

SHARE YOUR STORY: STUDENT LIFE AT MUNDELEIN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Anne Hartnett-Beasley's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Anne Hartnett-Beasley conducted by Melissa Newman on February 8, 2022. This interview is part of the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein project, an oral history project to expand and enrich the Women and Leadership Archives' (WLA) records of Mundelein College's history through interviews with alumnae on student life.

Mundelein College, founded and operated by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), provided education to women from 1930 until 1991, when it affiliated with Loyola University Chicago.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the WLA staff. Timestamps are provided every five minutes, within a few seconds of that exact point in the audio. Actions and sounds such as laughter are in parentheses, and notes added for context are in brackets.

TIME LOG AND OVERVIEW

0-5 Minutes: Hartnett's family and educational background, her work with Trans World Airlines, and her interaction with Sister Ann Ida Gannon who recruited her for Mundelein College.

5-10 Minutes: Hartnett's experience beginning at Mundelein, meeting her future husband, and her relationship with Sister Ann Ida Gannon and Sister Katherine Forsythe.

10-15 Minutes: Hartnett reflects on why she chose Mundelein.

15-20 Minutes: Hartnett reflects on her English major, Madonna della Strada, living on campus, and her roommates.

20-25 Minutes: Hartnett's determination to succeed at Mundelein, Mass at Mundelein, her time as a flight attendant, her interaction with Sister Madeleva Wolff, and her faith.

25-30 Minutes: The dating scene at Mundelein, meeting and marrying her husband Jim Hartnett, their trip to Italy, and Jim's cancer diagnosis.

30-35 Minutes: The Hartnetts' return trips to Italy, Anne's pregnancy, and Jim's remission.

35-40 Minutes: Hartnett's faith, remarrying after Jim's passing, and the impact of Mundelein on her faith.

40-45 Minutes: Hartnett's time as a flight attendant, activism on campus, national events at the time, and studying on campus.

45-50 Minutes: Hartnett's marriage, the fear of airline hijackings, flight attendant training, and nervousness while flying.

50-54:42 Minutes: Hartnett's final reflections on the lasting impressions of Mundelein College and faculty.

NARRATOR BIO

Anne (nee Vondracheck) Hartnett-Beasley was born May 1, 1938 in Reedsville, Wisconsin. It was and still is a small town; at the time Anne was growing up, the population was about 591 and her graduating high school class was about 51. Anne was one of eight children; she had four sister and three brothers. After high school, she became a flight attendant and was able to travel the world, spending time in Europe seeing its many treasures.

Due to her public speaking skills in high school, Trans World Airlines (TWA), the airline she worked for, enlisted Anne into making speeches to recruit new flight attendants. It was at one such event where Anne crossed paths with Sister Katherine Forsyth, a Mundelein College math professor. Sister Katherine gave a speech about the importance of education for women. After the event, Sister Katherine and Anne got a ride home in the same car and Sister Katherine began asking Anne why she had never gone to college. The next day, Anne was in Sister Katherine's office enrolling at Mundelein College.

Anne wanted to be an English major and took many English and religion classes. She also attended daily mass at Loyola University Chicago's Madonna Del Strata chapel with her roommates from Northland Hotel, who were both in graduate school programs at Loyola. Her roommates, Jean Comisky and Irene Miller, really took Anne under their wings and helped her settle in. Anne was so happy to be at Mundelein College and tried her hardest to keep up with her studies while working for Patricia Vance Modeling School every Saturday and for TWA over Christmas vacation and in the summer.

INTERVIEWER BIO

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

Transcriptionist: Keeley Shoudel

Narrator: Anne Hartnett-Beasley

Locations: Chicago, IL and Evanston, IL via Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: February 8, 2022

[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW]

[0:00]

Q: For the record, today is February 8, 2022. My name is Melissa Newman. I'm a graduate assistant at the Women and Leadership Archives, interviewing Anne Hartnett-Beasley, formerly Anne Vondracheck, for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. Anne attended Mundelein College from 1961 to 1962. I am in Palatine, Illinois, and Anne is in Fort Myers, Florida. So to start us off, Anne, could you just tell me a little bit about yourself, like when you were born, where you were raised and your family?

Hartnett: Okay. I was born in 1938—May 1, 1938, in Reedsville, Wisconsin, which has a population of about 591. Did when I left and still has just about the same population. I'm from a family of eight children and had a beautiful childhood growing up in Reedsville, two doors from the church and one—next door to the priest house. And basically, that's where I grew up. I think that's about it.

Q: Okay, sorry. I had trouble unmuting myself there. And so how did you come to study at Mundelein?

Hartnett: Well, after high school, I moved to Florida for one winter and then moved back to Chicago. And I was working at a modeling school, and I joined TWA (Trans World Airlines) as a flight attendant. And since I had a background from high school and speaking, I was chosen to do publicity for TWA. And I attended the 1960 Republican Convention in Chicago representing TWA and various other things. But one of the things that I did, was I attended Good Council High School. It was a career day. And when I was recruiting for TWA and Sister Katharine Forsyth [BVM], then known as Sister Ann Ida [Edit: Sister St.Ida], was there, and she made such a fabulous impression on everyone. She spoke before me, and I was glued to my chair. She was so compelling. She was in full nun's habit and just a magnet. She was amazing. She was telling us that it's important for girls to go to school. It used to be if you got married, you didn't have to go to college, but now if you were to lose your husband, there's no amount of life insurance that could ever support you for the rest of your life. And also that women need to be educated to be better mothers for their children. And those were some of the things she said, and then I spoke for TWA, of course. And then when I got in the car—I was offered a ride by one of the speakers from somewhere in Chicago. And I got in the car in the backseat and there's Sister Ann Ida [Edit: St. Ida Forsyth, BVM] sitting in the seat next to me saying, "And my dear, why haven't you ever been to college?" And I said, "You know, I'm from a family of eight, and no one in our family had gone to school. And I kind of wish I had, but it wasn't in the cards for me." And before I knew it, she had me sitting at her desk the next day with all my financial information and everything I would need to sign up for Mundelein College. I'm saying the next day. And so she

became a wonderful influence and a friend to me for all the years after that. But I enrolled in school and here I am, age twenty-three, going in as a freshman, looking around—and I worked at the modeling school, and I was a flight attendant, so I was trying to fit in by wearing knee socks and being more casual in my dress and all that. And also another thing Sister did for me was she found me an apartment at the Northland Hotel [hall], which I don't know if it's still standing, but that was a residence hotel for graduate students, also from Loyola. So I lived with two graduate students in what they call a Murphy bed. Open two doors, pull it down. That's where I slept because I was the third one in.

[05:00]

Hartnett: But in the meantime, Sister kept in touch with me. She would talk to me, ask me how I was doing and it was a struggle for me because it was such a change in lifestyle. Now I'm going to school full time, and I'm working eight hours a day at the modeling school so that I could support myself. And also I was taking leaves of absence from TWA over Christmas and over summer—over the school year, I was taking leave it to the absence from TWA-- because they needed me over Christmas and summer. So that worked out beautifully for that length of time. I did meet my husband on Albion Beach in the neighborhood, and he was a local resident, had gone to Loyola. And then at that point when we decided to get married, I decided I could not continue at Mundelein. So I only attended a year and a half.

But I kept up my relationship with Sister Katherine and I would call her—she would keep in touch with me, but I would call her, and I would take her to lunch, and she liked the restaurants

that she called white table restaurants. And so we would go. I'd drive in. I lived in Elmhurst, I'd drive in to Chicago along the magnificent lakefront. And I loved Madonna Della Strada Chapel, I always loved going there after Mass. But anyway, I would drive in there, pick her up, and we'd drive along Lakeshore Drive, beautiful, beautiful drive to Evanston which was the Orrington Hotel where they had white tablecloth restaurants. And so we would sit down and have the most leisurely lunch and the best conversations, as soon as she got in the car. It was just dynamite. She was just so interesting and so much fun and so dynamic. But anyway, and we'd have these long lunches and then I would drop her off at Mundelein and go back to Elmhurst. And then she came out to Elmhurst a few times. We brought her out for certain occasions. And some of the things she said that I still think about today are when she enrolled me in school, she said, "You know, the people that are—" I'm saying, well, my friends are saying, "What are you doing?" And the pilots are saying, "Well, you know, you're just going back to school to get a husband." And well, there wouldn't be many men at Mundelein College. But anyway, but there were a lot of negative comments about that. And even my dad said, "Why don't you come up to Wisconsin and go to Silver Cross," which was a prior convent in Manitowoc, which is where I was from. But I had my leader, Sister Katherine.

The other thing I want to say, is she got me a partial scholarship to Mundelein, and that was great help to me, especially since I was working eight hours at the modeling school on Saturdays to support my lifestyle. And so we did keep up a relationship. Then eventually Sister, when she became ill, she went to the Motherhouse, the BVM (Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary) Motherhouse. And when I called her, it was hard to I couldn't communicate with her anymore. It was difficult. And I regret that I didn't follow better with the other Sisters there, but I

kind of lost track of her. It gets very busy. We had four children, and I was selling real estate by this time. And so I regret that. I also am so grateful to her, to Sister Ann Ida, who, this is Sister Saint Ida, Sister Katherine. Sister Ann Ida [Gannon, BVM] was president of Mundelein when I went there. And she—I'm so grateful to her for giving me the scholarship. And then later on, after I met my husband, married him. And I learned that my mother-in-law, Mary Emily Garvey Hartnett, graduated from the first graduating class at Mundelein College. And I understand, this could be checked out, but I understand she graduated summa cum laude and she received a scholarship for her eldest daughter. But that scholarship was never used, unfortunately. It would have been kind of neat had somebody followed through and used that.

But anyway, I'll always be grateful to these Sisters and I will always support Mundelein and anything I can do. Like today, I'm very, very happy to contribute whatever little bit I have to say, to acknowledge the greatness of these women who way before their time were pulling—getting someone like me to come into her office the next day and enrolling me in school. It's just an example of who they were and what they did. And I am eternally grateful for that. Will always be grateful for that. Brings tears to my eyes when I think about it. But that's about the story.

[10:00]

Q: Yeah, that is really wonderful. I mean, it just goes to show how much education was valued for young women. And to get that from a Catholic institution is yes, quite wonderful. Could you talk about or do you remember at all what your thoughts were about college right after graduating high school?

Hartnett: After graduating high school, well, I didn't really have a big plan, but my sister, who was fifteen months older than I am, decided that she wanted to go to Florida. And we went to Florida and lived there for a winter, and then she came back and married her high school sweetheart. And I moved on to Chicago because I also had my, eldest sister was living in Chicago, and that's how I ended up getting my roots in Chicago.

Q: But there was no even thought originally to go to a college after high school?

Hartnett: Well, a couple of—I'm from graduating class of fifty-one, which was large because they had just consolidated a couple of schools, but—it was large for there, but only about two or three of us went to college. It was a very small town, and the people that were from educated families were expected to go, and they did. And I never really pursued it because nobody else in my family—and nobody else in my family ever did go to college. They're all very successful people in their own right, but they don't have college educations.

Q: So having your conversation with Sister Katherine, like, really pushed you and made you feel like that was something that you could do?

Hartnett: I thought I would like to—I just wanted to experience it. The thing she said is, "When they ask you why you're going to college, you tell them that you are going there for intellectual stimulation." And of course, in those days, that was like, whoa. But that's what I would say.

"Well, I'm just going for intellectual stimulation." And that's exactly why I was going, because by then—I spent a month in Europe, and I had seen so much, travel extensively while I was a flight attendant. And I wanted to know more about the background of the things I was seeing and the history of the countries. I would read historical fiction about the different kings and queens of England and France and whatever history I could get my hands on, because—as a flight attendant, I was always interested. And I read the Newsweek on the plane, and I would be interested in what the passengers were reading because it was a subject of conversation, and we had a lot of fun with that. Like when you're reading, "oh this is good," or it's whatever. So it was something—I was always interested in improving my mind. And I figured I was quite intelligent because the reason I even became a representative of TWA, along with my flying, was that I had a background—I'd gone to state in speech and the dramatic declamation, and so I was comfortable speaking to groups, but I always wanted to learn more. Still do.

Q: Yeah. Curiosity, intellectual curiosity is quite important, I think. And sorry, could you close the door to your room? I think I'm hearing a lot of background noise from another.

Hartnett: Yes, I was thinking of doing that. Okay.

Q: Okay, great. That should help.

Hartnett: I think he's finished.

Q: (Laughs) Of course. So tell me about that time that you spent at Mundelein and the classes that you took, what your primary subject of study was, how you decided that.

Hartnett: I wanted to be an English major. That was kind of my focus.

[15:00]

Hartnett: And so I was only there a year and a half, but I did take heavily English courses. I also loved the religious classes. Now, I went to a Catholic grammar school, but a public high school. And the religious classes were so interesting to me. And also Madonna Della Strada Chapel, which is on Loyola campus. They had like a noon Mass, and I would go there every day. And then after Mass, I would look out on the lake, and it was so beautiful. Coming from a little town, now I'm in a big congested city, but I look out on this lake and I could see nothing behind me. All the big buildings were behind me. And I love doing that, just kind of a little meditation after Mass. But Madonna Della Strada was an absolutely beautiful chapel, and I just talked with my brother-in-law the other day, and he was there recently. And we need to go back and have another look at it while it's still there. Now, also, as far as my extracurricular activities were mostly—I was dating, but also I had these two roommates who were wonderful. One was an English major. One was getting a Master's in chemistry, the other one getting a doctoral in English. And they became lifelong friends. I lost track of one of them, but I'm still in touch with the other one. Yeah.

Q: How did Sister Katherine find these two for you to room with?

Hartnett: Well, she was so dynamic, as I said. I know she had her antennas up everywhere. She knew exactly what was going on. I'm sure, divine guidance. But she said, "Oh, I just heard about these two women that might be willing to take on a roommate," this Murphy bed situation. So I stayed with them. I mean, I lived there through my—well, until I got married. So I was in this Murphy bed for whatever, two and a half years or something like that. But it all worked beautifully. But as far as—we didn't really do that much together. Well, for one thing, I'm being from Wisconsin, I would go home whenever I had a chance. There was still a train and I could take a train home, so I don't know what else.

Q: Yeah. Well, I imagine they were closer to you in age. If they were pursuing postgraduate degrees.

Hartnett: Exactly.

Q: Do you think that was—made it a more comfortable situation as to if you were living with eighteen-year-olds?

Hartnett: Absolutely. I think—what if she hadn't found that place for me, I'm not sure where I would have lived, but I would hope it wasn't with 18-year-olds because I was twenty-three and there's definitely a big difference at that stage of our lives.

Q: Yeah, so—.

Hartnett: Like I said, she made everything happen.

Q: That's wonderful, and what were the classes like then? Did you feel any sort of discomfort at being surrounded by girls that were younger than you, or was it very natural and normal and everything?

Hartnett: You know, I'm a family of eight, so I've got four sisters. So no, it wasn't uncomfortable for me at all. They were younger, and I was like the happiest person to be on campus because that was an opportunity that just fell into my lap. And had she [Sister St. Ida] not shown up or whatever, I doubt I'd have ever gone to school. I don't think so. Gone to college.

Q: Right. Did you make friends with the people that were in your classes with you? What did you get up to when you're off time?

Hartnett: Actually, I was so busy in my off time because I was either at the library studying on my off hours during the week and working on Saturday and Sunday, I have no idea, but it was very busy. And I really needed that study time because really the little high school I went to was not—I needed a little catching up. It was a very small high school in a very small town, and I wasn't preparing to go to college. You know, like most people that are planning to go, they take certain classes, but no, I didn't.

[20:00]

Q: So how did you feel that your classes went? Like, were the professors willing to give you any sort of leeway or were they helpful to you if you felt like maybe you needed that catching up?

Hartnett: I didn't really consider that, but I do remember that Sister had said to me, "When you've been here a month, you're going to be ready to escape because it's going to be a difficult transition." And then when we met, she just said, "How are you doing?" And I'm the kind of person who was going to make it happen, follow through, whatever it takes. I mean, I was so privileged to be there that I wouldn't have jeopardized it for anything.

Q: You were going to make it work no matter what.

Hartnett: Yes.

Q: And could you tell me a bit more about the religious aspects to the school? Because I know you said you attended Mass daily. What were those Masses like, and how much was that integrated into the culture of the school?

Hartnett: Well, it was really—it was Loyola, and of course, my roommates went to Loyola, so I knew about the Mass and made arrangements to be sure I could get there. But to me it was a great help while I was studying because I prayed to the Holy Spirit to help me because I can get through this. And I don't think—I mean, I wasn't I have no idea what my grades were, probably B's and C's. I don't think I had any A's, which in high school I did. But as far as the religious aspect of it, being with the two roommates, my focus was more with them. And as far as having questions about things like, oh, the story about Sister Madeleva [Wolff, C.S.C.] From Notre Dame—this is when I first met Sister Katherine [Forsyth, BVM] before I started school. She gave me this book to read. I have no idea the name of the book anymore or the authors, but I see this nun sitting on board the flight. She's got a seat vacant next to her, and I sit down—I'm a flight attendant, and I sit down next to her and I asked her, I said, "I don't know what this word means. It's annihilation." And she goes, "Oh, my dear, you're reading that book? Those authors are best friends of mine. They're very dear friends of mine, and they're a husband and wife team." And I still don't know what the book is. But anyway, I sat down with her and she told me some things. Like she said to me, "I have very high regard for my mind." That, I will never forget. And she said, "I have very high regard for my mind, and so I will not put literature into my mind that's not edifying. So I won't read fiction or anything, comic books, anything like that, never," because she regards her mind so highly. And then she took my address. She sent me a

Christmas card. She sent me a poem at Christmas and she -- I somehow lost track of her, too. But she was very helpful. And then later, I go home, and I say to my roommate's, "Oh, it's Sister Madeleva [Wolff, C.S.C.]. They said, "Oh, no, she's the president of St.—I think she was the founder, maybe of St. Mary's College at Notre Dame. I'm not sure." But I looked her up later recently and yeah, I was very fortunate to have her on board a flight. And I'm very fortunate I sat down next to her and talked to her. Which I did with everybody pretty much if I could.

Q: Yeah, so it sounds like your roommates, as well, were also very into the religious aspects of—

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Hartnett: They were, and these girls were educated in Catholic colleges, as I was not. So they had a whole layer of perspective on their faith that was new to me.

Q: So they could kind of give you that advice, and—

Hartnett: They took me under their wing. They really did. They were probably—well, they were right around my same age, twenty-three, something like that.

Q: So was living with these roommates that went to Loyola. Was this your main point of interaction between Mundelein and Loyola? Because being right there on campus next to each

other, they're very close related. But I know there sometimes wasn't much interaction between the two schools.

Hartnett: But for us there was. But also remember, I just moved from Surf Street, which was a lovely address and right near the lake. And so I still had my roommates that were flight attendants from United and TWA that I was still in touch with, I would see them. Plus, you know, dating. Yeah.

[25:00]

Q: What was the dating scene like? Was there a lot of—.

Hartnett: The dating scene-- this is such an unbelievable story, but I don't know if I should go into it, but I will go into it. I was at the beach. It's like June, whatever day it is, June 19th, and school is out, and I am totally exhausted. And I'm a flight attendant, and I'm still living there. And I go up to Albion Beach, and I took a book, something. I don't know what it was, but I was so exhausted I fell asleep. And I was with some flight attendants, Terry Beaver. And Terry Beaver introduced me to Jim Hartnett. And I didn't have my contact lenses on, so I couldn't see too well. But somehow he walked me home to the Northland from Albion Beach, and he just seemed so nice. So it turns out that -- I had four qualifications for somebody I was going to marry. He had to be Catholic, he had to be a certain age, blah, blah. And he was meeting all the

criteria just in our walk. And he's saying, "Oh, I've never been to Europe." And I'm thinking, I am going to have passes to go to Europe for after five years with the airline or something.

And anyway, but we just went out on a date, and I had my glasses or my contacts on, and, oh, my goodness, he's adorable. Sun-tanned, looked great. I was very pleased. And then we went to Chances R in Old Town, and they were where they'd throw peanut shells on the floor. And we had dinner there. And I laughed the whole night. I had sore jaws from laughing because he was so funny. He just had me so entertained. And we started to date. And then he asked me to marry him. And I didn't know all. But there was a story behind this whole thing that I did not know. And when we went up to Reedsville, Wisconsin to get married, he met my priest that had baptized me, given me confirmation, married me, not married me yet, confirmed me all that. And this Father Koutnik who lived next door to me, was set in his homily on Sunday. If you talk about Padre Pio and Padre Pio, you know that he has a stigmata of Christ and all that. And my late husband was saying, "Well, I'd like to go there. I don't care. We can go there." And so we went to Paris and went to Rome. And then on our honeymoon, we went up into San Giovanni Rotondo, which is where Padre Pio lived. And it was very remote, and it was also—we got married November 28th on Thanksgiving Day. So at this time, it was like there was no one around in San Giovanni. They come in the summer, not up into the mountains on these airline or—hairpin curves you have to go to get up there.

But we went up there, we took a train, and we—I think we must have taken a bus—took a bus, and went to San Giovanni. And at that time—now we're talking sixty years ago, 1963. And at that time, my husband had had some pain in his chest, and nobody really knew what it was. And

then they said it was a strained muscle or something. Well, we went to visit Padre Pio, and that was a beautiful, beautiful experience. Came home and Jim had more pain. It turns out that he was diagnosed with cancer. We married in November 28th, and this is January the following year, 1964. He was recuperating, and we were praying for his recovery and all that.

[30:00]

Hartnett: And then his boss talked to me one day and said, "You know what? Jim is not healing—" or—he didn't say, "He's not healing." He said, "He's just not doing as well as we hoped, and can you think of another vacation—" I'm still a flight attendant. He said, "Is there somewhere you can go just to take some time?" And of course, I'm talking to Terry Beaver, the gal that introduced us, her mother, and her mother said, "Go back to Europe. Why don't you go back to Europe?" Oh, okay.

So in April, the following year now, we go back to San Giovanni. And this time, the women who are like, pushing their way into church and not letting us in practically. And they were very protective of Padre Pio and San Giovanni Parish. They were welcoming us now. And I'm saying—oh, and by then, now I'm pregnant. And so we go and Jim asks for healing. And we went to Mass and we were right at the communion rail, right? And we would be very close to Padre Pio. And Jim said, "Please, I'm asking for a healing. But if that's not your will, then please heal me—" I mean, "please help me to die with dignity, and if it's not your will, that you'll heal me." And so at that point, Jim saw Padre Pio became pure light, and the host became pure light.

And Jim looked at me and said, "Did you see that?" And I said, "No, I did not." But it turns out that he—he said he knew that it was for his eyes only, and he felt that he knew he was cured. And then we went home, and obviously, he did a follow-up with his doctors, and the cancer was not there anymore. So—and this was right after we were married—to say that thy will be done. And our father, when he was, you know, questionably—and of course, I did not understand that the type of cancer he has, and I can't tell you right now what it was, but Sarcoma something. And I didn't understand that that was terminal at that time. And so I didn't know that. I didn't even know that until at Jim's funeral, when he died, that his brother mentioned that. Jim didn't tell me that. But also, Jim's friends who worked in the labs, where they sent his specimens, were very upset because they knew that it was not good.

So anyway, Jim lived another thirty-eight years. We have four children, and you can never forget the gift of life if it's given back to you. Although, like I said, I didn't ever know how serious it was because nobody told me. I was pregnant with Jimmy, our first son. But Jim, along with being healed, was given a great gift of faith and unbelievable person that he became through this whole thing. And with a great, great devotion to Padre Pio, and our 20th wedding anniversary, we went back and that was like 1968, no 1983, and Padre Pio died in '68. So he was not there anymore. But we did go back on Thanksgiving. And after my husband passed, my daughter and I went back to San Giovanni again in December with nobody around. But we went there to say thank you for the years God gave my husband, the additional years. I don't know how I got into all that, but that's something that I don't hesitate to talk about. And I do want to acknowledge Padre Pio.

Q: Yeah, that is just a remarkable story. Thank you for sharing it with me.

Hartnett: Well, my husband wrote a letter to his children, grandchildren by name before he died. And he talked about his experience. And what he said was he was down in Chicago. Oh, you know Chicago, Butch McGuire's one night, and he's with his friends and he's saying, "Dear Jesus, this is not the life I want to be leading, going to the pubs and watering holes and all that." And he said, he decided he was going to make a change in his life. And so he left, just left. And his friends were all there and he was driving, but they figured out another ride home, obviously.

[35:00]

Hartnett: But the next day he went to the chapel at St. Ignatius Parish, which is where he—it was his Parish. And there's a beautiful picture of the Blessed Mother there. And he said, "Blessed Mother, I want you to know I want to change my life. And I would like—I'm going to dedicate it to you from now on. And I'm going to do a novena of nine days of Masses to ask for guidance and help to find me a wife. And the only thing is, she should have good legs." So that was June 11th, I guess. And I met him on June 19th, like the day after, whatever it was. The day after the novena was over, he goes to the beach, he's with his friends, and he gets introduced to me, and he walks away, and he hears this voice saying, "This will be your wife." Little did I know. Anyway, so we start dating. And, you know, we obviously got married. If I had known that, I wouldn't have had to work so hard at snagging him. But it's a very sweet story.

Q: Oh, yeah, very. I love how your story is kind of just coincide in the perfect way. Right time and very divine intervention almost.

Hartnett: And I think that, I'm remarried now, and I think that my late husband and Jim literally put us together, the two of us. We just said that—anyway. But it seems like my life has been—I always say, stay close to Jesus. And Padre Pio and because of my late husband, I think my life has been like this in so many ways, just over and over and over and over again, that God is looking out for us. And if we just try to do the best we can, he's just so good to us unbelievably, and he can figure everything out better than we can. So one of the things that—I'm doing the Storyworth, which I sent you one of them, I think they're fifty-two weeks. But one of the things—I'm losing my train of thought. I'm eighty-three, I'm in my 84th year—about one of the most difficult things I did in my life. And that was when Jim was sick, and I was pregnant with my first son. To say thy will be done. I'd mentioned that casually, but that was one of the most difficult things I did because I could not imagine that. But I did turn it over to God. And when my late husband became sick and had cancer and had lung cancer, I go to Eucharistic Adoration, and that happened like two weeks after I started going. And I've been going for twenty-one years now, to say that I'm putting this in your hands. I cannot handle this. Just help me.

Q: And he's been there for you through it all.

Hartnett: Yes. And he always will be. I know that. I'm very grateful to God for that.

Q: Yeah. And do you feel like your faith was increased because of the relationship that you formed with your roommates and the nuns at Mundelein?

Hartnett: Yes. And even more so with my husband, but yes, definitely, because I was at a public high school. I was now in the modeling school. Patricia Vance Modeling School. Very lovely, but a different atmosphere, total different focus on how do you put your eyebrows on, how much weight—and all that. That's all very important, I think. But it's a different focus. And I was very happy to come back to the religious focus when I went to Mundelein.

Q: How did you feel upon learning that Mundelein was at all-women's college?

Hartnett: That was fine. The women there, they had the choicest women around out. So no, I would have no objections. I was a little bit—when I joined the airlines, I was thinking, I'll just do this, I'm going to apply. But I didn't have a really high regard for flight attendants at the time. But I thought, what the heck, I'll apply. Well, then when they said, you're accepted, I go, "Oh, yippee. You report to Kansas City for training," and all that, and there's a free flight. Okay.

[40:00]

Hartnett: I was very excited about it once I was accepted, but it was not something that I thought was going to be great. And it was great. It was hard work. Hard work. I mean, you're serving a

lot of passengers, and I was there before the jet age. I was there during the transition from the propeller airplanes to the jets. So that was quite the transition.

Q: Yeah, that's very interesting. When you were taking classes on campus, how was that experience of being with all women? I know that some others I've heard from felt that it helped build their confidence a bit to not have to compete with men. Did you notice anything like that, similarly?

Hartnett: I think because of my age, that really wasn't something I thought about. I always--well, I've had four sisters, which I'm very grateful for. I also have three brothers, and I love men. And a lot of times women can be, "Oh, men don't understand us," and all that. Well, no, I love men and I love women, too. So being from a family of eight, five girls and three boys, I think my upbringing didn't really—kind of eliminated any of that kind of thinking. But I know that my dear friends, my dear friends did a lot of demonstrating and are very into women's rights, have been. And then I started having a family. So that was that. That was my focus, four children.

Q: Yeah. What sort of world events were happening when you were at Mundelein? I can't remember quite when the Vietnam War started, but was that something that was—.

Hartnett: Oh, you know what the big thing was—we were on pins and needles—was the Cuban Air Crisis (Cuban Missile Crisis) with John F. Kennedy as president. He was the first president—it was the first time I could vote, and I voted for him. But the thing is, I was in school

and they had these reports on the radio that Cuba or Russia had ships focused, poised on Cuba. And I think we prayed about that. I don't remember too well, but that was just huge. And one of the funny things is, at those days, there were a lot of airplane hijackings. And then one of the thing was, "What did Fidel Castro say to John F. Kennedy? He said, Hi Jack," but they were bringing people in by hijacking planes, anyway. But the Cuban Missile Crisis was huge when I was at Mundelein, and I was only there a year and a half. But also, five days—four days before our wedding, John F. Kennedy was shot. I was on the train on the way home to get married, and we heard he was shot. I couldn't believe it. And all I could say was, "Oh, my gosh, we're going to get Johnson for President?" Who would have ever thought that Kennedy wouldn't live out his term?

Q: Yeah. What was politics like on campus? What sort of presence did it have on campus?

Hartnett: Well, like I said, I wasn't on campus very much. I know I was very into reading all the news at the time, but I don't really remember anything about politics on campus at that time. Now politics is such a huge thing, and everybody's got an opinion, and they're all demonstrating for this or for that. But it wasn't like that, especially on a Catholic campus. And it wasn't a campus. It was a high rise. That was so cool. [laughs]

Q: Yeah, that's true. Very minimal campus. It was the Skyscraper and Piper Hall, right?

Hartnett: Yeah.

Q: So when you were studying, did you mainly do that at your apartment or did you go to the library?

Hartnett: I was at the library all the time because that was the only way I could really focus. If I had time between classes, I would go to the library. And I think I went to Loyola Library as much as I went to Mundelein.

[45:00]

Hartnett: But that's what I did, because the apartment—the girls had—they were in their graduate classes, and they were irregular, some were at night, some were during the day, here or there, whatever. So I just felt it was better to stay away, not get into all the conversations. I'm very distractible. So I would go to the library and study. That's where I did most of my studying.

Q: Yeah. And then the choice to leave Mundelein after you were married, what was that decision transition like?

Hartnett: Well, one of the reason, I think, was financial, because when we were getting married, and I had the job of the flight attendant, and I could use the passes and all that. So when we got engaged—I got engaged in June, I think in June of the following year—Memorial Day of the

following year. Then when I took my leave of absence for the last semester, I never asked for another leave of absence for the fall semester because I got married in November then and did the wedding planning and whatever else needed to be done.

Q: Okay. And I wanted to ask this, but I'd forgotten. After hearing about the Cuban Missile Crisis and the hijackings, what reactions did you and your fellow flight attendants have? Were you nervous to continue your job? Had you thought of stopping?

Hartnett: Never. No. But one of the things in those days, we didn't have cell phones. And so when there was a major—and there were more crashes then—and when there was a major airline down, our parents wanted to get in touch with us. So we would call home and say, "We're fine. We're TWA, that was United," or whatever. One of the flights that I got off of at midnight, coming in from—we used to pick up the new recruits, the Army—Marines. They were Marines going to [Camp] Pendleton, California, and they would be like—now they're leaving home for the first time, and they were like totally drunk, and they were just a mess. And then we returned the flights. On the return flight, we'd take them back and they'd be like, offering to spit shine our shoes. And they were like totally different people in whatever that ten or twelve week period was. That was something I'll never forget. But there was something else I wanted to say about that. I always get sidetracked.

Q: You had any nervousness of the flying?

Hartnett: What I was going to say was that when I got off that flight that originated in Philadelphia and went to Camp Pendleton, California, there was a change of flight attendants in Chicago, at Midway, and we got off the flight at midnight and that same plane took off and the tail of the airplane, for whatever reason, cracked off. It was a constellation of stars—TWA constellation of stars. And the flight went down and those girls that took over the flight were so fresh and beautiful, and that flight went down and nobody survived. And I don't know exactly what year that was or what, but it was a TWA flight, so there were some. And like I said, we would call home because we want everybody to be sure we were okay. They don't have crashes like that anymore, especially since the jets, we just don't. But there were more in those days, but I never had a fear. One of the things they told us since flight training was, "You will be as comfortable on an airplane as you are in your own living room." Yeah. I've been on like three flights before that, but it was true because you focus on the passengers, and they told us they were mostly male business travelers. And they said, "One thing is, they're all in charge where they are. And now they get on your airplane, and they say—you tell them fasten your seatbelt, there'll be a delay of blah, blah, blah for a certain amount of time. So they're totally out of their comfort zone. And they spent a lot of time on psychology when they took us into training at Kansas City about telling us about the businessmen and how we should make them comfortable because they're out of their comfort zone, and it made sense.

[50:00]

Q: Yeah, now looking back from your time at Mundelein and just your lived experiences now, are there any lessons or experiences that you take away from that time that have carried you through?

Hartnett: Well, I think everything, it affects everything. It's a journey you enter into as life goes on, and it affects you completely. Whatever that education was, had I not had that, I mean, I'd be a different person. I do think that—I don't think it's lacking, like my sisters who have not had it. They're not lacking in any way, probably more intelligent than I am. One of them for sure. But very successful and very happy. But on the other hand, there's a whole dimension that I have that I would not have had, had I not gone to Mundelein. And I thank Sister Katherine for that, Sister Ann Ida [Edit: St. Ida].

Q: Yeah, I was going to ask, to what extent did the nuns impact your time there?

Hartnett: A lot, because every time I see—well, there are not enough nuns anymore around, period. But like all of the nuns that are around currently, I still am very comfortable with them, and I really admire them for what they're doing, so they definitely have an influence on me.

Q: Great, well, thank you for everything you've shared with me today. I'm at the end of my question list, but I feel like I have to ask if there's anything that I haven't asked you about your time at Mundelein that you would like to share that was on your mind.

Hartnett: I think I pretty much covered whatever I can remember, but I'm just grateful that whatever—I don't know what form this will take, what you're going to do with these interviews. Is that going to be in video form or book form or—?

Q: Yeah, so we are going to upload these interviews as they are as we conducted them to our online website and portal that we have specifically for oral history interviews devoted to Mundelein. So that's where it's going to be housed and then people can access them when they're browsing through if they're looking for specific research, stuff like that.

Hartnett: That is so wonderful. Thank you so much for doing that.

Q: Yes. So your contribution will be out there and will live on.

Hartnett: Yeah, especially right now. I'm doing Storyworth, which is a thing where I write something every week about some influence in my life, and I'm very grateful to my daughter for giving that to me because I'm able to say things to my children that I never would have said otherwise or to anyone who cares. It might be boring if they are, my sister say, "Turn the page." But I'm glad that I can put it out there. I think it's a nice opportunity, and I'm grateful for her for asking the questions. So I'm grateful to you for asking these questions too. Thank you.

Q: Yes, of course. It's been really wonderful. Thank you for your participation, and I'm really excited to get all of this kind of posted online and finished up, so it'll be great. I am going to stop our recording, but I would like you to stay on in the meeting so we can talk about next steps and expectations and stuff.

Hartnett: Wonderful. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]