

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Linda Jack's Oral History

Women and Leadership Archives

Loyola University Chicago

2022

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Linda Jack conducted by Melissa Newman on February 23, 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**

[0:00 - 5:00]: Introductions, Linda's family/upbringing, her sister being at Mundelein as well, and impression of Mundelein.

[5:00 - 10:00]: Impression of Mundelein and being with her sister continued.

[10:00 - 15:00]: Classes she took and the USO Troupe. Vietnam War and Viet Rock play.

[15:00 - 20:00]: Viet Rock play continued.

[20:00 - 25:00]: Vietnam War protests and reactions to Kent State Massacre.

[25:00 - 30:00]: How Mundelein shifted her political views, campus living, and roommates.

[30:00 - 35:00]: Tea Room food review, experience being a theater major, and the plays they put on.

[35:00 - 40:00]: Plays continued, Loyola and Mundelein crossover with theater, and professors that influenced her.

[40:00 - 45:00]: Being on campus and in the city and going to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for a class.

[45:00 - 50:00]: Importance of music in her life and how she started as a talent agent.

[50:00 - 55:00]: Talent agent continued, being a photographer, and having her photos in the yearbook for Mundelein.

[55:00 - 1:01:24]: Dark room for Mundelein and interview wrap up.

## **NARRATOR BIO**

Linda Jack was born in Chicago, Illinois. When she was three, her family moved out to the suburbs to Arlington Heights. Linda is the third of four children: an older brother, older sister, and younger sister. She went to Sacred Heart of Mary in Rolling Meadows, an all-girls Catholic high school, and after seeing her older sister, Eileen, go off to Mundelein College in Chicago, Linda decided to follow her there. Linda loved Chicago and its culture. She was also enamored with its proximity to Lake Michigan, so after hearing from Eileen that Mundelein was a place where women could be independent, Linda knew that Mundelein was the right place—geographically and emotionally—for her. She enrolled at Mundelein in 1968 and graduated in 1972.

Linda was very involved in the theater department during her time at Mundelein. She was a theater major, joined the chorus, the Chorale Singers, and USO Troupe, was a student aide for the theater department, a stage manager, and was a student advisor to underclassmen for the theater department. She learned all the tricks of the trade in her various activities and loved it. As a senior, she put all that knowledge together when she directed “Adaption,” a one-act play by Elaine May. Through this experience, she was in charge of casting actors, making the programs, paying for the rights to perform the play, printing tickets, painting the set, etc. One memorable play she was in was “Viet Rock,” a rock musical denouncing America’s involvement in the Vietnam War. She and her fellow castmates performed the play on a platform stage in McCormick Lounge rather than the Skyscraper’s auditorium, and even performed it at The Second City for the Chicago Peace Council.

Due to all of the political and social upheaval during Linda’s time at Mundelein, she became very aware of and interested in politics for the rest of her life. It was during her freshmen orientation in the spring of 1968 that Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. She was staying in the Northland dorm and remembers not being allowed to leave due to the rioting in the city. She also remembers being horrified when news of the Kent State shootings reached campus in the spring of 1970. Linda recounts Mundelein’s responses at the time and the student activism that resulted.

### **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: Linda Jack

Locations: Bend, OR and Palatine, IL via Zoom

Interviewer: Melissa Newman

Date: February 23, 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 Linda Jack, Class of 1972, on February 23, 2022, for the Share Your Story: Student Life at Mundelein Project. I am in Palatine, Illinois, and Linda is in Bend, Oregon. So to start us off, Linda, could you just tell me a little bit about yourself, like where you were born and raised and your family?

Jack: I was born in Chicago, and my first three years were lived in Chicago, and then my family moved to Arlington Heights. And there were four of us in my family, I'm the third in line. I have an older brother, an older sister and a younger sister. And I went to an all-girls high school in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, called Sacred Heart of Mary. And then I went to Mundelein College. So I had been introduced to Mundelein by my older sister, who had gone there before she went into the convent, and then she came out of the convent before I got there. So we were in the same dorm in my freshman year. And we had to share a partial wardrobe, but that's pretty much my

formative. I had wanted to go to a college in the city, in Chicago, because when I had gone on school trips into the city, I just loved it. I loved the culture that was available there, and I loved the lake, Lake Michigan, being there. I far preferred going to a college in the city on a lake than in the cornfields in downstate Illinois (laughs). Mundelein seemed far more attractive to me than University of Illinois at the time, and that's why I chose Mundelein.

And then it was a big eye-opener for a girl from the suburbs to move into the city and have all of those opportunities available. And also, the diversity that Mundelein offered was far different from what I had encountered in my suburban life. There were other races, other cultural backgrounds, although I regret that I never really fully explored that. My roommate for my first two years was African American, and we got along really well. She was from Atlanta. But in retrospect, you can think of so many other things that you should have asked, so many other questions, so many other ways you should have gotten to know people who were dissimilar from yourself. But I guess that's part of growing up. You learn too late what you wish you had taken advantage of before. But it did shape me in the fact that I loved Chicago, and I couldn't imagine living anywhere else—except for a brief period of my life when I tried. But Chicago really meant so much to me. I knew that I wanted to be around culture and around a lot of opportunities to meet different types of people. And I think that all was instigated at Mundelein.

Q: And you said that you had heard of Mundelein through your sister her going there first. What did you know about it through her?

[05:00]

Jack: I knew that it was a place where women could be independent. And that was something that had been nurtured in me in high school by the community that I was in at SHM. And then it seemed that Eileen's independence was fostered at Mundelein. So I knew that path would continue to be open to me. And of course, I loved that it was on Lake Michigan, and it had an art deco skyscraper. (laughs)

Q: And when you were thinking of colleges, were those, Mundelein and the University of Illinois? Were those the only two options? And if so, why?

Jack: They were pretty much the only two options for me. Because of the fact that there were four kids in our family, and we were the first generation to go to college. And my brother had gotten a National Merit—was a National Merit finalist, and we all had to apply for financial aid. I guess back then, I guess none of the other Illinois state universities or colleges appealed to me. I was just drawn to Mundelein. But I applied to U of I [University of Illinois] just as a backup. But when Mundelein accepted me and I got some student aid, it just solidified my decision.

Q: And so with your sister going there before you, or at the same time, you said that you guys could exchange or use each other's wardrobes, how much interaction did you have with your sister at Mundelein?

Jack: I think she was on the third floor, and I was on the first floor, and that was about it. We would say, "I'm going to take this for the week," or "can I have that?" It was back when you wore skirts. (laughs) And since she had just come out of the convent, and I'd come out of an all-girls Catholic high school with a uniform, neither one of us had big wardrobes. But other than that, we didn't interact a lot. I'm four years younger or three and a half, whatever. Four school years younger than her. And so she had her friends. I had my friends. We would interact when we saw each other, but we didn't socialize with each other, and we obviously weren't in any classes together.

Q: Yeah, that's fair.

Jack: Yeah. We managed to even have a joint checking account and not mess it out. I can't hear you.

Q: Sorry. Very important as a young adult.

Jack: Yeah, it was.

Q: How would you compare your experience at an all-girl school and high school to an all-women's college?



Jack: Well, you have a lot more freedom because you're not living at home. And just the age factor. You go through such different levels of maturity when you're in the four years in high school then the four years in college. There's so much to learn about people. You don't have someone watching over you beyond whatever the dorm curfew was at the time, which I don't remember. So just the freedom factor is huge.

Q: And in terms of your classes at Mundelein, could you talk a bit about your major, what you studied, what your favorite classes were?

[10:00]

Jack: When I first got there, I didn't know what I wanted to major in, and I thought maybe political science. But then I realized that I really wanted to be in theater. So I declared theater as a major, I think, in the midterm of my freshman year. And I started taking theater classes, and I loved them. I just really loved them. But I also took French class and took whatever all the basic studies were at the time. I think I had to take a philosophy. I knew I had to do music appreciation, which of course, I also loved. I got into the chorus and was in the choral singers. Freshman year, I was in the USO Troupe, which was a lot of fun. We had to make these dresses so that we all looked—and all had the same dresses. But we never got to perform beyond Mundelein. We never went out on tour or anything. But it was a good group activity for me when I was a freshman because it gave me acting and singing experience, and it gave me interaction with women who were in other levels at Mundelein. In other years, it wasn't all freshmen, it was

freshmen through seniors who are in the troupe. So that was good. And I can't remember when exactly I got into the chorus, but I loved being in the chorus.

Q: Do you remember why the USO Troupe never ended up going beyond Mundelein?

Jack: It was 1968-1969 and after 1969, the unrest with Vietnam they just—I don't remember exactly what we were told, but it just never materialized after that first year. And then, of course, sophomore year, I ended up being in Viet Rock, which was a war protest play. So I don't know if I would have been in the USO Troupe then. It would have been rather quite a conflict of beliefs and emotions at that point. Although I didn't hold anything against those who served in the military because most of them didn't have a choice. But the war protests became so much more prominent by 1969. And then come spring of 1970, there was the Kent State murders, and we started protesting.

Q: All right. There's a lot of stuff I want to ask you about this very topic. Let's dive right in. Well, first I wanted to ask about the Viet Rock play. What was that about? What did that include? How did that come to be?

Jack: Sister Jeanelle Bergen [BVM], who was the dean of the theater department or the head of the theater department? She was away on sabbatical, and we had an interim director who came, Janet Binna, who was an alum of Mundelein, and she had been at Second City as well. And she

came to teach a couple classes and to direct the big play for the year. And she chose Viet Rock by Megan Terry, which was a war play—an anti war play, I should say.

[15:00]

And we had cast members from outside the theater department as well as within the theater department. We had cast members from Mundelein and even from the community who—I have no idea how they all found out about the play. But it was a diverse group of actors, and we performed at Mundelein. We didn't do the performance at the Auditorium in the Skyscraper. We had a platform stage that was set up in McCormick Place—McCormick Lounge, and we performed in there. And then somehow or another, maybe through Janet Binna's contacts later in the year, we did a performance at Second City as a fundraiser for the Chicago Peace Council or Coalition or something like that. And I know we did another performance somewhere else, but I can't remember exactly where it was. So that was Viet Rock.

Q: Do you remember what role you played in it?

Jack: Well, you played multiple roles. It wasn't a traditional exposition play. You did multiple roles in chorus. And there were some songs that we did—yeah, so it's not like you can say, oh, I was so-and-so from the play. It was you're so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so.

Q: You said it was an anti-war play. How else might you describe it to someone who's never heard it before?

Jack: Well, it was done by the La Mama Theater, I think, originally in New York. And that was sort of what they call, I think it was Guerilla Theater back in those days. It was very modern at the time. It's very avant-garde. That was the same time that Hair was on Broadway or off Broadway, wherever Hair was. Although I didn't go see it, so I don't know how it really compared with it. But it was rather unexpected for an all-women's college to do a play like that. Wasn't Shakespeare, that's for sure. I think the previous year the big production had been Come Back, Little Sheba. So this was really a big difference. And I don't think we ever did a big production after that. Theater department wasn't exactly as vital as it could have been.

Q: Could that have been just a difference in directors? Like you said, that Sister Janelle Bergen—Bergen was on sabbatical. So was that maybe a change in just artistic choice? Maybe for who—?

Jack: I'm sure it was a change in artistic choice. And she did return to Mundelein, but we had—it was a really small department. I was a student aid for the department, so I did a lot of whatever the instructors in the department needed help with or wanted done, they would turn to me and I would do it. I cleaned out the prop and the costume room. I ended up becoming the stage manager for the auditorium. Whenever anyone wanted to use it, I would go and do the lights and the sound.

[20:00]

So that was a good opportunity for me. I enjoyed doing all of that.

Q: Yeah. Sounds like you were a Jack of all trades and learned everything.

Jack: (Laughs) Literally and figuratively.

Q: The Linda Jack of all trades.

Jack: Right. I've heard them all. (laughs)

Q: And so this is being a very large time of political and social unrest. Tell me about the war protests, Mundelein's, involvement, your involvement, your thoughts of it at the time.

Jack: We had a student strike after Kent State, and I remember there were protests. There was one protest, I don't know who did it, but some students poured red paint down one of the statues in front of the Skyscraper to look like blood. But I wasn't involved in that. I just saw the aftermath. But the student strike, I remember we had a big rally, I think, at Loyola, at their Stadium, and that may have been where we did some scenes from Viet Rock. I didn't take notes

back then [laughs]. A lot has happened in the past few years. But I remember being aware of police watching us. And I can't remember exactly when we had the—we had an agreement. The students met with the faculty, and we had an agreement for a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade period. If you chose to, you could choose to do some activist work, and you could work with—take your classes and get a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade, or you could just choose to get your normal letter grade. So I know I took some classes on the S/U basis, and that seemed to be the major demand. I also remember working with doing some canvassing before an election so that I went out and rang doorbells and knocked on doors and canvassed. I hated it (laughs). I hated it. I felt so uncomfortable. I didn't know what I was doing—because I didn't know what I was doing. But then I remember poll-watching at a precinct on election day and watching the precinct captains working the voters. Just glad-handing them and "how you're doing, how so-and-so?" That was really an eye-opener for me to see the political workers doing their thing.

Q: Because that is illegal. Yes, you can't do that?

Jack: At the time, it wasn't illegal. I think laws were passed. Well, no, I think—yeah, for years I voted in Chicago, and I never had a precinct captain come up to me and talk to me.

[25:00]

But also you couldn't have signs within so many feet of a polling place. So I think that changed between 1970 and later [laughs]. Probably because of that. Yeah. We can't influence people.

Q: Yeah. Seems like a big no-no.

Jack: Yeah, we did progress.

Q: Good. And so for this satisfactory/unsatisfactory thing, was that put in place so specifically for students that wanted to have a more active protest involvement?

Jack: I think so. I think that's what I remember. Again, it was a while ago, and I didn't keep a diary, so I tried looking through my yearbooks and things, but they didn't really go into that.

Q: Yeah, that's all right. I'm asking about things that happened decades ago, so it's not all crystal clear. I don't even know what I did last week.

Jack: I was going to say. Please. (laughs)

Q: So. Well, you brought up Kent State and the kind of response around that. Did you have any—I'm asking specifics again, do you remember any initial reactions or how that affected you guys at Mundelein?

Jack: We were horrified. We were—It's not as if we weren't aware of violence and police actions, because we were in Chicago. When I was on freshman orientation in April of 1968, there were the riots after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. And I remember I was staying in a dorm at a Mundelein—the Northland the old dorm, and my sister was still in the convent at that point, and she was across the street in the Scholasticate. I couldn't leave the Northland to go visit her because of the curfew, because I was only eighteen. But because she was older, she could come across the street to see me at the Northland. That's what I remember. And I can only think how upset my parents must have been to have two daughters in Chicago at the time of the riots. Although we were pretty far from where the West Side, where everything happened. But there was the Chicago Seven going on while we were at Mundelein, Fred Hampton was assassinated. I mean, all of that was quite shocking, but part of our lives. So the Kent State was just another shocking, violent activity that we weren't happy with.

Q: Do you think or to what extent do you think that all of these violent, tense actions influenced your time at Mundelein and your young adult life?

Jack: Well, it made me really interested in politics for the rest of my life. I pretty much—it turned me into a Liberal.

Q: You weren't a Liberal before? (Typing sounds)

Jack: I wouldn't say that I wasn't a Liberal. I just probably didn't think about it.



[30:00]

I was appalled by the injustice of the civil rights issues in the South, but they didn't really affect me that much. Living in suburban Chicago, the only Black people I saw, the only African Americans I saw, were when I had forensic tournaments in the city and would go to another high school and see African American students. So it wasn't until I got to Mundelein that I got to really know African American students and know about the injustices in the South. I read things in history books and seen things on television and read the newspaper. But those years, from '68 to '72, pretty much formed my political awareness for the rest of my life.

Q: And you mentioned that your freshman and sophomore, your roommate was African American. What was her experience like? How did you observe her experience at Mundelein and her reactions to what was going on? Did you ever talk about that with her?

Jack: Unfortunately, I don't think we really discussed it a lot. And the fact that she was from Atlanta made her background and her experience different from the Mundelein students who grew up in the city, in Chicago. Again, I totally regret that I didn't ask Pam more about her life and what she felt about these things. Because it was a total lost opportunity for me. But we got along well, and we chose to room with each other again our sophomore year after freshman year. I'm sure she had pressure on her because she had a white roommate at some point and because she wasn't as militant as some of the Chicago African American students.

Q: And who did you room with your junior and senior year.

Jack: Junior year, I started out in Coffey Hall and then an opportunity to room with a woman who was in the theater department a year ahead of me. She was renting a studio apartment in the Spanish Arms, which was the U-shaped courtyard apartment building between Coffey Hall—between the Skyscraper and the Northland. So she was looking for a roommate, and I moved out of the dorm to share a studio with her. And then my senior year, I had different roommates in another apartment in the Spanish Arms. I think I had mostly women who were a year behind me.

Q: How would you compare your experience of living in the dorm versus living in apartments?

Jack: The food is a lot better in the apartments.

Q: Because you were making it yourself?

Jack: Because we were making food ourselves (laugh). It wasn't great, but we couldn't complain if we screwed it up. (laughs)

Q: What was bad about the food in the Tea Room?

[35:00]

Jack: It was cafeteria food. You had mystery meat. (Laughs) Yeah. And Jell-O.

Q: Interesting pairing. Mystery meat/Jell-O.

Jack: Yes. (laughs)

Q: What was your experience like with the other theater majors or the theater department and your relationships with them?

Jack: I know we had a great time in senior year when we were directing our own plays. For the directing course that we took, we had to direct a one-act play. And I remember Janet Schnake and I really—Janice Schnake and I may have been the only two theater majors who were seniors at the same time at that point. I mean, it really got down to the nitty-gritty. Because I know we did our senior performances together, and we did our directing. She did a play by, a one act by Brian Friel. I think it was called Loving [Lovers by Brian Friel], and I directed Elaine May's Adaptation, which I loved, which was a comedy, and it was a comedy of life, like a game show, which was really fun to do. I found some good talent from Mundelein and Loyola who came through, did a great job. Off the record.

Q: Yeah. Let me just pause the recording for this then.

[pause in recording]

Q: Okay. We're back on the record now. Could you tell me about directing your own one-act play? Did you cast everyone yourself? How did that work?

Jack: Yes, cast everyone, worked on the set, got the—I think the actors provided their own costumes, but we discussed what would be appropriate. But you had to do the programs, pay the rights to use the play, print your tickets. I think we charged a dollar for admission, which pretty much went towards the paint and the whatever for the scenery. We used the same platform stage or part of the platform stage that had been made for Viet Rock, only we just painted it so that it didn't have the same looking surface. And it had to serve both the play that Jan Schnake was directing, Loving, as well as my play. The creativity is about figuring out a way to do it.

Q: Yeah. Were the plays similar enough where the sets could kind of work a bit together. Or was it very—?

Jack: Hers was a tragedy on a lake. [laughs] Mine was a comedy game show about going through life. There was the game show host, which was a mom—a woman. There was a contestant, the game show host, and then a woman and a man who played multiple roles. And it was by Elaine May, so the dialogue was really fantastic. It was all about timing.

[40:00]

Comedic timing was very important. So, yeah, nothing, Brian Fiel's was a tragedy.

Q: That's a bit tricky.

Jack: Yeah.

Q: So you mentioned that you also cast Loyola students in your plays. Was that typical to have a lot of, like, not cross collaboration, but cross participation in the theater department?

Jack: Yes. Because we didn't have a lot of male students at Mundelein. We had a few. In fact, one of the students—I had three Mundelein students and one Loyola student in my cast. So one of the men was a Mundelein student.

Q: And do you know if anyone from the Mundelein theater department ever participated in Loyola plays?

Jack: I don't know. I don't think we did. Because Loyola had a really strong theater department at the time, and I can't imagine they would have cast anyone outside of their own theater

department. It's interesting because later on as an agent, I represented some actors who went to Loyola around the time I was at Mundelein.

Q: That's very cool.

Jack: Yeah. For many years. I have a good friend who was—I can't remember what year she graduated from Loyola, but I have a friend who was a Loyola grad.

Q: Could you talk to me about any of the professors, lay or Sisters that you had and the influences they had on you?

Jack: Oh, boy. Here we go with—I'm not going to remember names at all. I had great respect for Sister Janelle Bergen, great respect for her and whatever advice she gave me. And I probably regretted that she didn't have more classes to teach because I think I could have learned a lot more from her. I know I learned a lot from Janet Binna. I learned a lot from nuns whose names I can't remember in the theater department. And I had teachers for chorus and singing who I really enjoyed working with and from whom I thought I learned a lot. And my photography instructor, I took a photography class, and then I did an independent study in photography in my senior year. I learned a lot from Barbara Van Cleave. I remember her name. David Orr had really interesting history classes. He was also in Viet Rock with us for one of the shows. And I had some French teachers I really liked. I wish I had taken French more than just my freshman year, though I dropped out of it at that point.

[45:00]

And George [Petterson]—I wish I could remember George's last name. He was our technical theater tech teacher, and he taught us how to build sets and paint them. He was a good guy.

Q: Yeah. Do you have any meaningful experiences that you can recall that kind of defined your time at Mundelein?

Jack: I think it was being able to investigate and grow to do things like explore Rogers Park and walk around in the evening, walk along the lake, go study in the Learning Resource Center and look out at Lake Michigan. To take the 'El' down to Orchestra Hall and see the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performing, to go to the Art Institute to wander around the neighborhood for a basic studies class, I think it was art appreciation. And you had to take a look at architecture and find a building that you liked and explain why you like it and learn how to grocery shop, how to cook a dinner for myself, probably wasn't very great, but—learn how to depend on myself. Those were—learn how to work with other people on projects, that was vitally important. And make decisions from what was going on in the world and what was going on in this city. And how did I feel about it? Where did I stand?

Q: It was a very formative time for you.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Q: And you mentioned that you had taken a music appreciation class, right?

Jack: Yes.

Q: So then going to see the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, did you get more out of that experience from that class?

Jack: Oh, my gosh, yes. Later in life, for a few years, I actually was able to afford to buy season passes—season subscription to the Symphony. After my husband died, I—it was sort of something to soothe myself, but I bought the Symphony passes. And then I'd take a friend along with me, a friend or a cousin, try to share it with them.

Q: Yeah. What from the class were you able to pull and then recognize in the pieces that you would see?

[50:00]

Jack: Well, I also listened—music was a part of growing up. Our mother had a beautiful lyric soprano voice, and she sang in the church choir, and she would do solos, and she would sing



around the house. And I didn't have a voice anywhere near as good as hers, but I appreciated it. And sometimes she listened to classical music. We took piano lessons for a few years, so I had basics. But when I took music appreciation, going to Orchestra Hall and hearing the music all around you. Just a transformative experience. And I do miss that. You didn't necessarily recognize pieces that you had listened to in the class, but it didn't matter. The point was being open to what was out there.

Q: Yeah, that sounds really lovely. I think music and theater and art just have such an important place in culture, and not enough emphasis is always put on it. Especially in school programs. Well, I'm reaching the end of the questions that I had set out to ask you. Has anything else come to mind, as we've been talking about your time at Mundelein that maybe I haven't asked about?

Jack: It really helped me when I became a talent agent, because I had studied theater, I studied photography. I had built up an appreciation—further appreciation of music so that when I started working as an agent, I had groundwork for my profession. And that's pretty good for a profession that lasted me over forty years. The only thing I could have used was some business classes. (Laughs) That would have been really helpful. Didn't think of taking any of those when I was in college.

Q: Yeah. Did you have this aspiration while you were still at Mundelein to become a talent agent or was that something—?

Jack: Oh, not at all. No. (Laughs) It after—it was around—I was in my mid twenties, and I was trying to figure out how to get into the business in Chicago. How to become an actor. And I was working as a server at a bar, and the hostess asked one of the other servers if she would be interested in a job as a receptionist at a talent agency. And that server said no, she was happy where she was working. Her day job was at Playboy as a receptionist. Playboy magazine. But I turned around to her, and I said, "I'm not terribly interested in being a receptionist, but I'd like to work at a talent agency." And evidently there was an agent who was going to have a baby in a few months, and so she would probably be leaving.

[55:00]

And I said, "And I'd be interested in probably learning how to be a talent agent." And I went in and I interviewed. I didn't get the job, but I called back about the time when I thought the pregnant agent would be leaving. And I got a second interview because the person hired for the reception position was going to another job at an ad agency, and they needed an interim receptionist before the person they wanted for the job was coming back from out of state. And then they wanted to start a children's department. And so, would I be interested in being a children's talent agent? And I said, "Sure, why not? I like kids," and that's how I got the job.

Q: And it all went up from there.

Jack: Yeah, it all changed from there. And once I got into the agency and learning how to be an agent, I realized it probably wasn't the right fit for me to be a performer. That I was better trying to match actors with jobs or with producers who are looking for someone to fill a certain role, that was a better use of my skills.

Q: Were you ever tempted when you heard of opportunities that you were supposed to be giving to the talent that you're like, "Oh, I would love to do that?"

Jack: No, because we were franchised by SAG [Screen Actors Guild] Actor and Equity, you were a franchise agent, and it was a conflict of interest you were never, ever allowed to do—I know at one point a casting director liked my laugh and wanted me to audition for a laugh. And it's like, "No can't do it, can't do it, can't take the job away from another actor."

Q: And was that hard for you at first or was it pretty apparent soon after you started that this was the right fit for you after all?

Jack: I think it was apparent to me that this was a good place for me to be. And I wasn't a children's agent for all of my career. I did that for about six years, and then I went on to representing adults and children on camera and voice-over. And I got so that I loved voice-over the best, so I ended up specializing in that. And when I started my own agency, I was the head of the voice-over department and I hired somebody else to go—had the on-camera.

Q: I realized that I forgot to ask this, earlier. You mentioned that you took a photography class at Mundelein, and I also remembered seeing some of your photographs on the Women and Leadership Archives website from your time at Mundelein. Did you take professional photos for Mundelein? How did that get incorporated? Do you know?

Jack: I think my sister had worked in the PR Department at Mundelein for a little bit, and so I had met someone from the PR Department through her. And I know I did my independent study—oh, I helped take some photographs for the yearbook. I think one or two years we had—you supplied your own photograph. You could choose your own photograph if you wanted to, rather than the official one that was on your ID. And I took some photographs for students and printed them up.

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The dark room was in the basement of the Gannon Center, which was the old mansion next to Coffey Hall. And so it was a pretty dank place. But it was our only dark room. So I must have connected with people in the PR Department, and that's how I took some photographs for them. Yeah, I was looking through things. I found a picture of Sister Ann Ida Gannon and some other staff members. I thought, darn, I don't even remember taking that picture, but I must have because I've got it.

Q: Great. Well, thank you so much for everything you've shared with me today. It's been really great hearing about your experiences and how Mundelein has kind of shaped who you are today and all that you've learned from it. So, yeah, I just want to say thank you, and I will stop our recording so that we can talk about next steps.

Jack: Okay.