

Interview #2: Marianne Gauss  
Date: April 5, 2006  
Time: 2:00-3:30pm  
Interviewer: James Brightman

M: Marianne Gauss  
J: James Brightman

*Prior to this interview, I e-mailed Marianne follow-up questions to preview for our second interview, but she sent me written responses instead on March 30, 2006. I refer to this at the beginning of the interview and have provided them here for reference.*

J: What was the neighborhood around La Salle like when you attended the school?

M: The immediate neighborhood looked a lot like it does now. There may have been a few more, older, white neighbors but it was integrated. Five blocks out, though, was a bit more stable than it is now. There weren't many burned out houses or vacant homes in this area of the city. The neighborhood was working class, integrated.

J: What types of service work did students engage in? How much was that emphasized?

M: I don't remember much "service" work. So many of us were commuters, who worked jobs to pay for tuition and room and board at home. Service may have been just as prevalent, but it was called being a good neighbor. I shoveled and dropped off groceries for older people in the neighborhood where I lived. I had been involved in CSC in high school and some of that continued. But there wasn't vocabulary for service learning.

J: How was homosexuality looked upon on and off campus?

M: My sense is that it was largely ignored off campus. I remember a group called SIR (Students for individual Responsibility or Respect) that formed to support homosexual students and raise consciousness. Typically, some people on campus were scandalized and appalled, citing "Catholic values" and others were happy that we were recognizing a need to acknowledge and support these students.

J: How were race issues addressed on and off campus?

M: Most of the white students went overboard to show how open and liberal they were. But there were obviously camps. There was an African American group, this was during the civil rights movement. I think it was called the Black Student Union. The population of Black students was even smaller than now, and I have very little recollection of Latino students, with the exception of one friend. I may have been oblivious.

J: How did it feel to graduate?

M: It was surreal. I have few memories of the actual event. Mass was at Mary Immaculate, but I don't recall commencement. There are pictures of me in a cap and gown. I remember my grandmother's pride. She had a 5th grade education and I was the first woman she ever saw with a college degree. I was proud of persevering, but I admit to feeling like an imposture at a certain level.

J: What were the reactions of professors, classmates, and family members to your graduation?

M: One professor took me to dinner, and my family did the same. But I had recently been engaged to be married, and I think that my mom was actually more centered on that than on graduation. Plus graduation was in May, but I have finished my course work in December and had already been working for five months.

J: Was there any special ceremony for the first women graduates?

M: No

J: Why is there a discrepancy in the record regarding your graduation date? (Brother Joe's CV says 1974 for you, but the magazine always puts a '75 after your name.)

M: I am considered part of the social class of 1974 as I would have graduated with them, but I had to wait for one last Math class to cycle. Switching to the evening division put me off schedule a little. So the graduation that I reference above is actually in May, 1975.

J: Who else could I interview from your class regarding their experiences as the first women to attend La Salle?

M: Local women: Teresa Hooten Kozemple, D.O., Gerriann Burke M.D.

### **1. Follow-Up Questions from E-mail Exchange**

J: Welcome back to hour two of our interview. Thank you for your e-mail answers to questions that I had proffered to you. I have some follow-up questions to those, and then, we're going to move on to your professional life.

M: Okay, no problem.

J: You stated in your follow-up comments to our interview that the neighborhood "looked a lot like it does now," that it was "integrated," and the areas farther out "were a bit more stable than they are now."

M: That is correct.

J: How would you rate safety around the campus during your time here?

M: I remember being told that I needed to be careful by my parents, but I don't remember ever worrying about safety on campus as an undergraduate. I just don't remember being concerned about it. I'm a little bit more aware now. I wouldn't say I'm concerned, but when I leave this building at night, after my night classes, I usually make sure that there's a security guard outside before I walk back to my car, so I guess I'm more conscious now.

J: So you're more conscious, but do you think that's a feeling that happened over time?

M: Part of it is maturity and part of it is changes in the city. The city is more violent than it was. I can remember my one sister telling me that they saw a dramatic change in her emergency room when crack came into the city, so drug use and drug traffic and things of that sort probably had driven up some of the crime statistics since the 70s, but part of it is maturity. Just trying to be a little bit more aware. I'm not as invincible as I was at 20.

J: That's right, and I guess with little ones worrying about you and such and a husband. Following up on that, when did the surrounding area begin to decline in terms of "burned out houses" or "vacant homes" and why do you think it declined? You already kind of mentioned that with the drug issue.

M: I think there might be some pattern with the drug issue, but I don't remember actually ever noticing it because I used the same path to come here every day. I'm driving pretty much the same direction that I drove when I was a student and that neighborhood is more stable. It just slowly would be integrated. When I was a kid, 5<sup>th</sup> and Godfrey was, as I mentioned in the notes before, Irish-Catholic and German-Lutheran, and now, there are a lot of Vietnamese and African-Americans, and there's still a lot of Irish-Catholics and German-Lutherans. It's still a mix and so, it's more one house at a time changing. I think more of the deterioration has happened west of here and maybe just a little bit northwest of here seems to be less stable than it was when I was a student, and since I don't go through that neighborhood very often, I don't know when that happened. I would imagine late 80's. That would be my perception because of what was going on in the city at that time, but I still think there are an awful lot of really hardworking people in this area who are trying to hold it together with a tax base that's not friendly.

J: That's right. When you say "what was happening in the late 80s," is that drugs you're referring to?

M: I think part of it was that. There was an acceleration of drug use in that timeframe, but once again, that's my perception, I have no data.

J: How did La Salle address these changes as far as you can tell?

M: I don't think that they addressed these changes until this year. I think that we increased security. We do a better job of letting our students know, and I think that's been going on for 10-15 years, but the outreach to the community where we gave the property over so they could build a shopping center. That kind of community development should probably have always been our responsibility, and we didn't take that responsibility beforehand. I think part of that is that whole Catholic separation of church and state. We're a relatively poor school for a university's standards. How much can we afford to give away? But if we don't do community development in this community, no one else is going to do it, so I really think those strides are really recent. Maybe since Brother Michael came back and saw that there was a need, and they've been trying to consolidate what we have and figure what's the optimum way to use things. I really think that's a big step forward for us, that shopping center.

J: Me, too. I'm glad. What was the dynamic then between students and neighbors as far as you could tell?

M: It was a town and gown situation, but it was less of an issue then because so many of the students were commuters and most of the commuters were on buses or carpoled, so it wasn't as though there were a horde of kids coming into the neighborhood and taking up all the parking spots. Although I'm sure the neighbors felt that way, there were only the six dormitories, the apartments for the older students for returning vets and married students, which were Teresa Court and La Salle Apartments. They were like apartment houses anywhere in the city, so I think that although there was probably a town and gown kind of quality to the dynamics, I think they are worse now. I think that's more problematic now, partly because we have students who come here from environments where they don't interact with people of color, partly because sometimes our students come here and think that this is a license to party and don't realize they're living next door to people who have put money into that house and raised their children in that house. So when it was a commuter population, it was probably less of an issue than it is now that it's largely residential.

J: How do you think during your time community members viewed La Salle?

M: We were probably an aggravation, but we were an employer. We helped stabilize the neighborhood a little bit, but I would imagine that there were issues of aggravation then that I'm not aware of. I would think the parking and the parties that did happen that were noisy. There were houses in the neighborhood then where students lived and had a good loud time, but I think in general, the neighbors didn't seem to have a real bad response to the students. The school had been here a long while already even then, so it was something that was part of the fabric of the neighborhood, but when our students are discourteous, whether it was the 70s or 2006, it's an issue for the particular neighbors whom they approach. I do think that there have been some dynamic changes with 20<sup>th</sup> street that we're just slowly starting to really fix, but maybe 20<sup>th</sup> street gave us good reason to do it. That may have been the prod that we needed.

J: Had any other protests from the community been as vigorous as that?

M: I don't remember any. No, I don't remember any.

J: You stated in your follow-up comments that "there wasn't vocabulary for service learning."

M: No, I don't remember any vocabulary for that. Now, in high school, I was part of the community service corps that the Archdiocese had just started to run. It was a brand new idea then, and so I remember hearing it, but it was things like contributing in local neighborhoods, maybe helping out with children with handicaps, and largely Operation Santa Claus. That was the big event, still the big event for CSC. But there was no vocabulary for service learning. I don't even know where that developed. I probably didn't hear it until 10 years ago. But we didn't have a large vocabulary for that. You were of service because you were a citizen and your parents made you be of service. If there was a neighbor who needed groceries carried, you carried them. I remember my brother as a newspaper boy. My mom found out that he had been paying for one of the women's newspapers because she would never have money when he came to collect, and he was out of pocket something like \$25. He was a little kid, but he was out of pocket that much money because not only was he paying for her newspaper, but she would send him to get milk and bread, and she wouldn't have the money to pay him for that. The only reason my mom found out is that she was trying to get my brother to pay

for something, and he didn't have the money. "Why not?" It was one of those long conversations, but it never even occurred to him not to help that woman out. That's just the way I was raised, and I think most of my neighbors were raised that way.

J: A tight knit community dynamic. In follow up to that, service is obviously the heart of the Lasallian mission. How was that value fostered in students at La Salle?

M: I don't know. I don't know that it was explicitly fostered. I know that we were always expected to be altruistic, tolerant, particularly tolerant, giving to one another. I had less of a sense of competition than I sometimes feel among my students now. The idea that we were all in the room. We were all supposed to be helping one another learn. I don't know whether that's a change in culture or a change in my perception of things. When I was talking about the last question, one of the things that struck me is that it was easy to be of service to your neighbor because your neighbor was going to be a part of your life in a way that I don't think neighborhoods have now, and some of that is legal. I remember my mother taking a child away from a man who was beating his daughter. We were at a picnic, and the man was smacking his daughter and screaming at her. My mother went over, took the child by the hand, and then walked the child to a park ranger, and then she got yelled at for interfering in a family dispute. But at that time, that was still a possibility. You could never do that today, so that is a breakdown of us being responsible to one another. We're not responsible for one another either, and so I feel there's more of that in the classroom. There's more competition in the classroom, a little bit more self-centeredness, and you have to actually explicitly think does their A really count for more than helping them understand the material? I don't know, but I don't remember the Brothers being really explicit about that, and it's interesting that I say the term Brothers because they had a lot of lay faculty, too, but we were here for academics.

J: The top reason, yeah. I guess it struck me because every time I've left the La Salle College High School parking lot, it says "Leave to Serve." That is the sign they have up to leave there.

M: Right, but it didn't say that in 1970 either. (Both laugh.) We've all caught the same wave.

J: In your follow-up comments regarding homosexuality on campus, you mention that there was a debate between those citing Catholic values as a reason to maybe spurn homosexuality while others supported groups like SIR. How pervasive was this debate and how was it addressed on campus?

M: I know it was addressed in the newspaper. I remember the Collegian having a number of weeks on this. There were protests in front of the Union. I don't remember many classes where it was discussed, but it was openly discussed in open settings like the Food Court and the Ballroom where we used to sit and talk. My sense was that there was total ignorance about homosexuality. People were looking for this scientific gene that they could point to and there were many people on campus that seemed to think it was a choice that someone made, and so that rhetoric was always very interesting to me because that didn't make common sense. I mean, as a kid I didn't understand it, but it didn't make sense to me either. The Catholic values were people who were often afraid of anybody who was different, and they would use that kind of conversation in order to sort of wrap a blanket around themselves if that makes sense. The conversations were open. There would be people who would talk to us about it, but

I don't recall actually having a big discussion about it in any of my classes. It was what it was: a group of students expressing themselves. I kind of wish you would find somebody who was a little more aware while they were here to interview because I just sort of blissfully went from class to class, job to work, you know. Found my way.

J: Well, it was a little lower on the priority list. You were trying to make it through.

M: I remember being aware that they not only were able to come together and form a group. The group was endorsed by whatever campus committee said this could be an official group. They were permitted to protest, and I had come from a high school where that would have lasted about 12 minutes and it would have been squashed, and mom and dad would have been called, and the child would have been sent home with a scolding. To be in an environment where not only were the voices heard but they were encouraged to speak, that was exciting to me.

J: That's powerful. You also mentioned the Black Student Union and the effect of the Civil Rights Movement on campus. And I was just wondering what role did these forces play, the Black Student Union and the Civil Rights Movement, on integration or separation among black students and the La Salle community?

M: I think initially it forced them to separate. There was probably a time in the 50s and 60s where there were young men on campus who were of color, and they just tried to fit in. I think the Civil Rights Movement almost called people of color to be more militant, and the Black Student Union would have had that sort of quality here on campus as well. Since most of the white students didn't know how to feel about that, either they vacillated between being annoyed that they were being asked to pay for something that happened during the slave era or feeling guilty because of what had happened yesterday to a black man in Philadelphia. There was a lot more discomfort than anything else, but I think it was more likely to force the African American students to feel that they couldn't integrate rather than do anything to the white students. Like any other person I'd say I had friends, I mean there were a couple people I can think of in the Masque with me who were of color, but they were often being called by their brothers and sisters to pull out because there was work to be done, and it was obvious the white people weren't going to do it, so it was an unsettling time. That kind of confrontation always made me uncomfortable. I didn't like to see people's feelings hurt. I didn't like to be a "them." It's funny how quickly we can make somebody else a "them," but I don't like being a "them." I remember that was probably the first time I had a real strong sense of that. There was also an incident in high school, but on campus here, it was more pervasive.

J: Great time to come here, I think.

M: It was just what it was. It was just what it was.

J: You mention that you only knew of one Latino student during your time here. You didn't say in your comments whether it was a male...

M: It was a man.

J: Man, okay. What was his experience like and do you remember his name?

M: His name was George Rodriguez. I had no idea, until you asked me the question, I would never have thought of him as a Latino because he was just one of the guys that we hung out with at the Campus Store. It wasn't until you actually asked the question that I went through my inventory of names that might have a slightly less Anglo sound, and I came up with George. He was obviously, probably Hispanic. I don't know that he ever felt any differently at all. He never alluded to it. There was nothing different in his behavior, and we didn't treat him any differently. He was just one of the guys.

## 2. Graduating from La Salle

J: "Surreal" was the word you used to describe your graduation experience in May 1975. I know that memories of that day may be fuzzy,

M: Oh, at best. (Both laugh.)

J: But could you describe your feelings about that as best you can and how your grandmother responded?

M: I can remember feeling like an impostor. I remember thinking they're going to find out that I don't belong here, and they're going to yank me out of the pew, and I was sitting next to a friend who I was really good friends with, a young woman that I liked a great deal, and we were just so tickled to be there. I can remember coming home and they had flowers for me, which was very startling in my family. That's not something that ever happened and my grandmother wanting her picture taken with me in my cap and gown out in the driveway behind our house. She was so proud that I had an education from high school, but the idea that I would have gotten a college degree just struck her as impossible. I remember at one point she said to one of my sisters something to the effect that "it's almost like she's another species of person, something very foreign," so it probably just bought into her sense that this is a land of opportunity. She told me the story of not being allowed to buy anything at a store until the store was empty. There was a time when she was young that there were so many Irish in Philadelphia, and they were the latest wave of immigrants. The storeowners would not wait on you unless the store was empty. It was sort of their way of showing you your place. To go from that to having a granddaughter who graduated from college, that's a pretty big leap. She scrubbed floors for a living. On her hands and knees, she scrubbed the floors at Litt Brothers, which is where Strawbridge's is downtown.

J: Down at 8<sup>th</sup> and Market?

M: That's a pretty big leap.

J: So you were a celebrity?

M: Yeah, for a little while. I think I was probably more of a celebrity with my own mother because I had gotten engaged that week, and in her mind, that was always the bigger goal. Pretty funny.

J: Yeah, getting the Mrs. Degree.

M: Yeah, big deal. (Both laugh.)

J: That's my next question. It sounds like your graduation experience may have been overshadowed by your engagement to Fred. Since you were both students here, would you mind sharing when you were engaged and how Fred popped the question?

M: If you remember, there was that confusion over my class year. I was a Math major. One of the courses that I needed to graduate was only offered in the fall. I missed it the fall before I should have graduated, and I was in night school, so I was sort of a little behind anyhow. Fred graduated in May of '74 and took a job in Washington D.C. working for the GAO as an auditor, so I was home here. He would drive back and forth. We didn't start dating until February of '74, and then, he took off for a year and a half, which apparently helped our relationship, and we got engaged the week of my graduation, which was May of '75. One of the things that was funny is my mother was so psyched about the wedding, and my graduation from college gift was a set of Tupperware pots and pans, which told me that she didn't understand what I thought college was going to be. She was preparing for my life as a cook. Crazy woman! (Both laugh.)

J: Yeah, it didn't lead in that direction at all.

M: No, I was thinking maybe a gift certificate to a bookstore or a new business suit or a briefcase. And then I get this huge box, and I open it up, and I'm thinking, "What is she doing?" Tupperware pots and pans. It was exciting.

J: Pretty hilarious. (Both laugh throughout this exchange.)

M: I still use them.

J: That's good. (More laughter.)

M: They were of good value.

J: Good quality that stuff. You stated that a professor took you out to dinner as a graduation present.

M: Brother Claude Demitras.

J: Okay, Brother Claude, okay. You said, I think, you said last time, that was pretty unheard of for a Brother to be taking two young ladies out.

M: I have no recollection of being in a restaurant and seeing a man with a collar with anybody but another male of the collar, whether it be a priest or a brother or whatever. I would think it would have been an unusual thing. The Brothers only taught boys up until that timeframe, so he was a special man. He was a very—Tolerant is the word I keep coming up with, but he was very open to what was possible for the young people who he taught.

J: What did that dinner symbolize since it was momentous that he would even take you out?

M: To me, it was momentous. It was recognition of how hard I had worked and that we had actually built a relationship, and in a fundamental way, that's the kind of memory

that helps me remember what I have to do in the classroom. Teaching is relational. They have to trust me, and I have to know them or we're of no use to one another, and he was very good at making that connection for me. I took awhile to figure out what he was trying to do.

J: Maybe he had a different approach than was obvious. (Both laugh.) You stated that there was no special ceremony for women during your graduation in '75.

M: It would have been inappropriate. I think it would have been inappropriate because it would have acted as though we were freaks, and what they were trying to do was make us feel included. So I think it would have really been inappropriate, but there was nothing that I recall. I wasn't invited to anything special that's for sure. What were they going to do? Give us pink flowers or a Tupperware party? You have to understand that my mother's gift to me was not out of character for the times, so what would the Brothers have done to make us feel special? We were happy to graduate with the guys.

J: It's interesting in the moment, in our current timeframe, it seems like firsts are always—They always try to celebrate those as they happen. One gets that impression, so I guess looking back, I can just imagine Joseph Cicala (current Dean of Students in 2006) would have to have something for that group of people, or something like that, meaning from a Division of Student Affairs type of standpoint. I can see that.

M: I know what you're saying.

J: Yeah, so looking at it from that standpoint...

M: To me, I think it's better this way. There's a part of me that thinks that a lot of the things that are wrong with American culture are those short-term orientations. The idea that new and first is better than successful and tenaciously tried. The persistent quality is not celebrated. When they celebrate the hundredth class of women, that will be something worth celebrating, but the first class, it's almost an experiment anyhow. They had no idea. They didn't know whether it was going to work. They didn't know whether it had worked. All they had done was handed us diplomas. Were we going to be able to go out and work in the fields we wanted to work? Was the education going to be enough to overcome the other barriers that were out there? I would think in many cases, the answer to that was probably no. At least, not until recently.

J: Which leads into my next question.

M: Well, this is working out great.

J: It is! Thank you. (He laughs.)

M: I wish you would have given me a script, and I wouldn't feel so played.

### **3. Working at PNC**

J: It sounds like you received a job offer right after college?

M: I did.

J: Was your first job at PNC Bank?

M: I was an internal auditor for PNC Corporation.

J: Okay, PNC Corporation. Do you feel you were well-prepared for it?

M: Absolutely. I was certainly well-prepared financially. I knew enough accounting, and my math skills always gave me an advantage over even the people I was working with because although they were all trained as accountants, my math skills helped me do number calculations so that I always had an answer before they did, which made them think I was smart. I was just faster at numbers. And I also think the predominantly male Lasallian education I received prepared me for the predominantly male workplace. It gave me a real strong sense of what I could accomplish and how to work around people who were in my way.

J: So what was an initial challenge in the fall of 1970 ended up being an asset in 1975?

M: Yeah, absolutely. And maybe had the Brothers done more specialized, "Oh, let's do this for the girls stuff." That would have just undermined what I really needed the most, which was the ability to find my own feet in a place where I didn't look like everybody else.

J: Interesting. Looking back on that, do you think there was much of an attrition rate with the women students?

M: No, I think the women were very aggressive, competitive academic types. I was probably at the lowest end of the curve for Admissions standards. My recollection of the women were they were confident harddrivers, and they had come from all girls schools where they were used to being at the top of their class. They may have been occasionally distracted by the boys, but they were not derailed for the most part.

J: Definitely not intimidated.

M: No, oh, maybe intimidated once in awhile. You know that story I told you about them rating the girls out? That was unnerving, and it was one of those things where we didn't have a lot of power to figure out how to address it. Plus, society was pretty much evaluating us that way anyhow. It was sort of a double-edged sword that way, but we were confident in ourselves intellectually.

J: So you don't remember many women dropping out?

M: No, I don't have a sense of that at all. I think they made it.

J: Was there any type of Career Services department to help students find jobs after college?

M: I'm sure there was. I don't remember. I have no recollection of it at all.

J: So how did you go about it?

M: One of my girlfriends was engaged to a fellow La Salle student. He had gotten out two years ahead of us, and he was working for a CPA firm, and I started interviewing through the CPA firms because I had a minor in accounting. I remember doing that, and somebody here must have helped me make that connection, so there must have been some sort of Career Services. But I had the sense that it was from a professor, and while I was interviewing with the CPA firms, Bill found out that PNC was looking for internal auditors and thought that might be a better fit for me, so I interviewed with them, and they hired me. It was a good fit for me because it eventually led me into banking, which I like, which I still like.

J: How did your career progress after that? You kind of already alluded to that.

M: I spent two years in internal auditing, and I had received an offer to do foreign exchange trading, which I would have liked to have done. That was actually the job I wanted to move into. When I went to fill out my final paperwork for that job, the salary they offered me was a thousand dollars less than what I was already making, and I didn't think it was worth it to me to take a job at a discount when there was so much risk in the job. The job was very different than what I was doing. It would have been very risky at least over the short run, so I said no, and the man was all upset. I went back and told my boss I was staying. He was thrilled because I was in the middle of a couple audits and I had progressed rather quickly. I had gone from an auditor to a senior auditor in a very short period of time, so he needed me to stay with the jobs that I was doing. Then, about a week later, the person from foreign exchange found out that the HR department had made a mistake when they gave him the number and that my raise would be significant, but at that point, I had already said no to one man and yes to another, and I just didn't feel like stirring the pot anymore, so I sort of stepped back from that. My husband and I were talking about starting a family, and I think we were at that point where we were thinking about having a family. Auditing was going to be difficult because they were frequently very, very long days, and I didn't have to travel far, just a couple hours to whatever property we were examining, so I still kept looking inside the bank and one of the loan officers came and asked if I'd be interested in switching to that division, so I did. I eventually switched to lending. I figured that was a more portable job skill than auditing, especially it would be a little bit more human. You can write a loan in a timeframe without having to be out at three in the morning to make sure that the money room opens under your supervision. So I switched to that and I worked in that department for two years and then I had Regina, our first child. I went back to the bank. They were surprised. I don't know that anyone had ever returned to the bank after a maternity leave at that point, but the law had changed and they did have to keep the job for me, so we played with that.

J: What year was this?

M: She was born in '78, so I went back and they kind of made up jobs for me. I put together a library for the loan officers. I would do evaluations of loan instruments, but I wouldn't actually write loans, and then there was some talk about maybe having me do international lending when I found out I was expecting Trisch because at that point, I was probably one of two people in the whole bank who could read a German translation of a financial statement. It's amazing the things that we think of as skills just because we don't prepare our students well enough. But anyway, when I found out I was expecting Trisch, I knew I couldn't go back because it was hard to get to work as it was. I didn't have childcare. What I would do is on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I would

leave Reg with my father. On Tuesdays, my mother-in-law would come down. Thursdays, I frequently took off and took work home with me. It was just this constant trying to patch. There was no childcare set up. There were no daycare centers that I had access to anyhow, and the idea of doing that with two children just seemed implausible. So I stayed home at that point. Trisch was born in July of '80. That's when I left, probably June or July of '80.

J: So approximately about 8 years. No, I guess it would be 5 years at the bank?

M: It was only 5, yeah, at the bank.

J: I was thinking of '71, but that's when you started at La Salle. What were the dynamics like in the workplace for you? Was it mostly men? Was it pretty mixed?

M: Mostly men, especially in lending. Well actually, it was mostly men in both settings. There were two female auditors with me in a department of 20, and then, when I went to lending, there was one other woman in a department of maybe 30. The dynamic that I remember most strongly in the bank was not gender. It was social status. I was one of the poor people in a department where most of the people that I worked with had trust funds and I can still recall very clearly a man asking me a question. I said, "Well, today's payday." He didn't know it was payday, and I knew to the hour when payday was coming because I had a quarter left to buy lunch until payday came in. He was a trust baby, and he lived off his coupons. I remember one day he also asked me if I would sew a button on his coat, and there was this women's lib streak in me and I was not sewing a button on somebody else's coat. So I said, "No, I have a sewing kit. I don't have time to do the button, but I can lend you my sewing kit." And he said, "Oh, I'll get James to do it." I said, "Who's James?" And he said, "He's the butler at my club." I remember thinking, "You got to be kidding me! I'm sharing a cubicle with you, and you have a butler at your club." That was much more of a challenge for me than gender.

J: Was this in Center City?

M: Uh-huh. Broad and Chestnut.

#### **4. Returning to La Salle**

J: In 1980, you leave the workforce for...

M: I go home.

J: For how long? Until '87?

M: Yeah, pretty much. I went back to grad school probably in '82. I had started before Reggie was born, and then, I probably took a course before Trisch was born. I took another course. I remember climbing the stairs in this building (College Hall) when I was pregnant with Matthew. I probably didn't get back to school until '82 because we needed to save money for it. Now, I was paying for it myself. Prior to that the bank had paid. In maybe '85, I got a job on campus part-time working for the Small Business Administration. We had a small business development center here on campus and I did consulting with small business owners who came in and needed help with their business plans. I did that for probably a year and a half. And then, I was offered the opportunity

to teach the Stat class. I taught two sections of Statistics in January of '87, and I've been teaching here ever since. They needed somebody as an adjunct in the spring term of '87, and then, in the fall of '87, one of my colleagues went out on leave, and then another colleague went out on leave in the spring of '87. One was a maternity leave. One was a research leave, but I can't remember which was which, and I was able to fill gaps and so...

J: So the right person at the right time.

M: Talk about tripping into a good deal.

J: You already kind of talked about it. I was going to ask you what role your family played in the decision-making process regarding your career? You pretty much answered that. It just got to be too unwieldy.

M: But my coming back was a function of that, too. I did not like being at home full-time. I was lonely. I was inept. I don't seem to have the ability to get the whole meal done at once. I'm a good cook. I'm just not real interested in the Martha Stewart thing. We used to have a joke that if I cleaned the house, the furniture got moved. Fred would walk in the house and pull a Dick Van Dyke tripping over something because I would have moved it so that you noticed that I cleaned because that's the part of the job that's so awful. It's just constant. You're always doing another tub of wash, another sink full of dishes. And at one point in time, I remember thinking, "I know every word to every Mr. Rogers song. I have to do something. I don't know where prime (rate) is. I don't know where the exchange rates are," and that's something I used to know. So that's why I sort of reupped in the MBA program because I intended to go back into banking and I knew I would need some sort of certificate that said I didn't get stupid during the years I was home.

J: When you decided to pursue your MBA, why did you choose La Salle?

M: Because it was comfortable. I knew that the value would be good. I knew how to get here. I felt that it would be the least inconvenient way for me to get a degree, but I was also working in Center City, still living in Fox Chase. It was physically a very easy place for me to get to between my office and home. There was a period of time where they offered classes in town I think, some MBA classes in town. Although I don't know how long that lasted, but it was just enough for me to get my feet wet and come back. Plus, they took a lot of the courses that I had taken as an undergraduate to be that 500-level MBA class, so it was an advantage for me financially. I wasn't going to need to invest quite as much; but quite honestly, it was probably just because it was easiest. I knew how to do it.

J: What was it like to return as a graduate student?

M: I had a 4.0 as a graduate student, so it was great because I didn't have that experience as an undergraduate. I was more mature. I was more settled. I was more disciplined. I had less time, so I had no excuse for not getting my work done. I started to see the power of what the rest of the education had meant to me because my philosophy class made sense to me in '82 the way it didn't at all in '72, so that I started to see—It's funny because the MBA is a very specific type of degree where it's very centered around Business courses, and yet, it was there that I first saw the value of all of

the other courses that I was forced to take as an undergraduate because it helped me be more philosophical, a little bit more holistic in how I approached topics.

J: So intellectually, where you felt really challenged when you were here in the early '70s, you felt like you were on top of your game in the '80s?

M: I think I'm just a slow learner. It took a little while for it to take root, but I still remember a class with Walt Schubert where he was talking about opportunity costs. Opportunity cost is a financial term that measures the value of building a prison against which neighborhood would have the most power to stop it. A volunteer army works because the opportunity cost for poor kids is so much lower than the opportunity cost for rich kids, so you'll always have enough kids to fill the ranks. It was a concept I had never heard in banking. When he mentioned it in class, I knew exactly what it was because it was so consistent with La Salle ideology about what is the real value of a person's decision and depending upon where their standing, their perception of that value is significantly different. And the idea that if you don't see these issues when you're making these decisions, you have the ability to ruin lives. Of course, when I was taking the classes, I intended to be CEO of a bank, so I could see that if I wasn't careful, I could make a lot of money for my company and ruin the lives of people all around the place, and it was a really interesting time for me to start to kind of gather all of what I needed to gather.

## 5. Teaching at La Salle

J: In a La Salle magazine article, you state that "you tripped into teaching, then just fell in love with it." Did that surprise you?

M: Oh, absolutely. As a young girl, I was encouraged to think about nursing and teaching as professions because that's what girls were encouraged to do, and I wanted no part of it. I couldn't picture that teaching would be interesting at all because to me, it looked like you were going to talk about the same thing every semester for the rest of your life, and I didn't realize that had very little to do with teaching. It was about the people in front of you who changed every semester for the rest of your life. That's where the teaching happens. Yeah, I was surprised. I never thought I would love it. I just thought I could do it for a semester and get out. I was looking to finish up.

J: What was it like teaching your first class here?

M: I was probably paralytically nervous. I don't actually remember it, but I mean, I don't sleep the week before I teach now. And I think that's a common complaint among faculty members. I'm very nervous before I teach now, and I'm not afraid that I won't be able to teach. I'm just afraid that I won't make the right kind of connections, that I might make a misstep that could block somebody from being involved in the class. Those are the things I worry about now, but when I first started to teach, I had never had a statistics class, so I was teaching a course I had never taken. Once again, I'm really a big one for the impostor syndrome, but I'm always afraid somebody's going to find out that I don't know what I'm doing, so I was probably terrified truthfully. And I don't remember getting a lot of direction. I got a copy of the syllabus. I got a room number and they handed me a textbook, so I knew that it was all uncharted territory for me.

J: And it was all on you?

M: Yeah.

J: How did it feel to change roles because you instantly went from being—well, were you still technically an MBA student?

M: I was still a student.

J: So how did it feel to change roles from student to teacher so quickly?

M: I was so busy it probably wasn't the sort of thing I reflected on, but it gave me an appreciation of the tension between teaching with a standard and being irrational and flexible from the students' perspective. That's one of the things that I do remember learning first that you needed to be really, really structured and really, really flexible and that having a standard for your students didn't mean that you had to be impossible for them to deal with. But were I to go into class without standards, none of them would have learned anything. The clever ones would have walked all over me, and the rest of them would not have found anybody to follow.

J: A balancing act. How did you find the undergraduate students during that time period (late '80s)?

M: I think they are just like the students we have now. I don't really see a difference in the temperament of the students. They were funny. They were willing. They were courteous for the most part. They tried, but they weren't terribly interested in statistics, and so I guess that most of them weren't any way interested in statistics. But my advantage was that I have a sister who was that age, and so as I was going into the classroom to teach, I would think of her and she and I have a very good relationship. We've always had a good relationship, and so I would think, "How would Jenny perceive this? How would this feel if you were doing that?" Then, when somebody misbehaved in class, I would start to try to think, "What would have caused that person to behave that way?" I don't actually believe that there are bad people. I believe there are people who are insecure, confused, occasionally manipulated by somebody else, and so if we're not getting along, there are a lot of other reasons than to say, "Oh, he's just a jerk or whatever." I didn't feel particularly confused about the students. The students were actually more comfortable for me than I probably would have expected. They were. They were very willing. They'd encourage you. They'd play along.

J: The same article states that you received...This is a review determining whether you were indeed a student finishing up your MBA when you started teaching.

M: Yes.

## **6. Alumni Association**

J: Now, I'm going to transition into your career as an alumni here. Since 1983, you have been an officer in the Alumni Association?

M: 1975 or 6.

J: Okay, so almost instantly upon graduation?

M: I had worked in that office. I had worked for Brother Patrick Ellis. When I was a freshman, he was Director of Development, and Jim McDonald, the Director of Alumni, was on the floor below him, so the office was over where the townhouses are now, and the mailroom is where it is. Actually, I think the mailroom was downstairs here (basement of College Hall). Regardless, you had to walk from that building to pick up the mail, and you had to walk from here to drop the mail off, so I worked for all the departments even though my paycheck came out of Development. Jim and I always got along well. When I graduated, I think they were looking for a female that they could put on the Board to prove that women were being integrated into the campus. He asked me to join the Board, and I said okay. Then, I stayed on it until we restructured the Board a few years ago, and I remember not always wanting to stay on it. I can remember a number of times going home to Fred and saying, "This is nuts! I have had it. I don't want to talk about the 1952 basketball team ever again. I don't want to start a conversation and have somebody say, 'We tried that in '34 and it didn't work.'" And that was the pattern. I was frequently the only woman, but I didn't quit because I don't think you can change anything from outside, so I sort of stuck it out tenaciously, stubbornly, whatever you want to call it.

J: Hmm, sounds like a theme.

M: Yeah. (Both laugh.)

J: A good theme.

M: I trip cluelessly into things, and then, I just stick it out. No plan. (James laughs.) It's a good background for somebody teaching strategic planning.

J: What role do you think Alumni should play at La Salle University?

M: In a fundamental way, they should be the gatekeepers of the traditions. There will not be as many men who become Brothers in the next 50 years as there were in the past. The charisma, the qualities that make this place special, are things that our alumni know. They've seen. They've shared. They have not stepped up as they needed to. I mean, we have many people who are very generous. We have many people who are generous with both their money and their time, but it's nowhere near the numbers it should be. What was special about this place is the way students are encouraged to develop their relationships with faculty, and those alums should make sure that the same thing is happening for the next generation of students. The major thing that gets in our way around here is money. If they have access to capital, even if it's time rather than cash, they should invest some of it. They got a discounted education. This place is expensive, but the value of the education, and I know that's even more true for my generation. The value of the education far, far outpaced what we paid for it because other people were making sacrifices, so I think they need to attend things. They need to support the school. They need to send money. They need to hire our students, and once in a while, they need to show up here so that they can see whether it's the place they think they're supporting to kind of keep us on track. I'm always surprised by how many of our alums went to school here, got a great job, made a lot of money, and then, send their kids to Princeton. And although Princeton's an extraordinary school, the Ivy Leagues have a great deal for themselves. I think the Ivy League's major advantage

over us is what they network with. We need to do a better job of that. There's no reason why our network couldn't be as strong.

J: In 1991, you were elected President of the Alumni Association's Board of Directors. What was it like to be the first woman President of the Alumni Association?

M: I remember that I was very, very aware of being the first because the men kept mentioning it to me.

J: So for once, it was...

M: Yeah, and there were some very funny moments as a function of that. I remember being at a cocktail party. I thought I told you this story, but we were seated at a table with General Burns and his wife, my husband and I, and General Burns started talking to my husband about, "Oh, so you're the new president of the Alumni." And Fred said, "No, actually my wife's the president of the Alumni." General Burns' wife leaned over and took my husband's hand and said, "Don't you just hate being a wife at these things." And the two of them laughed and had a good time, but General Burns was sort of nonplused for a few moments. He probably has no recollection of it at all, but it was just a funny moment for my husband to suddenly be the wife. There were a lot of times when my being the female President was just more than I really wanted to take on. I'm not a Barbie doll. I'm not a fashion plate. I'm not the quintessential girl, so to be the female alumni president was like, "Guys, you're asking too much of me. I can be president. I don't want to be the token female president." But I know that the men who elected me did it out of affection for me and out of respect for what I had done for the Board. In that regard, it felt good, but it was still strange. It was often that I was never introduced as anything but the first female president. I'm like, "Guys, get over yourselves. I'm moving forward."

J: Taking a step back from that, you said that being involved heavily with the Alumni Association kept you "sane."

M: Yes.

J: It kind of goes back to what you were saying about just being at home wasn't a good fit necessarily for you. Do you think it worked that way for other women, too?

M: No, for some of the women, it made them insane. (She laughs.) No, I think for anybody who serves on the committee, you know, we're back to that question you asked me awhile ago about service. The University changed my life. Being here was an absolute turning point for me, but I didn't have money when I graduated. I was still paying off some loans, and then, we got married. We were building up the house fund, and I didn't have money. I knew the only thing I could give back to La Salle was my time, and I think for the other women who were on the Board, that was their motivation. Occasionally, we get people on the Board who are there to resume build, but most of the people who have served on the Board over the years have been there because they wanted to pay back, but it was not always a real welcoming environment for women. We had quite a few women on the Board who did not persevere. I would say the attrition rate there is pretty high for women. I think they just wanted to be of service.

J: So there was a sense of maybe too much of a dynamic of the "old guard?"

M: The old boys network. That was a strong dynamic, and it wasn't anybody's fault because the reality is that's how they were having fun, too. They were being of service, but it should be fun being on a committee like that. It should be fun, and they enjoyed being guys, and so we'd say, "Well, let's do a fundraiser." "Okay, let's go to the baseball game." Or, "let's do a fundraiser. Let's go to the basketball game." There was a pattern. "Let's have a golf outing." Of course, every time you tried to plan something that would have a female slant, they were horrible failures because most of the women who went here didn't come here because they were girly girls. It's still something I imagine they're dealing with in the Alumni office. I don't know that they've had anything for the women in awhile. They used to have a luncheon periodically for women, and they were awkward. I mean, they were fun for some of the women, but they were awkward for me. I remember going to a fashion show thinking, "This is just so wrong!" What were we going to do, see a whole selection of Ed Sheehy's old La Salle basketball gear? (Both laugh.) Actually, that might be a really good fundraiser now that I think about it.

J: I have to say the first time I heard of La Salle really. I had heard of Lionel Simmons in the early '90s, but I'm from Indiana. I was teaching at a Marist Brothers school in Kobe, Japan, and I taught seniors, and outside my classroom door was a picture of Brother Ed slam dunking a basketball on a bulletin board in Kobe, Japan, so I told him about that. He got a kick out of it.

M: Yeah, he really is the fashion model type. (Both laugh.)

J: You kind of already talked about this. You already kind of rated your experience as President.

M: I think I did fine. What I finally figured out was that my job was to make people feel good about being in the room. I spent a lot of time at chicken dinners introducing people, thanking people for showing up, congratulating people on awards. When I did my best work, it was when I was me, and I didn't try to be something fancy. I just engaged how I felt. I feel like this place is wonderful, and I was always happy when people came back, so as long as I was as honest as I could be and as warm as I could be, I think my experience went well enough. We had some problems because there was a change in the Director's job during that time. Jim McDonald had been the Alumni Director forever, at least 25 years or so, and he stepped down and they hired somebody who was not as skilled, and more to the point, who had no database. Only we didn't have a physical database, but in addition to that, Jim's mental database was just breathtaking. "You remember him. He did this. His brother-in-law's here. His sister-in-law's there." He would have all that connected tissue in his head, and nobody had bothered to copy it down, nor I guess could they, but we had a lot of missteps that one year. Those two years I guess we had a lot of missteps because of that. The transition between the two men. Jim wanted to retire. He wanted to step down, but it was very hard to let go for him, and the man who came in wanted to be in charge, but it was very hard for him to ask for help, which he probably should have done more often. So I was occasionally left out to dry. I can remember being at a banquet where Reggie White was going to win an award, and somebody mismanaged the invitation, and at the last minute, he wasn't going to bother. I had a room full of people. The ballroom was jammed with people who were coming to see Reggie White win this Signum Fidei award, and I had to get up in front of them and tell them he wouldn't be there. Those moments were not real proud moments for me, but the people who were there for the most part forgave me and

came back to something else later. That really was what I was shooting for. Yeah, I would say it was uneven, but I did my best, and it was a very good experience for me, and I didn't do La Salle too much harm.

J: Some people might question the fact. I don't want to put it like this. Basically...

M: Go on, ask it.

J: There are a number of alumni here who are both faculty or staff members and also alums.

M: Right.

J: Did anyone question this when you were running for the office?

M: Actually, I was President of the Alumni Board. I was so involved in the Alumni Board for so long that my having a teaching contract here was not even an issue. Most of them (alumni) didn't know it. They were two separate lives. However, my colleagues resented it. They thought that I was foisted upon them in the Department because of my alumni connections, and that is still a tension in my Department. I don't have a Doctorate, and I am a non-tenure track appointment, and I think there are a couple people who still think that it was my Alumni Board clout that got me the job. We're back to—I don't really think they're evil people. They're people who have their own sense of self, and if you challenge that, they have to find a reason for it. I just come to work and do my work. I do think it's an issue at La Salle. One of the things that we have to be more purposeful about is hiring alums because their skill set is perfect for what we're doing. This should not be the safety net employer for people who can't survive outside the campus, but if you believe in what we're doing, then our students should be extra qualified as older adults to take on certain roles, and it's nice when you can get somebody to come back to whom you don't have to teach the charism, where that's not part of the learning curve for them. But having a La Salle degree should not be enough. They have to be qualified at the very least. That make sense?

J: Oh, absolutely.

M: I do think that that's one of those tensions there are. Some of the Ivy League schools will not hire alums, and I understand that once you set a policy like that, that becomes a very nice PR point, but it almost begs the question, "What's wrong with your alums that you wouldn't welcome them back? I mean don't they have something very special to share with the next generation of students?" I do think we were walking a very dangerous path here sometimes.

J: Too much Lasallian or not enough?

M: At least too much perception of Lasallian. The perception is that Lasallians have an inside track. That can't be the truth, but if it's the perception, it's just as dangerous. I don't have any sense that that's the truth, but if it's the perception, it could be very dangerous.

J: It seems to me like it would be very challenging to separate the two. How were you able to do that?

M: What the Alumni from teaching?

J: Yeah. At least during those two years especially.

M: Actually, it wasn't hard at all because the teaching part—probably because the demographics were so different. I was teaching 19-year-olds. Most everyone on the Board was older than I, and so, I had no confusion at all. What it did give me was a bigger picture of what was going on and prior to teaching here, I had a very skewed picture of La Salle. I had the view that it was a basketball school. Our Alumni are very focused on our athletics. They will occasionally get annoyed if there's not a new building built, but they don't want the place to change too much because then it's not good old La Salle anymore. At least, that used to be true. When I started to teach, I start to get a bigger picture of the mission. The fact that unless it happens to a student it's not worth anything. That may have been probably the more important thing I brought to the Board was that sense of, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You're saying this because you read *The Collegian*, but this only represents a small population of our students or the opinion of one student. The rest of them are like this." That helped the alums a little bit, I think, see a bigger picture of who we are as an institution. We all start where our feet are, and if your relationship with La Salle ended in 1945, how are you going to figure out what's going on now? There were some alums who never forgave the Brothers for letting women in.

J: Based on that experience, have you tried to bridge more faculty involvement into the Alumni Association?

M: Well, not just faculty involvement. I try to encourage students to be involved. I try to encourage alumni to be involved with students, and they've made a lot of strides that way. I wouldn't say it was because of me. I was just one voice crying that the more our alums see of our students, the more they will appreciate both the gifts that are students are and then the need that our students have. They'll be able to help one another. So I really do think we need to have a lot more networking at every level among all the different levels. Both fun and businesswise and perhaps that will help some of our students with research streams and things of that sort. The connection is important. The faculty is a little bit harder because the faculty who are alums in many cases have chosen not to exercise that as part of their professional life, and that's their right, and the ones involved sometimes feel left out. They sometimes feel like they didn't get the decoder ring. They don't realize there is no decoder ring. The rest of us don't know what's going on either. (James laughs.) No, I mean seriously. I think about being on the Alumni Board, being in the classroom, being involved as a parent of students, being on different committees, being on committees with the Brothers, which I'm doing now. Communication is a real problem for us collectively. The Brothers don't talk to the Brothers. The way faculty don't talk to the Brothers. The way faculty don't talk to one another. If you could see what we're doing in general, you'd be so tickled to be here, but we all get so trapped in our own little office with things that don't work the way we want them to that we lose track of the big picture.

J: The first time I heard a mention in any of the documents that Brother Joe gave me of a celebration of the first women or the first class of La Salle was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1996. Was that the first time?

M: That sounds right. I think they tried to have a luncheon before that. There was a woman named Diane Bones who would be a wonderful resource for you because she's funny and she's articulate and she actually has a memory. You shouldn't have trouble reaching her because the Alumni office knows where she is, but she's a writer. She was the Assistant Director of Alumni under Jim McDonald. I'd say early '80s. She was the first female Assistant Director they hired. She'll be a resource for you. She had scheduled a couple of luncheons trying to get some of the alumnae back. We come back, but in many cases, I think for most of us our job when we were students here was to get a good education and get integrated so why would we pull back? I don't remember there being a sorority here when I was a student for instance, and I personally don't understand sororities. Less this week than ever. You share your bedroom with four sisters, so the last thing you need is another female friend. I may just have a jaundiced view of it, but I don't recall there being a sorority here. There were very close friendships among some of the women because we were in boot camp together, but I don't think that's how we identified ourselves. I don't remember ever calling myself an alumna until I had to do it in some sort of formal setting. To me, I was an alum period.

J: Yes, hearing you speak about that, the first time I saw mention of an Alumnae Club, it was for this reference to this 1996 celebration. When did the Alumnae Club happen?

M: I'm guessing it was the mid to late '80s. I think it was a way the Alumni was trying to broaden their base, and they were trying to keep people. One of the issues around here is that if we have a really good basketball season, we hold on to those alums. They tend to come back. They tend to send money, but in the absence of that, we lose people. We frequently lose people, so they were trying to make sure they didn't lose the female alums any more than they were losing the men. They developed an Alumnae Club, but I just don't remember if it ever—I don't have a real sense that it ever took off the ground. I was always there because I was like the oldest woman they knew, so they always invited me to those things, but it wasn't a particular interest of mine. As a result, I don't really remember how successful it was, but there were many attempts at trying to give it life, but the attempts came from campus not from grassroots. If that makes sense to you? As a result, I don't think you can make something like that succeed.

J: Kind of a top-down approach.

M: Yeah, that doesn't always work because there's always that mistrust, too. If your alma mater's calling you to have you come to a luncheon so that they can celebrate the women, you just have to know that there's going to be a "Can you give us a check?" at the end of the conversation.

J: We'll give you some Puffs. (Laughs.) Well, speaking of that, this kind of top-down marketing approach, at least from that perspective, what about one of your main goals in the article, at least, you were quoted as saying that you wanted to try some affinity groups. Were those groups that you were trying to help from the bottom-up?

M: It was a combination of things, and actually, I was continuing on a theme that Steve McGonigle had started. Steve was the President before me. Actually, I think he may have been the first one to talk about affinity groups, and so I was following up on his thoughts. We do have some of that. Now they're geographic. We call them chapters, geographic chapters. The Soccer Alumni get together. The Economics Alumni get together. That is an effective vehicle, but it's like so many things that you need two or

three people who are willing to put in the time to make the phone calls. You need one or two faculty members that are willing, you know from the Economics Department say, who are willing to say "Yeah, I'll get you a list of names." Then, somebody in Alumni has to be available to make things happen. I think that we are making so many strides in that division because I think that division has been significantly professionalized. We have competent people who actually know what they're doing. They're just not goodwilled people trying to raise money. These are people who actually understand how it happens. I think Jim is excellent at what he does, and we now have Julie. Sarah was wonderful. Those types of things make it all more possible, but without a certain level of grassroots, it's artificial. That being said, no matter how many people you have at the grassroots level, you need somebody here on campus to organize things. Somebody to put the mailings together. Somebody to reserve the room and put a tablecloth down on something. I think we're making strides, but the affinity groups, they're going to be organic. They're going to develop the way students develop and how they see themselves. The Masque actually has done a pretty good job in the last 5 or 6 years in developing some sort of a cohesive affinity group, but you know, next year it could fall apart. It depends on who they make as president, so it's a good idea. It constantly needs to be watched. Of course, the flip side of that is if you have alums who are out five years and they have an affinity group they want to develop, chances are they don't want to do it through campus, so how does Jim tap into that without destroying it?

J: So it doesn't become...

M: It doesn't become La Salle. (Both laugh.)

## **7. Winning Awards**

J: I only have a few more questions for you. I saw numerous times you're in the La Salle Magazine receiving Alumni associated awards. I think they might blend together a little bit. I saw an Alpha Epsilon Alumni Honor Society Award, the John J. Finley Memorial Award, and since I'm not affiliated with La Salle from an alumni perspective, what are the significance of those awards and how did it feel to be...

M: The Finley Award is an Alumni award, and I would probably say that I felt at the time I got it that it was just a "Thanks for Being President Award." But I know Pete Finley who is John Finley's son. I taught Matt Finley and loved Matt Finley, who is John Finley's grandson, so there is that sort of nostalgia associated with it. But I was doing what I did because that's what I could do. La Salle gave me a lot. The only way I could give back was by giving my time, and so getting an award for it just doesn't feel particularly comfortable for me. But Alpha Epsilon is more of a recognition of you being really good in your field, and I always thought that was sort of a bogus award. I think they were just looking for a woman to give it to and my name keeps coming up. The Finley I probably earned. I was of service to the University as an alum and that's what that award's about. That probably does make sense. I don't know why I got Alpha Epsilon. It's just one of those things, but they're embarrassing.

J: Are they?

M: To me, they're embarrassing because I'm getting more out of the place than I'm giving most of the time. I'm still getting more out of the place. I don't need an award.

J: Would you say that about the Lindback Award?

M: Probably in all honesty, no. That is the highest award that I have ever received, and it is the most meaningful award to me. It was breathtaking to hear that I was getting it, but I teach because I love to teach. I'm really happy I got it because it does recognize me and it endorses me in an environment where I'm not always endorsed because that alumni, non-tenure track piece is still there. In my department, it's always that way. It's always part of what happens to me in my department and so having been recognized as an educator is very important to me, but I don't need an award as compensation for what I do if you understand the distinction. The Lindback meant a lot to me, but I get more out of teaching than I give always.

J: In going over the list of Lindback recipients, your name appears with several of your former professors and mentors. How does that feel?

M: Yeah, isn't that cool? That's just too wonderful. That's what makes it so humbling. When you think about the people who have won it, who dazzled you when they taught you, and then to have your name on the list, now we're back to impostor again. There is a part of you that is just humbled by it, and it makes me strive. I won the Lindback more than a few years ago, but it still makes me strive. I should be as good tonight in class as I ever was because those students deserve that. They deserve whatever's the best of me today. My teachers changed me. They changed my life. They changed my sense of self. I may not be able to do that for every student I have, but I should try. I should at least be open to trying for each student that I have. Does that make sense?

## **8. The Lasallian Vision**

J: Oh, definitely. You mentioned that you turned another corner now as a member of the Second Lasallian Leadership Institute. My question about that is how did LLI impact your career here? Does it mean that you will stay connected to La Salle for the rest of your career?

M: Absolutely to the second question. LLI gave me permission and actually made me responsible for doing things that I think are most important to do in the classroom. The idea that when I teach there's a value-laden piece to every theory I teach. If I teach them to do capital budgeting and I don't have them understand that one of the costs of doing business is human capital and the kind of impact you're going to have on the lives of people, then I've failed. If I don't make them look at the ethical issues and look at the personal issues, what's it costing you? What do you want to stand for when you're done? I was always tempted to do that, but it always felt a little bit too nurturing, touchy-feely, not professional enough. LLI said, "No, you're educating the whole person." St. La Salle actually has a lot of writings where he explains to the Brothers that their responsibility as teachers is to save the souls of their students, and if you're responsible to save the soul of your student, that significantly changes the way in which you engage them in the classroom. LLI actually probably has had more of an impact on me than anything. I actually was at a meeting last week at Manhattan College. We were talking about changing cost structures because most of these types of educational opportunities are funded by the Brothers. The Brothers put money into the district. The district pays for LLI, and if there are fewer Brothers in our future, our fund stream is going to dry up, and if we believe this is an important way for us to pass the charism down, how are we going to fund it? There was a lot of discussion from my table from people who were

being very pragmatic, who actually understand what the budgets look like, and I said something about "This is our brand. This is our product brand, and we need to invest in it. If we had a McDonalds sign out front, there'd be no question about the fact that we'd have to replace the McDonalds sign and that we should use McDonalds cups, but we're all so timid about using La Salle as our brand." This person was arguing with me, and I said, "AACSB accreditation cost the University a lot of money. There were a lot of things that had to happen for us to get that accreditation, and to me, that had no impact on my teaching near what LLI had on my teaching." So, it's the brand that we really need to invest in. To me, that's really important.

J: That leads in to—I guess these are less reflective questions and maybe thinking about how has La Salle changed over the past 19 years since you entered the classroom as a teacher?

M: I don't know that La Salle has changed a lot. I certainly have changed a lot more I can say. That we're accredited. That our Nursing School is as big as it is. That our Communication Department is as strong as it is. That we have the new dorms, and the Hayman's been expanded. Townhouses have been built since I was back. Those things are physically obvious and probably symbolically important as well. We have a bigger campus. There's more life here. They're going to turf the field they say, so that will change life for the athletes. But the idea that you're taking a young person, and you're giving them the tools they need to have a practical life, where they can be generous with themselves and with the environment around them, that hasn't changed. I don't know that we are any better at articulating it today than we were when I was 20, but that part's still there. That part still happens, and it's interesting to me as I travel with the LLI and with the other committees that I'm on, it doesn't seem to matter where I meet a Lasallian, they all get that. At the conference in Utah this year, the people were from all over the United States and Toronto, Canada and they all got it. Every single person I met got it, so it's there. There's something there that is transferable and we need to be more purposeful about how we do that. Because I think it's what makes the place special.

J: What challenges need to be addressed? You kind of mentioned one there, brand recognition, Lasallianism.

M: I do think the major challenge is that we frequently use money as an excuse for not doing what is going to be hard to do, and I think that we need to be much more explicit about asking for money and asking for help from people who should be helping because when I'm responsible for helping a young person be his best self and I'm responsible for saving a 20-year-old's soul, I'm just as responsible for asking a 50-year-old to donate what they can to save the 20-year-old's soul. We've been too timid about asking the 50-year-olds, so I think we need to be much more explicit about that. I think we need to do a better job of marketing. I really do. We tend to go, "old La Salle." We're much better at listing what's wrong with us than we are at listing what's right with us, and we need to get past that. We wouldn't tolerate it from our students. I think Brother Michael has a good, clear vision. He could probably share it with us more often. We may need a few more cheerleading sessions each year than we get, but I think we need to be more responsible to one another that way, too. You can always get a group of people together to bitch about the place, you know what I mean? (Laughs.) But if you get them together to celebrate, that would even be better, and it would be more productive.

J: With that being said, what do you foresee in La Salle's future?

M: I don't know. I guess more of the same. I would love to see us have a successful athletic program because that would bring money in to make other things possible, but I see that the students I have this semester are going to graduate. They're going to get good jobs. They're going to make a difference in the worlds where they live, and I see in August I'm going to see a whole bunch of new, young people who will start to discover themselves here. You just hope that we consistently do as much good as we can, and that when things that are difficult come along, we handle it as positively as we can. We don't always do that well either. I don't think we handled the rape trial well last year, but I do think we learned from that, and so the next time something awful happens, we may find a way to make that into a learning opportunity instead of an embarrassing public relations snafu. We're growing up, but it's got to be very carefully. As we become more professional, we're always at risk of losing what's best about what the Brothers started with. But I have no vision of the future, I barely remember the past. (Laughs.)

J: Well, I just want to say thank you for generously giving your time to me and to all you've done for La Salle, and I'm excited about the Archive having this record of your testimony.

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