

Sr. Mary Mangan Oral History Interview/July 26, 2002

Webster University Oral History Program

# 1

Sr. Mary Mangan

July 26, 2002

Tape 1

KG: Good morning. This is Webster University Oral History Program Recording number 1. Today's date is Friday, July 26, 2002 and the time is approximately 10:35 a.m. This is tape Number 1. My name is Kathy Gaynor. I am a Reference Librarian at the Eden-Webster Library and I'm also responsible for the Webster University Archives. Also present is Ellen Eliceiri, Head of Public Services at the Eden-Webster Library.

Today it will be my pleasure to interview Sr. Mary Mangan, a member of the Sisters of Loretto, a graduate of Webster, and professor emeritus of the university. This interview is taking place at the Loretto Residence at 590 East Lockwood Avenue in Webster Groves, MO.

Well, good morning again, Sister.

SrM: Good morning.

KG: Glad to talk with you this morning, and I thought we'd just start out with a little bit about your background, where you're originally from, and how did you end up at Webster.

SrM: Well I am from Chicago. I decided when I was in high school I wanted to go away to college. I didn't want to stay in the city of Chicago to go to college. There were choices then. Rosary existed in River Forest and that was not too far away. Mundelein College had just opened for women, and that was also in the city. But I really wanted to go away, wanted to have the experience of going away. And I mentioned this to a Sister of Providence who was my teacher in piano. I was taking piano lessons. I hate to admit I took seven years of piano lessons but I never turned out to be a player.

But at any rate, a Sister of Providence said "I have nieces who have gone to Webster and I think maybe you would like that. So why don't you write and find out if you could be accepted there." Well, I don't think there was any real question about being accepted to college because it wasn't regular for many young girls going to college. It was rather unusual at the very beginning. I had an older sister who finished high school and was very glad to be finished with that and she's not thinking of college. So I then decided to write to Webster College.

So that was the initial opening. And it was someone who taught me piano and said "I have a niece who went there and maybe you would like it" so that's how I really first became acquainted with Webster.

It's quite different from the way young people look at colleges now. There was an article that appeared just in U.S. News and World Report this past month or so. Young people go and visit all the colleges before they decide where. Well, that wasn't true in my regard. You have to remember the time, though. This was during the Depression. I think I always have to keep reminding people this was 1931 and we had the crash of '29 and therefore were still suffering from that crash. We hadn't really recovered, certainly not fully.

So that was my initial introduction to Webster in this fashion, and when I went to my high school, it was Alvernia High School where I finished a sister said "Oh, there's somebody who is registering for Webster and maybe you'd like to get in touch with her." And I said "Well, yes, that would be nice." "She lives in another part of the city, in the city of Chicago." Well I did get in touch with Dorothy Geis-G-E-I-S. I didn't really know her because in my high school we had separation of classes. If you're taking a college preparatory that's one group, and another would be what they called commercial, in other words that involved typing and, I guess shorthand, I'm not sure, but at any rate she was not in my classroom. But I did call her and she said "Oh, I'm so happy to think that somebody else is going but", she said, "the best news is that my parents decided they wanted to drive me down so how would you like to go with us?"

And so I thought, well, I thought that would be great. And so we drove down then.

KG: So you did not visit ahead of time?

SrM: I did not visit ahead of time.

KG: Do you remember what your impression was when you first saw that campus?

SrM: Well, we were rather unacquainted with the whole procedure and we walked in to what was the place where you register and then when we had registered the persons, the sisters who had registered us said "You didn't say you were boarders because you want to see your rooms first, don't you?"

We thought we had to register before we even could see our rooms. So then we found out our rooms. So that was the initial...

KG: Did you room with Dorothy?

SrM: No, not at all. She had asked for a suite. I didn't ask for a suite, I asked for a single room. So she was on the second floor, and I remember distinctly I was on the fourth floor. As a matter of fact, I want to go up and see that room because now that's where the offices are. It was 421, I remember.

KG: And this was Loretto Hall?

SrM: Loretto Hall, right. That had been erected in 1928 but I didn't have any idea that it was relatively new. But there was no problem at all finding a room and being very welcomed. The two sisters who were in the Registrar's Office at that time have both, of course, died some time ago, they're not around, but nevertheless, they were very good friends, they were very cordial to us. So that was my beginning.

KG: So you had a room to yourself?

SrM: Yes. On the fourth floor. A single room.

KG: A single room. And, in terms of the layout, what else, was there like a laundry or communal rooms, lounges?

SrM: No, but I they all showed me where the shower was, the shower room. The bath and the shower in one section and then a series of toilets because you didn't have in your room any facility. You had a sink but other than that you didn't have any other facility. So, this was rather general. And on the fourth floor, I presume it's the same today, although they have made many changes on the fourth floor since there are offices up there now. I have to go up and see what it looks like, which I haven't done.

So Mr. and Mrs. Geis were very nice. We enjoyed being together on the way. There was no problem. Dorothy and I got along very well even though she hadn't been at the high school for four years. She had lived on the south side and then moved to the north side so she wasn't really as entrenched in the high school as I had been. There was a difference there. But that was fine and made no difference.

But, Mrs. Geis was lovely and said "Well we have to go and buy things for the room" which of course I hadn't really figured on. A bedspread and curtains, I never thought of all that. It's entirely different now. People go away. I'm just looking at today's paper, how to prepare for your life in college. It's a different situation.

KG: Pretty bare bones?

SrM: That's right. I know I brought the necessary spread and drapes, those things, so that made the room very pleasant. No problem at all.

KG: Were most of the girls from the St. Louis area or did you have quite a few from out of..

SrM: As time went on I found there was a mixture. There were many from out of town but also many from the area whether it would be Webster Groves or St. Louis or even East St. Louis. We had a number of students coming over from East St. Louis which was different at that time than East St. Louis now. Or, what else is over there, across the river?

KG: Belleville.

SrM: Belleville, right. So, gradually, though, I became very familiar. But I was a boarder, which does set one apart from the day students, because we ate in the dining room. There was a dining room, and I had known that beforehand. And I was supposed to bring for the dining room a set of silver for my place, like a knife, a fork and spoon, which I had done, that much I had done. Somehow I managed to bring some silver. And...

KG: And they supplied the dishes?

SrM: That's right. We were served our dinner and supper in the dining room. The cafeteria was not really operating at this early date, except at night, you could go and get a sandwich at night or something like that.

KG: And where was the dining room because I know Maria had not been built then?

SrM: That's right, but the dining room was on the ground floor of what is now, of course, Webster Hall and that place has been used, now it's partly nursing so actually it would be the section of the area of what is now the southwest corner.

KG: Of Webster Hall?

SrM: Right. I imagine there are pictures, you can see the pictures of that. It's easier to show a picture than to try and explain it so if I've given you directions I could be wrong.

KG: Now every college dorm has its rules and regulations. I'm sure as a Catholic women's college there were a few?

SrM: Yes, I mean as to signing out, if you want to go out, permission to go out, you signed out at the sign out desk, and that would be in Loretto Hall down this, where the office was or close to the office. And therefore you had to be in by a certain time, ten o'clock. But in so far as your staying within the school you had study time. So there was study hour every night beginning at eight until ten. And there was a Sister sitting at a desk at the end of the hall at least on the second floor, third floor, fourth floor, and that, I don't know if it was more for keeping order, it wasn't for any other reason. But you didn't go from room to room, the idea was you stayed in your room unless you have permission to study with somebody else regarding a certain period. So you could go from room to room then and study, so you had study hour. And that lasted until ten o'clock. After that supposedly lights were out.

But see I was by myself, I could go in, and it's true, I could, because I had just a sink and a closet door, I could just put a desk over the sink and I could have the light on and nobody would know that.

KG: Sounds like a good plan.

SrM: Well, you figure these things out.

KG: What about in terms of dress?

SrM: Actually, there were no regulations regarding that but I would say mostly the young people wore skirts and blouses. What I found unbelievable that it was so warm in September and I had, remember, a new wool dress. And I thought I can't possible wear this, it's so hot here.

KG: Hotter than Chicago?

SrM: Well, yes. And it seemed to me that it was. And maybe in Chicago you could always find cool places, but not there, not here. At Webster it didn't seem to me that way.

KG: Some things never change.

SrM: But that's before the air conditioning, there was no air conditioning whatsoever. I remember distinctly at the end of this semester just sticking to a chair in one of the rooms taking a test. It was like a pongee blouse and it was stuck to the chair. Remember those, that kind of a blouse. But it was very warm and I thought I shouldn't even wear this little, it was a lovely little blue dress. I thought this would be good for fall but it was too much for fall.

KG: And you're on the fourth floor

SrM: ...on the fourth floor, but this would be even if I would be downstairs. I didn't notice the difference though because we had good circulation, I must say, the windows could be opened and closed so, such it is these days the air conditioning changes

KG: What was your, you know, if you had like a typical day, your routine?

SrM: Well I thought about what my schedule was. See I had volunteered to do some work, that was part of it, so I didn't know if I would be serving in the dining room. And that, again, made some kind of a change. That's to help pay for tuition. It was almost impossible to try, even though tuition was very low in those days, but keep reminding that this is still the Depression. And although my parents had given me some money, but it was hardly enough so I was serving in the dining room. And that means you do a lot of walking, carrying things in. People sat down to eat, it wasn't cafeteria style. Again, it was more like a home-cooked...

KG: And that was for like lunch and dinner?

SrM: That's right. Dinner and, we, well we'd say lunch and then dinner. But that has changed too as to what is lunch and what is dinner. And then we'd have social dinners and that would mean, it was very special and that would be a special menu for those too. But serving table was hard work. And even though I thought I knew what it was it turned out to be a little more difficult because there were no big dishwashing machines at the

very beginning. We had helped doing the dishes. If you did it on a small scale at home, that was no match for what this was.

KG: So you had class in the mornings typically?

SrM: I had class in the mornings, right. And the afternoons. No evening classes, that would be special. Only a little later do we have evening classes. But, I think that there were some distinctions between those, there were maybe some differences between, we had so many students from out-of-town. We had a number of students from Mexico and the Latin American countries. Now usually they had, I don't think they were touched by adverse circumstances, monetary circumstances because they had plenty of money. So it appeared. Now whether that's very true I don't know. I want to sit down and figure that out. I made friends very easily and maybe that's just the way I am. Even though I had my own room I still liked that, but then being able to go to others, spend time with others. There was no prohibition against that.

The rules were for study hour, that was important. First of all, that's what I'm here for.

KG: How about mass, was there daily mass?

SrM: There was mass, that was optional, nobody was ever required .But I thought I would take, would use that opportunity, certainly, and we had priests coming from the seminary all the time.

KG: Was that Kenrick Seminary?

SrM: Kenrick Seminary, aha. It's about the same now, it's different. But the one who was the regular was Father Joseph Donovan. So he became quite a fixture for us and he taught one class. And there were other priests from the seminary who might have taught a religion class, scripture or some other religion class. But this one was very into social kinds of things so that he had lots of young women signing up to do these social works. And so thought that was fine but you don't do that when you're a freshman.

KG: So among the faculty you had some sisters and then you had some priests. Did you have some lay faculty too?

SrM: Yes, we had some lay faculty as well. George Donovan was a lay faculty member before he became President and I took Current Events from him. He was the first who had that. And I had liked that very much, I liked his Current Events class. And I guess I was working in the library, that was part of my work study. Now I think these have different names now. I mean students work at Webster now but you don't know if they're work study students. Maybe you do know that. So it's a different name. This is before all the programs came out to really help educate people. In other words, this would be up to the college to provide this.

KG: So this was not a government-sponsored work study, it was just the college ..

SrM: Right. You got some work study that way. But anyway on Saturday I worked in the library and I enjoyed that. The Sister who was in the library, Sr. Mary Joseph, she had that special collection. You probably heard about that collection, trying to get Catholic authors to send their books so we had the Catholic authors section. So just working with that and being familiar with that was good. More than that, doing dusting and that sort of thing. What do you do in a library.

But what was nice is that I would say to her, "Oh, I'm supposed to read this Current Events magazine over the weekend and this library's closed" and she'd say "I'll let you take it out to your room on Sunday and bring it back on Monday". That was a privilege. But I said I liked the Current Events and I'd read the whole magazine. Ever read Current Events magazine? You can't just sit at the library and read a page out of it so I became then quite familiar with that. She gave me that little privilege and I would bring it back on Monday. That would be fine. So that was thanks to the work I was doing she permitted that.

KG: And then Dr. Donovan, while you were there, I think, became President? Shortly before?

SrM: There's a little space in there when he became President. He was a teacher at first and then he became President. And so actually that was the first time you had somebody who was a man who was President. And what's interesting now is that Fontbonne has a man president, Maryville has a man president and Webster was really the first one. And some people weren't happy about that. And then he went into what was called, not military service but actually it was for the government. He went over to Europe. That was after World War II.

KG: So I believe around 1948 he went over to Europe to help with the..

SrM: Yes, that's right. Sr. Mariella

KG: What were some of the other faculty that you particularly remember?

SrM: Well, actually, Consuelo wasn't there yet, she's coming a little bit later.

KG: Consuelo Gallagher?

SrM: That's right. I had a woman for French the one year and then another one in the second year and that was never satisfactory because, at least for me, it wasn't. I never pursued that but then later when I did graduate work I really had to use my French a lot and it wasn't really a good background. I hadn't taken that in high school, I had taken Latin. I had four years in high school and then I had four years, I took that as a minor in college because I think it's really a background for English.

But I think of lay teachers then, who were lay teachers. Well, the woman who was the gym teacher, of course it was phys ed, has been dead for some time now. Just recently we had a mass in this chapel, and this is through the work of Ken Nickless who keeps trying to get contributions from former members, you may say this is a lot round about way but there was one Sister in this family, the gym teacher was a sister to a Sister. And another person in the family who later married and lived up in Minnesota. The family of that one who lived in Minnesota were here for a mass and I did go for that. The gym teacher is the one I know, Gin Barthel was her name. We have lots of pictures and she was very good.

KG: It looks from the pictures that there were a lot of sports going on on campus.

SrM: Well we had basketball which was very important. And I had played in high school and I got on the team and yes, we had important games. Now you say where was the gym. We had what was called Idle Hour, you know that, and that would be across from where the dining room had been.

KG: Right where the condominiums are now.

SrM: Exactly. It was a wonderful kind of gym. It served its purpose but could be used for others. We had always like a great place for a Halloween party, the open rafters and all the rest. So we had some kind of an affair, always in October, to try to raise money for something or other, I don't know what. At any rate, it would be a Carnival or whatever it's called. And we had somebody like Dizzy Dean come down one time, he was able to come. You know who he was? If you know your baseball, a pitcher. So we got important people like that to come.

But our team was quite good, if you say basketball, because we played Maryville, we also played the Jewish nurses. Now I don't know how well organized they were but I remember distinctly the one game with the Jewish nurses was on March 17, which is St. Patrick's Day, and when they came, look at them, they were all big women. I thought they were going to have us on, because they were hefty, not only tall, but hefty but we had a very good game that night and we beat the Jewish nurses on St. Patrick's Day, that was the big thing.

We always had keen competition with Maryville and there's a Sister, no longer living, from Maryville, that I've known, had known, over the years. Sr. Patricia did a lot of work in the jails. At any rate, I used to meet her on the train going home because she went on to Indiana as far as Chicago. But the Maryville game was always a very keen one. "I'll always remember that", she said, "you beat us that last game." Sorry, we did, but those were important, those games were important.

Besides the basketball, there were other kinds of things as well. Do you know what I thought of this year? Now this is aside but somebody could do it, I thought there seems to be a resurgence of women in basketball right now, just this year and I thought somebody should have gone back and looked that up and then related it. The women's

basketball team has done very well. I've only gone to see them once and I thought, well, I don't know anybody any more, but I thought they could really relate that and see, that's what's lost. It's my fault, I haven't done anything about it. And I can't even find any other people still around who could join me in this. We had a good team in the past so this is not new. But you see this is all right now, and not much with the past. Whatever you're doing, now it's too late. Why don't I do something about it? Number 1, I don't have the energy to go back and check it all out but I do know you have wonderful pictures and a few times in this past when there is homecoming they bring out some of these old pictures. Somebody will say "Hey I saw your picture" so I know they're there, the stuff is there, but where it is, how much it's used I don't know. That's beside the point.

But besides them track was important. Put it another way, and there were the races always in the spring, in other words, that's part of it. I couldn't begin to think of all the other sports, no.

KG: I've seen pictures of golf, archery...

SrM: I was told that there is a golf course and I came here with a bag. I did. I couldn't believe it. They had something in the back, about where the tennis courts were for a while, I don't know what's up there in the back now, but I thought, this is a tennis court. I had some clubs and I thought I could play ..

KG: You were expecting a big course?

SrM: I was expecting at least nine holes but there wasn't anything there. That expectation quickly vanished

KG: You mentioned in the gym that there were parties, were there a lot of parties and dances through the years?

SrM: That's right, there were. The fall party, the spring party, yes, yes, you'd have to go back, really in the. So there were opportunities. The difference between Webster and other colleges, efforts were made to bring men to the campus. See you didn't have men on campus, this was way back. The efforts were to have a tea dance, it sounds stilted, but always very nice. And usually it was in the Loretto Hall in that room they call the Pink Room, whatever it is now, it has changed so many times. But very nice afternoon. Some fellows from the university would be brought out, from St. Louis University, and after all remember they had only men down there.

KG: I was going to ask you about that.

SrM: It was when World War II came along that they opened it up to women. So the men were brought out and I remember talking to somebody about this when I lived at the Heights. And I was talking to this man. Arrangements were made to have men brought in. See they were in a different situation out there at the Heights.

KG: Is that Loretto Heights in Denver?

SrM: That's right. But I can remember this fellow said that was a good arrangement at Webster because you brought these men in and therefore they had a chance to meet young women and therefore well this fall dance is coming up and would you like to go to a dance. In other words so arrangements were made to meet. Where do people meet to pick up people these days. The world is different.

KG: Yes, it is. Did you all go to their campus at all?

SrM: St. Louis U? Yes, yes. For example, like the Latin students always went down there because there was this kind of a club, it was a Latin club. Dr. Korfmacher was down there. So there were some organizations where you would have both men and women. And it would be the men who would invite us.

KG: I was going to ask you I know in the yearbooks they have so many clubs. We have clubs today, so of those you had as a student are no longer ....

SrM: International Relations. Some of them would be by the same name, the Poetry Club, you know, and that was a very strong organization. As well as the Classical Club, the Greek and Latin students would be in that. So it depends, there were always a lot of these extracurricular activities right outside the classroom but somehow related to studies.

KG: Did you have a favorite that you belonged to?

SrM: Well there was a Debating Club, I always enjoyed being in the Debating. Now of course it's a whole separate thing.

KG: From today's Debate program?

SrM: Absolutely.

KG: Who did you debate against?

SrM: You could debate with another school, Fontbonne, Maryville. The Classical Club, that was called, that's where you had people from St. Louis U. coming. Latin and Greek people.

KG: Did you get into any of the publications, the Loretine or the Lauretanium?

SrM: There are a lot of good articles in those, the Loretine and the Lauretanium. The Lauretanium was the yearbook, the Loretine was the other, and that was put out through the English Department, meaning mainly those who were majors, but you could be asked to write an article in the Loretine. I've never had time to go though those, those are rich, the history and the background.

KG: Today we have such a prominent theatre department and I wonder in terms of plays and musical productions, what kinds of things you had?

SrM: Yes, we had that. Mrs. Sankey taught theatre and Mr. Sankey, her brother, and they did, and we always had very good shows. The theatre, in the sense, see this was all before 1963 so that would be back in the old days. They always did the Shakespeare ....So we always had a Shakespeare but besides that there were the other performances. And because there was a theatre arts, speech, but then in the speech we really did public speaking. That was done through the history department. Dr. Donovan, so we had talks, but also we had contests. I remember we went down, I remember going down to St. Louis University, it was the law school auditorium. I did a talk on women and politics and somebody else did, we had other topics.

KG: That wasn't too long after women got the vote, maybe a decade

SrM: That's right, 1924, so then again this is in the 1930s. Now that somebody from St. Louis U. and somebody from Fontbonne and somebody from Maryville so then we were all open to that and some of us got to go down there for a little broader venue.

KG: I was wondering, you know, talking about school but also what did you go for fun around Webster Groves, where did people used to go and hang out?

SrM: I was thinking there was a place in Webster Groves that we always went down because you couldn't smoke up there.

KG: You couldn't smoke in the dorm?

SrM: Or even on campus. There was a place down in Old Orchard where all the plate glass windows there on the corner

KG: In that little strip mall

SrM: The last place and now it's all windows, plate glass windows, but that was the place where everybody went and they had the best chocolate cake. You could buy a piece of chocolate cake, cup of coffee, whatever, you could have a smoke so that would be a place where people would go. That was a fun place, very much, before McDonalds, the McDonalds wasn't there, we didn't have that. The drugstore was a really important place and now I think it's a hair salon. You can almost tell by the steps leading up to it. That was really an important place. You could get some things at the counter but you couldn't smoke there. You could get a good soda at the fountain if you didn't want to go to the other. The other place was really patronized by everybody, meaning, some professors. We had people like Jacques Chicoineau, but this was later, but that there were some men in some departments, we had one in the history department, Whitey Hohl, plus we had in our department David Smith, a fine young man, so that always you had some men in the departments.

KG: Did some of the faculty go out with you too?

SrM: That's right, an exchange like that, so it wasn't really strictly just faculty. And we had our picnics and we always used the backyard here for a picnic which is an ideal place, at least for our department.

KG: Backyard of?

SrM: Nerinx. So that we used that over and over again.

KG: Did you get down to Old Webster, Webster downtown, was there anything?

SrM: It wasn't really as alert as it is today. ...

KG: How about the greater St. Louis area?

SrM: We went there by streetcar.

KG: Where did you catch the streetcar?

SrM: Right in front.

KG: Right on Lockwood Avenue?

SrM: Yes. The streetcar. It's a bus now. You'd take that down, and so you'd go down there maybe on a Saturday and there were different places downtown. But that's before you had Crestwood.

KG: Crestwood Plaza and all the shopping in the suburbs. You had to go downtown to

SrM: Downtown. You wanted anything you went down there. When we first came we went down there to buy all we wanted for our rooms. Now of course, Mr. Geis drove and when we first arrived we were in Forest Park and we couldn't get out.

KG: You got lost in there?

SrM: We drove I think for ten minutes so we saw Forest Park.

KG: Well, that hasn't changed.

SrM: If you come in from out-of-town. We could always get the streetcar right in front.

KG: Did you get home often to Chicago?

SrM: No, I didn't go. I went at Christmastime and I took the train which is the way you went home.

KG: Now where did you catch the train?

SrM: You had to go down to Union Station.

KG: Okay, so you had to go downtown to catch it.

SrM: You can't get it out here. What you can get out here is something to take you to Kansas City. In Kirkwood you can get a train to Kansas City. I had to go downtown. So I didn't go at Thanksgiving time, there wasn't enough time anyway, but at Christmastime I know I went to Chicago.

KG: Did you have a break, how long a break at Christmas?

SrM: Two weeks, something like that. It was always substantial, I mean you could really go and, as I recall.

KG: What did you do in the summer time? Was there summer school on campus?

SrM: Let me see what did I do in the summer? No, I don't think I stayed in the summer. I think I went back to Chicago and worked. Pretty sure. Now that's not clear to me at this particular point. We had a friend who had a little grocery store in one of the suburbs in Chicago and she needed somebody to relieve her and when she was occupied elsewhere. So I worked in her store and that was easy enough. I mean, a small place. Other odd jobs I guess I had during the summer and then I did work in the Fair store, that was State and Madison, and you know Chicago, it was right on the corner, the busiest corner in the world, State and Madison. And the Fair store was there, right on the corner. And I worked there, I was in the basement, but anyway, it was very nice. I did that, the pay wasn't much, but anyway.

KG: A little money for your

SrM: Right. I don't think I did anything else during the summer. Earlier when I had been in the Catholic high school, where I went to high school, I decided one summer just to take a course at Schurz. Did you ever here of Schurz, Carl Schurz High School. Big high school in Chicago. And I went over there. Of course, you go by the streetcar and it wasn't too far, but I took typing and swimming. I learned how to type and learned at least where the keys are and after that I could go and swim. So that was very good. So that was my only experience at a public high school and that worked out very well. And then later, when I was in high school, I signed up for art, and the teacher became very ill and couldn't teach any more so those of us who had signed up were put into a typing class. I already knew the keys so that was fine but I probably would have failed in the art. Anyway she never did return.

KG: This was all, of course, during the Great Depression. What kind of impact did that have on you? Was there any question of your not being able to stay in college?

SrM: No, there wasn't, if I could manage it, okay. My parents did what they could, but they weren't, my brother had a scholarship to Marquette, that was a little different. My sister Dorothy wasn't interested in higher education and then Jerry was too young to be worried about it. No, my father said "Education is something nobody could take away from you. " Having lost money, and so forth. Right now, people are saying the same thing now. You know, put your trust in this and trust in that. They were very supportive, I'll put it that way, but they weren't in a position to say "Send us your bills", no. It worked out okay.

KG: You graduated in 1935, I believe.

SrM: Yes.

KG: That senior year, were there a lot of activities as a senior?

SrM: Guess what I came across lately and I sent it to my classmate Cille, Cille Ray, Cille Golden Ray.

KG: That was her name?

SrM: She was Cille Golden, and then married to Dr. Ray, he's been dead now for some time. This was the invitation for our graduation. I should have saved it and given it to you. I don't know why I came across, this was in some letters that I have, some old letters that I thought "my gosh". To see this still in pretty good shape is something. But we always had an exercise beforehand. See there would be May Day, which was a big thing. You've got pictures of all the May Days.

KG: Tell us a little bit about that, because people today don't know anything about

SrM: This is all based on good lucks, et cetera, the very fact that you had a May Day and would choose somebody as May Queen, the best-looking woman in the class or something like that. And sometimes it's more than that, it has to be popularity as well. But we have pictures of May Day and it was always on the back campus and it was very important. So she's voted to be May Queen and others would be part of her entourage, her maids, and therefore they'd process and there's music and of course dancing. So that's something which is a big thing. I don't think that would fit in the modern girl way of thinking at all. This was something that was done, every school had it. It wasn't that Webster was different, everybody had a May Day.

You had an athletic banquet. That's a big thing, that's when awards are given, whether it had been in the races or whether it had been in basketball whatever they are. See there's always various kinds of things like that that are very important beforehand. And that would be held in the cafeteria, big banquet, you know, with presentations for various

whatever had been chosen, whatever they were, something outstanding. It could have been the fifty yard dash, whatever.

Before you said there were other things, yes. Tennis as well, you see, that was big, and we had tennis courts in the back. That was pretty important. I'll tell you what was not terribly important but played a lot and that was volleyball. You see that's bigger now than it used to be and the tennis of course is big so that was something else. So you had athletic affairs, and then

KG: Were there some special dances or anything?

SrM: The spring dance, fall dance, those were all very special. And the dance might be held down at the Missouri Athletic Club.

KG: Downtown?

SrM: Yes, right, right. Or out here at the Westwood Country Club, Westborough, Westborough Country Club. Another possibility. I can't remember all these, those are some. What I was trying to think of too is the Poetry Club had something special. And the planting of the ivy, you asked me about that once before.

KG: Yes, and that's another tradition we don't see

SrM: Not anymore. The ivy that was all over the place and finally that became a hazard so it had to be taken down but that someone would be elected, selected for that. A poem that person had written, and therefore be considered to be, because we had a Poetry Club. As I said before we had all kinds of clubs. It would be impossible to list them all, I just can't think of

KG: So they would go and plant some ivy, and read the poem, and have a little ceremony?

SrM: It was more than just a little ceremony because you have some pictures of this, and people surrounding this, and it's a tradition. I think elsewhere it's a tradition too at some schools and something that you hold onto. I think so many traditions have been forgotten, dropped, abandoned. Other people said oh, we should have held onto that, we should have kept that. It's a matter of choice, I guess, or philosophy, I don't know what you think.

KG: Do you remember your actual graduation weekend, some places have like a Baccalaureate, and then the actual commencement ceremony.

SrM: You see we graduated twice, at St. Louis U. as well as Webster. We were part of St. Louis U.

KG: Part of that Corporate Colleges setup?

SrM: Exactly. And so my mother and her cousin came for my graduation. She stayed at the Melbourne Hotel which is on Grand and Lindell and that's now occupied by the Jesuits, as you probably know. But it used to be the Melbourne, a pretty nice hotel. She could come out by streetcar. Everybody traveled by streetcar if you were going any place unless you could afford a cab, the method of transportation. But anyway there was something at St. Louis U. so it was easy for my mother to attend it there and then come on to Webster and see something at Webster. So actually we were in two graduations. We had a mass ceremony for everybody associated with Maryville, Fontbonne, and Webster and St. Louis U. Then we had a separate one.

KG: A separate one. Do you remember anything about that ceremony? A lot of people don't remember a thing about their commencement

SrM: I don't, no. No, I do know later ones, as a faculty member, sitting up there, with all these dignitaries and watching all this and then debating with other faculty members—how long would they talk—oh, give him two minutes—I say only five—what do you bet—I bet five of this. This is all that's going on among the faculty members. So I don't remember to tell the truth.

KG: I know at that time a lot of families, it was not common to get a college degree. Were you one of the first in your family?

SrM: Well, actually, I would say yes in my immediate family. Because my father and mother certainly hadn't made any effort, my brother was getting, as it turned out he didn't quite finish. You know the story about my brother? He was killed in World War II so that was kind of closed off. But yes.

KG: So then what did you do immediately after graduation?

SrM: Well then I looked for a job.

KG: Some things never change.

SrM: And it was worse then, in '35. Worse. I worked at the Fair where I had been before, so I was able to get a job there. But I wanted to teach because after all I had a teaching degree. However, I was told well you can't teach in Chicago or in the suburbs. My mother said we'll go see our cousin, Lucy Gibbons, so we took the streetcar out to the south side where she lived and this was very nice. She was the only woman on the school board in the city of Chicago, my mother's cousin.

I should tell you the story. My mother was an only child who lived in her family, she didn't have brothers or sisters. But this cousin said, "Now, Margaret, she can't really teach in the city. She has to go to the college in the city for a year". And I said "Yeah, but I already have my degree". She said "that doesn't make any difference, it's a requirement, you have to go to the city of Chicago Teacher's College for a year and then you would be eligible".

So I thought I'm not coming up and where it was at this time was way on the south side which would mean I would have had to take about three streetcars to get to the south side. So I'm not going to take that so I didn't go. She said "Well, you can try one of the suburbs."

Well, I did try and I remember going out on the "L" and a couple of trains. I can't even remember what the suburb was. It was for fourth grade and I thought that's not for me. And I didn't go back. But it was just a trial so I didn't. So I thought, well, I don't want to go to college, Chicago Teacher's College anyway so I didn't. And I had different jobs, odd jobs. But I thought, well, I'll go down to one of these agencies where you apply for a job and you pay to get a job. Now that was popular then. I don't know how popular it is now. You pay \$50 or something like that to get on the list and so and I had the credentials. So then I had a call from this place in Momence, Illinois. So I took the bus down there, it's about 60 miles south of Chicago, Route 1. I went down to St. Patrick's Academy and there were Sisters around the place, Sisters of the Holy Heart of Mary, small community based in Illinois and also in Canada. And they had this school, high school, for girls only. The grade school was open to boys and girls and this was very attractive to families in Chicago who could send their children here. Boys and the girls in grade school together and high school, that was just girls only.

So I went there for two years. I signed up. Well I got \$50 a month with room and board, at that time then I was ready to buy a car to drive down rather than take the bus. I came home then every week. Well \$50 a month plus room and board, and I had more peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. But I stayed there for two years but I got experience then teaching. And I really enjoyed and I taught basketball to the high school girls. This was good because we had a good team and they were very good.

Now what about the other grades? I was supposed to teach physical ed to the other grades, figure out something. Well this is what I had learned before I put to use. I went and bought a book and got a book with all these kinds of things you can do with kids. What do I do with these kids? Sixth grade, fifth grade, third grade, fourth grade. So I was asked to have a program at the end of the year in which all the children would participate, about 500 kids altogether. So I thought I'll have a circus, and have all the elephants and tigers and such and such. So I had it all worked out. I spent the year getting ready for this circus and I had an eighth grade boy who was my circus master and he was perfect. He'd do whatever I tell him to do and he was a handsome young man but he was in eighth grade, so that just worked out. So the end of the year was a success. Actually all the kids performed and that's the big thing so their parents came and they're all happy. That all worked out

Two years and I thought, well, then I had a chance, well somebody who'd been my roommate at Webster, Doe Falla had a job at Skil. Ever hear of Skil? It used to be Skilsaw and they dropped it. And so she said there's an opening here so I went there and of course this is office work. And I thought, oh well, I certainly know how to type, I don't know what else. BC, before computers. Well anyway, I worked at this company, it

was on Elston Avenue and I really enjoyed it. I met some wonderful people but Doe Falla didn't stay much longer. Anyway she left and I stayed on there.

In the meantime I thought, well, my teaching career is over, just a short time. You asked the question well when did you join the Sisters of Loretto? Well you see there was a period between graduation and also entering. I didn't enter until wartime, as a matter of fact. I left home in February, is it 1942? I'll have to check that. My brother left in March, I left in February, he left in March. Anyway I went down to Kentucky which of course was entirely new. I didn't know what it would be like. The Mother General I had known because she was a Superior at Webster when I was a student. She said "This is real country" and I thought, yeah but you didn't tell me all the facts about this real country. It was.

KG: Quite different from Chicago

SrM: It was very different, but anyway, this was the war, this was the wartime. So there was space in between '35 and '42, seven years. Okay. So I didn't enter right after college and people are surprised to see I didn't. I made a retreat at the Senecal. Now there's one in Chicago, a Lincoln Park one, and I talked to this priest and he said "Well, you know, you're getting up there in years (I was now twenty-eight) it would be a good idea to try it out."

KG: There are so many religious orders. What was it that attracted you to the Sisters of Loretto?

SrM: Well, actually I never would have joined the Sisters from St. Patrick's Academy although they were wonderful, they were definitely Canadian. And also they were in the French settlement there in Illinois. I'm trying to think of the names of some of the places right there. But I never would have joined them because I visited their Motherhouse. As a matter of fact, I drove to the Motherhouse and slept in the car waiting for someone. What's the name of the place? Do you know any place in central Illinois? What's 60 miles south of Chicago? It's not central. Anyway, and I hadn't known the Sisters of Providence very well because I went to the public school for the first five years. We didn't have a Catholic school in our neighborhood until I was in the fifth grade, sixth grade, so I didn't know that community, the Sisters of Providence, I didn't really until my music teacher, my piano teacher, I had. So I really didn't know. And I really didn't do a survey of all the religious communities. I know somebody else who did. A young woman who surveyed all before she made a choice. But I thought these people are, what always impressed by me is they seem human and real and not, really down to earth. That I liked about them and when I was at Webster I got to know some sisters very well but you wouldn't know them.

KG: So they had quite an impact on you?

SrM: Yes, but nobody was ever saying “Sister you should be a Sister of Loretto” or “Mary Margery, you should be a Sister of Loretto”. I didn’t have anybody curtailing me like that, I didn’t have that.

KG: We only have a few minutes left and I just wondered if, looking at your student experience and the current student experience that you’ve seen as a faculty member, if there are any striking differences, similarities

SrM: It’s so different, I really say, I mean about how people select colleges now. Well I just read how they, even in today’s paper, decide what they’re going to have for their rooms and all that. We’re a consumer society now. I think I grew up when it wasn’t a consumer society. I just face it. And it wasn’t that we were, we were never rich but as my father said we always have enough to eat...and he also said one time “I attribute my health to your mother’s good cooking. She’s always able to provide” even though we didn’t have steak or all that. Well I think we have to accept that. Now this is a. Did you want some water?

KG: No, I’m fine.

SrM: I don’t know. That’s not answering your question. I think that children these days are so spoiled. They have everything. We didn’t, and I think, ask anybody. We weren’t deprived but we certainly, we never expected lots of things. I don’t know how to make that clear. It’s true that kids have everything now, I mean, from the very beginning. I have a great nephew now who has two little ones and the first one at three started school. I thought oh my gosh that means in twenty years, he’s going to be in school for twenty years. I don’t know if that helps you any.

KG: I think that was a good point. We are much more a consumer society then you could be even

SrM: ...We take it for granted. And we had to see maybe the differences in order to. I don’t know.

KG: I think that’s a good point to end on. I want to thank you for sharing with us today. We really enjoyed it and thank you very much.