

SHARE YOUR STORY: STUDENT LIFE AT MUNDELEIN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Charlene Hincks McLaughlin Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Charlene Hincks McLaughlin conducted by Melissa Newman on January 27, 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 got to Mundelein, what she studied there, and life after Mundelein.

[5:00 - 10:00]

Classes she took, impact of music on her life, instruments she plays, and her job after Mundelein.

[10:00 - 15:00]

Mundelein prepared her for her job and small class sizes at Mundelein.

[15:00 - 20:00]

Music department, faculty, homework, and on-campus housing.

[20:00 - 25:00]

On-campus housing continued, commuting, job while in school, Hackman Hall organ, and organs in general.

[25:00 - 30:00]

Hackman Hall, morning transit, and completing coursework.

[30:00 - 35:00]

Piper Hall as a library and meetings in Hackman Hall.

[35:00 - 40:00]

Performances in Hackman Hall and losing her music sheets during a performance.

[40:00 - 45:00]

Education department being friendly and Mundelein then and now.

[45:00 - 50:00]

Importance of music, picking Mundelein for the small classes, and getting married the same month as graduation.

[50:00 - 52:05]

Wrap up.

NARRATOR BIO

Charlene Hincks McLaughlin was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago. Growing up, Charlene had always loved music, and started playing at the age of seven. She knew she wanted to be a teacher, and her high school English teacher helped her decide on Mundelein College due to its music education program.

Charlene majored in music education and described class sizes being very small: sometimes only four students in a class. This was one reason for her developing close friendships with fellow music education majors Mona Cahill and Audrey Cihlar, who she is still in contact with today. She spent much of her free time studying or practicing the piano and organ, so she was not involved in any on-campus activities or jobs.

After her time at Mundelein, Charlene got a Masters degree from DePaul, had four sons, and taught music to students from kindergarten to junior high for many years. In 2006, she and her husband of 61 years moved to Fort Worth, Texas.

INTERVIEWER BIO

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

Transcriptionist: Chris Mattix

Locations: Palatine, IL and Fort Worth, TX via
Zoom

Narrator: Charlene Hanks McLaughlin

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: January 27, 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 Charlene Hanks McLaughlin, class of 1960, on January 27, 2022, for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. I'm in Palatine, Illinois, and Charlene is in Fort Worth, Texas. So, Charlene, to start us off, could you just tell me a little bit about yourself, like when you were born, where you were raised and your family?

McLaughlin: Okay. I was born in Chicago—Southside of Chicago. And lived there all my life until we moved to Fort Worth in 2006. I went to parochial schools all through. I loved music, and that was kind of what guided me to Mundelein. I started music lessons when I was seven, and I was taught under a Mercy nun until graduation into high school. And I went to Longwood Academy on the South Side of Chicago also and was taught by Notre Dame nuns. And when I was a senior, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. And my senior English teacher was very, very helpful. And I talked to her, and I was debating between DePaul and Mundelein. And we had a talk one day, and I said, "I don't know which would you choose?" And she said, "Mundelein, by all measures." So I applied to Mundelein and was accepted. So I began in September of 1956 and graduated in June of 1960. And in the meantime, I had met a young man when I was a junior in high school, and we dated all through that time, six years. And I graduated June 1 from Mundelein, and we were married June 18, and we've been married sixty-one years. So basically, that's kind of my life in the beginning. And of course, have much life in between 1960 and now 19—2022, wow. 1960 sounds so far away. It was.

Q: Yeah, that sounds wonderful. Congratulations on your long marriage.

McLaughlin: Yes. Lot of living in between.

Q: Oh, sure. Sure. Could you tell me a little bit about your studies at Mundelein and the courses you took?

McLaughlin: Okay. My degree was Bachelor of Music Education, and I was qualified to teach anything from kindergarten through junior high. And, of course, music. And what I loved about Mundelein was the music classes were very small. There were only four of us in the class. And [I] became very, very close with two of the girls. Sadly, two of them passed away quite young. But I am still in contact with Mona [Cahill] and Audrey [Cihlar], and in sixty-one years, Audrey has never missed sending me a birthday card. We really, really became very close friends in that time. But it was a wonderful education, and I certainly used it to the fullest. I began teaching the fall of 1960, and my first assignment was kindergarten. And that was the first year that kindergarten was mandatory for children. And I helped kind of form the curriculum. They really didn't have a curriculum at that time. And I taught until April of that year. And my first son was born in May of 1961. And it was a wonderful time. I love the little ones. And my second son was born May of 1962, and my third son was born August of 1963.

[05:00]

McLaughlin: So for those years, I definitely did not teach. I was at home and raising my children. Then in I believe—I went back to school, and I taught second grade for two and a half years in the interim. And then my fourth son was born in April of 1968. So kindergarten and second grade up until that time.

Q: Okay. Do you remember much about the music education classes themselves? What type of material did you cover? How did you prepare for being a music teacher?

McLaughlin: Well, of course, we had to perform and took music history, basically. Performance most of all. The one class I hated with a passion was music theory. I really didn't understand it, and we had to take it for four years, and that was very, very difficult. I really did not understand it. And I have to say, the teacher that taught it, you either understood it or you didn't, and I didn't. And it was difficult. Finally, when I was working on my master's, everything clicked. But when I was at Mundelein, I have to say that one class, I was very disappointed in. We learned—all of the other classes we had to take, all the other classes that we would have had to take in education, math, history, social studies, and then, of course, music on top of it. So it was a very heavy load.

Q: How would you say music had influenced your life up to that point?

McLaughlin: Oh, very much, I think. As I said, I love music. Music was always a part of my life, and I never—I know all the kids would—or girls would go down, and they were in the union. And I really never had time to do it because if I had a free period, I was usually in the practice room. They were very, very particular and very strict in our performance, and we had to really be on our toes for that.

Q: What instrument or instruments did you play?

McLaughlin: Piano, mainly. And the beautiful, beautiful organ that was in the hall. And I'm only sorry that I did not continue it. Again, most churches don't have an organ like that. And with three little boys, I really did not have a lot of time to continue with the organ. I did play organ several years at church when we were married and directed the choir. And then with the kids and teaching, organ kind of fell by the wayside. But I began teaching—my youngest son was born in 1968, and I hadn't taught up until that time after I left school. And I really, really wanted to get back into it. And I had enrolled the boys at church in Catechism. And I was talking to someone, and by this time we had moved from the South Side of Chicago, farther south yet to Chicago Heights, which was about thirty-five miles farther south from Chicago. And I said, "Wow, I really would love to go back teaching, just for a time." And she said, "Oh, one of the districts close by, District 162, was looking for a kindergarten teacher." So it was two weeks before

school was to start. And I went home and called them, and they said, "Oh, my gosh, we just filled that position."

[10:00]

McLaughlin: And I said, "Well, I know that school is ready to start in two weeks." I said, "do you have anything open?" And she said, "Yeah, we need a music specialist, and I don't know where we're going to find it." And I said, "Well, guess what? That was my major." And she said, "Get over here right now." So my son was very young. And I said, "Well, let me feed the baby, get him down for his nap, and I'll get a babysitter." And I went over and really didn't have any credentials pulled together or anything, and the superintendent began to question me. Anyway, I was hired, and that led to twenty-five years teaching music in school.

Q: That's wonderful. I love how serendipitous that was.

McLaughlin: It was. It was. It really was. Yes, I loved it. I had everything from kindergarten through junior high. And then within that time, the Orff method of music had kind of come into view. And I got very interested in it and began to go to classes over the summer at DePaul and really got into it. And it was just a wonderful, wonderful method of teaching and [I] started to incorporate that into music at school. And I had, as I said, everything from kindergarten through junior high and tried to make all the children in fourth and fifth grade have experience with chorus so that they would at least have experienced it. And maybe when they got farther on would like it and join. And it's funny because I still have several students they've got to be in their forties now that have written me or emailed me and said that they loved it. And when they were in high school joined chorus. And one young man I taught recorder in fourth grade. And, oh, my gosh, he was in high school, and he came to visit one of the last days of school and was telling me that he put the recorder in his drawer and just shut the drawer and kind of forgot it. When he was in high school, he took it out, and he began to play again. And by the time he had finished high school, he had found several other people that played recorder, and they had joined as a group and were playing at weddings, various things like that. So I really felt wonderful about it, that maybe I had made some inroads and felt good about it.

Q: Yeah, definitely. And how did you feel Mundelein—their education—prepared you for this role? Especially since you didn't have much time to prepare for the interview itself.

McLaughlin: Well, as I said, my beginning teaching, I taught kindergarten and then second grade. And these were all classes that I had to take at Mundelein because I don't know, bachelor of music ed was kind of all put together. You weren't necessarily constantly doing music, but you are also learning, you know, the education classes. And I had to do student teaching, which I'm sure all the people that are now in education would have to do, and that definitely prepared me. And being that the classes were mainly small, I think that was a great asset. It was just—I know, looking back at it, a very excellent education.

Q: Are you meaning the class sizes at Mundelein or the class sizes in your student teaching?

McLaughlin: The class sizes at Mundelein.

Q: Okay. Gotcha.

McLaughlin: In the music department. We were very small. Most of the classes, as I said, were only the four of us in that 1960 graduating class, but they were also combined with the class ahead of us, and they were a very small class.

[15:00]

So all of the classes were probably no more than eight people in the music department. And then the other classes were regular sizes, but again, they weren't super big, like being taught in a lecture hall or anything like that.

Q: Right. I imagine that was good for one on one teaching. But then also.

McLaughlin: Yes, It was. Yes. Very.

Q: It definitely held you more accountable for all of your assignments, I'm sure. Right?

McLaughlin: Yes, definitely.

Q: Were the teachers that you had strict or easy going? Did you connect with them well? How did you like them?

McLaughlin: I thought they were all excellent. But the teacher that taught theory, as I said, you either got it or you didn't. And at the time I didn't. I dreaded going to that class. And again, we had it for four years. And I don't know, that class was a disappointment. And the crazy thing is, I worked on my master's and got my master's in 1976, and I took all the classes that I needed other than theory and had to take them. And I finally went to the head of the department and I told him and I said, "I'm sorry, I don't understand this, and I'll do the best I can do." And again, a different teacher taught it, and all of a sudden it was like a light bulb going on in my head. And it kind of showed me, I think, how different teachers affect students. And I do think that helped me maybe in my teaching throughout the years.

Q: Yeah, definitely. Do you remember what about this original music theory teaching—teacher, like what her style was? It just didn't really rub you the right way, couldn't grasp the material as well.

McLaughlin: It was just, this is what you do, okay? And I sadly—really in my grade school and high school music, they really didn't teach theory. And I began to teach—after I left school in 1994, public school teaching—I taught for a while in my own home and made sure that the kids learn theory. Because it's so important. You don't just compose, there is a science to it. And she did not teach that. And again, maybe it's my fault, too, because I did not have that background in theory that maybe some of the other kids had. I don't know.

Q: Yeah. Since you had such a small class size, did you guys work together on homework a lot or collaborate on class assignments?

McLaughlin: Not really. Everybody kind of was scattered around the city. I took the bus from my home to sixty-third and Halsted and then took the 'L' train all the way up to Mundelein. And then I believe I was a junior at Mundelein, and I began working at Carson's downtown. So after school I'd take the 'L' down to the Loop, and then I worked at Carson's. Lots of times several of the girls and I would ride on the 'L' as far as we could, but we [inaudible] too much on assignments.

Q: Okay. Now you were at Mundelein before they had on-campus housing, correct?

McLaughlin: Well, I did stay my freshman year. I was way, way, way up on the eleventh floor, twelfth floor. I said to my mom, "It would be really nice to stay because then I would have time to practice after school or after classes." Well, I don't know, being in the building all day, sadly, lots of times we go out for an ice cream cone or something like that after class.

[20:00]

I really decided that I would travel. And I have to say, traveling like that, it was a good hour plus on the 'L', and I got all my reading done, and it really made me organized and use my time to the utmost. So in a way, maybe the traveling, even though it was difficult, was a good thing. I don't know.

Q: Yeah. It gave you a dedicated time, where you—

McLaughlin: Yeah.

Q: So did you not spend much time on campus after freshman year?

McLaughlin: I did not have any jobs on campus. As I said, my job was down in the Loop, and usually after school I would leave school and then travel down to the Loop or home. So I did not join any clubs or anything like that. As I said, the music department—we were very close in the music department. But other than joining any clubs or anything like that, no, I did not.

Q: Okay. So how would you compare your freshman year when you did live on-campus to the rest of your years when you were commuting back and forth? How did that change affect your time at Mundelein?

McLaughlin: Well, I don't know. I think traveling made me use my time more. When I was staying there, I kept thinking, oh, I'll do this later, I'll do this later. And sometimes the later never came. I guess I was procrastinating. When I was traveling back and forth, I knew it had to get done. So, as I said, I think I used my time better.

Q: Okay, that makes sense. Could you talk about playing the organ and any memories you have of the room that it was in, could you describe—because it was in the Skyscraper? Right. All of that was in the Skyscraper?

McLaughlin: The organ was in Hackman Hall, and it was a big three manual organ. And I had played a three manual organ in high school also. And it's a very complicated instrument and does require a lot of practice. So I did—any time that I did have extra time throughout the day, I would go into Hackman Hall and I would play. And we were required—they used to have meetings of the students in Hackman Hall, and sometimes the music department would perform. As I said, I do regret, in a way, that I had not kept up with the organ, because right now all the churches around are definitely [inaudible] again, I kind of went in a different direction.

Q: Sorry, Charlene. I think our connection went a little wonky for a second. The last I heard you say was the organs in your area, and then it cut out.

McLaughlin: Oh, well, I said most of the churches in the area—in all the areas—seem to be looking for organists, and it's kind of a lost art. A lot of the schools I know, TCU [Texas

Christian University] here in Fort Worth has dropped organ studies. And it's such a specialized thing, and it's probably a stupid thing that I did.

[25:00]

But again, I was so busy with little boys and my home and teaching that I kind of went into a different direction, kind of gave up the organ.

Q: Yeah, those things happen all too easily, unfortunately. And you mentioned Hackman Hall. What is Hackman Hall? Was it located on campus somewhere?

McLaughlin: Hackman Hall was right in the Mundelein building. It was a huge auditorium.

Q: Oh, I see. It was the name of the auditorium. Gotcha. So when you were on campus, maybe in between classes, was there anywhere that you and your friends would go to study when you weren't practicing your music or just maybe to have fun, something like that?

McLaughlin: Well, in the morning, I could not eat and travel on the elevated train. I would always get an upset stomach, and my mother was very upset, and she said, "You can't go to school without eating." So I promised her that before I went to class, I would get something to eat. So the Loyola Union was on the way to school, so I'd always bop in. And several of my husband's friends that he went to high school with— had enrolled in medical [school] at Loyola—and became doctors throughout the years. But anyway, they were students also. And I'd stop in, and I'd have a cup of coffee and a doughnut or whatever, and then go to school. So that was kind of the morning. And in the Mundelein building, the music department was on the seventh floor. And they had a wonderful little alcove that was always very private. Nobody ever went there because it was the music floor, and it was a wonderful place to study, read, and do whatever.

Q: One of those hidden gems, if you know it's there.

McLaughlin: Yeah. And it looked out over Lake Michigan. It was beautiful. It was a seventh floor looking out on Lake Michigan. It was gorgeous. Not during the winter, but...

Q: Yeah, it's quite a view up at Mundelein-Loyola. I love it myself.

McLaughlin: Yeah.

Q: Were the Loyola facilities open to everyone or just like Loyola and Mundelein students?

McLaughlin: That I don't know. And the Loyola students did not attend Mundelein classes. I don't know when Mundelein or when the merge came, but I know Mundelein was totally separate. Loyola was separate. We could go into the Union, I guess, but it was mainly Loyola students, but we were permitted to go in there.

Q: Okay. Do you know of any Mundelein students that took classes at Loyola?

McLaughlin: Not at that time I didn't. I don't even know whether that was permitted. I did take two summers. I took Loyola class, but it was down at the downtown campus after work. I worked all day downtown and then went to summer school, so to speak. But it was at Loyola downtown. It was not at the uptown campus.

Q: Okay. Yeah, I was just curious. And so you were also in school in the age before cell phones and the internet.

McLaughlin: Oh, definitely. Wow.

Q: What was it like completing coursework without the technology or what was communication like? How is that different than what we have today?

McLaughlin: Well, you had no way of looking anything up. I mean, you went to the library, and you found your information, and it wasn't handed to you. I'll never forget. It was, I guess, a history class, and we had to do a talk or public speaking. And I remember that everybody was given a different assignment.

[30:00]

And I guess we had a couple of weeks to prepare and had to find all the information on our own. And I'll never forget she came to me, and she said, "Should the laws of the land become sacrosanct?" And I looked at her and I said, "What? What does sacrosanct mean?" And she said, "Well, look it up." And I did look it up. And I think the talk was very well done. I was pleased with it. Apparently she was, too. I got an A on it. But I didn't even know what the word meant. And, you know, I had to look it up. And you had to go to the library, and you had to do all the research on your own. There was no Google to find the information.

Q: Right. So what was the library like at that time?

McLaughlin: I know the library. I don't even know if it exists anymore. There was a beautiful mansion that was to the right, coming down Sheridan Road. When you turned at Sheridan Road to go to Mundelein, there was a beautiful mansion that apparently Mundelein owned, and that was the library at the time. And it was a beautiful old mansion building. As I said, I don't even know if it's there anymore. But, you know, you could find the information that you needed there.

Q: Yeah. You're talking about Piper Hall or what is today Piper Hall.

McLaughlin: Okay. Is that it? Okay, it was a beautiful building.

Q: I agree. It's funny. The Women and Leadership Archives is housed in Piper Hall now.

McLaughlin: Okay.

Q: It used to be your library. And now it is our archive.

McLaughlin: It used to be the library. Yeah.

Q: Were the librarians people that you took advantage of to help find information, or were you more of like, I'll figure it out myself?

McLaughlin: Well, I believe that you could always ask for information. And anytime I had to look anything up, I found what I needed.

Q: I know I read somewhere—

McLaughlin: And I don't know, maybe it's a good thing. I think today maybe all this information is handed to you. You really don't go searching. I don't know. Technology is wonderful, but I can't say that I can't live without it.

Q: Yeah. It's definitely made things a little easier, but then it causes us to be more reliant on it. And some of the skills that you've developed, people today probably haven't.

McLaughlin: That's right.

Q: I know. I read somewhere that at one point students couldn't go and retrieve books in the stacks themselves that librarians had to go—or maybe student workers at the library had to retrieve books. Do you recall that happening when you were there?

McLaughlin: I don't.

Q: Okay.

McLaughlin: I wouldn't doubt it, though. I mean, you know, these books would be valuable books, and probably they wouldn't want them misplaced or anything like that. But I don't remember that.

Q: Yeah, I can't remember when exactly the time period was. I was reading that in. I just thought it was kind of a strange thing. It's a library for students, so they would need to—I would imagine there would be a lot of demand for books and maybe not enough librarians to go retrieve them. Anyway, when you mentioned that there were meetings in Hackman Hall, you said that your department would perform at these meetings. What sort of meetings were they, and how did you feel about performances like that?

McLaughlin: You know, I really don't remember why or how. I know they were mandatory meetings for the students. And many times when we had to perform, it was kind of a thing that we had to do for our courses. And a lot of the other students complained.

[35:00]

You know, "We don't want to sit here listening to music, whatever. We're busy. We want to do our—" and I remember, I did speak up, and I said, "We've put a lot of time and effort into our performances. I'm sorry you're not enjoying them." But again, they were in totally different courses and things like that and probably wanted to get on with their things, but I don't remember why, but they seem to be mandatory meetings for the students or the girls.

Q: I see. So did you—apart from maybe the negative reactions of some of the students—did you enjoy having these performances and playing for an audience?

McLaughlin: Yeah. I mean, you know, it was part of the part of the degree. And I think it did train you to be ready to play. Part of it, you know, music—it was not only music education, but music performance. And that's part of being a musician, I guess.

Q: Right. That's fair. Were there other performances that you recall during your time?

McLaughlin: Oh, I remember one. Oh, my God. My dear friend Audrey and I are still in contact. But she was a singer, she majored in voice. And it was in the spring. It was a beautiful day, and we must have been seniors because she was performing, and I was accompanying. And they had a beautiful grand piano on the stage, and I was accompanying. And she was, of course, standing in front of the piano, facing the audience, and I was in the background. And the music was on the music stand. And somebody must have opened a door behind the stage and my music blew off the stand. Well my heart stopped. I hadn't memorized it. I mean, I was using the notes. Well, God was with me because somehow the piece of music ended face up, and I was leaning off the piano bench reading the notes. And we got through the performance without a hitch. But oh, my God, my heart was pounding. I remember that.

Q: That is incredible. I mean—

McLaughlin: Oh, my Lord. I mean, she would have had to stop. It would have ruined the performance. It was just horrible.

Q: Yeah. What else could you do? You just pause and start over. Just—oh goodness. Well, good for you for being able to look down and read from the floor.

McLaughlin: Oh, Lord. I knew it well enough, but I hadn't memorized it.

Q: Right.

McLaughlin: Again, I'm reading the notes off the floor and leaning over. They probably thought I was going to fall off the bench or something. I don't know. I was so happy when that piece ended. I'll never forget it.

Q: Yeah. Did Audrey notice?

McLaughlin: No. She never knew until we finished everything, and I was telling her. And she was, like, amazed. Oh, dear God. We got through it.

Q: Now that is professionalism.

McLaughlin: I don't know.

Q: Did you typically read from sheet music or did you have to have your performances memorized?

McLaughlin: It depended on what we were playing and whatever. But I know there were times that we had—and I hate memory. I mean, it was hard. I didn't memorize easily.

Q: Yeah, I think I would always find that most difficult as well.

McLaughlin: Yeah.

Q: So were there any faculty or other staff members that Mundelein, besides this theory professor, that had a big impact on you?

McLaughlin: I think they were all very, very professional teachers.

[40:00]

Most everyone in the education department, they were very friendly. Very—if you approach them, very good about answering any questions you had or anything like that. When I was

student teaching, you know, very helpful. And I don't know, just looking back, the overall education was very good. I can't compare it to any other school. But I have always found that what I learned was very helpful, and I used it and built upon it throughout the years and my teaching.

Q: Yeah, that's wonderful. Were there any changes on campus that you noticed from the time that you had started at Mundelein to when you had graduated? Whether they be physical changes or something like rules, communication, culture.

McLaughlin: Not really. As I said, '60, you know—and then I don't know when Mundelein began to merge with Loyola. This is so crazy, my dear friend, that I've known since grade school back in Chicago—home, her grandson graduated from Loyola two years ago. And I know we were on Facebook together, and I was asking him questions because I guess now Loyola does use Mundelein's building for classes. Is that right?

Q: Yeah. I had my oral history class—funnily enough—in the Skyscraper. I can't remember which floor. Maybe the fifth floor, but yeah, definitely still in use.

McLaughlin: Okay. Now I don't know when that opened. Now, the last time that I was at Mundelein, we moved to Texas in November of 2006. And it was right before we moved that Mundelein had a reunion. And I picked up Audrey, and we went and—the dinner or the luncheon, whatever it was—it was in the spring. I remember that. And it was in one of the Loyola buildings, and we were looking out over the water and it was so beautiful. And, again, that was the last time, really, that I was there.

Q: Yeah. I'm sure there's been a lot of changes from even 2006 to 2022—

McLaughlin: Probably. No. When I was emailing with Nick [McLaughlin's grandson], and I said something—he was in a jazz band that they had, I guess, at Loyola. He played the trumpet. And I said, "Were you performing in Hackman Hall?" And he said, "Oh, yeah." And I said, "Well, I

used to play that big organ, whatever." And it was kind of fun to commence with him. Because here he is, very modern young man. And God, it's horrible to think your grandson. Wow.

Q: Time really flies. And yeah, actually, now that you mention it, I remember when we were still on campus—we haven't been on campus yet this semester—that I would stop in to the Skyscraper—which is now called Mundelein Center—and I would hear the orchestra performing in the auditorium. And I would just pause—

McLaughlin: Wow. We did not have an orchestra then. That would be wonderful. Oh, my gosh.

Q: Yeah.

McLaughlin: But music is so wonderful. I just enjoyed it for so many years. You know teaching the kids and just so much fun. I don't know how they're doing it right now with this pandemic. I mean, it's sad because teaching should not be virtual. Maybe for some people, older kids, whatever. But with the little ones, we did so much movement and dance. It was so much fun because everybody was together. And that's the way teaching should be.

[45:00]

You should be with your friends and the teacher involved. And, you know, it's just sad right now. I hope that eventually we'll get back to normal or whatever.

Q: Yeah, I agree. There's definitely a lot that you lose by having to conduct classes online.

McLaughlin: And the little ones.

Q: Sure.

McLaughlin: Your attention span just is not there. It's so much fun—and to be playing instruments in class and whatever. I did so much dancing and movement and poetry and things. I mean, all that is music. It's not necessarily just playing an instrument. It's background and history. And I loved it because social studies—any time a holiday would come, I would always try and tie that into music. When St. Patrick's Day came, we talked about the Emerald Isle. Why is it called the Emerald Isle? And I asked if anybody had a birthday in May. What is your birthstone? Emerald. It's green. And I taught them a jig and just fun things like that. Why was this music created? What does it prove? What does it do for you? So hopefully it made an impact. I don't know.

Q: Yes. Music can be such a big part of people's lives.

McLaughlin: And sadly, it's always music and art in the public schools or schools that get that cut. And it's so wrong because music teaches every subject. It teaches social studies, it teaches math, it teaches movement, it teaches discipline. So I always tried to incorporate all those things into my classes.

Q: Yeah. I like that perspective that you have. Going back to Mundelein. I know that you said that you chose it with the help of your high school teacher. Were you aware of the fact that it was a women's college going into it? How did you feel about attending a women's college? What were your thoughts about it?

McLaughlin: I really never, ever gave it a thought. I think I went into it because of the small classes, and she had held Mundelein in very high regard. As far as the education part of it. I thought it was great. Being a woman's college did not bother me.

Q: Yes, I know that—I think Mundelein was the last women's college to close in Illinois.

McLaughlin: Really? When did it actually close?

Q: So it affiliated with Loyola in 1991, and the last graduating class under Mundelein's name was 1993.

McLaughlin: Well, it held out for another thirty years.

Q: Yeah. Were there any experiences that you had at Mundelein that you found to be particularly meaningful either at the time or looking back?

McLaughlin: Well, as I said, I made friends for life. I really did. When my husband and I—well, we were dating, of course. I graduated June 1st, and we were married the eighteenth of June 1960. And my dear friend Audrey was also engaged, and we double dated quite often. We went to the opera, went to the ballet and even after we were married and had kids, visited each other's homes. I think it's the friendship that, you know, we made. I was more friendly with people in the music department. I think everybody kind of stuck to their—I'm not saying stuck to—but were close to the people in your department, so to speak.

[50:00]

I had other friends, but it was the music department that really kind of became my home, so to speak.

Q: Yeah. You spend a lot of time together. You have a lot in common. I would imagine. Well, that is the end of the official questions that I have for you, but through our conversation, has anything come up in your mind that maybe I haven't asked about that you would like to share?

McLaughlin: Not really, other than I've used what I learned at Mundelein all my life. And it was a wonderful education, a wonderful time to be living in Chicago. I miss Chicago—not the snow. But it's a wonderful city and wonderful people there.

Q: Yeah, well—

McLaughlin: Not really.

Q: All right. Great. Well, I want to thank you so much for participating in this project and sharing these memories and stories with me. It's been really great to hear your perspective, your memories of this time at Mundelein. Everyone has a unique story to share, so I appreciate you sharing that with me.

McLaughlin: Oh, it's been great.

Q: Yeah. Well, I'm going to stop our recording now, but I would like you to stay on the line so that we can talk about next steps and everything.