salle University as a Student-Athlete with a B.A. in American Studies and am currently enrolled in the Public History Graduate Program at La Salle. I am very close with my family and especially my grandma, Rita Hunt, and visit her often.

Background:

There was always a curiosity for me of the Christian Brothers because I had them as professors in some of my undergraduate classes and I familiarized myself with them on campus. I have a Roman Catholic background since childhood therefore, I was interested to learn more about becoming a Christian Brother and their values and philosophies. After getting in contact with Brother Joe Grabenstein and gathering materials from Google and the Christian Brother Archives, I contacted and met with Brother Richard for the first time on February 28, 2019. I met him before my class at around 4:30 and I was able to tell him about my background and why I wanted to interview him along with the process of the project. He agreed to do the interview with me, and I told him that doing two sessions about one hour each would work best and he thought

that was a good idea. We each looked at our calendars and scheduled the first session, so we had it all set.

I emailed Brother Richard in the morning of the first part of the interview on Wednesday, March 27 and got there at approximately 4:30 pm. The same occurred for the next session exactly a week later on Wednesday, April 3. I read off my questionnaire during the full interview. There were no breaks during the first session and there was one ten minute break during the second session. We did both sessions in his office in Anselm Hall where it was quite and no interruptions took place.

Description of the Interview:

Before the first session, I talked about the process of how the interview will go and what kinds of questions I would be asking. The beginning of the interview had a nervous vibe by both parties in trying to get comfortable one another. I asked the question and he answered. Sometimes he would go off topic a bit and I would have to try and sway him back to the flow of the questions. It made for some awkward pauses and unease with transitioning to next question. The first interview went straight through with five minutes under an hour and afterwards we set the date for the next week. The second session ran through to fifty minutes than I paused it to take a quick break in which it stopped the whole recording. We than picked it up again for another almost half hour. He invited me to stay for dinner afterwards which allowed me to talk about myself and get to meet the other brothers.

Notes on Recording:

- Recording app ran smoothly
- Can here shaking of fish food and tapping of armchair
- Two rings went off during second session; manageable
- Laughing/giggling is present but not disruptive
- Some incoherent phrases by interviewee; manageable

Editing the Transcript:

Editing decisions:

1. left out most “alrights” and “oks” from him
2. left out “um”, “and”, and “really” from myself
3. at 12 minutes decided to switch to a log because it was too time consuming and I believed I would be more efficient in summarizing Br. Richard’s answers
4. edited transcript and log before submitting on May 2