

Interviewee: Michael McGinniss
Interviewer/Abstractor: Ryan Campbell
Date June 26, 2018
Location: Christian Brother's Residence at La Salle University
Running Time: 22:53
Recording Equipment: Phone 5s using the Voice Memos App

Abstract

Michael McGinniss was born on November 11, 1947. His parents were Dr. Thomas McGinniss and Helen Catherine McGinniss. He attended St. Helena's Church Parish School and La Salle High School. Brother Mike joined the De La Salle Christian Brothers in 1965. In 1970 he graduated from then La Salle College with a Bachelor's Degree in English. Brother Mike taught at South Hills Catholic High School located in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania from 1970 to 1974. He completed his graduate work at Notre Dame during the years of 1974 – 1979, where he was student and an adjunct professor. He then taught at the Washington Theological Union in Washington D.C. from 1979 to 1984. After his time in Washington D.C. Brother Mike returned to La Salle in 1984 to serve as professor until 1994 when he went to work at the Christian Brothers University in Memphis Tennessee as president from 1994 – 1999. He returned to La Salle University to serve as president of the university from 1999 to 2014. During his tenure as President, Brother Mike presided over tremendous growth of the university as well as athletic success. Brother Mike currently oversees the Honors Program at La Salle University and lives in the Christian Brothers Residence located at La Salle University's Campus.

Log

- 00:00 Shuffling of recording device, introductions: interviewer's name, interviewee's name, date, location, and asking of permission to conduct interview
- 00:22 Born November 11, 1947 in Philadelphia. Explains how he spent his "entire life in Philadelphia until he joined the Brothers." Describe his parents, father Dr. Thomas McGinniss and his mother Helen Catherine McGinniss nee McMullin. He speculates that his father was born in Philadelphia, PA and that his mother was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Both of his parents were born in the late half of the 1910's. Remarks how his birthday is on Armistice Day (November 11).¹
- 02:40 Discusses his parent's occupations, his father was an optometrist and his mother was a homemaker and secretary for his father's medical practice.² Discusses his parent's characteristics and memories that he had of them. Also stated how great his parents were toward him and his sister.
- 04:53 Describes gender roles of his parents' contemporaries during his adolescence back round noise of people walking past.

¹ Armistice Day was the day in which the hostilities of the First World War ended.

² Optometry is the practice of correcting vision defects via examination and lenses.

- 05:50 Talks about his aunts and uncles, one of which was biological. He refers to his other aunts and uncles as “the Irish type” meaning adults who were in his life. Back round noise of people walking by. Subject asks if it is bothering the interview.
- 06:30 Discusses his relationship with his sister Helen (also referred to as Nellie) most of her life Brother Mike was in the Christian Brothers. He joined the Brothers at 17 when his sister was 10. He states that he has a great relationship with her now and that she lives in Michigan and has three children of her own. Discusses how his sister was more rebellious as a child and teenager. Subject taps on the table. Discussed his sister’s career and moving around due to her husband’s (Jerry) career.
- 09:12 Subject explains how learned the most from his parents through imitation. Also how his Catholic upbringing imparted morals unto him and his sister. Subject asks about the people walking past.
- 10:11 Discusses who owned his family home, remarks “that the bank did for a while” in reference to a mortgage. Subject wipes face. The importance of home ownership is discussed. The division of labor between his mother, father, sister, and himself is discussed. He remarks that it was divided typically based on gender. He explains his father’s medical practice was conducted out of his house that he grew up in. Brother Mike explains how he interacted with a variety of people as a child. He describes himself as the “entertainment for the patients.” He also explains that this upbringing greatly helped his interpersonal skills

13:58 He explains other social interactions that he had in his neighborhood growing up. He details how he keeps in contact with one of the people that he knew as a child because his sister is a still friend with them. Background noise of people walking by. He explains the types of games that he played as a child; he remarks that the question was “curious.” He explains the game “wire ball” were children would try to hit telephone wires with a ball. He primarily played near Fisher Park near Spencer and Fifth Street. Children that he played with are discussed.

17:03 Education is discussed. Went to St. Helena’s Church Parish School for elementary school. He referred to it as the “new school.”³ He graduated from St. Helena’s in 1961. Discusses how St. Helena’s has changed over the years, it “absorbed” another Catholic School (Incarnation) and had parts taken out to form another parish (St. Joseph’s in Cheltenham.) He stayed at St.Helena’s from first grade to eighth grade. He attended La Salle High School to complete the rest of his education. Discusses his favorite subjects, which were history and literature. He reflects that the teachers that he had for those subjects could have caused this. He explains the clubs and extracurricular programs that he was in. He enjoyed managing the swimming team because of the “statistical” aspects of it. Also mentions the unnamed Christian Brother that ran the team.

21:46 Discusses his first interactions with the Christian Brothers, the majority of his teachers at La Salle High School were Christian Brothers so he was

³ Still located at 6101 N 5th Street Philadelphia PA.

acquainted with many of them. For most of his subjects Christian Brothers with the exception of History and English, which were taught by lay people.⁴ Remarks how the school is entirely different now with the majority of the teachers being lay people and some women.

22:48 At this point in the interview we pause the session, unbeknownst to the interviewee and interviewer a former colleague of Brother Mike's were visiting the campus with their child. In order to maintain the integrity of the process a fifteen-minute break was held so the subject could speak with them.

⁴ In this instance a layperson refers to a teacher that does not come from a religious background.