

Transcript: First Hour of the Interview with Mary Currie

Tracks were automatically inserted at 5 minute intervals as the interview was being recorded.

Narrator: Mary Currie
Interviewer (Millie Hopper)

Track 1

Interviewer: And a transcription to Dr. Allen

Mary: Okay.

I: I can give you copies of the CD's, what I'm going to have him do is over the weekend I'm going to try to have him make a CD, I think we're probably going to wind up doing a couple hours, maybe one now, maybe one next Thursday [so uhh]...What I would hope to do is have the first CD ready so you could hear that, then I'll be glad to share a Second CD with you.

M: Okay.

I: Okay, so we're recording now.

M: No problem.

I: This is Millie Hopper, and Mary Karey, this is part of Dr. Barbara Allen's.

M: Currie

I: Currie

M: Currie

I: Okay, Dr Allen's Oral history project for Brother Joe and Mary is here with me and of course Mary has now agreed to be recorded.

M: Yes, I have

I: All right, and here we go. When were you born, Mary

M.: Nineteen fifty-six.

I: Okay, and where did you grow up?

M: I Grew up Mt. Airy. Actually, like if you go right out Chew street.. that takes road you to Mt Airy, that's my house, like two blocks down the road..Mt Airy.Avenue

I: And you went to school?

M: I Went to school at Holy Cross Grade School and Cardinal Dougherty High School.

I: And did you graduate from Cardinal Dougherty?

M: Yeah, nineteen seventy-four.

I: Are there specific teachers or nuns that you remember that you have some great stories?

M: Yeah, there's some I had a real nice teacher in my first.. every year I had a really nice teacher, it was like, um, first was uh, uhh Mrs Bodett, she taught in..introduction to physical science

I: Mmmhmm

M:And, uh she's a very nice lady, I just...sometimes you just connect with people and I just connected with her, and the next year it was my Modern European History teacher,

and the following year it was my accounting teacher, and the accounting teacher came back the following year to replace a teacher, so I had her for two years...

Mrs. Colburn.

I: So, particularly, what made those people special for you?

M: They're just real, really, really friendly...I just connect with people sometimes, just can't explain why. I just get a connection, very nice people.

I: I know you had just said about your mother was very much involved with the church as well?

M: My mom cooked for the sisters of St. Joseph in Holy Cross [coughs][excuse me] for eight years, and every day after school I went to the convent because she wasn't home to take care of us. So we had our dinner at lunchtime and our lunch in the convent.

I: And I guess you had a chance to get to know some of the people in the convent while you were doing that, or...

M: The nuns they were the best, they were like members of the family, you know, we'd get to go to. they had a ...I remember, when they first got their color TV they invited us up there, and we watched Flipper, it was a big thing to watch Flipper in color

I: Oh, to see -- all the water and the colors, and all that

M: Exactly, All the nuns, they were just spectacular. Really liked them.

I: They made you kind of spoiled, a little bit?

M: No, they kind of keep you on your toes, you it's like you can't really get into trouble when they're going to see your mom that night, so I mean, I managed to get in trouble, but, it wasn't big stuff.

I: Yes, well that certainly good.

M: Fond memories.

I: Ah, now was that an Irish neighborhood when you were growing up?

M: Yeah, Yeah, I...think of one time on my .street we hadI couldn't swear on it, there had to be about ninety kids on that street. It was like every household had about eight kids and it was a small street it was like an Irish ghetto type street.

I: So you always had somebody to play with, then.

M: Uh, yeah. Oh yeah, never a dull moment. And you didn't have to worry about... my mom never had to worry about where I was. You know, no matter who's house you were in, she knew you were okay, and not getting into trouble.

I: So you could play like the yards, were there playgrounds?

M: The playgrounds was pretty far away, the closest thing we had to a playground was the field at the train station... Central Train station, that was our ball field.

I: You were a ball player?

M: Yeah, we played like stick ball, half ball, wire ball, wall ball. I was a bit of a tomboy

I: Hye, I can understand

M: Me and my sister

I: That's Dottie?

M: Yeah.

I: Uh, Was there a person...

TRACK 2

...or experience that kind of led you to an interest in plants at that age, or was that just something?

M: No, no, not at all, umm, nothing. I was still not.

I: Not sure, huh?

M: I shouldn't say that, but, I'm really not fond of plants, I mean, the work I do here I love, but I don't get in the flowers, not as much as couple of the other guys I work with do.

I: Oh, okay.

M: I like the outside.

I: Okay.

M: Outdoors is the place to be.

I: So did you have other jobs before you came to LaSalle?

M: Yeah, when I graduated high school, I worked at Pennsylvania Lumbermen's Mutual Insurance, that was all lumberyards, basically, up and down the east coast. I was a clerk

I: Were you out in the yard, or were you mainly in the office?

M: No, no I was I worked in the insurance in the office. Just we insured all the lumberyards.

I: Oh, I see.

M: Yeah, it was an insurance company, that the only thing they did was lumberyards.

I: How long did you work there?

M: Three years, three years, there, I did two years at KMart, I did three years making tuxedos .at After Six

M: Yeah, I made tuxedos, I worked in the factory, and then I came here. A friend of mine was in charge of the grounds, and he just told me come down and put in an application, and I got the position. And here I am twenty years later.

I: Uh, So, what was your first job when you started at La Salle? What did you do first?

M: My very first day I worked with, actually the guy who's my boss now, Mario, on preparing the baseball field.

I: So what'd you have to do?

M: The baseball field, umm he showed me how you paint the fields, paint the lines, drag the infield, fix the mound and home plate.

I: So what did you think after your first day? You think you'd be there for twenty years?

M: I knew I would stay here for awhile, just because you were outside and not confined to one spot. I wasn't one to sit still. Still Am.

I: That's great.

M: Yeah, but we progressed now I'm the assistant

I: Do you remember the actual date that you started?

M: Yeah, April Fool's Day.

I: Okay, so we're almost anniversary time then.

M: Yeah.

I: So that was April Fool's Day...?

M: April first nineteen eightysix.

I: Okay

M: I started, so this will be the beginning of my twentieth year.

I: Very nice.

M: Yeah.

I: How about Dottie, did she come later

M: Dottie's only been working here a couple years. She worked at PNB. She got that job right out of high school, and was there for thirty-two years. She was there for a long time. And then, um, let me think... We bought the house we live in now, me and my mom, and my sister and my nephew, and then my mom got kinda of ill, that's the nice way of putting it, but my mom got ill, and Dottie Kay. quit her job to stay home to take care of my mom.

I: Mmmhmm.

M: You know instead of paying someone to come in and take care of her.

I: Yeah, yeah it's family.

M: I just, we all just felt a little better, the way it worked out.

I: Mom was lucky.

M: My mom was a good lady. Tough lady, but a good lady. Yep.

I: I guess that had something to do with this whole thing with the rose garden

M: Yeah, like I said when she passed away, I was talking to my boss and I was asking him what kind of roses I should get, cause I was going to put some around my house, cause my mom loved rosebushes. And he suggested doing it at La Salle, and it was like okay, just get like a couple bushes, and tell me where to get the plaque and we'll find a spot for it. And, uh it just kinda of snowballed from there.

I: Yeah, cause I know it took about three years before you actually got the garden dedicated, it was like a third anniversary. I was going to ask you, like, who designed the garden,

M: Mario. My boss. Mario Menocal. He come up with the design, and picked out what roses to put in there.

I: So your group actually laid it out and all?

TRACK 3

M: Yeah and um, all the guys on my crew, they did all the digging and that dirt was just like clay, some areas they had to use a jackhammer to break it up.

I: MM.

M: So yeah. They did all the digging, and you know, making all the wood boxes and filling it in. And then my cousin is actually on the crew with us, and he's our plant man.

I: Mmmhmm.

M: George. He did a lot of the work. I mean, they all helped, but when it came to putting the plants in, George is the one who we'd go to

I: Well, I know Brother Joe had asked if you considered any other options before you decided on the rose garden. Was that kind of what you're saying is it just kind of evolved pretty quickly from "You know, I'd like to get a couple roses"

M: Yeah, it really...like I said, Mario came up with the design and whoever he had to go to said you know we'll just expand a little bit and it expanded to ...

I: It's beautiful.

M ..;What we have over there.

M: Yeah, a lot of people compliment us on it, which is nice.

I: Yeah. Since we're talking about that, let's take a look at these pictures.

M: Okay.

I: This is photo one, and just kind of tell me who's in there, start from right to left.
M: Let me come over to you
I: Just watch the cord ..we don't to strangle our selves
M: I will...This is my mom's sister
I: Let me get a pencil or a marker Brother Joe gave me photocopies so we can write on it.
M: Okay. This is my niece, my great niece Brittany.
I: B - r - i - t
M: nny, no bit, I don't know, bittany.
I: any.
M: two t's, one n.
I: and that's your niece
M: yeah, my great niece, my nephew's little girl. And
I: And behind her is?
M: That's my sister Dottie K
I: That's Dottie.
M: And actually, it's a shame you can't see him, but my uncle
I: Maybe in an another picture
M: He may be in another picture, I don't know, but
I: Okay
M: This is my nephew's girlfriend. This nephew, back here.
I: this is your nephew and girlfriend.
M: Yeah, that would be Daniel and Melissa.
I: I'm probably misspelling that
M: Yeah, there's only one L, I hear about it all the time.
I: M I I
M: M E L I S S A
I: Okay, Danile and Melissa, and they are nephew
M: That's my nephew, and his girlfriend
I: Okay
M: And this is my niece, KERRIANN, you know I can write these for you.
M: This is Kerriann again
M: Ker
M: Kerri did the reading I think. I think it was in the book.
I: Yeah
M: I think she read the Irish blessing
I: Yes, Brother Joe gave me that
M: Okay
M: This little guy up here is the um, the last great grandchild that my mom and she's saw him maybe a month before she passed
I: Oh, that's nice. Yeah I saw him in the picture, he's a cutie
M: Yeah, Will, my sister always wanted to name uh, a kid after
I: Your dad
M: My dad.
I: Yeah

M: And my dad's nickname was Scotty, so when we tried that a couple times, we had a couple nephews that passed on.

I: Aww, that's unfortunate.

M: So she decided to try Will.

I: Hye, maybe that one will be lucky.

Track 4

M: He's a die hard. He's, we call him an old soul. He's so old for his age.

I: Like mature and sensitive?

M: He's a trip. He can tell you the entire story of Lord of the Rings.

I: Uh uh

M: I mean, word for word, I mean, he knows the character's names, I can't even remember the characters' names. He's a fascinating little boy. You got know him to love him. Then that head behind her is actually my brother in law. I should do some of these up top

I: That's fine

M: This one here is my sister, Rose Marie

I: I noticed there were three sisters, and brother and

M: My mom liked double names, I am not giving you mine, so don't go there

I: I think I have it.

M: No, not that one alright

M: No, you have it.

I: If Brother Joe has it, I have it.

M: I don't even, I think as far as LaSalle goes, my name's Marie G. Currie. It's not hard to figure out, I spent my childhood fighting because of that name.

I: Oh, okay

M: That's a tough name in the catholic school.

I: Oh, okay

M: I don't mind it, I still have family members that call me that, but,

I: Okay, well we certainly don't have to, we know who that is, and she's reading the blessing there.

M: Yes, Kerri ann, me and my two sisters

I: So we've identified them.

M: Yeah This group is actually my guys. The grounds crew.

I: Alright, If you want to mark some names on that so we know who they are

M: Okay

I: I guess this is

M: That is Mr Lopacki, he was the director of Physical Plant, he retired, that's Mario, my boss,

I: and the one that designed this

M: that's my cousin George, talking to my other cousin, who came down for the dedication. I think she might be in one the other pictures. She didn't quite make it so l.

I: Yeah

M: Life goes on. [laughs]

I: Yeah, well, I we didn't do all of them, I confess

M: No, that's okay. This guy, not all of the grounds crew was there, so they didn't get their picture.

I: How long did it take to put the garden in? Do you remember?

M: Um, it'd be real hard to say, because it was done as we had time for it

I: Oh, okay.

M: It's not like we spent two weeks solid on we bought some of the wood, and then we dug out the holes and put the wood in there. Then the dirt had to go in, and let that settle and uh there was an ongoing experience.

I: That whole area around the quad is .you said was all solid rock so it's real hard to work in

M: yeah, yeah i saw that in

I: I wanted to tell you that was such a good suggestion that Dr Allen picked up on and showed it in class and result a copy of that is now in Brother Joe's archives, plus also in following up on that, they were able to get copies of some of the recordings that were used for the interviews, and put those in the archives. So you did some good work in contributing that suggestion.

M: I saw that and I would catch bits and pieces of it. So I finally went and I saw Sid McCloud, and I asked him about it, and he said, well actually Tanya, I don't know her last name, um, that was her project for one of her classes. So, I think it was very interesting.

I: Yeas it's very nicely done. But it's just funny that it really hadn't reached the archives.

M: Yeah, that, I mean I don't know. You would think Brother Joe would have seen it. Obviously he doesn't watch the LaSalle channel.

I: Perhaps that's true.

I: I'll give credit to the designer there, that's pretty neat.

M: Mike Lo Packi he has since retired, he was the director of physical plant and Mario Menocal

I: Okay, fair enough.

M: You know who we are

I: Hey yes, we've got you now.

M: Okay, I'll go back over here so I can take my shoes off again

I: Take your shoes off and be comfortable...

Track 5

I: That sounds good to me

M: Okay

I: Alright, so we got your first job at La Salle, uhm, what, I know your work has changed a lot since you've been here, what have you held different jobs or it's just kind of expanded within maintenance?

M: When you work on the ground crew, it's every day's an experience, you know what I mean, it's like one day you could be cutting grass, another day you could be doing tree-work, another day you could be cleaning leaves from somewhere. I mean, you're not really here in the daytime, but [inaudible] The jobs vary from, I mean the guys spend uh, an hour and a half every morning, seven guys just picking up trash, just walking around picking up trash. So you get trash, you got the leaves, you got the snow, you got cutting

the grass, I spend a lot of times on the fields, you know, and the one football, softball, baseball field, field hockey, lacrosse, me and Bill spend a lot.

M: the other guys just, they do everything, tree work, cleaning the grass, cutting the grass.

I: Do they ever contract out any big jobs, or you try to keep everything in house

M: The only contractors they really use is for the tree work. Because they have the equipment, they have like the boom trucks they can just get up there and instead of us trying to climb. We used to have a tree crew, and it just kind of makes more sense to have a contractor, not on standby, but we always use the same guy, he does excellent work

I: that's good, at least you don't have to worry about getting up those trees, I know sometimes that's kind of scary up there

M: It's scarier to run the chipper.

I: That, takes fingers.

M: Yeah, that'll take the whole body. But there's so many jobs that we do,

I: And you're current job title is?

M: I believe it's assistant supervisor, but I try not to say that too much. I'm in charge when my boss isn't in., you know, I mean.

I: So you don't have a crew that reports directly to you.

M: No, when they come in the morning, everybody's in the shop, and Mario is there, I pretty much have in my mind what I'm going to be doing that day, unless he has something else, you know. Cause my job varies so much. I work on the equipment and take care of the fields, and cut grass, do potholes. I fix the fences. Not just me, I mean.

I: Yeah. The whole crew.

M: Not trying to have a big head here.

I: No, I understand

M: the majority of the jobs, it's just small stuff that would only take one person to do, and if I need help, one of the guys will always come and help me.

I: So you say equipment, you say the tractor, and what other kinds of equipment do you have"

M: Equipment we have one big Kubota front loader, we have a smaller Kubota front loader we have three Gravely tractors, a Simplicity tractor, a Skag walk-behind, a Toro walk-behind, the rotary mowers, the reel mower we use on the field, the snow blowers, the aerators, thatchers, the leaf blowers, [cell phone alarm rings] That actually just lets me know it's four-twenty-five, and time for me to clean up and go home, that's what that is. I get so carried away, because between four and four thirty, I'll try to do little things around my work area, and then I lose track of time.

I: Sure.

M: So all of a sudden I'm hearing those guys clock out, and I'm still dirty and everything, so I decided to set my alarm.

I: That seems reasonable. Don't want to be here all night trying to get out of here.

M: No but I could, there's a lot of work. What else do we do. Just trivial stuff, you know, filling in the potholes, fixing the fences when the kids...climb over them.

I: Soo you get involved with all the potholes that, you have special mix you put in?

M: No, you actually just buy the bags. You can go to Home Depot and buy the bags, and if it's really cold I use my ...

Track 6

...propane tank to get it warm up so it'll spread evenly. I don't know. I'm trying to think, there's so many things that we do. Then you got the snow,

I: Yeah, we actually, Brother Joe gave me a note that one year you wrote in about the snow removal was so bad, it was I forget the year, but you wrote a letter in

M: Well, her'es the thing, we had spent from Friday night to Sunday afternoon removing snow and some student wrote a letter in the Collegiate complaining about a little patch of ice in front of her, you know, and she went on to say how many people were here and you know, what a bad job we did in this and that, and it just irritated me.

I: Mmmhmm

M: So I wrote a nice letter, cause she was saying there was more people doing the snow removal than there actually was. So my letter kinda of was get your facts straight, you know, if you want to write a letter, make sure you know what you're talking about, we spent three days here, nonstop because we sleep here. We don't go home. You know, and she irritated me.

I: so who sets the priorities. Who decides when you start working on clearing? And what do you clear first?.

M: Mario is in charge of the snow removal, so we have a pretty set pattern, we have four trucks that have plows on them, and you know, like one will go down south campus and take care of that, and one will do main campus, and one's over here at Hayman and the smaller one can actually do some sidewalks, and then we have three Gravelly that have plow on it, and then my small Kubota I can take the bucket off that and put a plow on that so that helps. I use the big Kubota to move the piles as they're made in different places, and we have snow blowers, and then shovelers, and that consists of all physical plant, not just ground screw, that like custodial, electrician, plumbers, carpenters, basically we have a list, and Mario will call them.

I: I was going to say, do you hire temps, but it's basically use people within the organization to come in for snow emergencies.

M: Yeah, and then the resident life, now I think they're called the Hub. The dorms have their own custodials, and they take care of the snow there, they have their own snow blowers. They don't have a plow, but there's not a lot of areas inside that they need to blow, the snow blower does most of that, and the shovelers, and after that's all done, then we get to go home.

I: And you sometimes have to sleep here to get that all done?

M: Yes we have, I've actually slept on, people think I'm nuts, but I've actually slept on skids of salt in my shop, I'll bring in blankets and spread them up and curl up and sleep. The guys usually go into the union building. They have a couple of couches, here and there, they scatter wherever you can find someplace comfortable.

I: Have you ever had a particular adventure or experience with snow removal?

M: The funniest one, I just did, no one else thinks it's funny, but you had to be there

I: Okay.

M: I'm trying to move the snow, going out you know where the Clarkson street parking lot is, behind the town homes. Okay, so I'm cleaning the curb line there, and I was sweeping it up and dumping it, and I came close to the new gate that they put up there, and I went to scoop, and for some reason, they never attached the gate, the gate was

attached, but it didn't have any pins to stop it. Okay, so I scooped up the snow, and I lifted my bucket, and it was like a cartoon thing, because the whole gate just "poof" hit the ground, and you know the snow come up, and just the, exact marks of the fence, I just sat there laughing, I mean it cracked me up, but it took my guys about three hours to put it back up.

I: So they remember that.

M: they weren't amused, but I got a chuckle out of it.

I: That's pretty neat making designs in the snow like snow angels.

M: It just amazed me that they wouldn't think to fasten the gate, you know, put a pin in.

I: That's right, after all somebody thought somebody else did it.

M: I don't know, I mean the gates heavy, it's not like you're going to walk up and lift it and move it, I mean, we needed my tractor, the big tractor to lift it back up, even to set it in the hinges, but, it was kind of funny.

Track seven:

M: I enjoyed it. I can think of some other ones, but

I: Go ahead, what else comes to mind?

M: Well, I have real short legs, okay, and this one time, I mean, when they plow main campus, all the snow, along Olney hall gets pushed towards the buildings because that's where the drains are. So I pulled up there at break time and I jumped off and I got stuck in the snow, it was so deep, and it was like, how do I get out, I couldn't get out. That's another; you had to be there.

I: So how did you get out?

M: I just fell down and rolled. I couldn't climb back on the tractor, because I was actually stuck in the snow, like being in quicksand, just my legs weren't, and I had coveralls and they're even heavier, and like I said, I'm not a small person, so it's not like I was able to jump out.

I: Yeah

M: It wasn't working, so I just kind of fell back and rolled.

I: So you must have to have pretty heavy clothes to work out there in the wintertime

M: Yeah, I use a lot of those hand warmer things and they have feet warmers, and the stuff that they have for bad backs I'll strap them on.

I: To keep warm.

M: When you're sitting on the plow, I don't shovel.

I: Okay.

M: I never have as long as I've been here, but when you're sitting on the tractor, a lot of times, the snow just settles there, and you don't realize that your back's getting cold, so I started putting the heat wraps back there.

I: I guess like sitting still in the cold you start to stiffen up a little.

M: Your whole body stiffens up, and your knees get sore, because those tractors do have clutches, so every time you're stopping, you're actually trying to hit two pedals. And then you're always looking behind you to see if students are behind you, so you get sore knees, sore neck, sore back, but it's fun, it's my playtime.

I: You like the snow removal

M: I like the snow removal, I don't think anybody else does, but it's my playtime.

I: You get the play with all the big toys in the snow., a

M: Yeah. It's fun. Two good snowstorms a year and I'm h happy.

I: Didn't get much this year.

M: We got two.

I: Oh, okay.

M:That's all.

I: All right, very satisfied then

M: Very happy

[whispering about extra money]

I: I can understand that that would be an influence too.

M: oh yeah.

I: cause you get a little overtime when that comes though.

M: yeah.

I: So, uh, what about the ice, when the ice comes, that's not such a good thing.

M: the ice we have one truck that has a giant ...I don't know if you've seen it, it's a real big orange salt spreader that's on the back, that does most main campus, we just bought a Kubota it's called a rough terrain vehicle, and that has a smaller salt spreader, so we can do side walks with that, and then we have little push spreaders that the guys use. And we just have those days you're spending all morning just salting everything. But, we usually come in rather early for that stuff, like six, sometimes five, depending on how bad it's supposed to be, and if you do it right, campus should be open by first class.

I: Very good. So that's the goal to get in here in time to get the first class open.

M: Yeah they don't like to cancel classes. So that's our goal. And we usually accomplish it.

I: So you do the parking lots as well then

M: Yeah, the truck, there's a like I said the truck has a big orange salt spreader, and we use the Kubota. We just had a salt garage built down south campus, so it's humungous and it's loaded with bulk salt and use the big Kubota to fill the truck up, and off they go

I: That sounds good, it's a lot easier than trying to break it up or something.

M: It's a lot easier than using bags. We used to have a salt spreader that was real small, on the back of the truck and some one would have to stay in the back of the truck and keep cutting bags open to fill it up. So this thing holds...probably holds like a ton of salt I don't know much salt the bucket holds, I use three scoops to fill it. I want to say close to a ton of salt.

I: That's a lot of salt. It's a big campus. I really kind of getting a sense of it's pretty spread out.

M: it's pretty big, yeah, it goes from Bellfield and Linley all the way up to Chew and Church

I: Do you find any particular problems

Track eight:

...Being right in the middle of the city

M: I grew up in the city,

I: : No, I mean like in maintenance, problems or anything as a result of, does it make any difference

M: The only problem the ground screw has is the trash that's out there from the neighbors and students. I don't want to put the students down, if it wasn't for them we wouldn't have a job.

I: This is true.

M: But the I think the trash is probably the biggest problem... in my mind because there's more important things you could be taking care of instead of wasting manpower with that.

I: So when we start talking about what you wish they'd do differently we can mention trash. Trash I think we talked a little bit about it, but let's go back your work changes then with the seasons, the snow, then we get through the snow, and you have the equipment, I guess you're working on the cold days inside, what changes from spring?

M: Springtime for me, specifically it's the athletic fields, we've got baseball and softball, and lacrosse, they've have games scheduled now. So me and Bill take care take care of the fields right now. My guys have been spending most of the time cleaning up the grass, getting all the thatch and the dead leaves and everything, and cleaning the grass so it will grow better, and then they'll start cutting.

I: do you have to have specific types of grass in the different fields, or is it all the same kind, don't really get involved in seeding it?

M: I get involved in the seeding it, but I'm really not the grass expert, I mean Mario and Bill will talk, I know they use Kentucky blue grass, they use perennial rye, because that you'll get seeds within a week, two weeks and sometimes they use a special mix, called "Delval" I think it is, it's specifically for turf. It's also, I could be mistaken because it is just stuff I catch them talking about, but I think it's designed for this area because of the temperature, the climate, and stuff like that. But, um, see Bill does, takes care of the chemical applications, and fertilizing the grass.

I: So you don't have the pesticide applicator's license.

M: I don't have it, no, I drive the tractor for him because we have a big sprayer that he'll use, so Bill has license, and Mario has the license.

I: Speaking of licenses, do you have to have the CDL [commercial drivers license]?

M: No, the only ones around here that need that are the security shuttle drivers. We just have a regular license.

I: I know there's some problems...I've experience some things with CDL in Jersey when I worked there, so i know there's issues with them.

M: I don't know, I don't even think the tractor that I have is big enough to require any kind of special license.

I: So we got spring, so spring is getting the fields ready,

M: And cutting grass.

I And cutting grass.

M: And fields, and grass, and fields, and grass, and in between that, you got to fit in as far as I go, I got to fit in the little things that nobody realizes even has to be done. If you know what I mean. You know, like, let me think, keeping up the equipment, because I've tried, I do what people would call preventative maintenance, try to keep the things running before something breaks, so I do that, I do like I said, the season of the potholes, after all the salt been on the ground, so we do the potholes, believe it or not, there are a actually thinking about getting ready for graduation.

I: So what will you have to, will you have to do?

M: Me personally, um, not much, it's minor stuff, like making sure we have enough trash cans to go around, for all the different events, cause everybody wants cans out. But we only have a certain amount. So I got to make sure we got that covered. Graduation, um, they have it on the field.

I: I was wondering if they had it outside.

M: yeah, they have it outside, which is an adventure, but I'm....

Track nine:

.... trying to think, it sounds like I don't do anything now.

I: You say it's an adventure, is it.

M: It's an adventure because every day, it's different, it 's like I could come to work saying "well I'm going to do this" and then whammo something comes up where I have to go a whole different course, you know, I have set in my mind what needs to be done, but

I For instance,

M: For instance, if Brother Mike calls and says there's too much...? What ..He complains about everything...

I That's all right.

M:trash.

I: okay.

M: Okay, but he has his little quirks but it's like, um, if he calls and says he wants something taken care of, then you gotta, I mean, we take care of the flags, so if the's a flag is ripped or not flying right or something. We gotta go take care of that. It's like I said, it's the little stuff, and people don't realize that those flags take time.

I: yah, time consuming.

M: yeah, you know, because if one of them is actually ripped, then they got to take it down, and then I gotta try to fix it so they can put it back up.

I: by fix it, you don't sew it, or?

M: Nno, lot of the times what happens is they have grommets that the chains go through, and with the wind around here, they actually, the grommets get ripped off. So I'll have to cut a new hole and put a new grommet on there. It sounds fairly..

I: But it's time consuming.

M: It's time consuming that's the thing. Or they can, say, you know, the pole on the fence around the track is bent, fix it. Have no idea, it's time consuming stuff. So easy to say, fix it, but they don't know what it takes to fix it, you know, that's what I'm saying. I came in this morning thinking exactly what I was going to do, and then I ended up fixing the parking blocks from the snow removal, because the plows moved them around. You know, so that side tracked me, you know, it's an adventure.

I: Well that's what makes it interesting, isn't it?

M: Yeah, I tell people I love my job.

I: That's great.

M: I can do without some of the people.

I: Oh ,well.

M: I love my job.

I: I think anytime you work a lot with things and if you enjoy things that people aren't necessarily compatible with that.

M: I can do without some of them. I like the I spend a lot of time fixing stuff that people don't even realize it's being done, you know, because it sounds so trivial to them you know what I mean? We're like the unseen forces around here

I: I think that's maybe something we can change a little, I'm hoping that, you know, the idea behind this little bit with you know, doing this, is to get something down that talks about what the unseen people really do, because I think there are probably people really have no idea what's involved in maintaining a place like this.

M: No, I think there's like ninety acres, including the land the buildings are on, I think that's what it is. You'd have to ask somebody who. I was given that

I: I know when I was talking to Brother Joe about what else does she do, besides ride the tractor, he says, I don't think I know. And then I started to think well let me kind of go back and think about what maintenance people do in other contexts so that's where some of my questions came from. So that's kind of why I you know, if they seem a little, if they're kind of disjointed. Now you've, we got through spring, we're doing the grass fields, what about summer, what does summer bring for you?

M: Summertime I spend...I ride the..I use the riding mower, the three forty five, and I cut the big areas. I won't be doing the fields anymore, cause they're turfing them, but I cut over the farm, the big areas there, down south campus, big areas there, if I'm not doing that, then um, we still work on the fields. I mean, the grass still has to be cut, even though no students are actually here, and this, Billy puts down a lot of chemical stuff so like I said, I drive the tractor for him. We gotta mulch all the beds on campus, which takes a lots of time, because we're not allowed to drop the mulch on main campus....

Track ten:

..... so it's put back by my shop so I gotta take it out one scoop at a time. So . I keep a journal, and sometimes when I write in my journal and I'll say, like mulch main campus, it's like, that doesn't sound like much one line it doesn't sound like much. But it's probably, holy moly, a gazillion trips with that tractor, you know, it's..

I: Do you put do your people put out the bedding plants I noticed the pansies.

M:: Yeah, they go out pretty close to graduation so they look really nice and fresh. I personally don't plant.

I: You personally don't plant.

M: I personally don't plant, I got two bad knees, don't plant, I said I'll help them move the plants around, I'll move the mulch so they can do that, I'll do anything you want, but I ain't getting on my knees. It's just damp, the ground gets damp. It's from years of working here.

I: Yeah, being out in the cold and all

M: Well, the tractors, their clutches, so you constantly..

I: They haven't made a tractor with an automatic transmission yet, have they?

M: No, well it's strange, because you don't really have to shift it's not like a car where you have to shift it, but it still has the clutch, So you can put it in third, take off, but you still have to hit the clutch before you stop, So the clutch sits about this high, So, I got short legs, it's like.

I: I remember the farm tractor and the clutch, it's been a long time, but I remember

M: We actually had a tractor that was a fifty seven ford

I: Wow

M: And we had that up until I think I want to say four years ago now. Fifty-seven Ford'

I: They last forever.

M: It was a die hard, big blue.

I: I

M: They were made to last.

I: They're almost indestructible

M: Oh yeah, the bucket on that thing, you could kill somebody if you dropped it on them

I: Solid metal in those days.

M: Yea, I could crack ice

I: Oh

M: When I was clearing the roads, and if it was frozen, I could lift it up, tilt the bucket, and just "cckkk" and you'd see it just shatter. These new tractors,..I can get under the ice, but I can't crack it.

I: the lighter metals don't penetrate the same way.

M: Yeah, I don't know. What else do we have, and then in the fall, you have football, and soccer, men's and women's and field hockey, so that's another taking care of the fields, and trying to fit working on the fields in between their schedules

I: Do you ever get caught between a special event, or something where you have an emergency in terms of these fields.

M: No, we have a really good idea and you know, when the games are, and if I know there's a game, I'm not going to get pulled away to go do something else. Because these are scheduled games and the fields not done in time, and they have to forfeit, they're not really happy and I think I heard somebody telling me sometime they have to pay for the forfeit games. I'm not sure if that's accurate, don't put that in there, I can't swear that.

I: We'll leave it that way,

M: I can't swear by that, but, um, if it's a scheduled game, me and Bill aren't going to leave the field until it's done.

I: what about sudden rainstorms or snowstorms or something?

M: Rain's bad.

I: Bad?

M: Rain's bad, especially, with baseball because the infield's actually clay, so if there's rain in the forecast, then they'll cover the field with a tarp, and take it off the next day, and we can fix the field. If it's raining the day of the game, if it's a light rain, we'll work until somebody tells us they're not playing or until we decide you can't work with the clay anymore. You can't drive a tractor on there, you can't rake it if it's extremely wet, you just gotta know how far to push yourself before you say, it ain't happening.

I: So really, the maintenance people can say when they're not..when you have to call a game?

M: No, I get to decide when I'm not going to work on the field anymore, and the coach will what you think it's like, well if it stops raining, right now, and it's nine o'clock in the morning, if work really hard, and

Track eleven:

...everything was in our favor, if you got sunshine and wind blowing, the fields will dry out pretty quick. You know, so the weather plays a lot in that I don't get to call the game. I get to say that I'm not working on the field anymore. If it stops raining, then we can go back out there, and we'll give it our best shot

I: So it's really the coaches that make the decision

M: I think the coaches and the umpires, yeah,

I: Have you ever have any particular adventures with a particular coach?

M: [Laughter} I don't want to talk about it.

I: Okay

M: Um, all in all the coaches aren't bad people, they have a job, their job is to practice as much as they can to get a good team, you know, we butt heads a couple of times, because it's like the field's too wet to practice, but we need to practice, well you can practice, but you're going to mess it up, and I'm not going to be able to fix it for your game tomorrow, You know so it's kind of they know that if they practice and after we tell them not to, then, they got to deal with what they get.

I: You know what you can do and what you can't do.

M: Yeah. We butt heads a couple times, but it's not a personal thing.

I: It's your both trying to do your jobs.

M: Exactly, I'll go up and we'll talk its like why would you go out there, we have to practice okay, but now look at the field you gotta play on. I can't do anything with that you know, but all in all most of them have a brain.

I: So most of the time you can talk to them.

M: yeah.

I: I'm curious like with the mowing the foot ball field and even the baseball field I know I sit like in the baseball stadium. Sometimes and it seems like they have whole patterns they have to follow to mow, is there like proscribed heights or patterns that you have to follow mowing these fields?

M: The pattern, no, the height, um, sports do have different requirements, soccer. I keep looking out this window like the soccer fields' there. Soccer, we cut it two inches. Um, when it's baseball season, that field gets cut an inch and a half, and when it's field hockey season, the field hockey is played on the baseball field. So the field hockey part is cut in an inch and a eighth. And there are coaches who will come in and measure that. And I'm being very serious, I had a coach come in a measure and say that was too high, and I had to go out and cut it before they would play the game.

I: That was an opposition coach

M: Yeah. But all those troubles are going away, because they're turfing them.

I: What that means that they're putting in a whole new type of field.

M: Artificial.

I: All artificial

M: Yeah I don't have a lot of details about that, so I really.

I: Yeah, alright..

M: That's something that Haymen's doing, but as far as I know, it's um, soccer is being done, and baseballs being turfed.

I: Cause I know a lot of the big leagues are getting away from turf.

M: Yeah, artificial turf. But you see the problem here they don't have enough fields for practice, okay, so everybody needs to practice on the game field, so if you have say you gotta football game and it rains, they're still going to play in the rain, which means they're totally going to trash the field..

I: Yeah, the mud and all that is really a mess

M: Okay, and in an ideal world, you could get that field presentable for the next game if nobody was on that field through that week. But you have teams that want to practice, and at this school, they're practice field is their playing field. So you don't get a chance to do the work on the field and the field doesn't get a chance to mend. So they really had no option. I'm not saying I agree with it, I'm not saying I disagree.

I: See bow it works out

M: I don't know a lot about artificial turf so I really...

I: I know from baseball, my husband's a baseball fan, I know they're getting away from it, that they weren't all that happy with it

M: Well, I think they're doing baseball, because they're losing the softball field because of that shopping center they're putting up there, and the softball field is where the football field used to practice, and now the football team doesn't have a practice area, so you're going to have to three teams that are going to want to practice on that field. So I'm figuring they're turfing the baseball field so they can use it as a practice field also. That's my theory.

Track 12

I Ok. We'll see how it works out.

M: Nobody told me that

I: Hey, you know, we'll see.

M: That's my theory.

I: So you don't get involved with like setup for like inside events, like basketball games or you don't get called in.

M: No, I got enough, we have nothing if it's not outside, it's not mine.

I: Not necessarily a bad thing

M: No. No. We don't get involved. There's a whole custodial. They're the inside people and they're the ones who do the setup like the union, the ballroom, and all that stuff. I think they have a specific group that takes care of the setups. That's fine with me. I come inside if I absolutely have to.

I: I don't think we ever got to fall, I don't think we ever got to leaves do you get involved in any of that cleanup?

M: Leaves, well the three forty five mower that I have that comes off and I have a giant leaf blower that goes on there, so I blow leaves and we have two push blowers, and you've never been here in the daytime.

I: Rarely.

M: Ok. we have.. it's called a Billy goat. It's a vac that goes on the back of our truck, we have a box that they suck up the leaves, so you'll have the guys making piles.

I: I've seen those

M: The truck comes round and sucks it up. And then it gets dumped, south campus is my only dumpsite now, I'm sure they'll find a way to... it's looking nasty down there, I don't

know, I don't know what they're going to do, but it's the same, I don't have a big crew, I think there's only nine guys on the crew, and two of them are always on the trash truck. Which nobody even wants to discuss the trash truck, you know, that's a non-stop job.

I: There's, so much trash.

M: Yeah. They just spend the day driving around to all the buildings and getting the bags of trash as people put them out, they take care of the trash from cafeteria, all the garbage and stuff,

I: and I guess the residents areas as well.

M: St Basil's, Newmans yea the only place that don't deal with the trash is the town homes and the Theresa Court they have the roll dumpsters, and an outside contractor comes in and empties them, but they take care of they don't, take north dorms because the custodial, they do the dorms, there's a compactor right outside. behind [something] there's a compactor that blue and gold uses and that custodial uses, so we don't get involved in the north dorm's trash.

Blue + Gold

I But you do have to get all these leaves down to south campus.

M: well, the leaf thing is it goes in the back of the truck with the vac, and they just go down there, swing the machine out a little way, and pull 'em out. So, we had two trucks, the trash truck and a pickup truck. The trash truck and the pickup. The pickup truck has the leaf sucker on it, and then they just dump it down there, and when it gets loaded up then I go down there with the big machine, the big Kubota and try to push it over the hill.

I: Okay. Over the hill takes it where?

M: It's still LaSalle's property, but we have flat land, and then there's a hill, and there's a chain link fence at the bottom, it's all La Salle's property, I'm not dumping on somebody else's property, and it's Fairmount park is what's on the other side of the chain link fence, that's actually where the Lindley field is, okay, but I'm pushing the leaves over the hill, but it's La Salle's property, it's just.

I: They just go there and rot until

M: They'll decompose, and eventually harden up and be we've actually since I've been here, we've added about eight feet to that area by dumping stuff down there.

I So you use them after they break down, you use them as fill dirt

M: Yeah, they just sit there and fill in.

I: Well, that's making good use of them anyway.

M: Yeah, like I said it's an adventure.

I: Have you and the tractor ever been used as part of any special events. Have they ever brought you out on like a football game?

M: No, I've had some kids who like for I guess for class projects take pictures of different things, I know the picture of me on the Kubota was done for a digital photography class cause it was in the union building cause the teacher gave me copy....

DRAFT

CHILDHOOD

Parents William and Eleanor married in 1949.
Four children: Rose Marie Mullen, Dottie Kay and Mary Grace

When were you born?

Where did you grow up? (Andorro?)

Where did you go to school?

^{Yes}
Were there a particular nun or teacher that you remember?

What was the role of the Catholic Church in your family (mother)?

What was role of your Irish Heritage In your family?

Was your neighborhood predominately Irish?

Was there a person or experience that resulted in your interest in plants?

WORK EXPERIENCE

What types of work did you do before coming to La Salle?

How did you happen to come to La Salle?

When did you start at La Salle? (1986? – 7 years in 1993)

Who started at La Salle first? You or Dottie?

What was your first job at La Salle?

How has you work changed since you have been here?

What is your job title today?

How many different supervisors have you had since coming to La Salle? Special Stories?

Who is your supervisor?

Do you supervise other people (How Many)?

Is all your work outside?

How does your work change with the Seasons?

What do you do on rainy days?

How does cold weather affect your work?

Have you ever been called to set up for special events inside? Basketball games other events?

Does the college raise its own bedding plants?

What kind of Tractor do you use to Mow the grass

Are there special attachments for mowing and plowing. Do you put them on?

Is the same tractor used to mow other areas on campus?

Is a special grass mixture used on the football field?

Are there guidelines for mowing the football field (height or mowing patterns)?

Have you and the tractor ever been part of any special events at La Salle?

Are there times when you had to get the football field ready for a big event on short notice?

How do you feel about the nickname of "Tractor Mary"?

What are your responsibilities in snow removal?

Who sets the priorities for snow removal?

When does it start? What gets cleared first?

Are extra employees hired for snow removal? (/Temps)

Are particular snow removal stories for big events or specific people who were snowed in?

What kinds of grounds work project are contracted out?

What is your interaction with administration?

What is your interaction with faculty?

What is your interaction with students?

How does being surrounded by the city affect maintaining the grounds?

How did the idea of the rose garden as a tribute to your Mother develop?

Died 2001- Rose garden 3 years later

Were other ideas for a memorial considered as well?

Who designed the Rose garden?

Was it installed by the grounds staff?

PICTURES ??

What are the names of the participants at the dedication?

WRAPUP

What changes have you seen at La Salle in the time you have been here?

Are there things students or faculty could do to make your work easier?

What do you wish that they knew about grounds work?

Are there other people who you think should be interviewed for the achieves?

Today, how would answer that question about your contribution to La Salle?

What has the experience of working at La Salle meant to you?