

INTERVIEW LOG**Narrator:** Dr. Leo Rudnytzky**Interviewer:** Meghan P. McCormack**Date:** Session 1: April 12, 2007 – 12:30 p.m. Folder: A
Session 2: April 17, 2007 – 5:00 p.m. Folder: B**Location:** Dr. Rudnytzky's office, located in Room 240 of Olney Hall at LaSalle University.**Topic:** This expansive oral history covers Dr. Rudnytzky's illustrious life. We begin with a biographical background and his early childhood in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. He then discusses his formative years in the United States. He provides a detailed account of his time as an undergraduate student at LaSalle University. The interview then spans his graduate studies and early years of teaching at LaSalle, along with the differences between his time here, at Ivy League schools, and at foreign institutions. The subject discusses his involvement in various ethnic and religious groups and its impact on LaSalle by way of symposiums, speakers, and programs, which he has brought into the University. The interview is riddled with references to the LaSalle of the past. The subject regularly speaks of the changes that the University has undergone. His closing session focuses more intensely on those changes, as well as reflections on his time as a teacher and his hopes for this University in the future.**Interview Index**

Time Stamp	Topic
[Folder A]	
0:00:00	[Opening Announcement]
0:00:13	Biographical information: Date and place of birth (Lviv, Ukraine), parents' names and information, an older sister who died at birth.
0:01:31	Immigration: His family left Ukraine (no definite article placed in front) in 1944 as the Red Army approached the city of Lviv because his father was marked for execution. They spent the remainder of the war in Germany. 1951 immigrates to the United States.

- 0:02:15 Why Philadelphia: Came to Philadelphia directly. His uncle sponsored him and his mother, as both his father and grandfather had died in Germany. There had been a mass exodus of immigrants from Germany. The choice was between Philadelphia and Canada since both have large Ukrainian populations.
- 0:03:41 Security: He wanted to escape the Communists and leave the refugee camps of the British zone. Escaped being captured by Soviets and forced to Siberia. Speaks of America as the Promised Land.
- 0:04:42 Perception of this city: Saw Philadelphia as an interesting city. Lived in a Ukrainian neighborhood. The feeling of security exhilarated him; grateful that he would go to bed and know he would wake up the next morning. This was in contrast to his time in Europe with the incessant bombings. He worked for a German florist (F.C. Frank) during high school. He attended Northeast Catholic High School for Boys. He began during his sophomore year and would ultimately graduate in 1954. He intended to work as a florist permanently, but his mother forbade it. She reminded him that his father was a lawyer and his grandfather had been a judge.
- 0:07:58 Why LaSalle: They had moved to Cayuga Street in Olney and LaSalle, a truly Catholic college, was close in proximity. He no longer feels that LaSalle is a truly Catholic college. The Christian Brothers were in abundance, they dressed in their religious garb, they prayed before every class, and the school was not yet coeducational. Describes LaSalle as a glorious place to be.
- 0:08:50 Undergraduate study: His initial curriculum was Pre-Law. He dropped it because he became enamored with German literature. When he graduated in 1958 his major was German literature with a minor in English.
- 0:09:52 Extra-curricular time: Commuted to school and worked throughout his time as a student. LaSalle had a pay-as-you-go policy. He also played soccer during this time.
- 0:11:05 Favorite Professors: Had fantastic professors at LaSalle. Mentions Tom McCarthy in the Psychology Department, Brother Clemention and Dan Rodden in the English Department. Christian Brothers were a pivotal factor on campus. Speaks of Brother Eliphaz Lewius of the History Department.

- 0:14:23 Favorite memories from undergraduate training: His favorite memories include being on the soccer field, socials, but the most endearing to him is the fellowship and intellectual atmosphere that prevailed at LaSalle. He finds it lacking among students now. In his undergraduate years, they argued philosophical points. Even his colleagues today rarely discuss intellectual issues. He attributes this to his society having to deal with WWII. Again refers to LaSalle's Catholic ideologies at that point in time.
- 0:16:52 Post-graduation: Feels he owes LaSalle a lot. Attributes his assistantship at University of Pennsylvania to his Professor Bob McDonough at LaSalle who recommended him to a Professor Springer at PENN. Did he graduate study in German there.
- 0:17:36 Master's Study: PENN was an entirely different atmosphere than LaSalle. Demands were very high. A gulf between his undergraduate and graduate level studies. Complained to Dr. Guishard (chair of the Foreign Language Department) that he was not prepared enough at LaSalle for his time at the University of Pennsylvania. He offers Rudnytzky a job at that time.
- 0:19:24 Work experience: Would teach four (4) hours a week at PENN to teach German, then go to LaSalle to teach, back to PENN for his own classes, and possibly back to LaSalle to teach his evening classes. Mentions his mother worked as a seamstress in a factory, even though she was extremely educated. She never learned English. Learned to value intellectual pursuits more than money.
- 0:22:21 Challenges as a young teacher: No idea how to teach. He couldn't answer why things were the way they were. Wanted to be exciting and dynamic, provocative. Getting paid to do what he loves. Never really getting old being surrounded by young people who challenge him. Receives Lindback award in 1966. Uplifting experience because they usually gave it to older professors. He had just gotten married to a woman he met at PENN when he received the \$1,000.00 tax-free. It shaped his commitment to LaSalle.
- 0:25:52 Relationship with students: identified with their problems. Was once the youngest person in a class he taught in the evening division. No longer feels he has the bond. Different times, different values. Change in the *zeitgeist*.
- 0:26:52 Professors turn to Colleagues: Shared an office with Frank Wetzler and Bob McDonough. He knew his place. Did not

automatically switch to first name basis. Respect and veneration for older people.

- 0:28:14 Relationships outside of LaSalle: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences and Shevchenko Scientific Society. LaSalle afforded him the opportunity to pursue Ukrainian studies. [Shows book published in Ukrainian by the Shevchenko Society]
- 0:30:06 LaSalle's Role in his Endeavors: Always supportive. Support from administration and colleagues. "Eternal Chairman" Dr. Blumenthal who took over for Brother Joseph. Good deans. Not all were as good. Glorious place to work.
- 0:31:00 Differences between Brothers and lay faculty members: looked upon the school as the Christian Brothers college. Never an inimical differences. Never a chasm between the Brothers and lay faculty. Joked that FSC was more valuable than the Ph.D.
- 0:32:08 Evolution of Brothers: Not as many present. They no longer distinguish themselves from the laymen. Feels it's a shame because it brought variety to the college.
- 0:32:55 Subject inquires about the time.
- 0:33:07 Doctoral study: MA in 1960. Obtained Ph.D. in 1964 from the Ukrainian University of Munich with his dissertation on Ivan Franko (Ukrainian poet). His major interest in life.
- 0:34:42 Honorary degree: First from Holy Family University in Kiev. Second from Ivan Franko University. Seven in total. Important to go to Lviv, the city of his birth. Never could go to Soviet Union because they felt he was a spy for the Vatican. Banned from Russia. Known as an anti-communist. Inside Ukrainian Community known as Communist sympathizer because he invited Communist poets to LaSalle to speak.
- 0:37:36 Cultural identity: Felt a split personality almost. Steeped in Ukrainian culture, but enjoyed LaSallian existence and advantages of American life. At an age where he could retain enough of the old culture but at the same time was able to Americanize himself to a reasonable degree. Balance. Some colleagues never fully integrated themselves.
- 0:39:43 Freedom in Europe: solidified cultural roots but made him a better American. The US Passport allowed him to travel extensively when he returned to Europe for the first time in 1960, especially

throughout Communist East Germany. Loyalty to the United States, but developed ties to the exiles of Ukraine.

- 0:41:05 Education in Europe: altogether different from the U.S. LaSalle undergrad as a kid was fun, but graduate students in Europe were hard workers yet they maintained freedom. Not mandated to attend class. Could attend any class they wanted though. Feels he has the best educational opportunities, both in the United States and abroad.
- 0:43:17 Interviewer and subject laugh in reference to a joke.
- 0:43:29 Time abroad and back to LaSalle: His time away enriched him a great deal. Made him feel superior to his colleagues who didn't have that privilege to travel between various European universities. Did not see his students in a different way. Views them as younger colleagues. Tries to get them to teach him something. Made blatantly wrong statements to get a reaction. Students today are more docile and rely too much on the computer (i.e., Wikipedia).
- 0:45:54 Subject inquires about time.
- 0:45:56 Americans and foreign language: Generally speaking, American students are monolingual (with the exception of Spanish that has become a second language). Cultural myopia. Disparages the abolition of the foreign language requirement.
- 0:48:20 Time at other institutions: Harvard in 1976 had a chance to obtain a permanent position. Enjoyed teaching there, but not the egomaniacal atmosphere. The Ukrainian Community also kept him here. Again, LaSalle was a glorious place in the olden days.
- 0:51:11 Cardinal Karol Wojtyla: Loved the man. Met at the Cardinal's lecture on Communism being held at Harvard. Spoke in Polish with him. Received offer to visit in Krakow. Has written about his encounters with him in Ukrainian and English. Bobby Lyons, publicity man, informed him that an unknown Cardinal had been elected. Lyons calls reporters. Headlines read "Philly's Prof Papal Pal." Later would have an audience with him at the Vatican. The Pontiff remembers him from Harvard but Rudnytzky quickly identifies himself as being from LaSalle.
- 0:56:10 Role as a Catholic Educator and Eastern European descent: Faith enabled him to fully understand literature, perhaps not

contemporary though. Participation in the Church has made him a better teacher.

- 0:57:45 Ukrainian Events at LaSalle: very important to him. Owes LaSalle a lot, but feels that the school is indebted to him as well. Mutually beneficial relationship. Culminated with the first Ukrainian President receiving an honorary degree from LaSalle. Could not have done it without LaSalle, Blumenthal, and Brother Patrick Ellis. Also enjoyed Brother Daniel Burke's term. Students and the image from LaSalle profited from these events.
- 1:00:10 LaSalle as a forum: LaSalle was home. Could have held the events in New York, Columbia University, or at PENN. Center of the Ukrainian community. 1989 Celebrated millennium of Ukrainian Christianity with an entire course dedicated to the subject thanks to the presidents of the school.
- 1:01:38 Interest in European Studies Among Students: increased interest. Culmination of outgrowth of Central and Eastern European Studies department [shuffles pamphlets from the Soviet Studies Minor].
- 1:02:33 Conception of programs: The minor was created while the USSR was still very active. Could have had at LaSalle an undergraduate degree on par with Harvard, but did not receive help from Ukrainian colleagues whom he did not feel comfortable mentioning.
- 1:03:40 Collaboration: Worked with History and Philosophy departments.
- 1:04:06 Need for Central and Eastern European Studies: nothing in the greater Philadelphia area that was similar and the variety of resources in the Philadelphia Ukrainian Community, it was a natural thing. Wanted to ensure that American students understood that the USSR was not Russia. Focus on truth and reality more in an academic fashion. Views it as a success.
- 1:05:45 Desire of Students: Greater desire on Graduate level. 1980's immigration from USSR brought awareness. Foreign students also expanded American students' horizons. Mutual relationship though. Requirement to learn two (2) languages. German counted because the GDR still existed. Hoped to change the MA into a Ph.D. program by this point.
- 1:08:00 Exchange/Study Abroad Programs: When Ukraine opened and USSR was disintegrating, brought several students here. Under presidency of Brother Patrick Ellis. Administration changed and

- things were not easy any longer. Broadened LaSalle student's outlook. Students find a common language. They teach each other better than professors. One-way exchange. Only one LaSalle student went abroad. He benefited greatly. Foreign student didn't pay. They were housed in various different locations. Program collapsed. Never official. A lot of good for a lot of people.
- 1:10:32 Sponsorship: more difficult now than it was then to bring the students here. Attributes this to the Bush Administration.
- 1:11:20 Roles at LaSalle: Never held any administrative roles. Although was director of Central and Eastern European Studies. Replaced by Blumenthal. Good "front man."
- 1:12:06 Courses: Loves a course on Goethe's poetry. Comparative course on German and Ukrainian literature. Now teaches Modern European Literature. Loves the freedom at LaSalle. Felt as though he should pay the school for allowing him to teach what he loves.
- 1:13:41 Variety in Coursework: deviated from norm to teach detective and spy novels in cooperation with the English Department to attract students when the language requirement was eliminated. [Subject states he's tired.] It's fun to teach that. Brought people from the CIA to lecture on spy literature.
- 1:15:12 Current Relationship with Students: Perhaps he's a "dinosaur." Doubts the students absorb the information. Refers to a student named Buckley from the early 1960's who contacted him and how appreciative the old students were. The Honorary Doctorate from HFC came because he taught a Philosophy professor first year German. The influential feeling he had is gone now. Does not know where to place the blame for that, on either himself or the students.
- 1:17:04 Teaching Fatigue: Interviewer relates a quote attributed to Dr. Rudnytzky, which states that should he ever get tired of teaching, he would quit. The subject did not remember this quote. But he does want to be continually challenged. Attempts to bring a fresh perspective to class.
- 1:18:02 Teaching Motto: Dialogue. Exchange of ideas. Heavy responsibility on himself. Good in class as long as he has questions thrown at him. Again he mentions the docile nature of students today. Quotes Goethe in German. Translates to English, "Here I sit and form human being according to my own image." He does not adhere to that. [Knock on door] Giving something of

himself from emotional, from heart not just intellect. [Knock on door]

-- End of Session 1--

[Folder B]

0:00:00 [Opening Announcement]

0:00:20 Transitions at LaSalle: Most significant changes coeducation (positive move, survival depended on it), 1980's saw special attention paid to scholarship of faculty (Jim Butler in English Department), biggest change was College to University. Done under Brother Patrick Ellis (again praises him). Prestige of University is raised internationally. Negative changes: lost spirit of Catholicism that pervaded the school up until Vatican II. The schools standard is not what is used to be. Students are not as educated, or not as eager, to be educated as in the old days. Prove that by tests he administers. Lack of general knowledge.

0:04:36 Benefits of LaSalle right now: decent faculty, however departments vary. Central and Eastern European Studies has an advantage because it deals with a foreign area for Americans. Location of LaSalle is good. In the city, but a safe place from what he can tell. Mentions Virginia Tech Massacre and that danger is ever present. Wished the school would pay more attention to scholarly and intellectual endeavors on behalf of the students. Do more to awaken intellectual curiosity. They look upon a college career in order to get a "meal ticket." Educate for life, not just how to make a living.

0:06:47 Ideas for change: More opportunities for students and professors to get together on an informal basis. Start with the faculty. 1960's – 1970's saw the Pickwick Club. Unstructured interdepartmental meeting of faculty in their homes where one would speak on something outside of their area of interest. Rudnytzky gave lecture on Archaeology. Later on transferred onto students. Today, could have people read or summarize what they're working on. Active scholars abound at LaSalle. Blumenthal publishes poetry and on German Female writers.

0:10:03 Influential LaSalle Figures: Loved Brother Patrick Ellis, excellent president, as was his predecessor, Brother Daniel Burke. Patrick Ellis was eloquent and outgoing. Established LaSalle's reputation. Open to ideas – very important for administrators. Honorary degree to Kravchuk was a spur of the moment idea. Patrick Ellis fostered freedom of thought and expression. Brother Burke was more philosophical, but also very approachable. Believes LaSalle took great leaps and bounds under their terms.

- 0:13:19 Contemporary Administrators: Does not feel they have had the same relationship with their faculty. They just do not have Patrick Ellis' personality. He would go on to become president of Catholic University of America.
- 0:14:27 College to University: More Master's programs came about. Impacted him personally because his European colleagues could not understand the difference between college and university. They thought college meant something inferior. Criterion for hiring faculty was raised. Once would hire people without Masters degree. Not necessarily a good thing. People who publish, yet love to teach could be better than some Ph.D.'s.
- 0:17:00 Coeducation: Brother Emory Mollenhauer who brought about the change. The male students felt a positive influence. They attempted to impress the girls intellectually. Could joke about women in the early years without fearing lawsuits. Had excellent female students, which raised the level of academic achievement.
- 0:18:36 Racial Integration: done the LaSallian way. Not an ostentatious process. Competent people were hired. Not controversial in anyway. Certain minority administrators were not very beneficial to the school, but the faculty were always excellent.
- 0:20:07 Retirement: Several factors played a role in his early retirement. Undergrad students were not up to par, however didn't really stop him. Received an offer from Europe. Sought counsel from Brother Patrick Ellis while he was at CUA. The offer was a challenge to bring a sinking Ukrainian institution in Bavaria as its president. He was there for 7 years. Does not regret those years. Proven there is life after LaSalle. Came back because he loves teaching. He can be very good as long as he has decent students. Will provoke and scream at students in order to get a reaction out of the tame students. Only teaches two (2) courses now.
- 0:24:18 Hopes for LaSalle: Wants it to continue to be a Christian institution. People should not fear admitting what they are. That this school began as a Christian school and retain its character. Maintain it's ecumenical spirit. Would like to see more Ph.D. programs. Improve library. Hire more professors. Pay more attention to scholarship in professors. Attention to LaSalle's international image. Mentions cancellation of the LaSalle in Europe program – it was a mistake. During the age of globalization, students need exposure. Avoid mistakes like that.

0:27:17

Closing remarks: Subject states he's tired, but that he hopes to stay here for some time to come. He owes a lot to this institution, the Christian Brothers, his former teachers, and his colleagues (i.e. Blumenthal). Here he became an American and a better human being.