

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of the Youngstown Diocese

Personal Experience

O.H. 1571

SISTER JEROME CORCORAN

Interviewed

by

Stephanie Fisher

on

October 30, 1992

SISTER JEROME CORCORAN

Sister Jerome was born in 1916, in Chicago, Illinois. Her parents, Austin Corcoran and Rose O'Donnel Corcoran, moved the family to Youngstown, Ohio when she was seven. Her upbringing was very church-oriented. The schools she attended were St. Colomba and Ursuline High School. Sister Jerome chose to become a nun, due to her close association with the Ursuline Sisters. In 1935, she joined the order of the Ursuline Sisters.

In 1942-49, Sister Jerome received her B.A. and M.A. in English from Catholic University. Three years later, she received her Ph.D. in Education and Research from Case Western Reserve University. From 1937-53, Sister Jerome taught at various parochial schools and universities.

Two years after joining the order, her first assignment was teaching third grade at St. Colomba. She taught at various parochial schools for six years, including St. Nicholas, Struthers and Girard. In 1943, her next assignment was teaching English at Ursuline High School, where she taught for six years.

Beginning in 1953, Sister Jerome was the supervisor of education for the Youngstown Diocese. Her duties included supervising the elementary and secondary schools, setting up pay scales for lay teachers, and developing the curriculum. Changing from the Cleveland Diocese curriculum was significant. The Youngstown Diocese wanted to individualize itself and change the texts. This was possibly due to its smaller size.

Presently, Sister Jerome is director of the Mill Creek Children's Center. She is a member of the Youngstown area

Chamber of Commerce, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Youngstown Urban League, the United Way Agency Executives Group, and the Ohio Association for Education. In recognition of her work, Sister Jerome has been honored with several awards: the Michael Kirwan Anti-Poverty Award, the B'Nai B'Rith Woman of the Year, the Mahoning County Bar Association Annual Award, the Ancient Order of Hibernians Woman of the Year, and the Ursuline High School Woman of the Year.

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INTERVIEWEE: SISTER JEROME CORCORAN

INTERVIEWER: Stephanie Fisher

SUBJECT: Depression, career opportunities, Case Western

DATE: October 30, 1992

F: This is an interview with Sister Jerome Corcoran, on the History of the Youngstown Diocese, by Stephanie Fisher.

Okay sister, could you tell me when you were born, and in what city? Were you born in Youngstown?

C: No.

F: Chicago?

C: [I was born] in 1916.

F: Okay. And, what made you come to Youngstown?

C: My parents.

F: [They] brought you here. Did you grow up with the Catholic school systems?

C: Yes: St. Colomba, Ursuline High School.

F: And, what made you become a nun, do you believe? The sister's influence?

C: Well, the whole country had gone through a terrible depression--as you know, you read about it--in the 1930's. There was a depression that created certain

pressures. Also, the personnel of the Catholic Church really were the working people. And then, the working Catholics sent their children to Catholic schools that were taught by nuns. And then, for girls at least, career opportunities were very limited. You became a teacher or a nurse, or maybe a librarian. If you were in the Catholic school system, you usually became a teacher or a nurse, because almost all the classes were taught by nuns. There were no buses in those days.

So, you came early, and you stayed late. You came on Saturday to help, and Sunday for stuff. And so, there was a lot of real close association. So then, girls who were inclined towards teaching tended to go to convents that had teachers. Girls that were inclined towards nursing tended to go to convents that had nurses.

F: Right. Which were you inclined to do?

C: Teaching.

F: Teaching. So, that's why you chose the Ursuline Sisters. Was there another order in Pennsylvania?

C: Villa Maria. They have St. Elizabeth's and St. Joseph's Hospital. They were partly teachers and partly nurses.

F: Okay. So, what year did you join your order?

C: [In] 1935.

F: [In] 1935. Was it a two year process, your religious education?

C: There was orientation and experience; and then, we went to college. Then, we came back and taught some more.

F: Okay. So, what was your first assignment?

C: St. Colomba School, where I had gone to school as a child.

F: Is that still around, St. Colomba?

C: No.

F: No.

C: The building is used now for the CCD [Confraternity of Christian Doctrine] program. But, it's been well over ten years. There's been no school there.

F: What grade did you teach?

C: I began in grade three; and another year, I taught grade seven. I taught in the elementary schools [for] six years; and then, I taught in Ursuline High School.

F: After that, what year did you start at Ursuline High School?

C: The year the Diocese started, 1943.

F: That's when you started. So, you were with the Cleveland Diocese until. . . .

C: Until 1943.

F: Right, right.

C: In fact, what we did in those days, we usually went two or three years to school full time. And then, [we] finished up in summers.

Then, when we were doing our Masters Degree, we usually did that in summers. And in 1943, I had gone to Catholic University for summer school in English. Traveling was on trains. You rolled down the windows, and all the soot came in. We had all this white linen; and we would just be lathered in soot, because you had to have some air. The place would just have stagnant air, so we'd roll down the windows. And, we had all this soot coming in. Communication wasn't rapid the way it is [today]. You know, there was no T.V. and the radio was. . . . I remember, we were sitting there. It was so hot. It was August, and all this was coming in. And, we had all this white linen. The conductor came in. He said, "Where are you girls going?" And, we said, "Youngstown." He said, "Youngstown! That's where Bishop McFadden is starting." I said, "Yes." He said, "So, Jamie is calling his girls home!" I said, "Yes. He's calling us home." (laughter) That was when I heard about the formation of the Youngstown Diocese.

F: Did you know Bishop McFadden?

C: I loved Bishop McFadden!

F: Oh.

C: Bishop McFadden was a most unusual person. [He was] extremely bright academically, [with] handsome, gorgeous blue eyes and lovely curly hair. [He was] very observant and self-effacing. He couldn't do the politics in the church. This is for publication, so I won't go into that. But, he was an exceptionally fine and bright person. I came here, as you know, in 1943. And, he was like a home body. He asked that he live at

our convent on Wick Avenue, next to Ursuline High School. It's been still . . . at that time.

So, he was the Chaplain there. He said Mass for us every morning and gave a nice little homily. And, we served him his meals. He was very self-effacing. I remember, he wouldn't ask you for anything if he could do without it. We were really, very young. And, we took care of the Chapel and the food and everything. When you're real young, you know everything. So anything, we would be sacristans in taking care of the chapel. No matter what we would forget, the only thing he ever asked for was the host or the wine, if we forgot it. The rest, [if we] forgot a towel, he'd just let it go. He never let on that you forgot. But, the host and the wine, he'd have to tell us about that. I remember when we would take turns serving him his meals.

And, I remember the Wick Avenue Convent was the old Chauncey-Andrews Estate. It was gorgeous, with these beamed ceilings, oak. It was fabulously beautiful! And, we would serve him his meals in what used to be the Chauncey-Andrews library. And, [there were] stained-glass windows, oak paneling. . . . The bookcases that were in the library, they were glass with all this wood intricacy all the way through, just fabulous. So, he was self-effacing and patient. So, for what ever reason, we would place his chair facing the bookcases, and here was the fireplace. He would almost be burnt to a crisp, but he never let on. (laughter) He never showed any impatience with anything you ever did for him. We were too young to know that he should have been more comfortably seated. But, [he was] a most interesting person.

As I said, he asked to live . . . there was a suite. See, this was the old Chauncey-Andrews, a gorgeous place. There was a suite of rooms, as you came into this huge mansion, there was a suite of rooms on the right where he lived. And, his secretary was Monsignor Prokop, who lived in his own residence.

F: Right, Monsignor Prokop.

C: But, Bishop McFadden lived right through here, in this gorgeous place. He asked to live there. He said our mass. He ate his meals there. Every once in a while in the evening, after he finished eating, he'd come in and visit with us.

F: That's nice.

C: We were very fond of him.

F: What about Bishop Walsh?

C: Bishop Walsh was brought to town for political reasons. Is it Schiavone Funeral Home on Fifth Avenue? It's now a funeral home on Fifth Avenue. So, the Diocese bought that residence for Bishop Walsh.

F: So, you don't know Bishop Walsh as well?

C: Oh, yes.

F: Oh, you do?

C: I know him equally well. I was at the Diocese through the transition periods. That was only 1950 . . . I was there through those years.

F: Were those tough years?

C: How do you mean tough?

F: Well, becoming a strong Diocese. . . . Basically, you're new in Youngstown. And, the transition between Bishops, was there a lot of conflict? Was Bishop Malone welcomed into the area?

C: He became Bishop in 1960, Bishop Malone. So, Bishop Walsh had been here for a number of years before Bishop Malone was named Bishop.

F: What do you think was each bishop's strong suit? Each person had a key roll in the development of the Diocese. What do you believe them to be?

C: Bishop McFadden was Pastoral. [He was] very, very bright, academically. And, [he was] very kind and pastoral. I haven't a clue what Bishop--I never thought of it--Bishop Walsh's strong [suit]. At that time, I did not know the financial status of the Diocese, but I was there. So, if there were rumors about mismanagement, I would have heard them. So that, I don't even suspect that there were financial problems.

F: [There was] an expansion. That's what I have heard. That maybe, that would be his strong suit.

C: He has nothing to do with that.

F: No?

C: The Blue Nuns own that place. They appoint the board. They manage the finances. It has nothing to do with the Diocese.

F: It doesn't?

C: No.

F: St. Elizabeth's.

C: No. Those women are good administrators! No, nothing to do [with it].

F: I had just talked to Sister Mary Conway, and she was administrator over there. No, not Mary Conway--who did I just talk to? It was Sister Consolata.

C: Oh, yes. She's a great lady!

F: Right. She worked for the Diocese, and was assigned at St. Elizabeth's. That's what she said. She worked . . . that's all she did.

C: No.

F: No?

C: No. There's some slippage there. Now, after Sister Consolata--she's a great lady--after Sister Consolata left. . . . She was Superior of the Blue Nuns. After her term was up, she came to the Diocese to work in Catholic charities for about six years. Now, that had nothing to do with the hospital.

F: When I interviewed her, you could really say that she was only part of the Diocese for six years.

C: Yes. And, I esteem her very highly. She's a sharp lady. She's good. She did fine work at St. Elizabeth's when she was there.

F: Right.

C: Now, she was at the Diocese for six years. That was a job. I don't even think it was full time. If she wanted it full time, she could have had it; but, she was there, not more than six years in Catholic charities. And she's Catholic charities, now.

F: But, St. Elizabeth's has nothing to do with the Diocese?

C: No. The Blue Nuns own it. They appoint the board.

F: Where are they from? What Diocese are they part of?

C: Pittsburgh.

F: Oh, really?

C: Their Mother House is Pennsylvania. They're right across the line near Sharon.

F: Why would they choose Youngstown to have a hospital, to own a hospital here?

C: Well, way back--it would have been 1920--it was a Cleveland Diocese and Pittsburgh; and, the lines weren't clearly defined.

F: Okay.

C: But, when the Blue Nuns came to--they're called Villa Maria now--from France, they were getting into various charitable works; and the Catholics of the area wanted a hospital. They invited nuns to do a hospital. They were one group that was invited, and they said, "Yes." See, they weren't the clearly defined boundaries they are now.

F: So, what was the Youngstown Diocese composed of? Mainly, the Catholic churches in six counties.

C: Six counties?

F: Catholic churches and Catholic schools in the six counties.

C: Yes.

F: That's it.

C: Now, connected with the office downtown, there's Catholic charities, and CCD is part of their place there. And, there's the mission things.

F: Sister Elizabeth Stout, she's a Blue Nun, isn't she?

C: Yes. Great lady, she taught at YSU. See, I've worked with the poor in Youngstown for twenty-five years now. Since before I left the Diocese, I was working part time with the poor. She was principal of St. John's High School in Ashtabula when I was the Diocesan Administrator and Supervisor of Education. So, I knew her there. I knew how capable she was. She was there as principal; and then, she was elsewhere as principal. And then, she decided to go to YSU to teach biology, because that was her long suit. I was always so proud of her. The poor people I knew, loved her. She taught clearly. She taught well. She would help them. She was a credit to the church.

F: She was marvelous. She really was.

C: Did you have her?

F: Right, that's why I knew. . . . The one's I've mentioned, I've met and interviewed.

C: She's great!

F: Very nice, right. [She] loved teaching at YSU.

C: Yes. She loved everything she ever did, I think.

F: Right.

C: She was a very good principal, very good high school teacher, and very good at YSU.

F: So, after Ursuline, you went . . . where did you go from there?

C: After Ursuline, I went to Case Western Reserve and got my Doctorate. Then, I went to the Diocese. I administered the education office and supervised the school.

F: Did you start the education development?

C: I was there the first year it started. Bishop Malone was away studying.

F: Can you tell me about it? How was it?

C: We had been a part of the Diocese of Cleveland; and we had their curriculum, their text books, and all of that. So that was one of the biggest flurries, when we started the office down on Wood Street, was to individualize whatever our needs were that were different from Cleveland's and take care of those needs with regards to curriculum, text books, tests, scheduling, supervision, that kind of thing. That was a big flurry.

F: So, did you change the text books?

C: Yes. We changed everything.

F: You did? Why did you need to do that?

C: [It was] because of the bigger the system, the slower the movement. See, when it was the Diocese of Cleveland, it was just huge. [It had] very capable people, but changing anything would take so long. Whereas, you have a nice little, neat thing like Youngstown.

F: So, it was the perfect opportunity to develop what you needed.

C: Yes. The bigger the system, the slower the movement. And, that's not to put them down. That's just a fact.

F: Right. What was your main role there?

C: Well, I administered the education office. And, I visited the schools. I did personnel interviews. I established the salary schedule for teachers in the schools, and we administered the salary schedule from our office. We told pastors what they were supposed to pay each teacher.

F: For the six counties.

C: Yes, [it was] based on their years of experience and their academic degrees.

F: So, were you really talking about lay people at this time?

C: Yes.

F: Yes. Did the salary differ between the nuns and the lay people?

C: Yes. It did, a whole lot. And yet, any pastor who had the money was free to pay as much as he chose to lay teachers. And, some of the parishes had the money, so they paid more than the scale. But, they were required to pay the scale for the lay teachers.

F: Communication wise, I would assume that it would be very difficult to get in contact with the other five counties. With education and with the text books, it wasn't?

C: No. In those days--see, that's back a bit--the teaching personnel of our Diocese, nuns or lay [people], were accustomed to in-service concepts, so that we would have a series of Saturday meetings that might run six weeks in the Fall and six weeks in the spring. They were really used to it. We did a lot of demonstration teaching and text book demonstration explanation, so that there were a lot of meetings, a lot of communication. [There were] no problems, no.

F: Now, did you have any role in the development of more schools within the Catholic system?

C: Beginning about 1950, [there was] the increase of population nationwide. Of course, that was reflected to an increase in population in the Catholic Parishes. I always did the projections of enrollment. I would do that in March or September and do it as statistically accurate as I could. And for instance, it was very important for our high schools because they could not admit all the children who applied. So, I had to know

about how many would apply.

F: You didn't have the room is that what you're saying?

C: No.

F: No. Is that why you expanded even further and bought different properties?

C: Well of course, Mooney was built, because Ursuline was too huge at that time. Actually, until 1960, I always did projections of enrollment, need of new rooms or additional rooms. Then, I said at that time, "This is ridiculous. We cannot keep expanding. We cannot afford it." So, after 1960, I did not do projections.

F: Well, maybe it was best. Are you saying, because you looked to the future?

C: You couldn't afford it.

F: You couldn't afford it, is that what you're saying?

C: You couldn't afford it.

F: No.

C: The parishes could not keep on building. They could not afford it. They were interested in it, but they couldn't afford it.

F: Why did you charge students tuition at that time?

C: There was high school tuition, but no grade school tuition.

F: No grade school [tuition]. When did you start?

C: I was out of there when the elementary tuition started.

F: That started after 1960?

C: Yes.

F: But, you always did for the high school?

C: The tuition, yes. Way back, when I went to Ursuline, there was tuition.

F: Why do you think they had to charge? Were they too big at that time, that you couldn't afford it if you stayed smaller? If you had stayed smaller--they expanded, of course, the system--if you had stayed smaller, do you believe you'd have to charge for the elementary schools?

- C: Yes, because a generation ago, the parish considered the school an integral part of their ministry and mission, and the parish supported the school. There were enough working people with children in the school, so just automatically, the parish supported the school. But, as the population grew older, it was not possible to continue supporting the school 100 percent, so anybody who chose to have a child there had to pay part. But \$500.00, like a tuition in an elementary school, that's probably one-third of the cost, or one-fourth. So, the parish school is still subsidized, but more and more, they can't afford it.
- F: Now, if you're talking about growth of the Diocese, would you be talking in terms of strictly churches and schools; or are there other aspects you could say?
- C: After the schools hit their capacity and continued building was not feasible, then CCD. . . .
- F: Then, that's when you got into other. . . . When did Catholic charities start?
- C: That was way, way back. I don't have dates on that. You can talk to the Catholic Charities people.
- F: Okay.
- C: That's way back. Probably, 1850.
- F: Oh, okay.
- C: It's way back.
- F: So, what new developments did the Diocese do for themselves, that they chose?
- C: I don't know that the Diocese did anything differently from other Dioceses.
- F: No.
- C: Well, Newman Centers in the colleges was a needed development. I don't know a date on that. You'd have to get it.
- F: What are the Newman Centers?
- C: Well, there's a Newman Center at each of the state universities, and that's very good, not only for the Roman Catholic student body, but for anybody who's interested in associating. That's a good development.
- F: What does a Newman Center do?

C: The Newman Center is a location for--it's supposed to be primarily for the Roman Catholics, because it's financed by Roman Catholic people. You can check with someone. Get someone from the Newman Center. There's a Father Patrick Manning in Kent, who's just bubbling over with Newman.

F: With Newman. (laughter)

C: Oh, yes. Of course, they're named after John Cardinal Newman, the great English convert. So, they are a center where the students can come. There's a library there. There's a director--sometimes a priest, sometimes a nun, sometimes a lay person--to help them philosophically or theologically, or with adjustment problems. It's a real center for persons who feel some. . . . It's a real service. They have mass on a regular schedule, whatever that regular schedule would be.

F: So, you stayed at the education center before and until it reached it's peak, and [you] achieved what you wanted to do. What was your goal before you left?

C: Well, as I mentioned, personnel policies, so that we could treat the teachers as fairly as possible, salary wise and benefit wise, both high school and elementary school. That was not completely realized, because the board did not, in my judgment, do what they should have done for benefits for teachers. And, they could have [it] in those days. In my judgment, the board did not. But, it improved, salary wise and benefit wise: personnel policies, benefits, curriculum, teacher qualifications, conditions in the classroom, teacher development.

F: So, you believe that you've said everything, and there's nothing else that you needed to achieve at that position?

C: That I needed to achieve?

F: Right.

C: I don't mean there was nothing else needed to be done.

F: Okay.

C: But, I had accomplished what I felt I could do.

F: What you could do.

C: And, I left. I told them a couple years before I left that I would leave.

F: Who took over after you, do you remember?

C: I think our Sister Rita DeCello. Yes, I think it was Sister Rita DeCello.

F: What changes happened after you left?

C: Then, you had the turmoil of Vatican II, and the exodus from [it] established everything. And, you had the, of course, rising costs; and then, the parishes [were] beginning to be strapped by expenses.

F: Do you think that was due to the war, why economy wise, it was so bad?

C: It was just part of the society. Everything was affected, even the colleges that aren't church related, were affected cost wise.

F: I don't believe there was any expansion after 1963.

C: No.

F: No.

C: And, I shouldn't say that. Las Vegas, for example--I have close relatives there. Let's see if I can remember now. [In] 1991, Las Vegas, Nevada, the city, founded five new Roman Catholic Parishes in one year; so there was expansion in some areas.

F: But, not here.

C: No.

F: Certainly not.

C: No.

F: No. So really, as far as expansion, it was from 1943 until 1963. Is that what you believe?

C: Just about, yes. Those would be about the twenty years.

F: But, Vatican II had nothing to do with halting the expansion, do you believe?

C: No, no.

F: I know it was a bunch of reforms.

C: Vatican II opened people's minds to ideas and shook us up, and [it] forced us to look at things we had chosen

not to look at. I was all for it. I thought it was fabulous!

F: Right. Did you see the conflicting views?

C: Oh, sure. You'd hear them all over.

F: Right. Do you think it was mostly from the priests? Or, do you believe you had conflicting views from the sisters as well?

C: I don't think it was any group. I think it was society changing, and the societal impacts were reaching people at different levels and in different ways. Depending on our individual situation at the time, we latched onto it or we resisted.

F: Really, it sounds like in 1963 you started a decline, or leveling off, within the Diocese.

C: Leveling off. Not a decline, but a leveling off. Like, a plateau[ing]. Additional expansion simply could not be afforded; but also, at that time, a gradual lessening numbers of sisters and priests were available, because you don't have to be a nun to serve. Fifty years ago, you pretty well did. There wasn't a Peace Corp, and there weren't all of these agencies. You almost had to, if you wanted to serve. But, now you have fifteen dozen opportunities.

F: Right.

C: And change, you don't have to stay with them.

F: As far as growth and aiding the Diocese, do you believe it was the steel mills in the area that helped?

C: Oh, they did the parishes and the churches and the schools, absolutely! They were very church oriented and faithful. They contributed, and they upheld it.

F: And, without it--well, when did the steel mills collapse?

C: In 1979 was Black Tuesday, I think. Either 1977 or 1979.

F: Still, like you said, by 1963 and 1964, it leveled off anyway.

C: It was leveling.

F: Right. You couldn't expand it anymore.

C: No.

F: As far as hindering any further growth, what do you feel could be? Because, you didn't have the steel system collapsing.

C: Society was changing, and the boom years were leveling off. So, people weren't as slap happy about spending, as they have been.

F: So, you had left the Diocese in 1963?

C: About 1963, or so. Something like that, or 1965. Maybe it was 1965.

F: And, where did you go?

C: I went to teach at the university part time. And, [I] went to Head Start part time as a supervisor.

F: Okay, and where did you go from there?

C: From there, I came here.

F: Here.

C: I was teaching at the university when the city asked me to direct this place, and I wasn't interested. After a while, I thought, "Well, I can do it for a little while. It wouldn't hurt," and that was sixteen years ago. And, I've stayed on.

F: So, what reasons did you feel to leave the Diocese? You could have chosen another assignment?

C: I could have chosen anything I chose to do, but I didn't.

F: You didn't.

C: I think there comes a time when you know [and say to yourself]: "You've done what you're going to do. Get out!"

F: Right. But, you didn't have to stay a nun. But, you like being a nun, like you said.

C: Oh, yes.

F: So, you didn't want to change that?

C: You know, a lot of married people say, "If I knew then what I know now, I never would have. . . ." I never, for an instant, wanted to be anything but a nun.

F: But, as far as the challenges or what was offered,

you've done everything. You didn't need to stay.

C: Yes. There was nothing in addition. I left in good will. It wasn't that I was mad at everybody. There comes a time when we should change, and I thought that was when I should change.

F: Would you like to come back? Do you feel that there's a need for you to leave?

C: And do what?

F: And, go back to the Diocese, because they're having such a hard time right now.

C: For what? Who's having a hard time?

F: Well, the Walking Together program and the closing of the school system. There's nothing you think you can do for them? Well, they devised it a program. Why not be honest with the people and say, "I'm sorry. This is the way it is." You don't need to call it anything. It's just what's happening.

C: "This is the money." This is whatever. "What are your suggestions?"

F: Right. They're closing schools, and they're not calling that a program.

C: No.

F: They're just saying it has to be done. It doesn't seem like it's being well received.

C: Well, how could it be received?

F: Right. Whatever you call it, it's the same thing. That's why I just asked, because it seems like so much is going on now, that they really need something to happen.

C: Nothing is going to happen.

F: Nothing is going to happen. Just sit by and watch. [There's] nothing you can do.

C: No, do your own thing. Be happy. Do it. Be constructive, creative, inventive. Do your thing. Watch the things you're doing in programs.

F: So, what are the greatest changes you've seen in the Diocese, besides Walking Together? I'm not going to mention that anymore, okay.

C: Don't mention that. That's not a change. It's a trickle away, something or other. Well really, the structure from the working class membership of the parishes was that, fifty years ago, everybody supported the church. Your kids went to the church, and all of that. And now, you have a greater range of income than we had fifty years ago. You have many good people feeling that, "My child can get a better education in 'X' school."

F: And, you don't have to pay, right?

C: Yes! "I'm already paying. Why don't I use it?" Now, many of my friends have their children in--some of them have them in Catholic schools, some have them in public schools--but, the clientele here, are the working poor. That means sixteen thousand [dollars] a year for a family of four. But, they're working. That's why I'm committed to that. I'm determined to help them as much as I can, but when they can possibly afford it, they will send their children to Catholic schools because it's upward mobility for them. The others already have the upward mobility. They don't need it.

F: Right. Was there a Mill Creek Educational Center, Child Development Center, before you came here?

C: No.

F: You started this.

C: I started it.

F: How did you see--obviously there was a need--but, what made you start?

C: Well, the city set up this Child Care Center, and they asked me if I would be director. I said that I wasn't interested. And then, after a while, I said, "Oh, they can't find a director. I'll do it for a while." The need is just that working families need quality child care, and there is very little quality child care available. It's as good as it can [be], but it's temporary.

F: Right. Also, in Massillon, in the Catholic School System--I think it's Holy Mary--they had to start a day care center. I don't want to say "day care." I want to say a "latch key" program for after school, because they realized there was a need and they weren't going to get the students otherwise.

C: There's a real need for latch key. There's a real need for before school, too. Now, in the new building, we'll address those needs. We don't, right now. But,

we have two vans. So, we begin picking children up at seven o'clock in the morning. We're taking them home until five o'clock.

F: Oh, you keep them until five o'clock.

C: So, we are helping parents in that way.

F: So, they don't have to drop their children off here. You go get them.

C: About one-third of the parents do. The others, we transport.

F: That's great! So, you were approached, and you declined at first?

C: Yes.

F: But, you changed your mind?

C: Yes.

F: And, how was funding back then?

C: Our first funding was sixty thousand dollars from the city of Youngstown, and I've had a real good relationship with the city of Youngstown. I still get about fifty thousand dollars a year from the city of Youngstown, and also from foundations, businesses, individuals, and human services.

F: So, was this one room at first?

C: No. The building was like this when I moved in. The city made it a day care, so the walls were like this when I moved in.

F: So, you have ages three to kindergarten, and [you] keep them until five o'clock.

C: Yes.

F: But, you're not calling it a day care?

C: No, a preschool.

F: Preschool all day?

C: Yes.

F: So, what do you teach them?

C: If you look at you folder, I think there may be. . . . This is the schedule for the children, the

daily schedule.

F: Okay. Do you serve them breakfast?

C: Breakfast, snack, lunch, and [another] snack. We have our own cook here and our own nutritionist.

F: Is it cafeteria style?

C: No. We bring the food to each of the three rooms, and we serve in the individual rooms.

F: It's hot meals?

C: Yes. And, they follow the Department of Agriculture regulations.

F: Is your staff a volunteer staff?

C: No. We have a staff of eighteen. In each classroom there are two degreed teachers. There are twenty-five children in each classroom, and we have two degreed teachers in each classroom, plus one paid aid. So, we have little groups. They get a lot of teaching and interaction.

F: Is that a four-year degree they have?

C: Four of them have four-year degrees, and two have two-year degrees.

F: In elementary education?

C: In preschool. Now, the ones that have K-8 took additional courses.

F: So, as far as first aid, they also have to take a first aid class?

C: Oh, yes. First aid, CPR, communicable diseases and abuse.

F: What was your staff when you started? Did you start in 1963?

C: I started in 1976.

F: Oh, where did you. . . ?

C: I was at YSU and had started in between. I was also on the administrative staff of the Mother House from 1960 until 1972.

F: Wow!

C: For twelve years.

F: Being an administrator of the Mother House, that was technically part of working for the Diocese, is it not?

C: No.

F: It's not.

C: We're completely independent from the Diocese.

F: You're completely independent. I didn't realize that. So, the Mother House is the center.

C: It's on Shields Road.

F: Right. That's the center for your order.

C: Yes.

F: So, were you elected to that?

C: Yes. You're elected for six years, and you can be reelected for six years. And, there are five people.

F: Oh, you can have two terms. I didn't realize that. Is that a full time job?

C: No. That's part time.

F: Part time. So, what did you teach? English?

C: Yes. I taught English and education at YSU.

F: [What were some of your] fund raisers for your Development Center?

C: Well, I make the contacts. The children never bring money for anything.

F: No.

C: The parents pay on a sliding scale, though, according to income.

F: Okay. Do you decide this? Have you set up a [scale]?

C: Yes. We've set up a scale, but it's pretty much like. . . . The taxpayers will pay for the day care, if the parents are poor and working, so they won't go on welfare. It's cheaper for the taxpayers to pay for day care. Day care is about three thousand [dollars] a year.

F: That's not what they pay?

C: These kids?

F: Yes. Oh, really.

C: But, it costs more than that, so I have to raise the additional money.

F: Oh, okay.

C: It costs about 50 percent more than that.

F: Well, for a family [making] sixteen thousand [dollars], how much are they required to pay?

C: They wouldn't have to pay anything.

F: Okay.

C: Sixteen thousand [dollars] in a family of four, they wouldn't have to pay anything. But then--it's a sliding scale--maybe a dollar a day, or maybe five. We have a few at G.M. or Southside Hospital or the offices down at the city of Youngstown.

F: Oh, really.

C: They pay sixteen dollars a day. But, it costs twenty-two dollars. So, I have to raise the balance.

F: Okay. I'm surprised that you mentioned the G.M. worker. They're eligible. Is that because they. . . .

C: Anybody's eligible.

F: I thought you'd have to be under a certain income level.

C: No. Anybody is eligible. But, there's always a waiting list.

F: Right. And, how do you choose them?

C: Well, if a child needs speech therapy, for example, we give the child preference. [We] admit them out of order, because we have a speech therapist. If the child has learning problems, we give that child preference, because we have a learning disabilities teacher. And then, there's also ages. They're age three, age four, and age five; and then, we do have to admit according to the age. So, there's a little bit of that.

F: And, where do they go from there? Do they just go into first grade?

C: Kindergarten. We don't have a kindergarten.

F: You don't have a kindergarten?

C: We don't compete with any existing school system.

F: And, you're not going to?

C: No, no. That's tax funded. That would be a waste.

F: Now, Head Start, what ages is Head Start?

C: Head Start usually serves one year before kindergarten. That's two and one-half hours in the morning, or two and one-half hours in the afternoon; it's not all day. Working parents cannot count on it. But, it's good. It does the health screenings and gets them used to group activities. It provides a very good service.

F: Do you believe Head Start gave you the knowledge and experience for this?

C: No.

F: No, it didn't.

C: I had a Ph.D. before I went to Head Start.

F: What do you have a Ph.D. in?

C: In Education and Research.

F: And, your masters is in?

C: English. My bachelors is in Social Studies.

F: So, nothing prepared. . . .

C: No. You learn as you go.

F: You learn as you go, yes. So, how long do you think you're going to stay here?

C: Well, I'm seventy-six now, and my parents lived to be ninety-eight in good health. So, a couple years, probably.

F: So, right now, are you the happiest? And, this is exactly what you want?

C: I've always been very happy.

F: You always have, okay.

C: You get miserable days, but I've always been very happy. In fact, my parents lived to be ninety-eight in really good health. When people would say to my father, "How do you feel?" He'd say, "If I felt any better, I couldn't stand it." (laughter) It's an attitude.

F: Right.

C: Really, it's an attitude. Because, he would have ordinary health problems.

F: It just seems like you've progressed in your life, where you've done this. And then, you thought, "Well, it's time to move on."

C: Right.

F: As far as others, just stay in it.

C: Some do. And yet, that's alright, too. Because, temperamentally, everybody's different.

F: But, is there anything in one grade that you just loved teaching?

C: No. I loved every grade I ever taught. In fact, when I left Case Western Reserve, I loved research so much, I thought I would end up being a research student. I'm not going to do anything but research. But, I didn't.

F: But, you didn't.

C: But, I love research. I still do some.

F: Are you surprised that this is what you're doing right now?

C: Well, not now, because I've been here. But, I didn't intend to come.

F: Right, I can imagine.

C: But, it's very challenging, because you see the potential. The younger the child, the greater the potential.

F: So, you can't even tell me there was a best assignment for you, because you just loved everything?

C: No. There was never anything I liked better than anything else.

F: You said you always had the freedom to choose. It wasn't after Vatican II, your assignments?

C: I went to. . . .

F: Isn't that unusual?

C: I really don't know.

F: You never gave any thought about it. (laughter)

C: I never thought of it. I don't know. I know I chose to go to Case Western Reserve because they had an excellent research, statistics, and education department. It's just excellent.

F: Were you on scholarship for that?

C: No. In those days, there really weren't. . . .

F: Did the community pay for you to go there?

C: Yes.

F: That's great. This is an odd question, but the Diocese had asked me to ask a sister this question. If you could say what it's best, and at it's worst, what was your experiences with the Youngstown Diocese?

C: That's a stupid question.

F: That's a stupid question, but that's on the list to ask.

C: Alright. You tell them it's a stupid question.

F: It is.

C: Everything is a range, and there's just such little increments between things.

F: What do you think were, maybe, the best? Could you say? That's a silly question.

C: That's a silly question. Like, you ask a married couple, "What was the happiest five minutes of your married life?" That's stupid. (laughter) You know, if your life was so dull that you remember five minutes [of it]. . . .

F: Right. And, if it was so bad for you, you wouldn't stay?

C: I wouldn't stay. I wouldn't stay for five minutes.

F: Right. So, there had to have been extremely good moments. I guess I should ask that question to some-

body who has left, maybe the order, together.

C: Well, I don't think leaving or staying makes a difference. I think people temperamentally tend to think a certain way about things, whether they're married or whether they're not married. I think they tend to think certain ways.

F: That's it. No regrets?

C: No.

F: No. That's great. I don't think I have anything else for you. Is there anything else you think we need to talk about?

C: No.

F: No, okay. Thank you.

C: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW