

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Marilyn Craig's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Marilyn Craig conducted by Melissa Newman on February 24, 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**

0-5 Minutes: Craig's family and educational background, her decision to attend college, and her enrollment in the weekend college at Mundelein.

5-10 Minutes: Craig's time spending weekends on campus, the weekend college application process, the types of classes she took, and her relationship with advisors at Mundelein.

10-15 Minutes: Craig reflects on the options for classes at Mundelein, interactions with students and faculty, on campus activities, studying on campus, and her finite math class.

15-20 Minutes: Craig's classes at Mundelein, teaching finite math, and the weekend college compared to her community college experience.

20-25 Minutes: Craig reflects on classes she took and instructors who taught them, her Bible as Literature class, and her major.

25-30 Minutes: Craig's decision to major in business and the impact Mundelein had on her career.

30-35 Minutes: Craig's career after graduation, her class schedule, her master's degree, her time teaching, and her experienced living in Mundelein apartments.

35-40 Minutes: Craig's interactions with fellow students at the weekend college, arrangements for housing weekend college students, staying on campus, the Mundelein cafeteria.

40-45 Minutes: Craig's support system at Mundelein, working through college, and taking classes at other colleges.

45-50 Minutes: Craig's experience getting her degree, her time at other colleges, and her graduation ceremony.

50-54:06 Minutes: Craig's final reflections on her time in Mundelein's weekend college.

## **NARRATOR BIO**

Marilyn Craig was born and raised in Chicago with four brothers: three older and one younger. She graduated high school in 1970 and attended Greenville College, which was affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, for one year. She paid for the year in cash from all of the money she had earned through jobs, but sadly could not afford to continue. This led Marilyn on a journey of taking college courses one class at a time at various Chicago City Colleges as she could afford them over the next few years.

Then one day, she remembers seeing a large flyer for Mundelein's Weekend College and knew that was the best path she had to finally earning her Bachelor's degree. Majoring in business, Marilyn began taking a full load of classes in the late 1970s: one class on Friday evening, two classes on Saturday, and one class on Sunday. She stayed in Northland when she could, sharing a room with 10 other girls.

Marilyn was a full-time student, held a full-time job, and worked as part of her church's ministry full-time, so she had to remain vigilant and dedicated to her studies in order to complete her education. Overall, Marilyn is so grateful for her experience at Mundelein. She always wanted to have the college experience, so staying on campus and taking regular classes was a "dream come true" for her. She has a deep appreciation for her instructors that were so understanding of her and her classmates' situations and their dedication to the Weekend College program.

## **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

Narrator: Marilyn Craig

Locations: Chicago, IL and Palatine, IL via Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: February 24, 2022

[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW]

Q: Okay. For the record, my name is Melissa Newman. I'm a graduate assistant at the Women and Leadership Archives interviewing Marilyn Craig, class of 1984, on February 24, 2022 for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. I am in Palatine, Illinois and Marilyn is also in the Chicagoland area. So to start us off, Marilyn, could you just tell me a little bit about yourself, like where you were born and raised and your family?

Craig: Born and raised in Chicago. I'm the only girl of five siblings with four brothers, three older, one younger, and came from a split family. So while I always knew in my head and in my heart that I would go to college, there wasn't a structure in place to really allow for that. So going to college was probably the biggest deal in my life at that time.

Q: And how did you come to be at Mundelein?

Craig: I graduated high school in 1970, and became part of a pastoral ministry team at our local church here in Chicago. I had just gotten married in 1972, and despite the fact that I was—this is not what I want--can we pause early and back up here? I'm so sorry.

[PAUSE IN RECORDING]

Q: Alright, so we're back on the recording. So if you could tell me how you came to be at Mundelein, that's where we left off.

Craig: Thank you. I graduated high school in 1970, and always knew that I was going to go to college. I didn't know how that would happen because my family was split at that time and there were just no resources and nobody in my family had ever gone to college before. In the summer of '69, a traveling musical group from our church denomination came to our church and did a choir concert called the Greenville College Quartet. And I fell in love with the four guys who were part of the team and for some reason, I had always heard of Greenville College through our church denomination and had made the decision that that was where I was going to go to school. I had no idea where Greenville College was, where Greenville, Illinois was, how I was going to get there or pay for it or anything else, but it was something that I knew I was going to do. I had worked all through summer and saved all my money and self-supporting and when I went down to Greenville, Illinois for my freshman year, I paid cash for everything. It was what I did and there was no one at the college or no one in my family to talk about financial aid or anything else that might be an action. At the end of the first semester at Greenville, I didn't have any more

money to pay for the second semester. So I'm coming home, kind of tail between my legs and worked in a factory that my mother was working at. Dirty scummy auto parts factory. It was horrible, absolutely horrible. But it's one of those stories that we can tell our students in the classroom about how to avoid things like that.

Anyway, where I had always known I was going to go to college, I was heartbroken that I couldn't go to Greenville College and live that dream of living on campus and having a real college experience. Here I was working in a dirty, scummy, smelly factory rather than living my dream. Well, Mundelein was just starting at that time, and somehow I came across a flyer, a big newspaper sized flyer about this new weekend college program. And were it not for the weekend college, there's no way I would have finished school. I had taken a couple of classes at city colleges, one class here, one class there while I could, and while that was the only thing I could afford. But Mundelein offered an opportunity to get a real college education that would be actually on a college campus around my hours. Because at the time I was already working full-time and in a horrible, horrible state of—position here. So I remember probably one of the most exciting parts every semester was going through the large newspaper like course offerings. And it was a thrill and a half to look at all the hundreds of courses available and try to map out where I could fit in a class either nights and weekends around working full-time. And because of Mundelein's program, I was able to take a full load on weekends. One class on a Friday night, two classes on a Saturday, and one class on a Sunday morning. And if it were not for that, I would not have probably finished my college degree or had the opportunity to do so. Financially, it was difficult because still I didn't have anyone and nobody approached me about financial aid as an option.



[05:00]

I was signing over to the college my paychecks. Literally paid to the order of Mundelein College because that was the only way I could afford it. But being on campus was a dream come true. I remember spending the weekends in one of the large apartment buildings there on Devon [Avenue]? I don't know what street that was. I think it was on Sheridan Road where the apartment building had been converted to overnight dorms for weekend college students. I remember being in one of those apartments there with eight or nine other single beds all littered all over the living room and the dining room there. And that was just, again, the college experience that I never had, or never would have had, had it not been for Mundelein. So I made as many of those weekend classes as I could. The thrill of being able to go through the course offerings there and to be able to select, it was just a dream come true. I have just moved into my new condo from a house I had lived in for thirty-five years, and I was going through things in the basement, I came across one of my prized possessions from Mundelein. And that was a navy blue t-shirt with a big white "M" on the front and across the big white "M," it said, "Commuter." And that's exactly what I was. I was a commuter student, and I was so proud of it. And it was just. I remember wearing that shirt, realizing that this is my college journey here. I was going to be late twenties already by the time this is all taking place. But it was a thrill and a half. It would never have happened. I may not ever have completed a college degree. It wasn't from Mundelein having that Weekend College.

Q: Do you remember what the application process was like or the admission process?

Craig: I remember having to write an essay, but not much more than that. No, I'm sorry.

Q: That's okay. I was just wondering. I had read a little bit about the Weekend College when it first started, and so this was a few years after that, but I just wanted to know if that changed at all. So when you were living on the weekends at Mundelein, do you know if those rooms that you lived in and shared with all those other women, were they also used by commuters during the week that were staying there five days a week, or was it just for you guys on the weekends?

Craig: I don't know. I never thought about that. My guess was that it was only us on the weekends because I doubt that there are that many commuter students during the week. My impression was that all the other students on campus were those who are living the dream, having that college freshman experience on campus. And I just always felt, as a weekender, that I was kind of dabbling on the fringes of what I had always dreamed of having. But I couldn't tell you for sure that my guess is that it was only for the weekenders.

Q: Okay, yeah, I was just curious. So could you tell me how exactly the weekend college worked? You said you came on Fridays and then left on Sundays. But in terms of the types of classes that you took, how was that decided? Because I imagine people were at different places in their academic careers. Like you came in with several credits already. So how did they design a program that worked for a lot of women?

Craig: I can only remember sitting with someone--this won't sound great for the college-- I only remember sitting with someone once. And this was close to the end toward graduation where I was told that I needed a math class. And I think I sat in somebody's office and probably she—I was going to say he or she, but probably one of the nuns there told me that I had this hole in my program close to graduation. So, again, similar to the financial aid issue, I don't remember having any conversations with anyone from administration about making the plan. I just remember kind of laying it out myself. So I must have been—had an initiative to find out what the programs required, how many classes in each one of the programs that I needed, and I remember laying it out myself and trying to figure out what classes were offered when. But again, it was pretty well my putting it together. I don't remember too many meetings with administration, I'm sorry to say. That could have just been because I didn't seek them out, but I don't remember having very many at all, if at all, outside of that one that I needed a math class.

Q: Were there a lot of options for classes to take?

[10:00}

Craig: Yeah, actually, it was a pretty robust schedule. It took me a couple of semesters to realize that some classes were only offered on a rotating basis, so it might have only been offered in the fall semester as opposed to the spring, and that I couldn't get every class I wanted every semester. But there were a lot of courses from which to choose, and for that it was pretty amazing to me and reinforced the idea of being a real college student, at a real college campus. It was everything I had ever dreamed, though I was many years older by that point than a lot of the

other students I saw on campus. But I took heart in the fact that a lot of the other women who were in the weekend dorms with me were in my same age range. And so I realized that my story was not probably unique. Maybe the circumstances, the names were different, but a lot of us were on the same journey to try to do something that we otherwise would not have had the opportunity to, so. I owe a lot to Mundelein, thank you.

Q: Yeah. Could you talk a bit about what the community at Weekend College was like with the other students and even with the faculty?

Craig: Again, probably not the best person to talk about this with. I didn't have a lot of interaction with faculty at all. I know that there were other students who probably were more involved. I didn't have opportunity to get involved in any of the campus activities. I saw posters all around for them, but it was not something that I was able to avail myself of because I had my nose in books all the time, because I knew that it was like, at home, I wouldn't have time to do that. So I don't recall having any on campus activities either with faculty or other students. I'm sorry to say. That part of the dream died, but being on a campus, that was a big deal for me.

Q: Yeah. So how did you spend your time on campus when you weren't in class?

Craig: I must have been studying because I don't remember having any campus activities. I didn't belong to any clubs. I wasn't aware of anything that I could partake in. So if I didn't have my nose in a book. I was probably sleeping. Wow. I hadn't thought about that. But no I—I wish I

could have done campus activities. That part of the college experience eluded me because I wasn't part of a choir, which would have been a dream come true. I wasn't part of any clubs or anything else there. I don't remember them offering those options on weekends, come to think of it. But it may have been there, and I just knew I didn't have time to participate in them.

Q: So where did you study on campus? Was it in your dorm or the library? Some other building?

Craig: Dorm and library, that's about it. I got to be fairly intimate with the library there (laughs) on that beautiful lakefront. One horrible story about the beautiful library there on the lakefront. When I was taking that math class, I had to get a tutor, and I remember, for whatever reason, I had to miss the final exam and do a makeup on that. I remember sitting in the library on a Saturday morning because it was the final exam, and I had two hours to do it, and I chose to sit near—I don't know if I chose to, but the water was in clear view. And despite the fact that I had studied so hard for that finite math class, I remember that by the time that I sat down, suddenly, two hours had passed. The proctor came to get my paper, and I had barely put my name on it. It was horrible. So the beautiful water there was—I'm not saying that that was the reason that I didn't do well on that test, because I really studied hard for it. But honest to God, it was (makes whoosh sound) gone. Two hours went by really quickly, and I hadn't answered a single question on that test, because it was either I studied too hard, I was too tired, the lakefront was too mesmerizing—I don't know what it was, but it was not a good test. (Laughs) Not a good time, so. They should put a warning sign on all those windows there because it's very hard to take one's eyes off of that beautiful, beautiful asset.

Q: I know what you mean. Most definitely. So what happened with that math class then? Were you able to—I mean, did you just get a failing grade for that test, and it brought down your overall grade?

Craig: Well, obviously, I had to pass. I guess I took it again. I do recall having to take that math class three times before I passed it, I think. Well, I obviously finished it from Mundelein because I graduated from there.

[15:00]

Craig: I had to stop and reconstruct it. I know I took that same math class at three different schools with three different professors and three different textbooks because it just wasn't right. The professor couldn't explain it in a way that I needed to hear it. The textbook was over my head. And suddenly, having gotten the tutor who worked so incredibly hard with me on that—I'm trying to remember if I had to go to a different school and then transfer that credit back into Mundelein. That might have been what I had to do because I remember on that final exam I turned in a blank paper. So I must have gone to a community college and brought that credit back to Mundelein to complete the program. Interestingly enough that I started teaching general education courses many years later at a small business college in Chicago. And I taught finite math, that very class that I had failed three times—or failed twice and passed on the third, and talk about having a story to tell my students. And the bottom line was, you're making it

applicable. But get yourself a tutor. Don't be afraid to ask questions. If the book doesn't work or if the professor doesn't work, keep asking if you can get a book that does work and a professor that will answer questions, and then you get to own that journey yourself. Because that was the only way I was able to do it. So I really had a story for the students that I wound up teaching that same class. Oh, my God. Pretty cool.

Q: Yeah, that sounds like a victory story to share with them.

Craig: Exactly. But I'm thinking that I might—I probably had to transfer that credit in. Yeah.

Q: How many classes or credits did you transfer into Mundelein when you started, and how long did the program take you to finish?

Craig: I was probably there four years, and I probably transferred in enough for maybe sophomore standing. Unfortunately, I don't have any sets of transcripts or anything else to be able to pull up, but it was a long haul. Again, one or two classes at a time. Sometimes being able to do the weekends. I wasn't always able to do the weekend program, but however I could, I just plugged along and eventually remember the graduation. You're saying it was '84? I kept thinking it was '83, but everything I already got—always got back from Loyola for alumni day [inaudible] was always '84. So I misremembered on that, so I apologize for that. It took a long time. Again, it was one of those journeys that whatever I was able to afford that semester and whatever time would allow that semester. And again, it had not been for Mundelein's weekend

college program, it would have been a journey that I probably would have given up several times over. No other way to talk about it.

Q: Yeah, that definitely is what makes the Weekend College so great and incredible, because it gives a lot of people that experience to get their degree and pursue their dreams, what they always wanted.

Craig: That's it.

Q: How would you compare the Weekend College experience to your prior college experiences?

Craig: Well, outside of the one semester that I took down state at Greenville College—again, dream come true. Being on a campus, being physically close to a lot of other women, though it wasn't—we didn't bond or anything because I didn't allow there—I didn't allow myself time to do that, knowing that it would be a short-lived experience. It was just something that the community college program doesn't allow for. For all the years that—even working on my master's degree, I did it very unorthodox too. I did it one class at a time. I did it through DePaul School for New Learning. And again, that was completely independent study as well. So, there was some academic advising in that program. But I think I was more able to do that program at the School for New Learning because of Mundelein, because of the unorthodox nature of it. Unorthodox is a good term of the word, the unusual, the untypical college experience. It was just a dream come true to be sitting on a college campus and taking classes from instructors who



were good at what they were doing, and they recognized the struggles that we were going through to sit in those rooms. I have a deep appreciation for those who recognized that we women sitting there were, shall I say, a cut above or different than the average, because we weren't a typical college student.

[20:00]

Craig: We were having families and careers and lives outside that didn't allow us to be able to sit in the classrooms during the weekend, or during the week, excuse me, with eighteen, nineteen, twenty-year-olds. Most of us are ten years older or more.

Q: Yeah, what do you remember about the instructors that you had and the classes that they taught?

Craig: I couldn't remember a name to save my soul. The only class that I do remember was the Bible as literature. And I remember being—how do I say this? I found myself with nose out of joint sometimes, because I was part of a pastoral ministry team at my church. So I took that class for the added dimension of it. But I remember finding myself stunned by some of the things that— I think it was taught by a nun too, I think, whose name I couldn't tell you to save my soul. But I found myself at odds because it was different than the fundamental religious upbringing that I had had. I remember that—have considered the Bible as literature other than the word of God, and literal word of God. So suddenly it was stories, and suddenly it was a different interpretation

of the Bible that was against what I had always fundamentally learned in all my years of growing up in the Free Methodist Church. And then suddenly being part of the pastoral ministry team of the Free Methodist Church. I just remember, out of all the classes I took outside of maybe finite math that one—I don't want to say rubbed me the wrong way, but I found myself with my tentacles up sometimes because it was contrary to what I had always learned. The Bible wasn't literature. It was literally the word of God. So that was an eye-opener. And I don't think I left there being convinced of what I learned in the classroom, but it was a good experience to see things from a different lens, if you will.

Q: Do you think that you took any of that knowledge or what you learned there back with you into your church community, or how did that affect you, I suppose, in your own church community?

Craig: I don't remember bringing it back to the church community unless I had a conversation or two with my teammates on--"you know what I heard today?" It didn't impact my ministry, and I know that it didn't—I don't remember taking it to the congregation, so I think we discussed it as a team. Like, "Hi, honey. How was your day today?" And that was my conversation about it because it was something that was contrary. But I don't remember that I brought it into the—anything that I taught there at church. It might have had something in my head, in my mind, but it wasn't anything that I was equipped to share yet. I'm thinking that a lot of what I'm saying here is something that you may not want to share on the network because they're not kind of what you're digging for. Sorry.

Q: No, I will gladly listen to whatever you want to share. So it doesn't have to be strictly—I'm not looking for what's appropriate or not appropriate. I'm just looking to hear what you have to say.

Craig: All right, good. Thank you.

Q: Yeah.

Craig: That was the only class I really remember, because it was different. The other ones were just nothing distinctive in terms of the coursework or names. I just found myself, unfortunately, separated from the faculty and separated from the other students there. Probably because of the situation that I was in and because I couldn't afford to waste time chit-chatting. And so everything was quickly done, efficiently done, and then I was gone again.

Q: I should have asked this earlier. What was your major of study when you were at Mundelein?

Craig: Business. So that did have a good ramification. I was able to get several promotions at the company that I was with. I was working full-time as well as pastoring full-time, as well as being a full-time student. I didn't mention that, did I? I was working for an international wholesaler, the largest wholesaler in the world at that time.

[25:00]

Craig: And because of my going to school at Mundelein, and because I always had my nose in a book, I knew that the managers at the company that I worked for always saw me different. All my coworkers always saw me different because on my breaks, I always had my nose in a book. I was always writing papers. I was always doing something rather than sitting around the coffee break room and chatting or anything. And I think I can credit the fact that what I learned here in my business major got me a lot of promotions. It got me into a very lucrative position by the time I left that company. And I'm going to chalk that up to setting myself apart. Sticking my nose in a book and having a business major that I was able to change the way that the company saw me and changed the way that I carried myself so that I set myself apart visibly and in action from my other twenty-year-old female coworkers who were gossiping over their breaks. I had my nose in a book because I had papers to write and tests to take and chapters to prepare for. So that was to my benefit in that regard because it made me very visible at my business, and they rewarded that handily. Thank you.

Q: And why did you choose business as your major?

Craig: Good question. I think at that time I was already in the business world and knew that I could do better. I remember starting as a clerk typist in the same company that I had just mentioned. So while I was a clerk typist even then taking classes at the community college level, I liked what I saw around the company that I was working at. We were a wholesale company,

and so I was working for a buyer at that time. I eventually became a buyer myself. So the whole idea of supply chain management, I didn't know what it was at that time here, but I did everything. The interest of that story is that the boss that I had, he was a buyer. And we were an office of four people for the merchandise core group that we had. And my boss had me do everything. I was running around the warehouse. I was receiving goods. I was checking out items all over the distribution system. I was doing purchasers. He had me doing things that no other clerk typist, and eventually secretary in that office, did. And because he was, I guess I could say he was a weak manager in that he slopped off a lot of stuff to me to do. It gave me a tremendous advantage again over all of the other secretaries in the same positions who worked for other buyers, because they didn't do anything. And I gladly not only did it, but I boast the fact that I knew where all this stuff was in our huge complex there in Chicago. So I did it all. I received trucks. I took it upon myself that when the opportunity that one of our stores opened up, a new store up in Buffalo Grove [Illinois], I offered to go up there and help them unload the truck. I mean, it was everything I could do to make myself learn more and be more and do more. And again, all those came back to me in tenfold state of that business because of, again, what I was learning in the class or in that major because I was applying on the job there, and it just made me want to learn more and do more. And I got lots of promotions out of it because I set myself apart. I think that they want hand and glove. The fact that I was putting myself through school. I was being initially begrudgingly forced to do things that the other girls weren't doing, and I relished in the fact that I could do that. I was able to make some cross connections between a business major and putting it into practice. It was wonderful. So both of those paralleling [laughs] it was a great experience. I guess having the job first made the business major selection a natural. Didn't make any sense to do anything else.

Q: So were you hoping to use your business degree in another capacity once you finished, or were you kind of just hoping to continue moving up as you were?

Craig: Well, I became a buyer myself over the course of four promotions to get up there, and I stayed in that role. I worked at the wholesale company for twenty-four years before they acquired two other companies, and then there was a redundancy position.

[30:00]

Craig: So for twenty-four years, I put into effect everything I had learned from Mundelein and made it work for me and put it all into practice. And I would probably still be in that field had teaching not come to call. But as it turned out, that when I left that wholesaler, I had, at that point, been teaching part-time because I've always loved to teach. And so I did an immediate 180 from business to the academic world and began teaching at a small community college, small business college in the city. I worked for them for ten years, full-time faculty. It was just a wonderful way to get myself mature and aggressive and different from my peers. From the other women, both in my company and around me, because I set myself up and saw something I wanted to do and did it. Kind of cool.

Q: And was the Weekend College something that you did every weekend, and therefore you had to constantly keep up with four classes worth, of course, work during the week?

Craig: Yeah. So the classes met every weekend, and if I wasn't taking four classes, I was taking three. I tried to do as much as I could on the weekends to get through it as quickly as I could because I couldn't afford to have it drag out forever, but it was just something that I was thrilled to be able to do a full load. I'm not saying necessarily well, I wasn't a 4.0 [GPA] student all the way through. But I was proud of the fact that I was able to juggle a lot at the same time and the college maintained very high academic standards. Again, I was probably a B, maybe a C plus student, but I was proud of that because I had a lot going on, and I knew that whether or not I had every checkbox marked on every test paper, I absorbed it all and did it all and applied it all. So it was pretty cool, I have to admit, despite what I was going through and on several different parallel tracks there, completing that program was a thrill and a half to me and again, it would not have happened otherwise. And it got me also thinking when I was going to immediately start my master's program. I started a master's right away and then again life happened, and I took some time off on that too, and had to do the DePaul School for New Learning route because again, it was unorthodox, and untraditional. And I learned that through Mundelein because it was untraditional and had me able to see that I could complete and do it well, at least to some level of satisfaction and live to tell about it.

Q: What was the atmosphere in the apartments that you lived in like on the weekends with all the other women?

Craig: There was a lot of women talk, a lot of talking until wee hours in the morning, which I didn't partake in. I remember almost sleeping with the pillow over my head sometimes because I had to drown all that out, knowing that I had an eight O'clock class the following morning. So there were a lot of talking and a lot of loud—not partying, but just a lot of loud chatting among the other women in the dorm there that I didn't participate in by choice because I guess I knew what my threshold was, and I knew that I just needed to be awake enough to be able to focus on what I needed to focus on. And that just wasn't—socializing among the other women, that just wasn't a priority for me. It was doing well in the classrooms and being a good—to do the best that I could there because I was paying dearly for it. Again, I was signing over my paycheck. And I had no option other than to try to do the best that I could and stay with the program and stick it through as best I could. So I didn't do a lot of chit-chatting. Again, intentionally separating myself the same way I did on the job. I intentionally separated myself to recognize here that I had to get through this. The only way to do it was to recognize school came first, and the job came first, whatever I could on that. So I wasn't one of the gossip girls.

Q: Were the girls that you shared a room with also all in the same classes as you were, or were they all in different classes?

{35:00}

Craig: All in different classes. And I used the term girls there affectionately because I know that it's probably not politically correct—the "we women" who had other things to do there. But yeah,



it was definitely a girl's dorm, and it was probably definitely as close to the college experience [that] I'm sure that the other women wanted too. It was just something that—they're away from their husbands and the kids and the dog, and that was their weekend away as well. So there might have been some wine in the dorm. I couldn't tell you. There might have been some food in the dorm. I couldn't tell you, because I stuck my nose in my book or to the grindstone and I didn't participate in—I didn't learn any names. Maybe one name that I might have saw every other weekend or something. And I didn't spend every weekend on campus, but for the most that I could. Sometimes I remember that I had to make the arrangements, and I might have done it too late in the weekend to be able to get a bed. So as often as I could stay on campus, I did. But it wasn't every single weekend. Beds were very hard to come by, and then that was an additional fee of course. I can't remember, for some reason I'm thinking sixty dollars a weekend. But that may not be accurate, that sounds awful high for the time. But it was an additional charge I couldn't always afford it either. Or if there was something going on at church for that weekend that I couldn't get away. So it was as best as I could to take advantage of whatever there was there.

Q: So those weekends that you couldn't stay on campus, does that mean that you couldn't attend classes that weekend, or did you commute those weekends?

Craig: I commuted those weekends. I don't think I missed any classes. I was just getting up earlier and having to make the trog in. But if I didn't plan ahead fast enough to be able to get a bed, then I had to commute in. So there's probably sixty, forty, sixty percent probably, or maybe

seventy, thirty more on campus than that. But I do remember a couple of times there being no beds available.

Q: Yes. So how does that work? Did you have to sign up in advance to get a bed? You didn't get the same thing every week?

Craig: Didn't get the same thing every week? No. And I don't remember if I had to go into an office and sign up for it or make a phone call. I don't remember that. But I just remember that being told several times that there was no beds available.

Q: Man, I had assumed that it meant like Weekend College. Everyone was given a bed, given a dorm to stay in for a weekend.

Craig: Nope, it was on assigned basis. And you didn't know every weekend if it would be in the same apartment or the same building. I do recall the apartment building primarily was the one that was on Sheridan Road there. Just to the west of the main building. I don't remember. I might have been in one other building, too, but that was the primary one. But I remember having to sign up every week for the bed. No, it wasn't a given.

Q: That was in the Northland right?

Craig: Name of the building. I couldn't tell you.

Q: Okay.

Craig: But it was the apartment building that was just to the west of the main administration building. It had a name I couldn't tell you.

Q: I think it was the Northland, but I'm not positive either.

Craig: And I don't know if that building is even still there. I don't know.

Q: I know the Northland isn't anymore. So where did you eat on campus, or what did you eat on campus on the weekends?

Craig: I enjoyed the cafeteria, so I do remember that. What I appreciated about it a lot was that the one semester that I was down at Greenville College, I had a part-time job in their cafeteria washing dishes for the breakfast route. So I remember working that so hard down there that I recall looking at the students behind the counters there at Mundelein for lunch and for dinner and realizing that there but for the grace of God, that was me a couple of semesters—a couple of years earlier. Absolutely, doing whatever we could to pay those bills. I usually spent more time eating on campus. I don't remember that there was anything close enough. Maybe if I had walked

to Devon Avenue or up to Western [Avenue] I might have—or on Clark [Street], I might have found some things, but I don't remember walking around the campus area or neighborhood at all. It must have been all eating on campus.

Q: And I forgot to ask this before, did you have any sort of, not supervisor but like a resident advisor for the weekends to go to if there were any issues or questions within the dorm?

[40:00]

Craig: I don't recall that. If there was somebody I don't remember anyone ever coming in. I don't remember there being one of twelve of us who slept there having any questioning authority or anything. I don't remember that at all. I remember that I can grab a bed, sleep in, get up and—get up and get out. So no, I don't remember there being any RAs [Resident Advisors]. No. There probably was, and I was probably unaware of it. There might have been one person for the whole building for the weekend. If there was, I was never aware of who she was or where she was.

Q: And so you've talked about setting yourself apart and just really getting your nose in the book and getting things done. Did you have any sort of support system? Because I imagine this was very stressful and difficult to just have so much going on at this time.

Craig: Well the group that I was with, the team ministry that we were having, they had already graduated. So I was always one step behind the people and the tiers on our team here. So they

were already college graduates, so they were sympathetic with what I was going through, but I don't remember that they were necessarily did anything other than ask about the classes or anything, no. At work my bosses all knew that I was in school. I didn't get a free ride there either. And my family, I was pretty well estranged with my family by that point. So support system, I'd have to say probably not. Because even at Mundelein, I still didn't know enough to ask questions about financial aid or academic advising, or anything like that. I pretty well—either didn't know what was available or didn't avail myself of it. But I don't remember ever being sought out and having an appointment—"come see the financial aid department on Thursday at two o'clock." I never had any of that. I probably made the whole journey myself a lot harder on myself than maybe I needed to, but I just didn't know that there was a system in place at all. So on the college level now, I'm still teaching part-time now, close to retirement. And I try to make sure that in every class that I teach that there's some reference to the students being able to access the student activities director or the Dean of Student Services or something, because those are resources that if they were in place, I never knew about it.

Q: So it just made you that much stronger and good teachable moments for your students in the future.

Craig: Yeah, they really have good stories now when I put them in retrospect, because I can tell my students that I knew what it was to be first generation. I knew it was—the story I tell them. I get these two numbers mixed up here that it either took me thirteen years through eight different schools to get my undergraduate degree. That took me ten years to get my master's degree. I can't work with eight schools in thirteen years or thirteen schools in eight years. Must have been eight

schools in thirteen years to get my bachelor's degree, finally culminating there at Mundelein. I got one class here, one class there and made my way around the Chicago City College's system. I picked at least one class in every one of those schools. Wherever I could, wherever there was opportunity, whatever had the program that I needed at a cheaper price. Because I do remember time spent that Mundelein might have had a class, and I had to get it somewhere else because it was too expensive. I might not have been able to afford that semester because I do remember on the finite math class that I took two of those three classes off Mundelein campus because of costs. So it wasn't cheap by any means. But it was the closest thing again to that full time college experience that I ever had. And even today, I have to applaud our students. I'm at one of the community colleges outside of Chicago, and I have to applaud my students that they're doing what they can to get a good education now, save their money, so they can then transfer to a four-year school and complete the program and saving their nickels and dimes now on the community college level. Wow. So I remember, yeah—kind of coming back, there were a couple of times I had to do that at Mundelein.

[45:00]

If there was a course that was transfer[inaudible]. Like maybe business one on one, or maybe there was a—finite math for sure, and probably a couple of those other—maybe marketing 101 or something. If I could find it cheaper, I recall taking a lot of those classes off campus because at the time it was financially what I needed to do. But finished at Mundelein, yeah. Probably eight schools, thirteen years. Sounds about right. If I graduated in '84, thirteen years, I started in '71. That'd be about right then, yeah. Because I graduated high school in '70. But by probably '71,

I started taking classes nights and weekends wherever I could. And then Mundelein came on the scene. What was the first year of Mundelein's program? Do you remember?

Q: It started in 1974, the Weekend College.

Craig: So I would have finished up there then, yeah. God bless them. Yeah, and I finished there in '84. I don't remember my first year at Mundelein then, when I would have transferred in and finished it. But it was after accumulating lots and lots of credits here and there, wherever I could grab them. But I don't remember sitting down with someone at Mundelein who would have laid out the plan then. Obviously I would have had for admissions, so somebody sat me down to see what I brought in. But who that was, I couldn't tell you. There must be a game plan somewhere. But I don't remember who that was or when that was, what year I came. But it was after lots of attempts to do it, singly on my own, grabbing them where I could.

Q: I'm sure it is difficult to keep it all straight with all those different schools you attended.

Craig: Yeah. Nights and weekends over eight schools in thirteen years, yeah. Lots of really good stories to tell and lots of lessons learned. Yeah. Thank you, I'm sorry. Wow. Things are coming back okay.

Q: Glad to hear it. Glad to hear it. What was the graduation ceremony like, and what did that mean to you?

Craig: I remember it being outdoor, or at least we lined up outdoor along the lakefront. And I remember my boyfriend at the time, who became my husband, was there, awarded me with his frequent flyer miles gift to Hawaii for graduation. He traveled thousands of miles a month, and so he gave me a trip to Hawaii on his frequent flyer miles. I remember lining up outside.

Beautiful weather. And I don't remember if we filed, obviously probably filed into the building, but I just remember standing outside in that long line of women in our caps and gowns along the lakefront. Much more about that I don't recall because a little stupid to think—it's interesting, but I remember standing out there in cap and gown along the lakefront. Yeah. So I'm sure it went inside somewhere, but I couldn't tell you where.

Q: That's all right. And was this graduation ceremony just with other weekend collegers or was it all of Mundelein graduates?

Craig: I'm sure it was all of Mundelein's graduates because it was a long, long line.

Q: Well, I am running out of questions. Do you have any other thoughts about Mundelein? Your experience there? Something that has popped back in your brain that I haven't asked about?

Craig: Not really. I just find myself thinking and smiling, and you have a brilliant smile. Thank you for that. I am happy to think back over that journey. Don't regret a single minute of it, other than the fact that it was catch as catch can, if you will. I wish I could have done the whole thing.



I wish I—had I known better, I probably would have done that whole college journey differently. But again, no one ever told me that anything was different. Nobody ever took me under their wings. Nobody ever told me that there were options. So I just did what I could see immediately in front of me and made it work. But probably for a lot more grief and a lot more time and a lot more aggravation than it needed to be. So I always have stories then for my students, but to not make the same mistakes that I did. Yeah. Interesting. Well, thank you. Ms. Newman, I can't think of anything else, but if I do, I'll drop you an email. But you've been able to help me think back over things that I haven't thought about in a really long time. So will the unveiling of this project. This is for your master's program, right? That you're doing all this?

[50:00]

Q: Well, actually, this isn't specifically for my master's program. It's just a project that the Women and Leadership Archives is pursuing, so they can get a better look into the individual student experience at Mundelein since it's something that has been kind of lacking in our collections up till now.

Craig: Well, good. I'm glad somebody's undertaking it, because, again, I think that there are probably many other women who were in that for the weekend college wouldn't either have tried it or finished it. And I know that for me, that is true. It was as close to the college experience that I ever would have gotten. It wasn't ideal, and it was a long and arduous, but it was something that

I'll always treasure it. And it gives me warmth to know that I stuck it through and had an opportunity to get a nibble of it. So that was pretty cool. So thank you.

Q: Yeah, thank you so much. It's been wonderful to hear about your experience, and it's very unique, for sure. You're the only person that I've talked to that's been a part of the Weekend College, so I was very happy to get that perspective.

Craig: Oh, no kidding. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Well I hope more step forward.

Q: Yeah, hopefully in future iterations, we'll get more opportunities to speak with other Weekend College participants. So, yeah, I very much value all you've had to share with me today.

Craig: Oh, wow. I didn't realize that that was so unique.

Q: I guess so.

Craig: Wow. Okay. Well, if I do think of anything else, can I drop you an email about it?

Q: Yes, please. That would be wonderful.

Craig: Wow, yeah. I had no idea that this would be the one and only so far.

Q: Yeah, you are a unique gem that we are happy to collect.

Craig: Oh, my. Then I'm sorry. It wasn't as glowing as it had some down stories to it and some things that maybe administration would now hear and say, "We need to be more aggressive when it comes to reaching out to our students making sure that they're a greater part of the program and the opportunities." So that's the takeaway, if nothing else.

Q: Yes, perhaps it's just part of life though. Everyone, especially, I think the weekend college everyone has so much going on that it's hard to be there for every student like you would hope. I suppose that's not an excuse but... Certainly--

Craig: And I'm just realizing what I was talking about that I had three full-time things going on at the same time.

Q: How you managed, I don't know.

Craig: Working full-time, full-time class load then than the church ministry. Well, and I was the women's leadership minister. Holy cow. Way to go, Marilyn. I had no idea.

Q: You did it!

Craig: Quite the chore. Holy cow. No wonder I have potential bags under my eyes. Oh, my God. I'm still doing it. It's just the way I'm wired or something. But yeah, now I'm teaching weekends. Crazy woman here. (laughs)

Q: Full circle. Come full circle.

Craig: All right. Thanks Ms. Newman. I appreciate your time. If there's anything else that you can think of, another angle that I didn't cover or didn't think about, please drop me a note and maybe I'll start my chain of thought here to go into a different direction or deeper into something that I might have missed. As you review the transcript, think about a different angle or a step off from something else, and I'll see if I can fill in holes.

Q: Yeah, most definitely. That would be great. I will stop our recording now, but I do want to talk to you briefly before we totally say goodbye.

Craig: Sure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]