Salve Regina Oral History Project

Date of Interview: 7/14/17

Date of Completed Transcription: 8/2/2017

Narrator: Joseph “Jay” Lacouture, Art and Art History

Interviewer and Transcriber: Allison Graves, Class of 2018

Mr. Joseph “Jay” Lacouture is a professor in the Art department at Salve Regina. He was hired in 1980 as the Ceramics professor and quickly became Chairman of the department. During this interview we touched upon how he came to Salve, why he loves Ceramics as an art form, and his relationships with various faculty members and Sisters, especially Sister Sheila Megley. We also talked about his thoughts on Sisters Lucille and Therese, the proposed name change for the school, and the various additions to the campus.

Allison Graves: So you’re an art professor here [at Salve]. What brought you to Salve, and what brought you to art?

Mr. Jay Lacouture: Well, two part question, but the most interesting part is how I [got] my first impressions of Salve. I just finished getting out of graduate school, 1980, and I was doing a workshop at the Newport Art Museum with my former teacher Harriet Brisson. I went to undergraduate school at Rhode Island College, and graduate school at West Virginia University [in] Morgantown, West Virginia. So I had just finished, came back to Rhode Island because that’s where my parents, my folks were, and was given this opportunity to do this workshop with Harriet at the Newport Art Museum. Well, somebody casually mentioned that they thought they might be looking for somebody to teach Ceramics at Salve Regina. I didn’t even know…where Salve was, to be honest. So the last day of the workshop I walked down the street, I didn’t know how far it was. I walked down Bellevue Avenue, came to Salve, walked into Ochre Court. There was a receptionist that used to sit at the door of Ochre Court, I’ll think of her name before it’s over…Natalie. I can’t remember her last name, but she was wonderful, very welcoming. And I told her what I was there for, and she said you probably want to see Sister Sheila Megley[[1]](#footnote-1) upstairs.

I went upstairs, I walked right into Sheila Megley’s office. Once I got hired it would take a month to get an appointment with her because she was very busy. She wasn’t busy, we sat down, she talked to me and told me how committed she was that there would be a…if Salve was truly a liberal arts school, that there needed to be a real visible presence of the Arts: theatre, music, and art. And she told me they were looking for someone to teach Ceramics. So then she took me over to what was then Mercy Hall, which is now, half of it, the Antone Center. So then showed me around, went back to her office, and it seemed like she was gonna hire me. The interesting thing in those days, this was in the Summer, it could have been July, could have been right about this time actually, we didn’t start until October because of the America’s Cup Races.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Allison: Oh!

Mr. Lacouture: When they were held here in Newport, Salve would rent out every room, every facility to all these crews from all over the world because it was a big financial deal for the school. We didn’t start school until October, and the first semester didn’t end until like February. We came back for a couple of weeks after Christmas, we had a two week break at Christmas, came back for two weeks, finals, and then I guess maybe, it wasn’t a Spring break, but it was a Winter break, and no Spring break. But anyway, they massaged the calendar so that it would be possible.

I came back home to tell my former wife that it looked like I had a job, but I didn’t know if I could trust a nun that chain-smoked. [Laughter]. Sister Sheila would smoke one Salem cigarette after another in her office in Ochre Court. And I found out not only could I trust Sister Sheila, but she was my greatest ally and support when I started here. She…I don’t think gets enough credit for a lot of the things that have happened, particularly in the arts, and technology too. Sister Sheila was a dynamo, man. She would be one to really talk to. She’s in Chicago now. So that was my introduction to Salve, and I was gonna be hired part-time to teach Ceramics, and Sheila said I could use the studio, and they would pay for my materials. I could use the kiln. So I thought that was a pretty good deal, and before the semester started she called me and said: ‘Can you teach 3-D Design?’ And I said yes, and she said: ‘Well, that means we have to hire you full-time because you’d be teaching three studio classes.’ Then I said ‘OK, good,’ and she said: ‘But it’s only *one* semester.’ 5000 bucks. I said ‘cool, I’m in,’ and then the next semester she gave me a raise. I made 6500 dollars, so I made 11,500 dollars in 1980 as full-time faculty member, with two young kids. [Laughter].

I don’t know how the hell we did it, really. Anyway so that was my start at Salve. Kind of under the radar, because most of the time, because I was always working in the studio, so I looked like I was part of the Maintenance department [laughter]. Which actually I took as a compliment. In fact, Sheila told the story that the reason why she hired me was after it looked like it was gonna be a part-time job I said: ‘Sister, do you need any help in the Maintenance department? I worked as a carpenter for six and a half years, you know.’ And she told me that’s when she knew she had the right guy. But I don’t know how many other faculty here [would] offer to work in Maintenance half-time, but that’s sort of the way…I love doing things with my hands, which gets back to my artwork. It’s really about making things, always even as a kid. But I did not find Ceramics, or Ceramics did not find me, I’m not sure which is which, until I was twenty-two years old. Then I went back to school, finished at RIC, went on to graduate school and life came forth. [Laughter].

I still feel like if I’m not engaged in the making process, I’m a fraud to my students. Because I’m trying to get them engaged, so I’m always making something. Always, every day, there’s gotta be some effort put towards my creative life. And it’s not always making, physically making pots. It’s sometimes chopping wood, because I have a wood kiln. It’s sometimes building a kiln shed around the kiln, it’s sometimes mixing clay, it’s sometimes sketching, but every day you have to do something.

Allison: So you mentioned you’re the Ceramics professor, so is that your favorite art form to teach?

Mr. Lacouture: Yes. Although, I mean I’ve taught other things. I’ve taught 3-D Design, when we used to have it I’ve taught Sculpture. And one of the blessings of my teaching at Salve for somewhere, maybe over thirty years, I team-taught with Dr. Jim Hersh[[3]](#footnote-3) in the Philosophy department, a class called Philosophy of Beauty. I’m still doing an incarnation of it which is not cross-referenced, and not team-taught, and not anywhere near as much fun. That was one of the cornerstones of the curriculum in the Art department, really. Working with Jim was just fabulous, we’re still very good friends, and it was great to be able to argue about something in front of the students to show that it’s about discourse, you know. That the whole thing, it’s not about agreeing, it’s about sometimes agreeing to disagree, and about presenting a point. It was great. It was really fabulous, and I bet if you would ask alumni from over the years about their time in the Art department, three quarters of them would bring up Philosophy of Beauty with Jay and Jim. Or the “Jay and Jim Show,” as it was sometimes referred to.

And my own work revolves a lot around Asia, so through my work I’ve been able to travel to Japan…I had a sabbatical that Salve gave me in 2009, and I got to go work for three months in China. So I feel like my hands and the clay have led me to form a life. And part of my life is as a teacher and faculty member, and part of my life is as a maker. And a salt-water fisherman. I’m crazy about surf casting, so that’s another kind of obsessive thing that I’m involved with that gets me out in nature, which is *really* where it all comes from for me, from nature. Yup, nature and history.

Last week we were in L.A. and San Francisco, visiting grandkids, and traveling up to San Francisco. And every time I go anywhere my first consideration is: what are the museums? And I hadn’t been in San Francisco since 1971. And I’m walking around the Asian Art Museum there, looking at all these beautiful pots, and I’m thinking like: ‘I know quite a bit about this, I’ve been doing this for 45 years I think, since ’72,’ but I’m still excited and I’m still seeing new things and I’m like, what a life! I’ve been blessed! I’m pretty grateful to Salve Regina, for supporting me. Anyway, we got another question?

Allison: How has the Art department transformed since you began teaching at Salve?

Mr. Lacouture: Oh my God, it was nothing. I built my own office. It was like, in the corner of the Ceramics studio. They provided some two-by-fours and sheet rock [laughter]. And now that’s the dance studio, and what was Mercy Hall, or the little Art department building that we just tried to make due [with] all the time was transformed into the Antone Center for the Arts and Cultural Preservation. Anyway, I still call it Mercy Hall and Wetmore Hall most of the time. It’s a gorgeous facility, and there was me and two other faculty members, and they were always…arguing. And now we have, I think there is eight of us, full-time, and the new faculty that have come on in the last three or four years are so good, and so dedicated, and so smart, and work at their own artwork and research and care about teaching, and really, we’ve been very fortunate. The new faculty are absolutely fabulous. That makes me feel good, because I’m the old dude, you know what I mean [laughter]? That there are some really good people that are gonna take over, because I’m about ready to check out, you know? After, this will be my 37th year, this year. And you look back and go: how the hell did *that* happen? [Laughter].

Allison: Do you have any thoughts on Sister Lucille or Sister Therese as presidents, or any of the other upper faculty members?

Mr. Lacouture: Well, Sister Lucille was amazing. She’s the one that saved the place. I heard from people before me in the seventies there was a time when the faculty didn’t get paid. And the place was going down, and Lucille came on the scene, and she led this place for twenty-one years! Unheard of! Totally unheard of! A college president is usually six or eight, maybe ten [years] max. But twenty-one years? There’s few people…yeah she was quite a gracious presence, and she had this saying about being your best self. That, as corny as it sounds, became, today we would call it branding. I don’t know what they called it then, branding wasn’t even [around], and the brand came from what permeated the place, in a real way. And she used to say: ‘Everything’s a teaching opportunity.’ That includes the Maintenance guys, and the people in the kitchen, and so on. So, Lucille was something.

And then as I mentioned, Sister Sheila Megley. The fact of the matter is, I think it was 1979, the year before I came, somebody could check this if they were interested. But NEASC,[[4]](#footnote-4) our accrediting association, recommended that Salve punch the ticket on art, music, and theatre. That the enrollment was so bad that they should eliminate it. And Sister Sheila was so committed, and Lucille, to the Arts being a vital thing, and the year before I got hired, Sheila hired Tom Day, in music. And then the year I got hired, she hired myself and a guy named Bernard Masterson[[5]](#footnote-5) in theatre, and he should not be forgotten. And Bernard was actually acting head of the Art department when I got here in 1980, and the next year Sheila asked me to do it, and I was like what? But, I did it, and served as Chair a few different times for eighteen years. But anyway, Sheila was absolutely committed to the Arts, and she was trying to figure out ways, like offering one credit classes for non-majors that would get them into the studios, and stuff like that. And performance credit in a different way than had been done before to get students from other disciplines interested in Theatre, and music performance and stuff like that.

So yeah, Sheila was [a] very significant person in saving the Arts, and as I mentioned Jim Hersh, who was my colleague in the Philosophy department, [he] was just a fabulous colleague. And he…I never met anybody who cared more about a Salve student than Jim. To the point where he would have been…he’d be a doormat for them, if it would help them. Or, really he would bend over backwards all the time for students. And one other person, Dr. Christopher Kiernan.[[6]](#footnote-6) Chris and I came the same year. He beat me by a few months. I think he came in April, and I came in the end of September, beginning of October, of 1980. We were both basketball players. He played at Assumption College, he was a few years older than me, and I played at St. Michael’s in Winooski, Vermont, for a couple of years. And so he knew all the people at St. Mike’s and the New England Catholic College group, and Chris was Dean of Admissions at the time, hired to pump up the enrollment, particularly to figure out a way to attract the male enrollment, which we’re still trying to do all the time here. He was the one that was charged with that, and really helped build all the NCAA programs and the football thing was his idea, to have football at Salve, if the truth be known. But anyway, Chris was [an] incredible guy. He rose through the administrative ranks, and was the Provost for a while. Academic Dean and Provost, this was while I was Chair, and it was a delight to work with Chris. He was something. And the last maybe six or eight years, he was faculty in the History department, teaching American Studies and History. So we shared a building, but Chris was great.

This was the kind of guy he was. So we had this kid, who was a freshman, named John Kach, who was a basketball player, and he got meningitis. Like out of the blue. Woke up one morning with it. They had to put him in a coma for at least a month, it might have been more, could have been two or three months. He lost some of his fingers, he lost some his toes, part of a foot, you know? But he did make a comeback, any way he was a History major, and a basketball player. When he was in recovery, after he spent time in Rhode Island Hospital and then went back to Long Island where he was from, Chris Keirnan would drive to Long Island twice a month to tutor the kid.

Allison: Wow.

Mr. Lacouture: Who the hell would do that? Seriously, I don’t think I could do it. Nobody asked him to. I mean, knowing Chris, they didn’t even pay his mileage. I don’t know that for a fact so [don’t quote me]…I don’t want that to be ‘fake news.’ But he did it, he did it. I said ‘why you doing this?’ He said: ‘I want to keep the kid’s head in the game.’ He would always use these, with me anyway, these athletic metaphors that were fabulous. And he died of cancer, taught his last classes in May, we ended and his health was really bad, and he had all kinds of treatments and stuff. And maybe a week before he died, I called his house, I was friendly with both he and his wife Peg. His kids were the same age as my kids, and were in schools together in Newport. And I talked to Peg, his wife, and she said ‘oh, I think he’d like to talk to you.’ He was very weak. And he got on the phone, and his voice was really weak, and I could tell, you know, the end’s coming. And I said: ‘So how you doing coach?’ Because he would always say ‘I’ll let you know when the fourth quarter’s coming. I’m gonna be into this until we get into the fourth quarter.’ And he said: ‘Well, I’m not doing so great, but my brother’s here. All the kids are here, and they’re all chatting,’ and he said ‘you know me, I’d be right in the middle of the conversation, but I’m so weak, I’m just grateful to listen.’ And I spent…to this day even, I think about that: being grateful to listen. What a skill to be a good listener.

Yeah, so he was a special guy. Very special guy.

Allison: Do you remember any disagreements about a name change within Salve?

Mr. Lacouture: Oh, yeah. I think when I came here it was “The Newport College.” So they were trying to secularize it and make it…I think change the female reputation in some ways, and also make it more secular. And then it went to “Salve Regina-The Newport College.” Then I think it went back to “Salve Regina College,” and then somebody got the bright idea that “Salve Regina University” would be somehow advantageous. I remember one argument was that well in Great Britain a college is actually a high school. Well, we’re not in Great Britain [laughter] and Boston College is still Boston College, and so is Holy Cross. But anyway, the name was changed. The PhD program was added, probably first I think, and I think that kinda legitimized it in some way that there would be different schools, in terms of a graduate school and the undergraduate school. To me it didn’t make any difference really. You know, you don’t build a reputation by changing the name, you build a reputation by trying to do something qualitative so that the graduates you send out are the evidence and the proof, which is another thing.

I’ve had some great students here. Great students, and the privilege of being part of their lives, at a crucial time. And I just found out about one a couple of weeks ago. I want to say…I’m trying to remember if they graduated in 1990, no, yeah maybe. Either ’90 or ’91, and it was a particularly good group. Many of that group are still in the Art department. There are maybe a dozen or so, or fourteen. And many of them are still in the arts in a real vital way. Well, this one girl, Lizabeth Dion.[[7]](#footnote-7) Never heard from her after she graduated. About a month ago one of my colleagues in Ceramics from Arizona State University, that runs the Ceramics [program]…they have a big ceramics center study center and gallery and everything, but one of the best in the country. And I get an email from Garth Johnson, and he said ‘hey, we got one of your former students was hired to be head of development for our museum.’ They have a beautiful art museum, and a very good ceramics collection. And when he told me it was Lizabeth Dion, Lizabeth, not E-lizabeth, Lizabeth Dion, I was floored. Because I can’t believe she’s still involved, and I do need to follow up, and send her an email and find out how the hell she went from…she was from Winooski, Vermont and I always remembered that because I went to St. Michael’s College in Winooski, Vermont for a couple of years. Always remembered her as the girl from Winooski. But she was in that Class.

Jason Burrell’s father was the Dean of Faculty here.[[8]](#footnote-8) He’s Assistant Dean at Central Florida. Tom Shannon, who was in that group, is now sort of the Clerk of the Works of the Morgan Gallery and Museum in New York City. He went on and got his Masters in Museum Studies at Syracuse University. I connected him there because I was working on a project with the guy who ran the program. And I still see Tom periodically. He’ll come down here, and we’ll go fishing together. Tom Judd is an animator. He’s lived all over the world, really, doing animated stuff. He went on, I think, he might’ve even gotten two Masters of the Fine Arts. One in Digital and one in Painting or Drawing, or something like that. Gail Mangan went onto graduate school. She lives in Virginia, and still pursues her painting career pretty successfully. Anyway, that’s six! There may be a couple more, but that’s pretty incredible…

Allison: Yeah.

Mr. Lacouture: That people are all vitally engaged in their career. Yeah, one kid, Andrew Maglathlin, he came to Salve as an ADJ major, but he took a lot of Ceramics in high school. And he was in registration…freshman orientation, Ceramics was closed, and he ran into John Quinn, Dean of Students John Quinn. This is the land of many John Quinns [laughter]. And my neighbor, John Quinn of Carolina Village, whose daughter went to Salve, actually just passed away. His wake is tonight, [he] was a big time journalist and publisher. He was the founding editor of a little newspaper called *USA Today*. And his name’s John Quinn! John Quinn, John Quinn, John Quinn!

John Quinn, Dean of Students, runs into Andrew. And Andrew said ‘yeah, I really wanted to take Ceramics,’ I knew John Quinn prior to coming to Salve in the seventies, when he was a student at URI, and I was living in South County, we had a mutual friend. He called me up, he said ‘hey I got this kid, you’re class is closed.’ I said ‘tell him to come, if he’s that interested, tell him to come.’ Well, Andrew the ADJ major came out to my studio for a wood firing, I have a two-chambered Japanese style wood fire kiln. He came out to do a six-hour shift. He stayed for three days, he never left. And that was it for Andrew.

He was a fabulous student here, both in Ceramics and Painting, and went onto graduate school, got his MFA at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, where he studied with a guy who’s like one of my best friends. It’s all about connecting these students when you can, you know? And Andrew now teaches in the Boston area [at] Brookline Public Schools. It’s one of the best and most progressive public school systems in the country, really really good. He’s teaching Ceramics, they have a very well-equipped studio. And I still see him. He sent me a birthday greeting last week. It’s like…it’s a privilege really. Gratitude, man. Being grateful. And that’s not to say that everything has gone peachy, you know what I mean? There have been rifts between administrators and faculty, and faculty and faculty. And personal stuff, like divorce, and all of that stuff which is a whole other thing. And Jim Hersh, my colleague, he really counseled me a lot through that, because he had gone through it shortly before me. So the friendships, as well as the professional colleagueship’s, have been pretty wonderful. I’m trying to think if there are any other outstanding student things but…I’m sure there are but anyway, what else we got here?

Allison: You mentioned that you were very good friends with Sister Sheila Megley, so there was a point where there was a storm, and the wall around Wakehurst was knocked over at the corner [of Shepard and Lawrence Ave.]

Mr. Lacouture: That corner! Yup! Oh, it used to be like, God, it was over six feet high. It made this place look like a fortress, and so Sheila took this as the opportunity! That’s a good story! I think there’s even drain under it, the wall, now that they put in as a result of that. And then she just knocked the whole damn wall down and of course the hysteric district people, as I call them [laughter], were somewhat hysterical, but she was right! Because it opened up…I mean I understand about historic preservation, but it opened up the grounds of Wakehurst so people could see how beautiful it was, and then of course we built the library where we’re sitting right now. It’s much safer for students walking through there, which was really her concern, not so much the safety of the wall, but the safety of the students. So Sheila was one of these…she was the first one that ever said to me…how did she phrase it? ‘Sometimes it’s better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission.’ And she was like if she right, she didn’t care, she was going for it. And she would figure it out later. I think sometimes her being impetuous like that could’ve been a detriment, but it really was her strength. Usually your strengths can be your detriments if they’re in over drive right? You know what I mean? You’ve gotta sort of modify [them], but that’s the way she was. That’s a good story, yeah I remember that.

I think they bought this property for like 125,000 dollars, or something like…I mean it’s just ridiculous. 150,000 for this whole property, Wakehurst property. Because these big buildings, as they called them, White Elephants. Nobody wanted them. But you know, Salve, to give Sister Therese her due, she has been a great steward of the resources of this place, and adding to things in a significant way. In terms of the awareness of historical architecture, and the stewardship of these buildings, and the commitment to it, and then adding things that actually add to that landscape, like the Chapel, particularly. And even the Rodgers Rec. Center, the way that was done quite sensitively and bringing Robert Stern in who was unquestionably a formidable architect of his time. You know making that commitment, yeah that was [a] really good move on Sister Therese’s part. She, in building the endowment, she has definitely added. And I guess that’s it, the whole idea of stewardship, of making something better while you’re here. And I feel I’ve done that in the Art department. Because, you know, really there was nothing, there was nothing.

I used to, this is a funny story. So, when I would fire the kiln…my first year I lived in Woonsocket, where I was from and travelled, and so when I would fire the kiln I would bring a sleeping bag and sleep on my desk, firing the kiln. And I taught a night class, Sister Sheila said ‘go have dinner with the nuns, on me,’ to me and Bernard Masterson, the guy in the Theatre department because he would have late night rehearsals and all that stuff, and he lived out of town. So, the nuns on campus, and there probably could’ve been forty of them maybe, or more. Many of them older, actually I’m sure they were all older than *me* really, but they had a refectory in the basement of Ochre Court, and I would go have dinner with them. So, one night, we’re down there having dinner, and they would have these metal chaffing dishes with the little sterno cans under them to keep the stuff hot, on a paper tablecloth, and the paper tablecloth caught on fire. And so, for a potter, fire, that’s my thing man. I’m a bit of a pyromaniac, so I went in and put out the fire, I became the hero. [Laughter]. I’m sure these Sisters kept me in their prayers every night, because basically I saved Ochre Court from burning down. It was pretty funny, it was pretty funny. But yeah, that was…when I think about that that was really different, phew. Having dinner with the Sisters at night? They lived in Moore Hall, it was the residence of the nuns.

Allison: What was it like having so many Sisters on campus, for so long, and then [having almost none now]?

Mr. Lacouture: My oldest Sister was a nun, and my father’s two aunts were Sisters. It was a French order, Presentation of Mary. Rivier College is their place, in New Hampshire.[[9]](#footnote-9) So I mean, and I spent only one year…my older siblings all went to St. Charles school in Woonsocket, the Sisters of Mercy [ran that school]. Sister Ann Nelson,[[10]](#footnote-10) who was a History professor here, taught my brothers in the fifth grade, it think. Sister Eugena Poulin[[11]](#footnote-11) taught there for a bit, she was professor here in French. So…it was fine! It was fine! You know they were always very nice to me, and like I said I had this kinda comradery just by chance because of the, you know having dinner. And then of course my Sister Sheila thing about the Sister of Mercy, the nun that smoked for both Jesus and Buddha you know? [Laughter]. When you think of it now, but at the time, it’s like: Sheila’s cool, she smokes Salem cigarettes! [Laughter].

Yeah, very different world, I mean and even imagine that I could literally walk in off the street and get a job teaching is like, how the hell did that happen? And the woman that told me about it, Rosemary Day, she just died last summer at ninety years old, and she was riding her bicycle from Middletown to Lower Thames Street until she was eighty-nine. Anyway she taught Ceramics at Middletown High School, and therefore her interest in Ceramics, and she was active in the art museum, the Newport Art Museum. And so when I came here I was very active in the Education Committee of the Newport Art Museum because of Rosemary Day. And she’s really the link for me showing up here, so I *loved* Rosemary Day. She was like our first friend in Newport. She was just incredible, and she would come to all of the events here, if I would have a visiting artist here, or we had a Ceramics show, Rosemary and Bob were here at all of them. And Newport’s an interesting place, because it’s so beautiful.

I live in South County, Rhode Island, so I don’t come over here much in the Summer. But it was lovely coming in here today. In fact, I drove by Touro Park, and they were having this Black Ships Festival thing. I was involved when Black Ships started, I don’t know, 25 or maybe more years ago. And it was sort of a…driving back and seeing the Japanese delegation, right by Touro Park as I was driving down Bellevue Avenue. I was like: ‘Oh my God! That’s right, it’s Black Ships time! Third week of July,’ and I met a wonderful woman named Ineko Stephan, who used to live out on Ledge Road. And her husband John[[12]](#footnote-12) was a very accomplished painter in the Abstract Expressionist New York School of the late 40s, early fifties. And I became good friends with them. Ineko’s still alive, but John passed away a number of years ago, maybe fifteen years ago, but he was a for real artist. I mean he lived…he knew all of the [artists], Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, Picasso. And they published in this magazine that he and his former wife did that was called *The Tigers Eye*.[[13]](#footnote-13) Very important literary and art magazine of the New York School, 1947-54.

Another, being in the right place at the right time. Ineko and John became really good friends. And very good to my kids too, my young children, yeah, very good. Particularly Ineko and my daughter Elizabeth who now is a PhD in Chinese History, and she was always interested in Asia as a young kid. In fact she has been teaching at Colby College in Maine, and she just got a fabulous job offer that she’s gonna take at the University of Hong Kong, so they’re moving. She and her daughter and husband are moving to Hong Kong next month!

Allison: Wow!

Mr. Lacouture: Yeah! So she’s done very well, very well. And she helped me get to Asia, on a number of occasions! It’s good when your kid’s good to you! [Laughter].

Allison: Well, we have about fifteen minutes left, do you have any stories, any thing you’d like to add that we haven’t talked about already?

Mr. Lacouture: I don’t know, we had a lot of stories there, that we’ve already talked about that have just sorta come up. I think I said it all in terms of the relationship with students being such a treasure, and colleagues, being part of something that is growing and [has] a positive environment, and feeling like you’ve been able to make a contribution. Supported in that way, but the institution so to speak. Sometimes institutions aren’t so forgiving, because they’re really not human things, they’re things that have bottom lines and stuff like that. Everybody else has been paying attention to that here, I’ve just been given the opportunity to help build an Art program, and I think we’ve done a pretty good job. I didn’t do it by myself, but I think I’ve been a vital part of it, and been a part of hiring those since 1980 that have continued to build it from nothing to being accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, which happened in 1987, when I was Chair, with the encouragement of Sister Sheila Megley. She helped me write the first self-study report. I would have never known how to do that, you know, it was on the job training. She took no credit, and I think she was even on a sabbatical or something, and for part of it, a good month or more, she was holed up in her office, not the Ochre Court office, but her home office, helping write the report. Showing me how to do an accreditation report. She didn’t take credit for anything really. Her name’s not on any buildings. It should be, but there’s the Megley Theater, the Black Box Theater, that’s it but, yeah. Sister Sheila was fabulous, she really was. Yeah, I wish you guys could talk to her somehow. She would definitely have something to say, if she decided to do it! [Laughter]. She may say no, I don’t want to do it, and you know that’s her personality. But, big chunk of her heart here at Salve Regina. Yeah, big chunk.

I don’t know, Amen! [Laughter].

Allison: Well, if there’s nothing else, thank you for talking with me. It was great to hear what you had to say.

Mr. Lacouture: I wish you guys’ good luck with this. Are you going to collate it or, what are you gonna do?

Allison: They’re going to put them digitally and physically into the Archives. So they’ll be available for anyone who wants to listen or read, or research.

Mr. Lacouture: Yeah! Cool! I hope I didn’t embarrass myself too much! [Laughter].

1. Sister Sheila Megley was the Dean of Students in 1974, and was appointed Vice-President in 1977 under Sister Lucille. In 1992 she became president of Regis College in Massachusetts. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The America’s Cup is a yachting race that began in 1851, predating the modern Olympic Games by 45 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Dr. James Hersh was a professor in the Philosophy department from 1978-2010. He has since retired and currently resides in California. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. NEASC is the acronym for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bernard Masterson was head of the theatre department from 1979-1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Christopher Kiernan served as Dean of Admissions and then as Vice President for Academic Affairs under Sr. Lucille McKillop and then as a professor of History and American Studies until his death in 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Lizabeth Dion is the development coordinator for the ASU Art Museum. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Dr. William Burrell was the Dean of Faculty for a number of years at Salve. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Rivier College is now Rivier University, and is located in Nashua, New Hampshire. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 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-10)
11. Sister Eugena Poulin was a professor in the French department from 1981 until 2007. She passed away in August of 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. John Stephan was an artist in the Abstract Expressionist movement, some of his artwork can be found in the Peyton Wright Gallery in New Mexico. Mr. Stephan passed away in 1995 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *The Tiger’s Eye* was co-published by John Stephan and Ruth Stephan with nine quarterly issues featuring the art forms of Surrealists, Latin-American avant-garde, and Abstract Expressionists. The name was inspired by a poem by William Blake [↑](#footnote-ref-13)