

John Prendergast
History 650
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Index

Narrator: Dr. Michael R. Dillon
Interviewer: John A. Prendergast
Date / Time: March 4th 2013, 6:00pm
Location: Dr. Dillon's residence in Lafayette Hill, PA

ABSTRACT

Born on December 17th 1942, Dr. Michael Richard Dillon is a Professor and Chair of the Political Science Department at La Salle University in Philadelphia. He grew up in Wilmette, Illinois, a suburb just outside of Chicago, where he spent many years before opting to attend the University of Notre Dame for his undergraduate and, later, his graduate and doctoral degrees. Dr. Dillon first came to La Salle in 1968, where he spent 17 years as a member of the Political Science Department under the Chair at the time, Robert Courtney. After obtaining a J.D. from Temple University, Dr. Dillon left La Salle in 1985 to practice environmental law for the Litigation Section of the national firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, where he remained for 22 years. After his wife passed away in 2006, Dr. Dillon looked to get back into teaching and, so, he returned to La Salle in 2007 where he was hired to Chair the Political Science Department. As of 2013, he remains Chair of a Department that is highly regarded throughout the University community. He lives in Lafayette Hill, PA and has three children.

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- 00:01 Standard introductory remarks. John Prendergast identifies himself as the interviewer and Dr. Michael R. Dillon as the narrator. The interview was conducted on March 4th 2013 at 6:00pm at Dr. Dillon’s residence in Lafayette Hill, PA. Prendergast asked Dr. Dillon for permission to proceed with the interview.
- 00:25 He was born on December 17th 1942 in Evanston, Illinois to Rita Dillon (nee Hanley) and William R. Dillon (went by the name of Richard). He grew up in an apartment in Skokie, IL, a suburb just outside of Chicago, where he lived until fourth grade. At that time, his family moved to Wilmette, IL, another Chicago suburb, where he lived until he went off to college. His father was an attorney, and his mother worked at a bank for a number of years before she became a “home-keeper” who had to tend to six children.
- 02:31 His father attended the University of Notre Dame and, after World War II, went to law school at Northwestern University. His mother went to a college for three years, but he is not sure if she graduated. He had “long, good relationships” with both sets of grandparents. In particular, his maternal grandfather was a chemical engineer, who was superb at mathematics. Dillon recalls going to his grandfather quite often for help with math when need be. His grandfather also drove him to and from high-school for two years because it was on his grandfather’s way to work.
- 04:32 He is the oldest of five siblings—four sisters and one brother. His youngest sibling, a sister, was born on his 13th birthday. As he recalls, he got along with all of his siblings, especially the older ones who were closer in age, yet there still existed the sibling rivalries / competitions that one may expect to see from any family with multiple children. The area where they grew up in Wilmette, IL was an especially wealthy, privileged neighborhood for the time, yet he never thought about it in those terms.
- 09:17 He and his siblings were raised to abide by certain values. As he notes, his parents were 1950s Catholics which, according to him, “pretty much says it all.” They went to Church every Sunday at their parish in Wilmette, St. Francis Xavier, despite the fact that Chicago Churches, like many throughout the United States, “struggled” to retain priests within their religious orders. For those who remained faithful to the Church, the experience was more significant. He adds that he still receives Christmas cards from a priest whose first assignment was at their parish in Wilmette. In fact, this same priest later married Dillon and his wife, and baptized all three of their children.

- 13:57 He continues to discuss the family dynamic while growing up. He recalls rarely getting into trouble—perhaps fighting with a couple of his siblings was the worst he had done. There was no “punishment-oriented structure.” Instead, he and his siblings were assigned various chores, and they were performed without question and without being paid for it. With that said, he was extremely grateful that his parents were lenient about having multiple friends over for dinner at various points throughout a given week.
- 18:15 He talks about Skokie, IL and the bad reputation it gained from the Nazi marches of the 1970s. Skokie was a heavily-Jewish town at one point. He describes the nature of Chicago’s elevated-train and how, when it exited Chicago on the North End, it passed through Evanston and the line culminated in Wilmette.
- 19:16 In Skokie, his family’s original apartment was on the third-floor of a “U-shaped” building. The neighborhood had fields in all directions. [19:59 phone rings]. There were cookouts amongst the families, and all the kids in the complex played with one another. In fourth grade, his parents purchased a house in Wilmette. [22:11 phone rings]. He recalls being able to just hop on his bike and ride down to the beach for the day (Lake Michigan). He went to St. Francis Xavier for grade-school in Wilmette.
- 25:10 As a child in Skokie, pick-up baseball games were the sport / hobby of choice. In Wilmette, the kids rode their bikes and hung out at the park because the neighborhood “was safer.” Their family tried their best to ensure that everyone was able to sit-down together for dinner. [27:34 dog begins to bark which lasts for about forty seconds].
- 28:01 Tennis “became a passion” when he was in Wilmette. He also played football for a couple of years. The sports were not as organized as they are today (i.e. “Little League”).
- 29:52 He discusses how his father was an attorney and how his father’s two younger brothers were both attorneys. “They worked in a law firm that bore their father’s name on the door”—essentially stating that it was almost expected that he become an attorney as well. He neither questioned nor challenged this presumed path, but he liked the idea.
- 31:18 Attended high-school at Loyola Academy, a Jesuit school, which was located at the time in downtown Chicago on the North Side (where Loyola University is today).¹ He described his time there as a “really, really good experience.” He took four years of Latin, two years of Greek, and four years of Math, among many other subjects. He identifies Mr. James Serpe (Geometry), Fr. Conroy (English), and Mr. Frank Houdek (Tennis) as three of his favorite teachers at Loyola Academy. He credits Fr. Conroy,

¹ Loyola Academy moved to its current location in Wilmette, IL in 1957.

in particular, for first introducing him to acclaimed novelist Joseph Conrad.²

- 36:15 During one of his tennis seasons, he made it to the City-League Championship in Doubles. He notes, however, that in his junior year Loyola admitted two kids who were the sons of professional tennis player Bobby Riggs.³ The stiff competition resulted in Dillon not playing his senior year. Loyola ultimately hired Riggs as the school's tennis coach. Despite not playing his senior year, Dillon described his coach, Riggs, as "nuts, wonderful, [and] fantastic." Frank Houdek, meanwhile, left Loyola Academy in Dillon's sophomore year, but they did not remain in touch.
- 39:54 He also played football in high-school for three years. He was both a defensive-end and a blocking-back—positions, he claims, in which "you get killed either place."
- 41:53 English, Science, Math, and Latin first come to mind when asked what his favorite subjects were in high-school. He loved to decipher words (Latin), and Science intrigued him because this was "the age of Sputnik." Mr. John Connelly brought in from Loyola University to teach the top Loyola Academy Math class each year. This man could multiple two different sets of six-digit license plates together. He was truly a mathematician, and Dillon describes witnessing such human calculation as "frightening." [45:08 dog barks]. His favorite novel in English was Conrad's *Lord Jim*.⁴
- 45:58 Describes high-school as "an opening experience" in terms of forming friendships. He met kids who came from all different parts of Chicago. He also went to high-school with some of the same kids with whom he had gone to grade-school.
- 49:02 Attended the University of Notre Dame for his undergraduate. He notes that he did not apply anywhere else. His father went there; his father's two brothers went there; his paternal grandmother was a fanatic. Much like knowing he was going to be an attorney, Dillon says it was almost expected that he would go to Notre Dame.
- 50:44 [Dr. Dillon asks to take a break. Audio paused]
- 50:51 Audio resumes and Dr. Dillon gives permission to continue the interview.

² *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* are the Conrad novels that Dillon specifically identifies.

³ As Dillon notes, Riggs was the player who faced off against Billie Jean King in the "Battle of the Sexes." Riggs' sons were Larry and Bobby Jr.

⁴ He believes that, despite being Polish and not having a formal education, Conrad wrote "some of the most beautiful English that's ever been written." Dr. Dillon still believes this of Conrad.

- 51:00 Continued discussion of Notre Dame. [51:34 dog barks]. His paternal grandmother, a “short, portly, grandmotherly-type person,” ran through the house during one of Red Mack’s runbacks in football, slipped on a rug, broke her hip, but refused to go to the hospital until she knew he scored— emblematic of how intense the Notre Dame culture was in his family.
- 53:56 Describes his undergraduate experience at Notre Dame as “wonderful.” He chose Political Science as his major because he thought he would eventually be going to law school. He met many people during his years there, and happened to have a lot of friends who were Physics majors. One of his best friends from there, James Maher, went on to become a professor of physics and astronomy, and is now the Emeritus Provost of the University of Pittsburgh.
- 58:00 He talks about living on campus for all four years, 1960-1964. Dorms were separated according to class year (freshman all in one building, sophomores in another, etc.). Illustrative of Pre-Vatican II, the University “impressed Catholicism” onto its students—every morning, students were required to be fully dressed, hair combed, and downstairs for “mass-check” by 8am. If students missed more than one check-in a week, then they could not go out on weekend nights. At 11pm every night, dorm room lights went out collectively (controlled by one main switch).
- 1:02:11 When asked about extracurricular activities, he states that his participation in Notre Dame’s 1964 Mock Republican Convention in the Stepan Center, under faculty advisor Paul Bartholomew, was by far his best experience. He goes on to describe Bartholomew as a “thin, mustached professor who knew everybody” and someone who became a good friend. Other activities outside the classroom took place in the dormitories—especially on big football weekends (i.e. organization of displays, characters, productions, etc.).
- 1:07:18 Characterization of the dating culture at Notre Dame. There was very little group dating, and much more one-on-one dating. However, with about 6,000 men at Notre Dame and only about 2,000 women at nearby St. Mary’s College, the ratio was not favorable for the men.
- 1:09:10 Delving into religion during his college years. He went to mass every week, but also admits that he tried to skip the daily mass check-ins. “Rituals are important because they teach us certain things.” He also notes that he had fantastic religion teachers there—particularly Fr. John Dunne and Fr. William Hegge. [1:13:08 dog barks]. He is appreciative of the religious culture that his professors bred in which they could establish a core of beliefs, yet challenge those beliefs without being shunned, which is something not many institutions allowed at the time.

- 1:14:40 Discussion of graduate school. He obtained his Bachelor's in 1964, and he remained at Notre Dame for both his Master's and, later, his doctorate. In terms of possibilities for graduate school, he applied to three places. The first was Cornell, and he was denied there. They claimed he "was not qualified for their program"—a rejection letter he hung on his bulletin board in his dorm room until he graduated. He thinks "they may have done [him] a favor." The two other possibilities were Notre Dame and the University of Chicago. The decision came down to two things: money and a young woman. He wanted to get married, and Notre Dame was offering a full ride—it seemed an easy decision, despite the opportunity to study at Chicago under notable political scientists Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. On deciding to remain at Notre Dame, he asserts that he "is not unhappy with that decision."
- 1:17:56 He states he did his graduate thesis on Bertrand de Jouvenel, a French political theorist, whose main areas included sovereignty, politics, and redistribution of wealth.⁵ Two articles came of the dissertation but he was not delighted about them. Gerhart Niemeyer, his dissertation director, was completely German. Dillon notes that Niemeyer decorated his Christmas tree much like Martin Luther would have: with actual fruit and lit candles dangling from the tree. Niemeyer also taught Dillon much about grading—the school of thought being after all exams are graded, you must pull both the first and last five exams to be re-graded the next day, because you were either "not ready" or "too tired." Niemeyer was a significant mentor in this regard.
- 1:22:05 Details regarding the graduate / Ph.D. process at the time. He thinks there was about 24.00 hours of class time, followed by Master's comprehensives. If you passed the comprehensives, you did not have to do a Master's thesis—you went straight into the Ph.D. program (which is what happened to Dillon). Then you chose who you were going to work with, but you still had to do Ph.D. comprehensives. These included two days of written (six hours a day), and a final day of oral examination—all of which had to cover four academic areas.
- 1:23:30 Dillon clarifies that he did not have to write a Master's thesis. De Jouvenel was his dissertation.
- 1:23:53 Defense of the dissertation went fine. [1:23:32 dog barks]. The "memorable experience" of the process came later, when he was living on 5th Street in Philadelphia. He had "had" it with trying to re-write "this damn dissertation." Dillon first contacted the only other person who

⁵ Dr. Dillon's dissertation was, in fact, on Bertrand de Jouvenel. When I asked about a "graduate thesis," I was referring to his Master's degree, but Dr. Dillon took it to mean his dissertation. He later clarified that he did not have to write a thesis for his Master's, so any discussion of a thesis pertains to solely his dissertation.

defended his dissertation with Niemeyer, Joe Hennessy, a La Salle graduate. Hennessy reminded Dillon of the Martin Luther quote, “Here I stand, I can do no more”—something which would resonate with Niemeyer, a German. Dillon, in turn, contacted Niemeyer and they collectively scheduled the defense. The written portion of the dissertation, he recalls, totaled around 300 pages. [1:26:32 phone rings]. Amongst his colleagues, it was not particularly competitive—they all went out for beers on Friday nights at bars in South Bend. Overall, he had good relationships with his fellow Ph.D. colleagues and still maintains contact with many—naming Bill Murphy and Pat Powers, among others, as “friends.” If there was ever a moment of competition, it came in Paul Bartholomew’s seminar because he only gave out one ‘A’. Dillon jokingly recalls: one guy from Texas, Randall “Randy” Bland, would make it a point to slam his fist on the conference table every time he spoke, convinced that it would get him the ‘A’.

- 1:28:51 There were multiple women in Notre Dame’s Ph.D. program. Many came through the usual University process. Two of whom came in during Dillon’s second or third year, and they were from European programs (Germany and France).
- 1:29:44 He finally obtained his Ph.D. from Notre Dame in 1970, but notes that he began teaching at La Salle University in 1968. Interestingly, Dillon “knew that La Salle had an opening before La Salle did.” One of Paul Bartholomew’s earlier students at Notre Dame had been Adrian Leonard, a Christian Brother who was teaching Political Science at La Salle at the time. Leonard decided that he wanted to leave to get married and he confided this to Bartholomew. In turn, Bartholomew told Leonard that he had somebody (Dillon) who could serve as his replacement at La Salle. Leonard agreed and said he would say the word when it was time for Dillon to write to La Salle. As it so happened, Dillon wrote to La Salle and they received his letter about five days after the opening became available. Dillon interviewed, was hired, and he claims that Political Science Chair Bob Courtney later remarked: “it seemed a perfect fit.”
- 1:33:47 Came out to La Salle in the spring of 1968 to interview for the position. He observed that the campus was quite small then, consisting of only: College Hall, the Lawrence Library, Wister Hall, McShain Hall, and the Science Building.
- 1:34:29 Talks about finishing up the Ph.D. after already beginning his employment at La Salle. He had to make some edits and revisions to his dissertation, and also go through the defense of it. He notes that Niemeyer, his dissertation director, was spending the summer of 1969 in Japan as part of a State Department tour. Niemeyer requested that Dillon mail his dissertation to Japan for a final revision—all he had to do was bring the

manuscript to Washington D.C. to the State Department office and they would make sure it got to Niemeyer in Japan at no personal cost to Dillon. They sent it via “Diplomatic Courier Pouch” and Dillon left. Three months later, Niemeyer told Dillon he never received it. Ultimately it turned up, but it gave Dillon quite the scare at the time since the manuscript was his only copy.

- 1:37:27 In terms of first impressions of La Salle, Dillon viewed it as a “wonderful opportunity.” It was a Catholic college that showed an interest in him. Not to mention, Dillon knew nothing of Philadelphia. He liked the idea that Philadelphia was the step between New York and Washington D.C. Moreover, many Notre Dame graduates were teaching along the East Coast. Overall, this fresh start intrigued him on many levels. [1:39:25 phone rings].
- 1:39:32 Describes the Political Science Department at the time as “crowded.” Since there was no Olney Hall at the time, the Department was located on the 3rd floor “tower room” of College Hall. Five desks were all jammed into this one room, and they did not have room for a sixth desk. Dillon interviewed before the Chair, Bob Courtney, as well as the rest of the Department. Afterwards, Dillon called his wife in South Bend and stated he thought La Salle could work out quite well.
- 1:41:17 His wife graduated from St. Mary’s College and then became a train supervisor at the Northern Indiana Children’s Hospital. Dillon notes that, in those days, children who were born with deformities were placed directly into State Hospitals immediately after birth. The doctors and husbands would often tell the mother that the child had died in childbirth when, in reality, the child had been immediately institutionalized. Dillon’s wife was tasked with “developing lesson plans to do training for educable children.” When the time came, she was happy to make the move to Philadelphia so that Dillon could pursue a career at La Salle.
- 1:43:13 [Dr. Dillon asks to take a break. Audio paused]
- 1:43:25 Audio resumes and Dr. Dillon gives permission to continue the interview.
- 1:43:33 With regard to the tenure process at La Salle when Dillon arrived, he claims that some emphasis was placed on “professional activity, but the real emphasis was on teaching.” He believes that his stint at La Salle began amidst significant change within the university, particularly between 1968-1974. The message was clear that La Salle was now going to compete with universities with which it had not previously competed. Jack Seydow hired same year as Dillon; a year or two later Jim Butler was hired; a number of “professionally trained” women also hired.

- 1:45:47 Reaction of male students and faculty to the addition of women at La Salle. For Dillon, the barrier had already been broken at Notre Dame when he was a graduate teaching-assistant, so the transition was not awkward at all. To his knowledge, there were only two female faculty members when Dillon arrived in 1968—Minna Weinstein (“Micki”) in History and Bernie Blumenthal’s wife was in Foreign Languages as a German teacher. A couple years later, Caryn Musil and Barbara Millard were added. The women faculty members that were hired were “bright, polished, professional, articulate women” and it “changed the entire university.”
- 1:50:48 There were no adjuncts in the Department at the time. The use of adjuncts came later.
- 1:51:50 Dillon digresses back his Notre Dame connection. He notes that he never told anybody about how Paul Bartholomew hooked him up with the job at La Salle. When he first began to look for houses in the Philadelphia area, he and his wife stayed with the mother of a Notre Dame graduate student who did his undergraduate at La Salle—Theodore “Tommy” Hindson. The place was located on Wyoming Avenue, just south of the Boulevard on 5th Street. They then first rented a house located at 6513 N. 5th—a half block north of the Oak Lane Reservoir. Unknowingly, they ended up living next to Jack Grady, Samuel Wiley, Jack Seydow, and Jack Rossi. Dillon describes this circumstance as “absolutely wonderful”—to have such connections right there in front of him. They had parties, gatherings, etc. For he and his wife, this changed everything and made the transition that much smoother. To this day he remains in contact with Helen Grady (now living in downtown Philadelphia), Jack Rossi and his wife Fran, etc.
- 1:53:55 Discussion of race relations at and near La Salle in the late 1960s and 1970s. When he arrived in Philadelphia for his interview, he took the subway to Olney and then walked to campus. He saw it as an “urban area,” but not as an area with conflict or problems. This changed over the course of his first stay at La Salle from 1968-1985—the area became “tougher” and “nastier.” In fact, in the mid 1970s, a stray bullet was shot through the windshield of his car at Chew Street and Olney Avenue when he was driving home one night. Such random violence became the reality then and is still the reality in 2013.
- 1:57:03 Dillon served on the Faculty Senate during his first term at La Salle (he was elected about 2-3 times). Bob Courtney, the Political Science Chair, was the President of the Senate. Dillon jokingly notes that the Faculty Senate was “the one place where [he] could challenge [Courtney] and not be in huge trouble for doing so.” While they had some disagreements, Dillon asserts that Courtney was one of the most “honorable and ethical” people he has ever met.

- 2:00:27 He discusses the nature of his students during his first term at La Salle—comparatively stating that the top La Salle students were just as good as the top Notre Dame students. He believes the same is true today. The difference rests with the bottom half or bottom third of students. Both now and in the 1970s, the disparity between the top and bottom students is far greater at La Salle than at Notre Dame.
- 2:02:05 In terms of top La Salle students, Dillon specifically mentions the class of 2012: Claire [Fisher] going to Azerbaijan on a Fulbright; T.J. [McCarrick] going on to Georgetown Law; John [Prendergast] remaining at La Salle for his Master's; Steve [Patton] and Brian [McBeth] going on to Villanova Law. He also mentions former undergraduates of the past: Tom Curley (former head of *USA Today*), Paul Burgoyne, Nick Staffieri (former General Counsel of SEPTA), Frank Palopoli, and Dennis Lehman (Executive Vice President of Business for the Cleveland Indians). Dillon frustratingly asserts that he does not know how to get La Salle to “sell” that image of the University when up against declining academic performances of its bottom-half students.
- 2:05:03 Details of Dillon's post-graduate work. First intrigued when he learned that Franklin Littell, a Holocaust scholar, would be teaching a graduate class at Temple University. He sat in on one of his classes and they became friends. From there, programs being run by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided for a summer or year at different schools throughout the country, allowed Dillon to continue post-graduate work. He went to Duke in the summer of 1976 and studied democratic theory under John Hallowell. In Durham, N.C., he notes, his family stayed in a complex that arranged the units to house “black, white, black, white, etc.” so that the races could intermingle, which Dillon thought was great.
- 2:09:22 [Slight dog bark]. He next went to Princeton at their Center for Advanced Studies in 1978 for further post-graduate work. He and Sharon [Schwarze] (Philosophy Chair at Cabrini College) commuted together daily, and they were the only ones who did not remain living on campus for the year. He enjoyed the company and scholarship of Paul Sigmund, Sandy Levinson, Quentin Skinner, Walter Kaufmann, and Sheldon Wolin, to name a few. Despite the long commute every day, he describes the experience as “really valuable.” Finally, he completed his post-graduate work in 1983 at Wisconsin under Joel Grossman.
- 2:12:53 Conversation shifts to why Dillon decided to attend law school and switch careers. He notes in a digression that the Chair, Courtney, wanted to hire him as an Instructor in 1968 because he did not yet have his Ph.D. Dillon argued, however, that he would have it soon enough and wanted to be hired as an Assistant Professor because that meant a promotion to

Associate in five years and full Professor in another five.⁶ Though he ultimately succeeded in this plight and became a tenured full Professor, he was only making around 26k-27k a year, and he had three kids who needed to be put through school. So in this regard it was a financial decision. Moreover, he states he was fed up with the cheating and plagiarism, whereby the only method to monitor such dishonesty was to physically get into the library and search through possible books and journals. Lastly, from a personal standpoint, Dillon “wanted a new challenge.” With all of these factors considered, law school was the right decision at the time.

- 2:16:55 He attended Temple University’s Beasley School of Law and earned his J.D. in 1985. Temple was his only choice because they offered a night-school, which allowed him to keep his teaching job at La Salle during the day.
- 2:17:40 After law school, he was still unsure of what law he wanted to practice. As he puts it, law school trains one to be a “generalist”—to think in certain ways, but it does not gear one for a particular area of the law. He ultimately concluded that he wanted to practice an area of law that was considered newer and fairly recent, because he did not think he would be able to keep up with his friends from college who had been practicing law for over twenty-years. The “logical place” left him with environmental law.
- 2:19:11 From 1985-2007, he worked for Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP in their Litigation Section. For his first several years, he practiced international, contract, and intellectual property law—but environmental law was always in the mix, and it later became his concentration there. He notes that at Morgan, there was a “very savvy guy” named Denis Brennan who looked to specifically hire Irish-Catholics as his Associates because he thought they had guilt-complexes and would work harder than others.⁷
- 2:21:35 Dillon points to his new 2013 book, *How to Think About Law School*, and asserts that, when students graduate from law school, they do not know anything about how to practice law. He credits Brennan with being one of the few people who taught him how to be a lawyer and how to succeed.
- 2:22:33 Discussion of measuring clients’ expectations. In terms of litigation, he notes that he “had a hell of a lot of fun practicing law.” Specifically, he did cases for Greenpeace; he did cases on computer chips; he did cases on the Geneva Convention. He questions whether or not the public “won” as a result of the cases he successfully litigated. For instance, a case he had in

⁶ In this same digression, Dillon points that, at the time, either he or Jim Butler was the youngest tenured full Professor at La Salle. He also adds that Butler is “an infinitely better scholar” than he.

⁷ Dillon points out that Frank Labor was another hiring product of Brennan’s mindset.

Chester County involved the cleanliness of a family's well-water. Tests revealed that the well itself was clean for years, but he saw that they were suffering because the carbon-tanks in their basement, which processed the well-water, had not been changed. He asks if that was a result of his clients' actions or the family's own negligence. He describes such situations as "messy" with "no right or wrong out of it."

- 2:27:36 He only tried fewer than 20 cases over the course of his 22 years in law. The longest case he had in court went 15 days up in Rhode Island. As he points out, most civil cases "settle" before the trial process.
- 2:28:48 Dillon talks about what prompted his return to La Salle in 2007. The story begins well-before. He joined Morgan-Lewis in 1985 and was up for partnership in 1992. Most law firms had a policy of "up or out"—every partner in the firm could vote on you and, if you made it, you remained and now had a share in the profits of the firm; if you did not, you had 60 days to leave. It was around this same time when Dillon's wife was diagnosed with Leukemia. He struck a deal with the firm in which they made him "Of-Counsel"—but he did not receive a share of the firm's profits.
- 2:30:50 His wife passed away on March 11th 2006. After she passed, he no longer needed the money and the insurance, so he looked for other ways "to spend his time." He was actually seeking an adjunct position somewhere to get back into teaching when he stumbled upon an ad from La Salle in the "Chronicle of Higher Education" in which they were looking for a Political Science Chairperson. He was shocked by this because he knew that La Salle hired Tom Nichols, someone he knew, to be the Chair in 2003. Unbeknownst to Dillon until he finally interviewed, Nichols' wife got cancer and did not want to leave her support-network in Rhode Island—forcing Nichols to leave.
- 2:35:23 Dillon was hired as the Chair after he interviewed in 2007. He did not find it unusual that La Salle was seeking a Chair from outside the University. In fact, he thinks it is something they should continue to do as a way to search for new ideas and perspectives.
- 2:36:07 At his return to the University, he was struck by the expanded size of the campus. He remembers there being nothing beyond the baseball field on south campus, but now, in 2007, there were dormitories, a dining hall, parking lots, etc. Not to mention, La Salle had just signed onto an expansion of west campus with the taking over of Germantown Hospital. In addition to the physical expansion of the campus, he was struck by the same commitment to teaching and students as he had experienced during his first term with the school.

- 2:40:33 Conversation shifts to the current tenure process at the University. He suggests that the criteria is basically the same for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, something with which he agrees. He thinks that tenure cannot be given out freely just because a Professor is a nice, wonderful person. They need to demonstrate that they have ongoing research agendas—studies which can later be accepted by the professional, academic community. These agendas do not need to be overwhelming breakthroughs, but they must exist nonetheless. Giving tenure to someone just because they are nice is “not helping our students.”
- 2:43:36 Dillon talks about how he manages his Department. When he arrived in 2007, he knew that there had been issues in the past, and he claims that he intentionally tried “to [not] learn a great deal about them.”⁸ From there, he made it a point to knock on each of his faculty members’ doors on the way in to wish them a “Good Morning.” He also hosted faculty dinners at his house from time-to-time. All of this was meant to actively restore / enable collegiality amongst his Department.
- 2:45:31 He notes how Beth Paulin served as the active Chair when the Department was going through its problems—something for which he thinks she should be promoted to full Professor. Paulin differed from Courtney in that, when evaluations were turned in, she wrote a small letter to each faculty member listing things they should think about and things they are doing well. Dillon loved the idea so much that he continued the practice and has done it every semester for every faculty and for every course since his hiring in 2007. Conversely, Courtney never read the evaluations—he saw them as a correspondence between the student and their Professor and that it was not his place to read them. Dillon is not sure if that approach is the wrong one, but he knows that it is certainly a different environment today.
- 2:49:45 Other differences to the Department since Dillon’s return include: an Alumni Newsletter, an updated website, and a Senior-Alumni Reception. He describes the latter (the reception) as “Frank Nathans’ great program” during Dillon’s first term at La Salle. Similarly, Dillon has tried to recapture the importance of the Alumni base. He mentions Jamie Malanowski (Managing Editor of Playboy) as another notable alum.
- 2:52:17 Role of adjuncts in the Department. For the past two years, there have been no adjuncts—and he would prefer to keep it that way. With regards to adjuncts as a whole, he thinks La Salle will rely on them less and less to teach introductory courses. Moreover, he thinks he needs another full-time faculty member (an American specialist) so that he “can produce what [he] wants to produce.” Currently, he has a faculty member who has experience in city, domestic, and Democratic politics (Mary Ellen

⁸ For more information, see: *Brogan v. La Salle University*, 70 F.Supp.2d 556 (1999).

Balchunis). Another faculty member has experience in international relations, specifically with regards to the Middle East, Israel, and Palestine (Kenneth Hill). Dillon adds he does not know how many Departments their size that has a staff member with physical contacts in Israel and Palestine. A third faculty member is “absolutely outstanding” in violence, war, and revolution (Michael Boyle). Another is “absolutely outstanding” in tax policy, welfare policy, and comparative politics (Miguel Glatzer).

- 2:54:55 For the next academic year (2013-14), there are currently 145 high-school students who are admitted to La Salle in Political Science—an impressive number considering Dillon’s goal is 30-35 a year.
- 2:56:12 If he could only teach one course for the rest of his life, he would teach Political Theory (both semesters). It is the course which “teaches you most about you and about your passions...desires...possibilities...and consequences.”
- 2:57:38 He is once again on the Faculty Senate, now in his second term since returning to the University in 2007. Since his first time on it in the 1970s, he notes that there are many more women involved than before who are “serving absolutely beautifully.” His wish is that the Senate and the Board of Trustees would have a more “intimate” and “articulate” relationship.
- 3:01:23 Dillon talks about the student-run programs that he moderates—Pre-Law, College Republicans, and Mock Trial. The College Republicans simply needed a moderator, so his involvement is fairly hands-off given their self-sufficiency. His moderation of Mock Trial has an interesting beginning. Three students came to him in 2009 (Steve Patton ’12, T.J. McCarrick ’12, and John Prendergast ’12) and said they wanted to begin the program. Dillon urged against it and was not particularly interested, mostly because he thought it encourages an element of acting, but the three students went out and created the program anyway. Three years later, the Mock Trial team made it to the National Opening Round Championship Series in Washington D.C. Mock Trial entails teams of students arguing a hypothetical criminal or civil case before a jury. Dillon states he has since learned that there are many additional benefits which come from such a program and he is “delighted” to serve as the moderator of Mock Trial.
- 3:05:02 Over the years, he believes he has been fairly challenged and rewarded as an academic. Challenged to produce results with students and to show an element of professional scholarship. Rewarded with honors and recognition. For Dillon, the greatest reward is when he hears from graduates who write to him stating how successful and well they are doing, and that he somehow played a role in that.

- 3:07:14 From a personal perspective, he has learned that things happen which are outside of one's control. He has a problem with five and ten year plans because they "are subject to exactly those kinds of human disabilities." He adds that an advantage of working in a University community is that the community is responsive to one's personal crises—which cannot be said for major companies around the world.
- 3:09:38 His vision for the Political Science Department five and ten years from now. In five years, he wants 150 majors—which would make it the second or third largest major in the School of Arts and Sciences. He wants it to be sending students to the best graduate schools and law schools throughout the country. He also wants it to be a center for citizen-oriented politics. Ten years from now, he would like it to still be growing from there.
- 3:11:31 Dillon asserts that in 2007 he struck a hand-shake deal with Dean Tom Keagy—that he would stay for five years. It has been six years and he is still here. Much of that has to do with Dillon believing that he is still learning as much as he is teaching. He points to a book on his dining room table authored by Steven B. Smith of Yale University, and Dillon describes Yale's Open Course Series—something he recently learned about which can be found online. It entails over 300 courses from Yale professors, covering a wide range of topics, in which the professors upload their class notes, lectures, PowerPoints, etc.—all for free. He is very open to these sorts of advances in technology.
- 3:16:26 When asked for any last comments, Dillon notes that "La Salle has been a great place for [him]...La Salle was a great place for [his] wife."