

SHARE YOUR STORY: STUDENT LIFE AT MUNDELEIN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Diane Lally Culhane's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2021

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Diane Lally Culhane conducted by Scarlett Andes on October 28, 2020. 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. Sounds such as laughter and actions are in parentheses and notes added for context are in brackets.

NARRATOR BIO

Diane Lally Culhane grew up in Libertyville, Illinois. With the help of scholarships, she was the first member of her family to attend college. Diane chose Mundelein College both because she could get scholarship there and because she liked the atmosphere when she visited for an Open House. At Mundelein, she lived in the Northland dorm and went home to Libertyville for the weekends. She majored in English and volunteered, both for Chicago Area Lay Movement (CALM) tutoring inner-city children, and campaigning in Wisconsin for Eugene McCarthy and

Robert Kennedy in 1968. After graduating from Mundelein in 1968, she earned a graduate degree at the University of Illinois and held a career in editing. She currently lives in Arlington Heights, Illinois with her husband Paul Culhane.

INTERVIEWER BIO

Scarlett Andes is a graduate student in the Public History Master's program at Loyola University Chicago and is a Sesquicentennial Scholar at the WLA, working on projects to mark Loyola's 150th anniversary. She grew up in Vernon Hills, Illinois and studied anthropology at the University of Illinois.

TIME LOG AND OVERVIEW

[0:00 – 5:00]: Introduction, Culhane's parents moving from North Side of Chicago to Libertyville, decision to attend Mundelein College, attending a Mundelein open house, choosing to major in English, teachers welcoming questions and expressions of opinion

[5:00 – 10:00]: Discussion with theology professor Sister Mary (Thomas Daniel) Donahey, BVM, about losing faith, Mrs. Chobanion teaching about the Vietnam War, role of current events in Mundelein atmosphere, living at the Northland dorm during the week, roommates

[10:00 – 15:00]: Roommates and Northland dorm amenities, going home on the weekends, Sunday evening dorm meetings to announce engagement news, lasting friendships and staying in touch, reliving the college experience, volunteering for Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy in 1968, Class president Marge Sklencar

[15:00 – 20:00]: Volunteering in Wisconsin and Indiana for political campaigns, President Johnson announcing he would not run for reelection, assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy in 1968, Black students at Mundelein opening up about their experiences not feeling welcome, volunteering for Chicago Area Lay Movement (CALM), roommate who went to Selma

[20:00 – 25:00]: Roommate who went with Mundelein group to Selma to march with Martin Luther King, Jr., Culhane regretting not joining the trip, how Mundelein changed during her time there, Speakeasy events with speakers, class days, limited socializing outside of school

[25:00 – 30:00]: Interactions with Loyola students, snowball fight with the Loyola basketball team during the Blizzard of 1967, how students adapted during the blizzard, religious traditions, robes and hats, favorite places at Mundelein, the old library (Piper Hall)

[30:00 – 35:00]: Popular music such as the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, and Peter, Paul and Mary; watching and reading the news at night, Speakeasy events on Vietnam War, the draft, the tension of the 1960s

[35:00 – 40:00]: Going to University of Illinois for a master's degree in English, different behavior of female students compared to at Mundelein, working in editing at Scott Foresman,

marrying and moving to Texas and back, freelancing, Culhane and Andes discussing the editing industry and University of Illinois, anti-Catholic stereotype from students there

[40:00 – 40:24]: Wrapping up interview

Transcriptionist: Scarlett Andes

Session: 1/1

Interviewee: Diane Lally Culhane

Locations: Arlington Heights, IL and Vernon Hills, IL via Zoom

Interviewer: Scarlett Andes

Date: October 28, 2020

[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW]

[0:00]

Scarlett Andes: All right, for the record, my name is Scarlett Andes, I am a graduate assistant at the Women and Leadership Archives interviewing Diane Lally Culhane, class of nineteen sixty-eight on October 28th, 2020, for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project by Zoom. I'm in Vernon Hills and Diane is in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

So to start us off, could you tell me a bit about yourself and your family, like where you were born and where you were raised?

Diane Lally Culhane: OK, I only caught part of it. Tell me about myself and what?

Q: Your family, like where you were born and where you were raised.

Culhane: OK, I was born in Libertyville, Illinois, to a couple Chicagoans who married and after about 10 years or so, moved to the suburbs, as a lot of people were doing in the '40s. And my parents were from the North Side [of Chicago]—Logan Square and Humboldt Park. They did not go to college. And I knew that they hoped that at least some of their children would go to college. And it made them very happy when I graduated. So that that made me happy to know I was giving them some happiness.

Q: And then how did you choose to go to Mundelein?

Culhane: I knew I needed to go on scholarship because they would not be able to afford to send me. And I thought I wanted to go to a Catholic school because I felt like my faith was a little wavery. I figure if I go to a state school, that will be the end of it. So I wanted to give Catholicism a couple more years to see how that would work out. I went to a program at St. Xavier's and they—that seemed very scripted and, you know, kind of self-conscious that they were presenting their best foot, whereas Mundelein, at least in those years, they just had an open house. They invited high school seniors or juniors—I don't remember which—to just come and walk in and out of classes, whatever classes they wished to. And it just felt very natural. And I took the train into the city and rode a bus to Mundelein from the train station, got talking to a

couple other students, and so we were asking them, "What's it like?" And among other things, we said, "What's the social life?" And they said, "Oh, don't go to Mundelein if you want a social life." (laughs) But they said, "But the teachers are great, the atmosphere is great, but no social life." (both laugh) So that wasn't as important to me as what I felt the atmosphere was when I was walking from class to class, that the teachers, the professors welcomed questions, didn't mind students disagreeing with them, and so forth. That really made an impression on me and was a big change from high school. So.

Q: And you mentioned you studied English—did you go in intending to study English or did you decide that later?

Culhane: Pretty—pretty much wanting to do [English]. I mean, I would have—if I could have done a double major, I would have been English and history. But if I had to choose, which I did, I chose English because I've always been a reader. And not surprisingly, I went on and became an editor. So, books and reading, literature as well as history, all of [that] is what I've been interested in.

Q: What were your classes like?

Culhane: They were generally very, very good and the main difference between—I had gone to a girls' high school—the main difference, which I had picked up on during the open house, was

that the teachers really welcomed questions and expressions of opinion, challenges and so forth. That made a really good impression on me. And there were also lots of opportunities because it was such a small school to interact with professors outside of class, like our floor moderators were also teachers.

[5:00]

The moderator on our floor in the Northland was also my theology professor freshman year. And so, of course, I went to her with the typical freshman question saying, "I think I'm losing my faith." And she responded perfectly, "Well, that's perfectly normal" (laughs). I said, "So what should I do about it?" And she said, "Read." And I said, "What should I read?" "You should read everything." (laughs) So that just took such a weight off my shoulders because I knew there would be no—no restrictions, no warnings and so forth. And it was very liberating.

Q: Do you remember what that professor's name was?

Culhane: Oh, that was Sister Thomas Daniel. Yeah, I think her—when they went back to their birth names [after the Vatican II reforms], it was Sister Donahey [Sister Mary (Thomas Daniel) Donahey, BVM (Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary)], but I forget what her first name was, but she—yes, she was still there after Loyola and Mundelein merged.

Q: Were there any other faculty that stood out to you?

Culhane: No, I mean, I always think of that conversation as such a critical one, but, oh, well, I remember like taking a—it was like an Asian history or Asian politics class. And the teacher, who was Mrs. Chobanion, I believe, telling us that we didn't belong in Vietnam, (laughs) that—this was during the Vietnam War—that the Vietnamese were not going to be pawns for the Chinese. If the Vietnamese finally won their independence, they would have no use for China. And she turned out to be right, you know. And it showed to me the importance of talking to people who are really experts in different fields. She knew the history of that area and so she could see through a lot of the politicking and so forth.

Q: I definitely have more questions about the—the sort of Vietnam War and other things, so I wrote a note to get back to that as well.

Culhane: Okay.

Q: So I guess—you know what? I'll ask that now. How much did current events like the Vietnam War play into your experience of Mundelein?

Culhane: Oh, it was a big—it was very important. And as I said, from having been there during the open house and getting the sense that questions and challenges were welcome, that definitely made me want to go to Mundelein. And it was—and it definitely was the way it was. We were—I never felt the least bit stifled, as I had felt in high school. And we were encouraged to do things

like tutor in the housing projects and march for peace and so forth. So, it was very—it was both challenging and liberating.

Q: You mentioned that you lived on campus and I think you just said in the Northland dorm? Could you talk a bit about that?

Culhane: Yes. So it was five days a week, the first few years, which was also good because although it doesn't sound like a lot of money, I mean, it saved like a hundred-some dollars a year. And for those of us who were either on scholarship or working our way through, that was a lot of money. So, and those of us in the Northland, I think the girls in Coffey Hall kind of felt sorry for us because Coffey Hall was modern and overlooked the lake and they had their own coffee shop and so forth. But those of us in the Northland, which admittedly was a little ratty, it just felt like home. It felt like we were in grandma's apartment or something, you know (laughs). It just felt very natural and very warm. [We] liked it a lot. It's all gone now, of course.

Q: Was that—did you have your own room or did you have roommates?

Culhane: We had roommates, and because it was a converted hotel, the situation varied from apartment to apartment. Like I had three roommates; one roommate and I shared a little room that had been—maybe had originally been the bedroom.

[10:00]

And then the other two roommates shared a larger room, which probably had been the living room, dining room, and then we also had our own bathroom, our own refrigerator, because they never took the refrigerators out from when it was an apartment, our own telephone, so unlike in Coffey Hall, we didn't have to run down the hall to answer the floor phone to take phone calls and so forth. So, it was like having an apartment, so it was nice.

Q: Did you have kitchens as well?

Culhane: They took the kitchens out, unfortunately. (laughs) I think—I think for fire reasons or whatever. But we did have—each floor had a lounge and that included, you know, a hot plate and so forth. But just having the refrigerator was really nice. You know, even if we weren't cooking, it was good to have the refrigerator because if you didn't want to finish everything you had for dinner, you could put it in a bag and take it back with you. (laughs)

Q: And on the weekends, did you—how did you go home and what was that like?

Culhane: Yeah, my roommates and I were all five-day residents and most of the girls in the Northland were. So we would take the train home. And I lived in Libertyville and I roomed with a girl from Mundelein [the town], which is right next to Libertyville. So we took the same train up to Libertyville and then one of our parents would pick us up. And then two days later on Sunday, one of our parents would drive us all the way back to school. So it was a little clunky. I

mean, the biggest difference between that and regular dorm living was since we were gone on weekends, we didn't have much social life, you know. I mean, we missed dances and so forth. Missed meeting guys mostly, but pluses and minuses balanced.

Q: Living on campus, were there any memorable moments from living in the dorms?

Culhane: Nothing that really stands out. One thing, looking back that seems very old fashioned was so Sunday evenings we would have—I don't know what they called them, but we'd all gather together in the hallway with our floor moderator. And if anybody had anything to announce, like if she'd gotten engaged or something (laughs) that would be announced and there would be applause. And that—looking back to that makes me kind of cringe, but—(laughs). But we were teenagers.

Q: Were any of the friends that you had at Mundelein—have you stayed in touch or any particularly memorable friendships?

Culhane: Oh, yeah, yeah. Three of—senior year I had three roommates and I've stayed in touch with all of them. And in fact, we got together for our, I guess, fiftieth reunion a couple of years ago? So, and we still, I mean, it's so much easier now with email to keep in touch with people. But yeah, there were times when people the few years out of school, everybody is starting their careers. They're thinking about marrying, they're getting married, having kids and so forth. So it

kind of goes to the back burner. But then as you get older and you think more about key moments in your life, I think your college years come back more vividly.

And also, things—so many politically significant things happened when we were in college. So you end up reliving that a lot. I mean, there's always programs about the '60s or especially 1968. What a critical time that was in terms of civil rights and peace and social justice and so forth. So that kind of keeps you always going back and thinking about that time.

Q: On that note, in the form, you mentioned that you volunteered for [Eugene] McCarthy and [Robert] Kennedy in '68?

Culhane: Right, in '68.

Q: Could you tell me about that?

Culhane: I met Paul Newman. (laughs) Yeah, I'm trying to think. Okay, our senior class president was Marge Sklencar. She ended up dropping out to lead Students for McCarthy. And so she was—she promoted her classmates joining in activities in the primaries in Wisconsin and Indiana and so forth, so that's—that's a real and meaningful experience to me, remembering those times.

[15:00]

Q: Did you—what kind of volunteering activities did you do?

Culhane: I'm sorry?

Q: What kind of volunteering work did you do for those campaigns?

Culhane: Oh, okay. Just going up there for a couple of weeks and passing out literature and—and checking records for people they should be calling, and so forth. I mean, it was definitely low-level work, but it's the kind of work that any political campaign, they need a lot of people to do that. I've since volunteered with other campaigns and I know how critical it is in—especially in the week or so before an election, whether it's a primary or a general election, they really need people to keep the information up to date.

And I was up in Milwaukee when [President Lyndon B.] Johnson announced he was not running for reelection. And I was watching it with a lot of other students, and the place just went up for grabs. We never expected that he would not run for reelection. Of course, then we thought that happy days are here again, and they weren't. But it was still exciting when it happened.

Q: So, with the assassinations that year, what was that experience like as a student?

Culhane: That was—both Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were devastating in different ways. Martin Luther King's was first, and that was in April and I remember that there was a—they called a get-together in McCormick Lounge [at Mundelein College] for everybody to express their—their feelings and thoughts and so forth. And a lot of the—or several of the Black students were really opening up and saying, "I've never really felt like I fit in here. You think we feel like we fit in, but we don't."

And that was like the first time I felt pushback, which I can understand. But it was just the pain of that moment gave them the courage to speak freely about how they had been feeling all along. Some more than others, I think. But anyway, it was—yeah. That was just nightmarish when he was killed and you just had the feeling this is not going to be the end of it. This is just the beginning of something. And then a couple months later, Robert Kennedy, just before our graduation. And then you just felt like the country was spinning out of control, you know. I mean, we'd grown up in the '50s. Nothing like that had happened when we were young. So it was just mind-boggling.

Q: It's such an interesting moment, right as you're graduating.

Culhane: Yeah.

Q: You also—other volunteer work, which might be connected, you mentioned you were involved in Chicago Area Lay Movement?

Culhane: Yeah, it was called CALM—CALM. And there was a bus that would pick us up right by the Northland, which was also right by the entrance to Loyola. And so both Loyola and Mundelein students would ride the bus down to the Washington Park Housing Project, which was where—well, actually the first year was Holy Angels School. And then the next year they moved it to Washington Park Housing Project. And yeah, that was really good because it gave you—you see how people are living, very different from the way you were grown up, but they're still people, they're still individuals and so forth, and it was, you know, it was a really good experience. It also taught me I wasn't—didn't have the makings of a good teacher. (laughs) But I mean, we were just we were just helping kids with things like math and English and so forth. But I didn't feel like I was probably the most effective person, so.

Q: And did you do that your whole time at Mundelein?

Culhane: I'm sorry?

Q: Did you do that all four years?

Culhane: No, I think that didn't start until junior year, so I did it the last two years. Yeah, that was kind of—that sort of thing became more—I don't want to say popular, but more commonplace through the mid-'60s, so I did have a roommate who went to Selma [to march with

Dr. King in 1965], although she and I were not roommates at the time. We've talked about that experience of hers many times.

[20:00]

Q: What was the atmosphere like when the group was going to Selma, on campus?

Culhane: I think it was—it wasn't tense or anything, I think. In fact, I could kick myself I didn't go, but I had a paper due and I was like, I thought, "Oh, I can't miss turning in a paper on time." But one of my roommates went and she told me later what it was like when they were leaving Selma and they were warned, "You've got to get back to the bus really fast. It's getting ugly around the bus. So the driver really wants to get out of here right away." And they did get out safely. But she said it was scary, you know.

Q: Absolutely. In terms of the whole time you were at Mundelein, how would you say that the school changed?

Culhane: It definitely became more involved in things, and in fact, when we were freshmen, they—I remember it was Sister Ignatia [Mary Ignatia Griffin, BVM] was the academic dean, and she said that they had just done a mission self-study. And among other things, they had interviewed husbands of alums, asking, you know, what it was like to be married to a

Mundeleiner. And she said that generally they said, "Oh, she's a terrific wife and mother, but she's—she's not really up on things going on in the world."

And so the BVMs were horrified to hear that. And so they said that the emphasis on things going on in the real world was going to change. It wasn't just going to be a matter of being encouraged to go into nursing or teaching and then getting married and so forth. And I'd say they did that. They really did that. They had a program called Speakeasy. I don't know if anybody else has talked about that, but it was—it was once a week on Wednesdays. They had started—originally, the person, Stan Dale was his name, and he had a radio program and tried to have it [the Speakeasy event] at Loyola, but the Jesuits wanted to approve or disapprove of the speakers and he wasn't willing to surrender that responsibility. So, he did it at Mundelein. And a lot of Loyola students would come to the Speakeasys. We had great—now, I should have written down ahead of time some of the people we had: Dick Gregory, Charles Percy when he was running for Senate, Paul Powell before he was found to have been ripping off the state (laughs), just all sorts of people. And what was nice was there you were, a lowly undergrad, and you could ask these people questions, face to face. So that was every Wednesday. And it was such a good experience.

Q: Did—oh, well, hold on. (laughs) I forgot what I was going to say.

Culhane: Yeah.

Q: Okay. I have read about class days. Did your class have any particular traditions for that?

Culhane: Yeah, I'm not really—I mean, there were days where they would have, you know, like costume—there was a costume day, I can't even remember what it was called, but I don't remember it terribly vividly. I was mostly reading or going to lectures of one sort or another. A lot of the things that—or some of the things that they had were on weekends and so the five day residents missed those, like mixers and so forth were obviously on the weekends.

Q: Did you do any socializing outside of school?

Culhane: Well, because I went home, I went back up to Libertyville on the weekend, there were other girls from my area and we hung out a little bit. But it was not, you know, I think I may have mentioned when we were going to the open house at Mundelein and asking a student what it was like, and she said, "Good school, but don't come here for social life." So there wasn't a lot of socializing except in the dorm, you know, and in the Coffey coffee room [Culhane note: Coffey Lounge] and so forth before and after classes.

[25:00]

Q: Okay.

Culhane: And some went over to the Loyola Lounge.

Q: Did you ever interact much with the Loyola students?

Culhane: No, except I remember getting—some friends and I got in a snowball fight with the basketball team and we lost. (laughs) That was that was the time of the great blizzard in 1967, you know, when we got like three feet of snow. And so we were walking back from—from over near the L station and these really tall guys (laughs) were pelting us with snowballs. And needless to say, they were a lot better than we were.

Q: (smiling) I'm glad you mentioned that—I was going to ask about the blizzard. Did you get snowed in?

Culhane: I'm trying to think—no, I was able—I think it was on a Thursday. Some who went home every day were not able to get home that night. But I think by Friday, I would say by the end of class on Friday, I was able to get the train home. But a lot of the women who worked in the cafeteria, which was called the Tea Room, were not able to get up to fix our food. And so it was announced that the Home Ec [Home Economics] majors would be trying their hands at preparing meals. And of course, the rest of us were all (makes strangled noise with hands around throat) at the thought of being fed by our classmates, but we all survived.

Q: That's— (both laugh)

Culhane: You can probably relate to that (laughs).

Q: Let me see. Slightly different topic—I've, I've read some about the various religious traditions for holidays and things at Mundelein like the Candlelighting. What were those like while you were at Mundelein?

Culhane: Actually, that wasn't some[thing]—I knew there was Candlelighting, but it wasn't something that made a big impression on me. Maybe—maybe years before us, like maybe more in the '50s and early '60s that was more of a big deal. We were—my generation or the years around us were kind of deliberately turning away from that sort of thing. So, yeah. So I don't have any particular memories of it. Now, you may get somebody else from my class will say, “Oh, it was wonderful and I remember it vividly” and so forth, so.

Q: The other traditions—did you get your robe at the beginning of your time there or only toward the end?

Culhane: Did I do what?

Q: Did you get your robe early on? The robes that you would wear at graduation.

Culhane: Oh, oh, I don't think we got them like 'til senior year and I mean, we just rented them. We didn't keep them or anything. The one thing we kept were the hats. (laughs)

Q: (nods) Did you have any favorite places at Mundelein?

Culhane: I loved to go down to the lake and I loved the old library, Piper Hall. I loved to just explore there. And it was unlike newer libraries, it really smelled like a library. It was musty-smelling and so forth. They had old, old magazines and newspapers and then you could just go through—you know, things weren't all computerized, so you had to browse around to find things. But it was—it was enjoyable. It was just nice having so many books at my—at my fingertips. And then a couple of times I went over to Loyola because there would be things they would have that Mundelein wouldn't have. But as an English and history major, they had a pretty good selection. So. And then, of course, we could go down to the Chicago Public Library, the big library downtown, if there was something unusual we needed to look up.

Q: What sort of books and music were popular while you were at Mundelein?

[30:00]

Culhane: Oh, okay. Well, of course the Beatles. And I remember, I think it was freshman year, a fellow who was dating one of my roommates was telling us he just heard a couple of great

singers and their names, believe it or not, are Simon and Garfunkel (laughs). And we're laughing our heads off, thinking he's pulling our legs. But yeah, so the Beatles, folk music was very popular. Peter, Paul and Mary came to Mundelein our freshman year. And so it was a nice—it was a nice exposure to different kinds of music. Looking back, I wish there had been more classical. Maybe there was and I just didn't check it out or wasn't aware of it, or maybe it was on weekends.

Q: Were there any books or movies or TV that were really popular?

Culhane: I didn't watch too much TV. I've always been a news junkie, so I would always watch the news. I guess it was probably after dinner, maybe before dinner, I don't remember. But anyway, in the floor lounge, and there were—there were three or four of us who would be there every night, and also they got the newspaper. So we'd be sitting, listening to the news, reading the paper and so forth. So that was handy. That was nice.

Q: I think—I'm just double checking that I haven't missed any of my questions.

Culhane: Okay, okay, take your time.

Q: What was the—let's see. I've read about some of the events and talks held at Mundelein for the Vietnam War.

Culhane: Mm hm.

Q: Did you attend any events like that?

Culhane: Oh, sure. Well, as I said, there was the Speakeasy program, and that was once a week. And that was often on issues relating to, you know, foreign affairs, the war and so forth. And one thing I actually remember vividly was either junior or senior year they had the lottery to determine when—when young men would be drafted. And I was not dating anybody, but I had friends who had serious relationships and the night that they were calling off the numbers was very emotional because if someone's birthday was a number that was called off early, that meant you would—you would be going for sure. And if it wasn't, then there was a sense of at least temporary safety. So, yeah, I remember how stressful that was for a lot of girls. And some did have husbands who were drafted, then some lost husbands and brothers and so forth, more so the years after us. But girls that I had gone to school with, and then I would hear later, you know, Jen's husband died, Gay's brother died and so forth. So it was just kind of was chilling how it went on and on.

Q: Were there any other major events that you feel stand out from your time there?

Culhane: Okay, Well, like I said, we talked before a little bit about the two assassinations. And the main thing with both of them was that it just—growing up in the '50s, you kind of felt like everybody was living like Ozzie and Harriet and so forth [the sitcom *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*]. Oh, you don't know who Ozzie and Harriet were, but it was (laughs) very, very suburban and safe and so forth. And, you know, beginning in the mid '60s, that started changing. Instead you kind of got the feeling we're walking on eggshells. Everything could fall apart. And for the ones who came after us, I felt bad because they never knew that period of what seemed like complete safety, although it turned out it wasn't. But although I don't know which is harder: to go through that transition like we did or to never have known that period of—of seeming safety.

[35:00]

Q: Do you—how do you think that your time at Mundelein affected your life afterwards?

Culhane: I think it gave me confidence to—to speak for myself, to speak up and so forth. After Mundelein, I got—I went to U of I [University of Illinois] to get my master's in English. And so I had a teaching assistantship. So, I was teaching freshman English. And it would frustrate me so much when I knew from reading their papers, I knew I had some very bright female students as well as male students, but the females didn't speak up and it drove me crazy. And I realized it was because they didn't want to appear to be too smart in front of the guys. I've heard later that that attitude changed, you know, that I shouldn't generalize too much from that. But it was definitely the case back then in the '60s that a lot of the girls did not want to stand out

academically. So if you're at a women's college, you don't have that shadow that, you know, "Will guys think I'm a smarty pants?" or something. You wanted to be a smarty pants because you were all women. So you were competing with each other (laughs). Plus, your teachers were all women, too, and they were smarty pants.

Q: (Laughs) That's really interesting. So after U of I, where did your career go?

Culhane: Oh, then I went to Scott Foresman in Glenview, which is—it still exists in part, but back then it was one of the major textbook publishers in the country. And I worked in the college division. So that was great because it was just like being—I told people, "I can't believe that I'm getting paid to read books (laughs) and talk to authors and so forth in all different sorts of subject areas." So that was—I was just lucky that I fell into that. And then later I married. We moved to Houston. I became a medical editor at the cancer hospital in Houston, later came back and went back to Scott Foresman until they were bought. And then—but I've always stayed in publishing. In fact, when I finally had to retire because my mother needed more assistance, I was able to freelance. So that's a really nice aspect of being in publishing that you can make that transition back and forth from full time work to freelance work. I recommend it.

Q: And that's—thank you for sharing, that's a very interesting part—

Culhane: (laughs) Does it does it seem like another world to you?

Q: You know, at the same time, my sister-in-law is in editing, so I've heard a lot about the field.

Culhane: Uh huh.

Q: And I went to U of I, so.

Culhane: Oh, okay, there you go. Yeah, I was in Daniels Hall and then got an apartment. Yeah. And that was—in fact it was funny going to U of I getting my master's because of course we ate in the cafeteria with students from all different backgrounds, and the guys especially were very curious about these products of women's colleges and assuming we were sheltered and so forth. And there was some anti-Catholicism too—they'd say, "Oh, well, of course you never read Nietzsche." And I said, "Of course I read Nietzsche!" "Where?" "In my philosophy class at Mundelein." "But he's on the index." I said, "So what?" (both laugh) So it was fun to kind of break some stereotypes.

Q: Are there any other things about your experience of Mundelein that we haven't covered?

Culhane: No, I think you've done a good job of touching on the different areas. I just say I was—I was always glad I went there. I think had I gone to a coed school right out of my very sheltered

high school, it would have been a shock. But the BVMs of Mundelein did a good job of preparing us for going out into a more complicated world and thinking for ourselves and so forth. So that was good.

[40:00]

Q: Well, wonderful. I'm out of questions, so thank you so much, I can go ahead and stop the recording.

Diane Lally Culhane: Okay, very good. Nice talking to you. Take care.

[40:24]

[END OF INTERVIEW]