

SHARE YOUR STORY: STUDENT LIFE AT MUNDELEIN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Eileen Drake's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Eileen Drake conducted by Melissa Newman on January 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, family background, how she ended up at Mundelein, love for journalism, picking a major, joining the BVMs and leaving them, and being the first novice or BVM on the student newspaper.

[5:00 - 10:00]: Why she left the BVMs.

[10:00 - 15:00]: Living in Scholasticate and the differences between nuns, novices, and students on campus.

[15:00 - 20:00]: Making friendships in the school newspaper, living in Coffey Hall, and living off campus.

[20:00 - 25:00]: Things she wrote for the newspaper and the underground inserts for the newspaper.

[25:00 - 30:00]: Issues with the newspaper, on campus job, and unrest in Chicago in late sixties, early seventies.

[30:00 - 35:00]: Story about Mundelein students evacuating a burning building the the Chicago Tribune calling them good students unlike the ones protesting and changes to Mundelein.

[35:00 - 40:00]: Taught to be fearless and confident in a male-dominated society and changes in curriculum.

[40:00 - 45:00]: How she met her husband at a mixer, classes she took, and professors she remembers.

[45:00 - 50:00]: Professors continued, no clubs outside of the newspaper, and overlap being Skyscraper and Mundelein Today publications.

[50:00 - 55:00]: Publications work continued and her younger sister attending Mundelein at the same time.

[55:00 - 1:00:00]: Panty raids from Loyola men, Loyola and Mundelein interactions, and her reaction to the merging of the two schools.

[1:00:00 - 1:05:00]: Finding Mundelein in Loyola and giving thanks for doing the project.

[1:05:00 - 1:05:46]: Wrap up.

NARRATOR BIO

Eileen Drake (née Jack) was born in Chicago on September 13, 1946 and moved with her family to Arlington Heights when she was six. Neither of her parents went to college, so Eileen and her three siblings were first generation college graduates. Eileen attended Catholic schools as a child, but did not choose Mundelein for its Catholic associations. She wanted to be a journalist and

received a state scholarship, so she chose a college with a journalism program: Mundelein (Northwestern was her other option, but it was too expensive even with the scholarship). By the time Eileen began attending Mundelein, there was no longer a journalism major, but she was able to receive the training she needed through studying social studies, political science, and writing for the student newspaper, *The Skyscraper*. She enrolled at Mundelein in 1964 and graduated in 1970.

After her freshman year at Mundelein, Eileen joined the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) order to become a nun. She attributes this decision to her admiration for the Sisters teaching at Mundelein and the intellectual stimulation and challenges they imparted on their students. Eileen then left the BVM order after questioning some of the Catholic Church's stances and the role of women in the church, particularly during a time of societal upheaval. At Mundelein, she was known as "Eileen Jack," Sr. Eileen Marie Jack, BVM, and then, "Eileen Jack" again at graduation. Her younger sister, Linda Jack, also attended Mundelein and graduated in 1972.

Working for *The Skyscraper* was a large part of Eileen's time at Mundelein. Sister Sharon Rose was the moderator for the paper, and Eileen remembers having a good relationship with her as they discussed topics for articles. Eileen wrote numerous reviews on books and various art as well as editorial articles; she also photographed events for the newspaper. Eileen was also part of a coalition of editors that produced Mundelein's underground newspaper *Hades* that was a 4-page insert in the *Skyscraper*. The *Skyscraper* ceased publication in 1969, which Eileen attributes to having more people wanting to physically participate in the political and social actions taking place around the country rather than write about them. She then began working in Mundelein's

public relations office where she wrote articles and took photos for the alumni and donor publication, *Mundelein Today*.

INTERVIEWER BIO

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

Transcriptionist: Chris Mattix

Interviewee: Eileen Drake

Locations: Bend, Oregon and Palatine, IL via Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: January 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 Eileen Drake, formerly Eileen Jack, Class of 1970, on January 10, 2022, for the Share Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. I am in Palatine, Illinois, and Eileen is in Bend, Oregon. So to start us off, could you please tell us a little bit about your family, where you're born, where you're raised, stuff like that?

Drake: A little bit. I was born on September 13, 1946. I was a Friday the thirteenth baby, which has been my excuse for many things through my life. I was born in Chicago. We lived in Chicago until I was six years old, and then we moved to the suburbs to Arlington Heights. I have an older brother and two younger sisters, one of whom, Linda, also attended Mundelein. All four of us were first generation college students in our family. My mother—and my dad was in World War II, didn't have the opportunity to go to college. My mother would have loved to have gone to college, but didn't have the financial opportunity to do so. So, we were raised primarily in Catholic schools—Catholic elementary school, Catholic high school, and it wasn't an absolute that we go to Catholic college. In my case, I selected Mundelein for a couple of reasons. I had an

Illinois State scholarship, which meant I was going to go to college in Illinois, and I was interested in journalism. And at that time there were two schools in Illinois who were known for their excellent journalism programs. One was Northwestern University, a bit out of my budget, and the other one was Mundelein. So I chose Mundelein.

Q: Sorry, I was on mute there. What had you interested in journalism specifically?

Drake: I liked the idea of being able to focus on current events and translate those or report those to other people to get other people involved in what was going on in society. Particularly by the time I graduated from high school in 1964, there was a lot starting to build in terms of social issues, social concerns. And it seemed to me that being able to be part of the people who communicated that information in an objective way was important.

Q: So could you tell me a little bit about your studies at Mundelein for journalism?

Drake: Well, by the time I got to Mundelein, you couldn't major in journalism. You had to pick another field in which to major. In my freshman year, that wasn't a concern. I was able to become part of the Skyscraper staff—the Mundelein student newspaper—and start taking English courses, literature courses, and other courses that would support a career in journalism. However, I made a career choice late in my freshman year to enter the convent, to enter the BVM [Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary] Order. And so I left Mundelein, and in July of 1965 entered the BVM Order, which at that time the novitiate was located in Dubuque, Iowa.

So I found myself, a mostly city girl, suburb girl, going to rural Dubuque, Iowa, and trying to fit in with a different focus, different priorities. And I was there for a year and a half. Through the first six months you're a postulate, then you become a junior novice for a year, and then for a year you're a senior novice before you take vows and become a nun. At the end of my junior year, along with another former Mundelein student, I was sent back to Mundelein to continue my college studies there. And in the course of that year, back at Mundelein, I made the decision to leave the order, but still stayed at Mundelein to continue my college studies. And when I went back, I was the first novice or BVM in training to be a staff member of the Skyscraper newspaper.

[05:00]

So if you look back at the old Skyscrapers, what you'll see is a byline that says S. Eileen Jack, the S standing for Sister. Because it was a novel thing for me to be there while I was still a novice anyway, and because it was even more novel to be on the staff of the Skyscraper.

Normally, the student nuns didn't participate in that kind of a curricular activity. I was somewhat disguised by the use of the S instead of SR for Sister.

Q: So several follow-up questions for that. But the first one being, do you know why journalism wasn't a major by the time that you got there?

Drake: There was a lot of discussion and review and reconsideration of the curriculum. And by the time I was a junior, they had switched to the three term system with taking fewer courses each term, but in a more condensed fashion. And they were rethinking the entire approach to

curriculum even beyond that change. That change turned out to be an interim change, and then there were further curriculum changes even after I graduated. I don't know why journalism wasn't a major. Technically, it wasn't even a minor. And by the time it went to the three term system, there were no minors at all. But you could take additional courses, so you picked a major focus. In my case, it was social studies with a concentration in political science. Because that was a good substantive support for a career in journalism. So it didn't matter to me that you couldn't major in journalism. I was still getting the exposure and the training that I wanted to have for that kind of a career.

Q: Okay, that makes sense. And then why did you choose to enter the BVM order and then subsequently, why did you choose to leave?

Drake: Well, that was also—I was thinking about it in high school, but it didn't feel connected to any particular religious order. I'd had Dominicans in grade school and Sisters of Mercy in high school. Neither of them appealed to me. I was really impressed by the intellectual challenge and stimulation that I experienced with the Sisters at Mundelein. And so that was an appeal. The basic decision was I had been taught all those years that God is supposed to be the center of your life, and God was not the center of my life. So I thought, if I'm going to live the way we're supposed to live, I better put myself in an environment where I have no choice but to make God the center of my life. It was fairly immature thinking, but it sent me in that direction. I picked the BVMs because I was so impressed with the intellectual curiosity and challenge that I experienced from the nuns at Mundelein. By the time I was ready to take first vows, I had

already been back at Mundelein for a year—for an academic year. And I was becoming more uncertain about what direction I wanted to take my life in.

Now, remember that in the 1960s, if you wanted to focus on some kind of public service or social service or community service, you had very limited options. There weren't a whole lot of nonprofit organizations that you could work with, become part of. So that also factored into the choices that women were making at the time. I reached a point theologically where I believed in God, but I wasn't quite sure what kind of a God I believed in. I was having trouble with the teachings in the Catholic Church: teachings on birth control, teachings on the role of women in the church and in society. They were annoying me, shall we say. And so I just eventually evolved to the point where it would have been hypocritical of me to stay in the order because of the way my beliefs had evolved. But I stayed at Mundelein because I valued and appreciated the education that I was getting there.

Q: Was it a difficult decision to leave the order and therefore anything that came with it and the opportunities and relationships you had formed during that time?

[10:00]

Drake: I entered with a group of fifty-four women in my what we call the set. It was the class, but we called it a set. By the time I left, there were only twelve of the original fifty-four left. So it was a time of great transition in the church, in religious orders, in colleges and universities. There was a lot of flux, a lot of rethinking of who you were and who you wanted to be and how you wanted to get there. So it was not a particularly difficult decision for me because it took a

long time and I let it evolve. By the time I made the decision, I was very comfortable with it, and I knew it was the right thing for me to do.

Q: And I remember in our last meeting that you mentioned that you lived in the Scholasticate while you're in the order. Could you tell me a bit about that and what that differentiation was at Mundelein?

Drake: It was basically a dormitory for the nuns. For the nuns who had made first vows and who were continuing their college education. You had two choices in the BVM order. You could go to Clarke College in Dubuque, or you could go to Mundelein in Chicago. And I'm not sure that the individual nun had the choice. It may have been that they were sent there depending upon the order's decision as to where they would go eventually after they got their degree. So we lived in a more isolated manner. We wore a habit until I made my first vows, and then we switched to black suits or dresses. Black and white clothing that looked more contemporary because it was knee-length, and it was contemporary styles, but it was all black and white. We didn't wear veil anymore by the time I left the order. But that form of living, it was like living in a convent so that you maintain the sense of community with the sisters with whom you were living. And you could also maintain the rituals around Mass and daily prayers in a way—in a community that fostered that sense of togetherness and support of the religious life.

Q: Were the teachers at Mundelein that were nuns also living in the Scholasticate with you?

Drake: No, they lived in the Skyscraper building is my recollection. A few of them lived in the dormitories as responsible for dormitory residents. I'm not sure what their titles were, but they were assigned to live in the dormitories, but most of the nuns lived on the upper floors of the Skyscraper. I never went there. I have no idea what it was like. It was off limits.

Q: Even to you studying nuns. Okay.

Drake: Yes. We weren't fully nuns.

Q: Sure. Was there any sort of differentiation in relationships between the novices that you were and the teachers that were the nuns? Did you guys have a different relationship with them?

Drake: Yeah, we were students and they were faculty.

Q: So would you say you were on the same level as other Mundelein students that weren't nuns in their relationship to the teachers that were nuns?

Drake: Absolutely.

Q: Okay.

Drake: We were students. They were faculty and administration.

Q: Was there any sort of mentoring going on between the full-fledged sisters and those studying to become full-fledged sisters?

Drake: Not in any formal sense. There were occasional relationships between the faculty sisters and the student sisters, but those were individual and random. I had a fairly close relationship with the Sister Sharon Rose [BVM], who was the moderator for the newsletter—for the newspaper.

[15:00]

But it was no more of a relationship than I had with my political science department chair, Dr. Anne Matasar, who took great delight in teaching a BVM how to maintain kosher kitchen, because she and her husband and children were Jewish. And I would occasionally babysit for her. At that time she had one child, and when I was in her apartment, I had to maintain kosher kitchen for her.

Q: And what does that mean a kosher kitchen?

Drake: Well, you're keeping the dairy and the meat foods separate, and you're keeping the dishes and the utensils and pots and pans that you use with those foods separate, too. So you have

different cleaning equipment, you have different storage for all of that, and you need to maintain that separation between meat and dairy.

Q: Going back to the Scholasticate for a moment, did you form more specific friendships with the other women that you were doing these daily rituals and prayers with? And then how was that different? If so, after leaving the order.

Drake: I actually formed more friendships with the Mundelein students who were working on the Skyscraper newspaper and with my non-BVM classmates than I did within the order. Most of my friends within the order were still back in Dubuque, and there were only a couple of them still back there, my friendship base. When I left the order and came back to Mundelein a few months later as a regular student, I had no trouble transitioning back into the dormitory and into working relationships and friendships with other Mundelein students. Because I had already established those while I was still in the order.

Q: So where else did you live on campus when you were no longer in the order?

Drake: I lived in Coffey Hall for a year, and then three other women and I moved off campus into an apartment in Rogers Park right next to the 'L'. It's always a delight living next to the 'L'.

Q: Easy to get anywhere. But then the noise, I'm sure.

Drake: The noise, yes. You were always aware of your living arrangements. That may have been the first year they actually allowed seniors to live off campus. I'm not sure of that. But I know you had to be a senior in order to live off campus.

Q: Were there friendships that you had made before joining the order that after you had left were kind of different? Or maybe people had finished their studies while you were gone? Or how did that timeline of your journey versus theirs affect your friendships?

Drake: They all graduated while I was still in the order. So anyone that I knew as a freshman in my freshman year would have graduated in 1968—in that May/ June time frame, and I didn't leave the order until July of '68. So my friendships were more the class of 1969-1970.

Q: As you said, being on the Skyscraper helped a lot, too, with joining or—sorry—with having new friends or help transition a bit?

Drake: It gave you a regular group of people that you were interacting with on a weekly basis and working on common projects and common interests.

Q: So would you say that you would form most of your friendships with Skyscraper writers or—rather than those that you had in classes with you?

Drake: Yes, because you spent more time with them than you did with people in individual classes.

Q: Okay. So could you tell me a bit about your time as a Skyscraper writer? What sorts of events you covered, the other staff members that you might have had friendships with or remember anything like that?

[20:00]

Drake: Yeah. I kept a scrapbook of some of the things that I wrote. I've been going back to that recently, and it's kind of interesting. It appears that I did a fair amount of art reviews, book reviews, movie reviews, performance reviews. But I also wrote quite a few editorials. I took pictures—I was one of the photographers for The Skyscraper. I was on the—what we called the coalition of editors. Three of us who were the primary editors in 1969 when we created a companion to The Skyscraper called Hades: H-A-D-E-S. Which was our version of an underground newspaper in the late 1960s. It was very common, very popular to have an underground newspaper. The Mundelein way of doing that was to make that a four-page insert into The Skyscraper newsletter. And with the same editorial board, but different reporters and writers for the two newspapers.

Q: And was that a sanctioned thing that kind of went to the press with the same Mundelein script?

Drake: It did. It was a little more free form in that the Hades masthead was hand drawn. There were more illustrations in it—an occasional photograph, but more illustrations. And for example, one of the first articles that was written was an interview of seven students who were just identified by number, not by name, but talking about their views on premarital sex. And in 1968-1969, you can imagine the reaction that that prompted from among some alumni and even current students. So it was a social push, but it also included at that time there was a lot of focus on the minority students and how to better address the interests and concerns and the needs of minority students—particularly the Black students. As a city college, Mundelein drew a number of day students or commuter students that broadened the student base. But Mundelein was still very much a white women's college that was trying to figure out what to do with the Civil Rights Movement and how to integrate those issues and concerns into the curriculum, into the social life in the college community. That then became a component of the communications, of the student communications program.

Q: This is so interesting. I'd never heard of the underground inserts for the Skyscraper.

Drake: Would you like to see it?

Q: Oh, yes, please.

Drake: So, this is the Skyscraper.

Q: Okay.

Drake: That was the first issue, and we did an article on the coalition Call to Arms was announcing the new insert or the companion to The Skyscraper. And there were three of us who identified ourselves as the coalition. So we didn't have an editor-in-chief. We had three of us who shared the editorial responsibilities. And this is actually the second issue of Hades. Oh, no, that was the first one. So it says "an experimental newspaper." And the articles—it was a two-page article on the interview of the seven students on premarital sex, but there was an article on racism and capitalism and then a humorous article on an exposé in Northland Hall. But it was also a blend of serious contemporary comment and college stuff.

Q: That's very cool.

[25:00]

Drake: I don't know how long it lasted after I graduated. I have only two issues of it.

Q: Well, I know The Skyscraper stopped publishing in 1969.

Drake: So that's why I don't have anything past 1969. We were struggling with getting people to do the work on it. People were more focused—the people who were activists, the students who

were activists were more focused on external activities and efforts. The bus ride to the south to support the Civil Rights Movement. Activities in the city of Chicago were drawing people off-campus and into larger social movement activities. And so it was harder to find enough people to actually write The Skyscraper. And there was a sense that no matter what we tried, people just weren't turning to that for their news or cared enough about what we were publishing to pay attention to it.

Q: Was there any drama or contention within the Skyscraper staff of what to publish during this time, since there was so much happening?

Drake: That was in large part what led to the publication of Hades. That was our way of addressing that tension. And the debate within the Skyscraper staff was to say, the way to do it is to have two publications: have your traditional Skyscraper, and then let's have our version of an underground newsletter. So that everybody has a chance to frame what they want to express to the college community.

Q: And do you remember any sort of student response to this newspaper? The Hades I mean.

Drake: I don't remember any specific response to it. At some point in 1969, it may have been after the Skyscraper ceased publication, but it could have been before that. I had an Illinois State scholarship that was time limited, and it ran out before I graduated. And so I had to get a job in order to finish my education. And I actually got a job in the public relations department at

Mundelein, and I became a PR assistant. And so I switched to working on a publication that was called Mundelein Today that went out to alumni and supporters and donors and focused my writing attention on that publication. And it may be because the Skyscraper had ceased publication. I mean, there was an expense to producing the Skyscraper. And so if we didn't have enough staff, enough people interested in writing for it, and if stacks of the newspaper were just sitting in piles around campus not being read, it would have reached the end of its lifespan.

Q: A sorry thing to see go at the time when so much is happening, but understandable at the same time. So in relation to all that was happening, were you ever involved in any marches or protests, or did you see a lot of that happening on campus? What was your thought during this time period?

Drake: Well, for one thing, while I was on the Skyscraper staff, I was too busy recording, photographing, writing the events to participate, and then you couldn't do both. I took pictures. There was a candlelight vigil one night, and I can't remember what the reason was for the candlelight vigil. But I was busy taking photographs of it for later publication. So the big unrest in Chicago in 1968, of course, was at the Democratic National Convention. But that occurred when school wasn't in session, so most of the students were gone. I was too timid to go down and participate in any demonstrations—and too scared of Chicago police at the time. We had an interesting event that happened in the fall of 1968. There was a fire in the garage or outbuilding behind a nursing home across the street from the Skyscraper.

[30:00]

And a number of Mundelein students and some faculty went over to help evacuate the nursing home residents because the smoke — there wasn't a particular fire risk, but the smoke was infiltrating the building. And so people went over to help get them out. Well, I had to observe it and report it and therefore couldn't participate in it. But there was a front page article in the Chicago Tribune about these students who went over to help evacuate the residents. And the [Chicago] Tribune made a big fuss over the fact that these are the good students, not like those other students that are in the headlines all the time. These are the nice students. And so we wrote an editorial that basically said some of these students who went over to help evacuate women have also participated in demonstrations. And so you can't say there are good students and bad students. So that was partly my way of participating in the demonstrations and in the activities that went on at the time in the 1960s. But I was not brave enough to participate in demonstrations actively.

Q: And let's see—would you say that you saw a lot of changes at Mundelein during your time there and what those changes might have been?

Drake: There were tremendous changes in terms of reviewing the curriculum and the approach to education. Those changes and discussions involved students, faculty and administration in various conferences to identify more effective ways to present the academic program and to teach. And to get students involved in the creation of the academic program as well as the delivery and the absorption of what was being taught. I remember a lot of — and of course, they were building the Learning Resource Center at the time. And so there was a lot of focus on the

advantages that were going to be available, the audiovisual and technical advantages. But also just the resource and access to information that would come from that Resource Center. I think what I remember most about the education at Mundelein is captured in one class—where the teacher happened to be a BVM—standing up in front of the room and looking at us and saying, "Why do you just accept what I'm saying as true? Why aren't you challenging me? Why aren't you questioning me? How do you know that what I am saying is in fact, true?" And that was a characteristic of—I wouldn't say all of the classes, certainly not—But many of the classes and the attitude toward Mundelein. This is a place for you to question and challenge and test ideas and participate in your own education.

And in 1969 another student and I were sent to the Air Force Academy to attend a national collegiate conference on overpopulation and world hunger. And I don't remember the exact number of participants—let's say it was around 100. Of those, hundred, maybe twelve were women and all the rest were men. And we had discussion sessions every day. And then there were some social sessions. And at the social sessions, the women got more than their fair share of attention because there were so few of us. But one day in the conference I was walking down the hall and there were these two men from Princeton who had been in a number of the discussion sessions that I had been in. And one of them approached me, and he said, "You and your classmate are so masculine." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well, you're so intellectually aggressive." And I said, "Well, thank you very much. That's the nicest compliment you could have given me." But that was characteristic of Mundelein and the Mundelein education.

[35:00]

We were taught to be fearless and confident in a male dominated society. And I don't know that I could have gotten that from a Northwestern or a University of Chicago or any of the big name universities that I might have chosen.

Q: Being in an environment surrounded by only women, how did that affect going into other spheres then and participating in the same events with men and having them challenge you in this way?

Drake: Well, it didn't intimidate you in any way, shape, or form. Because you were used to participating in the discussion, whatever it was. In the sense I was gender blind because this is just this is a group of students. We're here to discuss something. It doesn't matter what it is. I went to law school when I was thirty-one, so I had a gap in my education. I was twenty-three—twenty-four when I graduated from Mundelein. And I got actually met my husband through Mundelein, which is a whole different story. It was a social event with University of Chicago business students. But we got married in the fall of 1970, and I studied at the University of Chicago for a while in political sociology, still focused on a journalism career. We went to Washington D.C., and I ended up doing public relations work for the World Wildlife Fund US and then did editorial work at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. And then we moved to Seattle and to Eugene, or—we moved around a bit. So by the time I really honed in on what I wanted to do career-wise, I was thirty. And I decided I wanted to go to law school and become a management, labor, and employment attorney.

So I applied to a number of different law schools, and one of the ones that I got accepted at was the University of Michigan. My husband was a business professor at that point, and he got a position at Wayne State University in Detroit. So we went to the Detroit area. And I finished law school in a shortened period of time. But 27% of our law school class was women out of a little over 100 students. And in law school, if you were called on by the professor, you had to give an answer. You had to answer the question. You were not allowed to pass. And for some of the students, that was very very intimidating. And I remember having a conversation with several students. They were, I think, all men in the hallway after class one day, and they were complaining about the fact that you had to give an answer if you were called on. And I said, "Well, it doesn't bother me." And they said, "Well, no, because you always know the answer." And I said, "No, you're not listening carefully. I always have an answer. I don't worry about whether it's the right answer or not. If it's the wrong answer, the professor will use it as an opportunity to correct us all, but it doesn't bother me." Well, that level of confidence was something I learned at Mundelein.

Q: That's wonderful. So you mentioned that there were some academic changes—the curriculum people were talking about how to move forward during the late '60s and all that. How were students involved in that process?

Drake: There was a student group. I don't know whether it was a student Congress or what they were called. But there were groups of students that would be assembled to participate in the discussions along with faculty members, along with administration members. And their input—I wasn't part of that process—but their input seemed to be valued. And the ideas that came out of

the students seemed to get consideration along with ideas that came out from the faculty and the administration.

Q: And sidetracks—tangent a little bit. Could you tell me about how you met your husband at the [inaudible]?

Drake: It was in what I call my first senior year. So after I left the convent and '68/'69, I was living in the dormitory and Coffey Hall.

[40:00]

And someone had put together a swimming pool mixer at the time. Mundelein had a swimming pool in the basement. Occasionally, it had water in it. And apparently it did at this time.

Somebody had connection with the business school, the dormitory at the University of Chicago.

This is the graduate school of business. And they had arranged for a number of guys to come to Mundelein for a water polo match—coed. And then we were going to go over to the coffee house in the basement of Northland Hall, the other dormitory, after the swimming pool party. So I was not going to go. I had zero interest in business students. I was a Liberal Democrat at the time in my thinking, and I figured the business students were going to be—you know, who cares? So I wasn't going to go. But at about six o'clock night, somebody came knocking on my door and said, "We've got all these guys downstairs and not enough women. Would you please come down?" And I thought, yeah, okay. It doesn't make any difference. This isn't going to develop into anything. I need to wash my hair anyway. So what the heck, I'll go swimming.

My husband, Bruce had a cold and had been playing tag soccer or tag football or something and hurt himself. And he shouldn't have been there either, but he decided that he was going to go. He got talked into it. So I went, and we did the water polo thing, and I went back to the dorm and all I could do was put my hair in a ponytail because it was wet and straight. I was one of the first people to arrive at the coffee house, and I walked in, and Bruce looked up, and he said, "Does anyone here know how to make popcorn?" And I said, "Move over, I'll do it. I was the family popcorn maker." And I shoved him out of the way (laughs) and made the popcorn. And we started talking and went out on double dates a couple of times after that event, and then he disappeared. I didn't hear from him, but I knew that his birthday was in February. And so I found this birthday card that had an old-fashioned candlestick telephone pictured on it. And I wrote inside, do you remember how to use one of these things? And mailed it off to him. And he called me, and we continued to go out and eventually got engaged and got married. And it's now, what, fifty? It'll be fifty-two years in next September.

Q: Congratulations. That's lovely.

Drake: So you never know. You take advantage of opportunities, and you see if they take you somewhere.

Q: Yes, definitely. Could you tell me a little bit more about the classes that you took at Mundelein? Any professors that you remember, what sort of lectures there were like?

Drake: Well, [Sister] Sharon Rose, of course, was the BVM in charge of the—to the extent that we had journalism courses and that—and that she was the BVM supervisor for the Skyscraper. So I remember interactions with her. But most of the interactions I remember with her were outside of the classroom discussing ideas for articles, discussing ideas for editorials, and that. Anne Matasar—Dr. Matasar—was the political science professor. And I had what became a very close relationship with her, in part because of the babysitting. But also I ended up doing my senior thesis on voting patterns in Wilmette, Illinois. Because it was very distinctive differences based on which side of one highway you lived on. One side was heavily Jewish and Democratic voters. The other side was heavily white, Anglo-Saxon Saxon, Protestant, and Republican voters. And she encouraged me to do that as my senior thesis. So I remember that well, I don't at this point remember too many other faculty members specifically.

[45:00]

I probably would if I read their name someplace have a recollection of them. I did study Russian for two years, and I remember the Russian professor was another BVM. And I have memories of her and interacting with her in the class and outside of the classroom. She was one of the people that I talked to when I was thinking about entering the order to see whether she thought it would be a reasonable thing for me to do. And then there was one other. Well, I remember [Sister] Jean Dolores Schmidt [BVM], of course, because she was always—even before she reached her nineties—she was always a larger than life personality at the school. But she was more in administration than in the faculty.

Q: And what do you remember about any discussions that you had with any of these professors or Sister Jean that you just mentioned?

Drake: I don't remember any specifics. Yeah, it's been too many years.

Q: Well, the Russian professor, you said that you talked to her about whether entering the order or not was a good idea. Why did you seek her advice? And do you remember any push in whatever direction she gave you?

Drake: I sought her advice because I thought she would be fairly objective in talking to me about what it would be like, what I might experience, and whether or not it would be a fit for me. I had her for, well, I started Russian for two years, but obviously it was one year and then there was a split and I came back. But there was a connection in that first year where I felt comfortable talking with her.

There was one other of the professors, and I cannot remember her name. But she was another one where I sat down, and I had conversations about what it would be like if I entered the order. And based on what she knew about me, how would I do? And she was also advising another woman who was a junior at Mundelein who had decided to enter the order at the same time. The two of us actually rode on the train together from Chicago to Dubuque. And while we were on the train, we designed a new habit. She was an art major and I in high school had thought I wanted to be a fashion designer. So the two of us spent the train ride designing a new habit for

the order to bring them out of the 19th century and into the 20th century. And then we got off the train, and we had put the design in an envelope, and one of us had a stamp, and we mailed it back to that one Sister—who wrote back to us and described us as new breed with a vengeance based on our design. So perhaps foretelling, because Cathy and I both left the order around the same [time]. She left it a little bit later than I did, but neither of us, neither of us stayed. So perhaps our train ride escapade was predictive of the likelihood of our staying in the order.

Q: Outside of The Skyscraper, did you participate in any sort of groups, clubs, social activities, anything like that?

Drake: I didn't, because there was no time. The Skyscraper took up all of your spare time.

Q: That's fair.

Drake: And then in my last year—once I had to go to work—then I was working part-time in the public relations department at the college, and so that took up my extra time.

Q: Was that similar to your work on the Skyscraper and did you work on the Skyscraper at the same time that you were working on Mundelein Today publication?

Drake: If there was any overlap, it would have been very little. Because of the ending of the Skyscraper publication.

[50:00]

The public relations department put out a publication called Mundelein Today. And so I wrote some articles for that. I did photography. I took photographs for that. We had a big old press camera, one of those square box cameras with the film slides that went in and out of it. And we had a dark room. And so if you were a photographer, you were also—also did the developing and the printing of the photographs.

Q: How was working for that publication different than working for the Skyscraper?

Drake: It was completely different because it was a PR piece. And so, yes, we were reporting on things that were happening in school, but it was designed to encourage people to support and donate to the college.

Q :Was it a mix of students and administrators working on the publication then?

Drake: I think I was the only student. And that was a job, frankly, that I think was created for me because my scholarship ran out, and I was considering dropping out of school for a while until I could earn enough money to come back. And I was offered that position as a way to fill the scholarship gap.

Q: It's really great that Mundelein did that for you then.

Drake: It was very gracious of them. And I ended up having to quit that job for medical reasons before I graduated. And they waived the rest of my tuition to let me finish school and graduate. So I'm very grateful to Mundelein. They supported me in many different ways.

Q: It really goes to show you the value that they have in women's education.

Drake: Yes.

Q: So you mentioned that your younger sister Linda also went to Mundelein. Could you talk about any—did you have any interactions with her on campus, or were you guys kind of doing your own thing?

Drake: We were mostly doing our own thing. She was a theater major. But we had part of a wardrobe that we shared. We could share tops in our wardrobe—and we did because we didn't have a whole lot of money. My mother didn't work. My dad did. But with four kids, they were trying to put through college. And we would work in the summers, but we still didn't have a whole lot of extra money. So Linda and I for years had shared clothes. But when I came out of the convent, then we were able to share blouses and sweaters and other tops. Which gave each of

us an expanded wardrobe to be able to wear. But for the most part, she had her friends and her activities. And our parents raised us to be independent in any event. And so part of it was let her develop let me develop in ways that suit us, and we can have our own interests and our own activities and still be family when it was time to be family. And now she lives a half a block away from me. Linda lived in Chicago. She stayed in Chicago after she graduated, and she lived there until 2019 when she retired and sold her business and moved out here.

Q: How much of an age gap is there between the two of you? Since I know that she graduated just a few years after you, but you had that break from joining the order.

Drake: It's about four years age difference. So normally we wouldn't have been in college at the same time.

Q: Okay. Yeah, that's kind of what I was wondering. Did you guys get along growing up a lot? Or—because four years can be kind of significant when you're younger.

Drake: Right. My two sisters. So there was Linda, and then we have a younger sister named Mary Lee. The three of us shared a bedroom growing up. You have no choice but to figure out how to be close. But we're very fortunate. We're still very close, all four of us. We're close with our brother, and our brother lives in Albany, New York. Our other sister lives in San Diego area. But we've all stayed close. We stay connected. Occasionally we get to vacation together. But

most of the time it's phone calls back and forth and text messages make it much easier to stay connected.

[55:00]

Q: Sure. Most definitely

Drake: Yeah, we were raised in a family—and even a larger family. We have lots of cousins. And we were very fortunate to be raised in a family of people who liked each other, not just the immediate family, but also across the cousins.

Q: Yeah. That can sometimes be a little hard to find.

Drake: It is. Yeah. And we recognize that we were very fortunate.

Q: Well, I'm reaching the end of my questions list. But are there any experiences that you had at Mundelein that you remember either at the time or now, looking back, that you found to be quite meaningful to you?

Drake: I think we've pretty much covered them. I can't think of any other specific incidents or events. There was the occasional panty raid by Loyola men. Have you heard about those?

Q

Funnily enough, I was transcribing part of the Skyscraper last week and I came across a panty raid article. And yes, please tell me more.

Drake: Well, they would just show up periodically and begged the women to throw panties out the dormitory windows to them. I don't know. I never did it. I never participated in it. I had no idea what the point of it was. But that seemed to be a thing for some of the—and I don't know whether it was some fraternity members or what—but it always struck me as being very bizarre.

Q: That is just something that blew my mind when I read about it.

Drake: I know. Beyond that, we didn't have much interaction with Loyola. Okay, they were Loyola and we were Mundelein. We were proud to be Mundelein. It's partly the younger sibling syndrome of just we were going to show them that we were just as good as they were. And just because they were bigger and just because they had more men, they didn't have anything over us. So when Mundelein became part of Loyola for some of us there was a sadness that we've now been gobbled up by the big guy. And we've lost our independence—we were very, very proud of our independence. We didn't have a very big campus. You had that little horseshoe of grass in front of—between the Skyscraper and in front of Coffey Hall and then the old library. But we used to brag that we had the world's largest underwater campus, and therefore you couldn't discount us as just some little women's liberal arts college. We were important. We mattered.

Q: Most definitely. Yeah. What was the initial reaction that you had or maybe other alums had when you heard that Mundelein was going to be incorporated into Loyola?

Drake: Realistic, but still disappointed. Because of the fact that Mundelein had created that environment where you mattered because of who you were. Not because of your gender, not because of your race or your religious beliefs, but because of who you were. It was a small enough school that you could be yourself and grow into the person that you wanted to be, with support from the faculty and the administration. And not knowing whether that element would be lost when you became part of the larger organization.

Q: Yeah, I see what you mean there.

Drake: Now, based on my experience at the University of Chicago and my experience going to the University of Michigan for law school, I learned that it's a combination of the institution and the individual that lets you grow and develop and that the larger institution can give you more to take advantage of.

[01:00:00]

Q: That is true, most definitely.

Drake: Now, I support Loyola [inaudible].

Q: It's a double-edged sword, right?

Drake: Yes. But I appreciate the extent to which Loyola has continued to recognize some of the core values and principles of Mundelein and to keep that alive. In the Gannon Center. And in the way it continues to recognize the value of Mundelein as part of its program and part of its history. And it didn't have to do that. It was just taken over the buildings and said, "We're Loyola. Now you're Loyola, and Mundelein had its day." And the fact that you're doing this project, the fact that Loyola keeps that focus and keeps Mundelein alive in that way, I appreciate that.

Q: Yes. We definitely still value the contribution that Mundelein had to the area and to women such as yourselves. I mean, this project has taught me so much about what Mundelein meant to all of you. And it's truly wonderful to hear all of your stories and hear firsthand the experiences that you had and the impact—the long-standing impact—that Mundelein had on you all as individuals.

Drake: I envy what you get to do and what you get to learn in this project. I think it must be really interesting.

Q: Well, it'll all be posted online, hopefully this semester.

Drake: Okay. So what started this? What was the impetus?

Q: Well, every year Mundelein has the reunions. And I know that, especially the past few years, there's been the focusing on fiftieth reunions for people. And now that more have come up, there's been a push to kind of hear more from the students themselves and find a way to incorporate their experiences into the Women and Leadership Archives collection. Because it's definitely something that our archival director, Emily, has noticed as a gap in the Mundelein College collection. That we don't have input from the student experience, we just have mainly administrative documents.

Drake: And I read the Wikipedia.

Q: Yeah, right. This is a way to—.

Drake: Not a student focus.

Q: Yeah. So it's a way to bring things back to the students and expand the collection in a way that will benefit everybody.

Drake: Yeah. Good. That's a great thing to do, capturing the memories. But hopefully also serving as an incentive to others to understand what their potential is. If you had told me when I was a Mundelein student that I was going to end up as vice president of administration and legal affairs for divisions of a Fortune 500 company, I would have said, "Yeah, right. In your dreams, but not in mine." But it's all connected. The Mundelein education has fed into everything that I've done.

Q: And that's something that I've definitely heard multiple times from other narrators such as yourself. So I think that's just really cool to see that through line personally. Well, I like to ask this final question. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you have thought of during our talk today or maybe leading up to this today that you would like to share or talk about?

Drake: I'm sure there are things I've forgotten. I'm sure there are things I could have said, and I can't come up with anything else at this point.

Q: That's totally fine. I think we've covered a large range of topics today, and it's been really great hearing it. Honestly, you've had a unique experience, I think, and we value this input that you're giving us.

Drake: Good. Well, thank you. I understand you're scheduled to talk to Linda in February, so she'll give you a very different perspective. She was there two years longer than I was. But get her to talk about her own career development because she eventually started her own talent

agency and was recognized as one of the outstanding talent agents—and talent agents in Chicago.

[01:05:00]

Q: Okay, I'll be sure to include that most definitely. Well, thank you for your time today, and thank you for agreeing to participate in this I'm going to stop our recording now, but like you to stay on so that we can talk about next steps and everything.

Drake: That's fine. Thank you.