

An Interview with John “Jack” L. McCloskey
Conducted by John M. Fallon III
April 8, 12, 18, 2011
Buckingham, Pennsylvania

[0:00:00] John Fallon: Today is April 8, 2011. I’m In Buckingham Pennsylvania with Mr. John McCloskey. Thank you for being here today sir.

John McCloskey: Happy to be here.

Fallon: First of all, do I have your permission to record this interview?

McCloskey: You do.

Fallon: We will start at the beginning. When and where you born?

McCloskey: I was born—December 29, 1920 in Olney¹ on Sheldon Street. I believe it was 255 Sheldon Street and it more than likely it was the Incarnation Parish, but if not it was Saint Veronica’s, one or the other. But I was born at home, and ultimately my mother and father had six children. Obviously, I was one of the six. I was the—one, two, three—I was the fourth of the six. I had two older sisters at the time and one older brother. Then, at a future date, along came the fifth, who was a brother, and then the sixth who was a sister, so six children. My mother and father moved to Cornwell Heights² in 1924. At that time, the address was Byberry Road, Cornwell Heights. It was right on the division line between Cornwells and Andalusia³ and there were no house numbers at the time.

Fallon: Really?

McCloskey: No. In fact very few phone numbers. We didn’t have a phone. We didn’t have a phone until my sister went into nursing school. But we managed to get by.

¹ Olney is a neighborhood located in north Philadelphia, Pa.

² Cornwell Heights is a neighborhood located less than a mile outside of Philadelphia along the I-95 corridor. It uses a Bensalem, Pa zip code. It is commonly referred to as Cornwells among Philadelphians.

³ Andalusia is a Philadelphia neighborhood. It borders Cornwell Heights at the Philadelphia city limits.

[0:01:50] Fallon: Imagine that?

McCloskey: Yeah. [Chuckles]

Fallon: What were your parents names?

McCloskey: Edward and Anna. Edward 'A' and Anna⁴ whose maiden name was Fay. F—A—
Y.

Fallon: What did your father do for a living?

McCloskey: He was a layer-out in structural steel. Now a layer-out has to be explained. He would mark the steel for the cutting. In other words, wherever he marked they would drill a hole. So that everything had to be absolutely accurate. If it was a circular tower as it might have been he was using what he called an INSKIP⁵ which was an engineering book to determine how to plan the angle for the drilling. His mark was the mark that either let it be put together or not. He did that all his life. He did it with a two year high school education. He graduated, or he didn't graduate, he went to Roman Catholic⁶ for two years. Which was an accomplishment then because not too many got through high school. After high school he took some ICS⁷ courses to bone up on the math side. He was very good at math, because I remember as a junior in high school he taught me cubed root in one night. I was the talk of the class the next day because I knew how to do cubed root, but they didn't know I didn't know anything else. [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

⁴ Edward Anthony McCloskey was born in Philadelphia on June 15, 1890 and died there as well on December 7, 1969. Anne Margaret McCloskey (nee Fay) was born in Philadelphia on January 23, 1888 and died in Philadelphia on November 15, 1968.

⁵ INSKIP was later explained by McCloskey to have been an engineering book that provided the necessary mathematical equations to plan the precise marking of the steel. McCloskey believes that perhaps his father called it by an unofficial name as he has never heard of it since. It may have been provided by his father's company or perhaps was a text book he retained from his time taking International Correspondence School courses. The exact nature of the book remains unknown, however.

⁶ Roman Catholic High School is located at 301 North Broad Street in Philadelphia.

⁷ International Correspondence School is a distance learning program.

[0:03:33] McCloskey: But, yeah he was a great guy, a very reserved person. He never raised his hand to anybody, but had a discipline that you wouldn't believe. He played a mandolin and he could lean over to the radio and listen to the tune and then play the tune.

Fallon: Really?

McCloskey: In fact, he entertained so many people from the house that it is hard to describe.

When I was growing up we were right across the street from Saint Katharine Drexel's. We use to call in Mother Katharine's Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Mother's house⁸. They had a school there in Saint Mary's hall, which was right across from our hedge. When Mother Katharine recruited Irish girls from Ireland in the thirties they studied there. When they played at night, my father would be out on the porch playing a mandolin and every now and then one would come to the hedge and say Mr. McCloskey would you play 'Danny Boy' once again. So they were enjoying it as well. Probably the best memory I have of his mandolin playing on the porch is that one day the sister who was in charge of the Irish girls brought three people over to meet my father. They were from the family that were the major part of the 'Sound of Music'. My computer is down right now, if you can turn it off a minuet—do you have that on?

Fallon: Yeah, but we can turn it off.

McCloskey: I wanted to think of their names, from the Sound of Music, the family, the Austrian family. Well let's come back to that later.⁹

⁸ Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament is the official name of the order to which McCloskey is referring. At the time, it was headed by Katharine Drexel who founded the order in 1891. Katharine was born into Philadelphia's wealthy Drexel family of which Drexel University derives its name. Katharine Drexel was canonized by the Catholic Church on October 1, 2000. She and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament were committed to serving under privileged African- Americans and Native Americans. Also, the order went to great length for other philanthropic efforts including supporting Catholic education. St. Katharine was born on in 1858 and died in 1955. At the time the McCloskey lived across from the order it was home to a number of underpriced children. The Mother House as well as the order played an important role in McCloskey's early life. He also volunteered for the order later in his life. This information comes from a pamphlet distributed by the order, provided by McCloskey. For more information see their web site: www.katharinedrexel.org

⁹ Further details of this story never came.

[0:05:30] Fallon: Sure, most definitely.

McCloskey: But that's one of the fondest memories I have. He brought them over to hear him play, but in reality they were the musician's musician. I lost my track a little bit.

Fallon: That's okay.

McCloskey: We moved there in 1924. I didn't say when we moved to Cornwells, but it was 1924. I started school in 1926 and school then, St. Charles was in a little bungalow up on Bristol Pike right south of Byberry Road¹⁰. There were 124 in the school, including commercial. When I started first grade there were two boys and four girls and I was one of the two boys. In early 1927, we moved to the new school up on Bristol Pike. Everybody marched from the old school to the new school. We were followed by Holy Providence children, that Mother Katharine's school, and there were 170 of them. So they outnumbered us, there was about 130 of us by then and 170 of them. That's how we started at St. Charles.

Fallon: How long was the march?

McCloskey: About two blocks.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Two Blocks yeah. We had a very small parish. Everybody knew everybody else. I was an altar boy from the time I was seven. Of course, we had to learn Latin then. That was back in the Latin days. My fondest memory of being an altar boy, actually there are two. One, my father went to 6:30 mass every Sunday. My mother went with him. He didn't believe there was any other good Catholic mass other than the 6:30 mass because we was use to getting up early in the morning. But at 6:15 if there wasn't an altar boy there—we were about two blocks away from the church on a straight run through Mother Katharine's ground. He'd come running

¹⁰ St. Charles Borromeo School is located in Bensalem, Pennsylvania on Bristol Pike. However, Byberry road no longer extends that far. It has since been replaced by an expressway known as Woodhaven Road.

[0:07:47] home and roust me out of bed. I'd be half-dressed running with to go up and serve 6:30 mass. That's another memory I had of the early days. Of course, the town was nice. There wasn't too much excitant. I glided through 8th grade fairly, I'd say quietly, and didn't get into too much trouble. I got the American Legion medal in eighth grade and shared the academic prize, such as it was. Then took the test for St. Joe's High¹¹—I don't think we had to take one for North¹². But I got a half-scholarship to St. Joe's and it was the joke of the house because back then, 1934, we were still in the Depression and money just wasn't there. The half a scholarship that I got at St. Joe's was worth one hundred and twenty five dollars meaning it was two-hundred and fifty for the full. It was the joke of the house because we weren't going to pay any money for high school other than the car fare to get there and back because the money wasn't there. So I went to North. I was very happy I went to North.

Fallon: North Catholic?

McCloskey: Yeah. I played football in my freshmen year. I played in about three of the games because there was so many out for football. I went out in sophomore year and lasted about four weeks until I was cut. There were four hundred went out. Then I went out for crew in junior year. I was on that for a month. My father and I had a little meeting. He was really in charge of the meeting. He said that my getting home at 10:15 every night and leaving with him at 6:30 in the morning to go back to North wasn't good for either of us. So I quit the the crew after a month because of the distance. We had to go from—well we lived in Cornwells. So we walked

¹¹ Presumably, McCloskey is referring to St. Joseph's Preparatory School located in center city Philadelphia near the intersection of Broad Street and Gerard Avenue. This is this is the only school by such a name located within the city limits of Philadelphia. There are, however, other schools by the same name in the outlying areas of Philadelphia.

¹² Northeast Catholic High School is located in Philadelphia's northeast section on Torresdale Avenue. It is commonly referred to as North Catholic.

[0:10:02] about two miles to the ‘66’¹³. Take the ‘66’ to Bridge Street; take the ‘El’¹⁴ to Erie Avenue, Torresdale and Erie, and get off for North. The in the afternoon when I was out for crew I would take the ‘El’ down to Gerard, the ‘15’ out to the Schuylkill [River], and we’d practice until six o’clock. So then I would come back on the ‘15’ up on the El to the end of the line in Frankfurt. Then the ‘66’ to the end of the line and then I was still two miles from home. It was an interesting, interesting time. But I did well in high school and I really have good memories of it.

Fallon: That’s good. Let me ask you, did your mother work?

McCloskey: My mother worked twenty-four hours a day at home. There were six children and my father and mother obviously. She was a living saint. In fact, my memory of my mother is with an apron on in the kitchen. You figure there were eight people to feed. In fact, a good story on that was—we came home and I guess I was about twelve years old and we come home one afternoon about three o’clock and said to my mother “can we have something to eat?” She says “you can have all eat—all you want to eat at any of the meals, but you cannot eat between meals, otherwise we wouldn’t be able to feed everybody”. We said “well Mother Katharine’s kids have snacks in the middle of the afternoon”. These were the, we called colored kids then, they were African-Americans and a few Indians. They can eat in the middle of the afternoon, “well if Mother Katharine wants to do that that’s fine with Mother Katharine, but we can’t eat between meals” she said. But we always had enough to eat. Because as we were growing up I guess I was in seventh, let’s see—1930, ‘29—I would have been nine years old. When times were good right before the Crash my father was making some extra money and he decided to go into the

¹³ The ‘66’ is a reference to an electric trolley line which still runs in parts of Philadelphia. At this time Philadelphia’s public transit system featured trolleys denoted by numbers and buses denoted by letters.

¹⁴ The ‘El’ is a reference to the Market-Frankfurt Subway line in Philadelphia. Part of the line is, in fact, not a subway at all, but rather a train that runs on an elevated track. Thus, ‘El’ is short for elevated rail.

[0:12:27] chicken and egg business. So he started buying chickens, small chickens, at five hundred a piece, or five hundred at a time. They'd come in by freight and we'd pick them up and the station. He built two chicken coups about ninety foot long each.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Within about a year we had twenty-five hundred chickens. Of course, that was cleaning the chicken coup on the weekends and that was our job. Well, with the crash of the market the feed was costing more than you could get for the eggs. So we started killing off the chickens, about forty-five a week, and selling them to local butchers. Well, somebody had to pluck the chickens. We had about half a dozen neighbors and ourselves to pluck them. They would get fifty cents a day for it; we wouldn't get anything because my father says "you're a member of the corporation." [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Yeah. So, we were so happy when we sold the last chicken and they tore down the coup. But that was like a two year experience that I'll never forget.

Fallon: I bet.

McCloskey: That was a job that, you know, plucking chickens on a Saturday and then cleaning the coups is a job we didn't need. Then, of course, as you'll see by my job descriptions, we worked every year on the farm, on the local farms, from the time we were about eleven and got anywhere from eight cents to fifteen cents an hour. When I was twelve I was getting fifteen cents an hour. We worked ten hours a day, five hours on Saturday. That took up half your summer because they would call you I guess about, well, maybe early July, when they started weeding for the truck farm to keep the weeds out of the growth. Then you'd be picking in August. You'd be picking tomatoes; and you'd be picking whatever else they had. It was right

[0:14:37] down her in the Andalusia; it was the—at the end it was T.S. Flemings. Now the same family owns the farm that is called Shady Brooke Farm it was where the Woodhaven Mall is¹⁵.

It's now Shady Brooke Farm up here in Yardley¹⁶. The same family owned it up here.

Fallon: Is it really?

McCloskey: Funny part of it was one of the bosses under the father T.S. Fleming, was Bud Fleming, who later became a representative of the Granges¹⁷, of the farms of this area, for the state. In the sixties I was teaching marketing, and we still had an agricultural section in it, so I had him into speak at the class.

Fallon: Oh okay.

McCloskey: So it was a switch around, you know? I worked for him as a kid. When he finished his speech, I said Mr. Fleming would you care to tell the fellows what I received an hour.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: He said “well times were different then”. I said “no [laughs]—would you agree fifteen cents?” “Oh that was good pay for kids” he said, “we paid a lot less”. I said “I know”. Because they use to pay in dimes in an envelope, they would go to the bank. You felt like you had a load in your envelope. I would go home and my mother would take the money and give me fifty cents and I felt like a millionaire, having fifty cents back then. I could remember when one of the friends turned sixteen his grandmother had a '37 Plymouth. He'd get to use it every now and then, but there would never be any gas. So we would drive up to the local gas station, he put his hand around and we usually end up with like seventeen, eighteen cents. Gas was

¹⁵ Woodhaven Mall is more a shopping Plaza located the interchange of Woodhaven Road and Bristol Pike in Andalusia.

¹⁶ Yardley is a town located along the I-95 corridor north of Philadelphia in Bucks County, Pa.

¹⁷ In rural Pennsylvania farms are often members of lose associations known as Granges.

[0:16:37] seventeen cents a gallon and we'd go in and he'd hold one finger up, one gallon. We'd drive down to Holmsburg¹⁸, come back, and invariably we'd have to push it in to the garage.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: The next time his grandmother wanted him to take her out, he'd have to say "grand mom I have to go to the gas station first with can and get some gas. Do you have some money?"

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: [Laughs] But that's typical of the times back then.

Fallon: Sure.

McCloskey: We knew every inch of the river front.¹⁹ Of course, it was mostly estates. One of our close friends father drove for Mrs. Biddle. So we use to roam around the Biddle estate. Right next to it was Penryn²⁰ which was the cousin of Mother Katharine and they had a nice swimming pool. One of the wards of a local family, Eddie Urbanski, use to tell us when the family was in New York and we'd go in and swim in the pool. We got caught once or twice. But I mean things like that; we had an easy time of it. On Sundays, when I reached about fifteen, we use to borrow two dollars after 10:30 mass, go up to Cherry Boat Landing in Croydon²¹ and rent two row boats for the day, a dollar a piece. Row down the creek to the river, row down the river to Pleasant Hill, and rent one row boat out for two hours for a dollar each.²² Get our two dollars back that we borrowed, and then we had the row boats for the rest of the day.

Fallon: [Laughs]

¹⁸ Holmsburg is a neighborhood in north east Philadelphia located south of Andalusia.

¹⁹ Cornwell Heights is no far from the Delaware River.

²⁰ Penryn was the name of an estate that belonged to a member of the Drexel family.

²¹ According to McCloskey Cherry's Boat Rental was located on Bridgewater Street in Croyden. Croyden is a town in Bucks County that is just north from Cornwell Heights along the Delaware River.

²² The creek McCloskey is referring to is the Neshaminy Creek which a tributary of the Delaware River and meanders throughout southern and central Bucks County. Pleasant Hill Park is a small park located on the Delaware River about five miles south of where the Neshaminy Creek meets. According to McCloskey it was a popular picnic and recreation site for residents of north east Philadelphia at the time.

[0:18:12] McCloskey: [Laughs] Things like that you know, things cost money, but we had a lot of fun.

Fallon: So when you on the farms you kept fifty cents and the rest went back to the family?

McCloskey: I kept what I was given and it usually was fifty cents.

Fallon: So some of it went in to help the family during the Depression?

McCloskey: Oh yeah, oh sure. Actually \$8.50 out of the nine dollars went into help the family.

This was the same for the rest of the family, there was never any question. Even when I was working at Crown Can²³ before I went into the service I use to give them the money and keep ten bucks. Until, things got more or less leveled out after the Depression. It was rough for a while, and yet, we always ate well and you didn't worry about money. I think I saw one movie that I had to pay for in about four years, like between the time I was twelve and the time I was sixteen. Except for a couple that we saw over at Mother Katharine's. They use to show to the children once a month; we were allowed to come in, but we had to sit on the floor in the front. So I grew up really envying minorities because we thought they were better off than we were. In other words, they had their own shoe maker. Mother Katharine's had their own bakery, their own cows, their own chickens. Every spring when there was First Communion, Mother Katharine would invite the communion class over to breakfast at Mother Katharine's. So we would march from the church, which was right across the street, down their entrance and into their dining area and have some breakfast. I use to think I died and went to heaven when I was there. You know, they had cinnamon buns that they made themselves. I was an altar boy so I coned Father

²³ Crown Can is disused in detail later. However, its official name at the time was Crown Cork & Seal. The company had been founded in Baltimore in 1892. Their Philadelphia manufacturing plant was located at I Street and Erie Avenue near the Kensington section. For more detail on the company's history see their website: www.crowncork.com

[0:20:21] Nugent into letting me lead the procession, I think until I was about fifteen. I got a lot of breakfasts over there.

Fallon: Was your father was able to stay employed during the Depression?

McCloskey: He was. He was. I don't recall him being out of work, but I do recall, sometime in the thirties, where he was paid in script. They didn't have the money; but they paid him in script and the stores were accepting his script. Probably the best story that I can tell you about the Depression is when a bank went up in Cornwells in the thirties. One of the neighbors was talking to my father and I was within earshot of it. He was saying how he lost all his money in the bank and my father said "yeah I lost all ours too." That was the end of the conversation. Then about two years later, when I was a little older, they started paying back ten percent of what was in the bank account. We were getting a check for forty-four cents. He had \$4.40 in—but he's, you know, commiserating with a neighbor: "yeah man, I lost all my money too". [Laughs] So that was the pleasant side of it. Yeah, they were strange days, but nice days. They use to have Friday night dances at St. Charles and the priest was very accommodating, you know. Otherwise there would have been no activity because nobody had money to go anywhere. But it was nice to meet different people there. He did a great job at that.

Fallon: Obviously, I take it you came from a religious family, from a Catholic home?

McCloskey: Yes, they were Catholic Catholic.

Fallon: Very religious?

McCloskey: Yeah, very Catholic. My father wouldn't have missed mass if he had to crawl. Again, he felt 6:30 was the only Catholic mass. [Laughs] He thought people were wasting their life if they slept later than that.

Fallon: He wouldn't have liked the Saturday night masses then?

[0:22:45] McCloskey: Oh no, I mean that wasn't for the time; I mean it had to be for later.

Fallon: What about your grandparents? Do you know anything about your grandparents?

McCloskey: I know my grandparents on my mother's side. I don't know them on my father's side because they died when he was nineteen.²⁴ They had a—well he had four brothers and two sisters so there were seven of them. They were really thrust out on it fairly quickly. His father, I think his father was a railroad engineer. I did know my grandfather and grandmother on my mother's side. They lived in St. Edge Parish in north Philadelphia and I helped them out a number of times when I was in my teens. I went down and I remember scraping the paper of the walls. My grandmother was always saying, you know, "you have to eat more, you're a growing boy"—this, that. She was a great person. My grandfather was a tall, stayed, individual and I still don't know to this day what he did; I should know. He was a great guy. He use to come up, in his seventies, he would come up through City Line and walk up to Cornwells to see us. That was a two mile walk. That was, let's see, I said this earlier, he was in his seventies; I don't know what year it was because it has to back—way back. But the grandmother was great; she was really a doll. She was always trying to fill me up. I had an experience in that case because I was working at Crown Can in '42 and they were changing over to airplane parts. Sikorsky²⁵ was going to come in; they were going to put a whole department up. I was sort of a straw-boss at twenty down there and became a journeyman machinist before I went to the service. But they interviewed me to go to Connecticut and learn the business for the move down to Crown Can.

²⁴ Later McCloskey was able to provide a copy of his family tree. According to that his paternal grandparents were James F. McCloskey (born September 14, 1852 in Gloucester, New Jersey; died in 1910 in Philadelphia) and Mary Ellen Hadfield (born in 1853 in Camden, New Jersey and dies in 1910 in Philadelphia). His maternal grandparents were Michael Fay (Birth and Death unknown) and Margaret Ryan (born in 1863 and died in 1950 in the United States).

²⁵ Sikorsky Aero Engineering Corporation is an avionics producer that was founded by Russian immigrant Igor Sikorsky in 1923. The company was contracted to produce aircraft, including the world's first production helicopter, by the United States government during World War II. The Crown Can Company was converting its factories to produce parts for Sikorsky's Corsair aircraft. For more information see Sikorsky's website and see under About Sikorsky: www.sikorsky.com

[0:25:23] They said “now how old are you?” I said “twenty”. [They asked] “Do you have any dependents?” [I said] “No”. [They said] “Is your grandmother living?” [I said] “Yeah”. [They said] “Would you agree to live with your grandmother so she could be dependent on you?” I said “no”.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: [Chuckles] They said: “Well look, we’d love to have you in this program, but we can’t take the chance. You would just get through the program and you’d be in the service. So we can’t afford it.” I said “I understand that”. I said “but I hope you understand me”. They said they did. I didn’t want to play any games like that. So two weeks later I took the test for the Air Corps. Which, up until four months before that I couldn’t have taken because you had to have two years of college to take it.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Then they rescinded that in January ’42 and said if you can pass the test. So I took the test and passed the test. It was the same way in ’39 and ’40 and that’s in the notes somewhere. I joined the infantry down in south Philly—Reserve, or National Guard so that I could learn a little about the military because I was going to take the West Point exam. I took it in ’39 here in the city and there were seventy-five of us who took it. Three of us who were selected to go to New York and take the final, one principle candidate, I was first alternate, and there was a second alternate. Well, the principle candidate the first year was a junior at Penn²⁶. Of course, I just had high school and I didn’t have any prompting at all. While I only had to take the English and math because of my grades in the other courses; everybody had to take the English and math. The principle candidate got the appointment. So I didn’t go in ’39. I took it again in ’40 and I ended up the same way. I was the first alternate. I went up to New York again

²⁶ University of Pennsylvania.

[0:27:26] and spent a week up there incidentally, from Tuesday to Friday. I had to take different physicals, and mental, and psychological. Actually, the academic part was a one day part, but I didn't make it then. But then I got word from the National Guard that they were going to the Pacific. This is '41 and I figure well, gee, I don't know what to do. I took the letter home and I read and it said "your parents must sign because you're underage". Well, they wouldn't sign because they knew that I wanted to go into flying if I could even though I didn't qualify at the time. So they didn't sign it and the unit went overseas and Lord knows what happened to them. I mean you could figure any infantry unit that went over in '42—

Fallon: They had a rough time.

McCloskey: They're probably history, they're history right. But anyhow, it was almost a pattern of what happened to me all the way through the service. You know, I mean, from not going on that one, to not making West Point, to not making combat—somebody up there liked me I guess. But anyhow, that's a string that I just put together.

Fallon: No, that's okay. Had you been able to declare your grandmother as a dependent you wouldn't have been eligible for the draft right?

McCloskey: Yeah. I would have been eligible anyhow, probably.

Fallon: Sure.

McCloskey: That's what they were afraid of and I didn't blame them. They wanted to know that whomever they hired, or they kept, would be there once they started the program. I had gotten to the point in Crown Can at the time where I was—I use to call it a straw-boss. I was over about ten different machines in the making of seamless cans. So I had like seven or eight operators that I would check on and see that they were doing it right; this, that and the other thing. If there was a problem I'd go up the machine shop and either make a part or bring a part

[0:29:41] down if it was there. Then they started sending me on Fridays, when they had company tours of the department I would take them through the whole department; explain how the seamless can was made and the different areas, you know, that did this, or that, or the other thing. So I was, more or less, geared to move up, but the time just didn't allow it. In other words, I was just too eligible for the military. I didn't want to avoid it; I just wanted to get in where I wanted to go. The funniest part of it is I missed West Point twice. I had two classes of West point graduates as B-17 trainees so I got to go back to West Point on a ten hour mission because that's where they wanted to go. So that's where we ended up after flying ten hours was at West Point. Then, even after that, in the eighties, when Charlie Dougherty²⁷ was a Congressman, I was on the committee to select candidates for all of the service academies. So we'd meet each year and make decisions as to who was going to be in it, all after not being able to make it myself. So, as I say, it's strange how life works out.

Fallon: You graduated high school in—

McCloskey: '38.

Fallon: '38. Talk about Crown Can Company. Where was it located?

McCloskey: At that time it was at I and Erie Avenue. Now it's up on Ashton Road. But it was I and Erie then and I was living in Cornwells. We worked any shift you could imagine. I started there in '39. I started as what they call a body-maker's helper. I was on the end of the machine and as the cans came out I just had to make sure they were coming out right; and throw away bad ones. I had that job for about a month. Then I was made an operator and then I ran the punch-press for a while and then the degreaser and a couple of the others. I got to know all of the machines and then that's how I ended up as more or less as the straw-boss. But we had—you

²⁷ Charles F. Dougherty was a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1979-1983. He represented Philadelphia and was the last Republican Congressmen to represent a significant portion of Philadelphia.

[0:32:08] name the shift and we had it. I worked six to six, six in the morning till six at night, six at night till six in the morning. I worked six to four-thirty, four-thirty to three. When I worked four-thirty to three, I use to carry two bags, one for lunch and one with another item in, that I'll tell you about. On the way home I'd get—[McCloskey's home telephone rings] I got the phone ringing.

Fallon: I'll pause it. [The voice recorder was paused for about two to three minutes as McCloskey answered the phone call from his daughter. When he returned he continued his story before the voice recorded could be set to record. Fallon asked McCloskey to "hold on one second". The recorder picks up directly after that] Sorry, go ahead and continue.

McCloskey: I finished work at three in the morning, take the trolley outside I and Erie over to the El, the El to Bridge Street, the '66' either to Blakiston Street or to City Line, some of them only went up part way in which case another one would come down and pick them up. So some nights I would end up standing in front of a cemetery for a half hour at four-fifteen in the morning. And at that time at St. Dominick's two-thirds of the people kept Votive Lights going. If you ever saw something creepy, I wrote a poem about it, anyhow. You'd wait there maybe fifteen minutes; the other trolley would come and take me up to City Line. It was a big hill. I'd walk to the top of the hill; sit down on anything I could find and put my skates on that were in the other bag.

Fallon: Roller-skates?

McCloskey: I would roller-skate from Andalusia up to Cornwells, about two miles; and then walk in a block to the house. I often wondered how many people stopped drinking because of me. In other words, they hear this sound like somebody roller-skating at five o'clock in the morning on Bristol Pike—[Laughs] So, I did that anytime there wasn't snow on the ground.

[0:33:56] Fallon: [Laughs] I don't blame you.

McCloskey: I had it figured down; I could do it in between nine and eleven minuets on skates and it took me twenty-five minuets to walk.

Fallon: Sure.

McCloskey: That was—

Fallon: Plus you had the walk home at the end of the day.

McCloskey: They use to say: “Two bags of lunch?” Nope, I have something else in there that I can use. [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: So I had a good experience there. As I say, I went up the ladder as I was there which was a good thing. But it might have been the best thing in world that I didn't come back and stay. I came back, but because in '45 when I come back in December I reinstated in the Union as a journeyman machinist. Started at Crown Can and the Union said I had to work forty hours or not at all with the Union. Because I had asked for twenty hours and it was a case of if I worked forty hours I would lose the GI Bill. So I retired, for the second time, at twenty-five from the union and took the GI Bill and went to La Salle.

Fallon: The cans they made, they were for canned food?

McCloskey: No, no, beer cans. They were seamless beer cans and it was the only manufacturing outfit in the country that made a seamless beer can. You started off with a metal—actually you started off with a steel roll. The punch press punched out four shells we called them. They were about an inch and a half deep and probably about six inches around. That went into that we called the body maker that had about twenty dyes that would pull the steel and stretched the steel a little further each time until at the end of the machine you had the shape

[0:35:33] of a can with the shoulders on it and an open top and a rough bottom. Then it went through a trimmer that trimmed it even at the bottom. Then it went through a flanger that flanged the bottom. Then a curler that curled the top. Then at the end of the line it popped the bottom on so that there was no seam at all. It was very unusual in that no other place in the county made them. That's why we had visitors come, you know, to see the plant. That's how I got to be the director of visitors. That was an interesting, interesting job.

Fallon: The company still exists to this day?

McCloskey: They're still in business.

Fallon: Are they really? Wow.

McCloskey: Not only in business, I can tell you another story on that. In the eighties, Brother Patrick²⁸ and I went up to solicit—actually in the sixties I was up there with Brother Daniel Bernian²⁹ and he gave us, John Connelly gave us \$125,000 as a result of that business. But in eighties when we went up we went up soliciting for the new library.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: We met him one morning at nine o'clock, John Connelly; and he was really a hard nut. In fact, Fortune magazine wrote him up about five years before that, saying he was one of the worst bosses, you know, that any corporation had. The roughest. But anyhow, we go in there at nine o'clock in the morning and I have under my arm three sketches of the library: one eleven million, one twelve million, one fourteen million. Brother Patrick, of course, had set up the meeting with him and we go in and we sit down. He asked if we want coffee, no we didn't need any coffee. Then he said "Brother what are you here for?" Brother had talked to him the day before. He just had that rough approach, you know. Brother said "we're here to see if you

²⁸ Brother Patrick Ellis was the president of La Sale College/University from 1976-1992. The name was changed from College to University in 1985.

²⁹ Brother Daniel Bernian was the president of La Salle College from 1958-1969.

[0:37:52] would help us with our new library”. [Connelly said] “A new library Brother?” He said “I don’t like libraries.” Of course, Brother Patrick was one of the best fundraisers I think they ever had at La Salle. He just kept talking about the library and why we needed it, we had outgrown the other one, and we were increasing in number, and we wanted to stay up academically. After about ten minutes of Brother talking, Brother said [McCloskey acted out Brother Patrick’s part looking over his shoulder and lowering his tone] “the fourteen million one”. So I pull the sketch out, the fourteen million one, and I hold it up as he is beginning to explain it. John Connelly said: “You know what this is like; I offer you a ham sandwich”, he said, “You not only eat the ham sandwich, you eat it right up to my shoulder.” He said this to Brother. Brother just kept talking, you know, this, that, we need this, we need that. After about a half hour, he opened his drawer and he pulled out a letter. I think it was ninety thousand in Crown Cork stock, and the letter said he would pledge two and half million dollars, but it didn’t say for a library. So when he handed it to Brother, he said “Brother here’s a pledge, but it’s not for the library.” Brother thanked him and all, and we left. He called him the next day and he said “Well, meet with the foundation³⁰ next month.” So he met with the whole foundation, including John, and he increased it to five million. Then, about two weeks later, after we had a number of meetings and decided that the rest of the money could only be gotten through a bond issue. We were going to go to New York and have a bond issue put up for the rest of the money. He called John Connelly again and he said, we appreciate the five million that he had offered and that we were going to put the other up with a bond issue out of New York. [Connelly said] “What are you doing that for Brother?” Brother said “Well, it’s the least expensive money that we can get”. [Connelly said] “Oh, well you know what? I’ll pay for the whole thing.” This was over the phone.

³⁰ The John Connelly Foundation.

[0:40:08] Fallon: That's how it became the John Connelly Library.

McCloskey: That wasn't quit how it become, because he didn't agree to that in the beginning.

But as—oh and he said “Under no circumstances any publicity on this”. Of course, Brother says to me “John, no publicity.”

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: So I had that responsibility until the dedication. The day before the dedication John Connelly came with his wife Josephine to go through and tour the library with Brother Patrick. This was the day before. When he was going through he asked him if there were any overruns and Brother told him “yes there were, \$396,000”. He said “I'll send you a check”. The following day, his daughter Josephine Mandeville came and did the honors of speaking and, you know, accepting it, ect, ect. They were allowed to call it the Connelly Library. So that's the story of that. Brother Patrick, really, I'll tell you, you talk about somebody that doesn't veer when somebody runs into them. You know, he just kept going on and on, and giving his pitch. But he did the great job on that. Of course, that's the biggest gift they've ever gotten.

Fallon: Sure. That's a great gift; I'm in there an awful lot so—[Laughs]

McCloskey: Yeah. Yeah. Of course, back when Blake Hayman gave \$125,000 for the— Hayman Hall—that was a lot of money. But even that was another story because he has an option to buy the property where St. Mary's Hospital³¹ is. He took Brother Daniel Bernian, myself and Joe Sprissler—and we were good friends, Hayman was very good friends of ours. He took us up to the property and he said to Brother: “Would you like this property?” Brother said “Well, we'll go back and we'll talk about it and we'll get back to you Blake.” He spent a couple days in meetings and they decided, they just paid the mortgage off and they couldn't really go into anything deep and expensive. So he called Blake and said, you know, “We'd love

³¹ St. Mary's Hospital is located in Langhorne, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

[0:42:30] to have it, but we can't do it." Blake had a \$150,000 in escrow there for the property and he gave \$125,000 of it to Brother and he gave \$25,000 to the Catholic charities which never had a campaign up here until that year. So his \$25,000 was the first gift for the first Catholic charities campaign in their history. The \$125,000 bought the ground on which Hayman Hall sits. Brother Daniel named it Hayman Hall. That's the story of Hayman Hall. Of course, the Lawrence Building is still another story because that's two stories. You know, they dropped the name and then they picked it up.

Fallon: Oh really?

McCloskey: Yeah, they dropped the name in the eighties and they renamed it last year. I have one hundred and twenty pages supporting that. In other words, there was a request by Jerry Lawrence, who worked for me for a while, about being very upset about the name having been dropped; was there anything I could do about it? I said "we'll see Jerry, but don't get too hot under the collar" because he was going to this, that, and everything. I got a call from Brother McGinniss³² and he said "would you, we don't have too much in the archive, would you put something together supporting the renaming?" So I put, I guess it was eight-five pages from the archive and about twenty pages that I put together with my knowledge of Governor Lawrence³³ and what he did, ect, ect. Which I have in there; in other words, that's also in the archive, but I have a copy of it if you need that. But they renamed it a year ago; Jerry Lawrence was up with his wife. I was invited and we had our picture taken together ect. I was in a lot of that stuff.

Fallon: Let me get back to United Can, or I'm sorry Crown Can.

McCloskey: Crown Can, right.

³² Brother Michael McGinniss has been the president of La Salle University since 1999.

³³ David Leo Lawrence was Governor of Pennsylvania from 1959-1963. He was the state's first Catholic governor. He also served as Chair of La Salle University's Centenary Campaign which was a fundraising drive that culminated with the institution's centennial celebration in 1963. That effort is discussed in detail later.

[0:44:56] Fallon: It was a union shop?

McCloskey: Yes. I was first in the Can Workers Union then I became a member of the International Association of Machinists when I was named a machinist. In fact, I was ushered out of one of the union meetings because the person didn't like the question I asked. I said "I don't look dangerous do I?" They said "no, but you'll have to leave". But it was a very legitimate question, but it was an embarrassing question to the union so they didn't like it. The funniest part of the union was that I became a member of the International Association of Machinists about four months before I left for the service. Then when I left, of course, I had a retirement stamp in there in '42. Then I was reinstated in '45, in December, and I retired in February. Actually, I was only active for only, maybe, six, seven months. So when I came to retirement age I sent them a letter and asked them how much retirement was due me.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Of course, I got a very polite letter back saying there was no money for me.

[Laughs] It was funny.

Fallon: That is funny. [Laughing]

McCloskey: Yes, I've been a union member. In fact, I had more fun with that because every now and then—in fact, not only every now and then. When they were building the Connelly Library I had to meet with every one of the unions that were involved in the building of the Library to try to get them to hire people from there area because the neighbors were complaining. So, the president of Bellfield³⁴ area neighbors, and myself, up in Frankfort meet with about eleven different union presidents on the one morning and they promised to do everything they could to hire people from the area. Well they did a good job, it was about thirty

³⁴ McCloskey clarified over the telephone that Bellfield was a neighborhood association around La Salle and its president was Jerome Williams.

[0:47:04] percent. But I knew Gelespi³⁵ very well and we had chats now and then and he said at the outset, he says “look Jack” hey said “We have a fair number already working from there the five zip code area. But we’ll be careful as we’re hiring to try to give the preference.” So that worked out alright. But that was a real touchy thing, because Dave Cohen³⁶, who was a Councilman at large, but lived in our district, came against us for everything we did. Anytime we did anything, including the library. I’ll tell you the most outlandish thing in terms of his opposition, and he had many, many areas of opposition, that would take a week in itself, was all the area residents should have access to the library. So I went back and I met with the powers to be and they agreed that any adult resident of the five zip code area around La Salle who applied for a library card could get it and any high school junior or senior, I think it was, who had a letter from their teacher or principle could get a library card. Now, Cohen didn’t like that. He didn’t know why they needed library cards. I said “Dave, the students need library cards.”

[McCloskey makes a whinny voice as to imitate David Cohen] “Well that doesn’t, it shouldn’t matter, they should be able to walk in and out”. I said “they can walk in and out of there, but they need library cards to get books just like the students.” But it was things like that that would almost drive you into orbit, you know, my meetings with the neighborhoods. That was the hardest part of my job; I was neighborhood liaison from ‘70 through the eighties. It was rough because I’d be meeting in the community meeting in the middle of July on a hot summer night and they would always keep me to last. I’d just have to sit there and perspire and wait until the ready for me. Then I knew they wouldn’t agree with anything I said, so. But we, we got by. Of

³⁵ McCloskey could not remember this man’s exact name, but he was president of one of the unions constructing the Connelly Library.

³⁶ David Cohen (November 13, 1914 - October 3, 2005) was a Philadelphia politician that active in the city all his life. He was first elected councilmen in 1968 and on the council at the time of his death in 2005. Though, he did not serve consecutively through that time. Sometimes he represented the city’s northwest district, where La Salle is located. At other times he was elected as a councilman-at-Large, which is a city-wide post. According to McCloskey he was opposed to almost all motions that La Sale lobbied for in council. The reason for this is unknown.

[0:49:28] course, 20th Street³⁷ was the biggest problem; it was almost a joke the way it ended. In 1929, we owned half of 20th Street.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Then the city, when they built the Street, bought both halves. Bought one half from the Wister's³⁸ and one half from us, and I think we got, maybe, \$2,400 for it. But you can check that in the records. But anyhow, we did own it once. Now we're trying to close it and the neighbors go up in smoke practically because we're trying to close it. We did all sorts of surveys on it and had all sorts of meetings. I was to the point—in the year Brother Patrick left the presidency, let's see, that would have been 1991, the year before that, I met with, as I did every year anyhow, I met with all the council people. I had a majority in council that would vote for the closing of it. I had one council member who would introduce it, Rafferty³⁹. Now Rafferty was one of these sluggers, you know, that didn't last too long. But, almost the unwritten word in council is when someone introduces a motion of that type is has to be the person from the district.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: It shouldn't be somebody outside the district. Rafferty was going to do it anyhow. Now, two months before he was going to do it, he punched somebody in council and was lifted out of council anyhow. The month before it could have been introduced, I might have had a

³⁷ 20th street cuts through La Salle's campus. As McCloskey goes on the explain traffic got so bad that university administrators wanted to have the street closed for the safety of the students.

³⁸ The Wister Family owned a significant area of land to the west of La Salle's campus. Today a park named Wister Woods in their honor is located south of La Salle

³⁹ Francis w. Rafferty was a Councilman at Large in Philadelphia in the early 1980s. When McCloskey calls him a "slugger" he is not exaggerating. Rafferty's most famous act of his short lived political career was getting into a fistfight with future Philadelphia Mayor John Street at a council meeting in 1981.

[0:51:25] majority. Anne Verna⁴⁰ called Brother Patrick and asked if he would hold off on it. He agreed with her that we would press any further.

Fallon: Sure.

McCloskey: Now he left two months after that to go to Catholic U⁴¹ and I retired in '92. That was the end of our efforts. Of course, there were many that, over the fifteen or so year span we tried, felt that we would never get it anyhow. Of course, what finally happened, they have a one-way street and what do they do after the get a one-way street? They build a bridge. So we have a bridge over it now. But we didn't think of building a bridge over it before.

Fallon: Yeah.

McCloskey: But it's funny how life has its turns, but I guess it was never destined to be closed. So 20th Street was really a thorn in my side for a long, long time.

Fallon: Why did they want to close it?

McCloskey: Because of the student traffic. We were afraid somebody was going to get killed. I mean, you know how kids are coming and going from class, especially night—night school. All of the parking was over the other side. There was such a traffic pattern there, our fear was for the safety of both the workers and the students. Of course, Wister would have been open. Down at the bottom of the hill at Wister there was a machine-tool plant and they agreed to give up part of their parking lot to widen the end. So that was the agreement there on that. The hospital wasn't standing in the way and there was only a small segment of houses up at the top; we didn't have too much from them. But it just didn't work out and I'm not surprised. It was a lot of work.

Fallon: Let me ask you—when and how did you meet Mrs. McCloskey?

⁴⁰ Anna C. Verna was elected to Philadelphia City Council in 1975 and has served ever since. In 1999 she became the first woman to be named President of Philadelphia's City Council.

⁴¹ Catholic University of America located in Washington, DC.

[0:53:31] McCloskey: I wish she was here. She has a bit of dementia, but she tells the story anytime some asked her. We had a hayride that was scheduled to go up to Bowman's Hill⁴² up here in Bucks County. The hayride was by ice truck, which we had borrowed from Cornwells ice—actually not a company; it was a used ice truck. We had a fellow who agreed to drive the truck. We bought four bails of hey and put them in the back of truck. It was an open truck. I had met a girl casually, who lived in Echo Beach⁴³, by the name of Straub. She lived down on Erie Avenue. I called and asked her if she would go on the hayride with me. I was playing baseball one day and I saw her. I remembered her named and called her; she said “yeah I'll go with you”. I borrowed my father's car. Eddie Urbanski, we'd call him Eddie Urban afterwards, had a date to take Betty to the hayride. So he says “hey Jack do me a favor”; I said “yeah”. He said “You're going down to Erie Avenue?” I said “yeah”. He said “would you pick my date up on the way back?” I said “sure” I said “who is it?” He said “Betty Patton.” I said “where does she live?” He said “8234 Frankfort Avenue”⁴⁴ I said “okay, I know where that is”. So I go down to pick my date up. I come back, leave my date sitting in the car, go across the street. I tell the person, it was her aunt that answered the door; I says “I'm Jack McCloskey, I'm here to pick Betty Patton up for Eddie Urban.” [She said] “Oh, oh okay, come on in!” So I went in and it was like Grand Central Station. There were three families that lived there. They had a big three story house. It turned out her father knew my father, not closely, but he knew him from having met him a couple times. The uncle was very nice. Somebody else would talk and I must have been in there ten minutes, I guess. So we come out and I introduce her to my date. We go over

⁴² Bowman's Hill Tower is a part of Washington Crossing State Park in Washington's Crossing, Buck County, Pennsylvania. The tower was constructed in 1929 as a monument to George Washington and his army. It is well over three hundred feet tall and offers great views of the surrounding area. For more information see <http://www.ushistory.org/washingtoncrossing/visit/bowman.htm>

⁴³ It is unclear what neighborhood McCloskey is referring too. No area is called Echo Beach in Philadelphia today. He goes on to say she lived on Erie Avenue which could be Kensington or Juniata

⁴⁴ That address is in Philadelphia's Holmsburg section, which would be on the way back to Cornwell Heights from either Kensington or Juniata.

[0:56:03] and go to the hayride. When we get out afterwards up at Bowman's Hill I went over to Betty and I said "would you go out with me next week." I don't know where Eddie Urban was, but I didn't care at the time.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: She said "no". I said "how about the week after that?" She said "no". I said "well, look, how about three weeks from now?" She said "call me". I said "what's your number?" She gave me her number. So I called her and she went out with me and that's how it all started. Now, what she tells at St. Joseph's Manor⁴⁵ is that she was on a hayride and she saw me and she shook the hay out of my ears, and off my face, and liked me, and took me home and married me.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: That's the way she tells the story, but it's funny the way she tells. But that's the way I met her. Of course, later on we find that my brother Jim was going out with one of her classmates from Hallahan⁴⁶. They knew each other well, so it sort of solidified things as we went along. But there was no question after I met her; you know I wasn't going anywhere else.

Fallon: Yeah.

McCloskey: It was just another one of my crazy coincidences of backing into something. This is the sixty-eighth year so it's held on for a while.

Fallon: I'm trying to do the math now. So it was '42 you got married?

McCloskey: '43.

Fallon: On leave?

⁴⁵ McCloskey's wife, Betty, is currently under care at St. Joseph's Manor a nursing home facility located in Meadowbrook, Pa.

⁴⁶ John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls High School is located at 311 North 19th Street in Philadelphia, near the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

[0:57:37] McCloskey: October, on leave. Yeah I had a delay in route. I didn't even have a leave. A delay in route meaning that if they had to call me back they could call me back. But the delay was until I got my orders.

Fallon: Oh okay.

McCloskey: So, I came home on a Tuesday. Incidentally, the Saturday before we got married I was in Florida and I called her. I said "do you think we can get married next Saturday?" Well, there was a silence at the other end of the phone. I said "Betty, are you there? Are you there?" She said "yeah". She said "do you think we can?" I said "yeah I think we can." I said "it's not going to be easy, but I'll be home on Wednesday." I said "We'll get the license on Thursday. If your father can get in touch with a priest and we can get a Mass on Saturday, then we can see the priest on Friday." I said "maybe your mother could get a few invitations out." [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: So that was it. I get home on Wednesday—Oh, I had to get a blood test down a Hendricks Field⁴⁷. I had to get it somewhere so I figured I'd get it there. So I go into the quarters and a nurse came up. She said "can I help you?" I said "Yeah, I need a blood test." She looked at me and she got real nasty, you know, at the beginning. [She said] "Oh come on over here, sit down here." I said "wait a minute, I didn't tell you why I needed it." I said "I'm getting married next Saturday." [She said] "Oh gee", a big hug and everything.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: She thought that I met the wrong people, you know, off-base. Because that was usually the only reason somebody came in for a blood test⁴⁸. So I was peaches and cream after that. I got done there. We got our license on Wednesday, or on Thursday, we saw the priest on

⁴⁷ Hendricks Field was an Army Air Corps B-17 training facility located in Sebring, Florida during World War II.

⁴⁸ The nurse at first thought McCloskey needed a blood test to test for venereal disease.

[0:59:20] Friday, got married on Saturday, went down to Atlantic City, and on Sunday I had the orders. On Monday we were on our way to Columbus, Ohio. It was sort of a whirlwind.

Fallon: How much time passed between when you first met, or you first went out with her, and you got married?

McCloskey: She graduated in June of '40. So it was probably in August or September of that year, '40. So I knew her for two years, like over one or two Christmases I think. Then I went off.

Fallon: That's quite—

McCloskey: But I had some jobs in between after Crown. I was showing moving pictures. That's in there; you'll find that in there. Yeah.

Fallon: Oh no, go ahead if you want to tell the story. It's—

McCloskey: No, I wouldn't want to get out of sequence on that. Because I'd have to look in to the sequence and see when I did it because—but, it's very interesting. Look at the jobs and if you see something you want to ask about then we can cover that.⁴⁹

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Because there are about five different jobs in there and there's some crazy ones. Some ones that surprise you, I mean, you won't have heard of them before.

Fallon: [Laughing] Okay. You left Crown Can in forty—

McCloskey: I left Crown Can in, let's see, I was sworn in May. I left in May, '42. I was sworn in on the fifteenth of May, 1942.

⁴⁹ The topic of McCloskey's job as a film projector never came back up during the interview. However, according to his personal papers he took the job in 1939. An inquiry for work led McCloskey to Stanley Haythen in center city Philadelphia who was a contact film distributor. The state of Pennsylvania had produced a scenic film of the state and contracted Haythen to show it at various places. McCloskey got the job. This film was shown at schools, churches, and lodges. He held the job for three weeks in the autumn on 1939 and was paid a salary of twenty-five dollars a week, plus twenty dollars for expenses. For more information see "John L. McCloskey: Job Experiences (early) and Other Interesting Activities" in The File of John L. McCloskey on deposit in the La Salle University Archives., Philadelphia, Pa.

[1:01:06] Fallon: This was to go into the Air Corps?

McCloskey: Yeah. But I didn't go into training until October.

Fallon: You volunteered right? You weren't drafted, you volunteered.

McCloskey: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Fallon: Why the Air Corps?

McCloskey: Because from, the time I was seven I didn't want to do anything but fly. This was the first opportunity that opened itself because no way was I going to flying school. In other words, when Lindberg flew across the ocean⁵⁰, that's when I started to want to fly. I made up my mind that somehow or another I was going to be a pilot. I never thought of what really happened, but I knew I loved flying. I just couldn't wait for it.

Fallon: What unit were you with? Or regiment?

McCloskey: I was with the Southeast Training Command. Of course, that covered a lot of territory. We were in Columbus, Ohio for two years and then Sebring, Florida, in the beginning, in '43 and then again '45, Hendricks Field. So Lockbourne Airbase⁵¹ and Hendricks Field, Sebring Florida, were my bases for two and a half years for the time I was flying and instructing. But we flew all over the country. I mean we flew, well we took off on—each group had to have a ten hour mission. Every flight was a five hour flight. But a ten hour mission was planning your flight in the afternoon, leaving, we often left at midnight and we'd fly until ten o'clock the next morning.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Now, that took us over a number of states. We might go from Columbus, Ohio down to Georgia, into Florida, up over Indiana, over Chicago. If I had West Point students, back

⁵⁰ Charles Lindberg Flew across the Atlantic Ocean on May 20-21, 1927. McCloskey was not yet seven years old.

⁵¹ Lockbourne Airbase was located twelve miles outside of Columbus, Ohio. The facility has since been renamed Rickenbacker Air Force Base.

[1:03:04] over into New York, Stuart Field⁵², so we'd land there a ten o'clock the next morning. It was to get them use to being up overnight, you know, for ten hour missions, planning the mission, going on the mission, and still being awake at the end. I would land at places like, well, Corpus Christi, Texas. If I had some students from Texas we'd land at Corpus Christi at the Naval Air Station. They were always very nice to us. But invariably, when I was coming back from the flight like Corpus Christi—on one of the times I had six additional passengers with me who were going on leave. In other words, I was getting them back to Columbus, Ohio in say six hours. Where they'd be two days on a train getting up there, even if they were going to New York or going to Indiana, or somewhere in there, it saved them a lot of time. So they were very nice to us because they knew we could take them back. I had to draw parachutes for them, of course, they didn't have parachutes. Then at the other end of the line I'd turn the chutes in and then they'd ship them back or we had an agreement if they had this many and others came back from another source they'd match it up, you know.

Fallon: So you volunteered. You left in October, '42.

McCloskey: Right.

Fallon: Did you go through—

McCloskey: We went to Nashville, Tennessee to pre-flight⁵³. That was all of the exams. A psychological exams, another physical exam, dexterity, you name it we had it. This is where a number didn't make the cut. In other words, when we were in Nashville, for probably six to eight weeks I guess, and out of it came pilots, navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, depending on how you made out physically and mentally. So that when you heard the word pilot, you know,

⁵² Stewart Field was an Army Air Corps training facility built in the 1930s and located within close proximity to West Point Military Academy. It is now Stewart International Airport.

⁵³ According the McCloskey's personal papers this is incorrect. In a phone conversation he confirmed his mistake. What took place in Nashville is what McCloskey described as Classification. His Pre-flight training actually took place at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama.

[1:05:10] “Whooo”, you know, because you were in a big auditorium and they call name and then say “pilot”, call another name, “bombardier” and that meant you were going off to training in those categories. I mean, I would’ve flipped my lid if I had been the other, and yet, I was fortunate. It probably ended up with, I don’t know if it was a third that were picked as pilots, but it was less than half of those who became pilots that went down there with that in mind. Then, when we went to primary flight training, there was another cut of people that didn’t make it. Flying and didn’t make it—with their night flying, you know, one way or another, so you lost quite a few in Primary Flight Training, a clear percentage. But then when you got to basic you lost only a couple. Then in Advanced only a couple, usually in Advanced it was night flying problems more than anything. You did have a cut back each time.⁵⁴

Fallon: When you say ‘Basic’ did you get full on Army combat training or was the Air Corps special?

McCloskey: Oh no, I could show you on the wall, by way of the airplane, what I meant when I say Primary, Basic, Advanced.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: Primary was a single engine, for us a single engine Stearman⁵⁵, which was a bi-wing airplane with open cockpits. We got sixty hours in there. Then we went on to Basic and we had a closed cockpit, low-wing airplane, single engine, with a stronger engine. In Advanced, you had, twin engines, for flying. Then you went off either to pilot—either pursuit or bombing depending on where you were selected. In other words, I asked for four-engine all the way

⁵⁴ Primary flight training took place in Camden, South Carolina. Basic Flight training was held at Saw Field, Sumpter, South Carolina. Advanced Flight training was at Turner Field in Albany, Georgia. For more information see “John L. McCloskey” in the File of John L. McCloskey on deposit at La Sale University Archive, Philadelphia.

⁵⁵ Stearman was a Kansas based aircraft manufacturer that produced a number of different planes.

[1:07:11] through and got it. Some wanted fighters and got it, you know. But it was how you were selected after the fact that put you where you went.

Fallon: You already told me the story, but I didn't have the recorder on, about how you got selected to be an instructor rather than flying combat missions.

McCloskey: Oh yeah, yeah. You want to hear it again?

Fallon: I do, and the recorder wants to, so if you don't mind.

McCloskey: When I went on a delay in route to get married, I was told I had orders cut to go to Moses Lake, Washington and from there pick up my crew after the training there and go

overseas. It was a short phase. You met your crew, you got your plane, and then you went overseas. So I came home on the delay in route, got married, this is all within a week period.

Two days after we were married, my father got a telegram says that I should go to Lockbourne Airbase, Columbus, Ohio. Which I knew was a central instructor's school; I also knew that I wasn't scheduled to be an instructor. But the orders say go there so off I went. It was two years later when I found out how I got there. I had asked for combat in all of my questionnaires from the time I went in until the time I finished B-17's⁵⁶. My instructor, whom I met in 1945, said that of the six students he had two had asked to be instructors and the other four asked for combat. The two that had asked to be instructors he felt would kill their students, but might survive combat. So he waited one evening, until he had drank about a half a bottle of Scotch. He put six sheets of paper with names on it in a hat, his flight cap, went to his four year old son, who was about half asleep, and told him to pick out two sheets of paper, or two pieces of paper, which he did and mine was one of them. That's a scientific method of becoming an instructor.

As I told him in '45: "if you had told in '43 I would have killed you, but now I'm thanking you".

⁵⁶ The B-17 was a long-range bomber used in World War II. It was a four engine plane.

[1:09:44] Fallon: Thank you for telling that again; that's a good story. You never saw combat at all. You strictly did instructions.

McCloskey: No. No. Although, as an instructor, we had to instruct the future pilot how to use the bomb sight, how to navigate. So I would draw a bombsight, but it in the airplane when we got that phase of it and would go over, we'd bomb Chicago or bomb Indianapolis, of course, without bombs. But they had to be proficient in the use of the bombsight. In 1943 and early '44, when we drew the bombsight we had to first draw a .45⁵⁷ and a belt. We had the .45 with us when we had the bombsight. Once they lost a number of the bombsights over Europe we no longer had to carry the pistol with us. We just drew the bomb sight, put it in the airplane, and took it out when we were done. One night over Cleveland, it was before they took that restriction away, we had the bombsight onboard and I had a fire in number three⁵⁸. I gave the students an option to bail out. They asked me what I was going to do. I told them I thought I could bring it into Cleveland. They said they would rather come with me. It was about 10:30 at night and I called "Mayday" and came in over the lake⁵⁹. As I hit the ground they had, we called it the "shower-bath tuck", came along. We were going about seventy miles an hour when it got up over the wing and put the fire out by the time we stopped. But it was a warm fire, when its number three and you're an instructor, you're right next to the number three. I know it was hot, but fortunately for us it didn't become uncontrolled. I hit the fuel shut-off as soon as I saw fire and that may have helped. You don't think of what may have helped as long as you can think of it afterwards. But that night, the reason I told that story is that, that night because we had a bombsight aboard one of us, actually there were two of us, had to have cots at the airplane and

⁵⁷ A .45 caliber pistol.

⁵⁸ McCloskey is referring to his third engine, which as he was sitting co-pilot, would have been directly to his left outside the fuselage.

⁵⁹ Lake Erie.

[1:12:22] stay with the airplane until the following morning when they came and picked the bombsight up and put it in another plane to go back to the base. We went back with it, of course, and left the airplane there. But they were very restrictive of the use of the bombsight until '44. So that's the bombsight story.

Fallon: Overall, your time in the Air Corps, did you like it? Did you enjoy it?

McCloskey: I liked it, yeah. I enjoyed instructing which I never thought I would because I hated instructors most of my time. That might have been one of the reasons I asked for combat because I had a number of different types of instructors. A couple were Aces and a couple were, a couple others were different. When you're in Basic Flight Training like I was and the instructor tells you to land the airplane and you know his hands are still on the control, you wonder whether you landed it or he landed it. Now, I always made it a point to fold my arms when the student was flying the airplane so they could see that I couldn't touch anything while I was sitting there with my arms folded. They knew that if they were to fly to plane there were flying the plane. I thought that was very important because of some of my own experiences. But, on the whole, most of them were good. I can't say too much bad about them, since I was one of them. [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs] Okay, you left the Air Corps in forty—

McCloskey: December 8, I believe it was, 1945. I took advantage of an early out because we weren't doing any training and really the better mechanics had all left the service. I didn't look forward to flying an airplane unless I knew there was a dang good mechanic at the other end of the line. So it was the time to get out. I took advantage of that. I also took advantage of location in that they indicated to me that there were no openings for discharge in the New York area at the time. I said "well where on the East coast do you have openings for discharge?" They say

[1:15:08] “Richmond, Virginia.” I said “I’d like to be discharged from Richmond, Virginia.” So I went there; stayed there a week. Actually, after the first day, I talked to the Sergeant and I said “people are waiting here for discharge and yet most of the rooms are empty”. “Well”, he said “if they live close we let them go and call them when to come in.” I said “Okay, I live in Philadelphia.” I gave him the right handshake and I went home for four days. Then went back and was discharged from Richmond. But it was right on the route, that’s why they let me do it. It was on the train route to Philadelphia. But I wanted to get out. I wanted to get in to college. I had to idea I was going to La Salle. I didn’t know about La Salle then I did Schenectady⁶⁰. I could recall my brother, who come out of the service about the same time, he was overseas most of his time, my brother-in-law, who was in the Pacific and come out at the same time, the three of us heading towards La Salle to take the entrance exam and asking at Broad and Olney, where La Salle was⁶¹. Of course, I don’t have that problem now. We took the exam and I had Brother Augustine⁶² interview me. He looked at my record, you had to know Brother Augustine, he was a saint really, a walking saint. He went [McCloskey clicks his tongue as to imitate Brother Augustine]. He was clicking his tongue and shaking his head. I said “What’s the matter Brother?” [He said] “You’ve been out a long time.” I said “I realize that Brother.” He said “nine years you’ve been out of high school.” I said “well, what do you suggest?” He said “well, I think maybe you should just take four courses instead of five for the first semester.” I said “okay, Brother.” At the same time, Jim, who had been in France, my brother, said to me “let’s take the advanced French exam.” [I said] “Okay”. We took that one along with the others and I

⁶⁰ Schenectady is a small town in New York. That is the best word that can be deciphered from the recording. Presumably McCloskey chose to compare his knowledge of La Salle to a small town. However, he could be referencing something else.

⁶¹ Someone standing a Broad Street and Olney Avenue in Philadelphia is about one block east of La Salle.

⁶² Brother D. Augustine

[1:17:29] was on my way out and I dropped my blue book in the waste paper can. He was following me out and he picked it up and handed both in. We both ended up in second year French.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Of course, I wondered why, until I found there were only seven people in second year French so they probably needed us. We had Dr. Guischar⁶³ who was a great guy. I was glad I was in it. That was—oh, the story on the four courses. The second week of the semester I was called to the Dean's office and asked by a Dean who was later to become a president⁶⁴ and I was to be, first his assistant, assistant to the president for a number of years with him, he said "Why did you only take four courses instead of five?" I said "I was advised to because I was out of high school so long." "That's what fouls up our rosters" he said "I don't know why you're taking four". I said "I told you Brother, a Brother told me to take four." [He said] "Take six next semester." [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: So I ended up taking six courses the second semester instead of four. But I made out alright; I did fine.

Fallon: Well, I noticed you graduated pretty quickly.

McCloskey: Yeah, we graduated, I use to always say, we graduated in three summers. I started in February 1946 and I finished in September 1948. The funny part of that is we met with the Dean, the same Dean, in June of '48. We asked him whether the prizes were going to be given out in September, that are given out at graduation. He said "Oh, no." He said "we can't afford to give out prizes every time somebody graduates." He said "we can give them out in June, but

⁶³ Dr. John Guischar

⁶⁴ Brother E. Stanislaws was the Dean while McCloskey was a student at La Salle. He would serve as president from 1952-1958.

[1:19:44] we can't give them out in September." We went out sort of with our head between our legs. It was a fact, some of the major prizes were scheduled for June and yet we had a graduation, in our year we had a graduation in June; we had a graduation in September. In other words, I guess there were maybe, I forget how many in June, but I think in September we had a little over a hundred, maybe a hundred and twenty or something like that. We had accelerated classes. During those years there were accelerated classes, there afternoon classes, because they didn't have the facilities to run a regular schedule. When I went into La Salle to start my freshmen year, February of '46, the first floor of College Hall was occupied by the high school for classes. We had the second and third floor of the College. Just to give you a concept of what was going on. They had all of Wister Hall, the high school, and they had the first floor of the College Hall. Actually, the semester before I came, in '45, they had less than one hundred students enrolled at La Salle. It was in the nineties somewhere I think. We came in and we started building up and building up. Of course, the evening division opened up in '46. Joe Sprissler who is a good friend, he was Vice-President for Business Affairs later, Controller earlier, said in '46 when they opened the evening division he turned all the lights on in the building to look like there were a lot of people there.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: It was less the one hundred, I guess, in the first year. But they ballooned. Actually in '47 or '48, I think they had over a hundred from RCA alone, taking electronic physics there. It really mushroomed as far as evening—in fact at that time I think we were the only college giving a degree in the evening school. In other words, the rest had evening schools, but they weren't giving degrees. We were the only one. The competition was a bit different.

[1:21:51] Fallon: Obviously, it was the GI Bill that got you there and got all the other fellows in there too, right?

McCloskey: Yeah. Oh yeah, we couldn't have gone if it wasn't for the GI Bill. They were paying my tuition, books, and, in addition to that, I was getting, with the two children, \$120 a month. Running the bookstore was another advantage while I was a student because I checked very deeply into the GI Bill as to what it allowed. I found that in the first year it allowed a dictionary that the veterans would pay for—I mean that the administration would pay for. It allowed a pen and pencil set. So added these to the book store and, of course, they were going like wildfire. Every freshman got a dictionary. Brother Patrick Ellis—not Ellis, Brother, the other Brother Patrick⁶⁵ who died a long time ago was the English teacher, sort of a senior English teacher and he would name the dictionary. I would order the dictionaries for all the freshmen that were veterans and the same thing with the pen and pencil set.

Fallon: Now—one sec. You majored in accounting?

McCloskey: I majored in accounting, yeah. Not only did I major in accounting, but after I graduated I started the CADES course for CPA and went about half way through that, but I got so busy at the college. I had to make a decision, whether to stay with that or to drop it and go with my work and then make a move later, which I did. In other words, later on, when I went into the president's office in '55 I went in with an agreement that I would go to graduate school. I was going to take marketing, which I did. As soon as I got my degree I ended up requesting teaching. I started to teach, so teaching one course in marketing and Vice-President for Public Affairs. I was, actually, I was assistant to the president until Brother Stanislaw left. Then when Brother Daniel Bernian came in he named the vice-presidents and I was named one of them, the Vice-President for Public Relations at the time. I have it somewhere in the article here, when

⁶⁵ Brother E. Patrick was Assistant Professor of English at the time.

[1:24:23] Brother asked me to come into the president's office I was only salary and commission at the bookstore, which was my initial agreement to take the job as a graduate. Anything that would sell weather I was there or not didn't come under that. But if I added, say a jewelry item or special jackets, ect, then I would get a small commission off those. It got to the point where my salary and commission weren't too much different, one from the other. The commission was about seventy percent of the salary. When I was invited into the president's office to be assistant to the president, I was invited in at a lower figure. I said "I'll be glad to take it, if I can go to graduate school." Brother Stanislaws said "Well, I wouldn't want you here unless you wanted to go to graduate school." I said "but I want you to pay for it." He said "I'll pay for it." Well I had half of my money from the GI Bill for the cost still there. So they didn't have to pay that much. It was probably, maybe, less than a thousand bucks or so.

Fallon: The government dispersed the GI money directly to La Salle and then they held on to it?

McCloskey: Yeah. Well, no, no. They dispersed it as you used it.

Fallon: Oh, oh, okay.

McCloskey: They didn't have a pot of money there, no. That was the story on that.

Fallon: So when you were a student at La Salle you were the student manager of the campus store?

McCloskey: Yeah.

Fallon: Then you graduated you became the full manager?

McCloskey: Right. I was really the manager of Leonard Hall, which was the store. I was in charge of scheduling all events there in what was then the lounge. They had a lounge there.

That was before the Union building. That was the event place so I scheduled that and made sure it was manned ect.

[1:27:36] Fallon: What kind of events were scheduled?

McCloskey: Well, they had dances, they had diners, they had the opening faculty diner use to be there. The students ran dances there. The students had meetings there. It was nicely appointed, so you could either push the chairs out of the way or leave them in the area there for the activity.

Fallon: Was it co-ed back then?

McCloskey: No. It wasn't co-ed until 1970 I believe.

Fallon: Okay, that's what I thought. But they didn't have a problem with dances, and girls coming in, and what not?

McCloskey: No.

Fallon: That's neat. What did you guys do to have fun back then? Or were you too busy to have fun?

McCloskey: We had some activities that we'd go to. I was so busy. It was local, most of it. In other words, we had neighbors and friends that were in same boat. Going to somebody's house, with maybe four couples, was the night out. In other words, we'd do it on a Saturday night; it was usually 'pitch-in' or something like that. We didn't go out to night clubs or anything like that. Most of our entertainment was self-made and local for the time we were in college.

Because I'd come in—I was going full-time and working full-time. So that didn't give you much time in between. Actually I give my wife credit for raising the children.

Fallon: I was going to say, because right now, at that point, your first two children had been born.

McCloskey: Right. Because, I didn't really have the time. I got to know them, but I really didn't get to take them places. She drove too; so a lot of the time she'd be taking them to their football games and their baseball games that they played. You know, they played the little

[1:28:43] leagues when they were growing up. I couldn't have done it without her. She did a good job. Then after they all grew and were in college, she went out and got a job. She ended up as the business manager at Bonwit-Teller in Jenkintown⁶⁶. Even though she only had high school. While the kids were growing, she was teaching, on a volunteer basis, at St. Christopher's⁶⁷ for two years. She had what they called the Great Books program. For somebody that didn't have college she really made it made it more than most. I was fortunate there.

Fallon: Yeah.

McCloskey: It's a shame that what happened had to happen, because from '92 on she's been really having medical problems, one after another. There's no chance of her coming out of the nursing home and yet she could out live me. Because, you know, basically, she's in good shape other than diabetes, but she can't walk. She has arthritis, her hands are like this [McCloskey raises his hands and crumples his fingers together as to demonstrate his wife's condition] so she can't push the wheelchair. So I spend the morning there every day. I have an aid come in from two to eight. This morning which is the first time in months I didn't get down there, but I had the aid come in at quarter to nine. Because I'm usually there at 8:30 and so the morning was covered too so I felt better about it. My son was giving a seminar at Holy Family. That's why I went down there.

Fallon: Yeah, that's rough; it's tough. But—that's all the questions I have for today. [Fallon is looking through his list of prepared questions] Oh wait, I think I have one or two more.

Although, we've answered quite a bit of them already, without me even having to have asked them. We did that. Maybe not. The only other one I had that I didn't ask you or that you didn't

⁶⁶ Bonwit-Teller was a woman's clothing store located in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁷ Betty McCloskey taught 8th grade at St. Christopher's School in the Somerton section of northeast Philadelphia.

[1:31:03] answer without me asking is: What were the professors like? Did you have favorite professors?

McCloskey: Oh, I had some great ones. Dr. Holroyd, I had Dr. Holroyd⁶⁸ for the last lab and lecture that he taught to business students. We had it on the first floor of college hall. Some of the stories, I'll tell you, are great. He always wore the robe when he came into class. He knew every Saints Day and would mention the Saints Day before class started; and say the prayer before class. He was a rough costumer but very fair. I had a couple of occasions and I've seen a couple of occasions—the one class that I always remember. We were like ninety percent veterans. This one, Chuck Boyle, who worked for me in the bookstore, his wife was expecting the following Wednesday and we had a test coming up. He raised his hand; he said “Doctor, my wife is expecting next Wednesday, is there a chance we could change the date of the test?” He goes like this, he says, “My dear young man, there's one thing I have to tell you. That you must be present at the laying of a keel, but you don't have to be there to launch it.” [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Boy, everybody broke out laughing; Boyle sat down and shut up. [Laughs] I thought that was one of the greatest. Another one, my brother-in-law had the same class. When we went into lab he use to be next to me, by his own choosing. Of course, we had to cut up something and then draw pictures of it. I'd be cutting up and drawing pictures and he would wait until I drew the picture in and then he'd copy down what I had done. I end up with an 'A' and he ends up with a 'C'. He says “Jack, I can't understand this.” He says “you got an 'A', I got a 'C', yet I got the same thing down because I copied right off you.” I said “there's one thing you didn't notice.” He said “what's that?” I said “did you notice that he continuously walks up and down the row behind us, and into the next one, and into that one. He's not just walking.” I

⁶⁸ Dr. Roland Holroyd was a Professor of Biology.

[1:33:38] said “he sees everything that’s going on.” I said, “So he’s probably watching.” Then one day, he would ask questions at the end of the lab, he’d spend about ten minutes on questions. So he called me one day and he said “Mr. McCloskey, what does this do?” I forget what he said. I said “Doctor, I don’t know the answer to that one.” Then he asked me another question and I didn’t know the answer. He asked me another one and I didn’t know the answer. “Mr. McCloskey, didn’t you prepare for today?” I said “Doctor, you could have asked me any other question and I would have had the answer.” He asked me five other questions and I answered them. “Mr. McCloskey, what’s your major?” I said “Accounting, Doctor.” “Did you ever think of becoming a lawyer?” I said “no”. [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: I use to drive him home once in a while. He lived in Frankfort⁶⁹. When the weather was bad, you know, it was not that far out of my way. He was a great guy. I mean, he had some of the greatest stories that you can’t imagine. He was a great teacher. Like it or not, on some of the tests he’s have like ten microscopes lined up on the table in front and part of test, ten of the question, would be identify what you saw in the microscope. That separated the men from the boys right off. He was a great teacher. Brother Norbert⁷⁰, who left, was the manager of the store and the chairman of the accounting department when I was there. I majored in accounting, was a great teacher. He was a character too because when he’d say “before you make up your roster” like in the first, second semester, before he left, “I want to look it over.” So he said “well who you picking for economics?” I said “Dr. Flubacher.”⁷¹ [He said] “Uh uh, uh uh. Don’t pick Dr. Flubacher.” I said “why?” He said “he’s the best teacher we have in

⁶⁹ Frankfurt is a neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia.

⁷⁰ Brother F. Norbert.

⁷¹ Dr. Joseph F. Flubacker.

[1:35:51] economics, but you'll spend all your time on economics and you won't have any time for accounting. Take Brother Augustine.⁷² [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: But then he left, when I was in sophomore year, and I became manager of the store. He got married and left the brothers and went over and was the chairman of the department at Steubenville, Ohio, a college in Steubenville⁷³. But I never was I touch with him after that. But he was a great guy, a good teacher. In fact, he used to do the income tax for the Phillies, for a number of the Phillies players. So he was another good teacher. Guischart in French was good one. I'm trying to think of some of the others. Brother Patrick in English was great, a hard marker, but great. I don't think—I only had one or two that were weak. I had one in business law who forgot his notes one day and gave the class the day off.

Fallon: [Chuckles]

McCloskey: Because he didn't have his notes with him. He left the on the "el" I think on the way out. I'd say good experiences with the teachers.

Fallon: That's good.

McCloskey: I also taught ROTC⁷⁴. I didn't know whether I told you that.

Fallon: No, I didn't know that.

McCloskey: In 1950, Brother Paul⁷⁵, because of the beginning of the Korean War, felt that didn't want to get caught like they did the last time in World War One where they lost all their enrollment. So they put in an ROTC program. He called me because I had been in the Air

⁷² Brother Augustine was a Proessor of Sociology; this is not to say he could not have taught a course in economics. However, more than likely, McCloskey is mistaken and means Brother F. Francis who was the only other Professor of Economics at the time. There was also an Economics Instructor named George R. Sowyer.

⁷³ The college was Franciscan University of Steubenville.

⁷⁴ Reserve Officer Training Corps

⁷⁵ Brother Gregory Paul was president of La Salle from 1945-1952.

[1:37:32] Corps. They were thinking about an Air Force ROTC. Then Joe Sprissler, who was Controller, himself and I went up to Northeast Airport; we were looking over the area there. Then we'd come back. Then the artillery came in and they were sort of head and shoulders over in what they were going to offer so they chose artillery and made it a requirement for freshmen year, of ROTC. This was 1950. They were short an officer and Brother called me over one day. He said "how would you like to teach ROTC?" I said "fine." He sent me over to the Colonel and he interviewed me and said "okay, you're teaching." He said "you'll have map reading, aerial photography, drill leadership, exercise in command" and I think one other course. Every Thursday I would put on my uniform and teach and take it off again. People thought I was going in the service every time I put it on. They thought I was called back.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: It was a joke for a while. I taught for two years. In fact, I'm probably the only instructor that ever taught in the tower room in La Salle. Go up the last set of steps in the tower, you know main College Hall, and there's a room there that has the open louvers up, way up above it. I taught map reading in there. We had thirty-four students. They had long tables and when it snowed the snow would flicker in and I'd have to move the maps from the first row. When the Colonel came in to exam the class he had to open the door in and my back row had to get up. He was one of these meticulous guys who said "you're five minutes behind in your lesson plan." Because, you had to make up a lesson plan which he followed. I said "Colonel the only reason I was five minutes behind was you." I said "you came in. My students all had to get up. They had to move their chairs to let you come by." I said "then when you went out they had to get up again and move out. So that's the five minutes." He would never say anything after that.

[1:39:45] Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Yeah, I taught ROTC and got points for two years. Other than that—did I answer your questions? I veered off.

Fallon: No, that's okay. That's fine. I think that will do it for today for us. [This ended the April 8, 2011 interview session. The second session occurred four days later.]

Fallon: Today is Tuesday, April 12, 2011. My name is John Fallon and I'm in Buckingham Township, Pennsylvania with Mr. John McCloskey for part two of our interview together.⁷⁶ As I was just saying Mr. McCloskey, we're going to pick up right after you became assistant to the president.

McCloskey: That would have been in the middle fifties.

Fallon: '55, right? 1955. We talked about, he called you up and then they were going to send you to graduate school—

McCloskey: Yeah. When we met to consider my acceptance of his offer to leave the book store and come into the president's office, in our discussion, I indicated that I wanted to go to graduate school; and he said he wouldn't have picked unless he thought that I wanted to go to grad school. Then I said "will you pay for it?" He said he would. I had some GI bill left so it didn't really cost that much for them. I went three nights a week and Saturday while I was working full-time, with him. I picked my MBA up in about eleven months.

Fallon: Wow.

McCloskey: I wrote my master's thesis on marketing on "The Development and Problems of the College Store in the United States From 1859-1955". I did a 120 store interviews. I visited the

⁷⁶ Fallon failed to ask McCloskey for permission to record the second session of the interview on April 12, 2001. Permission and confirmation that McCloskey was aware that the session was being recorded was gained at the start of the third session on April 18. See 3:04:18 of this recording.

[1:42:02] National Association's headquarters in Oberlin⁷⁷ and interviewed store managers out there on one of the conferences. Also, met, as I mentioned, with John Barnes of Barnes & Noble and he agreed to pay for it, the thesis.

Fallon: I saw in your notes you talked to Barnes about having him publish it. Did they publish it?

McCloskey: Yeah, no they didn't publish it because in the mean time the National Association of College Stores executive director wanted in on it. So he paid for half of the thesis and then took it over as soon as I completed it. So John Barnes didn't have the opportunity to publish it. In that the College Store in the United States started to publish it in their magazine and more or less took it out from under his wing. You see that little explanation at the top of the page there?

Fallon: Yes.

McCloskey: That tells you the story in essence. In other words, the true story was that John Barnes—you could have that if you want—John Barnes indicated that he would pay for the whole thing. At which time, I had suggested that he come out with an outline series on it. He said it was great; you know, he'd give it to the business managers and the campus store managers. Then I got a call the following week from Russell Reynolds, the director of the college stores in the United States, and he said "we want in on that!" I said, well, you know, what was I to say. I said "well you can talk to John Barnes." So he agreed to pay half of the six hundred and fifty dollars. Now, because he agreed to that, when I sent the thesis to the National Association and to John Barnes, he started to publish it under the rubric that he has in the introduction here, which was a little stretched. In other words, he didn't have permission to do that, but he did it. Of course, Mr. Barnes wasn't about to argue with it because he had a much bigger assignment selling to all the college stores. He didn't want to get in bad with the

⁷⁷ The National Association of College Stores headquartered in Oberlin, Ohio.

[1:44:30] executive director, therefore he didn't say anything. I got my degree and my thesis had been accepted so I didn't say anything.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: I just read what I saw in the college store magazine for the next five issues. After the second issue, he dropped my name completely from it. So that really it wasn't on the complete up and up and yet nobody was upset to any great extent. Because we all accomplished what we wanted to accomplish, except for maybe Barnes & Nobel and they could care less. I mean, it was peanuts as far as they were concerned.

Fallon: That had much bigger issues.

McCloskey: Right. But, that, I'll make a copy of that so you can have that with you. I'll just, anything I say I'll make a copy I'll do before you go.

Fallon: Okay. Who was the president when you became assistant to the president?

McCloskey: Brother Stanislaw. Michael Duzy was his lay name. At that time they were going under the old rubric and he was Brother E. Stanislaw, president.

Fallon: What was he like?

McCloskey: He was very direct and very specific about things. He was a hard boss, and yet I would say fair.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: He—I use to warn faculty members when they came in the office whether it was a good time to ask for a raise or not.

Fallon: [Laughs]

[1:46:19] McCloskey: He was a big man. I guess he was 6'2", 6'3" and well put together. His desk in the president's office had a chair that was a good since chair. He had naugahyde⁷⁸ seats on the other side so when anyone came in to see him they were almost sitting on the floor looking up at him so it was difficult from the outset, you know?

Fallon: Very imposing.

McCloskey: Sort of imposing, yeah. But as I say, he was fair and had been dean for quite a while before he became president. So he knew his way around. We had had a couple meetings before that because that—this is an aside. When I first took my test I was—I think I already told you this about the four courses and the six courses.

Fallon: Uh huh.

McCloskey: Alright, well, I won't repeat it; but, he was the dean at the time who chided me for not taking the five courses after I had been told to take four. That was the president I was working with then. His assignments were almost anything from "go tell one of the faculty member he's in trouble" to "help get the new catalogue format together and get working on that and collect information for that". There were details that he would assign almost on an ad hoc basis. There was no daily assignment for me in a specific category; it could be anything.

Fallon: So your duties were whatever he asked?

McCloskey: Whatever he asked me to do, right—as long as it took. So that I sat in the president's office there and I was the first one to meet people. The secretary was in the desk behind me. Incidentally, the secretary was the person who later was his wife.

Fallon: Oh?

McCloskey: Yeah. That was—he had left, that's another story, at the end of our stay. It was comfortable. In other words, I had worked with many bosses before him and it didn't bother me

⁷⁸ Naugahyde is a type of synthetic leather.

[1:48:37] a bit that he was very direct and very specific about what he wanted done. And you did it as were assigned. I had nobody else to report to. It was a good few years. It lasted until he left, when he left the order at the same time. I forget the exact date that that was. That gave me another assignment. For a week I had to answer all the phones that related to the president and I was advised to say that he was at Amendale⁷⁹ on a retreat, for that period of time. No he wasn't difficult to work for, but, let's say, a very affirmative person and not one that you could win an argument with if you started arguing with him. It was best not to argue, you could differ, but you weren't going to get far if you did.

Fallon: You weren't going to change his mind?

McCloskey: I think I was the first assistant to the president lay person. I think if you check back you'd probably at one time there was a Brother who was assistant t the president quite a ways back. It was a new title that he established at the time.

Fallon: You stepped down in, I want to say, it was 1958?

McCloskey: Actually, I didn't step down. In the week between his leaving the provincial met with others and the named Brother Daniel Bernian president. Brother Daniel Bernian called a meeting the week after the former president had left. There were five of us there, I think. He named two lay vice-presidents and I was one of them. It was the first time in the history of the school that lay vice-presidents were named. One was Joseph Sprissler and he was Vice-President for Business Affairs. I was Vice-President for Public Relations, at the time. That was the title, which they changed later on. I'll tell you that when we get to the next president. I then began to work for Brother Daniel Bernian as vice-president. But, I had at the time the alumni under me, Development, Career Planning and Placement, the news bureau. So those departments were under the Vice-President for Public Relations when I came into office. We

⁷⁹ Amendale, Maryland where at the time the Christian Bothers had a home for retreats and retired Brothers.

[1:51:31] established that as he called it “the trunks”. He used to call it “the four trunks”. He said “these will be your departments”. They were for a time and then later on I added another one. But that was under the next president—no, it was under the same president. About half way through his presidency, Tom McCarthy who was Vice-President for Student Affairs then, later named, was over Travel and Tours department and he couldn’t get along with the guy who was running it. He was going to fire him. Brother called me one day and said “how would you like to have another department?” I named him right away. I said “Oh, it’s John Bean of Travel and Tours.” [He said] “That’s right. How did you know?” I said “I knew that the other vice-president couldn’t get along with him.” He said “Well, would you take the department?” I said “sure, no problem.” So I added Travels and Tours then to my departments and had five after that. They were a good group and most of them were long employees, the directors, after they were hired.

Fallon: So the directors answered to you?

McCloskey: Yes.

Fallon: Then you answered to the president?

McCloskey: I answered to the president. They had to prepare their budgets. I had to defend the budgets at the meeting, the budget meetings, of all the departments, once I accepted them. Then we’d take it from there. There were four areas of administration at the institution. One was academic affairs, student affairs, public affairs—or public relations at the time, and business affairs. Now the student affairs came on a little later in terms of the naming of Dr. McCarthy as the Vice-President of Student Affairs. Brother Daniel Bernian had been in that area before he became president so he hired Tom later and named him vice-president.

Fallon: Brother Dan Bernian was involved in student affairs before hand?

[1:53:45] McCloskey: Yeah, uh huh.

Fallon: Then he was president. You stayed in that post—or no I'm sorry wait a minute—yeah, all the way up until 1986 right?

McCloskey: Yeah. The title changed in Brother Daniel Burke's time⁸⁰. One of our trustees, Ted Meckey, was the Vice-President for Public Relations at Ford Motor Company. He was named Vice-President Public Affairs from the title Public Relations. About a month later, Brother Daniel Burke called me and said "John, we're going to change your title." I said "what is it?" He said "you'll be Vice-President of Public Affairs begging at the end of the year." I said "fine brother." I said "how much more money is that?" [He said] "Oh, John, that's not any more money it's just a new title." I said "okay brother." I knew that it was on the head Ted Meckey's change to Vice-President of Public Affairs. He saw the opportunity for a new title, which was a good idea. He was a very, very soft spoken guy, but when he said something it was very specific and it suck, in other words. In fact, I use to say when he said—he had an expression, he said "Ohhhhh", that only he could say. I said you had to listen to that and depending on how far up it went it, it meant a lot different than one that was just "oh", you know. You'd better listen close because it means a lot when he does that. But that's getting into the next president which I shouldn't get into yet. Brother Daniel Bernian was a very personal president, very loyal to the people who worked for him. Actually, he was the president who gave me more experience then I could have gotten from any other president. In that, he had a driver's license, but he never drove. When he went to a meeting, any of the president's meetings, he wanted me to come along with him whether he flew, drove, or what. So I got to met presidents that I never would have met. I got to go sometimes when he couldn't make it. He'd send me and tell me I'd be the voting member at the time. I made trips and saw people and traveled with people that ordinarily my

⁸⁰ Brother Daniel Burke was President of La Salle from 1969-1976.

[1:56:26] position never would have me travel with. When they had a VIP trip to Pensacola for three days, which was presidents and business executives, he said “John you go, I don’t want to go.” When IBM had the presidents up for a week in Binghamton, New York, in the sixties, in the early days of the computers, he said “you go, I don’t want to go.” That’s the way it was, you know, in a lot of things. When we went somewhere, I would be with him for hours, you know. We’d discuss everything. Everything to the point where he offered me, when the Vice-President for Business Affairs was going to retire, because I had majored in accounting, he offered me the job of business affairs. I said “no brother, I like it in public affairs.” It was a relationship that was very unusual for anybody to have with a college president. As a result I got to know so many different college presidents and got involved in things that I never would have gotten involved before. I worked with the college—I’m thinking of it—Aston, Pennsylvania. Newman College, it use to be Our Lady of the Angeles. It turned out he president and I grew up almost next to each other. They didn’t have a Development Office so I worked with them on a Development Office, on outing one together. Holy Family College, when they were thinking about opening the college, I was up there, I was still in the bookstore; but we were talking about a lot of things like how do you get a license for chemistry. I said “No problem sister. I’ll get the answer for you tomorrow.” It was then Mother Neomisias, who was the first one at Holy Family and then she was followed by Mother Aloysius⁸¹. I worked with them and had some beautiful letter from them, you know, for the help that I gave them.

Fallon: Oh, okay.

McCloskey: With Melrose Academy, I worked with them on a capital campaign. There were about five or six different institutions that I never would have met the people if it hadn’t been for

⁸¹ Holy Family University was founded by Sister Neomisias Rutkowska in 1954. She was followed by Sister Aloysius Sabacinska who was president from 1950-1970.

[1:58:48] my circulation. I had a career that I wouldn't sell for anything. Brother Daniel Bernian was a key in that respect and many instances of, more or less, getting known. And Governor Lawrence—I ended up seeing Governor Lawrence more than he did. Because I'd go out every month and we'd sit down for an hour to bring him up on the Centenary Campaign because he was the chair. I'd say "well Governor, when we write a letter for your signature, I'll send it to. You can approve it and send it back." [He said] "You don't have to. I'm giving you my signature now and I trust you." His son worked for me too, when he was a junior; he didn't at the time, but he did while he was still a student.

Fallon: What do you mean when you say Centenary Program?

McCloskey: The Centenary Program, in 1960 we planned. Actually, we started in '59, to plan the first capital campaign that we had. They just started Development in '54. So this was—the La Salle Centenary Campaign was a capital campaign that was to culminate in 1963. Governor Lawrence was the chair. Now how he got to be chair: Brother Daniel wanted him to be chair. He set up a meeting at the Bellevue-Stratford⁸², a luncheon meeting one time, brought two or three of the trustees, myself, Joe Sprissler the other vice-president, the Vice-President of Business Affairs, and a couple of the alumni, the alumni president. We had a meeting and he said "now, here's what we're going do, we're going to, I'm going to say this, then you say that, you say this, and we'll eventually ask the Governor if he'll be char of the campaign. We're in at lunch at the Bellevue. Governor Lawrence comes in and he didn't come in with an entourage. He came in by himself. We go and Brother said "You're here at the head Governor." He said "fine." So we all took our places and right as we right as we were ready to sit down Governor Lawrence said "Wait a minute Brother." He said "I know I'm not here just for lunch. What do you have in

⁸² The Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in an iconic Philadelphia building located at Broad Street and Walnut Street that was built in the early 1900's. Though it had undergone minor name changed over the years, the hotel still operates today.

[2:01:19] mind?” So Brother said “well, we were going to ask you if you would be the chairman of the Centenary Fund.” [He said] “I’ll be happy to Brother, now let’s eat.” [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: The whole plan, you know, [Laughs] as I say went up in the right kind of smoke. Because he said yes before anybody said anything, but that’s the way he operated. He was a very direct person. The meetings with him were a pleasure. Every month I’d go out and he had a parking place for me in the parking area in the Capitol⁸³ that was near where his office was. I could just pull in, park, and go up. He’d give me the hour and we’d go over everything and then “so long” and that was it. There was nobody every with me. I mean, I never had the alumni president or anybody. Because he just wanted to, you know, go through the routine and make sure he was doing what we wanted him to do and let it go at that. So, the Centenary Campaign then was the first capital campaign after World War Two that La Salle had, because Development hadn’t really got off its feet until 1954, when they had the First Annual Alumni Fund at La Salle. Up to that time it was a foundation called the La Salle Endowment Foundation which was headed by a fellow whose was on the board, Joseph Schmidt, Jr. He had about nine or ten people that use to contribute moneys to La Salle, but we didn’t have any fundraising for the alumni until ’54. So, from ’54 to ’59 we developed the Annual Fund. I didn’t become involved with that until I became vice-president in ’58. Then the alumni came under me because up to then it was alumni. From there on in, we had it. In other words, the Centenary Fund, I say unfortunately, but don’t publish that part of it⁸⁴, involved both the high school⁸⁵ and the college because we were both on the same campus.

⁸³ Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

⁸⁴ In a telephone conversation on April 26, 2011 McCloskey was read this excerpt and he waived this clause. His displeasure for running a joint high school-college fundraising drive was due to the complexities of running such a large operation, not at the fact that the high school also received funding.

[2:03:44] Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: It was a hard campaign to run. Because, number one, we didn't have the upper structure of the campaigns from past campaigns because the one before that was 1937 and it was a parish campaign. At the time the Brothers went around to the parishes and solicited money for La Salle. I mean, of course, these days you could never do anything like that because they can't get enough of their own money.

Fallon: Yeah.

McCloskey: But back then it was the need of the continuance of a college in the area. In other words, just St. Joe's⁸⁶ and La Salle were the only two in the Philadelphia area. So Lawrence became involved with that campaign and did an awful lot for us before and after that. A long answer to a short question.

Fallon: No that's good stuff. The whole while, you're also teaching. Tell me about that.

McCloskey: One course.

Fallon: Just one course?

McCloskey: One course in marketing which I started after I got my MBA degree in '57. That's all they asked for. I said that, you know, "that I really couldn't do my job and teach more than that." But teaching one course would put me in front of the students; make me a member of the faculty. It was so much easier to be Vice-President of Public Affairs or Relations at the time, to be a part of all. When somebody said "Oh, the administration did that", I'd say "Whoa, wait a minute."

Fallon: [Laughs]

⁸⁵ La Salle High School.

⁸⁶ St. Joseph's University is a Jesuit College in Philadelphia.

[2:05:25] McCloskey: “Whom are we talking about here?” Yeah, they’d say “you’re doing this to the faculty”. [I’d say] “Hey, I’m a faculty member.” [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: So I was fish and fowl at the same time. That was an advantage. In fact, in 1964, which was very unusual, I got tenure. Now, with the vice-presidential title, your job lasted at the will of the president. So when a new president came in, he didn’t have to re-up you. Well, the latest President, Brother Michael McGinnis, brought a vice-president in with him, from Memphis, Brian Elderton⁸⁷. That could be done. You know, you’d accept if it happened. It just didn’t happen to me in the five presidents. In fact, with Brother Dania Bernian, he had two secretaries and it was like lemmings going over the dam when he left in 1969. The two of them, and I know them very well, said “Oh, Mr. McCloskey are you going to resign?” I said “no”. [They said] “You’re not?” I said “no.” I said “the new president will come in and if he wants me he’ll keep me. If he doesn’t he’ll name another one.” That’s when Brother Patrick Ellis came in, and, of course, I was re-upped again. You didn’t the privilege of tenure in those top administrative spots, which is good, because the president has to be able to determine whether or not he has the people he wants working for him.

Fallon: During your time, how many other administrators were also on the faculty?

McCloskey: My Director of Career Planning and Placement was also on the faculty of marketing. He had his MBA from Penn. He taught more than one course. He taught an evening division course; he taught a day division course. I can remember the Dean coming to me and saying “Mr. Reifsteck⁸⁸ is teaching too many courses and I wonder if you can talk to him.” I said “Dean” and I won’t say his name. I said “Dean, he’s doing a great job in Career Planning

⁸⁷ R. Brian Elderton is currently Vice-President for University Advancement at La Salle.

⁸⁸ L. Thomas Reifsteck

[2:08:00] and Placement. As far as teaching is concerned, that's your responsibility." I said "it's not mine to ask him to take one less course, it's yours." He went [McCloskey makes a noise as to imitate the displeasure of the unnamed Dean] and walked away, but he never did anything about. So, yes, in my area I had one and then later on when Fred Foley came in to Development, he had a Ph.D. from Princeton, so he taught in political science. Then in '85 when I hired a Director of Government Affairs, Ed Turzanski, within about a year or two he started to teach political science, one course. Other than Tom, I don't know of anybody that had more than one course. In the other areas, Student Affairs, the Vice-President of Student Affairs was a Ph.D. in psychology. He had been Director of the Counseling Center. It was expected that he'd be teaching, alright. Business Affairs, no, there was no in Business Affairs teaching. They were kept pretty busy. But, yes there were people who taught other than myself.

Fallon: So it wasn't that uncommon then?

McCloskey: No, no. When I was running the college store, I was Associate Professor of Military Science⁸⁹ because they had a shortage. I had military background—experience; they thought I could handle it and I did.

Fallon: When you were teaching accounting you taught one course. Was it the same course every semester?

McCloskey: All but one time. I was teaching the introductory course in marketing by my own choice. In other words, I was interested in teaching the broad spectrum of marketing rather than getting into the specific. I think it was only one time when I went into other than the introductory course. That was my plan to do it that way and it worked out that way. I was also very active at the national level too on what we called CASE, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. I made sure that when they had activities I was part of the activities. For

⁸⁹ Teaching ROTC.

[2:10:35] about eight years I was in on the Site Selection Committee for the conference, Mid-Atlantic Conference with CASE. In 1976, I was the chair of the conference; we had about a thousand attend. We had it at the Marriot on City line. I also was on the faculty of the college stores when I was in the college store. I was advisor to young administrators in the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. If somebody wanted to go into the field, I would meet with them, write to them, make suggestion about what conference to go to, what one that they shouldn't go to, things like that. I was, let's say, active at that level. Each president encouraged us to be active in the community. I was chairman of the Mayors Scholarship, City Scholarship committee, in the eighties, under Goode⁹⁰. I was on the committee from Tate⁹¹ all the way through to Goode, so for about twenty years. I was always also on the Commission of Higher Education, which was abolished by Rizzo⁹². He wanted to hire a person as the executive director and we, as a committee, voted it down. So we wondered what he was going to do. Until, we read in the paper the next week, he abolished the committee, hired the woman. She went on strike with the Union about six months later and he had to get rid of her. Only the way Rizzo could do it. He was a—let's do it, if we don't have the money we'll find the money. So I was active many, many organizations and its all in there, one way or the other. But, they encouraged that. I was on the board of Catholic Social Services for about ten years in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. I was chairman of their personnel committee for about two years. If someone was going to be hired in the Archdiocese, at the administrative level, I would interview them before, you know, they were hired. A lot of times it was procedural because you

⁹⁰ W. Wilson Goode was Philadelphia's first African-American mayor. He served from 1984-1992.

⁹¹ James H. J. Tate was mayor from 1962-1972.

⁹² Frank Rizzo was Philadelphia Mayor from 1972 to 1980. Between him and Goode was William J. Green, 1980-1984.

[2:13:19] knew they were going to be hired anyhow. When Archbishop Bevilacqua⁹³ came in to be in charge of the Diocese, I was the committee of five to hire an assistant for him. We had 120 applications. We interviewed ten; we didn't hire any of them. Because we figured by the end of the sequence, that, really, to have somebody assist him was almost impossible because he wanted to everything himself anyhow. So he ended up with a priest from the diocese helping him out, but we went through the process. I had some interesting assignments during my career there, a lot in the organizations in the city. Education to Work Council, I was in that for four or five years. That's the one the Sullivan started, Dr. Sullivan⁹⁴, and others that's part of the record.

Fallon: There's a long list.

McCloskey: Yeah.

Fallon: A very long list. I want to back up just for one second. What made you chose Temple to get your master's degree?

McCloskey: Dr. Heidingsfield, Myron S. Heidingsfield, was the chair at the time. He was a government expert witness. He was probably the most know guy in the field of marketing, that I knew at the time in the circulation. Now there may have been somebody at Penn that was better, but Temple also had a schedule that fit somebody who was working full-time, where some of the others didn't. In other words, I was able to go Monday, Tuesday, Thursday at night from six to nine-thirty and Saturday from nine to twelve and get my graduate degree in eleven months. I wanted to get it as quick as I could. I told the Dean that when I sat down with him. Of course, they were suggesting this, that, and the other thing. I—no—let's have the basics. What do I have to do? What do I need to do? I already had the thesis in mind so I was ready for that before we even started. I knew that I was going to write on the store in that I had been with for seven

⁹³ Anthony Bevilacqua was the Archbishop of Philadelphia from 1988-2003. In 1991 he was elevated to Cardinal.

⁹⁴ Dr. Leon Sullivan

[2:15:54] years at the time and I'd seen it grow. That worked out almost automatically. Other than scheduling the time in, because the semester I started, they were being evaluated. I had, let's see, one, two, three, four—I had four courses that semester. On the night of the same week that I had each of the courses, I was assigned a five thousand word paper by each of the professors. When I got to third one I said—because a lot of the people were only taking one course, see. So they wouldn't have known that. I went to him; I said “this is uncanny. This is third night I've gotten a five thousand word report.” [He said] “We were told he didn't give enough papers.”

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: So, I ended up with, really, challenge on my plate, but I got it done. My wife did a good job raising the kids. Because, I built a room in the basement, in Cornwells, where I'd go down as soon as I get home, spend some time studying. I'd use it on Sundays. You know, anytime I had. I'd go down there and everything was right there. So I did the work there.

Fallon: When you did get your Master's, you had a post-graduate fellowship.

McCloskey: That was in economics and it was out at CASE institute. It was a month's summer fellowship. They were selected from each of the institutions. I don't know who selected me, but I was picked from La Salle to go out to Cleveland for the month for the fellowship. It was a great—Oh, I'll tell you, a great experience. We'd spend the morning in class and the afternoon visiting a corporation in Cleveland like Republic Steel. There was about six or seven: Lincoln Electric, which was really a classic of efficient operation and bonuses. We'd get to interview the employees, interview the executives, and then we'd have to make a report on that. It was a solid month of, you know, knock them down and drag it out study. I traveled with, let's see, one, two, three, four—Four PhD's from India and one was to get his Ph.D. They'd gotten their PhD's here

[2:18:41] in the United States. I sat down with them one night at dinner and I said “Now, you fellows all are getting your PhD’s”, four had gotten and the other was getting, “you’re going to go back and help your country?” [They said] “No way. No way. We’re bringing our family over as soon as we can.” That’s where you had the influx because colleges were looking to internationalize themselves. They saw a sharp Ph.D. he was on the staff next thing you know. That was quite an experience in many respects out at the CASE institute. I was so happy I had it even though it meant a month away from the gang. In fact, there was a strange incident. The month I was away from home, my oldest son was a junior at La Salle and he was taking a course out in the Black Hills of South Dakota with Brother Nicholas and it was a course in connection with biology. They were supposed to have a Land Rover out there. I let my son drive our car, with five other students, out there. Well, when they got there, they didn’t have the Land Rover. So you know what they used for the Land Rover? My car. They got back to Harrisburg. On the way home and the engine, didn’t blow up, the auxiliary oil line I had broke, and it’s like six o’clock in the morning, and the engine caught fire. They pulled over and they pounded the fire out with their jackets. I got a call in Cleveland, at maybe ten o’clock in the morning, from my wife in Cornwells, saying the car was broke down over in Cleveland⁹⁵ and they wondered what to do with it. I got on the phone to a mechanic in Cornwells who agreed to go out there, to Harrisburg, and tow it in and do it over. When I had it done over it cost about eight hundred bucks. Insurance didn’t cover it because the wires had burnt, but the car didn’t. In other words, they put the thing out when the wires were all burning and there was some ancillary damage in the paint, ect. But they’d only pay for replacement of the wiring which was like a hundred bucks. I went to Joe Sprissler and said “hey, it was being used for class, will our insurance cover it?” [He said] “Oh John, your insurance will take care of it.” So I never went to him on it. That

⁹⁵ McCloskey meant to say Harrisburg.

[2:21:32] was a real experience. I'm away. My wife is home with the other children. He's out in the Black Hills. That was another interesting situation with La Salle. [Coughs] However, that's an aside.

Fallon: That's—what kind of car was it?

McCloskey: It was a Chevy, a '60 Chevy four-door sedan. It had 62,000 miles on it when they took it out there.

Fallon: That's a good car, but it's not a Land Rover. [Laughs]

McCloskey: Yeah, no.

Fallon: Okay. Let's see, you've already answered a lot of these. Okay, at what time was the decision made to make La Salle co-ed?

McCloskey: 19—I think it was '70. It may have been a year earlier in the Evening Division than it was in the day. [Coughs] Somehow or other, I think evening proceeded the day by a year. But it was '70 that they made it co-ed.

Fallon: Was it a big deal? Was there a big discussion behind it?

McCloskey: I think everybody thought it would be a big deal, but I didn't really [Coughs] work out that way. Maybe they had to make some adjustments in the ladies room. [Chuckles] But beyond that the only thing I noticed about it was that it seemed to me the students dressed a little better after the women came.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Of course, the strangest part was in class, where the women seemed to tend to sit nearer to the front than the men. So that if you five women students in your class like I did early in the game, you'd probably find them on the first and second row. The others would be in the back. They were a real challenge to the males. In that, there would always be one or two that

[2:23:39] would be the best student, or nearly the best student in the group. Of course, this was a challenge to the individuals there. But, no, there was no big hub-ub on it. I mean it really blended in nice. It's a good thing they made the change when they did. Of course, they were early enough in the dormitories that that wasn't a problem either. They were building and they were able to take care of that.

Fallon: I want to ask you, on your resume you have that you served on the Bicentennial Program Committee?

McCloskey: Bicentennial—in 1976. If you haven't gotten the programs of that year, you want to get them. We had activity there for each month of the Bicentennial year. It was really a, almost a, bright light in the history of La Salle as went along there. They had programs, academic programs; they had some public relations programs and special speakers come in. If I'm not mistaken, no it was the centennial they gave out the medals each month, the centennial year. The Bicentennial year was well planned and well orchestrated by academic as well as the social end of it. As I say, you have to see the program on that. I've been away from it, but I thought they did a very good job on it⁹⁶.

Fallon: So it was celebrations at La Salle that were in conjunction with what was going on in the country.

McCloskey: Yeah. That and, of course, it was going on all over the city.

Fallon: Sure.

McCloskey: So there was some inner-college scheduling ect, ect. Special speakers were invited in. It was unusually good in terms of the programmatic aspects of it; I thought.

⁹⁶ The Centennial McCloskey is referring to is La Salle's 100th anniversary in 1963. The Bicentennial was a celebration of American Independence that was city-wide in 1976. The committee McCloskey was on was exclusively for activities at La Salle.

[2:26:01] Fallon: Well that takes us through '76, which was also the end of Brother Dan Burke's presidency—

McCloskey: Brother came in with the idea of staying seven years and he did. Now, he was a very quiet Brother. He was in in some tight times. At one point Joe Sprissler, who managed a dollar, I think, better than anybody could manage a dollar, he announced there was a possibility we would have to cut our personnel budget in half. I went over to Brother Daniel Burke, at the time, I said "Brother, you know, I have a problem. This last notice we got about the potential of cutting our personnel in half"—I said "I have two departments where there's only one administrator." [He said] "You'll figure it out, John. You'll figure it out." That's all he said. But they rescinded it at the last minute. Sprissler was always one that held on tight to the dollar and made sure the dollar was there before they spent it. I can remember early in the stages—like in '46 when the first opened the Evening Division, although Brother Paul was the Dean, he was there part time controlling; he was working on it. He said they'd turn on every light in the building to make it look like the place was jumping. You know, just to get a thing. Another thing he use to say was—we'd give the faculty dinner, in Leonard Hall, for the opening of the year, the week before they get their paycheck. Everybody comes, but there hungry. That's the way he was. He was very meticulous with a dollar. I had one department, Travel and Tours, where most of my budgets survived. He'd take one look at that and say "we can take \$10,000 off of that." That was John Bean's budget. Bean would always pack his budget and I didn't want to hurt him in process so I'd say "well, if you can get, you can get it." Of course, Sprissler would go [Makes a slashing sound]. Nobody would argue with it. He was a good man for the dollar, in other words, in tight times.

Fallon: This is Brother Dan?

[2:28:30] McCloskey: Pardon me?

Fallon: This is Brother Dan?

McCloskey: Yeah. He was a Brother, Brother Gregory Paul, Sprissler.

Fallon: Oh okay.

McCloskey: Brother Paul Sprissler and Joe Sprissler were brothers, which wasn't known by everybody.

Fallon: Wait, which two were brothers?

McCloskey: Brother Gregory Paul, who was president from '46 to '52 and Joe Sprissler, who was Vice-President of Business Affairs after Brother Daniel Bernian came in, were brothers.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: The Sprissler took over the evening division after Brother Gregory Paul left it.

They operated fairly close. They were both good men.

Fallon: Well, when Brother Dan Burke left, Patrick Ellis came in, Brother Pat.

McCloskey: Now, I had met him because he was Director of Development before he became president. I was Vice-President for Public Affairs.

Fallon: So he worked under you?

McCloskey: Development was underneath, Brother Patrick was never underneath me, but his department was. He was a great fundraiser. He was probably the best fundraising president that I knew. In that, to survive the presentation at Connelly's, and I told you about that last time, it would have taken somebody with sort of an iron personality to meet the same type. He was a good man. He was very direct. He knew what he wanted to do and did it. I think he was good for the institution. Also, he was very community minded. He was on committees that otherwise didn't have, other than laymen on, at the top end in the city of Philadelphia. He really circulated;

[2:30:44] they knew him. Everybody in the city who was anybody knew Patrick Ellis. I think that helped us really in many instances. Again, he was a hard man, but a good man to work for. I ended up at the end of—in 1986, when I stepped down from vice-president when I turned sixty-five. Two years ahead of that, I had made up my mind this was what I was going to do. I stepped down from vice-president in October of '86. When I told him I was going to do that he said “well, what are you going to do?” I said “I’m going to go get a job somewhere.” He said “well, how about staying here?” I said “Brother, do you want me to stay?” He said “yeah.” He said “we’ll have to give you a title.” He said “how about Director of Public Affairs?” He said “you won’t report to anybody but me. But, is that okay?” I said “fine.” I said “how about we meet once each year to determine whether or not I’ll stay the following year.” That was '86 and I stayed to '92 which is about the same time he left. I had two different titles in the mean time. Because he had somebody else they wanted to give that title to and I said “fine.” I didn’t care what title I had because it was reporting to him. He was a good man to work for and we worked on a lot of projects together.

Fallon: What were some of the other fundraising projects that Brother Pat worked on?

McCloskey: The big one was the Connelly Foundation grant of \$14.3 million. Another one was 20th Street, which we came so close to getting. I think I told you about this one.

Fallon: We talked about that one too.

McCloskey: 20th Street was another one. He was all for the groups that we had in. We had a leadership conference that was initially run by Congressman Dougherty and then followed up later by Senator Rocks,⁹⁷ where we brought in four hundred students on a day in May from forty different high schools. They had a day of leadership discussion with business leaders, political leaders, union leaders, and some education leaders. That made for some good admissions

⁹⁷ Pennsylvania State Senator Joe Rocks, 1981-1990.

[2:33:27] possibilities for us because we had juniors and seniors in the group. Each school had the ability to pick five juniors and five seniors. Initially the first year they had it they had all seniors. Then I met with Dougherty afterwards and said “how about if we break that down to five juniors and five seniors?” He said “Why?” I said “because it’s better for our admissions.” I said “When they’re here as seniors if they’re that good they’ve already decided where they’re going to go.” [He said] “Yeah, okay. We’ll do it that way.”

Fallon: That’s a good idea.

McCloskey: Then we made the switch. That was another project we worked on. 20th street really wore us both down quite a bit. So I say, we came very close to it. Anne Verna, whose just about to retire now, called Brother in December of 1991, a said “Brother, would you not have that introduced in Council in January? And hold off on it a while?” She said “because it will cause too much controversy.” Brother said “yes.” I had met with all the Council and I had a majority that would go with us. But, the person who was to introduce the measure wasn’t from the district. That was almost a given, that if it related to the persons district they would introduce the ordinance. Rafferty, who was going to introduce it, was tossed out of council within a month or so later. Nobody would have loved us, but we might have gotten through with it. They ended up making it a one-way street and putting a bridge over it.

Fallon: I just had a question on the top of my head and now it’s gone.

McCloskey: [Chuckles] you’ll figure it out.

Fallon: [Laughs] I’m sure I will. I have many others. What was this—when you were director of Public Affairs and then there was a title switch, what was the name of the second title?

[2:35:43] McCloskey: Assistant Vice-President for Development. [Laughs] That was really off the shelf, you know. Again I was reporting to nobody but the president. He just wanted to give me a title that sounded decent.

Fallon: What were your duties when you were at both of these posts?

McCloskey: My duties were anything he wanted me to do.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: He would send all the invitations over and [he would ask] “Is this a good mingle?” In other words, “Is this something I should go to? Or is this something somebody else should go to? If it is somebody else who should we send or should you go?” It was things like that, little projects that related to the community. If somebody came there and he didn’t want to meet with them—

Fallon: You met with them?

McCloskey: I met with them, from the community particularly. You were more or less going up against a stone wall, but you had to meet the stone wall and talk to it. Dave Cohen was one of these stone walls, the councilman. A year before that came to a head, we had a meeting with one of our trustees, black women trustee, who lived out in Mt. Airy. We had, then the president of city council, I’m trying to think of his name; but, he expected to be mayor but got sick and retired. He had said at the dinner, there was just four of us there, this trustee woman, himself, Brother Patrick and myself. Brother Patrick explained what we were doing the community, the different programs we had, the Urban Center. He said “Brother, you continue what you’re doing and I’ll approve 20th Street.” Now, he expected to be mayor. Of course, he got sick and retired. I’m trying to think of this name, but it will come to my head sometime soon. Brother was very

[2:37:54] active that way. Also, he was instrumental in forming the CBC. I don't know whether you ever heard of the Campus Boulevard Consortium.

Fallon: No, never heard of it.

McCloskey: That was a consortium of institutions like Germantown Hospital, Central High School, Einstein⁹⁸, that met just for the betterment of the area in itself. In fact, if you look up at the signs on Olney Avenue, you'll see Campus Boulevard, which is from Broad Street up past what use to be Gratz College⁹⁹.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: That was an organization. There was a fellow by the name of Bill Miller we hired to be the executive director, whose duty it was to bring the group together and see what could be done that was best for the area. They talked about shared energy possibilities and other things like that. That was another thing he formed that I thought was a great idea. I worked with him on that for a while. There are so many things that really don't come to mind right away. We were busy, always busy. He never let much grass grow under his feet. He was always either on community or doing his job at La Salle. He was a good president. They all were good.

Fallon: That's the impression that I get, that they were all good. When you stepped down as vice-president in '86, you go a number of letters from the city council and other people, accommodations.

McCloskey: Oh Lord, I have so many letters. I have letters from so many people. In fact, I have them somewhere around if you're interested.

Fallon: I have them all too.

⁹⁸ Albert Einstein Medical Center

⁹⁹ Gratz College is a Jewish institution that had since moved from the area around La Salle up to Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.

[2:40:00] McCloskey: Right. I was also on the James Finegan Foundation out in Harrisburg. We met once a year in the governor's mansion when they had it open on the river there. We selected interns from all the different schools on Pennsylvania to serve in the summer-time in Harrisburg, an internship. I was on that for twenty-some years. Matt McCloskey was on it. Judge Blatt, she sent a beautiful letter. She was great, Judge Jenaveve Blatt who was quite a name back twenty years ago, thirty years ago. I met a lot of people that way. Of course, the circulation in CASE, in the different institutions brought a lot of responses too when I stepped down. Mayor Goode came up and spoke at my little affair up at the Union room.

Fallon: Did he?

McCloskey: Yeah, yeah. He really put my up on the ceiling as far as what he thought. He was there and Senator Rocks from Pennsylvania were both on the stage at my stepping down ceremony. I guess there were about one hundred and twenty people there. It was a very, very nice affair, more than I ever expected. I had citations from all the bodies like the state and the federal government. Because I had met—both at the state and federal level, as far as any problems we had or things we wanted passed ect, ect. I'd go down to Washington. Heinz was one of the nicest guys I ever met.¹⁰⁰ I use to stop in there and see him before he was killed, of course. In city council I would stop in all the offices. One of our best friends, I guess, was Thacher Longstreth¹⁰¹ who spoke at the opening of our Centenary Campaign and said “there are two guys at La Salle that really bring me here tonight.” He said “one's George Sawyer and the other's Jack McCloskey.” He said “I hope you have more of them up there.” He gave—he's from Princeton. He gave a thousand bucks at the diner. You know, we just invited him to say he was up for one of the students open houses. I mean, he was a very nice guy. Before he went

¹⁰⁰ Senator John Heinz

¹⁰¹ Thacher Longstreth was a long-time Philadelphia Councilman.

[2:42:45] downhill, which was in the last, you know, ten years before he died. He left his wife, ect. ect. That's another thing; I went to Pensacola with him on the three day visit. He was one of the ones that went, Thacher Longstreth. So that again, I would have never gotten to know him if it wasn't for the fact that Brother Daniel Bernian was sending me here and there, you know, where he didn't want to go or had something else to do.

Fallon: Later in '92, you stepped down for good.

McCloskey: Yeah, yeah. There were some of my friends that called me the most retiring guy they ever met, that I had two parties. I said "I have you have to really work on it to figure out something like that." Yeah, '92 was equally nice. I didn't expect it, but it was nice. I got the old round of citations again and letters. They're around somewhere.

Fallon: I wanted to ask you, it's kind of off topic now, but when did you discover poetry?

Because there is a lot of poems down in the archives.

McCloskey: I was probably about sixteen years old when I wrote the first one in a contest for Old Gold. That's the one where they had it on the radio for about three months and I got a buck for it.

Fallon: Really?

McCloskey: Yeah.

Fallon: I didn't know that story.

McCloskey: You didn't?

Fallon: No.

McCloskey: It was Lichty Jewelers in center city. They had a contest for a limerick on old gold. I wrote "If you have any old gold hid away in a trunk, don't wait until it's thrown away with the junk, but stop in at Lichty's and you'll be amazed, from this worthless old gold the money

[2:44:48] you've raised." They sent me the buck and I was happy as a lark. I'm sixteen years old, you know, I didn't expect anything. Then I heard it on the radio for the next two or three months. They use to use it as an ad. It was the least expensive. Then the next one that I did for money, and nothing else is for money, I just do it for people. They had *My Favorite Brunette*. It was a television program.¹⁰² There was a limerick to be written for that. A fellow by the name of McDonald, who went into advertising, was at La Salle at the same time, but he was a little ahead of me. He sent one in. I sent one in. He won a new Chevy. His limerick was "My favorite brunette is a girl just seven, she thinks ice cream is money, and Hollywood heaven." Now the one I sent in was "My favorite brunette is Hedy Lamarr¹⁰³, just send her to me, and keep your new car."

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: It was a little ahead of its time I think so I didn't get anything out of that. But, now I've been writing them for people. I have about twenty for La Salle people, either retiring or promoted but, for a reason like that. They go from the truck driver to the vice-president. In other words, I knew as many of the ones in maintenance as I did anywhere else. Paul Pace, who was there for forty-some years, use to raise the flag in the morning. If he had a problem in the forties, like with his income tax one time, he'd come over. [He said] "Hey John, can you figure this out for me?" I looked at the thing and I shook my head. He said "am I in trouble?" I said "not really, you just didn't sign your return." [He went] "Oh, oh, oh, oh."

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Another one, he came in, and he became engaged to the woman he married. Last year they were still there, he always came to the faculty parties. The difference between him and

¹⁰² *My Favorite Brunette* was actually a movie that came out in 1947.

¹⁰³ Hedy Lamarr was an Austrian-born, American Actress, known for her beauty. She was active in film in the 1930's through the late 1950s.

[2:46:58] the rest was that the faculty party they only invited the faculty member or the maintenance member. He always brought his wife and nobody ever said anything even though she wasn't invited. But he came to me and he says "my uncle's going to kill me." I said "what's the matter?" He said "well, I took an insurance policy on my wife, we just got married, for twenty thousand dollars and he's mad as a hatter." I said "well what do you have on yourself?" [He said] "I don't have anything." I said "well I'd kill you too." I said "He thinks you're going to kill your wife." I said "that's why he's mad." He'd come to me with things like that. Of course, Pete the Barber¹⁰⁴, I've written three poems about him. He cut my hair in 1946 and he cut it again right before he died. He had the candy concession before we opened the campus store, along with his barber shop. He also, when he was in the basement of McShane Hall, had a machine and we use to say electric heated hotdogs. It was an electric hotdog cooker. He'd be cutting hair and somebody would come in an order a hotdog. He had it in a little cart and put it in, you know, and push the plug. As I said, the lights would go dim. It was using half the electricity of the campus.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: He'd sell his hotdog and come back and cut hair. When we opened the campus store we had the candy concession, but he was getting the profits from the candy concession. In other words, he would come in and we'd give a report of what was sold. It kept everything together and Brother Paul wanted it that way. So, he was being paid for that. He also, at one time, charged for the Brothers, but then he stopped. I guess it was in the sixties or so; he came to me and asked me how he was going to handle asking for more money from the Brothers for their haircuts. Fortunately for him, it was Brother Daniel Bernian who was the president. I said "Pete

¹⁰⁴ Pete Paranzino began cutting the hair of Christian Brothers in the 1920s. In 1930 he opened a Barbara Shop on campus and worked there until he retired in 2008, he died one year later at the age of ninety-four.

[2:49:07] sit down with him. Tell him what your problem is, you're not making enough, ect. He'll take care of it." And he did. So things like that and I'd get to know the guy that put the flag up in the morning and the fellow that drove by in the truck. I'd write a poem about them, you know, when the retired or left. I have, I'd say that many [Gestures as to indicate a large stack] of them still in there, but they're not collated. They could be almost anywhere. Now I write for people down here at the nursing home¹⁰⁵. I've written four or five for people. It really makes them feel good. I have the computer there so I can throw a little color in on it and let it go. It's fun. It's a good sideline.

Fallon: It's good to have a hobby like that.

McCloskey: In fact, let's see if I can find one of my last ones for you, while you're—

Fallon: Okay, yeah, I'm coming up with the next question here. [The recorder was paused for three to four minutes while McCloskey found his most recent poem. The poem was read and was being discussed when the recorder we restarted. Consequently, some of his speech is missing.]

McCloskey:--The Pastoral counseling people down at St. Joe's Manor.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: They like something like that.

Fallon: That's neat. You have a talent for it and you seem to enjoy it to which is good. Brother Joe tells me that you have the rather distinct honor of being made an Honorary Christian Brother?

McCloskey: Yeah, affiliated in 1992. That was great. I really felt especially honored with that. That was very unusual.

Fallon: Who told you that they were going to honor you that way?

¹⁰⁵ St. Joseph's Manor, where Mrs. McCloskey is staying.

[2:50:53] McCloskey: I got a letter from the provincial.

Fallon: Was there a ceremony?

McCloskey: We had a nice affair down at the chapel and a dinner. At that time, Joe Flubacher was an Honorary Christian Brother so he was there.

Fallon: Oh, okay.

McCloskey: It was nice. Later on Sid McCloud became one, but wasn't yet. It was nice to be in any club with Joe Flubacher because he was up here [raises his hand high] as far as I was concerned. Yeah. It was a beautiful honor. It was something that made it all worthwhile as far as I was concerned. It's something that money can't buy.

Fallon: That's true. I know that you have been a donor to La Salle on the funds. What motivates you to give back?

McCloskey: Look what I've gotten. I have four children, whose ages are now: sixty-six, sixty-four, fifty-seven, and forty-seven, who graduated from La Salle. Even the Vice-President, one time, of Business Affairs said "Jack you ought to get out and get with a corporation. You'd do so much better than you would here." I said "I know, but I like it here." When you add it all up, you know, it not only was worthwhile, but you own a lot back. Now, I couldn't give a lot back, but I gave steadily while I was working there. I got it up probably, I guess, when, maybe the last ten years or so, I gave a thousand dollars a year, which was, for me, a lot of money. A thousand or thirteen hundred, I had a payroll deduction. In fact, I was the first one, in my knowledge—I started payroll deduction after meeting with Sprissler. I said "hey, you know, it be good if we get payroll deductions here. In fact, we'll be able to give money and it won't hurt as much." So we started payroll deduction in the annual fund. In other words, if somebody wanted to give to give some money to La Salle they could have so much taken out each pay.

[2:53:23] Fallon: Oh, okay.

McCloskey: Yeah. So that I started and I became a part of it from then. When I stepped down I was not satisfied that I had given enough. I tried to figure other ways that I could do it. When I went from vice-president to my new title I said to Brother Patrick “I want you to cut my salary in half.” He said “you sure?” I said “yeah.” So I had him cut it in half. Two years later, when I still had four years to go, I was getting my retirement, at least two-thirds of my retirement. I said “I want you to cut it in half again.” Then after I finished I accumulated the amount that I had given and it was maybe \$120,000 or something like that. I wrote a letter to the president. I said “In reality, this could be construed as other than giving. However, this is what did; now how will you evaluate this?” They gave me credit for it. As I say, it would appear—like that plaque up there with medal on it, that puts me in the La Salle Society. No way could I have gotten there. Right now, if I give them anything it will be a miracle because of the money it’s costing me for my wife. They realize that. But at least while I could, I did. If anything turns different, I would again. The very package that I just mentioned, of my getting the education there after service, my staying there, the four children all getting their education there, I think that’s motivation that you can’t buy. That’s the way I feel about it.

Fallon: Well you bring up your children and we haven’t really talked about them yet very much at all. Your oldest was born; you were still in service—

McCloskey: Born in Columbus, Ohio in 1944. We he went to the hospital I was flying. When he was born I was in the air and they wouldn’t tell me until I landed for fear that I would do a loop on the way.

Fallon: [Laughs]

[2:56:04] McCloskey: To precede that by a week, at that time when they went to the hospital they had to go in an ambulance. I went with the ambulance the first time so they probably thought I was from overseas or just coming in or something. They let me stay with her all night and this was the week before they baby was born. I'm in the delivery room from like midnight to six the next morning. I watched three other women go out and have babies. They didn't take them out until, believe me, they were on their way. My wife's still there. Then at five o'clock in the morning they say "it doesn't look like she's going to have it, she better go home." So we went back home again. Then the next morning, when I was out flying, the neighbor, who was a colonel's wife, got a call from Betty and took her out to the hospital. The baby was born at like eleven o'clock and I was flying from seven to twelve. So I didn't find out to one o'clock. I came to the hospital and this Colonel Love's wife is standing there with her hands on her hips. [She said] "You G[od] D[amn] S[on] [of a] B[itch] lucky Irishman you. I stand here all morning and I worry this out and you come here, the baby's born and everything fine."

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: I said "that's the way it goes."

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Yeah, he was born out there. The second one, Jim, was born when I was a sophomore. I had two, really, going through. In fact, the graduation picture shows one two year old and one four year old on my arms in the cap and gown. The of course, our daughter was born in 1953. That was when I was still in the bookstore. Dan wasn't born until '63 which was nineteen years after the first one. Everybody forgot there would ever be anybody else. It was a strange combination. They all went through La Salle and all did well.

Fallon: That's good. I know there's other questions I wanted to ask you.

[2:58:25] McCloskey: They each had such a long story themselves. With the oldest¹⁰⁶: orthopedic surgeon. He has been president of Shore Memorial Hospital. He was one of the top doc's in [New] Jersey in a magazine they put out a few years back. For two years he did all the, in the seventies, he did all the basketball physicals at La Salle, for nothing. Then when the vice-president came in, took the job, he hired somebody to do it. Not Jack, somebody else. Jack wouldn't have taken any money anyhow. His wife, Cecilia, who's quite a swimmer herself, was the coach of the women's swim team for one year at, I think, seven hundred dollars and using her own van to take them to and from. It was the beginning of the woman's swim team. So they've had connections after La Salle. The second one, Jim, he's the one who was a full Colonel before he retired. He was in Vietnam, wounded twice. I just came back, last Friday, from a conference that they had at Holy Family University. [McCloskey gets up to bring over the program from the conference] He put this together and introduced it on Friday, Pacific Rim Conference. Now his pictures not in there, but the second page is the copy. He didn't send a picture in. That's him typically. It was really well run, probably sixty or seventy there. It's a program that—this is Dwane Hetzler that does the law on the Pacific Rim stuff. It lasted from 8:30am to about noon. I went down, go somebody to sit with Betty for the morning. He teaches at three institutions. He teaches at Villanova, teaches at Penn State, and he teaches at Stockton College. He also is a business consultant for you name in, including the Pacific Rim. Last year he started an exchange program for Villanova and Vietnam. He's lectured at Ho Ch Minh University for a week for each of the last three years. He said, when he was there in '68, '69, he swore he was going to go back, but he was going to go back and help them rather than fight them. So he's done a great job. He's also been Santa Claus for the last twenty years in Philadelphia and beyond. He's quite a contributor to things, retired full Colonel in the reserves. Would have made general if he wasn't

¹⁰⁶ McCloskey never calls his first son by name, which is also John.

[3:02:12] honest, I mean, he was too honest to make general is what a general told me. I was at a retirement ceremony and he said “Yeah, Jim would have made general just like that if he’d just go with the flow and wouldn’t be so honest.”

Fallon: [laughs]

McCloskey: I said “well, that’s Jim.” Then, Kathy has been teaching between eighteen, nineteen years in the Catholic School System. She’s now at St. Williams in Lawndale, been there about sixteen years. Dan is in real estate out of Newtown, Re/Max. He’s in both residential and industrial. In fact, he’s selling the house.

Fallon: Yeah, I saw that when I pulled up, his sign out there.

McCloskey: They’re a busy group. They all have families and they’re all doing well. Except for Dan, the others families children are out of college. You saw two of them there [points to a picture on the wall]. Their mother, my oldest son’s wife, went to the ’68 Olympics in Tokyo as a backstroker. So it’s in the genes. [Laughs]

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: We use to go down in the late seventies, she was in the around the island swim out of Brigantine and around all the inland waterways and three miles in the ocean. They dive in at 7:30 in the morning and finish around four o’clock in the afternoon and be followed by a boat. The one that followed her, her husband would be in there with the feeding bottle and tube that the hand out when they wanted— [McCloskey’s cell phone begins to ring and the recorder is turned off while he takes the phone call. Afterward it was determined that the day’s session was over. Six days later, on April 18, the interview resumed for its third a final session.]

Fallon: Today is April 18, Monday April 18, 2011. My name is John Fallon. I’m in Buckingham, Pennsylvania with Mr. Jack McCloskey. First of all Mr. McCloskey, the last time

[3:02:21] we met I failed to ask your permission to record our interview. Were you aware that it was being recorded and did I have your permission to do so?

McCloskey: I was aware and you had my permission.

Fallon: Okay. Then, do I have your permission to record today?

McCloskey: You do, yes.

Fallon: Very Well. Okay, I just have a few questions. The first thing I wanted to ask you is—you don't know this about me. My name's John, but I also go by Jack.

McCloskey: Okay.

Fallon: What are the origins of, it's an Irish thing right, of being named John and nicknamed Jack?

McCloskey: Yeah, don't know. There's so many instances of that in my lifetime. Yet there are few where they never did make the change, where it was John and it remained John. My Uncle John, one of my father's brothers, was always John. Yet from the time I remember I was Jack.

Fallon: Me too.

McCloskey: Why, How? I have no idea.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: Before me. [Laughs] That goes back a long time.

Fallon: I'm the same way. My father and my grandfather, John, but went by Jack.

McCloskey: Right.

Fallon: Friends will always ask me. Maybe I'll meet someone in class, the professors call me John, maybe after few weeks I'll realize I'm getting friendly with this person: "Call me Jack."

[They go] "What? What is that?" It's an Irish thing I guess. So that remains unanswered.

[3:05:40] Looking back, what was the Urban Center? You were the interim director and on the board of the Urban Center.

McCloskey: In the sixties, the neighborhood around La Salle changed almost completely from white to Africa-American. There were a lot of people who really needed help. Many of them looked at La Salle with askance. In other words, they saw La Salle as an organization that was in the community and had a lot of money and a lot of programs, none of which they had. I would imagine that Brother Patrick, let's see, it may have been before Brother Patrick. It was in the sixties. It came out of the Economics Department. Rick Geruson, who taught economics, was one of the original people in the center itself. It was during Brother Daniel Bernian's time that it was founded. It was a fellow by the John McNelis who was hired to Director of the Urban Center. Its objective was to set up programs in and with the community. It was everything from basic classes in education. We had English as a second language that was taught out of the Urban Center. They had programs to help the community and join with the community at La Salle. There were some conferences, meetings with neighborhood leaders to see what we could better do for them. At the outset, when this was formed, Brother Daniel Bernian put it under my jurisdiction.

Fallon: Under Public Affairs?

McCloskey: Under Public Affairs. For the first year of the Urban Center it was under my jurisdiction so the director reported to me. During that year, it turned out that there was sort of a fear among the neighborhood people about public relations, basically. In other words, they saw themselves more trying to get on the educational side then the public relations side. We had a meeting, and Rick Geruson was one at the meeting and of course John McNelis, and a few others. It was changed to Academic Affairs, which was in the second year, which was more in

[3:08:40] keeping with the courses they were offering. There were four or five courses that were offered. Some were offered at our campus. Some were offered down at Incarnation¹⁰⁷ at one of their buildings, school buildings, so that it was both educational and economics. In other words, they helped them out in the economic sense. That went—It had a very good history, I would say, of bringing the neighborhood together. We had a board that was, I'd say, two-thirds neighborhood representatives, one-third La Salle. I was on the board from the outset and continued on the boards after it was put in the Academic Affairs. [McCloskey's doorbell is ringing in the background.] In fact, at one time in the late sixties, or early seventies, when they had a—

Fallon: It's your doorbell; do you want to get that?

McCloskey: Yeah.

Fallon: Okay. [The recorder was turned off for a few minutes while McCloskey answered his door.]

McCloskey: One stage in the Urban Centers history, probably eight or nine years after it was founded, one of the directors of the center left. There was a gap of one semester and the provost asked me if I would take over the center until they could put somebody on. So I really served as Director of the Urban Center for six months along with my other work at the request of Academic Vice-President, provost, which was very unusual. But he knew that I was in it from the outset and I knew what was going on ect, ect, ect. Out of the Urban Center concept came another concept, the Campus Boulevard Consortium, which was in Brother Patrick's day. That was a grouping of the institutions along Olney Avenue from Gratz College, to the hospital, Germantown Hospital, to La Salle, Central High, Einstein and there might have been one or two other institutions. It was a loosely organized consortium that come together if there were

¹⁰⁷ Incarnation Parish in north Philadelphia.

[3:11:01] common problems. They had some good ideas that never came out, but one was a central energy plant that would serve the whole group. Of course, that never came to be. There were some good ideas. There was a fellow by the name of Bill Miller, who was director of the group that they hired. That in a nutshell I guess is the Urban Center. Of course, what, to some extent, made it a little more difficult is when we came up with the thought of closing 20th Street. That was a conflict immediately with the neighborhood. Of course, we always had Councilman David Cohen, who was Councilman at Large, who would come against anything we did. He was dead set against that.

Fallon: I don't know if I'm going to pronounce the name right, but I'll give it a shot. What was the James Guo Scholarship? [Fallon is trying to pronounce Guo as a western surname when in fact it is of Asian origins. McCloskey pronounces it as "go"]

McCloskey: Guo, Jim Guo, G-U-O. Jim Guo came over from China in 1949, really chased out by the communists. He started a business here in Philadelphia of little—I'm trying to think of what they are, Chinese, no fortune cookies, they're something else, a little food item, rolls?

Fallon: Eggrolls or dumplings?

McCloskey: Eggrolls. He started a business in eggrolls. Did a great job of pulling the Chinese together in Chinatown and was responsible for the Chinese Arch that is in center city. My son who was Deputy Director of Commerce in the city got to know him well.

Fallon: Okay, which son?

McCloskey: Jim, the second son, the one who came back from Vietnam and then got his MBA, he got the job with the city as Deputy Director of Commerce and was very close with Chinatown. In fact, he was working with Jim Guo to start a Chinese bank. They got that close to it when someone put the skids on it. Jim worked with him on bringing the Chinese artisans

[3:13:32] over to build that wall. They were all from China that built that, the gate. In fact, Jim had him for Thanksgiving. They were here for about six months building the gate and he had them at his house for Thanksgiving. Of course, Jim Guo and him were together, I's say, at least twice a week. Guo was going to start an educational center in Chinatown and wanted to tie into La Salle on the center itself. Well, in the course of their conversations, Jim interested Jim Guo in La Salle. He came up a number of times and then he one day told Jim he wanted to give La Salle some money to start a Chinese scholarship for China, students from the Republic of China.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: He gave La Salle \$125,000 to start the scholarship. When the first student came over Jim asked me if I would be, sort of, his mentor on campus. So I ended up with three or four while I was there. If they had a problem they'd come to me and I'd tell him how to get around, what to get around. I helped the first one, Yu Shu Hong, or Yu Hong Shu, get a grant in the summer time to make for extra money. He made three thousand with a pharmaceutical firm one summer. Then he was with a PR outfit another summer up in Chicago and he made another three thousand. He graduated and managed to come back about four years later and get his Master's Degree from La Salle.

Fallon: Oh, really?

McCloskey: His son, now he originally is a native of China, his son about six years ago graduated from Leigh University with an Engineering degree. His son was born while he was here and the wife came over and was living in Philadelphia. He came to me and asked if he could leave the dorms and live in Philly. We figured out how much it would cost and he moved out of the dorms because he said "I don't like the food." He said "I can cook my own food there." I became very close with that, with Jim Guo and the fund. He was a tremendous fellow,

[3:16:13] but he died in the eighties. He died too soon, but a great guy. That's the Jim Guo Scholarship Fund.

Fallon: Now, does that—any relation to or did the Committee for Students of the Republic China steam from that?

McCloskey: No, no, that was part of that. Yeah. I was on the committee so that I would keep, more or less, be the person to whom they could come other than an administrator that wasn't acquainted with program itself.

Fallon: Okay, so that steamed from the scholarship fund?

McCloskey: Yeah. Right.

Fallon: Okay. The Presidential Search Committee.

McCloskey: Right.

Fallon: What was that? You were on it in, I think, '77 and '87.

McCloskey: Any time there was a change of presidents we had a search committee.

Fallon: Oh, that's makes sense. [Laughs]

McCloskey: I was on the Search Committee one time. Then I had as specific job on one of them, the more recent one: secretary. It was interesting, you know, to sit down with possible presidents and interview them. That's what it was. I was on two different ones.

Fallon: Gotcha. The James Finegan Foundation was another—

McCloskey: James Finegan a politician, out of Philadelphia, who was well known in his time and he goes way back. He formed a foundation, out in Harrisburg that set up internships for college and university students who were looking toward a political career. They would be selected by a committee and would spend the summer in Harrisburg.

Fallon: Oh okay.

[3:18:24] McCloskey: With either a House member, or a Senate member, to get a feel of the whole operation. I was on that for years until I retired. We'd met once a year in the Governor's Mansion on the river, have our meeting, go through all the business of the meeting, then get together the following year. It was a once a year thing.

Fallon: Okay. You just decide who was going to get picked for the internship?

McCloskey: Yeah.

Fallon: One of the other things that I wanted to cover is—I know for sure, because we have it in the interview, you were born in Olney in 1920, in '24 you moved up to Cornwells.

McCloskey: Right.

Fallon: When you—I assume, you lived and your parents lived in Cornwells through your time in the Army?

McCloskey: Yeah, they lived through 1959 in Cornwells. I went in the Army in '42, come out in '45, and of course, I was married. Our first home, after I took my wife from her mother and father's place where she was staying with the kids while I was rifting out of the Army, was Pennypack Project¹⁰⁸. We lived don in Pennypack Woods from 1947 until 1950. Then we bought a house in Cornwells.

Fallon: Okay, so you went back to Cornwells.

McCloskey: Back in Cornwells, yeah. So I came back to Cornwells. We were there from 1950 until 1964, I believe. Then we moved to Somerton¹⁰⁹.

Fallon: Okay.

McCloskey: We were in Somerton thirty-five years. Moved up here, we were here fourteen years.

¹⁰⁸ Pennypack is a neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia. Today it is commonly called Pennypack Park .

¹⁰⁹ Somerton is also located in northeast Philadelphia.

[3:20:15] Fallon: Why did you decide to move out to Bucks County after so many years in the city?

McCloskey: You heard about roots, didn't you? [Laughs]

Fallon: Yeah. [Laughs]

McCloskey: We didn't want to move into the city. We wanted a place that was open for the kids to grow up. Cornwells looked good then and that's where we moved. We like St. Charles, that's where I went to school. My wife was from Holmsburg which wasn't that far away. So we chose Cornwells and we're glad we did.

Fallon: But what finally the move to from Somerton to Bucks County?

McCloskey: To Somerton from Cornwells, we needed a bigger house. That was four bedrooms, the split-level we moved into. It had all the earmarks of suburban living and yet it was in the city. We use to call it politicians Philadelphia.

Fallon: [Laughs]

McCloskey: In other words, somebody that had to live in Philadelphia would pick Somerton to live because it was, let's say, cut above and a little different. We were happy to move into that area.¹¹⁰

Fallon: The final question I have is: how's retirement? How do you enjoy retirement?

McCloskey: We enjoyed it very much until, I guess, my wife got very sick. In other words, when she got to the point that we couldn't do everything we wanted to do. Up until '97, '98 we went places. In the year 2000, we went to Alaska on a trip that my son set up. Thirteen of us went. We enjoyed that. My wife was using—no it was before the walker, but she did have a little limp then. In '97, on one side she had had a trauma of the sciatic nerve. She has a brace on

¹¹⁰ During the interview Fallon was operating under the assumption that Cornwell Heights was in Philadelphia when it is actually in Bucks County. What he was really asking about was the move to Buckingham. However, the question was unclear. Fallon, unable to get an answer, dropped the topic as it was of minor importance.

[3:22:35] her left leg. Later on it came to the other side too, but we were able to get around until the year 2000, I guess. After that, let's say, toned-down living, but we still enjoyed it. I was able to take her, with a walker, for three or four years, then a wheelchair. I'd have the wheelchair in the trunk and I'd pull it out of the trunk and get her out of the car and into the wheelchair and we'd do where we wanted to go. So, I'd say, until three or four years ago it was enjoyable. We still got places. Of course, in the last couple years it's been a very restricted situation. We don't see the end of the tunnel. In other words, they're not giving her PT because they don't think anything can be done for her leg. She has arthritis. Her hands are like that [gestures by crumbling his fingers] so she can't push the wheelchair. That's why I'm there all morning, seven days a week. I have an aid there from two to eight every day. I feel comfortable about that. It's not the best of times, but we're still together.

Fallon: That's what's important.

McCloskey: The house is up for sale now. When it sells, I'll go down to my daughter's in Somerton and I'll be within seven miles instead of eighteen, nineteen miles from the place. It will be easier to get to and from. That's one of the basic reasons. Plus the fact that I'm over ninety and the kids don't like me by myself because they can't get to me if I made a call or something like that. I agree with them. I find it difficult, but I agree with them.

Fallon: Yeah. Well, at least you'll be able to see the grandkids more often right?

McCloskey: Oh yeah, yeah.

Fallon: I think that covers everything. I mean you've been involved in a lot. We could go on and on, well with anybody you could but—

McCloskey: Let's see what else I have. I had a couple things in here I didn't know if you had anything on or not. Let's see where are we? We had the affiliation. You have that one.

[3:25:09] Fallon: Yes.

McCloskey: The Order of St. Gregory¹¹¹, do you have that one?

Fallon: No I don't think so. [McCloskey pulls out the appropriate papers] I saw this on your resume.

McCloskey: That's all you would need then.

Fallon: How did you come to get named to the Order of St. Gregory?

McCloskey: Somebody put my name in, I guess, the fact that I worked with the Archdiocese for a dozen years. I was on the board Catholic Social Services and that was over all the Catholic nursing homes, and a number of schools: St. Francis, St. Gabel the Protector, La Salle in town. As a result of being on the board, I would pick up different jobs like I was Personnel Director for a couple of years. Where anybody that was hired in the Archdiocese at the administrative level I'd have to interview first. When Bevilacqua came in he wanted an assistant. We had a committee of five who interviewed for an assistant for him, which we never got because he turned out he was one of these balls of fire. He did it all himself and ended up with a priest as the assistant.

Fallon: Is this when he came in as Cardinal?

McCloskey: Yeah. We met with him couple times, found out what he was looking for and then went through the process. We met with him later and said "Your Eminence there's no one that can do the job, even though you're offering \$85,000 for it." That was good money back then.

Fallon: That's good money now.

McCloskey: Yeah.

Fallon: I think that will about do it.

¹¹¹ Officially, The Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great is a Papal designation, one of the five orders of knighthood in the Holy See. It is issued from the Pope as monarch rather than as a religious leader. It is bestowed upon individuals for exemplary service to the Holy See and the Catholic Church.

[3:27:25] McCloskey: Right.

Fallon: Once again, thank you very much for your time.

McCloskey: Oh, you're welcome. You're welcome.

Fallon: It has been a pleasure.

McCloskey: As I say, there's so many things in the woodwork that you don't really have time to talk about. It's in the resume, whatever.

Fallon: Like I said these—

McCloskey: I'm trying to think of the city committees. We've gone over the scholarship committee. I was on the Education to Work Council, but that's—all that's in the resume so you're okay.

Fallon: I'll shut the recorder off. [3:28:09]