

Kevin Lynch

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015

HIS 650: Oral History: Theory and Practice

Dr. Barbara Allen

**An Interview with Mrs. Ruth Jenkinson: Part 1 (recorded Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 8:00am)**

**Kevin Lynch:** Good Morning my name is Kevin Lynch it is Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:04am and today we are conducting an oral history interview with Mrs. Ruth Jenkinson at the Connelly Library at La Salle University. Mrs. Jenkinson it is a pleasure to be here with you this morning, as we discussed earlier, I will be recording the content of this interview on an audio recording device, for the record, Mrs. Jenkinson do I have your permission to do so?

**Ruth Jenkinson:** Yes that's fine

**Lynch:** Ok, thank you Mrs. Jenkinson, would you please tell me your most recent position of work has been?

**Jenkinson:** Most recent full time position here at La Salle was Office Manager to the library director at Connelly Library.

**Lynch:** Ok, thank you and you are about ready to officially retire from your work at La Salle University is that correct?

**Jenkinson:** Well actually I retired from full time position on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Lynch:** February 6<sup>th</sup> ok.

**Jenkinson:** I'm now part time, two half days a week until they hire my replacement.

**Lynch:** Ok and how long have you worked here at La Salle?

**Jenkinson:** I've worked here 33 years.

**Lynch:** Now can you describe for me what some of your responsibilities are, that's you've had while you've been working here, at least with the most recent position?

**Jenkinson:** the most recent position was Office Manager which is also equal to Administrative Assistant and I've been in that particular position for, since 1988 and prior to that I was Secretary to the Director when we were in the old library over on campus and I was in that position from, I started that position in '86, prior to that I was a payroll clerk in our Payroll Human Resources Department for about a year, and prior to that was my first position at La Salle which was Cataloguing Library Technician, that was my first position, I started the position in '81.

**Lynch:** Ok, and are you originally from this area?

**02:40**

**Jenkinson:** Yes I was born in Philadelphia and I am currently, I was a resident of East Falls at the time I started and then twenty years ago I moved to Roxborough.

**Lynch:** Great, now I would like to talk about La Salle a little bit later on in the interview, I was hoping you would be able to give me some information, some background information about your childhood, what it was like growing up in the area, you come from a rather large if I'm not mistaken quite a few siblings correct?

**Jenkinson:** Yes there were eight of us children, four boys and four girls. I have three older brothers, I'm the oldest girl, so there was three brothers' three sisters and then another boy and then a baby sister. Actually I was born in West Philadelphia and we moved to East Falls in, I believe it was in 1952 when I started first grade.

**Lynch:** And that was in East Falls?

**Jenkinson:** Yes that was in East Falls. We went to, all of us went to local catholic school which was St. Bridgits in East Falls.<sup>1</sup>

**Lynch:** Can you talk about some of your interests or activities that you and your siblings liked to do when you were younger and growing up?

**Jenkinson:** (Laughs) It's an oddity but we were close to Laurel Hill Cemetery<sup>2</sup> which is a huge cemetery and now a historic site so it was practically right across the street from where we lived so we were there quite often and it was huge you know, and we would climb the trees, we played all kinds of games throughout the cemetery, it was a great sledding place, we all sled there, we did our sledding there, I broke my nose there.

**Lynch:** Oh no!

**Jenkinson:** Sledding yeah (laughs) and we had a local recreation center McDevitts and we all went up there to do playground stuff and growing up in the 50's and '60's is like, you were outdoors most of the time, I mean your parents were like "get out and play" and we were out playing, we did all the street things and my brothers played stick ball and shooters and those kinds of games that were not playground games but street games. And of course we belonged to baseball teams and football teams and cheerleading, girls did softball, so it was those kinds of activities that we all participated in and it was good, all the neighborhood children were outside too, there was nothing keeping you indoors much except for Saturday morning cartoons.

**06:15**

---

<sup>1</sup> Located on Midvale Ave. and Stanton St. in East Falls, Philadelphia, St. Bridgits School closed following the 2011-2012 school year.

<sup>2</sup> Designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1998, Laurel Hill Cemetery Laurel Hill Cemetery is the burial place of several historic figures including Thomas McKean, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and American Civil War General George Meade

**Lynch:** Cartoons, yeah. And all the video games that we have today.

**Jenkinson:** No, they weren't even a thought in anybody's head right then and there, and that's about it for early childhood. Just normal stuff whatever that all the other kids did too. And as we grew older and went into high school my brothers went to Roman<sup>3</sup> and the girls went to Hallahan<sup>4</sup>.

**Lynch:** And they were all boys and all girls' schools?

**Jenkinson:** Yes Roman was the oldest boys catholic school in the country and I believe Hallahan was also the oldest catholic girls school in the country, they were the feeder high schools from the parish, from your parish, at that time you pretty much had to go where your parish wanted you go, it's not like now where you can apply to other catholic high schools around the area and you know it was good, my oldest grandson now goes to Roman

**Lynch:** does he?

**Jenkinson:** Yes the tradition continues.

**Lynch:** It does, great.

**Jenkinson:** I have no girls, granddaughters; I just have a grandson so I believe the two oldest ones will be Romanites, Cahillites so that will be good.

**Lynch:** And just one question about your parents, what kind of work was they involved in at the time, what kind of jobs did they have?

**Jenkinson:** My father worked for an Ice Cream company located in Fairmount in Philadelphia, called Potts Ice Cream and he was a delivery person and he had to be in at 4:00 in the morning to load up his big truck and deliver all over the city and the area, so that was his full time job, prior to that when we lived in West Philadelphia I kind of remember that he drove a taxi, a yellow cab, he worked for the Yellow Cab Company and on the weekends he worked too, he was a bouncer for a private club in West Philadelphia so he kept that job when we moved to East Falls, so he worked practically seven days a week, because there was eight of us and he didn't have much choice. Now my mom didn't work until we were, until I was around ten years old and I was old enough to kind of look after the ones under me while she worked, and she worked at the Penn Mutual Insurance company in their cafeteria, I'm not sure what she did in the cafeteria but that was her job and she was there until she retired so that was basically her one job and my dad worked for the Ice Cream company until he retired, and the second job I'm don't remember when he stopped doing that, I think it was when I was a teenager, he got older and felt that he didn't need to do that anymore, so that's basically it.

**10:12**

---

<sup>3</sup> Opened in 1890, Roman Catholic High School is located at the intersection of Broad St. and Vine St. in Philadelphia.

<sup>4</sup> Founded in 1901, J.W. Hallahan Catholic Girls School is located at the 300 block of N. 19<sup>th</sup> St. Philadelphia.

**Lynch:** Ok thank you, now I would like to ask you about your early schooling, you had said that yourself and the girls, your sisters would have gone to Hallahan School, any early interests as far as subjects that you liked studying in school?

**Jenkinson:** I actually liked History, I was good in English, I liked to read and write and although I was terrible at Algebra I was great at Geometry (laughs) so that made me feel better but I did not pursue much academic subjects, I went into what they called the commercial courses, to gear towards if you wanted to be an office worker, so I took typing, stenography, and it wasn't duplicating it was mimeography I think it was called, where you typed on these carbons and you fed it through this machine and it made all the copies that you would need or the teachers would need for a test, so it was an early copier but you had to do it by hand, because they were so many of us in our family, the girls weren't encouraged to think beyond high school. And that was pretty much the way that it was in the early '60's and I graduated in '64 and didn't even think that I could go to college so that's why I took the commercial courses that I took and when I graduated I found a job in an electronics factory making circuit boards, and I was there about four years and during those four years I progressed from assembling circuit boards to inspections and then they had people that tested the circuit boards so I had gotten training on the job and that was really very interesting, that was the beginning of the electronic age and it was very interesting but then I left and I got married and then I got pregnant and I stopped working, let's see ten or, it was about twelve years that I stopped working, so my son was twelve years old, my daughter was going on ten when I went back to work and I came back to work here, my sister worked here at La Salle in the library and her boss was looking for another person to fill an open position so she got me an interview and came in and interviewed and was offered the job so I came back to work full time at La Salle in 1981.

**Lynch:** And what year was it when you were married?

**Jenkinson:** I was married in 1968.

**Lynch:** And prior to you accepting this position here had you known about La Salle at all or had you been on campus?

**Jenkinson:** My second oldest brother had come here briefly he had started, he had taken some classes here at La Salle but then he stopped going to classes and kind of dropped out for a while and then he picked it up again at Temple and then got his degree from Temple eventually so I knew about La Salle from him going here but other than hearing the name and connecting it with the big five<sup>5</sup>, you know the basketball part of it, I didn't really have any great knowledge or even know that much history about it until I started working here.

**Lynch:** alright, now you had mentioned that your initial position when you began working here in 1981 was as a secretary would you elaborate on some of your...

**15:31**

---

<sup>5</sup> A group of NCAA Division 1 schools in Philadelphia, Temple University, Villanova University, La Salle University, St. Joseph's University and the University of Pennsylvania that compete for the City Championship.

**Jenkinson:** well in 1981 it wasn't secretary it was cataloguing

**Lynch:** cataloging that's right.

**Jenkinson:** I worked in the catalogue department as a library technician.

**Lynch:** and what were some of your roles...

**Jenkinson:** Well the duties of the position were, at that time there were still typewriters and only one computer that we all took turns working on. In the catalogue department after the books are received they are catalogued by the catalogue librarian and the librarian assigns a number to them, at that time we were in the Dewey Decimal System<sup>6</sup> and so she would assign numbers to them and we belonged to this cooperative called OCLC<sup>7</sup> which is still in existence and we still belong to it we took turns inputting the catalogue information into the records in the OCLC system so every morning they would give me a cart of books and I would go in, it was located in the next department over and I would go in and I'd input in all the information that needed in the OCLC record for them to produce catalogue cards, for the card catalogues you know what they look like, there's one right outside here (motions to book carrier on the other side of the office door)

**Lynch:** Ok

**Jenkinson:** there's long drawers, like a million drawers that go into it. And our unit represented every book that we had in the library, our new books, that's what I did, I put in the information and the company would manufacture the cards and send them back and we would file them in the card catalogues, so basically that was what I did, sometimes if it was an original record that wasn't listed in the Library Congress through the OCLC then the librarian would have to create her own new record and then I would have to input that and type a card for that separately and we kind of maintained two sets of records for each book, one that would be for all the card catalogues, the public card catalogue, but we had a set of card catalogues in the back in the catalogue department that was a duplicate of what was out front, so there was a lot of manual..

**Lynch:** Kind of like backing up your hard drive right?

**Jenkinson:** Yes exactly yeah, so it was I mean I liked the job and it was very interesting but I was kind of looking for a little more money, (laughs) when I started here my salary was like \$6,000 a year.

**Lynch:** wow

**19:12**

---

<sup>6</sup> Founded in 1876 by Melvil Dewey, the Dewey Decimal System or Dewey Decimal Classification is a library classification system.

<sup>7</sup> OCLC: Online Computer Library Center, a nonprofit computer library service founded in 1967.

**Jenkinson:** And you know I wanted more money so they post internal positions through the Human Resources which then was called Personnel, the Personnel Department and I applied for payroll clerk which was more money and a higher grade than what I was at so I got that job and that job was located across campus, almost near West Campus, it actually was in the old stone houses similar to building blocks you know the day care and the old art studio?

**Lynch:** Yeah

**Jenkinson:** Those grey stone buildings well they were all down Wister Street, where the townhouses are now located, so Human Resources was in there and there was two clerks and a payroll supervisor and then a VP and a director of payroll and it was very interesting because La Salle did their own payroll, they never sourced it out so it was very interesting but at that time, everything was key-punch and you had to be very accurate, if you put the hole in the wrong space in the card and you fed it into the system to generate a paycheck and it wasn't right then there was trouble but I was there for about a year I didn't like the isolation of it because it was payroll and it was also what you now call Human Resources which included people's personal, you know, files and so the head of the department liked to keep us isolated from people so we wouldn't spill confidential information and whatever, I had attended some classes but I had to drop out of two of them while I was there because sometimes when, particularly when it was payroll week and we had to stay until it was done, so I was missing a lot of classes.

**Lynch:** Long days

**Jenkinson:** and so I stopped going to classes and that aspect of it I didn't like and so when this new library was built the new director was looking for a secretary, the previous secretary who was my sister left to be the head of mail-in duplicating a position came open and they interviewed a bunch of people and she asked me to interview and I did and she offered me the job so that was the secretary job when I started in this building in 1988. I actually started in the old building in 1986 as the secretary and when it carried over to the new building in 1988, it changed to Administrative Assistant and at La Salle there's three rankings of Administrative Assistant so at that time I was Administrative Assistant 1 and then gradually over the years I became 2 and then, 3 was equal to Office Manager and my job involved Human Resources thought it was closer to Office Manager than Administrative 3 so thus it evolved into Office Manager.

Phone rings (23:41)

**Lynch:** You had mentioned that you were taking some classes while you were working as a payroll clerk that just because of the nature of your job and how busy it was that you weren't really able to attend on a regular basis, were those classes geared toward finance or were they...

**Jenkinson:** The first courses I took were while I was still in the library I had taken an English and a Religion, you know the basic courses that you start out with, at night time so it was you know only once or twice a week or something like that and so I was going to go towards accounting but I, after I went to

Human Resources or Payroll I developed a health condition which eventually required surgery, it involved my back, so I couldn't sit in those chairs, the classroom chairs and I couldn't do it was just too painful, even if I brought a pillow it was just too painful so I stopped going to class, I guess I have enough credits for almost completing freshman year but I didn't go any further than that, I don't know why, I just didn't, and at that point I was just thinking more about my kids being eligible for college and the benefit here is after you've worked 5 years as a full time employee your kids can go get the full benefit.

**Lynch:** Oh wow

**Jenkinson:** The full tuition. So I guess I just justified it as working towards their future and that's, I never did go back, I completed workshops that were relevant to my job but I never did go back to doing any coursework.

**Lynch:** And your kids did end up going to La Salle?

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes, yes they both graduated from La Salle my son in '91 and my daughter in '94, and they didn't have any financial aid bills.

**Lynch:** That's great. It's a real problem for a lot of people.

**Jenkinson:** Yes it is and my son never had any real interest in, he wanted to play football but at that time La Salle was finished with their football program.

**Lynch:** The football team has kind of been on and off and on and off again.

**Jenkinson:** Right, so that was about the only thing that he was interested in so when he was at Roman, they had this business program with then SmithKline<sup>8</sup> downtown and he got a job as a high school student practically right across the street he got a job there and he really liked it and he was in the marketing department and when he started here at La Salle they wanted him to continue so they gave him a bump in salary and he was able to use his job that he had through high school and most of college as an internship in his marketing management program here.

**Lynch:** Oh wow

**Jenkinson:** so he benefited from it the long run he always wanted to be a policeman and after he graduated from here he did continue with SmithKline by then it was GlaxoSmithKline but he didn't want to be behind a desk.

**Lynch:** I see

**Jenkinson:** so he took the Philadelphia Police Academy test and the state test and he heard from Philadelphia and went through the academy and became a Philadelphia Policeman and he was on the job for almost a year then the State Police called him and said if you're interested you have to let us

**28:45**

---

<sup>8</sup> GlaxoSmithKline is a British pharmaceutical company, which is headquartered in Brentford, London.

know in three weeks because the next class is starting and we have to get you background check. And he was like I don't know what to do so I said "well think of it this way, you don't want to be in twenty years saying, I should of went for the state police, I said "you think that Philadelphia would pay for all of your training and not take you back if you didn't like the state police?"

**Lynch:** that's a good point.

**Jenkinson:** I said, "they would take you back, so he went with the State Police and he's been with them ever since."

**Lynch:** There's that saying you regret the things you don't do more than the things you do.

**Jenkinson:** Yes exactly

**Lynch:** Sounds like that worked out.

**Jenkinson:** Yeah and then you know my daughter, she kind of followed in the same footsteps as my son as far as she also got into the Business Experience Program at SmithKline from Hallahan and worked for them also through high school but they didn't keep her afterward, you know, they usually let the high school people go and then if they want to rehire them as temps. in college they can do that, but Kristine had other pursuits she was active, she's six foot and she's into basketball, into crew, into cheerleading, into softball, you name it, she was into it and when she came here she went right for the crew at La Salle and she got into sororities and was on the inner sorority-fraternity boards and she wanted to stay here, and she was still working, they hired her back at SmithKline so she was still working and making enough money that if she wanted to stay here we offered to pay half of her dorm and food programs if she paid the other half and she did, so she stayed on campus sophomore, junior, and senior year and she loved the campus life, not like my son he just wanted to be done with it (laughs) but she is still to this day is close to her local sorority sisters, in fact they just went to dinner the other night.

**Lynch:** that's great

**Jenkinson:** It does I think make college life better if you form relationships with people rather than you leave campus and your ten year reunion coming up and I don't want to go, but I think they benefited from the benefit that I had so I'm well satisfied with that.

**Lynch:** That's great.

**Jenkinson:** And then in turn she eventually got a job here at La Salle

**Lynch:** Oh did she?

**Jenkinson:** Yes she married a Navy guy and they lived in Florida, Pensacola and Jacksonville back and forth for like twelve years and then he was done, he had to leave the Navy for medical reasons and so she said well I want to go back up near home and she, her company that she worked for had a branch



office in Scranton that they offered her to run and she said “oh, well only two hour drive so we’re going to Scranton” so they went to Scranton and unfortunately it was not for my son in law, he’s a southern guy and they split up and shortly thereafter her company closed that branch by then my husband had passed away and I had three rooms, three bedrooms, so her and the two boys came home to live with me, and after that she had a couple jobs, one in community college, one up the in the northeast, a clothing manufacturer, and then she got a job here over a Graduate Enrollment, as a Project Coordinator, she is a coordinator at the Graduate Enrollment Office, so like I said, my grandson is a sophomore at Roman so she’s had two years here so by the time he graduates if he can meet the requirements, the entrance requirements, it’s not a free ride, you still have to meet the entrance requirements for whatever school you’re going to then he’ll reap the same benefits that she did.

**Lynch:** that’s great.

**Jenkinson:** That’s nice

**Lynch:** Thank you, now I would like to back up some to when you’re just starting in with the library, this would have been before Connelly Library, I believe if I am correct that the library would have been the Lawrence Library, correct?

**Jenkinson:** right

**Lynch:** Can you tell me anything about that building?

**Jenkinson:** The building, I’m not sure when it was built...

**Lynch:** I believe it was about 30 years old when the new one was built.

**Jenkinson:** Oh ok, the director at the time I was hired was Brother Thomas Warner and he was one of the Christian Brothers a really nice man, but he was a senior citizen at that time so he had let it be known that prior to us coming to the new building that he was going to retire and I believe that was in 1986, early ’86 and they searched for a new librarian and new Head Director of the library so Jean Haley H-A-L-E-Y became the new Director in 1986 and she was the one that hired me. The building itself was kind of cramped, it was, you walk in the door and circulations desk was to your right and Brother Alfred Grunewald he was the head of circulation, very small staff, and it was three, well actually four floors if you count the basement, the basement, half of it was closed areas and like a staff room, lunch room area, and the other half was Blatt collection but I’m not sure what exactly that was..

**Lynch:** Black?

**Jenkinson:** B-L-A-T-T, blatt collection and I don’t believe, there was some tiny special collections within that collection I believe but nothing that was developed until we got into the new library this library and so basically there wasn’t really much of anything on the lower level that was of any use to the students who had to research what was in that collection so the main floor the second floor and the third floor

were where the books were housed, on the first floor the whole left side of the entrance was all the processing offices, like the Acquisitions Office where they research what books to order for the library, they order the books, and they receive the books. Mr. (John) Baky, the current Director was the head of acquisitions in the old library it was called Acquisitions/Collection Development and then the office beyond that was the Cataloging Office which had the Catalogue Librarian the Assistant Catalog Librarian the Bibliographic Assistant and three Catalogue Library Technicians, they also had a Technical Library Technician and he was the one that actually did the physical processing of the new books, covered them, put the catalog card number on the spine and put them all in order for somebody, we had students too that we hired and they usually came in and they put the books on the shelves and put the catalog cards and the catalogue cabinets out front and then beyond the circulation desk was the card catalogue and some shelving on the first floor, most of the books were housed on the third floor, on the second floor was the Reference Department and they had four Reference Librarians and they had reference materials that you could research in within the library on that floor but there also was some regular circulating books on that floor also. There was a tiny little elevator that nobody wanted to get in, if you wanted to move the books up and down you had to get in that elevator (laughs) otherwise we climbed it.

**Lynch:** Better the books than you right?

**Jenkinson:** yes (laughing)

**Lynch:** Was the library acquiring a lot of books, year after year?

**Jenkinson:** Yes it was to the point that, we had to have an annex to put books in, and our annex was called Wister Annex which was where the current campus store is right now.

**Lynch:** Ok

**Jenkinson:** That housed our excess materials and materials that didn't circulate as much as other materials that were in the main library so we had two people staff over there and we were open at night, it was also a great kind of study hall because we had a bunch of carrels and the kids liked to go over there and study over there because it was pretty quiet so that was over there until we moved here and then everything combined, they housed the campus store in there afterwards after they were done renovating over there, so yeah there was a need for the new library.

**Lynch:** for extra space?

**Jenkinson:** Yes there was 100,000 sq. feet in this building?

**Lynch:** I think so yeah, something like that. You had mentioned the Blatt collection, can you discuss any more about some of the collections, if there were any in the Lawrence Library? Anything like what we have today or were there any specific special collections?

**Jenkinson:** I would probably have to defer to Mr. Baky on that because he was here, he may have acquired whatever was in that collection or he would know better than I. I never had to go into that collection to put anything in there or take anything out there so, sorry.

**Lynch:** Oh no, that's perfectly fine, ok you had mentioned Brother Warner and also for the Lawrence Library I believe also one of the librarians at the time was a women named Georgette Most.

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes, she was the Head Reference Librarian and she, everybody on campus just thought the world of her, I wasn't there all that long before she retired and left but she was really a real nice women and well respected everybody even after she was gone from the university people would always mention her name, so she was well known and well liked on this campus. After she left, the Head Reference Librarian for a while after she left was Ellen Wall and she came over when we came into this building, but she didn't stay all that long, she retired, well she didn't really retire, she resigned and left, when she left they revamped the Reference Department, so there is no real actual head of the Reference Department, they are all equal in responsibilities the four Reference Librarians, and that's the way it's been. One is in charge of bibliographical instruction which means they teach the students how to use the library usually at the beginning of the semesters all the freshman English professors make appointments for their class to come in and use the classroom down in the lower level and the librarian instructs them on how to use the databases and what they need to get into the databases and general use of the library, believe it or not I have people who come into my office here on the second floor and ask me questions like, "I can't find this book" you're a senior and you can't find a book in the library? So it's kind of questionable how much people do or do not use the facility.

**Lynch:** Yeah, now everyone is used to googling everything and getting everything in a matter of seconds.

**Jenkinson:** Oh now, you're right about that, now there's an easy way out, they don't have to actually physically go look for the material. So the other Reference Librarians, one is in charge of interlibrary loan, which is, when our students can't find what they're looking for here and they know another university or college or another place might have it, then they give the information to the interlibrary loan people and they research it in our databases, Easy Borrow is the database that they use and if another library that belongs to our co-operative has it, they will lend it and the student can get that material. Over the last few years it's been electronically generated for them but they still have to get permission to borrow it. And then also we get requests from other places, so our people in interlibrary loan have to look and research it and see if it's a lendable entity so we have reciprocal agreements and what-not and that's grown exponentially over the years.

**Lynch:** I'm sure

**Jenkinson:** and we have a Serials Librarian whose mainly, they're all Reference Librarians too so they have other duties as Reference Librarians but they have a secondary title and we have a Serials Librarian who decides what serials we may need, including databases and she does that in conjunction with our online services librarian reference and they decide from whatever input they get from professors about we need this database blah-blah-blah and can the librarian get it for us and depending on how much it is and how much we have in the budget, they may or may not get it, because even though we don't order as many books as we do and the databases are so so expensive that sometimes we can't get what they need and that presents a problem later on down the line.

**Lynch:** that's the way it works, ok very good, now just a few more questions for today, I'm going back to the mid 1980's the Lawrence Library had to build the annex in Wister Hall and space was an issue and it was apparent, certainly to you as you said that a bigger library was needed. Can you talk about when the process really began running where the school was really starting think that "we're going to make this new library possible?"

**Jenkinson:** I believe the actually of saying that yes we don't have any choice we need to build the new library was I think in '84 or '85 I can check that out we have some reference in the file room that I can refer to if I can't answer it today then I will answer it in our next session but then the process came along where you have to get donors and money and it was estimated that it would cost \$11 million dollars to build this building and so they were able to contact the Connelly Foundation, John Connelly and Brother Patrick<sup>9</sup> was able to convince himself to donate half of the cost of the building.

**Lynch:** Wow

**Jenkinson:** so the other portion was raised through other donors I assume and I don't know if they floated any bonds or anything like that but initially I'm not sure it was ten or eleven million, something like that it would cost but in the end when it came that it was eleven million the Connelly Foundation paid for the rest of it, whatever the other donors contributed didn't come up to the cost of the rest of the building, the Connelly Foundation paid the rest for us so I'm not sure exactly how much they're portion was other than the initial five or six million but they did pay off the building.

**Lynch:** Wow

**Jenkinson:** So they got the funding and they picked an architect, I don't know who they are (laughs) maybe that information might be in the files also, I can check that for you but they chose Shepley Bulfinch<sup>10</sup> they're from Boston the big architects on the building and I think I told you before that Jean Haley the current Director at that time was very adamant about being involved on how the building was to be laid out as far as placement of offices and you know the way that the stacks would lay throughout the building and she was a very staff-oriented director she wanted us to have a nice staff room and that did happen, with a full kitchen, very well-used throughout all of these 25 years (laughs)

**51:58**

---

<sup>9</sup> Brother Patrick Ellis, who served as President of La Salle College from 1977 to 1992

<sup>10</sup> An international architecture and interior design firm originally formed in Boston, Massachusetts.

and if it wasn't for her input I'm not sure it would even look the way it looks today, so she was very adamant about being a part of that so I'm not sure when construction began, again I can get you that information because I do have that information and then this where we're located, this footprint was a parking lot.

**Lynch:** Really?

**Jenkinson:** It was part of the current L-shaped parking lot in the back of us so we didn't take away anything, we just took away parking, which seems to be happening all over the place (laughs).

**Lynch:** there you go.

**Jenkinson:** and I'll let you know when the actual building and when it was finished and we opened in August of 1988. And when we opened, Cardinal Bevilacqua<sup>11</sup> he was the Cardinal then in Philadelphia and they set up a dinner in the library and this is before the fall semester began and they had a dinner and he came in and he blessed the building and throughout the summer we moved stuff over and we all took turns, we hired a moving company was hired to move books off the shelves onto these giant carts which were rolled up the street and we put them into the library and stuff like that, but offices and stuff like that, we packed up our own offices and moved anything personal that we wanted to move ourselves and not have it moved by a moving company but that summer was a (laughs)

**Lynch:** pretty hectic I'm sure; you had mentioned that you're moving all the personal offices, how about moving all the books and collections of volumes in the library, who was in charge of that?

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes the director hired a library moving company that was experienced in library moves and they had these giant book carts and the librarians themselves oversaw what was taken off of each stack and put on the carts so that they wouldn't be out of order and then they were moved up the street. So that was a long hot summer.

**Lynch:** I'm sure

**Jenkinson:** so like I said I will have a lot of that information in the file so I will get you that for the next time.

**Lynch:** Great, well we are up to 8:59 now, this seems like a good place to stop, we have brought us right up to 1988 and the opening of the new library and we will continue this discussion again another time.

**Jenkinson:** alright

**Lynch:** thank you for your time

**Jenkinson:** You're welcome Kevin

55:40

---

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Bevilacqua, Archbishop emeritus of Philadelphia from 1987 to 2003

**An Interview with Mrs. Ruth Jenkinson: Part 2 (recorded Thursday, March 26th 2015 at 8:00am)**

**Lynch:** Good morning my name is Kevin Lynch and this is part 2 of our oral history interview conducted with Mrs. Ruth Jenkinson in the Connelly Library at La Salle University. Mrs. Jenkinson, as with earlier I will be recording our session today for use in our oral history project, do I have your permission to record our session today?

**Jenkinson:** Yes

**Lynch:** Thank you, now just to recap, when last we spoke we had talked in detail about your work at La Salle beginning in 1981 with your work in the Catalogue Department as Library Technician, you progressed to Payroll Clerk in the Human Resources Department and then Secretary to the Director in 1986 in the old Lawrence Library, a position that would soon change to Administrative Assistant with the opening of the new library is that correct?

**Jenkinson:** That's correct.

**Lynch:** Ok, and that was in 1988 and that's where we pick up today, you had mentioned the last time we spoke that the members of the library staff and in particular Jean Haley had some considerable input or influence into the design, at least the interior design of the library, things that they would like to see in the new library. My first question today, can you describe your initial thoughts and perhaps some of the feelings of the other members of the library staff about the new library, your initial impressions.

**Jenkinson:** Well my initial impressions were very positive because everything was very cramped in the old library including the office areas, the desks were like back to back and you were on top of each other, you didn't have a whole lot of workspace around your desk area and everything was very old and had that old feeling in it that smell of oldness and I'm sure that most of my fellow staff members felt the same way, we were all very happy when the news broke that they actually had plans to build a new building and as I told you in the previous session, I wasn't exactly sure about timelines as far as dates go but in the intern I found our fact sheet that had key events in the building program of the library. In December of '84 the preliminary discussions started with the President for footprint proposals to the donor, the possible donor. In January of '85 a building committee was appointed by the Provost, and Jean Haley, and I believe three faculty members but I don't remember who that was and I couldn't find out who that was but there was four I believe in this Building Committee that had to do preliminary work like review of literature for other libraries, similar libraries that had just been built so they would contact them and talk to them about what they wanted for their libraries and how that came to fruition and they did site visits to new libraries around the area and they had a consultant come in and talk and then they gathered architects, possible architects from these visits and finding out who the architects were of the libraries that they had visited. In June of '85 they selected the architect and they reviewed the architect's proposals and they had telephone interviews and site visits, the Building committee, the

**04:16/59:56**

Provost and the President you know did some of these visits and in July of '85 the building program was written and approved by the Building Committee from August to December of '85 they developed a schematic design for the building and in which was the footprint of the building, interior spaces, and what goes on in a site when it's under construction, also in December of '85 they selected a construction management firm and that was Nelson and Cullen. And then they submitted this design and it was approved and they started working on exterior design of the building, suggestions on how it would look and how we wanted to keep it the same, well not the same but similar to the buildings that are closest to it, namely College Hall,<sup>12</sup> I mean this certainly looks like a more modern building but if you notice details you'll notice some of the same details that are in College Hall, let's see, they also discussed the landscaping and how that would look when the building was finished and then the designed development drawings were approved. We broke ground in June of '86, I'm not sure if that was the date I told you...

**Lynch:** We had discussed the year, I don't know if we had the month.

**Jenkinson:** Ok and then there was site preparation going on throughout that summer and they had developed, June through October they had developed the construction documents, you know exactly the schedule of how things would begin, construction began in September of '86 and then after construction was ongoing they continued meetings and in March of '87 they had preliminary meetings for interior design how they wanted everything to be laid out and the color pallet, and the furniture and throughout '87 the building continued to be under construction and from May of '87 through February of '88 they had development of the interior design as far as where they wanted the furniture and how they wanted it laid out and what kind of furniture they wanted, like study carrels and they wanted chairs that would hold to (laughs) usage no matter what kind of chairs a library purchases, students manage to pop the backs off of them all the time.

**Lynch:** There's always a few yeah,

**Jenkinson:** so they tried to get an idea of what was the sturdiest form of furniture especially at the tables and the carrels. They interviewed furniture dealers in December of '87 and in February of '88 that's when construction was completed, the building was finished by constructed but in the ensuing months is when they had furniture delivered and placed. The 20<sup>th</sup> of March in '88 was when the official library dedication and we had a big event inside the library and Cardinal Bevilacqua blessed the library and he gave a homily and there was a dinner and Brother Patrick spoke and we had Jean Haley our Director spoke and there were other speakers, there was George Dennis O'Brien<sup>13</sup>, he was the president of the University of Rochester and a trustee here at La Salle at that time and he spoke so it was a large event. Then after the dedication, like I said the furniture contract was issued, we weren't going to bring

**09:44/1:05:24**

---

<sup>12</sup> College Hall, which opened in 1930, was the original academic building on La Salle College Campus, located at 1900 W. Olney Ave

<sup>13</sup> George Dennis O'Brien served as President of the University of Rochester from 1984 to 1994. He served previously as the President of Bucknell University.

all of the old shelving from the old library because some of it was in bad condition so we put out a bid for new shelving for this library so that the new shelving started to be installed in the library in April and May of '88, they had, also in April of '88 they put out a bid for a moving company, there are several specialized moving companies that only do library moves so they put out a bid for that. In this new building, which we didn't have in the old library was an Audio Visual Department and we were going to start collecting or buying movies, documentaries, features that teachers recommended and wanted for their classes, mostly that kind of material at first and then over the years we put current feature films in there too because it was very popular with the students especially if they were staying on campus, you know during the weekends and stuff they would come over and have to check it out and they'd bring it back it two days.

**Lynch:** Ok

**Jenkinson:** So everybody was very happy with the aspect of an Audio visual Department and the Audio Visual Department also handled our microforms, which were microfilms and microfiche<sup>14</sup> that we had over the years for them so they took care of the that aspect and like a quarter of the lower level was filled with cabinets full of microfilm and microfiche And at that time we had three readers and in '88 that was still a popular media to use, in fact people still use it today but not as much because they can find what they need online.

**Lynch:** Just Google and iPhones now.

**Jenkinson:** Yes, and also in the lower level we had a small department, called the Instructional Material Center which was basically for the Education Department, for elementary education, it was all, when the students go for that degree they usually have to intern at a school or at kindergarten or whatever, and there's early childhood education material in this center, like games, educational games and books for children and stuff like that, and that was very well used by the Education Department, as with everything else in the interweaving years things change and it wasn't used all that much so, there is still material in there but, when and if the library ever gets around to renovation, that department will probably be changed to another site for other uses. So but to continue with the chronological of the library, in the AV (audio-visual) department they have these specialized carrels that have monitors and what do you call it, VHS machines.

**Lynch:** VCR's

**Jenkinson:** VCR's that's what I'm looking for, VCR's

**Lynch:** you don't see too many of those anymore

**Jenkinson:** No, and the students had the option of checking it out if they had their own or they could use

**14:17/1:09:57**

---

<sup>14</sup> Microfiche: thin sheets of film that contains small photographs of newspapers, magazines, or other texts, viewed with a specific machine.



these carrels to view the movies. In June of '88 also, there were some specialized shelving that we did move over to the new building and then we had it contracted out to be repainted, to match the other shelving so that shelving mostly went to the lower level, where it's reference material, so you might see the face of all the shelving down there and the side panels of the shelves themselves are gray which matches the overall color pallet of the library but you can see, the part of the shelving that the books sit on is still the coco-brown color of the original shelving. In July of '88 that's when most of the furnishings came in and was installed and then in August of '88 in when we actually opened the building.

**Lynch:** Ok great, thank you so much.

**Jenkinson:** Ok, now the building itself, if you want the actual facts?

**Lynch:** Of course.

**Jenkinson:** The size of the building is 104,498 gross sq. ft. and there are really four floors and a mezzanine, the ground floor, which we call the lower level, then the first floor, which is the main floor you come in, the second floor, the third, and right above the third floor is what they call a mezzanine level which is a floor, a floating floor that actually is built over the shelves so it doesn't go from wall to wall it's right under the huge skylight.

**Lynch:** Oh, nice.

**Jenkinson:** which is at the top of the building, I don't know if you've ever been up there?

**Lynch:** I have not been up there yet, no.

**Jenkinson:** The volume capacity as far as books go, this building is able to house 501,000 volumes, based on a 20 year growth at the present rate of acquisition. Well as you know over the years...

**Lynch:** Things change

**Jenkinson:** things are going online and less books, we still order book, but less books are ordered so I believe our collection is in the 300,000, 325,000 as far as volumes in the library are concerned. Total seating capacity for the building was 1,032, which includes the audio visual workstations and small viewing rooms and the lab, they're like, there's tables and chairs in the formal study which is an also on the lower level and the informal study is actually closed off, with access only, through the main lobby, going down to this level and has vending machines down there, so that's the reason they closed it off, at that time there was no food or drink allowed in the library so if you wanted to study and you wanted something to drink or eat you had to step outside.

**Lynch:** Step outside or go to the cafeteria

**Jenkinson:** Yes go to the cafeteria (laughs) and then come back, which is not the way it is today, you can bring food and drink in now, it's not a big deal as far as damage to electronic equipment, they've been

**18:15/1:13:55**

pretty safe in that part, it's just to the building itself.

**Lynch:** yeah

**Jenkinson:** so I think I told you before that the architectural firm that was chosen was Shepley-Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott?

**Lynch:** Yeah

**Jenkinson:** and they were from Boston, Massachusetts, they also had design architect and interior design architects who we chose to help with the furniture, and I mentioned that the construction management firm was Nelson and Cullen who are local.

**Lynch:** ok

**Jenkinson:** they're from Wayne, Pennsylvania and the electrical contractor was Vasoli, Electrical engineers were Vinokur/Pace We had several furniture firms based on what the furniture was for, I don't know if you want their names or not?

**Lynch:** sure

**Jenkinson:** there was Worden W-O-R-D-E-N, Tuohy T-u-o-h-y, Modern Contract, and Bunyard, and all the office desks and any steel furniture like the credenzas and the filing cabinets were by Steelcase.

**Lynch:** Ok

**Jenkinson:** If you notice in the library we have really nice wood features as far as the main stairwell was

**Lynch:** I did notice that, it's nice.

**Jenkinson:** so all the mill work and built in shelving and specialized desks in circulation reference and the wainscoting, it's oak and it was fabricated by Eisenhardt Mills<sup>15</sup> in Easton, PA. And they for the Special Collections room, you were in there so you know, all of the cabinets are glass-faced cabinets but they are solid cherry wood as is the large conference table that is in there, and the floor is oak, parquet oak, and when we came in, when this building was brand new, it was state of the art as far as lighting was concerned, it was all fluorescent with parabolic lenses but over the years fluorescent fades, and last summer we had a whole revamping of all the electrical fixtures in the library and they were replaced the CFL's were installed which have a longer life and less replacement and which was..

**Lynch:** welcome (laughs)

**21:36/1:17:16**

---

<sup>15</sup> Eisenhardt Mills Inc., founded in 1937, at worked on restoration for Independence Hall, Carpenter's Hall, Betsy Ross House, and City Tavern.

**Jenkinson:** One of my jobs was to report to facilities whenever something needed to be fixed in the library and at least once a month I had to do a work order for them to come and replace twenty lights in the building or fifty lights in the building and that's how that worked and any other problems, that they were, leaks or anything like that, were reported from my position as office manager so that relationship will still stand after I'm completely gone. Anything else?

**Lynch:** Of course, you had mentioned Brother Patrick, you are referring to Brother Patrick Ellis, he was president at the time for the record, and he was very involved?

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes, Brother Patrick was instrumental in getting the donors and I believe he was very instrumental in going back to the Connolly family and asking if they would be interested in putting the remainder of the money up and like I said before in the long run that is what happened and the building was completely paid for by the Connolly thus, the name

**Lynch:** the name right

**Jenkinson:** and unfortunately like two years after the library opened Mr. Connelly died, but La Salle and other local universities have benefited greatly from the Connolly Foundation and I know Villanova has their Connolly Center and they've had other buildings paid for by the Connolly Foundation, I'm not sure what other ones but their foundation is very generous to catholic schools, colleges and high schools.

**Lynch:** Ok great and you began to discuss the technology of the library; a lot of it seems almost pretty radical as far as what was in the Lawrence Library compared to what was in the Connolly Library,

**Jenkinson:** Yes

**Lynch:** sort of like a night or day thing.

**Jenkinson:** Yes as negotiations were going on for what type of furniture and how things would be laid out there was a second arm you might say that was putting out requests for proposals to library companies that did your library online systems, there was Innovative Interfaces from San Francisco and there was three others that the library was looking at and Jean (Haley) was very instrumental in choosing them and they also had a committee to look into the aspects of how easy it would be for the a patron to use the system and there were, it came down to two and I'm not sure, I don't remember what the other one was in the long run Innovative Interfaces was easiest to use by patrons and several universities around the area had gone with them, and they were fairly new in 1988 we were, La Salle was one of the, I would say first dozen schools in the country to go with Innovative Interfaces.

**Lynch:** oh wow,

**Jenkinson:** and we're still with them and if you ever use the library to find a book in the library you're using the innovative system to find it and its very good, not many complaints, there's been several overhauls of it over the years which have been very costly but overall everybody was happy with the

**26:26/1:22:06**

choice and as far as I know the librarians are still happy with it so we have a System Librarian who is also the Head of Cataloguing and she is the one that is the contact person for Innovative if something goes wrong or their an update and something doesn't work the way it's supposed to work she's the coordinator of that and she had the title of Systems Librarian so she's always on top of it.

**Lynch:** great, now we have mentioned Jean Haley a number of times, at the time that the library was built she was the Director correct?

**Jenkinson:** Yes she was I believe she was the Director from '84 or '85 until 1990, she left in 1990, two years after, she one of these people who come in and get things moving and love the challenge of it all and then when's it over wanted to move on to a new challenge,

**Lynch:** really

**Jenkinson:** So she was offered a position of Head Librarian in Minneapolis-St. Paul, University of St. Thomas and she took it and left, and Mr. Baky our current Director was the Head of Acquisitions in Collection Development so he was appointed by the President Provost as the interim person until a search was conducted for the director of library and of course he applied for it and they eventually offered him the position so he's been the director since 1990. Until now and I knew him as the Head of Acquisitions because their office was right next to our office.

**Lynch:** Ok, so you've worked with him a lot?

**Jenkinson:** yes I did, I didn't work under him but when we'd input the information from the cataloging into our OCLC system that computer was located in his department so we had interactions and I knew the people that worked for him so we he came aboard as Intern Director, his personality is compatible to mine and I know when he walks in the door if I should say good morning or say nothing until he's in for a while (laughs) so we'll say that's he's having a little difficult time with me not being here except on this temporary basis so they're conducting interviews right now for the person that will ultimately fill my positions.

**Lynch:** now I'd like to spend some time and talk about the special collections and exhibits in the library if exhibits is even a proper word, the Connelly library has a number of special collections, including one that I'd like to start with on the Vietnam war that is described on the website as the largest collection of literary and creative works on the Vietnam War in the world, can you talk some about that?

**Jenkinson:** Based on the sheer volume of the collection, it is a very large collection, there are people would think that University of Colorado, John Newman's collection<sup>16</sup> our there was first and foremost in the Vietnam collection area and it's still astounding, people who come to do research in this Vietnam collection eventually if it's affordable and if it's within their time frame will go out and view the collection out there too so I'm not exactly sure how it became but I know it was under John Baky's

**31:03/1:26:43**

---

<sup>16</sup> Vietnam and America: A Documented History, a literature collection by John Newman on the Vietnam War

direction that he personally started collecting materials when we came into the building and because in the old building we didn't really have a Special Collections Department and one of things that Director Haley wanted was a Special Collections area that could house the literary collections, the small literary collections that we have and then room to grow and it was fortunate that she saw this and allowed space for what now is the largest collection back there is the Vietnam collection. So in 1986 or '7 a new head or cataloging was hired as our previous head left for California and Mr. (John K.) McAskill was the head of the cataloging and he was also a Vietnam vet, as is John.

**Lynch:** Ok

**Jenkinson:** between the both of them, finding and collecting materials for the collections it evolved to where it's at today and there's things back there that you say to yourself why is this here there are games back there, like a monopoly game that is based on a Vietnam theme and all kinds of games and all the magazines that were in the Vietnam era, the Life magazines and the Look magazines countless books and DVD's and VHS tapes too and even music, there's music back there from the Vietnam era and if it has any reference to Vietnam in the book, in the material, in the music then John tried to purchase it for this collection. And posters drawn by Vietnam Vets in Vietnam while they were there and other related Vietnam posters, and many of them, I don't know, were you taken back into the vault area?

**Lynch:** not the vault area no

**Jenkinson:** back there John had many of them framed and they are on the walls back there and the ones that are not framed are on a special card catalogue unit that is a flat catalogue that allows them not to be rolled up.

**Lynch:** viewed but not rolled up

**Jenkinson:** yes, but that is his baby (laughs) and to this day they still continue to add things to the collection.

**Lynch:** that was going to be my next question

**Jenkinson:** oh ok

**Lynch:** to what extent is this still going on?

**Jenkinson:** yes as you get further away from that era it's harder to find things that are relevant to the collection. There's still books being written and in that event that if John sees there fit for the collection we will still order material for the collection but he was concerned that once he does retire that it wouldn't continue without a librarian for the Special Collection and it wasn't until 2012 that the University allowed us to hire a part time librarian for the collection and 2 years later he was able to convince them that the position needed to be full time so Sarah Seraphin is the full time Special Collections Librarian she maintains that area back there and connects with the faculty and on events and

**35:57/1:31:37**

exhibits downstairs on the first floor there are exhibit cabinets, there's an area right past the circulation desk, that's where they mount the exhibits with a particular subject in mind and then to gather all the materials and put them in the cases, and Sarah is very good at that.

**Lynch:** Thank you, I'd like to digress for one moment as we're talking about the Vietnam War certainly this sounds like a collection where anybody from any generation could come and really learn about this. Does it have any special meaning for someone like yourself who would have grown up during the war?

**Jenkinson:** oh yes, well I find it very interesting my husband was in the Vietnam War, but not as a combat person, he was a courier but my brother in law was in Vietnam and one of my brothers was there briefly before the major escalation into the war part of it so I have some knowledge of it and being a young adult in the 60's, of course I didn't participate in any demonstrations but on a nightly basis when you watched the news you would see all the people who were against the war and unfortunately I guess in that era we didn't think about the soldiers all that much as now and thank them for their service, no they were not thanked for their service, they were spit on when they came back and they were stoned and cursed and what not and they were doing the duty that they signed up for or were drafted for and some of them didn't have any choice they were drafted as with my brother in law he was married in early April and had to leave two weeks later for the war

**Lynch:** oh wow,

**Jenkinson:** so it the mindset in that era want an thankful one for what they did because so many people were against the war and they were against the soldiers who fought in the war and it wasn't until the last dozen years or twenty years maybe that people have turned around and have honored the Vietnam Vets instead of stoning them and cursed them and spit them so that's my thoughts on that.

**Lynch:** of course during that time you had mentioned that the draft there was a lot of anti-war movement and protests going on college's campuses, including La Salle, I was reading at one point there was one year where they had to postpone final exams.

**Jenkinson:** oh I'd heard that but that was well before my time here so...

**Lynch:** that's exactly what I was going to ask that would have been before, once you started working, people who had been there at the time talked about?

**Jenkinson:** no I don't remember anyone, I mean at that point we were about a dozen years past the end of the war and people I think people were tired of talking about so in the ensuing years they just didn't talk about it and then people that were in the war such as my Baky or Mr. McAskill felt that people should remember and thus was a reason to start collecting materials so people could remember that and in today's generation they're very interested in the war, they come and get material out of the collection to do papers and like I said I think in the previous hour that we had talked there are some classes that they hold on the Vietnam war and Professor (Joe) Volpe usually has a class every year and in the springtime he tries to take a class to Vietnam and John has gone with them several times it's very

expensive so they kind of do it every other year or whenever there's enough interest to it so the kids come over and they ask for material and before the librarian was hired then John had to approve that they took it out and then I would take them back to the vault and take their information on what books they wanted or what material they wanted and then pull the stuff off for them and they had to leave their ID numbers and make sure that we got all the material back, it's not like circulating material where you check it out at the front desk it's handled differently so yeah they're interested in today's generation so I hope they appreciated it.

**Lynch:** certainly yes and these collections can help them to do so now some of the other collections that they have in the library besides Vietnam, there's also one on the Holocaust, is that correct?

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes, yes there is. John started that collection as well.

**Lynch:** oh he did?

**Jenkinson:** Yes, I really don't know a lot about that collection but it has grown also teachers on campus must have classes for it.

**Lynch:** I'm sure

**Jenkinson:** because the students will come over and borrow that material too I'm not sure that I remember how much interest from outside is in that particular collection as is in the Vietnam collection but there have been people who have come to La Salle to look in the collection as part of their research for writing a book and what not, so that's basically what I know about that collection.

**Lynch:** Sure, thank you, you had mentioned students coming to borrow material, whether for checking it out or for papers, research, to what extent for all of these collections do students, or even outside researchers have access to the material?

**Jenkinson:** Well John is very generous, if it's a professional from the outside, they usually contact him he verifies who they are and allows them to come and basically almost have free reign he'll make appointments or allotted times if Sarah is available she'll interact with the person and they'll pull material off the shelf and either use the reading room or outside study table and they're allowed to photocopy it and as far as somebody who's coming to research he usually doesn't allow them to take any books when they go but many of them find what they need in the length of time that they're here and it seems to work very well. Students I can say, if it's a book in a particular collection we have what we call ID strips that we put in a book and that has a call number on the back of the title of the book or the material or whatever and that is if he allows the student to borrow the material we take that out of the book and we make a copy of the student's ID and John usually tells them that they can have the book, they can have the material for a week and if it's beyond it, if they need it beyond it they have to call and let us know so we can put...

**Lynch:** make special arrangements?

**Jenkinson:** Yes, put it in pencil that they have to a certain date and we have a little box that we keep all those in and we look through it and we make sure that we get everything back and if for some reason we didn't get anything back then a letter is sent from the Director's office saying that they need to return the book or pay for a new one. And I don't remember that ever happening...

**Lynch:** Doesn't happen too often?

**Jenkinson:** Usually they're pretty good and they realize that this is a special collection and in the long run if there's a library fine on your record when you go to graduation...

**Lynch:** Uh-oh

**Jenkinson:** and it's not paid and you don't pay it on graduation day or before, you don't walk out with your diploma, you graduate but you don't get your physical diploma until...

**Lynch:** until you pay up? I see.

**Jenkinson:** so I believe that's still in effect

**Lynch:** Probably works very well

**Jenkinson:** (laughing) you have to have some kind of incentive to do things sometimes

**Lynch:** Well that's certainly a good incentive. Ok, another exhibit, Bob Dylan

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes

**Lynch:** How did that come about?

**Jenkinson:** that was again Mr. Baky (laughing) he definitely is the curator of the Special Collections, I guess from being a child in the '60's or being a young adult in the '60's where Bob Dylan was very prevalent and very vocal against the war, that was one of the things that John thought originally should have been in the Special Collections but intervening years came by he just collected more material from Bob Dylan. There's books, there's music, there's like I said Bob Dylan was here recently he was doing a small concert and the concert promoters knew about Mr. Baky and Mr. Baky's collection and sent him tickets to the show.

**Lynch:** Oh great

**Jenkinson:** it's a pretty well-known collection now it's been given a lot of publicity, I'm not really sure why, I mean, I like Dylan but I'm not sure why and he's been interviewed by a public radio and had newspaper articles about the Dylan collection and again started off with nothing and has grown and people who are writing books about Bob Dylan have come to research the materials that we have here



so they can incorporate him into books I don't remember exactly who but some of them have mentioned the Connolly library.

**Lynch:** In their research or their dissertations or whatever they are doing. Great one last collection that I would like to ask you about and a pretty remarkable one at that the Susan Dunleavy Collection of Biblical Literature, yes that actually started as a memorial, is that correct?

**Jenkinson:** Yes I'm sorry to say I don't really remember the details of that since it was, it didn't come into the library until I would say until maybe four years ago, five years ago.

**Lynch:** Oh really, that recently?

**Jenkinson:** It was always housed in the Art Museum in La Salle's Art Museum. Brother Daniel Burke<sup>17</sup> he was very close to the Dunleavy family and I believe the memorial collection started with him from her family and Brother Daniel was very good at what do you say, getting donors for collections and over the years this collection had grown and grown and grown and some rare rare bibles are in that collection and the current curator of the Art Museum felt that it would be better served if it was housed here because we have a closed vault area, people know it's here they can come and see the Special Collections Librarian and be allowed to view the material in the Special Collections room and I don't believe they allow it to go out on loan to anybody, because the collection is very valuable I don't know if you want to quote me on this but I thought I heard it was about five million dollars.

**Lynch:** oh wow, and you had started to address my next question, that some of these books are very old and very valuable I think one of highlights was I believe was a King James bible from 1611 so a lot of these are very valuable and again, the access that people have to them, are these books something that you know the content been digitized and they can view it or they can actually view the books I'm sure these aren't exactly books that you can just go and check out.

**Jenkinson:** Over the years the Audio-Visual Department has kind of gone by the wayside and has now evolved into the Media and Digital Services Department and the head of the Digital Services Rebecca Goldman, she studied, she is an archivist, so she works in conjunction with Brother Joe<sup>18</sup> and in the University Archives, she helps him a great deal, organizing and getting things the way they should be, even though Brother Joe is an archivist also but she is a more recently trained archivist she is also trained in digitization, so under her initiative we just hired a Processing Archivist who is another librarian and an Archivist Assistant so they're starting to digitize materials so I would assume that eventually this is going to happen, put the most valuable materials available if they're old and fragile like that it's more beneficial to digitize them and allow any researchers or students who need to view them that way instead of handling the actual materials so there is some sort of initiative to start doing that, I don't know, you'll have to talk to Rebecca Goldman to see exactly what materials they've started with because I don't know that, but they are going in that direction with a lot of the materials.

**53:07/1:48:47**

---

<sup>17</sup> Brother Daniel Burke, served as President of La Salle College from 1969-1976

<sup>18</sup> Brother Joseph Grabenstein is the Head Archivist of the La Salle University Archives

**Lynch:** Ok and then, though it does sound like there is a lot of benefits to doing this, easier access for a lot of students, in preparation for this interview I was reading transcripts of several other interviews including one that was done with Mr. Baky in 2009 and he was asked about the technology and he said that if everything had existed the way that it does today, when he started if things were digital then it might not have been as interesting to him and he maybe might have pursued a different career.

**Jenkinson:** Well I would think that's true...

**Lynch:** Is that something where you have similar sentiments

**Jenkinson:** Well I would think that's true because to look at something digitized, of course you can read the materials but it's not tactile, you can't touch it and you can't see the value of it as much. I mean, if you had access to the bibles and asked to see them and saw them you would say oh my god this is beautiful.

**Lynch:** Incredible yeah,

**Jenkinson:** and the same thing with some of the articles in the Vietnam collection, you might say well why would he collection this? There's a Vietnam G.I Joe doll back there, well that was part of the era and they manufactured these things to relate to the Vietnam War, if you just saw a picture of that, you could see a picture of that in any catalogue, if you went back onto amazon and you googled the Vietnam War material you would probably see a lot of stuff that looked neat, but touching it and seeing it is a different view so.

**Lynch:** Great, I wanted to backtrack for one moment, the Belfield House which is on the property, right on the same block, right next to the library I believe that was purchased in 1984 that property was, was that purchase necessary, did the school own the property that the library was built on prior to that?

**Jenkinson:** Well the Belfield house is behind the library so the library was built, I believe on La Sallian already purchased land because it was parking lot and in between the library and Belfield Estate are tennis courts so I would believe that that was La Salle's property too when the tennis courts were built and they always wanted to purchase the Peale Estate<sup>19</sup>, that's what the Belfield house is and one thing I did mention earlier when I first became employed at La Salle the Personnel Department was in a small house that's on the Peale Estate, after the Personnel Department left that building it became the Tea house the Japanese Tea House, but it was so so tiny and when you went in to fill out your paperwork to start your employment here you had to snake around and up these tiny little steps to an office upstairs, it was so tiny that they moved them out of there into the building that I told you that I went over to work in along Wister Street so when they bought the property there they tried to keep the footprint, all the green areas there remained pretty much the same they didn't build anything new on that property they housed security there and next to the house it looked like the stable area where you open the half

**57:41/1:53:21**

---

<sup>19</sup> Charles Willson Peale: One of the leading painters of the Revolutionary and early Federal eras lived at Belfield from 1810 to 1826.

doors, it was like a barn.

**Lynch:** Oh nice,

**Jenkinson:** but security was there for many years until they moved to Chew Street, I believe they bought that just because it was historic and they wanted to maintain it and keep it that way, they haven't changed much of anything, they might have renovated the interior of the house because that's where the president's office is and renovated for security there but the other little buildings that are the property there are either empty or I don't know what's in there.

**Lynch:** thank you, you had mentioned of course Bellfield house has served in recent years as the office of the President of the College and this gives me a nice opportunity to ask you, it's been sort of a historic moment for the school recently in the hiring of the newest president

**Jenkinson:** Oh yes,

**Lynch:** Any thoughts on Dr. Colleen Hanycz?

**Jenkinson:** Well I'm happy to see that it's not an all-boys club anymore (laughs) and from what I know reading her resume that was posted to all of us when she was interviewed that she looks very good for the job and hopefully, internally things might turn around, not that we need a women to do that but this will be first time that it's not a Christian Brother, plus it's a women so even though I won't be here, I look forward to it, my daughter will be here so she'll let me know what's going on but I think it's a positive thing and hopefully, there's a little bit of chaos on campus right now because of the unknown and once she's settled in and makes her mark people will be more at ease with certain changes, when changes happen too fast people get kind of off their keel and they kind of get worried that things are not great when there's nothing really wrong, it's just that there's change fast and even if it's just construction it's like well where are they getting the money for this and things like that so my thoughts are I think she'll be a positive influence for the university.

**Lynch:** Great and I think a lot of people are looking forward to seeing that. Now in conclusion I'd like to kind of bring it back around to you, you said retired but there is still some time left until they hire a replacement, how did you arrive at your decision to retire?

**Jenkinson:** Uh you know actually I wasn't going to retire until I was seventy but the reason I'm retiring now is, my family is saying why do you want to wait until seventy, by then you don't know, not that I'm unhealthy but you never know what's going to come and my sister and I always had plans to do some traveling and I just said to myself that I need to go, it's time to go and if I waited until I was seventy I would have been here thirty five years and that was kind of my goal, but it's fine I was kind of upset with the fact that I'm not going to be here anymore but I think this little interim period where I'm only here half days, two days a week it's like weaning me off and the reality of it isn't so, you're working and you're not working so I'm kind of glad I decided to do that for John and it seems to be working out ok, and you know there are things at home that you want to get done and order to get things done you

**1:02:38/1:58:18**

have to take time off like if it's a contractor or something and this way I'm home and I can have them come and go at my timeframe and like I said I can come and go with my sister anytime if we want to take a small trip or maybe go cross country or something but right now that's my goal, eventually when I get everything I need to do at home I'll probably try to volunteer someplace, you know maybe a local hospital, there's schools around that I can do library stuff in schools around where I can volunteer my time or just look on the internet and see what's around for volunteering,

**Lynch:** That's great

**Jenkinson:** and my sister, she volunteers at a hospital once a week so and we still manage to do what we want to do so that's my immediate thoughts.

**Lynch:** That's great, one final question or a quote that I would like to share with you I was recently reading as you know a book about the history of La Salle by Prof. Rossi<sup>20</sup> for background information and there was a chapter in there that discusses the library and it talks about the members of the staff and how fortunate the school is to have such a devoted staff working in the library over the years and I'm quoting one faculty member who is stated in the book that "these people are worth their weight in gold" considering how much time you've put in and the work that you've done how does that make you feel that people really appreciate what you've done

**Jenkinson:** Well everybody feels appreciated because when they do something extra for a faculty member, most of those faculty members write a letter to John saying I had project and I want sure how I was going to approach what I wanted to do and your librarian was great at steering me in the direction that I needed to go and I just want to let you know that you have valuable people there and longstanding people, our people don't leave quickly some of them are here twenty-five years already and I guess when their time comes maybe most of them will be leaving together and create a big hole in the staff at the library and even us clerical people get praise from the faculty and the students alike saying thank you, being on the second floor here we're not in the immediate flow of what's going on the first floor with all of the computers and the online materials and they have the Reference Department if they have any questions but several times a week somebody will come into my office and say can you help me find this book I've been over here back and forth and I just can't find it and I don't have any problem getting up from my desk and saying yeah come on let's go and then, well I must have passed it I don't know what I was looking at I just didn't see it and usually the students are very very thankful just for that small help and it makes your job easier when people appreciate you and knowing that the reception that they gave me the day that I retired from full time work let me know that, I don't want to get teary eyed but I felt appreciated even by my fellow staff members, John and I are the oldest, we're the longest standing staff members and now John is and then there's another John down in Circulation who is right behind him, but everybody else is here for quite a number of years, the support staff in the circulation area and the reference area that have turn over a lot because people take a clerical job here

**1:07:18/2:02:58**

---

<sup>20</sup> *Living the Promise*(2012) By Prof. John Rossi, Emeritus Professor of History

at La Salle mostly to get the benefits and to go to school so when they've done their four years and if they're not going to graduate school then they're looking for a better paying job because unfortunately the salaries at La Salle (laughing) are not great so you have to have an alternate reason for being here and mine at the time was my husband worked full time and I didn't really need to have a job but at that time my kids were halfway through grade school and I just didn't want to hang around the house all day so I took the job and I've been here ever since, and granted it's not the best paying job but the benefits for my two kids were basically what I was here for so I'm happy that I was here.

**Lynch:** and La Salle is better for it.

**Jenkinson:** Thank you

**Lynch:** Well Mrs. Jenkinson we are now up to 9:13 personally I would like to thank you very much for your time it has been a most enjoyable discussion and as a member of the La Salle student body albeit a relatively new one I want to personally thank you for all you have done in your time here and I wish you the very best in a well-deserved retirement.

**Jenkinson:** Well thank you so much.

**1:08:43/2:04:23**