

Christopher A. Thompson
Questions for April 14, 2007 interview with Bro. Daniel Burke.

Please state your birthday and the place where you were born?

OCT. 25, 1926, PITTSBURGH, PA.

Can you state your father and mother's names?

DANIEL W.J. AND MARY E BURKE

Where were your parents from?

PITTSBURGH, PA

How has your father influenced your life?

MODEL OF QUIET ENDURANCE, PERSISTENCE, AND KINDNESS.

How has your mother influenced your life?

MODEL OF PERSISTENCE, PATIENCE, AND IMAGINATIVENESS,
ESPECIALLY IN HARD TIMES

Did your father's experience in World War I influence your outlook on life?

NO, WASN'T THERE AT THE TIME - OR MUCH CONCERNED
UNTIL WW II.

How, as a child, did you feel about aviation?

NOT IN TOUCH, UNTIL MUCH LATER - AND SOME TALK
ABOUT MY FATHER'S EXPERIENCE

How did your father's work as a car salesman influence you?

AGAIN, TOO YOUNG; BUT DID ENJOY THE BACK SEAT
WHEN HE DROVE.

How do you feel about the subject of war?

SADDED AND HELPLESS WHEN IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY
(E.G. WW II); REGRETFUL, IF NOT ANGRY WHEN UNWISE
OR UNNECESSARY, AS IN THE PRESENT WAR.

Can you describe Pittsburgh where you grew up? The look of the town, the smells?

THE SMELL WAS OF SMOKE, FROM DOZENS OF STEEL MILLS,
THOUGH RELIEF IN THE CITY PARKS, ETC. (SCULLY CONNECTION:
RELIEF IN SWIMMING & WALKING THE PARKS)

Did you understand, as a child, the impact of the steel industry on the town?

No.

Do you recall the importance of, and general feeling of Homestead, PA

No. EXCEPT DAD'S MEMORY OF THE INJUSTICE OF WORKERS TREATMENT,
FIRING, ETC.

What was the impact of the Great Depression on you and your family?

The Pittsburgh area?

The Country?

DEEP - LOSS OF BUSINESS; MOTHER GOT A JOB; RELATIVE POVERTY
- AND SERIES OF MEDICAL PROBLEMS BY SELF (5: BROWN LEE;
6: BURST APPENDIX; 7: SEPTICEMIA, BLOOD POISONING.

What is your take on FDR's New Deal policies... A success? Failure? Both?

GENERALLY POSITIVE, PROBABLY BECAUSE MY FATHER BECAME
A DEMOCRATIC POLITICIAN (ALSO MOTHER) IN THE 1930'S.

I understand that you first took drawing classes in the eighth grade, did you become enamored with art right away, or was it something gradual?

ONLY IRISH-AMERICAN KID (BRO. BERONE, SISTER AFRICA) IN AN
ALL-ITALIAN SCHOOL, BEING TAUGHT BY GERMAN NUNS.

I understand that you went to grade school in an Italian school, did that have anything to do with your love of art?

IN 8TH GRADE → GRADUATION SPEECH & ASSIGNED TO CARNEGIE
MUSEUM OR ART CLASSES ON SATURDAYS.

Have you always been religious? YES

Your family? YES

At what point in your life were you called to your vocation?

OLDER BROTHER PRECEDED

HIGH SCHOOL KUSHKORAN;

What influenced you to become a Christian brother?

OLDER BROTHER IN FAMILY.

What is the significance of the name Fidelian of Mary?

END OF THE NAME LIST, IN THE NOVIATE.

I understand that you were in High School (La Salle Hall, Ammendale, MD,) during most of World War II, Can you remember the impact of World War of the fascist regimes on your little corner of the world, the country as a whole? Europe? What did the Christian Brothers say about fighting a war? This particular war? Was there discussion on the legitimacy of violence?

The effects of war on the man? On society? - TERRIBLE

a) REDUCED INCOME FOR SCHOOL (BOARDING) - LOTS OF RICE
(OATMEAL) DESPITE FARMING WHICH WE WORK IN
OCCASIONALLY.

b) WWII WAS CONSIDERED A "JUST" WAR - AND A
NECESSARY ONE TO OVERTHROW HITLER; SURVIVAL
WAS THE GOAL; FEW CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS
(LA SALLE TEACHER; ARTIST FOR CHAPEL).

I understand that you began teaching English at West Philadelphia Catholic (High School) in 1949; What was West Catholic like during your time there? (I am a West Catholic legacy; my uncle graduated in '44, my father in '58, I in '92)

GREAT! A LARGE GROUP OF FSC (CO) TEACHERS,
WITH SEVERAL GOOD FRIENDS, OTHERS ESPECIALLY SUPERIOR
AS WE GOT TO KNOW THEM - JOHN O'BRIEN, DAVE REAN, ETC. ETC.
AND GREAT STUDENTS.

ADDITIONAL WORK AT PENN

I have this excerpt from a web log written by a Jay Stetzer.

Sometimes when I hear the booming thunder of a soaking spring rain storm I'm drawn straight back to my high school chemistry class, and there's a perfectly good reason for it, too.

The school year was just about spent, and so were most of the members of the sophomore class in my Catholic Boys High School, including me. We were tired of learning. Tired of dragging our books around from class to class like carcasses. The books, that is. Tired of donning the regulation coat and tie as required by school policy. It appeared that our chemistry teacher was the only soul sympathetic to our plight.

Fidelian
of
(Jesus)

Brother Fidelian. A toothpick of a man who wore glasses too big for his face. They magnified his eyes so greatly that he had a permanent look of "ahah!" which, I must say, befitted the magnitude with which he viewed his subject matter. He was as passionate over chemistry as he was toward his spiritual practice, and we were clueless as to how he could be so enthusiastic about either.

His cure for our lethargy was an "unforgettably splashy experiment" (his words) designed to entertain as it educated. He placed two hollow glass tubes on the lab table connected at the top with electrodes sticking out of it. Like two towers, standing in a pan of water. He announced, "Gentlemen, today we will make water. In one tower I have placed hydrogen, and in the other, oxygen. When I connect the electrodes to a power source..."

Right then he reached up and he did just that, releasing an ear splitting sound throughout the room. Exploding glass shot in every direction. We hit the floor and covered our heads. Somebody uttered a prayer.

When the air cleared we climbed back into our desks. Brother Fidelian slowly came up from behind the lab table with those big eyes wider than ever before. He said, "And there you have it, gentlemen. The making of water."

And I do believe some of us actually made some right then and there.

Reactions to the article?

Bro. Fidelian or many had a quieter time
with English classes — and, in my second year,
Algebra.

You started teaching at LaSalle in 1957, You've stated that when you came to LaSalle there were 34 Christian brothers teaching at the College, can you describe the social life a typical Christian brother at LaSalle in 1957?

"Social" life suggests parties, plays, etc. Their might have been a bit of that but that bigger and more important part was interacting in the community life, with 5
other Christian teachers, some 34 or more.

Where did they live?

COMMUNITY HOUSE ON CAMPUS MAINLY; FIRST FEW YEARS
SOME YOUNGER PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF WERE IN McSHAIN HALL,
SECOND FLOOR — IN TINY ROOMS!

Can you remember how many persons of the Dominican Order taught and worked here?

What happened to them?

4 — OR MORE. AS NUMBERS STARTED TO DECLINE WITH THEM
(AS THE BROTHERS ALSO), THEY HAD TO WITHDRAW TO MAINTAIN
THEIR OWN COLLEGES, ETC.

What were the differences between the Dominicans and the Christian Brothers?

DOMINICANS WERE ALL PRIESTS FROM A MUCH OLDER ORDER (13TH CENTURY),
THE BROTHERS, NON-CLERICAL, WERE FOUNDED IN THE (7TH CENTURY) —
WITH NO PRIESTS BUT WITH RELIGIOUS VOWS AND TOTAL INVOLVEMENT WITH EDUCATION.

Can you describe the culture of LaSalle in the 50's and early sixties?

The culture of men?

Commuters vs. residents?

1. QUICK INVOLVEMENT IN BUSINESS, ETC. AFTER GRADUATION.
BUT MANY INTO GRADUATE WORK, SOME WITH MAJOR UNCERTAINTIES
AND NATIONAL (E.G. WOODROW WILSON'S) — [LATER BECAME
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FOR THESE IN NEW JERSEY, PENNA.,
DELAWARE]

What, in your opinion would the effect of the G.I. Bill be on LaSalle College?

As stated by you in summer, 1993 edition of *LaSalle* "When I came to LaSalle in 1957, the campus occupied 28 acres at 20th and Olney... There were six dormitories that accommodated 270 residents." What other physical memories of the campus do you have?

1. MORE MATURE, OLDER STUDENTS, MOST TO FINISH COURSE,
AFTER SOME WOULD BEFORE BEING DRAFTED IN WWII —
AND WITH BIG INCREASE FROM RETURNING SOLDIERS, — SUDDEN
BIG EXPANSION FOR LSU.
2. NEW LIBRARY, (NEW SCIENCE BUILDING THERE AREA),
NEW UNION BUILDING.

What did the area of North Philadelphia look like in 1957?

Racial makeup?

Economic background?

Physical environment?

1. LOWER BROAD STREET (& EAST/WEST NEIGHBORHOOD) WAS ALREADY POPULATED LARGELY WITH AFRICAN-AMERICANS
2. IN LATER YEARS, TURNER STARTED IN FORMER WHITE AREAS (INISIT, GRANTON, [TACING, JEWISH], (OLNEY AVE ADJ. WERE ALL WHITE E.G.)
3. AREAS, AS YOU MOVED TOWARD LEXINGTON HILL, WERE ALL WHITE, NEW YORK

You are an English teacher, what did you teach while a professor?

After your time as president?

1. MAINLY LITERARY THEORY AND POETRY - IN BOTH CASES THRU 30s, EARLY 90s.
2. FADED OUT AS DEMANDS IN THE ART GALLERY INCREASED.

What are your favorite memories of teaching English at LaSalle?

1. TEACHING THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN/AMONG COMMUNICATION FOR E-G-S-M-P-E, RHETORIC, AND LITERARY VALUES OF FITNESS & BEAUTY.

How did you work in art into your English curriculum?

Was there any opposition from other faculty members regarding this?

MY BASIC NOTION WAS LITERARY VALUES WERE NOT PART OF COMMUNICATION OR RHETORIC BUT LITERARY, ARTISTIC (SIMPLY GETTING IDEAS ACROSS) (WRITING TO PERSUADE) (THE BEAUTY OF LANGUAGE SPARKS BEYOND SIMPLE COMMUNICATION AND PERSUASION).

When were you first approached to take the position of Vice President?

1959/60

How and why did you start the Christmas Poetry books?

STARTED WRITING IN COLLEGE, PUBLISHED IN COMMONWEAL IN THE 1960'S AND LATER - AND OTHER MAGAZINES STILL WORKING, NOW ON THE BOOK

As the sixties progress, did you notice a tangible change in attitude and outlook of

DIPTYCH, 1970
CHRISTMAS CARDS, 1991
FRIENDS & BELIEVED, 2005
7
APOSTLES & DISCIPLES, 2005

incoming students?

YES, PERHAPS, FOR LACK OF INVOLVEMENT IN A CONSIDERATION OF NEW DIRECTIONS, CHANGING VALUES, AND THE GROWING INVOLVEMENT (NOT ALWAYS HEALTHY) IN NEW MEDIA (6 HRS. OF TV A DAY?)

Is there a particular year or events that said to you personally, "these times, they are a changin'?"

What is your take on the new 1960's Music?

Counter Culture?

Drug Use?

MORE, AS ABOVE.

What was your role, if any, in the Civil Rights Movement?

PERIODIC AND OCCASIONAL - AS IN THE PROTEST BEFORE THE NIXON WHITE HOUSE WITH THE HEAD OF THE QUAKERS, ANGLICANS, PRESBYTERIANS, AND METHODISTS, AND JEWISH SYNAGOGUES.

Were you conscious, as a Christian Brother, to the plight of blacks?

YES, FROM MY GROWING UP IN A FAMILY THAT WAS FREQUENTLY IN TOUCH WITH NEGRO GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL (A FATHER & MOTHER INVOLVED IN POLITICS FOR MANY YEARS), ETC.

What was your experience of the Vietnam War era?

LARGELY DISAPPOINTMENT, AS IT DRAGGED ON WITH LITTLE EFFECT.

Could you, as best possibly, illuminate me as to what went on at your protest in Washington?

(SEE ITEMS ABOVE ↑).

The LaSalle sit ins?

GENERALLY GENTLEMANLY AND FUD, AS I STOPPED OVER
PHONE FIGURES TO GET INTO MY OFFICE AS V.P., TALKED
TO STUDENT LEADERS, LEARNED, AND CAME TO SOME AGREED
CONCLUSIONS

LATER, WHILE I WAS DOING A PROJECT WITH MY ORATOR
(CAROL LADRIERE AT HARVARD, AN AD IN THE DAILY PAPER

"Bro, DANIEL LONG BACK!" I DIDN'T BUT A COMMITTEE CAME UP
AND WE WERE TO SOME GOOD CONCLUSION (DISPITE FIRING OF A CHAPLAIN
BY ANOTHER VP, Mc CARTHY)

What was your take on the student uprising on colleges across America?

NOT ENOUGH DISCUSSION

Can you expound on this statement by St. John Newman, "There is no situation which combines respectability with lightness of responsibility and labor so happily as the office of the professor."

DOESN'T SOUND LIKE NEWMAN. HAVE A LECTURE SOMEWHERE
ON NEWMANN WHICH I GAVE AT THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY (1300 LOCUST), WHEN HE WAS CANONIZED.

What was LaSalle like in 1969?

Culture of men?

Commuters vs. residents?

The make-up of Religious vs. lay teachers?

BUBBLY, ACTIVE, INTERESTING

At what time were you first approached to take the position of President?

1959? 60. / 1969.

What went through your mind when you decided to go through with the appointment?

GOD HELP US! I WAS HERE ONLY THREE YEARS ON THE FIRST BUMP-UP; TWELVE ON THE SECOND, BUT A LITTLE MORE ASSURED.

Did you see it as a continuation or a culmination of your career?

SORT-OF.

Did this appointment conflict or correspond with your mission as a Christian Brother?

NO. PART AND PARCEL, EXCEPT FOR LESS CLASSROOM TEACHING.

What was your role, as President, in the curriculum?

MINIMAL, EXCEPT FOR MAJOR REVISIONS AND SHAKE-UPS.

What influenced the decision to allow women into LaSalle?

DESTINY! WE DID HAVE NUNS IN THE 60'S,
WENT ALL THE WAY IN 70.

What was the selection process?

NORMAL COLLEGIATE, AFTER THE FIRST YEAR OR TWO.

What was your relationship with the female faculty?

WARM.

Was it any different than any other instructor relationship?

NO

How did that relationship change over time?

MUCH GREATER FEMALE STUDENT (AND FACULTY) PROPORTION
AS MALES GOT MORE INTERESTED IN MECHANICAL THINGS.

Was there conflict with the decision to make LaSalle a coeducational college?
(exempting the nursing program, of course.)

At the instructor level?

At the student level?

> DON'T RECALL DETAILS, BUT I DON'T THINK SO.

Could you describe, if you can, the culture of women at LaSalle in those early coeducational years?

How did you personally handle the (coed) transition? CALMLY.

How did the staff handle the transition? ADROITLY.

The students? GRACIOUSLY.

What influenced you to hire African American instructors at LaSalle?

(DA.) WARREN SMITH AND OTHERS CAME EARLY ON
(AS ~~DO~~ DID JEWISH STUDENTS) — WHEN PENN AND
OTHER INSTITUTIONS WERE RELUCTANT IN THE 1930S. THE WAR (II)
WHAT WAS THE SELECTION PROCESS? CHANGED THINGS.

REGULAR AND NORMAL

How did you personally handle the transition?
How did the staff handle the transition?
The students?

CAREFULLY.

METHODICALLY.

BOISTROUSLY. (JURIES OF YOUNG MALES
WITH NUMBERED CARDS,
EVALUATING COEDS AS
THEY PASSED BY)!

What was your relationship with the African American instructors? HAPPY.

Was it any different than any other instructor relationship?

NO..

As stated by you in *LaSalle*, Summer, 1993, "When I came to LaSalle in 1957, the campus occupied 28 acres at 20th and Olney... There were six dormitories that accommodated 270 residents." While you were president, many significant projects came to fruition, Can you describe the building programs during your time as president? SENSIBLE.
How did you get the funding? SOME WITH LONG-TERM GOVERNMENT FUNDS.
What is your favorite project? SCIENCE OR UNION OR OLNEY.

THE SPATSLER BROTHERS
(FSC PAUL AND HIS LAYMAN
BROTHER WHO WAS 12
BUSINESS VP) WERE VERY GOOD.

Can you describe, briefly, the academic program at LaSalle in 1976?
What changes did you make?

NOT VERY WELL. I'M FORGETTING MUCH THESE DAYS
ONCE I TURNED 80.

What was the impetus behind the Ph. D program, which started with the Psychology program?

In which ways did this new role (having a graduate program,) change LaSalle?

The academic program?

The identity of the college?

What input did you have in the curriculum of the new program(s)?

NOT INVOLVED
WASN'T INVOLVED AT ALL.

How did the Art museum project come about?

ART TEACHERS (TON RIDINGTON, WHO BECAME FIRST DIRECTOR),
GEORGE DIERL (OTHER ART HISTORY TEACHERS HERE) AND
OTHERS SUGGESTED THAT WE HAD A COUPLE OF PAINTINGS
AND WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF WE HAD A FEW MORE
FOR THE STUDENTS. I SAID YES. THAT WAS 1965—
AND WE RECCED AND COLLECTED FOR 10 YEARS & FOUND THE CELLAR IN

Was it a struggle to get the museum off the ground?

NOT WITH GOOD ADVISORS - AND
PATIENT DONORS.

How did you get the funding?

↑

How has the Art Gallery changed?

BY REPLACING GOOD PIECES WITH BETTER, AS WE
WENT FORWARD

Where do you see the Art museum, as opposed to:

Other small galleries? - BETTER

Regional art museums? - SMALLER.

What is your favorite piece?

H.O. TANNER, LA SAINTE-MARIE C. 1898.

(FUNDED BY AFRICAN-AMERICAN SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MAN -
IN RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS - RAGAN HENRY).

What do you see as the future of the museum?

GETTING OUT OF THE UNDERGROUND.

What is your proudest moment during the time of your presidency?

The worst?

GIVING MY MENTOR, (RAIC LADRIÈRE, (EARLIER AT C.U.,
LATER A CHAIRMAN OF ART HISTORY AT HARVARD), AN
HONORARY DEGREE HERE, (1975?).

What do think is your legacy as president of LaSalle?

IT'S MODEST, IN ANY EVENT, BUT ESPECIALLY
WHEN I WASN'T ABLE TO CONVINCE
SUCCESSORS TO REMAIN ONLY UNDERGRADUATE
AND WOO BACK MALES.

Briefly, could you discuss the impact of computers?

NO. REALLY HAVE NEVER REALLY USED ONE,
BEYOND FINDING A BOOK IN THE LIBRARY.
SMART SECRETARIES DID IT ALL.

What is the role of the Christian brothers in 2007?

TO WORK TO SURVIVE THE TRADITION
AND, AS OUR NUMBERS DECREASE EVEN FURTHER,
TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE LAY MEN AND WOMEN
FACULTY AND STUDENTS.

How has that changed since you first became a brother?

OLD AGE, MEMORIES, DISAPPEARING FRIENDS, CHALLENGING
PROJECTS, ALL THE REGULAR STUFF!

How has LaSalle changed since 1957?

MUCH BIGGER AND MOSTLY BETTER.

When did you retire?

LATE YEAR.

What was your official position at LaSalle?

^{LATE}
DIRECTOR OF THE ART MUSEUM

2 OR 3?

Of your 23 books, which is your favorite?

The critics?

HARD TO SAY.

Which is your favorite poem that you have written?

What is your favorite poem?

HARDER TO SAY. PERHAPS, "FIRST MAGI."

What have you learned as a Christian Brother?

GOD IS GOOD.

Can you impart some wisdom onto the future generations of LaSalle Students?

IT'S A GREAT, BUMPY RIDE OVER THE YEARS!

BUT HOLD ON - AND THE LORD WILL GET YOU THROUGH.

What is your legacy to LaSalle?

IT'S MODEST.

To Philadelphia ?

More modest.

To the Art World?

"Less is more."

What is your proudest moment during your entire time at LaSalle?
The worst?

What is your favorite memory of being a Christian brother?

What are your greatest achievements?

SURVIVING