

Interviewee: Michael McGinnis
Interviewer/Abstractor: Ryan Campbell
Date June 26, 2018
Location: Christian Brother's Residence at La Salle University
Running Time: 44:35
Recording Equipment: Phone 5s using the Voice Memos App

Log

- 00:00 Interview resumes after a short break and unrecorded conversation. Discusses his accomplishments as president of La Salle University. He states that he is most proud of the way the “university grew during his presidency.” He credits the programs that were developed by his predecessor as a major contributing factor. He explains the role that the board of trustees played in facilitating growth; some members resisted the changes while others aided it. He is also very proud of the athletic success achieved during his tenure. The most notable is La Salle's Men's Basketball team entering the Sweet Sixteen during the NCAA Basketball Tournament in 2013. Explores the role that John Gianni had as head coach.¹ He discusses how basketball receives the most attention in college athletics. Discusses how basketball coaches were hired and what his criteria were. His major concern for the coaches was for them to “treat the players as people” and a concern that the players graduated.
- 05:13 Discusses the ethnic change in Philadelphia that has occurred throughout his life. He notices that the neighbors shifted from majority white to people of color, describes it as a “big change.” Discusses the economic disparity in the areas of Philadelphia around La Salle's campus. Explores issues of housing such as home

¹ John Gianni was the head coach of La Salle's Men's Basketball team from 2004 to 2018.

ownership and renting. Despite the changes in the area he still sees them as that wanting the same thing that people wanted when he was growing up which is “wanting a safe and coherent neighborhood.”

08:52 Compares the concerns of the residents with the concerns of the students. He reiterates that the values of the community around La Salle remain the same despite the change in demographics.

10:37 Discusses the role of La Salle in the community moving forward. He states that La Salle has a major economic role in the community and that it has to “engage the community.” He discusses ways to engage the community, for example the building of the Business School, how to control student behavior. Tells one story of how he would have Belfield park cleaned when students left trash there after social gatherings and the steps he took to prevent students gathering there.²

15:15 Discusses the issue of gentrification in Philadelphia and examines how much of a role La Salle University played in that process. Urges that La Salle thrives in a diverse area as opposed to a gentrification and that La Salle has an economic responsibility to the neighborhood.

18:25 Discusses the effects that gentrification could have had on La Salle University, the economic capabilities of the area around La Salle’s campus, issues that other universities have to contend with. Explores how his experience and problems he faced, as university president was similar to the ones his contemporaries faced in Philadelphia. States that La Salle University never had an objective to gentrify the

² Belfield Park is a public park immediately adjacent to La Salle’s campus

- area community immediately around La Salle. States that his successor will face the same issues with the community that he did during his tenure.³
- 23:00 Discusses and evaluates the role of multicultural programs and events at La Salle. States that universities need to be welcoming to people and able to educate others who are not informed about different peoples. Praises his successor, Colleen Hancyz in her ability to establish a non-denominational prayer room. Explores how since La Salle focuses on students who are the first in their families to attend college, diversity is essential. Discusses how diversity should be implemented in the college setting.
- 27:53 Discusses the Honors Program at La Salle University, explains that it is much less stressful than serving as president. Mentions the death of Emily Hancyz who was an honors student.⁴ He describes the job as “being nice to smart kids” but nonetheless it is a challenging role, seeks to run the program in a credible way on a tight budget, keeping it relevant with a new curriculum. Focuses on how to craft the honors program to serve the student body. States that running the honors program is similar to serving as President but on a smaller scale.
- 31:42 Discusses the future of the Catholic Church, the impact of Pope Francis on the papacy. Compares Pope Francis with Pope John Paul II and how both men were actively engaged with the secular world, both injected “youth” into the role, “more travel, more touching the people.” Speaks highly of the human emphasis that younger pope demonstrate. Describes the Catholic Church as “ an institution

³ His successor as president at La Salle University is Colleen Hancyz

⁴ Emily Hancyz passed away in November 2017; she was the daughter of La Salle University's President Colleen Hancyz.

made up of people,” and that the “essence” will change. Discusses the media focus on the Pope Francis, how history tends to highlight the leaders as opposed to the people.

37:29 Discusses his favorite Pope, who was Pope John XXIII since he called the Second Vatican Council. He relates a story when he saw a photo of John XXIII serving as cardinal smoking a cigarette and having an alcoholic drink he described it as shocking but more “human”.

39:08 Discusses goals and achievement he would like to pursue for the remainder of his life. States that he never had a bucket list but if he were to write one many of the things that he has achieved would be on there, instead is focused on the Honors Program and insuring that it has a successful future. He looks forward to the next phase of his life, hopes to be reasonable about what he can achieve, reasonable about when it is time to step aside. Describes how optimistic the Christian Brothers tend to be and he looks forward to being optimistic himself as his level of responsibility decreases. Reflects on potential vacations he will take. Conclusion of the interview, appreciation for conducting the interview, credits Dr. Allen for urging him to be interviewed.

44:35