

SHARE YOUR STORY: STUDENT LIFE AT MUNDELEIN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Phyllis Fornear Fredericksen's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Phyllis Fornear Fredericksen conducted by Melissa Newman on February 14, 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 history, how she ended up at Mundelein, and the interview to get into Mundelein with Sister Ann Ida Gannon.

[5:00 - 10:00]

Interview continued, on campus living as a five-day resident, living in Rogers Park, and the snowstorm of 1967.

[10:00 - 15:00]

On campus living continued, difference between Northland and Coffey, and curfew.

[15:00 - 20:00]

Candlelighting, roommates, and commuting to campus.

[20:00 - 25:00]

Parent's opinion on her living on campus and coming back for the weekends, dating scene at Mundelein, and fire drills at the dorm.

[25:00 - 30:00]

Winter formal and classes she took.

[30:00 - 35:00]

Freshman red beanie, being on the school newspaper, and stand out professors she had.

[35:00 - 40:00]

Professors continued: ones she remembers and her impression of them.

[40:00 - 45:00]

Sister Ann Ida Gannon, working at the library, and faculty that made an impact on her.

[45:00 - 50:00]

Places on and off campus to study, dining hall meals, breaking dress code rules, assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., and protests in the South.

[50:00 - 55:00]

Protests in Chicago after the assassination of MLK and campus reactions, on campus protests of the Vietnam War, and penpal program with Vietnam War soldiers.

[55:00 - 1:00:00]

Being a feminist and the contrast between Mundelein and the rest of the world.

[1:00:00 - 1:05:00]

Changes in Mundelein over the time she attended, Christmas candlelighting, and the sense of community at Mundelein.

[1:05:00 - 1:08:21]

Coming back to campus recently, familial connections to the campus, and interview wrap ups.

NARRATOR BIO

Dr. Phyllis Fornear Fredericksen was born in 1946 in Chicago. She lived in Park Ridge with her parents and two younger brothers, attending Catholic elementary and high schools. Phyllis remembers her father wanting her to attend the University of Illinois, but after going to relatively smaller schools, the University of Illinois was intimidatingly large. After talking to a Mundelein representative at a college fair, Phyllis applied to attend college there. Upon walking into the Skyscraper building for the first time, she felt like she was home.

As a freshman, Phyllis was a five-day resident at Northland Hall, sharing a two-bedroom apartment with three other women. Since her family lived in the Chicago suburbs, she tried commuting her sophomore year, but missed the connections and relationships one makes after classes in the evenings in the dorms and around campus, so she moved back into Northland for her final two years. Phyllis worked in the basement of the library during her freshmen year as part of a work study and socialized through mixers, formals, games of bridge in Lewis Center, food and drinks at Hamilton's and Cindy Sue's, and watching "All My Children" in the lounge. During Phyllis' time at Mundelein, there was also a lot of significant national events happening in the United States such as Martin Luther King, Jr. being assassinated and the Vietnam War.

For graduation, Phyllis and a few other classmates asked for Sister Ann Ida to present their diplomas to them instead of the Cardinal (as was tradition), and Sister Ann Ida made that happen. Phyllis felt very privileged and special for that experience. She has nothing but the highest regard for the nuns and professors at Mundelein. They always encouraged Phyllis to ask questions and form her own opinions. She credits her continued love of learning to her experiences at Mundelein.

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

Narrator: Phyllis Fornear-Frederickson Locations: Palatine, IL and St. Louis, MO via
Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman Date: February 14, 2022

[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW]

Q: Ok. For the record, my name is Melissa Newman. I am a graduate assistant at the Women and Leadership Archives interviewing Dr. Phyllis Fornear Fredericksen, class of 1968, on February 14, 2022 for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. I'm in Palatine, Illinois, and Phyllis is in St. Louis, Missouri. So to start us off, Phyllis, would you just tell me a little bit about yourself, like when you were born, where you were raised and your family?

Fredericksen: Oh, sure. Family history, no problem. I was born in 1946 in Chicago, and we lived on the northwest side of Chicago—very close to Park Ridge, and went to elementary and high school there. And I have two brothers, so I was the oldest, and we lived in that house from about—I think we moved there from Chicago, I want to say '51 or '52 maybe. My mother had that house until she passed away in '78 or '79.

Q: And being in the Chicago area, did you always know of Mundelein or did you know the path to getting to college?

Fredericksen: Well, I was trying to remember how I got interested in Mundelein, and I can't recall exactly. But I'm thinking—I went to Resurrection High School on the Northwest side of Chicago and a girl's Catholic private school. And it was probably a college night that we had, and somebody from Mundelein probably was there. And we went—just like you do today, go to all the different booths and talk to different people. And I remember that my dad was really big on wanting me to go to the University of Illinois. And I just thought after coming from a small elementary school and a small Catholic high school, I just cringed at the thought of all those people. I just didn't think that would suit me. And when I talked to the Mundelein person, it sounded like it would be fun. And I love the lake [Lake Michigan]. And when we went down there, when I applied and was asked to interview to get in, I remember walking into that Skyscraper and thinking, this is home, this is the atmosphere. Everything about it, the person who we spoke with, it was wonderful. I just had a really strong feeling. And it's interesting because I'm in contact with some other friends from Mundelein, and we all say the same thing. We came from all over the country, but we all centered on Mundelein. And the minute we touched campus, there was something about the place that we just all really loved.

Q: Do you recall anything about the interview process itself? And—well, yeah, just the process itself.

Fredericksen: Boy, I know my mother took me and that was interesting in itself. Because in those days—so that would be like '60—I guess I graduated high school in '64. So really, at that time,

many, many girls did not go to school, did not continue their education. They went to work, and they got married. And I wanted to go to college. My dad never even asked if I wanted to go. It was always you're going. Find a place. And my mother was always of the opinion that I should go to work and proceed like everybody else did. But she took me to the interview, so I can't remember that even that conversation with her. But I thought remembering that was pretty funny for me. I want to say we were in one of those offices on the first floor, but I can't remember who interviewed me. And I don't think it was Ann Ida [Sister Ann Ida Gannon, BVM]. It might have been somebody else, but I know the person just asked about why you want to come to school, why you want to continue your education, what you hope to do in the future. I had written—you had to write an essay, I guess you still write essays for college entrance. And I remember her commenting about how well mine was written. And I've always just been a really good writer. So not much on taking standardized test things, but always could write essay tests really well. And so she commented on that, and we just kind of talked about that. And I don't remember a lot of the exact questions, but I remember having a very good feeling about it.

Q: Do you recall the time period in which you applied, interviewed, and were accepted and then attended?

Fredericksen: No, vaguely. So probably would have been probably early in '64, I'm guessing. January, February, and then maybe interviewed—it seemed to me it was warm out.

[05:00]

Fredericksen: I don't remember going in the winter. And in Chicago, you'd know, it was winter, so it was warmer. And then I just remember after the interview, they just thank you, and you go home. So I didn't know if I was accepted. But then I got a letter saying that they had accepted me. And I remember being very excited and the whole college thing. And my mom taking me shopping for clothes for school because again, back in the day—and I was a five-day resident, I lived at Northland [Hall]. And so if you were in the dining hall—actually, we couldn't wear pants on campus at all. We had to wear skirts. So mom took me out and bought me—we bought a lot of jumpers, I remember with long sleeve blouses and turtlenecks knee socks and loafers. But that was kind of the outfit of the day. And I remember for graduation, my parents gave me a luggage set, and that's what—huge, which I would never even dream of taking on a trip today. But those ginormous suitcases and makeup case, the whole thing and packing all my clothes in there and moving into Northland. And it was scary, but it was exciting at the same time, for sure.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about living at Northland as a five-day residence specifically?

Fredericksen: Sure. Northland was very cool. And I guess I knew Coffey [Hall] was there. And I want to say a lot of the five-day residents were assigned to Northland, and that probably was their policy. I'm just not sure about that. But Northland was really an apartment building that Mundelein had bought when they needed more space for residents as the school became more populated. And we, as freshmen, we were in larger suites. So there were two bedrooms, a bathroom, and there was a little area with like a double French door thing that was like a kitchen. You had a refrigerator and your phone, if you wanted a phone, was in that little section. And so I

had—there were four of us in that. And I remember the Sister who was in charge of us was Thomas. I think her name was Thomas Joseph. I was thinking about that today, and I just remember she was delightful. She was fun, but she always listened to you, you could always go to her with all of our problems of the day. Being a five-day resident on Friday we went home. My mother would come and pick me up and would take me home. And you could stay on the weekend if you paid a fee. I guess it was for meals or whatever. But I didn't do that often freshman year. I did that more often junior and senior year as I got more acquainted with a lot more people.

Fredericksen: I just liked the atmosphere. I really hadn't been on my own very much at all as a high school student and certainly before that. So being on a college campus on your own, in basically an apartment setting, which it was kind of fun. So exploring the neighborhood. Cindy Sue's hamburger place down by the 'L,' Hamilton's, the bar with the pool tables I remember very well. We'd love to go play pool there. And just exploring that whole neighborhood, and I can't even think of—and now my grandson lives right down there. So I just can't think of the names of the streets. But just going shopping or going out for—actually, we were sent out for groceries because we were there during the storm of—the big snowstorm. I want to say it was '67. I think I was a junior and everything in the city was shut down. There was not one car on Lake Shore Drive. That snow was piled high. In fact, as they plowed the sidewalks to get to the Skyscraper from Northland, it was like two giant walls of snow. It was that deep. And so we couldn't go home. So five-day residents had to stay, and the cafeteria was running out of food. So we volunteered to go shopping, and they gave us money, and we were told to buy whatever we could eggs, milk, stuff like that, bread, whatever. So there were like five of us who trooped up

to—gosh I wish I could think of the name of that street where the grocery store was. And we brought groceries home. And in fact, one of my college friends, we were talking about that a little while ago when there was a snowstorm where she lived in Michigan, and she said, "Remember when we went to go get groceries, and we were walking what we thought was a sidewalk? And actually we walked on top of a car." Because the snow was so high that you couldn't tell where you were. And so we just kept walking. But that's a strong memory of just totally closed down.

[10:00]

Fredericksen: So that was through the weekend. And I'm not sure that we went to class on Monday. Maybe it was Tuesday because the whole entire city was just shut. That was it. That was a very strong memory. When I was a sophomore, I decided I'd try commuting, and it was okay. It wasn't the same thing. And junior year I went back to the dorm. But I was glad I had both experiences, just to sort of see what it was like. But junior and senior year in Northland, you had just one roommate and just a one bedroom little apartment kind of thing. So that was also nice. And at the end of the hall there was a—you might call it like a living room kind of thing. TV, big TV—not big like today, but big for us—and couches and stuff. And there was a little kitchen there too. So we would have birthday parties there for friends or watch movies together. If you could get out of class at noon, we'd run in there to watch All My Children, which had just pretty much come on the air. And everybody was fascinated with All My Children and stuff like that. But Northland was very cool. And we used to walk up to Coffey also because a lot of our friends lived over there.

Q: Yeah. I was going to ask. I feel like there would be a very distinct living situation and difference in community with Northland and Coffey. So do you know about any of that? Could you speak to any of that?

Fredericksen: We were all friends because we were in class together, even the commuters. And there was a commuter lounge in the basement kind of thing—lockers and stuff for people. So we were friends with everybody. So basically if somebody was doing something in Coffey, like, "Oh, come on over to our rec room," or whatever, we'd go over there or they'd come over to us depend—like we had a birthday party for my roommate, for instance. Everybody would come over to us, and we'd have a party in our little lounge. So I think it was a very different experience. I remember going up to a room as a freshman and seeing the difference. Because Coffey was a dorm, two beds and the bathrooms were down the hall and that kind of thing. And so I just thought, I'm just a fan of Northland. I loved it there, but it was very different living for sure. But like I said, we were all friends, so we would walk, and it was just down, not even a couple of feet from Northland, basically. But we had curfews until, I think, I want to say, senior year. Seniors didn't have a curfew, but other than that, we had curfews. And even if you were Coffey Hall, you have to back at Northland by whatever it was, eleven or whatever on school—weeknights or something. So we'd be running back as fast as we could to get back to Northland before curfew, before we were in big trouble.

Q: Yeah, did you ever miss curfew or break curfew, whether by accident or on purpose?

Fredericksen: Oh, never. (Laughs) Yeah, of course. And then talk your way out of it as best as you could. But I never got—I don't want to say detention, but I think you had to stay in. Like they'd tell you, "The rest of the week you're in. You can't leave your dorm." But I never got that because we were able to talk our way out of whatever we did.

Q:

Do you remember any specific incidents in which you had to talk your way out of?

Fredericksen: You know, I can remember one when we were seniors, and they used to have the tradition was candlelighting. And I don't know how long that lasted. But if a girl got engaged, they would tell their roommate or their best friend or whatever, and that person would go to the floor monitor—the person in charge of the floor, and they would announce that there was a candlelighting that evening. So after dark, we'd all gather in the hallway, kind of sit in a big circle on our floor. And we would invite people from Coffey. So Coffey would also invite us. So, of course, one night we all went to Coffey because somebody said someone got engaged, and they want you there. So we trooped over to Coffey and the deal was we sang a song. Somebody picked a song, like Moon River was popular, and that kind of thing. And somebody lit a candle, and that candle went around as a circle and around the circle. And finally, after two or three times around, the girl who was engaged blew the candle out. And of course, everybody screams, then you're partying, and you're so excited. And of course, we weren't watching the time that time.

[15:00]

Fredericksen: And I want to say we had to be—that rule must have still been in place because I remember that we were seniors, and it was after eleven o'clock, and we ran back, and we did. We just kept telling Sister, it was Thomas Joseph, and we kept telling her, "But so-and-so got engaged, and we had to be there for the school and for our friendship." And I think she just must have laughed so hard after we left. Okay, fine. Just go back to your room. So that was really the only excitement.

Q: But you would also have the candlelighting ceremonies at Northland just in your halls, or would you go to a lounge at the end of the floor or something.

Fredericksen: We always did it in hallways on our own floor. Yeah.

Q: Okay. And then in terms of the five-day resident thing, I know there was also a Weekend College. So would they also kind of rent out your room if you were gone on the weekdays to those on the or if you were gone on the weekends, did they give them to the people that were studying on the weekends?

Fredericksen: I want to say that Weekend College wasn't in place when I was in school there. But I'd have to do some research because I don't remember that happening, or I don't remember

them saying that your room will be used, make sure it's clean or whatever, which they probably would have told us. So it just might have not been in place when I was in school.

Q: Okay. That's fair. Yeah, I can't remember the exact date that they started it, but it was just on my mind. And I think that's interesting because then what happens to your room on the weekends? I guess it just stays as it is?

Fredericksen: Right. Yeah, pretty much.

Q: Okay. What do you remember about your roommates?

Fredericksen: Well, I remember freshman year. Actually, one of my roommates was a girl I sort of knew from high school—a neighborhood girl. I didn't know her really well, but I sort of knew her. And then two other girls who I didn't know at all, but one was from a neighborhood close to mine. So we had something in common. But living with four girls after being the only girl at home with two brothers was very different for me. Must be like when you have sisters, I never had sisters. So I don't know that there—there weren't fights or anything, but I think there were arguments and I think there was girl stuff. And then people, of course, then you've got four wardrobes to choose from, basically because you're, two closets were full of clothes. So we did that a lot. That was something.

Fredericksen: As a junior and senior, I only had one roommate. And I'm in—one junior year and then one senior year—and I'm in contact. I was in contact with junior year one, and we kind of lost contact. But my senior year roommate, she's in a group that we text with almost every day now through the pandemic, so that's kind of fun. She was in Coffey freshman and sophomore year and then moved to Northland.

Q: And what was that transition to and from when you were commuting and how was that different? Was it that—how did that affect your relationships with girls at school? What was that year like for you?

Fredericksen: First of all, I didn't drive. So one of my—another commuter who lived kind of close to me—actually, she was my roommate freshman year, but she decided to commute the rest of the time. So I drove with her sometimes when we had classes at the same time. But a lot of times I took the bus, and it was like two buses to get there. Two or three to get all the way to Mundelein and the lake. It's a long time to sit on a bus. Sometimes I'd study or read whatever, but I think that took away a little bit. And I think more importantly, you kind of lost a little bit of that touch with people who were living there, and you knew them, but you weren't a part of the meals anymore or a part of socializing that went on in the evenings. Certainly you weren't there for parties and stuff or even mixers. That's why we, in junior and senior years, stayed on the weekends much more. You certainly could go to them, but because I didn't drive, I just didn't do that. And I think that was a very different experience living at home but being in college and at home, you had to follow home rules. So that was way different than being—so I think that all played a part in me really wanting to go back junior year and live on campus.

[20:00]

Q: And what did your parents think about you living on campus, coming back and then going back again? I imagine there was a money factor in which, "Oh, we don't have to pay for this anymore. That's nice."

Fredericksen: Right, for sure. I'm sure that was all part of it. So I think they were a little happy about that. But I don't remember any argument at all about me going back to live on campus. So I guess I was lucky in that respect. I think they understood that my friends were all there, and I just wanted that full experience. But I don't remember anybody telling me, "No, you can't," or "You have to pay for yourself," or any of that. I do remember, however, senior year, my junior year roommate got an apartment on, I want to say it was Fargo. It was right across the street from the Alpha Delt[a] House, and we were dating guys in that house. So she got an apartment, and she said—we thought we were going to move in together because I was set, this cute little apartment she had, and I was just so excited and whatever. And I remember telling my mother something about, "Oh, yeah, I'm moving in with Danni," and my mother saying, "Really? How are you going to pay for that?" And I totally can see my face to this day, my jaw dropping, going, "Well, you're paying for it. You and dad?" "Oh, no, we'll pay for school, and we'll pay for the dorm, but we're not paying for you to live in an apartment." So that was the end of that dream. So pretty much went back to Northland.

Q: Can you tell me a bit about the dating scene and like, the mixers and parties you mentioned?

Fredericksen: Yeah, we went to a lot of Loyola mixers. Honestly, I don't remember Mundelein ones, but maybe we didn't have them because Loyola was like right there. We did have—freshman year, they had a big picnic and a lot of us met guys at that big freshman picnic.

Freshman guys from Loyola and freshman gals from Mundelein. But obviously we went to the mixers and Mundelein did have dances. Like I think we had spring formal maybe, or maybe a winter formal. I remember going to those and those were always in hotels in Chicago. So like prom kind of stuff. The mixers were fun. I remember there were a lot of little—they were bars, but they were like places—like when I went there, there was a lot of folk bars. Especially on Wells Street in Chicago and down on Lake Shore Drive, if you just kept going north. And we would often do that instead of going to mixers, or we go to the mixer and then start walking, because we were kind of close. So we did that kind of thing.

Fredericksen: We did a lot of—Lewis Center was the union, Mundelein's union underneath Coffey Hall. And we played bridge there all the time. My roommate was a bridge fanatic, so we played bridge continually and met a lot of guys because a lot of the Loyola guys would come over and play cards with us or just sit and talk with us. So we get to know a lot of the boys. And Northland is on the corner of—or was because it's not there anymore—but a Lake Shore Drive, and I want to say that's Kenmore, that street. I think it is Kenmore. And so there was a fraternity house on that corner. I think it was, it wasn't the Sigma Delta—no, maybe that was the Alpha Delta and the Sigma Delt's were on Fargo. And they used to call in and find out—they used to have friends in the dorm or whatever—and find out when our fire drills were. So you never knew

when a fire drill at the dorms, they just would pull the alarm just like you would in school. And it would be like ten or eleven at night and everybody's in the pajamas and the curlers and stuff. And they'd pull it, and you'd have to leave. And you'd walk out of Northland and all the guys in fraternity were standing along Lake Shore Drive on the other side of the street hollering and screaming and laughing. And it was exciting. That's a very fond memory.

Q: That's funny too, that they would have the drills at ten or eleven at night. I've never had a fire drill that late. Wow.

Fredericksen: I guess to make sure that if, you know, if people were sleeping or whatever, that you knew to get out instead of stopping to figure out what you were going to wear.

[25:00]

Q: And I did see in the Skyscraper that you were in charge of ticket sales for a winter formal one year. Does that ring a bell at all?

Fredericksen: Very vaguely. Very vaguely. I don't have much memory of that at all. That's funny.

Q: But you said those would be sort of held at a hotel downtown? What was that experience like of getting all dressed up and going downtown?

Fredericksen: So while I was a five-day resident, my date would pick me up at home. So it was pretty much like prom, except you were older, and we all go downtown and meet our friends. And it was very much like a prom thing. Big band kind of thing, it's in ballrooms wherever. I can't remember the hotels that we had a map, but it was fun just to get dressed up in a formal again. I remember shopping with my mother for winter formal. My formal. I remember distinctly that was a red velvet long dress. And I don't remember the spring formal one as well as I do the winter one. But I do remember I asked a boy that I got to know in the union who was a really good friend of another girl on the floor, an older girl who I was friends with. And she kept telling me to ask him and ask him, and I kept saying, "Oh, he's old. He won't want to go with me." And she kept encouraging me. So I finally asked him, and we really had a good time, but we never dated after that. But he was just a nice guy.

Q: All right. Shifting gears a little bit to the academic side of Mundelein, could you tell me about what you studied and your classes?

Fredericksen: Sure. Yeah, we did go to school there, actually, too. On top of all the fun. Yeah. I was a history major, actually. And I remember going into the Skyscraper as a freshman. Of course, with our beanies on, we had to wear red beanies. And during that kind of first beginning of the year. And the deal was if you go in those big doors on the front of the Skyscraper and there's on the floor, there's a big Mundelein emblem, and then there's a statue of Jesus as you walk in. And there's I want to say there's an elevator to your right. But if you walk around to the

office section, where there are offices on that main floor also, and if you walked around that to the left, there was an also elevator and a stairway. So when we went to classes, we would either walk way up or we'd get on that elevator. You could never use the elevator in the front hall if you were a freshman, you weren't permitted to. I mean, that was kind of a tradition thing. And God help you if you walked across that Mundelein insignia, it was all over. That was a senior privilege, and you never walked on that. Ever.

Fredericksen: We took pretty much—I did the history major and an English minor. And in the middle of—I want to say sophomore year, maybe it was junior year. They changed from quarters to trimesters, and I'd never even heard of that before. And that was very interesting because then we had so many credits already that when we went to trimesters, there weren't a lot of classes left to take. It was a funny way you had to balance that out. So they were trying to work that out. And so I ended up senior year with—I needed hours that I had taken everything in my major and my minor. So I ended up taking Russian literature and journalism. So I was on the paper for a little while with that. I took, oh God, housing and home decoration. I thought that was hysterical. And one of the girls was dating an architect student at the University of Chicago, and he did all of our architect drawings for us because we just figured he would do it. So, hey, do it. But it was just kind of fun. We took stuff that—I think it was neat because it was stuff I enjoyed, but I probably would never have taken otherwise because I would need to get my hours in and my courses for my major. So it was a nice opportunity. And we also had a lot of Fridays where there were no classes or else a class at eight thirty, and that was it. So on Fridays, we could take the class or get up whatever and go out to the beach and just sit there. That was kind of a nice perk also.

Q: Okay. And could you explain what the red beanie was? Why was that a thing?

Fredericksen: You know what? I can show you a red beanie if you like. Hold on.

[30:00]

Fredericksen: So when you were freshman back in the day. So this is from our fiftieth reunion, and one of my friends, who was an art major, made them for all of us and gave them to us at the reunion. I got my little fifty-year pin there. But she made these because we had to wear these. Like when you first—it was like initiation kind of, for freshmen. So when we first went, I think we wore them through October, but you had to have your beanie all the time. So this is the beanie.

Q: Was that just kind of a signal to everyone else? Like, oh, we can help them along a little bit more or just to identify you in some way?

Fredericksen: Yeah, that's exactly. And I think so for us, it was because you knew all the freshmen. You got to know each other because everybody had a stupid beanie on. But there was also some "give them a little trouble" kind of thing. There was never anything vicious, or I don't even think mean, actually, I never really experienced that at Mundelein. But just a little poking fun kind of stuff. But really, even those fire drills I mentioned, you had to have that beanie with

you because seniors on the floor would go, "Where's your beanie?" (Laughs) Back in the burning building. So that kind of fun stuff.

Q: And you said you were on the paper for a little bit. Could you talk about that?

Fredericksen: Yeah. It was part of that journalism class I took. Whether I was a junior or senior, it eludes me. But anyway, I like to write, and I did some editorials, but very few I'm sure. I was much better at that than reporting, so that's what I did. I really still like to write a lot, so it kind of fit in. And I remember, gosh, was it Sister Sharon [Sister Mary Sharon Rose, BVM]? That name comes to mind, but I don't know that I'm right. But I could be. And we would meet in one of the rooms in the Skyscraper, and we would go over—we'd work putting the paper, cutting and pasting the articles on the paper. In those days, you cut and paste and put them on the layout, and then they ran them off for everybody. It was pretty old ways to do things, but that's a long time ago.

Q: Before you joined the Skyscraper newspaper. Were you aware of it? Did you read it yourself usually, or was it something that just was kind of around, but you didn't pay much attention to?

Fredericksen: No, I really read it. I think everybody did it. It was kind of the news of what was going on and a lot of good information, first of all, about events that were going to happen. And then just some interesting articles about students or teachers. So it was kind of a way to keep up with what was happening at school.

Q: Where did you get them? Were they delivered to the dorms? Somewhere in the Skyscraper?
In the Tea Room?

Fredericksen: Yeah. I'm kind of thinking they were like, for instance, in the Tea Room, for sure, like on a table as you came in, or in the Skyscraper at Northland. They were down in the lobby area that you just picked them up as you went, that kind of thing.

Q: And now for your classes, were there any stand out professors that you had? Any of the Sisters that you really enjoyed taking classes from?

Fredericksen: I was trying to think today, I don't think there was one that I didn't like or didn't enjoy the class. They were just really good. And it was so different. As I said, I went to an all-girl Catholic high school and all the nuns there were in full habit and that's from '60 to '64. They totally—and they were lived in a convent, and that was it. I go to Mundelein and you couldn't tell who was a Sister and who was a lay teacher because the nuns all dressed so beautiful. I just remember all of us saying, "Gosh, I wish I had that suit," or "I wish I had that dress." They just dressed beautifully. And they lived in apartments up and down Lake Shore Drive, too. I think they had a wider worldview, maybe. So they brought that into classes, and I loved it. Margaret Thornton [Sister Margaret (Crescentia) Thornton, BVM], who was the chair when I was there, of the History Department. I thought she was just amazing. That woman, what she knew. I mean, it was amazing to me.

[35:00]

Fredericksen: Who else? We had Sister Jean [Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM], actually, for an education class. I want to say it was kiddie literature, but it might not have been. But I know we had Sister Jean because we've all talked about—we've watched her at the games, and we've seen her on TV and stuff. And we all remember taking courses from her in education. Paul O'Dea, Mr. O'Dea taught English composition. And as I said, I like to write. So I really enjoyed that class a lot. And I thought he was great. The French teacher, Dr. [Agnes] Blanc, I had taken Latin in high school for four years, and why I didn't continue is anybody's guess. So I took French to be different. And it was almost the undoing of my career at Mundelein. It was horrible, and I don't even know why, because I had all that Latin that I couldn't figure out the French. But she was unrelenting. I mean, I wouldn't say she was ever unkind, but, boy, she pushed you till you passed. Thank God she did, because I would never have made it without her help, for sure. And I think I want to say that Thomas Joseph, who was kind of the head of the Northland, I kind of think she taught a theology class also. And I liked her a lot, but we knew her from living in the apartments. And there was also, oh gosh, Father Senski. Father Senski was from Loyola, a Jesuit, from Loyola, and he taught a philosophy class at Mundelein. And at the time, he was also kind of, I want to say, chaplain, kind of for some of the fraternities. And actually he was chaplain for the Sigma Deltas. And many of us were dating Sigma Delta guys, I think must have been senior year. So for an assignment, he'd have us do coll—those days, collages were really popular. Collages of our philosophy or whatever else it was. And all you had to do was go up to him and say, "Oh, Father, do you know so-and-so and so-and-so?" "Oh, yeah," he said, "Sigma Delt."

"Yeah, I date him. I'm going out with him." "Really A-plus." I mean, really, it was wonderful. Nothing like using, you know. But if it works, it works. But I remember that was pretty funny because all of us who were dating guys in the fraternity all got A's in that class. It was very interesting.

Q: In terms of the faculty as a whole, and maybe the nuns specifically, what could you say about them and their efforts towards teaching and the kind of ethos of Mundelein?

Fredericksen: Well, I would have nothing but—I had nothing but the highest regard for all of them. Because first of all, like I said, they just seemed to have a wider world view than other Sisters that I'd come into contact with. But, of course, I was older, too, so maybe I saw more. But they were very concerned about the world, and about justice, and the Earth before that was even something we talked about. And they really put that into us. And they encouraged us. They encouraged us a lot to ask questions. And my father had taught me early on, you don't believe everything somebody tells you or everything you read. You find the source, and you question. Now, in elementary school and high school, you never question the nuns because that was like a mortal sin. No one ever did that. Forget it. And so I went to college, and you were encouraged to say, "Wait a minute, I don't understand, or I don't agree." And so that was really different. And they were so respectful of that, of your questions and helping you find a source or helping you find an answer. I just thought they were amazing.

Fredericksen: And [Sister] Ann Ida Gannon was just—I don't think any of us can express how much we dearly love that woman. She would listen to you on the silliest things. Everything was

important to her. Every single thing that affected us. One year, our senior year, the tradition was to have the Cardinal from the Archdiocese be at your graduation ceremony and hand you your diploma. And there were about ten of us who got together and went to her and said that we just did not want that to happen at our graduation. We wanted our diploma from her because this was our school. She was such a huge influence. She was one of the group.

[40:00]

Fredericksen: She was never the president of the college. She was always one of the group. And she made it happen. He was still there, but we never had anything—he was up there, but we all got our diplomas from Sister Mary Ann Ida, and that was a treasure.

Q: That's wonderful. She was really of the people, right.

Fredericksen: Without a doubt. Like I said, she just never she'd see you in the hallway, and she'd know who you were and talk to you. I remember going to an alumnae event when I still lived in Chicago. It was a fashion show at some hotel out in the suburbs, maybe Hoffman Estates or something like that. And everybody waited in line to say hi to her. And she would go, "Phyllis, how are you doing? What are you doing to now? And do you have children or whatever?" She would just know you. Like, how in the world does she do that? But she would just know you. And I just dearly loved that woman.

Q: Yeah, I definitely get the sense of when she was president there, she was very much like the spirit of Mundelein.

Fredericksen: Without a doubt. And I think it helped you to feel that so much that you were a part, and it was your place.

Q: Let's see, I also remember reading in your initial intake form that you worked at the library your freshman year. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Fredericksen: Sure. Yeah. Because it was like a work study thing where you could earn money for your tuition. So to help out, I worked in the library. I don't think it was many—it was in the evening and maybe two nights a week. But they put me down in the basement of the library, and I can't even think of what sections were down there. But it was very spooky down there. It was very dark. There you were at that desk, checking out books with the old stamper and whatever. And there were some students down there, but everybody was basically on the first floor studying or getting stuff out. Not a lot of people came downstairs, and downstairs was a true basement. There were stacks of books, but also furnaces and all that kind of stuff. So you heard a lot of sounds. And when you were there alone, I remember being spooked, like, a lot, but it was fun. I only did it the freshman year. I didn't do it anymore.

Q: Do you have another job to continue the work study in subsequent years?

Fredericksen: I didn't, no. I convinced my parents that I really needed to devote my time to studying, and they bought that. So that was great. It was wonderful.

Q: Do you remember anything about your supervisor at the library and what they were like?

Fredericksen: No, I really don't. So sorry. I just don't have any memory of that.

Q: No, that's all right. Any other faculty members that had a large impact on you? Or mainly just the teachers that you mentioned previously?

Fredericksen: Mainly those teachers. But you know who else who actually—Sister Joan Frances [Crowley], who was in charge of Coffey Hall. And she was another one, I want to say she taught history classes, too, but that I'm dim on. But I remember definitely being—she was the advisor person at Coffey Hall. And I remember going over there with my date to pick up another friend and her date. And she would interrogate those boys, I mean, in the sweetest way. She had that way about her that she could ask questions that they would never answer for anybody else. But she would be like your friend. And she really took care of everybody. She was making sure that those boys were okay and that she was going to know all about them before they took out any of her girls. I mean, she was fun. She was a sweetheart. You never wanted to cross her, though, because when you broke a rule, she let you know that. And you had serious talks about breaking that rule. So she was lovely.

Q: She made you feel that she was disappointed in you and just very guilty.

Fredericksen: And then you felt horrible because she was so sweet. In fact, I wrote to her several times after I left. She was just that kind of person. She just enjoyed hearing from the girls.

Q: So where would you go to study or eat, whether on campus or off? And just kind of have fun.

Fredericksen: Well, we always went over to Loyola's library to study. And that was always—if somebody called, if a parent called for you, the person—because there were phones in your apartment, but there were also phones in the hall.

[45:00]

Fredericksen: And so the hall phone would ring. And if it was a parent, the person who was on duty answering the phone for that night would always—the comment always was, "She's in the library studying." So my parents thought that's where I was all the time. And we would go to the library. We would. We didn't always study, but we were at the library a lot because it was a neat place to be. We would go over to Cindy Sue's, which was like the greasy spoon. It was right under the 'L.' I know it's not there anymore because I've been there, and it's no longer there. We ordered pizza out a lot. I don't remember going into a pizza place. Now. When we went back for our fiftieth reunion in 2018, we kind of walked up and down those streets to see if there was

anything remembered. And there's just nothing that old anymore. Everything's kind of different and new.

Q: Yeah, fifty years. A lot can change in the landscape.

Fredericksen: That's for sure. I do remember the meals in the dining hall at dinnertime. They weren't terrific, as I recall. We used to laugh a lot about them. But we also, if you remember, I said we could not wear pants on campus until we were seniors. Senior year, a lot of those rules changed. But until that time, you had to wear a skirt. Well, who wanted to do that? So we would challenge the system by wearing shorts and knee socks and then a trench coat and then went over to dinner. And one evening we were all sitting there in our trench coats because all of us had shorts on. Our Bermuda shorts in those days, like walking shorts with knee socks and trench coats, tightly closed, eating dinner. And in walks Sister Ann Ida Gannon with a gentleman. And she comes right up to the table, "Oh, ladies, there's a gentleman from the," it must have been from the [Chicago] Tribune or something doing some kind of article on the school and wanted to talk to some students. And we were horrified because we are buttoned up to our chins because we didn't want her to know, anybody, to know that we were breaking the rule. We must have said something about, "Oh, you know," our class president was seated at a table across the dining hall, and we all said, "Oh, there's Judy. She'd love to talk to him." So we sent them away thinking, "Oh, thank God," 'cause I think we would have been in trouble. But, yeah, we did that all the time. And as I said, the food was not terrific, but it was okay.

Q: And would you have breakfast, lunch and dinner there? Or was it only one or two meals.

Fredericksen: I remember breakfast and dinner for sure. For lunch, we mostly ate at Lewis Center, like hamburgers, stuff like that.

Q: I didn't realize there was food in Lewis Center.

Fredericksen: Yeah, I can still see the little entry, little window, and we just—you'd order, whatever. And it wasn't like a big deal menu, it was fries. They had shakes, soda, hamburgers, chips, that kind of it was very much a casual kind of thing.

Q: And then in terms of world events, national events, when you were in college. What do you remember of that? Because I know there was a lot going on in the country in the '60s.

Fredericksen: Wow. There sure was. I remember that Mundelein had a group of buses, and they were going to take students down to Mississippi to help enroll—help people register to vote. And I was on board for that. And I was so excited to do that. And of course, I went home for the weekend and I mentioned it. I should never have mentioned it. That was my big mistake. I mentioned it and my father hit the roof. My father just, "You are not getting on a bus and going to Mississippi. No white girl is going to go down." But that's how it was. He would not hear of it. So I couldn't go. But I know a lot of people did, and it was really quite the experience. I

remember very vividly when Bobby Kennedy was shot, and that was just total shock. I mean, the whole place. So school was closed, and we were still there, it might have been I don't even remember the day of the week, but I do remember that we went, you know what? It must have been Martin Luther King [Jr.], not Bobby Kennedy, because I think Bobby Kennedy was killed in June.

[50:00]

Fredericksen: Martin Luther King, though, was in spring, I think I remember. And like kids, we were we decided we go downtown shopping. Where the brain was doesn't even—but I will never, and we would take the bus from Mundelein to, I don't even know if it was State Street or whatever. I don't even know why we're on the bus and not on the 'L.' But I do remember that there was not a sound on the bus. There wasn't anybody on the street. We got downtown, and it was a ghost town, which almost seems ridiculous, but it was totally. And then when we got home, and we watched the news, people were saying, you really shouldn't be doing that kind of thing. People were very upset and angry, and there was a lot of junk going on that we really could have been involved in, but we saw nothing of it. But I recall that very strongly. I don't remember, thinking about the Democratic Convention, but that would have been after we graduated.

Q: And that would have been in the summer as well. Right?

Fredericksen: Right. Yeah. So I don't remember anything else. That was a big deal while I was school.

Q: What were the reactions on campus after Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot?

Fredericksen: Pretty much horrified that anything like that could happen in this country. We saw that with [John F.] Kennedy in '63. But to see it as you're older, to see that that still was happening, it was very horrifying. Everybody walking around crying. I think we even had a prayer vigil at one point. It was a very sad mood across the entire campus. In Loyola also.

[00:52:10:21- 00:52:47:04 redacted due to privacy issues. See WLA archivist for more information]

Q: And the Vietnam War was also happening at that point, too. Do you remember any participation from Mundelein or friends, faculty about anti-war sentiments or anything like that?

Fredericksen: I do recall some protests that happened, but that's pretty vague in my mind, but I do think that was happening. I do remember that we were asked to write to soldiers. A lot of us in the dorms did that. The thing was about that, you'd be writing to somebody, and you didn't know, but they just gave you a list of names, and you wrote to them, and you'd get letters back. And so that was kind of exciting and that kind of thing. Back and forth until you didn't get a letter anymore. And then that feeling was kind of overpowering, like you didn't know if they

were out of the service and went home or if something happened to them. And you never knew because there was no way to find out. So I know we did write to a lot of guys over there.

Q: Do you remember the types of things they would write to you about?

Fredericksen: You know, they would ask a lot of questions about us, about school. Like, what are you studying? What are you doing? What do you like to do when you have fun, and that kind of thing? I'm pretty vague on that, but I do remember that there wasn't a lot of information about the war, because they couldn't write that kind of thing, but like recreation and how hot it was. And I think one person I wrote with—wrote to, I think I remember him saying it was very scary because they pretty much were our age, maybe a little older, but how scared it was—how scary it was to be over there in that situation.

Q: And then my last thought about national events, the Feminist Movement, that was also kind of starting around this time as well, right?

Fredericksen: It was. And boy, I think I was a feminist since I was born.

[55:00]

Fredericksen: But I never knew it, and I didn't know how to express it. But that was something else about Mundelein. It wasn't so much—maybe it was feminist, but it wasn't so much in your face feminism, as you are a person, and you are equal to every other person. And we were taught that, told that it was just ingrained in you, that there was no difference between you and the next guy, male, female. You were all the same, and you can achieve the same things. And I remember then graduating and teaching and then getting married and having children. I think I was one of the very first subscribers to Ms. Magazine back in the day. Marlowe Thomas and other people, Gloria Steinem, and all those people who established that magazine. And reading and just thinking this is just how school was. But school was very different than the world. And when I even talk about anything that even remotely resembled, I'm equal to everybody else or feminism, put down immediately by friends who weren't in college with me. But friends in the neighborhood, that kind of thing, that was just not what they know. That wasn't it. Your place is in the home with your children, taking care of your husband. That kind of stuff went on for a long time, so it was kind of disheartening, but I never lost that. And I'm still very vocal, writing letters and emails and things because obviously I believe that we are all the same and worthy of respect and dignity.

Q: Yeah. How was it to deal with that contrast coming from Mundelein with the rest of the world then?

Fredericksen: It was very difficult. Very difficult. I mean, I remember having conversations with a neighbor friend who had children, too, because my kids were little, and just saying something about, "We've got to take care of ourselves, because if we don't take care of ourselves, we can't

take care of anybody else." I mean, it just seemed to me it was the concept of not taking care of yourself but taking care of your husband and your kids. You've got to be taken care of first.

You've got to be healthy . And I remember, she just argued. I just remember that so clearly, the argument that, "Oh no, the husband comes first, and then your kids come first, and we have to sacrifice." And of course, my mother and my mother-in-law, very much the same. You sacrifice, you make sure those kids are clean when your husband comes home and dinners on the table.

And I kept thinking, I understand he's working all day, but I'm working all day, too. And I'm not having any conversation with anybody over the age of three. So this is not, you know. And so I really knew I wanted to go back to teaching as soon as I possibly could because, I was home, I think ten years with children and that was a long time. I think when you go to school and your mind is open, especially back in the day when your mind is open to all these concepts that you hadn't really thought of before. It takes a while for all that to hit home and for you to process it and reflect on it. And I think I just grew in that and finally was able to go back to teaching and eventually be a principal and just to move out of that. It wasn't that I didn't take care of my kids. I mean, my kids always had food and our house was clean. But I just remember that I thought it would be everybody should participate in that in the house. Everybody, not just the wife. And that was not popular in my house. But the kids soon learned that that's how it was going to be. We're all here, we're all doing work, and we're all going to pitch in. But I've noticed that my son doesn't have children, but my daughter has three, and actually she has two stepchildren and three of her own. And they all help in the house as they grew up. They all were helped in the house because she worked all the way through. She became a single mom also. And she just how do you do this when you've got kids, and you're the adult? Well, this is just like we did at our house, honey. This is what you do. Kids learn to make their lunches on their own. Kids learn how to

fold laundry. And if you want clean clothes, here's how you do it. And I think it did them all very well.

Q: Do you remember if the boys that you dated through college, if they had a sort of traditionally conservative view, and you were kind of disagreeing on certain things like that? Or was it more Liberal feminist thought as well?

Fredericksen: You know, that's really a good question.

[01:00:00]

Fredericksen: I don't remember having any of those discussions or even an argument with any boys about that. Even the guy I eventually married. We really never talked about that. And that's interesting, but it somehow seemed that that was a school thing, and we talked about it in school. And then we graduated, and then, like I said, it was kind of like a school thought, but it didn't carry over to your life unless you really pushed it.

Q: Yeah. Just hearing me talk about it, making me think, have these connections. But that's fair. Did you notice any changes on campus from when you first started at Mundelein to when you graduated, whether they be a physical, traditional, cultural?

Fredericksen: Well, I don't know about changes. I'll think about that. I know that the rules, like in the dorm changed. We didn't really have rules at college for classes and stuff like that. But like I said, the curfews changed. When I was a freshman, boys could not come upstairs. They came to the lobby, and then they called up from the lobby, whoever was on the desk, and told you your date was here or whatever. Or a friend was visiting, whatever. But in senior year, that changed. You could have a boy upstairs in the room as long as the door was open, that kind of thing. And curfew, like I said, for seniors. And that must have changed maybe halfway through the year. And we were able to wear—we never could wear jeans, but you could wear pants to classes and to dinner. So those kind of changes. Boy, I just don't remember changes in other things.

Q: In terms of memorable or meaningful experiences that you had at Mundelein, maybe that we haven't talked about yet. Because I know you've brought up a few, but are there any others that you have found to be really impactful, whether at the time or looking back now?

Fredericksen: You know what? And I wrote down a few notes. I think the thing I remember so well was right before we all left for Christmas vacation. And I want to say they called it candlelighting too, but I don't know if I'm mixing that up with the candlelightings we had on our floors. But we had like a prayer service, liturgy kind of thing. And it was in the Yellow House—so wasn't the Yellow House, like it was next to the library maybe? That was like the first place I ever had experienced Mass where we just all sat around at a table. It was like, you're kidding me. It was just a big deal. But at Christmas they did a liturgy, like a prayer liturgy, and they lit the candles and all that. They lit the trees. And then we walked over to the Skyscraper and seniors led the caroling in the Skyscraper and we all carried a candle over. I mean, that was a real sense

of comm—of course, it's a holiday, too. So you have those holiday feelings, and you were going home to family kind of thing, but that was a real sense of community.

Fredericksen: And I couldn't tell you what other thing. I think everything about Mundelein, we always felt that sense of community right from the very beginning. Whether it was [Sister] Ann Ida Gannon or the other faculty members and all the students you were with. We always had that feeling. But those Christmas things really stayed in my mind for sure. And also the candlelightings when we were engaged, that's just a fun thing. But it was very romantic, of course, and it was lovely. But there was just a lot, I think Mundelein, I think I mentioned this before, I don't know that I was impacted immediately. But I think as I've grown and matured, certainly I loved learning, but it really made me love learning more. And I just kept going to school after I graduated, I just kept going on. And I think that came from the people, the teachers I interacted with, and they gave me that feel for education. And I wanted to be a teacher from a little kid on. So I think in that respect, Mundelein had a huge influence on my life and on my thought and even feminism. And again, it wasn't feminism as like feminism.

[01:05:00]

Fredericksen: It was just that you are as good as everybody else, and you can do whatever you want with your life. I think that spirit came from Mundelein, for sure.

Q: Thank you so much for everything you shared with me today. I can tell from listening to you how much Mundelein impacted you. How much it meant. And how wonderful the experience was. So it's been really great hearing that.

Fredericksen: It's my pleasure. Yeah. I love the place. And my grandson, actually, my daughter, I wanted my daughter to go there so badly, but she was having none of it. And I took her there twice. And actually my oldest grandson now is at Loyola Lakeshore he's studying, doing graduate work in sociology. He lives on Kenmore, a couple of blocks down. And for Easter, this past Easter, my birthday fell on Easter. And so my daughter, granddaughter, and I drove up to see him, and we walked the campus. And of course, I'm pointing out this is this. And I remember going here and doing this, and we were all having such a good time. We took pictures in front, by the angels and the big two doors. And my daughter looks at me and said, "Mom, why did you ever tell me about this place? I love it." And I say, "You know what? You're hopeless." I'm only hoping that the sixteen year-old, maybe is inspired to go here, to come to Loyola and experience this, too. So I don't know if she will. But, in fact my grandson texted me last week and his classes, I guess the term has really just begun over there. And he has a class on the sixth floor of the Skyscraper. And I said, "Oh, you made my heart is so happy you have to take pictures?" Because I think that's so cool, because I remember being on the 6th floor for classes. So that's just tradition going on, I guess. I love the place.

Q: Yeah, that's funny, too. One of my classes this year is on, I think, the fifth floor.

Fredericksen: Really?

Q: Yeah, so I'm going in and out of there as well.

Fredericksen: That's wonderful.

Q: Well, any final thoughts before I end our recording?

Fredericksen: Just to say thank you for doing this. I think it's so important that we have these records. Mundelein may not exist as a college, but I think the spirit is there. And we attended that fiftieth reunion in 2018, and you felt that spirit immediately. All your friends, all the people who were there, we were welcomed so warmly back to the campus. I think it will always be there. And I think maybe these archives will inspire men and women to pursue an education, to pursue places like this that really are not just places where you learn from books, but that you have that community and that spirit that you also learn, I think it serves you well through your life.

Q: Most definitely. That is our goal with this project for sure. Thank you for your time today. I'm going to end the recording, and then I'll just stay on for a couple more minutes, so we can talk about next steps and stuff, okay?

Fredericksen: Okay. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]