

JOAN HOLLAND '51

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Mundelein College
Oral History Archives

Joan Holland: These are notes that I'm doing for Mary Alma Sullivan's essay on Mundelein College. Mary Alma, a BVM, who is also my friend and my co-editor on *The Review*.

My full name -- this is Number One. Here we go. My full name is Joan Therese Holland, which is my maiden name. I resumed my maiden name at the end of my second marriage, which was in 1976. I've been single since '76. So that entitles me to be Joan Holland again, right? [chuckles]

My degree ... I graduated in 1951 from Mundelein College. My degree was in English Journalism. That was a split major. And I also had a split minor in psychology and philosophy. A real mess. But it all worked. It all ended up working out in the end.

Number two, family background. I was born in Chicago and grew up in Evanston. My mother was a Canadian from Ontario and also from Saskatchewan. That's where she lived later on. My father was born in Chicago, in Ravenswood. And my mother and father met in ... in New York, when my mother returned from studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London at the age of 18. She had won a scholarship as a

violinist to study there for a year and possibly two. And she had earned the second year but decided to come back. She stayed at the Parnassis Club in New York and there met my father.

Both my parents, my brother and I worked all of our lives, I think. I have one brother, Richard. My mother was playing in public when she was four. My father, after the Crash, when they came back to Chicago from New York to stay with my father's parents, went to work for the Commonwealth Edison Company. And that's where he stayed for the rest of his life until he died.

My dad and my brother were both in the Navy. My dad in World War I and II. And my brother in World War II. Mother, Dad and brother have all died. And here I am.

Okay. During the war, I was sent away to boarding school at the age of twelve. I went to boarding school in Canada. Some of my cousins ... No, let's see - grand-cousins [chuckles] ... grandaunts ... started Loretto Academy in Hamilton. And I knew them, one of them at least who was my friend when I was in boarding school. I stayed there all the way through to the end of junior year and came back to Chicago to go to St. Scholastica's for my last year.

Uh...I came to attend Mundelein College, that's number three? Uh ... I came to attend Mundelein College, uh, no, I've got to go back. I've got to go back.

Uh, growing up time. Uh, number two. Uh, I was... we were both. My brother and I were both models. Our pictures were in all of the Sears catalogs [chuckles] and stuff from the time we were little kids.

And, when I was five, uh, my mother took me to California, uh, and I won a part in, the part of Patricia Zeigfield in "The Great Zeigfield" which turned out to be in 1996 to be a, uh, an academy award winner. And then Mother went back to Chicago and got my brother and the three of us stayed in California for a long time, for a year, year and a half. And we both were in in movies. We had lots of little parts. Uh, I was in eight. My brother was in seven.

He got into radio, and when we came back to Chicago, we were both in radio. I was doing commercials, and [laughs] he had real _____ parts, and he had uh, a show, "The Bartons", that was on every night at dinnertime for two years at least.

Um,...second, when it was all over, after my brother had been in the Navy and, uh, he had, he had been through University of Chicago and Northwestern. He had two degrees. He went on, uh, to New York and stayed there as a writer, as an actor, TV, and, um, I went on to Mundelein and graduated and.. married.

Um...uh, number three how I, how I came to attend Mundelein College. That was sort of a forgone conclusion. I had always heard that it was a good school, and they liked me because I had a, a good basic education from a Canadian school, which is a pretty good background. And, uh,...until I went off to Mundelein, I uh, I had, uh, my family there, and I hadn't been with my family since I was twelve years old, so that, that was a pretty good deal.[chuckles]

Okay, uh, number four, activities, events, or experiences I found most satisfying. Time spent working on the Mundelein Revue was the

most satisfying I think, and that's where I learned so much, uh, and from my mistakes mostly. [chuckles] Uh, and in creative writing classes. I enjoyed those so very much. Uh, most of the creative writing classes I took were with, uh, Sister Mary ^{Anna Greenwood} Alma Sullivan, and she was such a delightful teacher, I mean, I will never forget her. I see her now, now that she's in the nursing home wing of in Dubuque.

Most challenging? History classes and Greek! And, uh, I think that's enough. History, Greek, and, oh, and a brief time I spent as a biology major. I decided it was beautiful, uh, to see things through a microscope and watch little spore pods open up and all that stuff and, and I announced that I was going, after all, I was going to be a, uh, a biology major, and the department head said, "Well, good luck dear." [chuckles] I really needed it. I didn't have that kind of mind. I just liked the beautiful part.

Uh, the most frustrating. Um, the most enriching was the Shakespeare and creative writing and poetry classes, and.. Uh, the most frustrating part of attendance in any school for me is socializing. It was very hard for me to understand people my own age. Um, especially following the five years in a convent school, and, before that, even in grammar school, uh, my best friend from third grade, Margie _____ [chuckles] was the only one who understood me, cause that had gone on since third grade. Uh, it was, uh, it was hard, uh, adjusting. It was hard knowing how to act. Uh, these girls had, had been together a long time, most of them. Uh, if not they had, they had become oh, I don't know...smart. Uh, they had become

socially smart. They knew how to act, what to say, how to behave, and how to learn lessons from what didn't work. I didn't know any of that stuff. Uh, I think they thought I was standoffish and, and, um superior, and I was none of those things. I was just frightened. Uh, it's still, uh, like that. [laughs]

Uh, my relationships with my class... with my faculty members, uh, they, they were easy. I...I liked ninety-eight percent of my teachers and they knew how, what kind of social trouble I was in and they, they were really neat. And there were many of them who taught me about behavior, about, um, getting a grip on my own personal, uh, good stuff. And they, and there was some. [chuckles] Um, ^{Irma} Alma, uh, I think was my, my best friend among the faculty, and still is. Um, Sister Mary _____ also [laughs], she was marvelous, and Sister Mary Donald even though I had a hard time learning Greek, she was great. Uh, ...and there were many others, many others.

Uh, ...now where were we? Between faculty, with faculty members. Uh, relationships with different classmates, I think I've talked about that. Um, I didn't have as much trouble with, uh, people in my department. I mean writers, uh, and similar creative types have a, a language of their own and a way of behaving that I did understand, and they did their best to understand me, I think. Uh, but, as I say, they had a kind of maturity that I didn't have. Uh, and maybe will never have.

But I did have a sense of psychology that nobody understood. I just began to understand it. Uh, I have learned ... how people work and

how people's interiors work. Uh, especially with my, uh, Jungian studies. I've been doing Jungian studies with friends here in, uh, Rock Island for about fourteen years, and we're quite close. I think we're close.[laughs] But, psychology and philosophy were so important to me always that, um I think I'm going to muddle through someday.

Uh...what ways has your life been influenced, let's see, what did you do, number seven. What did you do in the first ten years following graduation. Uh, I worked for a year at Marigold Advertising. I learned a lot there about what I was going to need in my life. And, I got married the following year, and the rest is history. I had seven babies in nine years. And, uh, we all still haven't recovered from that.[laughs] Wonderful Catholic behavior, right? But, I'm glad I had them, and they're glad I had them, so. Uh, relationships, uh, among us are wonderful, and also with my, uh, first husband. They're very very good.

Uh, in what ways has your life been influenced - that's, that's number eight- by the years spent at Mundelein college? Um, I learned ... as I said to have a great respect for psychology and also religion. Straight up religion. And then, after Vatican II, um, I began to see why I was doing what I was doing. Um, I, I gathered a sense of social responsibility, and I got that at Mundelein, right there. Uh, it was very important in, later on in the seventies and eighties it led me into the peace movement, uh, where I clung for some years along with my Jungian studies.

Um, we had quite a peace movement here in the Quad Cities - in

Davenport, Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline. And we met regularly, and we marched, and stood on the ramparts ... at the arsenal where, I live about a mile from the arsenal right now. Uh, I still shiver when I go across that bridge.

Uh...let's see, number nine. Describe in general what your view of education you received at Mundelein was and the environment in which you lived for four years. I think I got an excellent education. I learned to think. I learned compassion. I learned to take responsibility for my part of the world...as well as the people next door. If it had not been for, uh, what I, what I learned, what I, what I absorbed at Mundelein, I don't think I'd have gone on a peace march.

That was in 1989. Uh, might have been my response to being alone after my parents and my brother died... But I was encouraged to go on the peace march, and my people of peace, my friends encouraged me and, uh, I gathered up some money and had some help with that from, uh, spiritual side of my experience. In other words, when I needed the money it was there.

Ended up, uh, in a couple of, three different offices. One in Philadelphia, one in Washington, and, uh, oh where else? I believe I, uh, worked in New York City for a while. Um, it was just an unreal situation. You felt like you were in a dream all the time. Uh, I, uh, I wrote a brochure, uh, in Washington. I found out about the, uh, the news building which is where you can contact every newspaper in the world just by putting out a little press release. It was great.

It was great. And finally we walked into Washington, and, uh, I was well for that. I was sick a lot of the time. I walked into Washington and ended up at Catholic U., and, uh, standing behind me..

TAPE STOPPED (NOT END OF SIDE) BREAK IN DIALOGUE

At the final rally, in the gym was Marge _____'s son Jim. Among the thousands of people who finished that march, there was Jim calling my name. He took me to the dorm where he was a manager and, uh, took care of me until it was time to go home. I will never forget that.

Number ten. Oh, it seems to me I would go for A. The Mundelein College environment during my college years supported both my religious tradition, and, uh, a climate of social responsibility. Oh, heck. I, uh, think I had a head start though, because I felt very much alone as a small child, and I was very much taken with the Mass, with the, uh, just, just with, with religious experience of all kinds. I, from the time I was a little tiny kid. Uh, but also, I, then, then again the, the convent boarding school. That was, that was a big time experience and a long time. And so I was pretty ready for, [chuckles] pretty ready for a further Catholic education. And, uh, I've been told that, uh, I had a lot of pre Vatican II leanings because of that, and a lot of, of religion I really don't understand. [chuckling] Uh, how can I say that right? Um, I do understand, but it seeped in. It was something that came almost genetically, so, um, I think Mundelein

just followed through on that and gave me a little more, a little more maturity possibly, uh, for the way I responded. Um, not entirely, I think. [laughs]

I, for all I have learned, I, I have managed to, uh, forgive the trespasses more or less and understand where people come from when they, when they do damage to me and mine, which isn't very often. Uh, but I also think that, on the side here, uh, Mundelein helped me prepare very well for what I encountered, or what I invited into my life after I got out of school. That's the other part of it. Uh, I'm proud of that. I think Mundelein did a good job.

Um, I had a great deal of stress and heartache and poverty which went away finally. Uh, but I learned how to take hold when something presented itself. I had a chance. I, I ran my own advertising agency all those years, twenty-some years, and, when something presented itself to me.

For instance, I had a chance to run a, a service called "Cityline". I think they had it at the Trib in Chicago. Uh, we had it here, and I was able to start it. And, uh, it was a telephone information service. People called a number and got any kind of information they wanted. And I saw to it that the information for the poor and the homeless and the needy and all that stuff got on Cityline. Uh, Earth Alert got on Cityline. I got a, uh, an award from the Sierra club for that. Uh, um, an hour and a half of information [laughing] or something like that on, uh, on the, uh, on the needs of the current earth. But, also, um, I got all of the