

**SHARE YOUR STORY: STUDENT LIFE AT MUNDELEIN**

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Leigh Anne Rowinski's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Leigh Anne Rowinski conducted by Melissa Newman on March 10, 2022. This interview is part of the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein project, an oral history project to expand and enrich the Women and Leadership Archives' (WLA) records of Mundelein College's history through interviews with alumnae on student life.

Mundelein College, founded and operated by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), provided education to women from 1930 until 1991, when it affiliated with Loyola University Chicago.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the WLA staff. Timestamps are provided every five minutes, within a few seconds of that exact point in the audio. Actions and sounds such as laughter are in parentheses, and notes added for context are in brackets.

### **TIME LOG AND OVERVIEW FOR SESSION 1**

[0:00 - 5:00]: Introductions and how she came to be at Mundelein. The appeal of the BVMs and the impact they had on her as career women.

[5:00 - 10:00]: Sister Jean and her lasting impression on Leigh Anne before and after her time at Mundelein. Madonna della Strada.

[10:00 - 15:00]: Madonna della Strada continued and the importance of music for Leigh Anne. Mundelein's legacy of being a four year college when two-year and secretarial schools were the

norm before World War II and being attracted to that and the level of education provided. Jesuit education.

[15:00 - 20:00]: Classes she took at Mundelein and the professors who taught them. Mundelein being next to Loyola which was an added benefit.

[20:00 - 25:00]: Favorite class and the way the Liberal Arts classes immersed the students in whatever they were teaching. School choir.

[25:00 - 30:00]: Student choir, friends and social life on campus, and how she chose Mundelein for the close knit community.

[30:00 - 35:00]: Continuation of friends at Mundelein and being part of the McBuddies. Living in both Northland and Coffey Hall.

[35:00 - 40:00]: Comparing Northland and Coffey and the fashion shows they would put on.

[40:00 - 45:00]: Continuation of fashion shows and helping with the school newspaper, the Mundelein Scholar.

[45:00 - 50:00]: Places on campus frequented and whether the Loyola and Mundelein students used each other's facilities. Campus job.

[50:00 - 55:00]: Continuation of campus job. Sisters only floors of the Skyscraper and her impression of them.

[55:00 - 1:00:00]: Sister Ann Ida Gannon and the other Sisters who were retired in their fields, but still at Mundelein. World events that happened.

[1:00:00 - 1:05:00]: Graduation day.

[1:05:00 - 1:10:00]: Graduation day continued and Mundelein's study abroad program. Lasting relationships with fellow students and professors/faculty.

[1:10:00 - 1:15:00]: How Mundelein has prepared herself and other women to be leaders and independent.

[1:15:00 - 1:15:52]: Wrapping up and closing remarks.

## **TIME LOG AND OVERVIEW FOR SESSION 2**

[0:00 - 5:00]: Reintroducing and Leigh Anne wanting to come back on the record to talk about the cabaret show.

[5:00 - 10:00]: Leigh Anne's story she put on at the show.

[10:00 - 14:12]: After show parties, expanding on favorite campus locations, and closing remarks.

## **NARRATOR BIO**

Leigh Anne Rowinski was born in Connecticut and lived there with her parents, brother, and sister until they moved to Wheaton, a Chicago suburb, when Leigh Anne was in junior high. She chose Mundelein College for its fashion merchandising and business management program and the benefits being in Chicago would have on that career field. She values the experiences she gained from participating in the fashion shows every year and directed the show during her senior year. Growing up around a love for music and singing also led Leigh Anne to treasure her time as a Mundelein College Singer and the performances they gave every trimester.

In the latter half of her college career, her parents moved back to the East Coast and Leigh Anne was grateful to have such a good support system at Mundelein. The Sisters created a close-knit community that Leigh Anne remained a part of even after graduating. Her first job was at Lord &

Taylor's on Michigan Avenue, and Leigh Anne stayed around Mundelein, commuting downtown. This proximity to Mundelein allowed her to continue to develop strong relationships with the Sisters and she remains in contact with several of them to this day, including Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM.

### **INTERVIEWER BIO**

Melissa Newman was a graduate student at Loyola University Chicago and a graduate assistant at the Women and Leadership Archives 2020-2022.

Transcriptionist: Chris Mattix

Session: 1 of 2

Narrator: Leigh Anne Rowinski

Locations: Greenwich, CT and Palatine, IL via

Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: March 10, 2022

[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW]

[0:00]

Q: For the record, my name is Melissa Newman. I'm a graduate assistant at the Women and Leadership Archives interviewing Leigh Anne Rowinski, Class of 1989, on March 10, 2022, for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. I am in Palatine, Illinois, and Leigh Anne is in Greenwich, Connecticut. So to start us off, Leigh Anne, could you please tell me a little bit about yourself, like where you were born and raised and your family?

Rowinski: Yes. So I am from Connecticut, another part of Connecticut from where I currently live. But my family includes a brother and sister, my parents. And we had moved to Chicago as a family when I was growing up in junior high school at that time, which was part of my eventual student time at Mundelein.

Q: How did you come to be at Mundelein? What was that decision process like for you?

Rowinski: At the time—I grew up in the west suburbs of Chicago, and through the recruitment process, different career fairs, college fairs. It was something that came to be known, that was a possible place to go. And I grew up in Wheaton, in the suburbs, and had always been a very strong student, knew it was important to be going to school, still undecided about what I would major in, what I really wanted to do. But Mundelein was one of the few four year institutions that offered a fashion merchandising management program at the same time that it was a full Liberal Arts four year degree. And so that was something important to me. Of course, I was very much in love with the city of Chicago and all that it has offered and the opportunity to be at the lakefront, the opportunity at that time that Loyola was a neighborhood school next door as well as Northwestern as well as DePaul. But there was a strong retail presence and fashion presence, of course, on Michigan Avenue and Oak Street and the Merchandise Mart. I really wanted that life of being in the city—away from home, living on campus, but not so far away from my own family that was still growing up, my younger brother and sister, who at that time were in high school and junior high school.

So the other thing that stood out about Mundelein was the BVM [Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary] Sisters and some of the people I met in the admissions office who had been students who stayed on for a time to continue their academic leadership career. But as an example, I knew my own doctor when I was growing up in Wheaton, had gone to Mundelein. And so the summer that I found out I was going she had graduated in something like 1974. A great lady. We had never talked about it, and she was so enthusiastic and told me how wonderful everybody was. And she already knew Sister Jean [Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM]. And so Sister Jean has been a part of my life since I was seventeen years old as a prospective student and

just this week, we still exchanged correspondence and speak on the phone. Despite all of her busy schedule on campus with many, many students. But it just shows you the strength of life and the threads of life that remain.

Q: Were you aware of the BVMs before attending Mundelein, or is it something that you kind of understood and learned while you were there?

Rowinski: I was not aware of them before. I had always grown up Catholic. My mother is in fact, a Catholic school teacher, in primary school. We have been a stronger faith-based family in many ways, but no, I was not aware of the particular branch of the BVM Sisters, but having met them and over time continuing to learn about their history and travels originally from Ireland to Clarke College. Yes, it's been something I greatly respect and appreciate the commitment and what they've given to so many women in a strong education. They were really the first group of career women, I would say—outside of my own family members who worked, my mother being a teacher. But at the time that I was choosing college, it was still hard to find enough company information or public life stories of women outside of the media industry.

[05:00]

So just as a point of reference, the fact that we had different Sisters in different departments of the college really helped open up the opportunities of women being successful out in the world beyond their college years.



Q: And what sort of relationship did you have with Sister Jean? How did you first come into contact with her?

Rowinski: I believe I met her in some of the early student orientations—so before I had fully committed to going. But I was an early committed person in the fall-winter, part of my senior year of high school. So I knew I was going and still coming back to campus for other information. But I knew her from the beginning. My first dorm was the Northland Hall that was eventually taken down to make way for other campus development, I think in the '90s. And Sister Jean, I think she lived up on the fifth floor, and I was on the third floor, and she was one of our regular neighbors. I wasn't in the education department like she was focused on at that time, but because we had a small campus, we saw her and some of the other BVM Sisters every day walking back and forth to the library, the main building, either one of the dorms. But she's always friendly and talkative and interested. I remember one year when we were preparing for the fashion show late at night, and she came over to see us. We were working in the sewing room, and she saw lights on. And she wanted to come and see what it was all about and how it was going. So always very supportive of everyone and knew you even if you weren't in her class or that wasn't your advisor. She always knew something about you to connect and asking about your classes and your family and different things like that.

Q: Yeah, that's wonderful. And then how did your relationship with her continue after you had graduated?

Rowinski: We stayed in touch at first because when I graduated school, I lived right nearby campus, and so we were still neighbors in the Sheridan Road area. I still attended some of the events, alumni events and different things that went on. I was commuting downtown to Michigan Avenue for my first job out of school with Lord and Taylor on Michigan Avenue. So that was a great thing in those days and what Michigan Avenue really represented. So I might see people as I was walking through the Loyola campus or home, but we kept in touch. There were other BVM Sisters, people like Joan Francis Crowley [BVM], who also lived in my building at that time. She was a tremendous history teacher that most of us had the pleasure of taking. I was another time in the choir, so I knew Sister Judith Dewell and [Sister] Eliza Kenney [BVM]. They lived in the neighborhood. Sister Fran Dolan [Sister Frances Dolan, BVM] lived right next door. So when I graduated, my parents had then left Chicago, and I still needed my home base, if you will. So commuting into the city, most people were moving out to the suburbs. There were many people going on to graduate school, law school, medical school, becoming teachers somewhere. But I stayed close to campus because I didn't have a car, and I needed the commute on the 'L' and the bus line. And my own family wasn't around, so it was another way for me to keep a home base. And the BVMs and the Madonna della Strada Community Church was also a part of that for me.

Q: So would you regularly attend services at the Madonna della Strada?

Rowinski: Yes. That was my church of record in the time I was a student. And then I lived in a couple of different places along Sheridan Road, but for probably five, six years when I was out

of school. Yes. And the Jesuit education by that point that I had been in school and graduated. But the appreciation for the Jesuit education, the BVM Sisters, the music program at Madonna was tremendous.

[10:00]

Sister Dorothy Dwight [BVM] was my voice teacher during my student years, and she was also part of the choir at Madonna della Strada. So it was important to me. Music has always been important to me in the mass services, and I think it helps people go. I think the positive outlook that we've enjoyed with Loyola's Ministry is important to going. So I still look forward to when we have had alumni masses or will have alumni masses again to get to come back to campus. It's a beautiful location.

Q: Yes. Were the masses all typically students or teachers or staff members or did outside community members also participate?

Rowinski: I think definitely there were people from the neighborhoods in Rogers Park that attended. Certainly there are other local churches that they might also attend. But I think the combination of the thought leadership, the Jesuit leadership of the campus was also a draw. And people want to be inspired. You know, they want to have their faith kind of reaffirmed. But it really does help people of faith have someone who understands what people in real life—different walks of life go through and why they come to church and what the services are about.

So I think it really is a beacon for a lot of people. And over time, I try to share with people. I didn't necessarily choose Mundelein because it was a women's college. I chose it for the level of education and the combined philosophy of wanting women to be empowered. I went back to the original purpose of the college, which was there were families from an earlier time that wanted their daughters to have four-year college education, to become a teacher or whatever it may be, as opposed to a two-year school or a secretarial school that those options existed before World War II. One of my own grandmothers went to secretarial school, which is lovely. But I wanted something with more substance. I wanted a community atmosphere.

And then when you look at our history from the post World War II era, it's not always remembered that Mundelein was the largest women's Catholic college in the country in the 1950s. And so that's really a cornerstone. What is Catholic education about? What is Jesuit education about? And in my current life or more current life, I have attended Fordham University here in the New York City area, which is also a Jesuit school. And there is something about the values, the combination of faith, family values, if you will, the work ethic, you know, the path that so many of us are trying to build a life or for parents wanting to offer and build a better life for their children and showing how to do that. There just is very strong foundational elements and positive elements to help people start their lives.

Q: So could you tell me a little bit about the classes that you took and the professors that taught them?

Rowinski: Yes. So as I said, I knew coming in that I wanted this fashion merchandising, retail management, business management focus as a major. And so I stayed true to that in my four years. I didn't veer off of that, and I wanted the arts and educational background as well. So at the time, fashion merchandising was part of the home economics department. We had a very smart, very talented lady, Ava Smoller, was our lead professor. And there was another lady who joined us in progress of my four years, Kathy Fell, who taught most of the programs. Which included everything from design to clothing construction to the retail buying process to—we put on the annual fashion show, spring and historic costume.

[15:00]

We went to certain museums and ways of understanding dress over different periods of time. But we also took some classes relative to round out the art history piece of the program, the nutritional piece of the program. We did have women who graduated with nutritional and dietitian kind of management programs. And that was part of our schooling. So I really loved it. And I really loved that we had the proximity with the stores, with the Merchandise Mart. I was able to volunteer for some fashion shows and some of the trade opportunities. Chicago did have a mini fashion show season, if you will. So that was important. And in my other kind of core Liberal Arts degrees, I remember doing all the freshmen and sophomore required 101s and 201s of psychology and sociology.

But I did expand my business management to accounting. I took two years of accounting in part because of a really great teacher that we had, Ms. Rhonda Kodjayan, lovely woman, really smart. We had a great business chair. And that's something that people didn't necessarily expect either. We had Sisters in every area of the college. But we also had gentlemen who taught. I remember I'm thinking of someone in English literature that we had. But the chair of the business Department, Mr. Jensen, was a gentleman. And so that also shows you something of the peer level of the relationships in the academic world.

But everybody taught with enthusiasm for their subject. We had our either—mostly twice a week classes, I would say whatever the Monday, Wednesday or Tuesday, Thursday kind of scheduling happened. And they were always available. They were a part of campus. You would see them in the lunchroom, a lot of reading. I remember after my first freshman year, and I was a scholarship student, I had to relearn how to study. I'd always been a straight 'A' student. And it was one of those growth patterns where I had to develop a deeper way of outlining and rehearsing for myself what the material really was and getting through all the text. And in those days it wasn't digital. You couldn't Google things. You really did have to go to the library and look up in the periodicals. And we had some runoff copies of things. But all beneficial, all good learning. You really got a good sense of the world. And I always felt that Mundelein benefited, even in those years from Loyola being a global institution. Loyola had the Rome Center for many years, I think, even at that point. But Loyola was a global campus already in the 80s. And of course, now everything has grown tremendously, which is great to see and how much they've expanded the campus or other campuses.

But I think the teachers really wanted us to learn. They shared of their own experience. I remember Sister Joan Francis Crowley [BVM] with Western Civilization. She was able to draw upon her travel experiences from students that she took to Russia. Fulbright scholars that she helped develop and what their studies were, books that were written. We had many well accomplished people in business as well as the subject matter. And there were classes I didn't get to take. I was in the choir, which was an activity, but it always occurred on I want to say we rehearsed Monday, Wednesday. And I never did get to take the Chicago history class with Paula Pfeiffer on Wednesdays at four o'clock would have been another kind of piece that you wanted. But I think we were offered great curriculum, some guest speakers, some field trips and good discussion because we were in classes of whatever twenty or twenty-five people or so. So you did get to more know people and you did get to know your professor. And with the discussions.

[20:00]

Q: What would you say your favorite class was?

Rowinski: For me and my major I would say historic costume with Avis Moeller. Because one of the things people don't always know about fashion is it's emblematic of so much else. That style of clothing, style of architecture, what books we're reading, what music—there's symmetry to the kind of eras and chapters. So you think about even now in this COVID period and people having to wear a mask and how they're taking care of themselves. That goes with the symmetry of the type of clothing and our patterns of work, patterns of how we're doing, our errands seeing

people. And it will change again as we're about to embark on spring and hopefully this will be the last round of closure that we've all gone through. But I really also learned history. You learn European history, world history, and you see trends come back. So it was very foundational to culture and lifestyle, I think not only for my business plans but just generally being an educated person, style, manner, holiday is all important.

Q: And what type of guest speakers and field trips did you take?

Rowinski: I remember there was different historical museums, including in Evanston, which was right nearby, that we had gone to. I recall we had some guest speakers of Loyola at that time as well. So the two schools were not as aligned as they have become, obviously. But from a history perspective, books that were written, I would say within the history and sociology realms I remember that we had guest speakers. Another one of my favorite teachers, and she became a friend as well. I took a couple of semesters of German with Dr. Gertrude Denning back in that time who really was from Austria. And she took us on educational kind of field trips and social occasions and in part to help practice our German. So I remember when it was Bach's birthday, we were in a beautiful home in the Southern suburbs, someone who had this very spacious living room with a Steinway piano and with all these beautiful people. So we had fun that way. We were at the Palmer House for a Mardi Gras event, similar kind of thing. We went to a Frühlingsfest for the spring season, like right about now, this time of the year. We had a lot of fun with her, and she really wanted her students to absorb some of the culture and get a chance to use the language. And that crossed over also into my singing because with Sister Dorothy, I was



singing in Italian and French and German as well as English. So we were small enough that you got to do that, that you were able to connect some of your classes and teachers to each other.

Q: That really brings together the Liberal Arts aspect of being able to relate everything to the other things and see how they all fit together.

Rowinski: Yes.

Q: Tell me a bit about your experience with the choir. How did you get involved with that? And I know you mentioned how often you guys met, but what do you remember from that?

Rowinski: We were the Mundelein College singers. We were about a group of thirty—thirty-five girls in three-part choir. So soprano, second soprano, and alto. I was primarily a second soprano in that middle level range. I've always sung. My mother had a beautiful voice. My mother is a school teacher. So from the time I was a young child, the various types of schooling and programs, being musical, from the time Sesame Street and things like that were on, we'd always sung.

[25:00]

I was in student choirs throughout my life growing up in high school, so I knew it was something to do. And great women and Sister Judith and Sister Eliza were very dedicated to us. And we did different types of music throughout the year. So the fall quarter—we had three quarters in those years. So we were in school whatever, September to November and then January through maybe March 15th, and then April, the Easter break until June. But we did a sacred music concert. Then we did a stage concert with Broadway show tunes. And then the spring concert—it could be a mix. It was a different it was lighter fare which sometimes occurred in the auditorium over in the library building. But we went through rehearsals. We had another choreographer, lady. What was her name? Mary Schoen, I want to say. And her daughter. I remember her daughter now Cecily was in the choir with us. But lovely people that knew something about the music, the school production. And we rehearsed. We were on the stage and in the auditorium that's in the Mundelein building was where our both sacred music and our stage show was done in the winter. But loved it and very dedicated. I remember our dedicated show to Irving Berlin. We did a 100th birthday dedicated show all of his music to Irving Berlin. That was a big deal in the winter. And I remember I did have years that I was the soloist. I was thrilled to get a piece of music and be able to expand my repertoire a little bit.

All of us, I think as younger women. You want the opportunity to try things. And I could sing. I don't have the full range. I certainly had peers that were very talented, that graduated with a minor in voice in addition to their main major, which was wonderful. But they found me pieces of music that I could do well with. My parents still lived in Chicago then, so they came to that show. So it was fun. We had fun and a lot of strengthened friendships that I have from that group.

Q: So tell me a bit about your friendship groups that you had at Mundelein and—yeah, take it away.

Rowinski: Yes. So there's many people I remember and love and still have kept in touch with over the years. I think what I liked is that I had different groups of friends. So there were people I knew from the time I was a freshman that I would see in the lunchroom that I stayed friends with the whole time. There were people that I also knew from the choir, from my fashion major. And one of the opportunities that I think we had is that we could be friends with people from multiple years. You weren't kind of limited to your class year because we were I think we graduated approximately 300 people together in 1989, which was probably about the size of my high school class. So that was another factor. When I chose Mundelein, I didn't want to be on campus of 10,000 people or something. I felt like I would get lost. I was someone who needed and wanted time to develop better friendships and actually know people. And so you had that opportunity. You knew people in the dorm, you saw different people across the day, your week, your schedule. So I was always pleased that the girls I found as a total group, people were positive, supportive. I was pleased that I never went through the difficulties of sometimes the way high school can be into college, but that people were there for the right reasons.

[30:00]

Everybody had their wishes and their plans and worked hard and students that had on-campus or off-campus jobs, what have you. Some of us were busier than others, but yet people took time for you. And so in the afternoons or evening and whoever you might be having dinner with. I remember I had a friend, Carla, who we also sewed together. And again, this is a different chapter of time. I know it's not done today since everything is digital, but we're both very serious students in different majors. She was also from the Chicago suburbs. She became a doctor. Lovely girl. But we could do our catch up conversation at the same time that we were sewing. And I remember making Christmas tree skirts and different things, but really a great girl.

I had another group of friends from the time I was a freshman also with—and I remember the boat trip that we took on the river to see the architecture. And that was a big field trip. I was part of the McBuddies following that. But every September, some of us were there a week early to help freshmen move in and facilitate some of the orientation sessions. But some of my friends from that time, Pamela Liebfried, Susan Paris, Chantal Mahler, Vanessa Marker. We all met in that first week or weekend when we were freshmen, and those relationships continued the whole time. So sometimes I would see them before class or at lunch, whatever it was. And we were in all different majors. Some of them were in journalism or teaching. Vanessa has a design business. So, you know, over the years we've stayed in touch, we've been at alumni events together. We still exchange Christmas cards. So it is nice to have those friendships over the course of time.

Q: So in having you participating in the freshman orientations to help students move in, do you remember anything about your own freshman orientation experience?

Rowinski: I remember everything was new. I think there was some other parent meetings that went on as well, separately for the parents. I think I—you know you're excited, you're looking forward to it, you're ready to be at college, but yet there's still a factor of 'am I really doing this?' 'My parents are really going to leave,' so I think it was a rush in some ways of the new people. It's all overwhelming. You're trying to move in. So I think it was fine initially, but I don't remember something more specific. As I say, the boat trip, we did go downtown, and we have the site seeing. We had more senior level students helping all of us get acclimated. Everybody was friendly. Everybody was great, definitely. It was a great welcoming.

Q: And now did you live at the Northland all four years?

Rowinski: No, I lived there two years, and then I moved to Coffey [Hall] my junior and senior year. So some of that was a factor of cost. And, you know, I love Northland. The suite set up of rooms. It was said it was an old hotel from another time, but some of my classmates and friends had graduated. And so I felt like I needed to kind of re-change what I was doing. And so I moved over to Coffey, which is a bit more social new people with some of it. And that was also the year my parents were getting ready to leave from Chicago, the Chicago area. Their home was now going to be in Connecticut. So I was already kind of experiencing that transition of becoming more adult, or what am I going to be doing in two years as I graduate with some of that factor? And that was great, too. Coffey is a different environment. It had more of the hustle and bustle of

people in and out of the front reception area. It has the open room where they do a lot of luncheons and things like that.

[35:00]

We had done the fashion show there some years, so still in the center of everything. But I did move over to Coffey Hall at that point.

Q: How would you compare those two living experiences? Did you prefer or like one over the other?

Rowinski: I like both for different reasons. I think as a freshman and sophomore, I think it made sense for me to be in a quieter dorm, you know, in my own home. I don't know if this will make sense to others, but I had always had my own room. I always was more studious. It takes some time to get acclimated to living with other people in a community environment that everybody feels good about. The people I met—I ended up meeting literally in Northland, a girl. She was like three years older than me, but from my town in my major. So that made a difference to how I got situated as a student and in my department and whatever. Another girl that I was a bridesmaid for her, she graduated like a year ahead of me. I was very happy with it. It's just having a sense of chapters of when it's time to also infuse new people in your life and new experiences, too. So I knew Coffey was a lot more social, and by then I knew some people, so I felt better about it. I was still a bit on the quiet side, I would say back in that time when I first got

to college. And so by the time I graduated, I was more sociable and ready to be working in the world and meeting new people.

And that's one of the biggest life lessons that I had from that time. I went through two kind of heartbreaking things while I was at Mundelein that are life forming. We all have these. The fact that my parents were moving away, and I was making a decision to stay in Chicago when I graduated. That was new. I would have been independent anyway. I would have been trying to find somewhere to live on my own anyway, even if they were still in the west suburbs. But when people are a thousand miles away, it's very different. And I went through a heartbreaking boyfriend issue that kind of left me having to be on my own—more who you are emotionally. And what does it take to get through that? Because not everyone can understand that. The fact that I was in Coffey with that much more activity around that did help that situation for me.

Q: You mentioned a couple of times the fashion shows. So could you go into more detail about that and your role?

Rowinski: Sure. Yes. So it was an annual event that we did in the spring, and this was the one from the home economics department with our leadership. So for Avis Moeller, as our chairperson, Kathy Fell as the next chairperson, but we had student designers, so that was also a major that you could focus on. And it was student designs, student models, student kind of putting it together, coordinating what the show was going to look like and feel like, creating invitations, doing fundraising. So we were planning all year, and I did different things. So one year I was the wardrobe mistress, which meant having the inventory and managing the actual

fashions, coordinating with student designers to make sure we had everything, you know.

Arranging for the fittings with some of the models that would wear their garments and making sure people had dressing rooms, that it was organized backstage, if you will. And then I was an assistant, and then as a senior, I was the director of the show. So it's one of those learning experiences you grow with, which was great. And it was very well received each and every year. Many years, it had been in the McCormick Lounge of Coffey Hall, which was great. It had a high ceiling.

[40:00]

We could put up a stage. And of course, the models love being in it as well. They like the newness of everything, and it was very well attended. It was always a packed room. It always gave somebody a chance to be a speaker because we had someone that described the fashions. So there was a lot of hustle and bustle about it. Ms. Moeller and Ms. Fell had helped us guiding the process. What they knew or the construction we needed with the maintenance team or something like that. But the year I was the director, having seen the show, I wanted to do a different setting. And so I looked at the logistics of doing it in Piper Hall at that time, which, as you may know, at one time, was the student library before the more modern library was built. And then it had other offices or smaller departments were using that space, and it's a reception space as well. It's a beautiful space. So the house was so well designed because it had the front staircase that came down to an open room. And then there were drawing room doors into the library room, and then there was like a dining room, I think you might call it, and then it follows through the kitchen, and there's a back staircase.



So we had a circle that the girls could follow. So we had three rooms of audience and three speakers and could kind of close the doors. And so I hoped it had given a more prestigious kind of way. We have a terminology in the fashion industry that we call a trunk show—that it is a smaller audience of people seeing fashions being displayed or modeled, and that's kind of how we did it. We had the beautiful stained-glass windows from the top of the staircase, but it added something different. And then at the same time, because this was like mid-May, we were able to have the reception on the terrace, which overlooks the lake following the event. And so it was very special. I think people liked it. I hope that they felt like their work was being showcased in a different environment from the ordinary stage. Very well received. We have many alumni that come back to campus but very much love the event and happy, you know, to be a part of it.

Q: That does sound very cool. I can just picture the beauty of it.

Rowinski: Yes.

Q: And I think in the questionnaire that you submitted to us, you mentioned you were a part of the student newspaper. Is that right?

Rowinski: I was not actually on The Scholar. I don't know if with you, when we spoke, I mentioned some people maybe that I would hope are being included in this project to get their perspective. But I was not officially a writer or anything for The Scholar, but it was a great—I

think it came out every two weeks, but it was very much a part of our student life. And the activities going on, which included our sports teams, which included our senior edition that did some of the senior events, including our fashion show, our concerts, all of that was included.

Q: Okay. Yeah, maybe that's what I was thinking of. I know you mentioned Chantal and Pam were part of that. Okay. So maybe I just kind of sucked you into that, too.

Rowinski: Yes. I hope they will participate in your research. Susan Taras, I believe, is another name, someone I knew that was all three of them were, I think, instrumental in the paper in that time. Okay.

Q: Yeah. I'm actually interviewing Chantal next week, so I'll ask her.

Rowinski: Oh, great. Yes, very good.

Q: So when you were on campus, where did you go to eat, have fun, study, all of that?

Rowinski: I mean, of course I was in the Tea Room. That was our main spot of gathering and socializing and the busy lunch crowd. So that was always fun.

[45:00]

The library. The main library was very expansive, and I really liked it. I really loved the lakefront. So any place that I could be at the lake or if I could be outside studying, that was always great, too. I would say the library. I like—we used to have, I think it was on the fourth floor, the sun enclosed roof. I need the right word. But there was a garden. I think the science department kept a garden up on the fourth floor with a glass enclosure. So that was a great place to be. The eighth floor, the little theater and the music rooms also, too. Because they were higher up, they had better lighting, so you really got a sense of where things would be. And finding a quiet spot where if you were talking to somebody. I think those were some of the spots that I liked. I remember the outdoor campus and some of the stair steps to be able to sit on and read and that kind of thing, too.

Q: Yeah. It's just such a lovely area up there. I always love to ask where would they like to go to enjoy it?

Rowinski: Yes.

Q: Was there much cross communication with Loyola students at all using their facilities there—them using Mundelein facilities?

Rowinski: I would say not as much at times as I say. I was very loyal to Madonna della Strada. That was one of the things that I think was from another time was at a point where Loyola was

more of only a boys school and Mundelein was a girl school, let's say through the sixties. We knew we had many of my classmates still had mothers that had gone to Mundelein and had met a boyfriend and eventual husband at Loyola or Northwestern. But during my time, I can't say it was that cross interactive. It just didn't seem to develop that way. I love their campus, I love the history of their buildings, and I'm glad to see everything that it has developed.

I did spend a lot of time in Evanston, in the Vogue fabric store, and, you know, helping myself with some of the sewing projects that I was doing in Northwestern campus as well. But I can't say it developed that way. I'm trying to think, the other nooks—places that it really could be anywhere that we could find a spot. But we were not allowed in the Sister's elevator, for example. So I knew of some places because I had stayed on campus for a break and helped run the switchboard down in the main building. Or I did take a part-time job when I was a senior because I wanted to stay in Chicago following graduation just to have some extra savings. I worked for a couple of teachers, correcting papers and putting through their administrative work. So there was a woman, Audrey Sullivan, who led some of the physical education classes because we needed that for teachers in those days. That was part of the required elements of being a teacher. How would you teach—to primary school student—how would you teach basic education? But she was a great lady, so I worked for her and so knew more about the athletic complex in the pool and the gym areas in those days. So it was something funny that the seating goes up above the gym floor. We watched a lot of the ladies, the Laker team, basketball games. We had a very good team in Division Three.

Q: What else did you do working for teachers?

Rowinski: It was really an administrative function. I worked for someone with the mathematics area and so it was cross-checking grading papers for them that they had a master, and I would look and see how it was.

[50:00]

I was not in the class if this was a couple of years removed from that. Getting their mail, making copies, running errands around the main building. Those are the days of huge copy machines. I think there was even a ninth floor in the building. But very appreciative. I even received a beautiful silk scarf as a secretary's day gift from Mr. Rhinegold. Very sweet. So it really did add to student life and feeling a part of the campus, feeling a part of you know. We had great administrative support staff. There was a woman, Sandy, who was one of the executive secretaries in the main office on the first floor, just when you come in the door, who was there for many years and knew, of course, all the Sisters and how to share messages. I worked with a great lady named Elaine who ran the switchboard for the college. I worked with her during the Christmas break, but always busy. It's a hub of activity, always a smile. I developed a friendship with the campus activities director. We had this great lady, Erica Nelson, who I stayed friends with all of my adult life now. She came from Boston and just a great positive personality. And as it happened, she moved to Wheaton, where I had grown up. And so we knew some of the same people. But you really got that infusion of energy and people who wanted it to be a good day, a good week, the level of activities going on all the time.

Q: I had another thought, and now I'm losing it. You mentioned that there was a Sister's only elevator. Why was that?

Rowinski: Well, they had additional floors. I don't know if it was to the tenth floor. If you look at that Skyscraper building, and you see it gets smaller to the top. But they had another type of dining room or their own offices where they could more be themselves, I think, and have their own meetings while they were in the main building. Or maybe the president's office was up there. I was never officially up there, but it was a smaller elevator just outside of the cafeteria on the main floor. If they saw you, they would scold you. That was theirs. We had two other ones in the main hallway that had the gate that comes across to close and then to be able to push the button to go up for class. There were people that—that was a job that people could do. And the Sisters were always otherwise friendly, and they weren't wearing their habits in those days. This was a more relaxed era of dress code in those days, the retired Sisters, many of them lived across the street in what was called Wright Hall, that was directly opposite the main Mundelein building. So many of them came over every day, whatever for breakfast, or they swam in the pool.

They were active ladies. No matter—it seemed they were ageless, the ones that were writing books. There were people who were still tutors for students. They remained active and involved always. So I always felt very fortunate that we were learning so much and seeing so much of what we talk about today that women can do so many things, have many chapters of their life, different talents to explore, and they were doing it. And were educated and always happy to talk, happy to share what they knew, whether they were officially your teacher or not.

Q: That's lovely. I didn't know that the retired Sisters also had so much involvement at Mundelein, too.

Rowinski: Yes.

Q: Were the retired Sisters all one that had previously taught at Mundelein, or were they from all over?

Rowinski: I think they were mostly previous teachers at Mundelein and previous leadership.

[55:00]

So as an example, Sister Ann Ida Gannon [BVM], who unfortunately died a couple of years ago at 103, we saw her all the time. She was president of the college in the fifties. But she attended all of our events. There was a group of scholarship students, the Gannon Scholars, that was in her name. But she was a lovely woman who spoke with us all the time and very thoughtful, very alive, vibrant, participating. I remember another Sister, Katharine Forsyth [BVM], who at the time that we knew her was already in her nineties and she was a tutor, and she was interested. And there is a wonderful book that was developed, Mundelein Voices, that was published many years ago, as you may know. But it really does give a great, having those profiles really does

help explain the beginnings of the college and some of them who came as students and then became BVMs or stayed on or went to Clarke College or something and came back at another time. But the academic resources, the thoughtfulness, the interest in the world issues of the eighties definitely resonated. Whether they were an active teacher or not, they were very much thoughtful and involved in the academics.

Q: Were there any specific world or national events going on at the time that you were at Mundelein that impacted your experience there?

Rowinski: I was there in the mid to late eighties. So the United States was doing pretty well as a world power, as an economic—the way the economy was moving back in that time. I was still on—near campus when the first Iraq War happened. You know, George H. W. Bush would have been elected in 1989, and then it was a year, year and a half later that the Iraq War began. So there wasn't the disruption like right now. I can imagine that there are students that are discussing Ukraine and wanting more perspective and what has led to the current situation. But at the time we were allowed to focus on our studies. During the eighties, there was a Mayor, Jane Byrne was a female Mayor of Chicago, and she came to our school, she spoke. So that was exciting. That was interesting to see for all of us. Martin Luther King [Jr.] Day in January, being a federal holiday was new as an official holiday during those years. And so I remember some of the early editions of the reception of having a candle service and how we celebrate his life and how that can be for everyone.



But we were very lucky that we were living in a relatively peace time economy. It's only now when you look back on that time and realize the eighties was such a tremendous period of growth for Chicago as a business city, as a sports city. The Bears had won the Super Bowl. The White Socks and Cubs each won a baseball division. Michael Jordan was part of the Chicago Bulls, and that started taking off in the early nineties. Oprah Winfrey had gained national recognition with her original talk show being based from Chicago and being broadcast in many more places. So Chicago was a pinnacle city. It was very aspirational the level of retailing stores on the avenue. There was quite a level of growth and optimism about how someone could do coming out of college in whatever field that they were trying to go into. And that's a lot of what I remember, and that helped confirm some of why I had chosen Mundelein.

Q: What do you remember about your graduation ceremony?

Rowinski: I do remember it. I had been somebody on, in fact, the planning graduation committee.

[01:00:00]

So both as a junior and as a senior, we had some events leading up to it. So this month, in March, we would have had the 100 days to graduation kind of cocktail party over in Piper Hall. And I remember that I had an accounting test on a Friday. The party was on a Thursday night. So I was doing that back and forth of how to prepare and also be included and involved in the party and all the spring quarter events. So whatever's going on on campus with the art show, with the

fashion show, our spring concerts. But the graduation weekend, we did an honors ceremony on the Saturday night. My parents had come from Connecticut now to be here for the weekend. They brought one of my grandmother's with us, my sister. So it was very nice to see that group of people in the auditorium and have those pictures and that celebration.

And then the Sunday we got ready in the auditorium. It was a beautiful day. So thank goodness that worked out. And I'll tell you some funny stories or memories of Sister Jean. Sister Jean was in charge of graduation also in those days. And it's interesting because now as she's become so aligned and known for her work with the Ramblers basketball team, they still haven't told her full Mundelein story. She was leading the education department at the time that I was a student. But then one of her other initiatives was she was in charge of graduation. So in terms of making sure that all of us had our proper credits, we had gotten our picture, our formal picture taken in our graduation gown and colors. There was a route photographer studio just a little further west on Sheridan Road, and there was a picture of her with her mortar board, you know, that it had to be flat and positioned just so. And per Sister Jean, this is how they were taking the picture in those days. And as you may know, girls are more concerned about their hair and how it all looks. And in the eighties, a lot of people had big hair and, you know, like a wave or something. But this was graduation, so there was no bangs. If you had that little point on your mortar, that's how it was. This is not a fashion show.

And then the day of graduation as we're lining up alphabetically. You had to wear black dress shoes. And she looked, and she had other people, there were other Sisters that were helping her look and check and make sure that you were dressed properly. And your other dress underneath

was not showing. And nothing funny, nothing sticking out. But she had a box of black shoes that if you didn't have the proper shoes, you were getting a pair of shoes out of that box because this is what was allowed. And then the lining up to go over from the main library building, around the circle, into the main building and with our teachers, our professors, of course, into the main auditorium.

And it was a full house. We as students, I think, were down on the main floor in how we filed in over time. But it was a lovely ceremony. I mean, some of it you see what's on stage. We had teachers giving benedictions. We had a student speaker, I believe it was Colleen Riley, a great girl that we all knew. She was one of those very connected students from many of our activities and in the dorm. So she was kind of the right speaker for all of us. And then we had the upper level. So I know in my own pictures, my parents having been there, they were in the upper deck, as it were, and some of the pictures kind of looking down on where we were. And then there was a reception afterwards in the McCormick Lounge of Coffey Hall. And as I say, it was a beautiful day, so it was nice. They had whatever fruit punch, light, champagne, cookies, different things for people to be able to initially meet up with their families and take pictures and so on. So it was a lovely day.

And I don't know where we went for dinner, following probably up to Evanston. And then in my case, I was still living in the dorm. And I was starting my new job three days later at Lord and Taylor.

[01:05:00]

So I had that bit of time with my parents and my grandmother, who had come from Connecticut to see me and take pictures with all my friends and meet teachers. So it was all very nice. We did it well and it was hard. I got to go to work in three days, but it was a very nice time.

Q: Yeah, that sounds like a lot happening. So you mentioned your language Professor, Denning, I believe.

Rowinski: Yes.

Q: Did you ever think about studying abroad in Germany? Was that encouraged at Mundelein at all?

Rowinski: We did have students that went to the Rome Center. I think that was an exchange program. We did have several students that took a semester abroad to be at the Rome Center. My family in that time, I think, was more conservative. I didn't push for it. I didn't think about it. I do wish I had done something different. I guess I was still a young girl. While I was a very committed student, and I loved my activities and my schooling, and I thought I knew something I wanted to do. I also had hopes, as many young women do, of being married at twenty-five or twenty-eight years old and being a mother. And so I wasn't as fully committed to my career pathing or—as I might have been. It is something that while I love fashion, and I've continued to build upon that career in different ways in market research and corporate branding, I guess I was

more focused on myself and the life I was trying to build in my twenties. So I didn't do an exchange program. And yes, I would highly recommend it anybody who has that opportunity.

Q: So as we're kind of winding down here, I just wanted to ask what it means to you to have so many lasting relationships, friendships with people that you went to school with or were taught by.

Rowinski: Yes, it is absolutely one of the best gifts that I have received. And being a part of Mundelein. It always brings you back to kind of a home base that you chose well, that you come from good people. You chose well, how important education is, how important Jesuit education is. And how lucky we were that we had teachers who led, who wanted us to be our best people. You stay in touch with Sister Ann Ida [Gannon, BVM] said that to me at one of our alumni events even twenty years ago. She's like, "You know, all of you girls, the importance of your friendships is going to become more important as you go on in your lives." And that is true.

Rowinski: Sister Judith, at the time that I was just graduated, maybe out of school, had said to me, "Your faith, your internal faith will become more important to you as time goes on." And that is also true. So it's so important to have good people around you that are positive aspirational that can help give you tools to build yourself and as a resource to go back to. So it's also great that Loyola has such a developed campus life and alumni network. I've gone to many of the alumni receptions in New York when it's been here. I know they have chapters all over the country, which is great. We hope in this post-COVID era that more people will be able to come

back. It's great what, you know, the Ramblers basketball team means to so many people, and that's another level of connecting and that you never lose that. So it has absolutely Mundelein and the BVMS has been such an important part of my life. I can't imagine not knowing Sister Jean. I can't imagine some of the friends that I've known and not knowing them. And I think it's important for women's education. There's not as many female colleges, and I think it's something I would find another way to contribute to the value of female education. I'm not a feminist. I don't understand that word.

[01:10:00]

Rowinski: I do understand the concepts of learning and leadership and independent thought and teaching and thinking for yourself and helping young women prepare for their lives, or re-preparing in a different way for a new chapter that's more balanced, that includes men as business partners or other students, other peers that we all have. But I appreciated that I worked with kind but confident women. Thoughtful and aspirational women that, you get a better sense of yourself. And I think that does help you prepare for your life as a college graduate.

Q: I realized I hadn't muted myself there, so now I was about to mute myself silly. So anything that has come to mind for you, as we've been talking, that I haven't asked you about, that you wanted to share?

Rowinski: I think we've covered a lot. I very much like the conversation that we've been having, and I hope it's interesting, or I hope it adds insights to everyone who will be using these resources to help themselves understand. I'm glad we're doing it. I'm glad that there's an initiative to help capture many more eras of the student population that has been a part of Mundelein. Because as I see some of the news articles, it doesn't quite capture it. So I hope that we are all helping you capture some of the insights about it. And what the value of female-led and female peer education—I know what we can talk about the Weekend College. I was not in the Weekend College program, but I think that was another chapter, another branch of seeing education in action. And I always appreciated that with different I wasn't only classmates or friends with eighteen to twenty-one-year-old women, which is great. And that's your core peer group [inaudible 01:12:34] departments and walks of life. And I think that—.

Q: I'm sorry, could you just start over with that last bit? The audio went out a little bit for a second.

Rowinski: Okay. I'm trying to describe the having a smaller college community allows you to know many women. Maybe not necessarily in your major, maybe not only your eighteen to twenty-one-year-old peer group. But because it was a closer knit community of teachers as well as students, you got a better perspective about where this goes. So we had—the Weekend College students would generally be in classes on let's say Friday night and through the weekend days through Sunday. And they stayed in our dorms. There were certain dorm rooms that were made available for them to rent over that weekend. We saw them in the lunchroom. We saw

them at programs. But that was another avenue to see real women, out in the world working.

What could you learn from?

We also had adult women who did participate in the normal Monday to Friday type of schedule, including in our fashion department. And so I think I still appreciate that type of community and educational value and cultural value. I am a volunteer in the Junior League, which is a national association, in different cities including Chicago and suburbs, of women who volunteer in their community. And it's the same thing. There are new people and there are women who have been in the group for twenty-five or thirty, whatever years. And I think that really helps spread the effect. We're all trying to have a positive leadership empowerment, the change culture that we're talking about or as we're in March and the Women's History Month. What does that mean for all of us? We learn from each other and the best way of learning is with people who have something to give, who have something to receive. And we're not drawing a distinction between when they graduated or what major they had or if they're a mom.

[01:15:00]

But that it's all of us that want each other to succeed as well.

Q: Yeah, I think you put that in just such a lovely way. That's really wonderful. Well, that is all I have for today.



Rowinski: Okay.

Q: So thank you so much for participating in this. I really loved hearing about all of your experiences. Every person that I talk to has something unique and interesting to share, so I appreciate your contribution to that.

Rowinski: Absolutely. Yes. I hope I'm sharing with you things you need to know and want to know and help add to the story.

Q: Yes, most definitely. So I will stop recording now, but I want to talk to you for a couple of minutes just to talk about next steps and everything.

Rowinski: Of course. Yes.

[END OF SESSION 1]

Transcriptionist: Chris Mattix

Session: 2 of 2

Narrator: Leigh Anne Rowinski

Locations: Greenwich, CT and Palatine, IL via  
Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: March 10, 2022

[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW]

[0:00]

Q: I am the Women in Leadership Archives graduate assistant Melissa Newman, conducting a second interview with Leigh Anne Rowinski on March 17, 2022, as a part of the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. Once again, I'm in Palatine, Illinois, and Leigh Anne is in Greenwich, Connecticut. So, Leigh Anne, you were mentioning something about an annual cabaret entertainment show that the students would put on every year. Could you tell me more about that?

Rowinski: Yes. So this was a student organized and directed, and the different acts in the cabaret were all student groups. Some of them as groups representing aspects of student life in the school. Some of them were individuals. But it was a Saturday night evening that we sold tickets for some of the other peers on campus, teachers, family. Anyone in the community could attend. So my role in it was singing. I had been studying voice with Sister Dorothy [Sister Dorothy Dwight, BVM] in the music department. I was also a part of the Mundelein College Singers, the three part women's choir that was led by Sister Judith Dewell [BVM] and Sister Eliza Kenney [BVM]. And so this was kind of a natural outgrowth because it formed another aspect of music that I liked, a talent that I could show and expand a little bit. So I chose a couple of different Broadway songs each year and a way to interact with the audience or expand upon the

expression on stage. And I had an accompanist, another student from my class, Nancy Kunkel, who was an accomplished piano player. I believe, in fact, it was a minor program for her in her academics. I remember she also did a senior recital during our senior year. So we had very talented students. There were some people that did skits and funny kind of comedy—Saturday Night Live was a big show on TV as an example as far as the national culture. And so there were student groups that kind of borrowed from that inspiration to the work that they did in the cabaret show.

But in my case, it was all about music. And so one year I did a song that I liked called I Won't Last a Day Without You from The Carpenters, and kind of embellished on that with the audience. Another year, I did a tune from Barbara Streisand, Funny Girl, which was a Broadway show back from even the sixties, in the earlier part of her career before she became a big star. Second Hand Rose. And in both cases, it was an opportunity to kind of create a vignette, if you will, from Broadway and interact with the song, interact with the audience. So I appreciated the opportunity to do that as a student and expand on my musical repertoire. Music was one of those ideas that I was not as talented as some other of our students—and scholarship students that could be accomplished or potentially do something professionally with singing. And so it gave all of us an opportunity to do something we love to do that we were good at. Better than maybe the average, better than singing in a large group of a choir. That you could have a showcase, if you will, and share something with the audience that was fun and for a night of laughs and, you know, your peers. So that I greatly appreciate it being able to do.

Q: And did you say that you interacted with the audience in some way as a performer?

Rowinski: Well, yes, because Second Hand Rose is a funnier type of song, if you know the show. In Barbra Streisand's character—in her time of being on Broadway in that show, there's kind of a conversation, if you will, back and forth with the audience of sharing how it is to be from Second Avenue. And wearing second hand clothes, and the piano was a hand me down to the family. And just how that is, and trying to make your way in the world.

[05:00]

Trying to recreate a time of life in the early 1900s, in the Depression Era, and how that was for American families, working class families trying to make their way in the world. So in my expression, it was relative to—I'm telling my story, but I'm—with hand gestures, with showing the clothing examples I was wearing. Commenting on, you know, in the song, my own family environment that I'm speaking about, how to bring that to life with people and connect.

And that was something we also had an opportunity. There was a lady at Mundelein and with our College Singers, Ms. Mary Penkala Schoen, who helped us stage our productions, our formal choir productions. But she also gave some advisement to those of us who were performing in this cabaret show. So it was a way to bring the story to life. And people seemed receptive (laughs). So I liked being able to do it. And it seemed to add—it wasn't the hilarity of other aspects of the show. It was musical, and it gave that kind of calming break or Broadway vignette, as they were. But we probably had an audience, I would say, of up to 200 people. And I think we ran it—I want to say it was a one night event on a Saturday night, like in February, a midway point in the school year.

Q: And do you know who organized it and what the audition process was like?

Rowinski: I don't remember. It was like our student government or we had a campus activities director office and a student-led kind of team. As far as the recruitment process, showing them what we would do. There was probably a good fifteen to twenty acts, if you would. I would say most of them were trying to be entertaining acting, choreographed, line dancing, take-offs on Saturday Night Live. You may recall that the Second City Theater, in the West Side of Chicago, off North Avenue, was a bigger deal in those days and where eventual national comedy came from. Some of us had the opportunity to go there on our own time on a Friday or Saturday night, see that show. But that was a feeder at those times to either New York or other venues across the country. So a lot of people who performed in this show, their skits were relative to things you might see on Saturday Night Live.

Q: And do you think that most of the acts came from the theater department kids? Or was it really like a wide range of majors were participating in this?

Rowinski: I think it was a wider range of majors. It wasn't serious. It was meant to be funny. It was meant to utilize the elements of whatever music, audio, background music, some props. In my case, it was just a stool chair to kind of have something to sit on or lean on to start. And Nancy played off-stage. She was known she was seen, but I think her piano was down on the actual floor. So it was just a raised upstage. So it was pretty bare bones as far as what they gave us to work with. Or what you would bring to the situation to act and whatever dress up you would do. But I think it was possible for many students or their own group of students. It could have been a group of people who were friends from Coffey Hall or what have you. The setting was the McCormick Lounge downstairs in the first floor of Coffey Hall. So as I say, we probably had about 200 people seated for that evening.

Q: And I have heard in the past of Mundelein holding talent shows. So was that something that also happened during your tenure there, and how might have that been different from the cabaret?

Rowinski: It might be the same. I mean, over the years, the title, the general theme may have evolved.

[10:00]

In our years, it was called the annual cabaret show, but I would say talent is the same kind of idea. I think it was fun for people to do something of their own style or personality or take anybody who had a talent for speaking, singing, dance, casual comedy, I think was part of the procession.

Q: Were there any after parties or after the show gatherings?

Rowinski: Yes. So I think we did have informal kind of cookie/punch reception time for people to chit-chat. I'm recalling some photos with different people that were there at the show. Which is part of why I thought about it as we have talked about that that was still an age of documents and printed programs and the student newspaper, the Scholar, would have covered it. And so

that's why I wanted to make sure I included it in my discussion with you. Because I feel like I would want the record to show that this was also an important event in that time.

Q: Yeah. Thank you. I appreciate you adding this in and sharing this experience. Is there anything else that you wanted to share about the cabaret or anything else that's come to mind.

Rowinski: Another student life aspect that I thought of, that I should maybe expand upon for you on campus. You had asked me about locations and places I had as a favorite or hangout spot. [inaudible 00:12:04]—hopeful spring weather at Lake Michigan. That was one of the real benefits and things that we all appreciated being on the Mundelein and Loyola campus was that we were right at Lake Michigan. And so one of the things for spring that we always look forward to, especially those of us that lived in Coffey Hall, was being able to sunbathe out on the wider sidewalk that's right at the lake. Those of us that were on the lakeside, had beautiful windows all year long. But you really look forward to April, May and June, because our school year didn't end until about June 10th. So this time window is coming up again, and when I see pictures of Loyola's campus, I'm always reminded of how fortunate we were mid-April, let's say to mid-June of being able to sunbathe on our lunch hour between classes all week long. And, you know, that's a favorite memory and social time that we have, that I have with many of my friends that happened during that time. And I hope it is still true in some way, even though the outline of the campus has changed.

Q: Yeah, we just had a beautiful day yesterday and today. So I imagine. Yesterday I was on campus I saw people outside for the first time in months just enjoying it.

Rowinski: Good.

Q: Most definitely still—

Rowinski: Good.

Q: Yeah. Well, thank you again for coming on and sharing this once again with me. This will be—

Rowinski: Yes.

Q: Lovely second edition to the interview, and to the project itself. Yeah. If there's nothing else, I will stop our recording again.

Rowinski: Yes.

[END OF SESSION 2]