

audio highlights name

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HM: Let me ask you a few questions about what LaSalle was like the bigger picture when you first arrived in the early 70's now it had just switched to being co-ed at that time, the year before, I believe in 71 to 72 it had switched over.

GBS: That's right because I remember my first; my first classes here in '72 were co-ed.

HM: What did you find the student body to be like?

GBS: I had, I had very little by with comparison. I mean, I suppose in appearance and my general overall impression say the classroom, was that they were more like myself. That is to say, you know I grew up in a row home and I...I...I sensed a kind of camaraderie with the LaSalle students; remember in those years, LaSalle was still mostly a commuter school.

HM: Right.

GBS: Where when I was in Southern California, well that was party party all the time. Even before that Lehigh was definitely a party school and my chemistry lab mate at Lehigh drove around campus in a Bentley. So, Illinois was again you know an average Joe's school and I felt LaSalle was the same thing. I was impressed to by the classroom demeanor of LaSalle students. They were serious, hardworking, no, I remember, I remember in one of my experiences in Illinois, as a T.A I sat in the back while this professor Trexlor was giving lectures you the 300 auditorium of students sleeping and talking and stuff. These classes here were smaller and I, there was no such thing as inattentiveness here. Of course, that was before cell phones, but we won't go there.

HM: What was the administration like in those days, especially since you were a new faculty member, could you just tell me a little bit about kind of the bureaucratic state of the institution at that moment of time. I mean it was still heavily Christian brothers in the early 70's in administrative positions, as I understand it.

GBS: Right, the President was a Christian brother, as he is now. The vice-president Brother Emery Mollinhour was Christian Brother and it is now. Let's see, the dean, ya, both deans in my early years, ya, the top echelon of the administration consisted of Christen Brothers. The exception would be the business affairs, the business vice-president, and the I think, ya, even at one point, although the first of the evening division deans was not a Christian brother, then another Christian brother did become evening division dean. I, in general terms, as you alluded earlier, you know, the things were less formal, in a sense, the impression I have I come away with. Mind you, LaSalle was very small then, the faculty consisted only of, you know I don't know the numbers were over 200 now and I guess aren't we?

HM: Yes, and only 12 I think, are Christian brothers, somebody, just, I think Middle States review just released that information about the composite. I think at that time, the student body in the early 70's was only about 12 to 15 hundred students. So, it was still, now we are up to 5,000, so, the university was just considerably smaller in all facets.

GBS: I think the fact, well the faculty must have been under a hundred. I remember the faculty dining room was very small, and there was a school of business, and you know, and I knew, you know, I got to know almost everybody. I came here in '72 with a fellow who was appointed in the same year to the business school. I think its management, but I'm not sure, he's still here, and every once and a while we'll see each other you know, and we'll sort of, you know how it goes, you know oh the good old days and all that stuff. But, so there was a, more of a, collegial atmosphere, faculty involvement with each other. We all knew each other. The had marvelous, Christian, Christmas parties, most all of faculty attended with their wives. Cause it was small enough, you could do that, we knew each other, we all knew each other.

HM: How did that compare, say going to where you did some of your graduate work at a large school like USC, or at a large school like Illinois, where coming into a small community. I imagine you felt like you were in a small community just inside your department, but just being on those campuses, that are large compare to you know are kind of small.

GBS: Well, again, I suppose there was a sense of intimacy or a sense of belonging, in a place like this. I sense that. On the other hand, you have to remember, I as a graduate student I was totally focused on my work. I you could, I could have been in a million faculty, student place, the difference, I would just trundled everyday to the main library, were I would be, then go to the department of history. Illinois was actually mammoth. Much larger than USC. These big 10 universities are sprawling and they dominate the town, in that case Champagne Urbana. But, so what you know, I didn't have any recourse to, one possible advantage of a place like that. Was that they, there was so many different offerings of a cultural nature. I mean there could be a posting, even in the engineering department of some professor of ancient roman, some guy expert in engineering and architecture, will come in and give a lecture on roman architecture or roman siege engines or this kind of stuff. That's a real, rich, setting. If you like that sort of stuff.

HM: I had that opportunity to go to a lot of weird lectures at Arizona, stuff that kind of just popped up.

GBS: It wonderful, just go, or you can hear a faculty string quartet at lunchtime. Oh ya, marvelous stuff.

HM: What was it like teaching in the small environment as it was going through some major changes, like you know the idea that women were becoming fully integrated into the classrooms here and did you notice it as a teacher or did you notice that your students noticed it at all.

GBS: No, Nope.

HM: They seemed to transition fairly well?

GBS: Well, see I wasn't in on the transition. I came here when it was already co-ed place. I had always been in a co-ed atmosphere. USC was co-ed. Illinois was co-ed. Lehigh was not. Lehigh was single sex, but, didn't remark on it. I don't remember anyone else remarking on it.

HM: So you received tenure in '77 you estimate?

GBS: '77 or '78 somewhere in there.

HM: O.K. What was the experience like personally for you to kinda have achieved all your goals. The goal you set out to become a college professor and kind of had that mark like to solidify you in the field basically.

GBS: No big deal. I mean I didn't, I don't think I was too busy. I was busy teaching. You have to remember that, I sometimes muse about this. From my first year on this campus '72-'73, all the way until, only about , two years ago maybe, so for over thirty years, I taught four courses each semester, undergraduate, day division, and one course evening division. So in a sense I have had a five course load all of my academic life. And including teaching in the summers. When I go to conventions, and it is one thing that I do feel, how can I put it, that I would have liked to have worked out differently in my career, it is that I could have landed a position at a pure research institution where I may have had a two course load each semester and on occasion a two and three. Then I really would have poured out the scholarship. But as it is, when I mention to colleges around the country and England the amount of work, teaching load, that I have had to carry all these years, and still earned something of an international reputation in publishing. They kind of shake their heads. So that's what I mean, I never really, I'm just too busy to sit back, and certainly not, see what a lot of people do to is ok fine after they make tenure and after they make associate professor that's it. Put their feet up and just do crossword puzzles. Well, that's not in my blood, and well I've never wanted to, I always wanted to keep my hand in the published. I just do it as a matter of course. Even now, I'm always at it, every single, at least once a year I get something out. It may be small, but I got dreams and designs for large projects, once, perhaps if I ever do retire.

colleagues

HM: Did you feel like there was any kind of next step you needed to achieve once you had achieved all those goals that you had set aside for yourself, you know become a professor, teach, publish, was there anything else in your time frame here, that you felt you needed to achieve once you had achieved that certain level and kind of seem to put it on auto-pilot, where you are always working, you know publishing, teaching.

Limbach

GBS: One thing that I did want to attain, to earn, to win was the Limbach award for teaching. I saw others getting for years, and I did consciously work on that, to try always get good evaluations. I always made sure, but then again, I did that, I do it now, even after winning the Limbach. But that's, that, that really is, that that is, that's really nice. That kinda rounds it out, rounds out my ability to do solid research to publish and also to be effective in the classroom.

HM: That's actually my next question on the list too. Tell me when and what it was like to win the coveted Limbach award in teaching here at LaSalle.

GBS: It was, it was absolutely marvelous. It was a just a wonder, I still have warm feelings about that.

HM: You won in 80?

GBS: No, where are we now, 2003.

confused

HM: Oh, oh o.k. I think I viewed Dr. Ryan. I think he won in the early 80's.

GBS: He...I'm not sure when...a little before I did.

HM: He shows movies. So like you said, that seemed to be the feat accompli.

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GBS: Right...one of the things I think that gives me a warm feeling about that honor is that I you know, I've looked at faculty always through Lehigh, Southern Cal, Illinois who are pure researchers and can't teach their way out of a paper bag, I've always looked at them as ~~scants~~. And I thought...you know...no wonder you can, you don't teach many classes, you don't put any effort into it, so I so to be able to do both meant a lot to me, to earn that recognition.

HM: Tell me a little about specific experience you have had in the history department here at LaSalle. Do you have, have you had any conflicts or contentions over your you know almost thirty five years here. Is there any kind of period in the department that stands out as a high point or low point? Kind of just give me.....

GBS: All departments...it wouldn't be academia unless there were factions and things and attitudinal person^{al} even academic differences. That goes with the territory. And, there was, I suppose the most contentious period in the department per ~~say~~, was for me anyway, when I was anyway chair of the department. I served for two terms, minus one here and I I've always...I've always wanted to...I guess...everyone I encounter, in any walk of life, even my children, to kinda do the right thing. And there were occasions when I was informed by say students that a certain instructor was you know was just doing outrageous things in the classroom, so I would take it upon myself as chair to try and set it right and that would lead to tension. Those were...I had...I had some very tense years. In fact, that is one of the reasons why ultimately I just decided to it was it was draining to much of my energy to do that. And I had, I guess in that very last year I had a particular, there was something, I was working on something that had to get out, a major piece. I just decided looking ahead to that year, that I, I just couldn't devote myself to administrative duties anymore. I would rather go back into the classroom, but, as I say, but, that's goes with that, academia. And by the way, some of the things, that I, some of the, oh, interactions, or tensions that I have observed in the history department, pale by comparison to some that I saw elsewhere. And you read about it in the papers, for example.

HM: Do you attribute that to the fact that LaSalle, the community at LaSalle is so kind of tight knit. You almost have to get along, because its, its a small community and you need to be able to work out any differences you have just because of the type of atmosphere LaSalle creates, compare to a larger university that isn't really worried about if everybody gets along in a department?

GBS: I think that is one factor.

HM: O.K.

GBS: I think another factor is, that, this is a very precise point, but at least its my interpretation. LaSalle has never really had a merit system. And you know, almost every other institution that I attended, or that I have been affiliated with, had a merit system. That gets into some pretty petty politics and your making more than I am, ten dollars more a year than I am, and you ^{don't} deserve it, and etcetera etcetera. I think its also the case that, for example when I was at, let me think, not so much USC, but at Illinois, look there were several very accomplished members of that history department who had, oh gosh, it was typical for a full professor at the University of Illinois to have two three books working on a forth and a fifth, very high powered guys, Lincoln scholars, and I remember once an ancient historian, these were big boys. And I think, you know, when you get to those ranks, those echelons that rarified atmosphere, there is more of a tendency for academic to think of themselves as prima donnas. When I think back on it, I recall some of the most titanic, titanic clashes were between the big boys. You know preening their feathers, and but we have always been more down to earth here. Look, I think that has to do to, with the Christian brothers. The Christian brothers mentally is one of gentleness. So, I don't know how else to, how else to describe it. *meta mentality*

HM: How do you feel about the academic standards at LaSalle, and specifically in the history department? Do you feel, like its a rigorous program? Do you feel that it could need improvement? If its *disintegrated* at all over your thirty-five years?

GBS: Well, let's go from the general to the particular. In general terms, there is no question that the rigor of instruction and of the academic program at large at LaSalle has declined. But then that's nationwide. When I first began here, in a typical freshman course, I would require a textbook and five or six outside readings, and that's long gone. Now days, they even, some students even, refuse to read a textbook. In particular, regarding the history department, I think, I think, what has happen is that we have expanded into a service department. We are no longer just dealing with majors and teaching majors. We service the whole university with two required history courses. Well that has required bringing in a adjunct instructors, and for what every reasons, a lot of adjuncts don't have the same expectations of students, and they often don't adhere to them. You know, and so, my sense is, from what I here, if its true, from some students, there are some, some adjuncts do a marvelous job in the classroom, other ones are, as one student said to me, describing what went on, in a course that he had had, with an adjunct instructor, quote unquote it was ridiculous. So I suppose that it varies tremendously, but, how do you, how do you, deal with something like that? How do you administer that, its pretty tough to do.

HM: Ya, especially if the university keeps getting larger and larger, you have to higher *hire* out, kinda. How do you feel specifically, we just touched on it a little bit, about the student body changing over the past thirty-five years?

GBS: Huh, I don't know what to say there. I think all these um, this is going to make me sound a terrible old codger, and an old curmudgeon, which of course I don't deny in many ways. But you know, today's generation of students, not just at LaSalle, but at Harvard, I'm sure, and at Princeton, is more inclined toward creature comforts and high tech gadgets and so forth. You know, I think, most students these days, have cell phones, and they fiddle with them during lectures. A lot of students have laptops, what do I know what their doing? I hear stories that there, while your doing, 'cause I can't see the back, the screen is away, facing them, not me. I understand that their IMing each other, back and forth. So I think there is, there is a tendency today's students to be much less, I don't know, involved in the academic enterprise.

HM: Do you feel as a result of just kind of societal shifts that the realm of academia has kinda lost something? At least specifically in your dealings with children here at LaSalle, students?

GBS: What do you mean by that?

HM: What I mean by that is, basically do you feel as if academia has kind of slipped backwards.

GBS: Ya, well I think, most academics would admit that. They would, Princeton, last year, implemented a policy of trying to cut back on 90% A's and B's. Harvard is also doing the same thing. Well if Harvard and Princeton are concerned about grade inflation, you know its going on all over the country. And so, I think, I mean, don't get me out, who knows, what the reasons are for that. That's something for a sociologist or cultural historian to get into. But, I have a rather humorous encounter, exchange, with an old army buddy. Let's turn the clock right back again to my army days, where I began this whole path. Couple of months we were chatting on the phone, and he said, you know George, I think your truly great. I'm really proud of you, that you didn't fall the path of most of us, who got out of the army and just got a, factory job or machinist job, or truck driver job, and raise a family, and just go on the down toward retirement, and drift on out, so to speak. That you really did something worthwhile. He said, I'm really proud to say that, that, that I, that I know you was a college professor. But on the other hand George, that's something you'll have to live down.

follow
coast

HM: That's interesting.

GBS: Ya, I think that, ah, with all the strife's ~~of~~ contentions of contemporary American social, economic, political pressures, and problems, and with the, the contentions elections in the recent years, there have, there have emerged divides, between, well, with most, most predominately between left and right, between liberal and conservative...I'm sure very general tags. For the most part, most academics are on the left, and in some faculties, it is not unusual to have, out of a faculty of say, 300, maybe 2 republicans and, so, and then, so, I think, I think, as witnessed in the last two elections, the country itself at large, has taken a shift toward "quote" "unquote" the red states. And, ^{any} everyone associated with the blue state mentality or with liberalism are considered to be egg heads, or, you know, just not with it etcetera. Well, if your an academic and your a PH.D, your sort of tarred with that brush.

HM: Richard Hofstadter, Anti-intellectualism.

GBS: There you ^{are} go.

HM: Do you feel that the institution has had to shift at all to accommodate the students that are kind of unwilling, you mentioned that when you first came to LaSalle you were surprised at, at the kind of work ethic that the students had. Obviously, that has shifted somewhat. Do you feel like the institution has had to make changes or I mean, just specifically, the history department has had to make changes and institutional ~~led~~ those changes to kind of deal with the issue? This is the meaty part of the interview.

GBS: Well, if, if, if LaSalle has done that, I would be at a lost to know how. I mean...expect for the purposes of this interview, is that, I again, I have not, I have kept my head low, in terms of involvement with administrative issues. Even as a faculty member. The last committee I served on, was the health professionals, health advisory committee. And that's, I'm off of that for a good five years or so. I, I, again, I suppose if I'm selfish about it, I put all my efforts my efforts into teaching and publication. Where I think, I can do the university a much better service. So, I'm sure there were, there have been developments on the campus, in terms of curricular changes, and policy changes. Perhaps to address these developments, the students. But, I would be hard pressed to come up with them off the top of my head. Now, but if you were to say what about this, what about that, well ya, I've might have heard of it, might be able to make a comment, but, so gues spante, as they would say, I can't come up with anything.

HM: Do you feel that, the A you gave to a student in 1975, is the same as an A, you gave to a student in 2005?

GBS: Well, I have always given students what they earn, and the only, and I think, an A student today, earns an A, I don't do it because I have, because I've set out a certain quota, or a certain, well, one way or the other. I mean, there are, well, back in the day, as the kids would say, there were, there were colleagues of mine in all departments would say, well, I just, as a practice, I will give one A. Well, I've never done that. And I, well so, but on the other hand, I think its easier to get an A today, to earn an A today. As I said, if I were to go back, for the purposes of this interview, cite chapter and verse from a course syllabus that I used in 1975 say, and compare it to one in 2005, we are again, as they say on the street, talking apples and oranges. So ya, I think it is easier to get an A.

HM: What in your mind, is the most positive aspect of working for LaSalle? You mentioned before, the influence of the Christian brothers over the institution itself, but just in general what do you consider to be the most positive, of having, having your time here at LaSalle?

GBS: Probably, well for one thing, I suppose the most positive for me is being a member of the history department. Which in itself, has provided me with lifelong friends and, again, I, I think our department is one of the more unique on the campus, regarding a lack of tension or friction. Some departments, even on this campus, let alone other places, some departments are extremely contentious and, and split, and faculty members in the same discipline don't speak to each other. I think that I have been very very fortunate with that. And, regarding LaSalle in general, I think perhaps because it is small, you know, there's not, and maybe precisely because there is no merit system. Although, having said that I can kind of anticipate a future question come back to this issue of the merit system. But, um, and I, I think again the administration has never really ridden us. They, they, well that's their Christian Brother mentality or whatever it is, small school mental, I don't know what it is. But the administrations never breath^{o's} down our backs. And I've been able to do more or less what I want to do. *really*

HM: So you have had a lot of academic and professional freedom?

GBS: Yes.

HM: O.K. and then, this is probably what your anticipating, what would be your most negative aspect?

GBS: O.k. Its precise at the issue of merit, or that the issue that there is no merit system here at LaSalle. Although, I understand its in the works. I say that, because if there is one thing, that, that gets under my skin, especially in the earlier years, not so much now, but especially in the earlier years, when I was really pouring out an article a year or book reviews and so forth. And yet, a colleague, who may have been, appointed to this faculty five years ahead of myself, was always, I could never catch up to him because everything was done on a lock, step scale. And, I would get a contract for the next year, which would reflect one step up on the scale. But so would that character, and there would be, there would be no recognition of scholarship, say, it there, now again, now how do I know how this works, well because I have friends and colleagues in other departments around this country. Most of whom do have a merit system. And again, it turns out that most of my colleagues and friends in the profession are medieval historians and I admit something, I've, we often joke among ourselves, there is something sort of driven about Medievalists, a lot of us just publish anyway, and that they get an article out one year, they might get a little thousand dollar kick in their, not necessarily in their contract, but a little recognition. Conversely, you know, I know of other institutions where faculty who have decided when they, after reaching associate professor and tenure they are going to do nothing. Well, every year they get zero, in terms of a raise. Their contract, year in year out, is the same, it doesn't increase. Whereas, a person, oh and by the way, there is some faculty here whom who I've observed over the years, who have, once they have attained tenure and associate professor do absolutely nothing. They don't do any service, they don't do any scholarship and even their teaching is, has been, in some cases abysmal. They are never, they are never are chastened in any way. They are never reprimanded in any way. There is no accountability, and they get the same raise year in year out I get. Whatever the percentage raise is across the board. It's not right. That is not right.

HM: Do you think that is why some people outside of academia have the opinion that academics are lazy?

GBS: Sure, why not? LaSalle faculty, now this, I, again the administration has made noises about addressing this. But we still have a twelve hour load, twelve hour per semester. That is really archaic.

HM: That is a lot. I know most of my professors at my undergrad had two courses and then maybe a graduate course on top of it.

GBS: Well the usual load, and even this is becoming a bit much now is nine hours. Now, what do you expect, suppose, you know, Professor Jones is out, in his backyard barbequing a spring afternoon, and, Mr. Kelly from next door, who works in advertising says so, what's it like, what are you up to this week. How many hours are you teaching?Six hours this week, meanwhile Mr. Advertising is on a plane to Dallas, and then from there to Denver and then from there, he'd be gone a whole week. I mean, what do you expect them to think, of academics. What...course...and again, there are some academics around the country who, I think selfishly confine themselves, restrict themselves to a six or nine hour load. Don't do anything else. Then again, there are those, ^{our} ~~are~~ guest lecturer coming in on Friday night, Bill Jordan from Princeton, represents the, what I think is probably the exception. There is a guy, who all has life, has kept his nose to the grindstone and has been a producing scholar. In his case, I think he is justified in having a six hour load because he is contributing to the overall academic enterprise. So...

HM: Under that guise, of creating a merit system, are there any other improvements that you would like to see happen at LaSalle before your time ends, ends here?

GBS: Who says its ever going to end?

HM: Ya, right, you could be here for, you know, fifty-five years.

GBS: I don't know, I'm always impressed when I see the physical plant improving, and I mean, you and I both know, what a pit Olney hall is. That needs to be, either spruced up or torn down, rebuilt, altogether or something. So its impressive, I think all, there is a sense of, and I've seen it in recent years here, when one sees new buildings going up, and when one hears about plans ^{to} ~~about~~ projected, new ball field or something, it gets the sense of energy and sense of dynamism to a place, and I would like to see more of that. But I realize that it takes money.

HM: Do you think that LaSalle and the larger community of Philadelphia, considering that Philadelphia has more colleges than anywhere else in the United States, even more than Boston, which most people don't know, that LaSalle kind of keeps that tradition of building and expanding up to that level that they need to stay competitive in the Philadelphia area, which is very competitive?

GBS: I think we've done very well. Now again, my perspective on that, comes mostly from a graduate, a director of a graduate program. We have, we've got a really innovative and attractive graduate program in history. And I think the proof is in the pudding as you might say, we are attracting, we are beating out some of the competition. Even though it is just an MA program. For the undergraduate program, I think there have been a couple of rough patches, because of negative publicity. Course all schools go through these things, but there again we've always managed to bounce back. And, I don't think the place is ever going to go out of business, it's always going to offer a solid education, and attract folks to it. So, I mean, I don't know where we fit in the pecking order, I mean I would think, I don't think we should expect to catch ^{up} to place like, Haverford, Brynmar, Swarthmore, there different institutions. Nor should we expect to catch up to places like Princeton, or Penn or Rutgers. But I think with the other schools, we're, we're, we're in the running with the majority, and we're superior to a lot of them.

HM: Especially St. Joe's Prep or St. Joe's.

GBS: Well...I don't know about that one. We could be facetious about that, but St. Joes, one thing that I would, getting back to, what, wanting or would like to see LaSalle attain before I retire. One change I would like to see would be, I would love to see LaSalle be awarded a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. When...when I...I guess it was in the early '80's, there was kind of a push on by the then President Brother Patrick Ellis, assisted by Brother Emery Molinhour, both of who were Phi Bet's, there GBS: Well...I don't know about that one. We could be facetious about that, but St. Joes, one thing that I would, getting back to, what, wanting or would like to see LaSalle attain before I retire. One change I would like to see would be, I would love to see LaSalle be awarded a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. When...when I...I guess it was in the early '80's, there was kind of a push on by the then President Brother Patrick Ellis, assisted by Brother Emery Molinhour, both of who were Phi Bet's, there was push on to see if we could not, if we could get a chapter. And so sense, I had come in as Phi Beta Kappa, I organized a faculty group and I had been in touch with national headquarters and the first thing you have to do Stowe, is to work up, you have to get a core faculty. So I think at that time there were twelve of us, and, so to make a long story short, we were given the green light to, you even have to earn the, kinda of put it, the right, the privilege to apply for a chapter. Well we got that green light, so we applied, then for the first time ever, I think the year was 1985, we were granted an off-campus interview. So you can imagine the elation. Trouble was we were up against Villa Nova in '85. Who at the very same time had applied for a chapter. And had an on-campus interview. And our heart sank, because we didn't think that Phi Beta Kappa would give it to two schools in the same region, let alone two catholic universities. Now, loy and behold, Villa Nova got it and we didn't.

HM: Do you think they received it because their campus was larger and had more facilities compared to LaSalle?

bold
GBS: Partially, their endowment was and is a lot heftier. Their curriculum, I think was and is more rigorous. If I'm not mistaken, even today, LaSalle University, 2006, does not require a foreign language, require a foreign language. Well, that's one of those, absolutes, that one has to have for Phi Beta Kappa. I mean, they insist on a foreign language requirement. And math requirement, mathematics. You have to have, and so, Villa Nova, St. Joes, Ursinus, schools in our area who have recently earned the distinction of having a Phi Beta Kappa chapter have all, have all, met all those requirements. And that's to say, on top of all that, their endowments are heftier, I think their SAT profiles are higher, their libraries are larger and equipped. Although, as is, ours, we have a just, its a hidden secret of the campus, this library. So, its a long way. ^{to go,} I don't know if we'll ever get a Phi Beta Chapter, but I would like to see that. *healthier*

HM: What, this is, my last few questions here specifically are about the field of history and then you starting the graduate program in history. What do you think students gain from the study of history?

GBS: Well, its an old adage, but I think they gain a sense of...oh...contemporary issues. How can...take the Iraq war...how can any person really understand anything about the current inability of this government to form a collation, a united government, unless they understand the tribal history of Iraq. Or how can they, how can students appreciate the antipathy of hard line jihadists, Islamic jihadists, against the west, unless they understand, lets say the issue of the...crusades...and the medieval era...or more recently the whole issue of the concepts of the mandate system, post WWI. They don't understand things...I don't...and those are just two examples, worldwide examples. If you came to American history, I am sure there are a plethora, if you don't understand...the forces that drove this revolution and they creation of this constitution, how can you understand, they make-up of the country today. If you don't understand, anything about immigrant history, how can you, so ya, I think it...any student a certain grounding in the current world. *coalition* → *these*

^{our} HM: How do you think are history department effects the overall undergrad experience of every student at LaSalle, since they are required to take two courses?

GBS: Well, whether they like it or not, and whether they are dragged kicking and screaming into these world history courses, I think they leave them, if there done correctly, and if the instructors really do attempt to cover all the material, they are living with a, their gaining a better knowledge, of the past. And so, I can imagine, I can well imagine, lets ^{say} see a student, who wants to major in finance or marketing grumbling about...oh well why do I have to take a course in ancient, why do I have to learn anything about the Greeks and the Romans. And yet, I'll bet you dollars to donuts, when that person, maybe not, ^{all through their} during ~~their~~ all four years here at LaSalle, but I bet you when they get out in the real world, and, now they begin to interact with others, young business types, but also start ^{to} study, perhaps a little about the past themselves, maybe want to trips and travel, then, I bet it comes back to them. *they're leaning*

HM: Why did you start the graduate program in history in, what was it, the fall of 2004?

GBS: Well the answer to that is, lets be honest about this, I, myself, was ~~the~~ not the creator of this whole idea of an MA program in history. It had been banded about, it had been banded about in English, for example, for years. The person who really deserves credit for, designing the curriculum and pushing the agenda is Dr. Frank Ryan, Francis Ryan. So, but we, those of us in the department who were in favor of it, saw that it served a need for this area. It served an need in that, our particular program can really, increase the historical content knowledge of teachers, middle school and high school teachers. A lot of other graduate programs don't do that and I'm really proud to be associated with a program that...that...that...well stresses content, in the three major areas, American, European, and World. But also, that marries the content with pedagogy. How to teach that content. That really is unique. Look, an there is another advantage too, that is LaSalle specifically, next year we are going to have two students who are going to take advantage of our five year program. They are going to begin their graduate courses, their graduate work, even as seniors, now ~~they~~ ^{they're} highly qualified. And then once, they graduate, with their BA degree, then they can really devote full time attention to their MA. And they can earn their Masters degree in history in five years, instead of say, six or seven years. So I, but again, I think the advantage we have, we offer solid content. Another thing, I think that is interesting about LaSalle's masters program in history, is because LaSalle itself is small, there is far less red tape, and students who come into this program, and I have heard this over and over again, from all those we have accepted even from those who expressed interest in applying to the program. That they appreciate the personal attention they get. Which I think a place like LaSalle can afford. Vis-a Vis, a place like Temple or Rutgers, or even Penn.

HM: How difficult was it to get the institutional approval for it?

GBS: Not, not at all. From the highest to the lowest of administration, we had the support. The president was behind it, and all the way down to the associate deans, and they were for it. We sailed through the curriculum committee meetings and...Grad council meetings and all that stuff.

HM: What, why did you, you mentioned Dr. Ryan's influence in the development ^{of} in the curriculum for the program. How did the director position become available to you, you had mentioned earlier that you had kind of cast administration aside.

GBS: Well, they looked around and they couldn't find anyone else who would do it. So , no, I guess its because, Frank Ryan would have been a natural choice, but he's director of American studies at the under, the undergraduate level. Chip Desnoyers, who is chair of the department, he can't take on both. And, looking around the faculty department, there were other senior members who didn't want to devote the energy and the time to it. And there were lesser, newer faculty, who didn't want to devote the time either of necessity. ^{their} They, ~~there~~ focus is on doing well in the classroom and on publishing, in order to get tenure. So, I mean in a real sense it was almost by default, either Stow~~e~~ did it, or who else would do it.

HM: How do you feel its changed the department by having graduate students, kind of intertwined into the department basically?

GBS: I think its been a, useful to them, its provided undergraduate students with a sense of what can be done in history and a sense of, well what it might be worth in getting a bachelors degree in history, perhaps they to, some are already thinking about, well you know, maybe I should get a masters degree because they are seeing the results, at least two of our folks are going to be in PhD programs, and possibly a third, by the time next year begins. I think it lends a kind of luster, to the undergraduate program.

HM: Do you have any aspirations ^{of} ^{ing} to extend the program to include a PhD?

GBS: If the job market were ever to improve, and if there ever was, all of a sudden a kind of, these things do go in cycles. Let's say, there all of sudden turned out to be a massive wave of retirements in community colleges, and colleges and universities across the country, which is not ~~un~~conceivable. And that there was that their was there for a dearth of college level instructors, post secondary instructors. Ya, ya, I think we would consider that, but we would have to chose, I think to do that one, if I could interject, we would have to chose a specialty, probably American,

HM: Just because the strong tie,

GBS: To, to this area, right.

HM: How do you think it's progressed so far, given that it's still kind of in its infancy, you know its only coming into its second full year?

GBS: Remarkably well, we're actually ahead of the projected numbers. When the administration, launched, and gave approval for this program, there were ~~as~~ many new, as ^{with any} many new program objectives and goals, were hopeful goals, that would be met, we've already met those goals, mostly in terms of enrollment. We've exceeded them. And I don't see any slacking off. I still continue to get requests for, new folks who actually want to begin this summer, new folks who want to come in for the fall, ^{more} or for the fall over the summer, so, in fact, I had recent conversations with some of the faculty, Frank Ryan especially, and in fact in a very recent conversation with Frank Ryan, I reminded him about the old Aesop's fable of the frog sitting around the, the lily pond, getting rather bored, just lazing around, lying on their backs with their legs crossed, just looking at the clouds, very boring, they wished that they would have a king and so eventually that wish was gotten and they got a king, and he proceeded to beat the tar out of them and chastise them and tyrannize them, moral of the story, beware of what you ask for you just might get it. And so that's the case with our program, that is to say, ~~that~~ if we continue to grow as were growing now, in terms of student registration, and assuming ^{that} we continue to maintain, even I think, is a liberal cap of fifteen students per section, per course, I may have to start scrambling outside this university for faculty. But then again, I am hoping ~~this~~ university will provide for additional minds.

granted

HM: Do you see any areas of the program that you are disappointedⁱⁿ or that you would seek improvement in, I mean it's a new program, I'm sure, there's bumps in the road, but do you see anything that you know, you could kinda, since you are the director, kinda fix or shift.

GBS: Well, I, ya one thing that has emerged is more and more folks^{are} have self included, and have expressed interest in doing their thesis work or their comps work in American history, and we're really stretched thin with Americanists, that was not anticipated, and I, Iⁱⁿ have already^{beginning} to talk with the dean and the Provo^{Site} about the possibility of another hire, in, specific to American history. Although, again, I have to, I have never really thought of to many things, that I think, I mean, the university has been generous with funding, say for this lecture series that we are initiating here, well, ya, well there is one other thing that I would like to see improved, and I alluded to it earlier, and that is the physical plant, physical site, Olney Hall, I think is often embarrassing, for a graduate program, some of the classrooms are horrible, there was even talk about holding some of classes, in rooms like this, to try and expand these rooms over here, which would be marvelous, it's a nice setting, so, I can't think right off the top of my head of anything else.

HM: Do you feel that it's difficult to, if the program is going to start holding classes at Bucks County to administrate over both campuses?

GBS: You can put that down as number three^{of the things} that I would like to...to accomplish. No, its, obviously, with any program that's growing, there are going to be more headaches, there are going to be more bases^{that} that have to be covered, and more dots that have to be connected, but that again, goes with the territory. So what, I would welcome that and I hope that we get up to Bucks sooner rather than later. I think that there is a rich market up there that we could, that would serve, not only that our program could service, but also, would help the growth of this university.

HM: Our only competition is Holy Family in that area.

GBS: Ya, and I in terms of a masters degree in history, there is no one up there really.

HM: That's pretty much it for the questions I had set aside, is there any additional commentary you would like to interject in general, just for the posterity, you know Brother Joe's archive, anything you feel that as a faculty member, as a staff member, that you would want kinda preserved, in the archive? Nothing in Latin hopefully.

GBS: You mean a sort of sine quo non, to borrow a phrase,^a ~~no~~^{not can't} I think, the...LaSalle will always be here, and I think its made remarkable strides, since...I joined the place. And, once we get the national softball squash championships here we'll, have something.

HM: Great.^{then}