Salve Regina Oral History Project

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Sister Elizabeth “Betty” McAuliffe, a graduate of Salve in the class of 1968, was a professor in the Education department from 1980-1993. She served as president of Bayview Academy for eighteen years and returned to Salve in 2013. She is currently the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. During this interview we touched upon Sister Betty’s academic and professional careers, her influences in her teaching style, her thoughts on Sister Lucille, and the Salve name change proposition, her feelings on the new O’Hare Center, and her thoughts on the current students at Salve Regina.

Allison Graves: Ok, so, you were a student here.

Sister Betty McAuliffe: I was a student here, yes.

Allison: Yes.

Sr. Betty: I was also a Sister of Mercy while I was a student. I was a Chemistry major, and Biology and Math minor. Well, it’s funny because we started our experience as we entered the community, so we did our first work up at Mount St. Rita’s, where we were students, that’s in Cumberland Rhode Island it’s the novitiate. And when we left the novitiate, after three years, and we took courses here with Salve faculty, four adjuncts, depending on what it was, but and then we were on campus after we left the novitiate, what was called the Juniorate. And we lived at Bay View in East Providence and we came by bus every day, and because I was doing science, because there were a lot of courses and labs and so forth, I had to finish…I had to come one summer, I think I was only here for one summer. But we…my class opened the O’Hare building.

Allison: Oh!

Sr. Betty: Yeah, we were the first science folks to be in that building. Prior to that the labs were…the Biology Labs were in the bottom of McAuley Hall, where the Nursing I think was too. And then the Chemistry Labs were over in what is now the Antone Center.

…

My favorite people during that time were Ascanio DiPippo,[[1]](#footnote-1) and Dr. Morris.[[2]](#footnote-2) Dr. DiPippo is deceased and Dr. Morris just died in February I think of this year. And Dr. Butari who was for Biology, and he died several years ago now. But great people, and Sister Mary Brenda.[[3]](#footnote-3) I had um….Anatomy! Oh how could I forget? It was wonderful, she was [a] great teacher. They were all great teachers, they really were! But she was very strict, and had to be called Sister Mary Brenda, couldn’t call her Sister Brenda. But it was interesting because at the time, because we were Sisters, we were not allowed to just study with our fellow students. So we didn’t really get to know the students that we were in class with, because when we studied we had to go over to the basement of Ochre Court. And if you go downstairs, do you know where the ladies room is downstairs in Ochre Court?

Allison: Mmm-hmm.

Sr. Betty: Look to your right, there’s a big door there, and it says ‘Do Not Enter-Dangerous!’ Or something like that, that’s where we studied, in there!

Allison: Oh…

Sr. Betty: Right next to the boilers! I guess that’s what it was then, it probably still is. We had a little table and it was dark and it was…that’s where we studied. [Laughter]. And then that’s where we went in between classes and so forth…

Allison: Was there a special reason, that you couldn’t study with your…?

Sr. Betty: Yeah…well that was the rule at the time. It changed later on for those others who came after me, but for that time. But the good news is, Allison, I was able to keep up with people I graduated with, they’ve been a joy to stay in touch with. Mary Ellen Atkins who, do you know Mary Ellen?

Allison: Uh…she teaches science correct?

Sr. Betty: Yes, she does.

Allison: I took Physics with her…

Sr. Betty: Ok, well she and I were in the same class, with all those people. [Laughter]. So she’s another one you might want to talk to, because she’s on campus almost every day, she goes to the 12:15 mass. Anyway, so we managed to finish our degrees, and when we graduated, we graduated on the little dais outside of Ochre Court there, that little platform that’s out there.

Allison: Yeah.

Sr. Betty: That’s where we graduated from. It was gorgeous, really gorgeous. And we were a small class, I think we were only sixty some odd people, maybe 68. And we went our separate ways.

Allison: What did you do after you graduated?

Sr. Betty: After I graduated, I…this is funny, and it gets funnier. Now you have to understand, I just finished a degree in Chemistry, with a minor in Biology, and a minor in Math. And I was assigned to teach third grade, at what was then Tyler School, in South Providence.

I had never taken an Education course in my life. [Laughter].

So that was fun, but I always wanted to be a teacher. I had wanted to be a teacher since I was four years old. I went to school, I would come home right after school and play with my dolls, and I would be the teacher, and they would sit and listen to me. Anyway, so I was a natural teacher in that sense, and I had an excellent principal at Tyler School who really mentored me and helped me teach the reading and so forth, and she also realized that Tyler School was a grade one through grade eight, she also quickly realized that I was a Science major. So the second year, she put me in charge of all the Science from, I think grade four to grade eight. So I taught the Science, and I had a…I think I had a junior high home room at that point. But I taught Science in five, six, seven, and eight; and I taught Math in grade seven and eight. Loved it, absolutely loved it. Loved middle school, *loved* the students, hated to leave. Hated to leave! Hated the weekends because they weren’t there. [Laughter].

And then after that, I was there for three years I guess, and then Sister Therese Antone, who was the previous President here, she was on our…what we called our Leadership Team, and she was then principal at [Bishop] Feehan High School in Attleboro [Massachusetts]. So, she knew I was Chemistry major and Biology minor, so she invited me to come to teach at Feehan, which I did. And there I taught the Chemistry and Biology that I had been trained to…that I knew you know? And again, just a wonderful time. I loved Feehan, I loved every bit of it. I loved the students, I loved football games, I loved going to everything. And it was a good cohort, and the convent was right there, attached, as it was at Tyler, the convent was right attached to the school. So we just had a spectacular time.

When you think back on it, we were only a few years older than the students, than the seniors because…

Allison: Right.

Sr. Betty: We were in our early twenties at that point, and they were eighteen. But that was a magnificent experience, magnificent. And Sister Therese was an excellent principal. And then Sister Faith Harding, she left to come here I think, and then Sister Faith Harding took over. She was also the principal. And then that’s the time when Sister Therese was on the leadership team, I think she was here and on Leadership…I can’t remember how that went. But I was at Feehan for four years. And she came to me in February, I think, of the fourth year, and she sat me down and she said: ‘I’d like to ask you something.’ ‘Yeah,’ ‘We’d like you to be a principal.’

Now mind you, I had just…I was just finishing my Master’s degree in Chemistry that summer.

Allison: Wow.

Sr. Betty: Ok, so I had no administrative experience. But she sat me…and I was like ‘oh what elementary school is open?’ And she said ‘oh no, it’s not an elementary school, it’s a high school.’ ‘High school! What do I know about high school?’ Be an administrator of a high school? … But anyway…so I said ok…so I left Feehan and I went to Bishop Gerard High School in Fall River, which used to be Mount St. Mary High School. It was run by the Sisters of Mercy. So that school combined with a number of other schools in Fall River and became known as Bishop Gerard High School, was named after one of the Bishops in Fall River. I think I was the second principal there, I think, second or third, I can’t remember it was so long ago. Anyway, I was there for five years as principal. Loved it! Loved working with the students, loved working with the faculty, never did get to use the Chemistry degree again, really [laughter]. Except to know what was going on in the classes, and I could do that nicely. I did teach…I tried to teach an Algebra 1 class for a while when I was principal, but it didn’t work because I was always being called out of class to meet with a parent or to meet with somebody to solve some issue. So I stopped…it wasn’t fair to the students, so I stopped doing that. But anyway, so I was there for five years and then unfortunately we had to close Gerard because of the low enrollments and so forth. And so Dr. DiPippo and Sister Ann Nelson[[4]](#footnote-4) were here, and contacted me and said you should come to Salve. Oh. Ok. I hadn’t thought of that. So I came down and met with Brother Victor Hickey. At that time he was the Chair of the Education department, because that’s where the openings were. And by that time I had been out of Chemistry for five years, and I really liked working with the teachers, and helping them to get what they needed for their classrooms, I really like doing that. So I said: ‘I would really like to work with young people who are interested in being teachers, and help prepare them to do that.’ So that’s how I got into Teacher Education.

So anyway I came down and I was hired, and that was 1980, and so some of the people that were here then…Do you know Kitty Rok in Education?

Allison: I know of her.

Sr. Betty: Ok, well she and I came the same year, and that’s where she met her husband John, while she was here. So then Dr. Bram came, and all those folks came, so anyway I came in 1980 and I was here and taught in the Education department and eventually I was Chair of the Secondary Ed. Because they saw that as my strength. Did that, and at that time the university was changing, the university was going from being a college to a university, so it changed over. And so there was a whole restructuring, I don’t think that I was aware at the time about what the structure was. Brother Hickey was, as far as I knew was the Chair of the Education department, but there were also like a Chair of secondary Ed, there were all different sections, and after it became a university they wanted to change it. They wanted to change the structure. To have…what did they call it…I don’t remember…but they wanted to have one person in charge and then people reporting to that person. That’s how they wanted to do it. They talked about schools, having like a School of Education, a School of Nursing, a School of Business, that sort of thing. But that conversation led to the decision of we were too small to do that, it would divide the university too much. So they decided to stay rather with the independent departments, like we have today.

So during that time I went away for a year or so to do my doctorate work at Penn State, in Happy Valley. And it was a happy valley! [Laughter]. Great, great, great place. I loved every minute of it, and so I got my doctorate there in curriculum instruction. And then I came back here, I guess I was gone for like a year and summer, or something like that. I came back in 1985, and then was here, and taught, and ten was promoted and got tenure. Then in 1993, I guess, *again* I got a tap on the shoulder that said: ‘we’re looking for a President at St. Mary Academy: Bay View in East Providence. So after much ado, ok well I’ll interview for the job, and so I was one of the people interviewed, and end of the story was I got that job. So I spent eighteen…so I left here…and my mother died in that year too. She died in August of ’93. So I was here for the ‘93/’94 year, I guess is what it was. And then left in ’94, went to Bay View and I was there for eighteen years. And after eighteen years I said: ‘You know, I think I’ve done what I can do here. I think I’ll just…leave’ and retire from Bay View. And then I started to think: ‘Well, what would I like to do next? Well, I think I’d like to go back to Salve, if there was room for me and they had me.’ And so I started to ask, actually I came, I think…yeah Sister Jane was president then, yeah ‘93, she was President then. Was she? No…

Allison: I think it was still Sister Therese.

Sr. Betty: Yeah, it was still Sister Therese, you’re right. It was still Sister Therese.[[5]](#footnote-5) So yes, they would have me, so I took a year off, so that was the 12/’13 year I took. And then during that year I had conversations with the Provost at the time Dr. Dean de la Motte. And the Education department really wanted me back, and they wanted me back as Chair. And I said: ‘Oh, I don’t think so.’ I just want to come back and teach, I had been in administration since I was thirty.

Allison: Right.

Sr. Betty: So I said you know, it’s time, to let someone else do the job, anyway but by March or so of ‘13, I said maybe, yeah ok. So I came back as Chair in 2013, and I’ve been back here since then. So I was Chair for a couple of years, and then last summer I put in, at this very time, Dr. Shakarian,[[6]](#footnote-6) who was then Interim Dean, told the Provost she had to step down, because she was very sick. And so she was going to take a leave, and so the Provost said ok, and he announced that to the Department Chairs, that Dr. Shakarian was stepping down, if we had any ideas to let him know. I simply wrote a little note that said: ‘I’m so sorry to hear about Dr. Shakarian. If there is anything I can do to help, I am happy to do that.’ [Laughter].

You know, the end of that story. The next story was: ‘Oh, would you like to be the Interim Dean?’ *Oh*. I wasn’t thinking about that. I was torn, you know, with the Education department. And I said ‘yeah, ok,’ so finally I said yes, and as you know last year that is what I did, sat in, and then it came time for the search, and then I had to make that decision, whether to do…and I was really torn. It was a very hard…one of the hardest decisions I think I’ve made. But I enjoyed what I was doing, I like working with students in this way, so I threw my hat in the ring [laughter] and I eventually got the job, and here I am. My life in a nutshell. [Laughter].

So what else do you want to know?

Allison: You mentioned that you were here during the time when it [Salve] was transferring from college to university…

Sr. Betty: Yes.

Allison: There was also a…questions of a name change for the school going on around that time. How did you feel about that?

Sr. Betty: Yeah, I can’t remember what…I don’t…it’s good that you bring that back to me, because I had forgotten all about that. Probably felt that I didn’t want it to change. I don’t even remember, I don’t remember the conversation actually. What were they thinking about for another name?

Allison: They wanted to call it the Newport College…

Sr. Betty: Yes they did! Oh, yes I remember that! Ohhhhhh, thank you for reminding me [Laughter]. Yeah, I think that, no. We said no. Absolutely not. *No*. It had its identity and it would lose its identity as…we felt it would lose its identity of a Mercy college, and as a Catholic college. That it would become just another one of the places. And we weren’t trying to sell Newport, we were trying to sell the commitment to the mission. Oh, I forgot that, yeah. That was a…there was a lot of heated discussion around that. I know I wasn’t for it. Nope. I know I wasn’t for that.

Allison: Were there any experiences, as a student here or as a teacher [or] anywhere else that influenced any of your decisions to get to where you are now?

Sr. Betty: Hmm. [Laughter]. I would say mostly the people that I have met along the way have been the impetus. I have always admired Sister Therese’s leadership and I think I paid attention to that when she was principal and then when she came here. And she was a big influence on me, I think, in the way I tried to be the principal that I was. And then President even, she was very thorough, very single-minded in what she wanted in what she knew she was visionary in. And I think I tried to aspire to that, if you will, and in many ways.

I had great teachers that I tried to mimic in terms of teaching, especially the Sciences. I mentioned Dr. Morris and Dr. DiPippo and Sister Mary Brenda. I also had a wonderful teacher, I was just talking about this the other day for some reason, with the gal from…*Report from Newport.*[[7]](#footnote-7)She was then Sister Mary Ida, she’s now Jeanette Pippin, because she left the community. But she’s a teacher that stands out for me. She taught American Lit, and she made it so much alive that you felt you were sitting in Paris at one of the little cafés just talking about literature and books and life. You could imagine yourself there.

Another great teacher I had was…oh what was his name? He was a science teacher at…because I did my Master’s degree at UNH,[[8]](#footnote-8) in Durham, New Hampshire…

He was just so organized! He would always, I can see him to this day, he’d be up there at the lectern, and he’d have his outline on the board about what he was gonna do that day. And he would methodically move right through it. So when I came back to Feehan, because I was teaching [there] at that point, and I wanted to mimic him. So I would do that, put my outline up. The only problem was…I could never get to the bottom! [Laughter]. So that was a problem, but I still do that. I don’t put it on the board anymore because I don’t want the students to know whether I get through my whole agenda or not. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don’t. So I think the people really, I’ve had some really great teachers that have really influenced my teaching. Penn State, I had wonderful mentors there. So does that answer your question?

Allison: Yeah! … You were also here when Sister Lucille was President.

Sr. Betty: Yes! Sister Lucille was here, yup. She was the President when I was here. Sister Lucille, Sister Sheila Megley. Very gentle woman, very lovely, very personable, very Irish. What would you like to ask me about her?

Allison: I just wanted to know what you thought of her, how she’s different from Sister Therese, about her influence on the Financial Crisis, afterwards how she “saved” Salve.

Sr. Betty: Well, I was a faculty member, so I didn’t know that much about any of the finances, so I don’t know how she did it, but she did it. One of the things that stands out for me with her is…you know when you walk from Angelus through that little walkway by Marion Hall, by the Chapel here now? And you walk over to Ochre Court?

Allison: Yes.

Sr. Betty: That used to be a very high wall, all along that. And she took it down one day. It just came down!

Allison: Oh!

Sr. Betty: How that happened I have no idea, Allison! But what I know is it happened. And people were aghast at it. But it opened up the campus, it had a way of opening up. If you go around Newport you’ll see some of those still high stone walls. When I think of Lucille, that’s what I think about. She opened the campus up. And it grew under her, it grew under her tutelage. And she had a vision for what she wanted to be. Now I wasn’t thinking about all that at the time. But I always found her very personable and friendly. I didn’t have a lot to do with her, because I was in my own little world in the Education department. Sister Therese was here at that point, she was the Development Director and a very good one too. Excellent, excellent!

Allison: Were you also here when the library was built?

Sr. Betty: I was! Oh, yes I was! That was 1991, and we watched it go up brick by brick. We were so…because the library used to be over here in McAuley Hall, that’s where I used the library, over there, even as a student. So we were delighted when we had this separate building. We all wanted to move our offices over there because it was so beautiful. It still is beautiful, it was well done, and well thought out. Therese was behind that. And I was here when they built the Hunt/Reefe dorms too, because I think that happened shortly after that. Again, another brilliant move on Sister Therese’s part because she built it so that it could be used if it wasn’t a university, if it had to go into something else, it was still a functional building. She had the wisdom to build things in her presidency to keep things within the framework of the neighborhood. Even with the library the idea was to mimic Wakehurst a bit.

I was here when Mrs. Bruguiére[[9]](#footnote-9) was still over there in Wakehurst.

Allison: *Ohhh*.

Sr. Betty: She hated, *hated* Salve girls. Oh my God. Oh, she hated them! Oh, imagine, chewing their gum! [Laughter]. But I was here when we got that building. But they were trying to mimic it so that when it ages, even more now, that they would look like they belong together on that property. And that was very smart, very smart.

Allison: How, when we got the library, did that effect or help the Education department?

Sr. Betty: Oh, yeah. I think so. Oh yeah….They used to say, well the other thing they used to say, was build the gymnasium or build the recreation center and then you can build the library. We did it the opposite, but it was sorely needed. The university had outgrown the library there and I think it felt more like a university, it began to feel that way, and I think students took advantage of it. And there was a beautiful Curriculum Library there. Sister Corinne Walsh, she was in the Education department too. She did a lot of the placement of students, and worked out with the schools, and made connections. Great, great lady. But she really was the backbone for the beginning of that Curriculum Library, and I think that was a great resource for our Education students, and it’s even grown to that under Sue Small. It’s done a great job and expanded itself, especially this last year with the Maker’s Space, and all of that kind of thing that’s happened. And opening it up I think it was very good idea, brilliant.

And of course that opened this building [McAuley] up for classrooms, challenging classrooms at some point, but you know….

Allison: Was the transition easy? Going from administration to teaching, to administration, when you transferred from Gerard to here, to Bay View, back to here?

Sr. Betty: Always a learning curve. *Always* a learning curve. Again, had good support, had good people around me who helped me get to that point, and to make the shift from the classroom to the administrative role. It wasn’t hard, it was a learning curve, and you had to look at life differently, and I had more responsibility than I had if I was the classroom teacher, for example. I had to make sure that things were coordinated and moved well. But I wouldn’t say it was difficult, it was just another learning curve. And I thrive on that. I like to thrive on new things.

I did miss the classroom, which was why when I went to Gerard, I tried to get back in, but it didn’t work. So I learned something there that it was more difficult to do that. So I never really tried to do that at Bay View, what I did do at Bay View was get involved with the Catholic Leadership Program, that was for, at that time, principals who were coming into the Catholic school system, and it was connected with PC at that point.[[10]](#footnote-10) So I got my teaching there, at a Graduate level, doing it that way. And I liked that, and I did that for several years. And then I came here, and I got going right away. Well, first of all, I came down here, and I think it was Dean de la Motte that I talked to, I think it was him. When I was still President at Bay View I came down and said: ‘I think Salve should have a Catholic Leadership Program.’ And he thought that was a good idea, but it didn’t go anywhere. So, when I got here, that was one of the first things I tried to get going again, and it happened. It happened and in fact the first cohort is gonna be here this summer, in just a couple of weeks. So that’s moving forward, which I’m happy about. That’s kind of a digression from your question, but there’s a flow that happens, I think.

Allison: While you were here, was there any memorable faculty members that you worked with that you have…stories about, I guess?

Sr. Betty: Well, I mentioned already a number of them, and they all have stories [laughter], which I’m not gonna put on tape [Laughter].

Allison: Or maybe any memorable events that happened?

Sr. Betty: Well of course the big event that happened, was when we went from a College to a University. That was huge.

Allison: Right.

Sr. Betty: I’ve worked with so many wonderful people, you know? Dr. Mary O’Brien,[[11]](#footnote-11) she was here. The twins, you know everybody talks about the twins.[[12]](#footnote-12) I never had Jean Tobin for English, but I had Eloise for Metaphysics. I might have even had her for Logic, I’m not sure. They were both very good teachers. I never had a bad teacher, I have to say I’ve never had a bad teacher. Dr. Berman,[[13]](#footnote-13) I remember for Math. Oh my god, he was good, he was hard, but he was good. Bernie Masterson, who was in theatre at the time, have you heard these names before?

Allison: They’re familiar.

Sr. Betty: Yeah, he was great. In fact, I was talking about him the other day because he did a production of *Joseph and the Technicolor*….

Allison: Technicolor Dreamcoat.

Sr. Betty: Yeah, Dreamcoat, yeah. Because at that point we didn’t have a theater, we had only the, well during the time I was here we had the Megley Theater created, and so that’s where the productions were. And you know how small that theater is.

Allison: Yeah…

Sr. Betty: You can imagine trying to put a production on, and it wasn’t any bigger than it is right now. Now that I think about it, how did that ever work? [Laughter]. But it did, it did! Amazing!

…

There are so many, Allison!

…

The other big memorable event was the opening of O’Hare. That was huge, for our class that was huge because we thought we’d died and went to heaven. We got those new labs and the classrooms, that was awesome, and then to come back later and teach there, and I taught summer classes so I did teach science in those labs as well. And Kitty Rok and I taught in Bazarsky, those were the days when we had like 100 kids or something like that. We did a co-teaching. So to come back and be there was really a gift, if you will.

Allison: What do you think of the…?

Sr. Betty: There was a Boathouse here too, you know!

Allison: Oh!

Sr. Betty: Has anybody talked to you about the Boathouse?

Allison: I’ve heard it mentioned a few times.

Sr. Betty: Yeah, there was a little boathouse, I don’t know what it was originally. It was just across, well Marion’s here, so it’s across…where the Chapel is now, that’s where it was. Because these used to be estates, these were vineyards here, and the keeper of the vineyards lived in this gatehouse, you know that story too?

Allison: Yes.

Sr. Betty: The Boathouse was used for a couple of things, as I remember, but the thing I remember about it was it was a nice place to go on Friday afternoon and faculty came together there, and had a drink or had some peanuts or pretzels or whatever we had there. And just kind of relaxed there after the week. We don’t have that anymore.

Allison: Right.

Sr. Betty: We need that.

Allison: Yes!

Sr. Betty: We need that desperately, because we are very separate and we’re all of in our different buildings. And we don’t see each other very much, except at faculty meetings. Those were really fun times, it was something you looked forward to at the end of the week. What else was I gonna say about that though? I don’t know. I remember that, that was fun. Hmm, what else. Haven’t thought about that in… [Laughter]. I had no idea where you were going with all this so I didn’t think about it really ahead of time.

But I think about the students…the other day at one of the orientations I met a gal and she was going to be in Global Studies I think, I can’t remember her first name now. But anyway, we had a nice chat and she was very clear incoming freshman about what she wants to do, and blah blah blah. So afterward I went back over to the auditorium, Bazarsky, to sit and wait for the closing things. And I sat right next to her mother, I didn’t know that! And the mother looked at me and said: ‘Were you here in 1980?’ I said: ‘Yes’. She said: ‘I think I had you for class.’ [Laughter]. And of course she did, but I didn’t recognize…she didn’t stay. She only came one year and then she left. But I said, how’d she remember me? Wow, that’s impressive. But yeah, she was an Education person, and I guess she had Kitty and I, because Kitty was in Special Ed., and I was in regular Ed. So you meet people like that, you meet the students coming back, you know?

Bill Hall; I remember when he came, I remember he met his wife Judy here. Judy was a student of mine, just very exciting to have those connections. It’s a joy to come back to see what’s happened to the University and how it’s grown. And I’m always conscious of the fact that it’s a young university. It looks old, but it’s young, it’ll be seventy in September. So that’s *young* for a university! So it’s always about ‘what is this gonna look like in another 70 years?’ What legacy will we have left, all of us, yourself included. What will it look like? ...

I don’t know, I don’t know. But it will be different that’s for sure!

Allison: Yes!

Sr. Betty: I was here when the Monroe Center opened, you know when we got all those buildings, the Monroe Center.[[14]](#footnote-14) And the picture, you know where we used to call the Rare Books Room in the library, they’re calling it the Special Collections Room now. It used to be called the Monroe Room, and the pictures on the wall of Mr. and Mrs. Monroe; we were here when that was dedicated, and that was a big deal to get that building and then have it all renovated. And I was here, before it was a dorm, Moore Hall was a dorm for students; that was a convent, that’s where the Sisters lived…

Oh, I don’t know, you stirred up a lot of memories! [Laughter]. Yeah, good memories, good memories! Yeah, I loved it, it was great. I still love it, obviously, I’m back!

Allison: You mentioned one of the big events obviously was the opening of O’Hare, what do you think of the new renovations?

Sr. Betty: Oh! I love them! Absolutely love them! I love the addition, I love the softness of building…that was the first thing…when I saw the renderings I said: ‘This is brilliant!’ Because that building was so harsh. And we didn’t know it in the sixties because that’s how buildings looked. But now when you [look], it was almost offensive to look at. Now it seems to fit better, its softer, I l*ove* the addition. The thing I love the most is the *easy* pathway into the building. [Laughter]. I said: ‘Why didn’t they do this in the first place?! Why did they have those stupid stairs there?’ Because that’s the way people did it, there was no thought of handicapped or anything else, but now it flows nicely. You can go this way, you can go that way. It’s just beautifully laid out, and the landscaping! I love every minute of it! I love the labs, I was in the labs yesterday talking to the Chemistry students who are there in the labs there doing research this summer. I’ve gotta get upstairs to see the Biology people doing it. You know, it’s so funny, because it’s very hard for me to visualize what it was, now that it’s all open.

Allison: Yeah.

Sr. Betty: But it’s…I love it! And I *love* the new teaching stations for the business areas there. And the faculty have such nice offices. It’s just brilliant! Brilliant! Great design, great addition, I think, to this campus.

Allison: We have about ten minutes…

Sr. Betty: Ok.

Allison: Is there anything else you’d like to add that we haven’t touched upon yet?

Sr. Betty: You know this time around, second time around, and maybe it’s just the positions I’ve been in, the Chair and this one now, but I’m much more conscious of the type of student that we have here. Very socially conscious, which of course is a Sister of Mercy wish and dream, to have you all have that sense of urgency about the world and so forth. But just that the sense of pride, I think that students seem to exhibit about Salve, and the friendliness of people. It’s amazing, you know you can’t put this stuff on! People talk to you, they say hello, you know? They respond!

Allison: Yes!

Sr. Betty: Every single student…I said this at orientation a couple of times, to the incoming [freshmen]. I said, you know it still amazes me, every single person that leaves my class says thank you on the way out the door. I’ve been teaching a long time, I’ve been teaching over forty years, and I don’t remember that happening before. But I notice that coming back. A civility about the environment, which I hope we don’t lose in this pretty tense environment that we live in called the world right now. And I am…impressed with the students coming into the university, even with this incoming class who have already done so much service, and already some students say…one was gonna start a golf club, I think a couple of people have tried to do that in the past and it hasn’t flown, so I hope it does for this student. But just to come in with that, and know they can make a difference, if they work at it they can make that difference. The clubs, the variety of clubs that have built up! And I’m happy to be in this position, to be able to see a lot more of that than I would have seen in the world…just in McAuley Hall.

Allison: Right.

Sr. Betty: But what I do miss here, I love this building, this is a charming building.[[15]](#footnote-15) My office was in McAuley and I looked out over on the Cliff Walk [laughter]. I think I had the best office in the whole university, I had a better office than the president has. But anyway, so I was a little sad when I came over here. But this is a charming, there’s something about the feel of this building, there’s a charm about it. But what I miss is that students…the activity of the students, even though I can see them as I look out the window, I can see them moving around, which is a good thing. I have to go *out* to meet them. But even then, when I was appointed, officially, appointed the Dean, I had students that I didn’t know come up to me and congratulate me! You know, it brings tears to my eyes because they are just so *genuine*. I guess that’s the word I’m looking for, *genuine*! They appear to be genuine. And even in some difficult situations that I’ve dealt with, there’s a…kind of owning their own responsibility for situations, which I think is a sign of maturity, because you have to do that as you go up. We all make mistakes, none of us are perfect. So, I guess when you say that it’s the students that *really* come forward. And I’m always impressed with the dedication of the faculty. And their willingness to go…they really go above and beyond for you folks, they really do stretch themselves, you know, to almost \*pop\*…there’s a few I’m sure. I think almost to a person they realize they’re here for you. And they’re not here for themselves. And with the SRYou[[16]](#footnote-16) days which I really have to confess I was not terribly involved in, but I was this year because of my position, and even that was amazing. Seeing this work, and this research that’s being done…and we need to capitalize on that! [Laughter]. We need to spread that word, we need to spread this word, you know? About what you’re doing the work you’re doing, because you have that opportunity to work with a faculty member who’s doing research and you’re part of that!

Allison: Yes!

Sr. Betty: And so the skills that you’re learning as a researcher are critical, and that doesn’t happen in every institution at the Undergraduate level. It certainly happens at the Master’s level, and the Doctorate level, but it doesn’t always happen at the Undergraduate level. I don’t know I could talk for five hours as you can tell probably, kinda meandering through the…am I meeting what you need?

Allison: Yeah!

Sister Betty: Good. [Laughter]. Good!

…

Sr. Betty: It’s amazing! The biggest difference I see coming back is the number of offices that have been created over time, so its different you know there are more student…needs, if you will, and not needs in a needy way, but things that need to be available to students that weren’t needed in the 1980’s, but we need it now, you know other than all the student services, etc. That really…that area has really mushroomed.

Allison: Ok, well, thank you for speaking with me.

Sr. Betty: You’re very welcome! If you have any other questions, come back,

Allison: Ok!

1. Dr. Ascanio DiPippo was a professor in the Chemistry department from 1963-2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dr. George Morris was a professor in the Chemistry department from 1963-1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sister Mary Brenda Sullivan was a professor in the Biology department from 1960-1976. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Sister Ann Nelson was a professor in the History/Politics department from 1963-1984. After the departments separated, she was a Politics professor retiring full-time in 2000, and continuing to be a part-time faculty member until 2014. She passed away in December 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sister Therese was President from 1994-2009. I thought she meant in 2003, therefore I stated that Sister Therese was President. Sr. Betty meant 2012, and Sister Jane Gerety was President at that time. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Dr. Alison Shakarian was a professor in the Biology department until 2015 when she became the Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies. She passed away in January 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Report from Newport* is Salve Regina University’s quarterly magazine. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. UNH is the acronym for the University of New Hampshire, located in Durham, New Hampshire [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Margaret Van Allen Bruguiére was a Newport socialite who owned the Wakehurst property until her death in 1969. She refused to sell to Salve, and it was only after three years on the market that the trustees finally sold the estate to the college. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. PC is the acronym for Providence College, located in Providence, Rhode Island [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Dr. Mary O’Brien was a professor in the Education department. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The twins were Sister Mary Jean Tobin, who was a professor in the English department, and Mary Eloise, who was a professor in the Philosophy and Religious Studies departments. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Dr. Joseph Berman was a professor in the Mathematics department. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Monroe Center was acquired in 1972 when Salve purchased the Wakehurst property. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The building we held the interview in was in Misto Gatehouse where the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies is located. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. SRYou Day is a day in the spring semester in which classes are cancelled and students present research or other works to the university. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)