

This is an interview with Sr. Olive Louis Dallavis at Avila University on May 16, 2002. I am Margot Thornhill.

(Tape 1 – Side 1)

MT: Sister, we are going to document some of your memories and especially about the early time of the college or the university, so why don't we begin there? Can you tell me how you first became associated at Avila College?

SOL: I was missioned at the college. I received that word late summer that I was going to be sent to Kansas City, MO to be at the college of St. Teresa and also to be at Visitation School where I would open Msgr. McDonald's kindergarten. I was so excited! As far as the college was concerned, I was to take the music classes in the academy; all the vocal music and then that would be on Tuesdays and Thursdays where I had every section. I had four sections of chorus Tuesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon and then I was to teach college credit courses in teacher education, especially reading and methods in teaching reading and also vocal music to the college students, if there were any. Then I was also instructed that I would have a homeroom in the academy. So, I was kept very busy, although at the time, I didn't think I was that busy. As I look back now though, I realize that I had a very, very full schedule teaching even on Saturdays, private lessons. So I was missioned to the College of St. Teresa. However, I always had a sneaky feeling that someday I would be missioned in Kansas City, MO.

MT: And then your mission to the College of St. Teresa grew into an administrative role with the college at the time it became Avila, how did that happen?

SOL: No, not at the time it became Avila. I really went to Kansas City in 1952, the fall of 1952, and I taught at Visitation in the morning, Msgr. McDonald's kindergarten and then in the afternoon of the next year I taught 3rd grade for the reading supervisor. But, then I also kept all the other duties that I had in my first year, that is I had the choral classes at the Academy and then I had the college classes in teacher education and I also had private voice and private piano lessons on Saturday and after school during the week. Then, in addition to that, I also taught music at St. Elizabeth's school for one of the sisters, who at that time, had 7th grade but there were only 7 grades in the Catholic school system at that time. And this particular sister who had the 7th grade did not like to teach music to the 7th graders, so I was asked to take her music class, which I did.

MT: Was that Sister Mary Grace?

SOL: No, it wasn't Sister Mary Grace. Her name will come to me. She was also the Superior and a very good friend of Sister De La Salle, who was my companion in music. So, I came to the college in 1952 and I taught at the

Academy for eight years and then in 1960, I was appointed the first Dean of students for the college. Sister Mary Daniel appointed me as first Dean of the college. The first Dean of students and I was Dean of students that year and then toward the close of that year of . . . that would be 1960, at the close of that year, Sister discovered that she had leukemia which then gave her little strength to exercise her duties. She was very humble and asked if I would help her, which I was glad to do. So, I really was full-time at the college in 1960 as Dean of Students and then teaching college credit classes. Then in 1961, at the end of the at year, I was appointed Acting President and then President because Sister Mary Daniel died the Fall of 1961 just as Dr. Gehaw had said she had five or six months to live. Does that answer your question?

MT: Yes, it does. Ah, yes, it certainly does. So then you became President at the end of 1961?

SOL: That's right, Acting President. I was Acting President so many months that finally I said, "When are you going to let them tell people that I am the President and word came back and said, "Well you are."

MT: But they hadn't bothered to actually inform you?

SOL: No, no, no.

MT: So what was your first priority as President?

SOL: When I was told that I would be the President of the college, my first priority was that whatever I will do, I would not have to do it twice. In other words, I would do my very best if I had to make any decision, to make a good decision so that it would not have to be repeated or undone. That was my first thought.

MT: Uh, huh, uh, huh.

SOL: And my second thought was, I must get the opinion as to what a President should do, and especially a beginning president. And with that in mind, I looked on the roster of our own Sisters and our own Province. And it was really only, it was really just one sister, at that time. It was Sister Alfred Noble, who was President of the College of St. Teresa for two years and then she left the presidency of the college after those two years in order to accept the presidency of Fontbonne College. And when I spoke with her, she really did not have much to say. I think she was still overwhelmed with the responsibility that was given her to be president of Fontbonne College. To my knowledge, she had not been president anymore than two years herself. So the next thing I did, I searched for some advisement from brochures or readings and I did a lot of professional reading. But lo and behold, my greatest asset was the Gonser and Gerber leaflet, only one page, but loaded on both sides with very practical information for

presidents and especially for a beginning president. That was my Bible. I read those bulletins faithfully. Sister Mary Daniel had those in a folder in her 2-drawer file and that was the nicest legacy she could have given me. So that later, 5, 10, 15 years later, people would say, "Where did you get all this information?" How did you know to do this and to do that?" And I would respond, from Conser and Gerber. And they would be so surprised, you mean the firm in Chicago. They were awed. I didn't tell them it was the leaflet that I had read, but it's the truth. Those leaflets were excellent.

MT: What this a firm that was devoted to higher education?

SOL: Yes, the finest. It was a firm that had consultants that knew higher education. And it just said those things in there that were just common sense, that you should go out and solicit money, that you should be very grateful, you should always write a letter of thank you. You should never overstay in an Executive's office because they have their things to do, that I should always give them a letter of thank you for having seen me. To be very sincere in what I had to say or not say it all and to be very brief and to the point, to the extent that when I went to see Mr. Penny, in his huge . . . that it was the highest building at that time in Chicago. Do you know that that dear man took time to see me and to turn off the light after we left each room in his suite on the top floor? I only wish now that I could have remembered more of what he said. But he was a wonderful person and a good example to me that a president should not be ashamed to turn out the lights.

MT: Then, the decision to relocate the college would have been made around this time. Was that made before you became president?

SOL: No. At the time before I became president, that was a highly debatable question as to which of the schools would leave; would it be the Academy or the College. And as far as I was concerned it made no difference to me. I liked both of the schools. What's interesting though, in the papers that I've just read, Margot, there is . . . there is one or a couple of sentences that says it was actually Bishop Cody who made the decision for us to move. Sister Daniel had taken me to see Bishop Cody. Of course, he was from St. Louis. He was a person that was considered very cold and I remember going into his office. Sister Daniel was sitting next to me on my right and he was at his desk. And I understand he was really a very timid person.

MT: Really? Bishop Cody?

SOL: He said to me, Sister introduced me as the Acting President because of her illness. And then Bishop Cody said, "And what is your plan, Sister, for the college?" So right then and there I made up a 10-year development plan. I told him that the decision was made that the campus at 5600 Main should belong to one school, not to be shared by both schools. Then he made the remark, and I

remember this, that what we had at the 5600 campus was sort of not worthy for a college. I thought that was very blunt. Now if he was going to pay for it that would be a different story, if he were going to pay for it. I think he should be free to make that kind of remark, but not contributing anything, I don't see why he would even make such a remark. But anyway, right then and there I told him that what were in the plans is that one of the schools would move and if it would be the college that would move, that we would go about finding a site that would be really large enough to accommodate a campus and at that time, we had no idea where it would be. Although, Sister Mary Daniel, I think had already started to look but you have to remember that Sister Mary Daniel was a Superior of both the Academy and of the College. She was really the head person. Then I guess I must have gotten into the programs that the college had and what we had in mind, the development of our teacher education program to include special education, also the late classes we would have for adults, sort of continuing education. Your father was on that Board, if you recall.

MT: I do.

SOL: So, really in one way you could say that Bishop Cody had a lot to say about which of the schools was going to move. And I think right then and there that Sister Mary Daniel had made up her mind that it would be the college that would move. We also had the bequest of our first alum, Margaret O'Reilly who left \$200,000 in her estate to be used for the betterment of the College. And of course, she graduated from a junior college.

MT: Was the basic decision to move a question of space, that there wasn't space for both?

SOL: Yes, there wasn't space enough for both schools and time has shown that. Because the Academy has really grown well. And it's done well on the campus and it has beautified its campus. It is really something to see.

MT: I think his decision was correct or his impression was correct, no question about it.

SOL: Oh yes. Looking back now, hindsight always . . . it gives you a certain feeling.

MT: Absolutely. So was Sister Mary Daniel responsible for choosing this site or was . . .

SOL: Yes, she was. Do you know that she had chosen a site; I think I wrote this somewhere. It was 20 acres and she was so pleased to tell Mother Eucarista. Now I just remembered that it was Mother Eucarista who had been president of the College of St. Catherine and was our Reverend Mother at the time. So Sister Daniel told her that she had located this 20 acres out in South Kansas City and

Sister Eucarista looked at her. She had been a college president, thank God, and she said, "No, Sister, not 20 acres. It must be a minimum of 50 acres." See, that was not a 50 just pulled out of the air. She knew that a college had to have at least 50 acres.

MT: Yea, enough room.

SOL: And being from the College of St. Catherine. Have you been to the College of St. Catherine?

MT: I have not, no.

SOL: Beautiful campus, it's up North, of course, in St. Paul, MN. It has, I think it has a lake and just a lot of trees and a lot of green grass, it's really . . . I was on this Board. It is really a beautiful campus. So, she said, "No, Sister, it should be 50 acres, no less." So Sister Daniel knew then what she had found, she had located 20 acres which is now the cemetery right next to the funeral parlor that's on Holmes Street, you know right off 435? I think it's Freeman.

MT: Oh yes, yes it's . . . just south of 435.

SOL: She said . . . and then when Sister told her it was by a cemetery, then she was even more persistent, "No, Sister, not by a cemetery." So poor Daniel had to start all over again.

MT: And then she located this one?

SOL: And this was fantastic! I didn't know how fantastic it was, nor did she, until the year that I was interviewed by that article that's in one of the paper of 1985 where I said we have purchased these 50 acres for \$200,000 and then Sarah Jane Ingram called me and said, "I didn't get \$200,000." You know that story?

MT: I read it in your history. I think that's just unbelievable.

SOL: I called him. It would even be more unbelievable if you knew who the attorney was who was involved in that.

MT: I suspect that I know who the real estate agent is, but I don't know who the attorney is. But, I think that is such nerve. What did the attorney say?

SOL: What attorney?

MT: You said you called the attorney who was involved with it.

SOL: Oh no, no, no. I know who the attorney is; I think I know who the attorney is.

MT: Oh.

SOL: I think they used that extra money for a good cause.

MT: Well, I'd like to think they did.

SOL: For a cause, a bigger cause.

MT: But it's still theft.

SOL: What it is, it's fraud.

MT: Yeah.

SOL: You could still prosecute. So you know what I did? Now this is 20, how many years would that be, 85 . . .

MT: Oh, longer than that.

SOL: For the 60 . . .

MT: Oh, you mean from 85 . . .

SOL: About 25 years. I called the development company because it was on the deed and when I called the development company, it was out of business, it had closed.

MT: Well, they'll get their reward.

SOL: Did I answer your question.

MT: Yes.

SOL: Are you sure.

MT: I think so; actually I don't remember which one . . .

SOL: And then we had medals. Sister Daniel would put medals in the places she went. Of course, I wasn't that interested in it and it didn't make any difference to me. And I got only interested after I discovered that I was going to be the President. Then, I was driving her and I had just learned how to drive. She would say, "Look over here, Sister!" and I would look over there and then a car would come. Finally she'd say, "Don't look over there." I remember we were going where the duck pond is?

MT: Yes.

SOL: And she was telling me something. She says, "Look over there." And I looked over there and I almost went right into a ditch, she stopped telling me that. I thought that was so funny. I always wondered about this land because it was so special to us, 50 acres, and it was really virgin land that had been earned by Sarah Jane Ingram's father when he was 14 years old. He came up from the river on a barge, leaped off the barge, came up the bluff, and went to the farmers and said, "Hire me!" And the farmers would say, "You're a boy, we came to hire men." And he went to this one farmer and said, "I'm strong." He said, "I can greatly work, try me." That was his words, try me. Try me. So the man said, "All right, I'll hire you, but I can only give you room and board but I can pay you with acreage. So he took the job and he worked for the man and he earned all the acreage. Somewhere I read, I think there were about a thousand acres, but he gave 50 acres to his daughter as her patrimony. Now that was Sarah Jane. See Sarah Jane was 90 years old already.

MT: Oh really?

SOL: When she called me she was older than 90. So that was 90 and her father was 14 when he came, so that's a 114. And by the time she was at a marriageable age, 24 she could have. . that might have been 1934 maybe, she married Ingram from the bank, Commerce Bank, I think, and Sister Rose Anthony's brother in law knew the Ingram's. He remembered when they could not work there anymore as husband and wife when they got married.

MT: At the bank, you mean?

SOL: At the bank. Sarah Jane had all of this wonderful antique furniture that her father eventually had brought up from the South.

MT: What was Sarah Jane's maiden name?

SOL: Dunlap. D U N L A P. And that name would be on the lease. She was so interesting. I was so delighted that she actually called me. She told me that she had a sister, but the sister had died when she was quite young and she had a beautiful portrait of her sister that her mother had executed and I said to Sarah Jane, "Oh, Sarah Jane, she must have been so cute with her pantaloons and so forth." Sarah Jane said, "No, Sister, she really wasn't. She looked like she had eaten green apples. I thought that was so funny. She said, "I really never knew my sister." And she sold her sister's portrait to a person who came to her door over in Kansas, Mission, KS and wanted to buy some antiques. And Sarah Jane said, "I don't have any antiques to sell." And the person said, "Well, I was told that you had many antiques." And she did. She had trundle beds and had a wonderful plate that she gave to me, a collection plate that was made out of the

wood of the barn that was built out here. Sara Jane asked me if the trees were still out here.

MT: Yes, yes.

SOL: And that's where the home was.

MT: Yes.

SOL: The first home . . . and you know, I had sort of figured that out. That you always saw a farm house.

MT: Yes.

SOL: There by, where the trees were. And she said, "Did you see the well that was out there?" And I said, "Sarah Jane, I did." I said, "I almost fell on it." It wasn't a little well; it was a big, big well.

MT: Uh huh, big.

SOL: It was a big, big well. And do you know under our property, there is a lot of water that flows. That's why right after that building was built within the first couple of years, the walls started to crack. And Dunn Company came out and the architects came out and the engineers and it was because of the water that was flowing under our property. And Art Schlumpberger had dug a big hole in one of the classrooms that face out this way and he told me . . . he said, "Sister, anytime you're over there, just pull that iron bar over," and he said, "Look, you'll see, you'll see the water." So one day when I was over and I used to periodically check on everything, I went down on my knees and I pulled that iron thing aside, it was about this big. I looked down and when I first saw it, I expected to see mud. Instead that water was crystal clear and Margot, I could look down and you could even see the pebbles.

MT: Really?

SOL: And the water just flowing and I thought my land . . .

MT: I bet it was delicious water, too.

SOL: Oh it must have been.

MT: I bet it was.

SOL: Just wonderful. But anyway, they had to close that well over and Sarah Jane said that wonderful water. . . and she also asked me, now are the jonquils blooming in May? I said, "Yes!" I said that Sister Margaret Reinhart has said she

came in one day and she had the jonquils in her hand and she said, "Look! These are blooming outside. I bet that whoever lived in this area had planted them." So we had jonquils for quite some time.

MT: Isn't that wonderful? And I'm sure that Sarah Jane was pleased and delighted.

SOL: Uh huh. She told me that the first building that they built was not the house. The first building that was built was a barn. And the barn was over, this is the back of our property, was all around onto Wornall and right on the corner of Wornall which really would be West, this would be East, this would be West over here. That's where they used to shoe the horses of the wagons that were going on the Santa Fe Trail.

MT: Are you talking about the area that's down in that hollow down there, where the practice field is now?

SOL: It's exactly where, right across from the Greek church.

MT: Oh, okay . . . right next to the street to Santa Fe.

SOL: Right, and Sarah Jane said her father always said, "Now if you sell that property over there on the West side," it would be their West too, "Be sure that you tell the buyer not to drive his machinery over there because that's where the horseshoes were thrown when they were removed from the horse's foot."

MT: Isn't that something?

SOL: Yes, that is. They used to have molasses and cornmeal, everything that the travelers would need.

MT: Uh huh.

SOL: Pioneers would meet going out on the Santa Fe Trail.

MT: That is interesting. And she remembered seeing the wagon trains and. . .

SOL: Oh yes! She was more than 90 when I first met her. And she gave me the plate that was used in the church that was right up there close to Santa Fe Road, close to State Line. There's a little church there and a little cemetery, did you know that?

MT: Yes, well except didn't they tear that church down? Is this the church that used to be right next to State Line? Very close to it.

SOL: Well, it's the little church that's maybe about 2 blocks down.

MT: It's still there?

SOL: Yes, and it has a cemetery.

MT: Yes, yes . . .right on Santa Fe. And that's the church they went to?

SOL: I guess so. And that was the collection plate. Then she, what did she also tell me?

(Tape 1 – Side 2)

MT: Had she lived on the farm all her life until she got married?

SOL: I think so. Let me tell you about her sister. I should have told you. But anyway, I'm going to tell you this. I was telling her about this, how pretty her sister was and she told me, "No she was ugly, looked like she had eaten green apples." So, when her husband came home, after she had sold the portrait, her husband said, "Sarah Jane, you should not have sold your sister." It was the way he said it. And she said, "Well, I didn't know her anyway. She was dead before I even . . . that was silly, it was just cluttering clutter." And do you know, they went over to where Wentworth Military Academy is. They went into this room and over the fireplace her husband said, "See, your sister is following you." And there she was hanging there. She was hanging on the fireplace. This young lady with her pinafore and pantaloons and looking like she ate green apples.

MT: Isn't that something?

MT: How was the campus plan developed and when . . .

SOL: Let me tell you. Evidently, Angus McCollum was the architect that Sister Berenice had identified many years before to do building. And I remember when I first met Angus McCollum he said to me, "Now Sister, are you serious about this or this just another time when we do all the talking and then nothing comes of it?" And I said, "Mr. McCollum, to my knowledge we're supposed to build a new campus." He said, "All right." He said, "I will help." So he really, the borers, I don't know if that's what you call them, but the people who bored into the land.

MT: Take the soil samples.

SOL: And why we didn't find that water, but anyway. The point is the shale that we have certainly provided for foundation. And so you do those borings all around the campus. But then he decided the chapel would be here, because that's the highest point. The administration building, the student center, the dormitories, the library, the theater—and people would say, "How did you know where to put the buildings?" I said, "I didn't, our architect had them already." Then the only building I had anything to do with is to put the field house over on

this side. The Dean of Students wanted the field house over by the dorm. Now could you imagine the neighbors with the field house there carousing and . . . so that was a good decision to put the field house over there.

MT: Yea, yea.

SOL: Another thing, Margot, you know before you start a college, you, from my Gonser and Gerber notes, be sure that you have your charter and bylaws. Well I could find a charter. That was in the treasurer's office, but I couldn't find any bylaws. Then I noticed in Gonser and Gerber it said, "That the Lily Foundation would take care of the expenses and provide, not only take care of expenses, but provide the talented people who could advise the president about building. So I wrote to the Lily Foundation and I told them what we were going to do, locate, relocate the college and they sent me the material with the names of the available consultants and to choose one. Then to ask for dates and so forth, which I did. And they sent to the college, I asked for, I sought was a priest, I thought we should have somebody Catholic. I asked for a Dr. Stanford, but I didn't tell people that he was a priest because I thought people would say, "Now what does a priest know?" They're worse than we are. But, Dr. Stanford, he came, and he met with me and Mr. Blasco, Mr. Gordon and Mr. Jensen. And one of the very first things that he asked of course, for the charter. I told him very bluntly, I said, "Dr. Father, I looked all over for the bylaws and I can't find them. He said, "Don't worry, most colleges don't have their bylaws." He said, "We'll draw up the bylaws. It's better that way as we'll draw them up, get them approved by Jefferson City and you'll have a nice clean start." And that's what we did. Mr. Gordon, Mr. Blasco, Mr. Jensen and I and Father, what did I say, Stanford, Father Stanford . . . we drew up the first charter and it was wonderful because one of the things we had in there was that Avila would grant not only the bachelor's degree but the master's degree and honorary doctoral degrees. Not the doctoral degree, but honorary doctoral degree.

MT: Uh huh, right.

SOL: And then also, we didn't say just women, we just said that it would admit students. At that time, we were taking men in the late classes, so we would have students of both sex. Is that correct?

MT: Both sexes, yeah. Now would this have been in like 1961 or '62?

SOL: This was 1961, '62 and then he came back and visited the faculty and staff in '63 and '64.

MT: Okay.

SOL: When I say '63, '64, I really mean the school year, the academic year. And he was so funny. He was perfect. I remember that the faculty all gathered

in that tiered classroom and he said, "You know coming on the train (he wouldn't come on the plane), I read your catalog and I couldn't see how a college as small as yours could teach so many courses, which is perfect. Then he said, "And you have all chiefs and no Indians." Everybody was a department head.

MT: That's probably right come to think of it.

SOL: Those are things maybe that I shouldn't say.

MT: No, that's all right. So, Mr. McCallum was not actually chosen by any process related to the construction of this campus, he had already been selected for this purpose for architecture.

SOL: Future building. Planning purposes. By Sister Berenice.

MT: Okay. So this was just another task that he undertook for the congregation?

SOL: Yes, but he wanted to make sure that it wasn't just going to be a talk session.

MT: Well, it sounds like he had been disappointed with a lot talk?

SOL: Oh yes, he had a lot of talk sessions. I'm sure that the Superior had been many times disappointed.

MT: So then construction began in the early part of '63? Is that correct?

SOL: Oh, it began January 13th or the 14th of 1963.

MT: Oh, okay.

SOL: And that day that they actually excavated, now we actually had ground-breaking in the fall. The Fall of '62 and it was the January 13th or 14th. It was snowing that day of 1963 that we drove out here the afternoon just to watch them excavate. And the snow was coming down so thick, it was such thick flurries that you could hardly see them, you know. It was Kidwell. Kidwell was the excavating company and Art Schlumpberger was in the Massman team of workers. So he worked on this, on these two buildings that we had. Isn't that astonishing?

MT: It is. And what better person to take care of them than someone who helped build them. He really was a loyal employee, wasn't he?

SOL: Oh yes. And then you know his successor is David Gebauer who came after high school because he was hemophiliac and he was afraid to go to high school and his parents, I guess, boys at that age . . . they were just afraid that he might get hurt and then might start bleeding and so forth. So when I was in St. Joseph's Hospital this March, the nurse said to me, Sister, my father's been at Avila 26 years. She said, I'm Jeanette Gebauer. I said, "Honey," and the other nurses were there, "Your father's been with us all of his professional life. Isn't that something? And now he's our head engineer. God really has been good to us.

MT: Yeah, really. Describe what the neighborhood look like at the time, because it looked nothing like it looks today.

SOL: No, in fact, the street wasn't even cut through. Oak Street wasn't even there and when I brought Sister Daniel out here just maybe 2 months before she died, I let her out on Santa Fe because there was no Oak Street. She made me cry, really. She, we walked over to the cornfield and she said, "I will never see one building." And I felt yes you will. Her spirit will be there. But she, you know, she did her job. Also, Margot, what is important . . . she went into St. Louis. Remember this was only her, she was going to begin her 2nd year of the presidency. She pleaded for Avila to have the opportunity to move and to sink its roots in South Kansas City. And do you know, they paid attention to her. Now they would have never paid attention to me, I wouldn't have gone anyway. But the point is, she, I've thought about that often, to think that she had only been president not even a year and a half and she was able to persuade them in St. Louis that Avila should exist. Then when Dr. Manning Patillo came back with Father Rinehart, about 3 years after, we had about 4 buildings. The community was worried-should it have 2 colleges in one state? And these two men came up to assess Fontbonne and to assess Avila. For 2 days, I didn't go near them. They spoke to me in the beginning and then they had a session with me when they were finished. And when they were finished, I didn't know what to expect. I went in and they just said, "We have come to the conclusion that if the Sisters of St. Joseph wish to close a college, then they should close Fontbonne."

MT: Oh my gosh. Well, you must have been astonished?

SOL: Oh, I was floored.

MT: Well I think so.

SOL: They never said another word about Avila closing.

MT: Imagine that. Because Fontbonne was an institution, Fontbonne had a long history by that time.

SOL: It did have a long . . . it started as a senior college, and it was every community has a college to which its Sisters go, the novices go and to which they get their credits to get their degree. No, I was the most astonished person of all, but they said, "It's here in Kansas City where Avila's future seems assured." No, that was before all the junior colleges came into the picture. Because shortly after that, then all the junior colleges started to enroll or started to spring up like mushrooms.

MT: And when Sister Mary Daniel went to St. Louis to speak for the college and solicit the support, was she looking for their financial support? The community's financial support.

SOL: No, not really.

MT: Or their permission.

SOL: She was looking for permission to go ahead with our plans. That's what she was looking for.

MT: Was this after you had met with Bishop Cody?

SOL: Oh, no. We met with Bishop Cody before anything happened. And it was at his, not just urging but his saying that the college that should move.

MT: So she had that with her at least?

SOL: Oh, yes.

MT: Okay. Well, then that does kind of lead to the name change. Uh, who suggested the name change?

SOL: That was Father Stanford. He said, "Sister, you should have your own identify." He said that in front of the 3 men and me. He said there's, I told them there was a College of St. Teresa in MN and our mail was being, it was going up to their place and my place. Now do you know that that college is out of business.

MT: Is it really?

SOL: It's closed.

MT: No, I didn't know that.

SOL: That College of St. Teresa is closed.

MT: Has it been gone for a long time?

SOL: Yes. I would say at least 15 years.

MT: Is that right?

SOL: More than that. I'm going to be retired. It's 18 years that I've retired.

MT: And it closed before you retired?

SOL: Oh yes.

MT: Oh, I did not know that.

SOL: But I think what he was thinking of is, get your own identity from the high school, keep the high school St. Teresa's Academy and you have a different name. And right away, he thought Avila was a fine name, St. Teresa of Avila. Just take the Avila part.

MT: Sure.

SOL: And do you know, Margot, have you been over to St. Teresa's Academy? Have you seen the plaque that they put out in front of the grotto?

MT: No.

SOL: Well, they did that just this year.

MT: No, I haven't been down there.

SOL: I was really, I was very surprised. Mary Beth Swartz and Helen Wald, a group of our alums, I don't know if they gave the names or suggested names, but they established a scholarship in my name for a student of St. Teresa's to go to Avila.

MT: I knew about that scholarship, yes.

SOL: Did you? Well, I didn't. And the part that amused me, because I thought that St. Teresa's fundraiser is really smart. Because that endowment money, and I think I'm just saying now, it could be around \$30-\$40,000 they collected. That all went to St. Teresa's coffers. So we don't have that. But it's our alums. Do you follow me there.

MT: I follow you exactly, yes, yes.

SOL: So I just wrote a letter lately to our alums and gave . . . St. Teresa's was kind enough to give me a listing of all those. So I wrote to them and I thanked them for what they did. I did that right after I received the honor, but then I did it

again that they would remember to give to their alma mater before too . . . But do you know, some of them responded right away?

MT: Good, good.

SOL: I thought that was great! But, what I liked, on that plaque it says, "On the grounds of St. Teresa's was founded a junior college in 1916 and the 4-year college of St. Teresa was founded on this campus." And it tied us, now Avila, I don't know if it has Avila University, I doubt it, it might though, it could have Avila University.

MT: It would have been the same time.

SOL: At least, it ties us now in with the community. See before the academy wouldn't even acknowledge us.

MT: Yeah, I remember that. Yes there was . . .

SOL: And Tom, all that Tom wants, he wants faith to see that some students come here at St. Teresa's. But that's not unusual. When I was at the academy they didn't come except for the nursing program.

MT: Well, I remember that because I encountered the same thing as Director of Admissions. There was very little enthusiasm when I went to St. Teresa's for Avila. Although, there were some that came. But it wasn't considered to be an automatic thing by any means. Lots of, lots of girls went other places. And you know, that was fine.

SOL: Now they go even farther.

MT: Even farther, yeah.

SOL: But see, Sister Anna Joseph, for some reason or other . . . I tried so hard, Sister Anna and I just to divide everything, but we shouldn't have. Because there's a whole difference between a college and an academy and what you should have. And I don't think I was afraid, I wanted to be just, but at the same time if I knew then what I know now, I should have taken all of those things, but I didn't. But she was telling everybody that Olive Louise was stealing everything. And I couldn't retaliate. No, because it would be so stupid.

MT: No, it would, it would. You were better, better advised not to.

SOL: Yes, yes.

MT: Well, let's see, we've.

SOL: So that was really Dr. Stanford, the name.

MT: All right. Then did it have to be approved by the community? By St. Louis?

SOL: Finally I called Reverend Mother, I called her. This was just about a half year later. I said, "Sister, I don't think we had the approval of the name change of the college." She said, "Why it's Avila." So I thanked her, I said, "Well thank you."

MT: They didn't believe in putting things in writing, did they?

SOL: No, no. So that was the second thing that happened. Just like, oh,

MT: You're president.

SOL: Yes, my presidency. Sister Joan Ruth said, "Well you're president of the college." I said, "But I didn't get any notice that I am the president." I couldn't announce myself exactly. We never had an installation. I was never installed.

MT: You just occupied the office and that was it.

SOL: And I was just as happy.

MT: Yeah, yeah. Then the next thing is the move from the . . . did you have something else you wanted to say on the name change?

SOL: Yes, because who approved it and I thought that was interesting that you have that because the one who approved it was Reverend Mother. I'm trying to think of what her name was. That would be easy if we got the, that would be '60, '61, we got it on our stationery in '63 so it must have been already, we knew it was going to be Avila, so we must have known in '62. It must have been approved in '62 by whichever Reverend Mother it was. It might have been Eurcharista.

MT: But as you say just looking at the history of the congregation would tell us who that was.

SOL: Yes.

MT: Okay, and then the campus, well at least O'Reilly Hall is built and it's time to move. Can you describe the long process of moving. I assume this was a long process? I remember the very end of it, but I wasn't here for the . . .

SOL: Well, Sister Anna and I, in the evening, would stealthfully mark the furniture that was going to be taken and when you stop and think about it, it was

not that big of a deal. We didn't touch anything in the academy, of course. So, it was college furniture for the main part and that was about it, the desks and so forth. Not all the desks, but some of the desks. And then of course, we had to pay for our furniture, the community paid for the first building that was \$1,000,000 and we got two buildings for a \$1,000,000. We got O'Reilly which is really a big building, and then we also got Blasco Hall for a million dollars. That is a good buy.

MT: That is a good buy.

SOL: Right. And it's brick. We had the old fashioned walls with the metal in between and all that ugly plaster they have to put over it and so forth. We got two buildings, but we had to pay for the furnishings. See, they would not pay for any of the furnishings.

MT: So, things like laboratory equipment?

SOL: We had to do all of that.

MT: You didn't bring that with you from the main academy?

SOL: Oh no, no. Angus McCallum said, "Sister, we have to have those labs up to date." Because they were just beginning the safety. I think you had to have hoods and all kinds of stuff.

MT: So all of that was new, all of that? Now some of the student furniture was brought along, some of the student desks . . . ?

SOL: Yes, but not too much. See they had those old armchairs. But compared to what you get now, if you would have had those desks all sanded, we would have still had them today. They were most uncomfortable.

MT: They were made like iron.

SOL: They were made like iron. But we still had a few of them, but when we had a garage sale and so forth, the faculty and staff would pick them up as heirlooms.

MT: I believe it.

SOL: As heirlooms. We were accountable for all the furniture. That's why there on these doors here in the convent, I asked the benefactor's for \$800 to furnish each of the rooms.

MT: And so the money to pay for the furnishings that had to be purchased just came out of the operating fund.

SOL: No! I had to go around and ask people for it. No, that's where Judge Bunchue and different people . . . I said, "Judge Bundschu, if you'll give me \$10,000 that will be the furniture for the library." He gave me \$10,000. Those tables and chairs that were delivered out here the winter of '64 were the same furniture that we have over there and you lift that furniture. I bet today you couldn't buy and get all that furniture for \$10,000.

MT: You probably can't buy it at all today, because they don't make furniture like a lot of other things. I bet they're all solid wood, right?

SOL: Oh yes. People that go over there try to lift it and you can't lift it.

MT: See nobody uses solid wood for anything anymore, if they use wood at all. So, that makes me ask now, when did you start your program of visiting people and asking for donations, was that right away after you began?

SOL: No, no. That was even before Sister Daniel died. Sister Daniel said to me, "Oh we need this and we need that." Sister Margaret Rinehart said, "And I need a kiln." She said, "Our kiln is broken, it won't fire." So I just told this to Mr. Crosby Kemper. I said, "Mr. Kemper, I'm here today to tell you that your dad on a cold January day" (in the year that Sister Daniel died, I went to Mr. Kemper and they said he'll never give you anything, but I didn't pay any attention, I just went). I said, "Mr. Kemper, when I left the college this morning, Sister Georgiana Marie told me that our kiln was out and she had nothing to fire the pottery with." He said, "How much do you need, Sister Olive?" I said, \$800. He sat down and gave me a check for \$800.

MT: Good for him.

SOL: That was . . . cause I went to ask him for another favor. I don't know if he's going to do it, but his son now has that request. No, then I went to, but at that time, Margot, there were many businesses in Kansas City that were owned by people, Kansas City people. Just like your dad. He had the Klughartt

MT: Klughartt Company?

SOL: Klughartt Company. I went to see him and I went to see Elliott Norquist. I went to see Helena Norquist's dad, Jo Zach Miller. I went to see a lot of people who were very good people, Mr. Bixby. I began doing that in 1960 as soon as I became aware of what Sister Mary Daniel had to go through.

MT: How did you develop your list of prospects to call on?

SOL: I just went and called.

MT: Anyone you happened to come across that you knew about that could be in a position to do something?

SOL: Yeah, anyone that was president of a bank or Mr. Deramus, Kansas City Southern. He was so nice. He said, "How do you want your money, in a check or shall I give it to you in cash." I said, "It doesn't make any difference, whichever way you want to give it to me." But see those people are all gone now.

MT: And you're right, there are a lot of companies now that are not owned by Kansas City people, not like it was then.

SOL: Now they say, we'll have to write to our parent company. Or you know our main office is in Chicago.

MT: Yeah.

(Tape 2 – Side A)

SOL: Now Charles Stevenson was a counselor on the Board of Counselors.

MT: Okay. He was on the Board of Counselors when I was working here. That's how I knew him. I remember him from that.

SOL: Charles Stevenson told me that when he came to Kansas City and was dismissed from service, the only possession he had was the clothing that he had on his back. And he went to Hallmark and went into Mr. Hall's office and asked for a job and Mr. Hall gave him a job. It was right there he even had his office, even the day he died, he still always had a permanent office at Hall's. He was a good friend of, what was his name, Jessie? Mr. Hall's name, I think it was.

MT: Could have been. No, it was Joyce, that's it, Joyce.

SOL: I had the J correct. But I found Mr. Stevenson very forward looking. He was the one who said to me, "Sister, you should be able to have a phone and have your, not leave your office, you could have a phone that you could connect with the people you want to talk to." Well I didn't know who I wanted to talk to. But he thought that would be wonderful and then TV. I should have TV screen. Well, I could talk to the person and that person could talk to me what they're able to do now.

MT: Yes, yes.

SOL: He was very forward looking.

MT: What did he do at Hallmark?

SOL: He was one of the top executives.

MT: I knew that he had an important position.

SOL: I have heard that, I have heard that. Just lately someone was talking about Charles Stevenson. And then of course, he really loved the memorial, the World War I Memorial.

MT: Oh, the Liberty Memorial?

SOL: Yes, he donated a lot to the Memorial. Now, I'm not knowing about money, but he donated a lot of memorabilia from the war.

MT: Yeah, that's what they want. Well now I know he was interested in the history of Kansas City because he wrote this series of articles.

SOL: I think what's good, is that he was on our Board.

MT: Oh, absolutely, yes. And I'm sure he was very helpful because he was a very energetic person, wasn't he?

SOL: Uh, huh, that's right. I can still see him. Sandied hair and kind of gray, blue eyes and short. And oh, you know what he did? He asked me if I would be the speaker, now this is, if I would be the speaker for Memorial Day at the Liberty Memorial. I was thrilled to do that, because I love history! And then to be able to speak at that Memorial where they had brought in all the world leaders and I saw those films. And then to have the salute, you know the guns. Oh, I was in my element!

MT: What year was this, roughly?

SOL: Oh that could be found out by calling the World War Memorial and find out. I was the speaker on Memorial Day. And I remember that time, Colonel Bishop was living.

MT: Yeah, the police department.

SOL: Of the police department. And he had served and I remember he was in full regalia and he had his little grandson with him. He was coming up the steps and I was happy to speak, I really was. I thought that was a thrill. And to hear those guns go off, I was in my element.

MT: Now that they're restoring it, maybe they'll be able to do that sort of thing again.

SOL: I'm on the board.

MT: Oh, do you do that?

SOL: Oh, yeah. But I don't go to the meetings. I don't want to go out at night. I really shouldn't. In fact, they're having a meeting . . .

MT: Yet, would you have to go down there?

SOL: Yeah.

MT: Well, okay so we got side-tracked from the move to the campus. So obviously, the move . . . well, I guess I'm making an assumption here. The move to the campus ended when school started. At the time that, when school started in the Fall of 1963, was everything here?

SOL: No, in fact we must have spent the first two weeks before school started and the reason that was all decisions that I had to make. Because I did not want the academy to have to wait for us. So we moved about two weeks before and we decided that we could use Holmes instead of Wornall Road. We used Holmes and then we cut over because this street was not cut out yet.

MT: Did you have to use Red Bridge Road to cut over?

SOL: We must have.

MT: I bet that was about the only street that was there at the time, wasn't it?

SOL: We must have had to use it and one of the students that helped us a lot was Mary Alice Staggs.

MT: Oh, yeah. Mary Alice Staggs, Dr. Staggs' daughter.

SOL: She helped a lot and we had a couple of pictures that showed us eating peanut butter sandwiches. She's sitting on the floor and all of us are sitting in one of those offices eating our lunch after bringing things out. I don't know how we did it, I really don't. 'Cause we had to sweep the tunnels and we had to sweep the crud out of the area and store some of our things.

MT: Had, now the buildings themselves were not completed at that time? I mean, O'Reilly wasn't complete. I know the Administration was not.

SOL: Oh heavens, no! Knowing what I know now, in building them so quick, they might have been if I stretched it, maybe between 50 and 60 percent. And there were no windows even in the winter. It was cold. And the girls begged me to wear slacks and I said, "Oh, no." I should have been hit on the head. How terrible. And we had to drop our evening classes because who wanted to come

out here to a dark place and then not even have windows in the building. I'm surprised we didn't get sued by the students.

MT: How long did we have to go without windows?

SOL: Oh, we went without windows, at least, I would say until the beginning of second semester.

MT: Really, was it that long?

SOL: Oh yeah.

MT: And this is because the glazers were on strike.

SOL: Yeah, the glazers' strike.

MT: I didn't, you know, I didn't remember that it was that long. So see, I must have been used to it too, because I was here at that time. I must have accommodated it like everyone else did. And there were heavy sheets of plastic over the window opening.

SOL: Yes, uh huh. And the men that were working on the building wondered how in God's name we even had school. And also, how everybody came late. People were walking into the school late, all the time.

MT: Uh, well let's talk a little bit about life on campus then. How did the students react to this, in general?

SOL: I think they were marvelous! Now that I look out, I think they must have been marvelous the way that they were. It was exciting. Oh, I'll tell you, Mary Clarkson said, they came here for a counselor's meeting and we had it in the double-tiered room. And we were so happy and they went home and cried. They felt so sorry for us. I thought that was so funny. But they did, they really felt sorry for us. We had to cook our own meals. We had nothing to cook with. We had two hot plates and we cooked our dinner and then on those hot plates. And then Sister Anna has a couple of friends that fixed us casseroles. So then we'd have a casserole maybe twice a week.

MT: And how many Sisters were there living on the campus?

SOL: Living on campus there were six of us. And the reason I say six so fast, is because I purchased six chair beds from a company in Chicago, but we couldn't sleep in those chair beds until 2nd semester, until that building was finished. And we lived at the hospital, the six of us did.

MT: So no one actually was here at night?

SOL: No, until we lived in

MT: Until the six of you moved here and slept in those chairs?

SOL: In our offices. Two in my office, two in the Academic Dean's office and two in the treasurer's office.

MT: But that's in Blasco Hall, right?

SOL: Yes.

MT: So you never actually spent the night in O'Reilly, I mean none of them actually slept in O'Reilly, even though you had the beds, the chair beds.

SOL: Oh yes, no I didn't order them from Chicago until that building was . . .

MT: Oh didn't you? I thought I remember the chair beds being in O'Reilly.

SOL: Oh no.

MT: Okay, so the six of you drove back and forth everyday?

SOL: From cars that Jerry Smith lent us. Jerry Smith lent us three cars.

MT: And this was the St. Joseph Hospital down on Prospect, not the new hospital?

SOL: No, not the new hospital.

MT: And then the, who else was living at St. Joseph's at that time?

SOL: At St. Joseph's Hospital? There was just the six of us.

MT: What about the boarders, were they living there also?

SOL: They were living there and this is the funny part. I had a cousin whose daughter was one of the first boarders, Kathy. And she was a beautiful girl, I thought my, she's a beautiful girl. But do you know that Kathy's parents were just so alarmed when they discovered the neighborhood that the hospital was in? They thought that was terrible. So at the end of her first semester, she had to go home. She went to a different school. And I thought, that's my relative, I can't believe it! But she did. And do you know that that year, she finished 2nd semester at another school in St. Louis, do you know she was killed that 2nd semester and her father Jim whom I knew, told someone, I should have left her at Avila. She was speed racing, the kids did it going up and down and she lived in a beautiful neighborhood.

MT: And this was in St. Louis.

SOL: In St. Louis, she was killed in St. Louis. I couldn't believe it. And it's almost like the hand of God . . .

MT: Yeah, yeah.

SOL: I couldn't believe it, it was terrible.

MT: How tragic.

SOL: Does that answer your question?

MT: Well it does, but it introduces another question. In all of those trips back and forth in those three cars with all of those people in all weather, was there ever an accident or any kind of . . .

SOL: Margot, here's the funny part about it. We used to think about, what if we have an accident. Then, I could hardly wait until winter was over and then I thought, winter doesn't mean anything. They could have an accident in May too.

MT: Well, that's true.

SOL: So then I thought, "Oh how grateful I am.

MT: I think that in itself is rather amazing that all those trips, because that was everyday, they let . . . what time did you leave the hospital, 7:00 or 8:00 or something in the morning.

SOL: 7:00.

MT: Okay, as I recall at least the boarders, I don't remember your schedule, but I think the boarders left here about 4:30 in the afternoon, didn't they, to go back.

SOL: Uh, huh. Uh huh.

MT: And then they had one or two Sisters who drove the boarders routinely.

SOL: Uh huh. Margaret Rinehart was one of them and Anna.

MT: Okay, now were some of the Sisters also living at St. Teresa's at that time.

SOL: Uh huh. More than half of them were. Sister DeLa Salle, Sister Ann Dominic, Sister James Marie, the librarian, Sister, I was thinking of the English

teacher, can't think of her name right now. There were a number of them. They had to bring sandwiches, their bags and they used to eat and Sister Dominic loved to tell how they had one light. Mr. Bryde, they used to eat right down in that area that is now part of the Upward Bound students.

MT: And Mr. Bryde joined them?

SOL: One little goal. When they put the machines in for the students to be able to get a coke or something, sometimes they'd put there money in and out would come a little mouse.

MT: I remember that.

SOL: And Sister Margaret Rinehart would say, "They were here first."

MT: Well, she's right.

SOL: Sure she was.

MT: They were here first. Yes, I remember and that took place in the machines for the food and drinks. They were in this huge unfinished area on the ground floor of O'Reilly Hall that was a combination assembly hall, lunchroom, chapel and theater, as I recall.

SOL: Mr. Muentzel, I went to Mr. Muentzel and his wife Florence, we became good, good friends. He died first. But I said, "Mr. Muentzel, would you let me have," I think I might have had 7000, I asked it, "just to pay to have the floor, if we could put tile on the floor and we could put the tile up in the ceiling."

MT: Ceiling tile. They put a dropped ceiling.

SOL: And then after that was all finished, Sister Felice finally said, "Yes." She would put a theater on that lower level, then they had to take a whole lot of those tiles out. If she just had, but you see she wouldn't have anything to do with theater. We didn't have a theater. She was just heartbroken to leave 5600. But we won the National Theater Award. We won that award without a theater. I thought that was the funniest thing. We beat St. Louis University and Drake and all those schools, we won 1st Place.

MT: What year was that, do you remember?

SOL: It would have to be '64 or '65 at the latest.

MT: That was just using this temporary theater that was set up in that big area?

SOL: We had only one producer that was James Pond, I think, Jim Pond. He was a professional actor guild.

MT: And was he a faculty member?

SOL: Uh huh. Students made their own costumes. Students decorated the stage.

MT: And it was a very simple arrangement and folding chairs in front?

SOL: When they went to the Midwest Conference, they would call out the names of the producers, directors. They had about 10-15 of them from all these other schools and ours, it was just James Pond and James Pond. James . . .

MT: Wasn't his name Bill?

SOL: No, James Pond. And the students, this was just the students . . .

MT: Well, that's wonderful training.

SOL: Oh, they were out of this world.

MT: And they, actually, the productions they put on were quite good. It didn't really matter that the . . .

SOL: Margot, when I look back now, we have such talented kids! In fact, it hurts me once in a while when we don't measure up sometimes and we can't all be perfect.

MT: You know the one I remember is Karen Metz.

SOL: But do you know when she came back to perform, DeLa Salle, had . . . and I don't remember when it was. But you know of all the voices, I expected hers to be glorious. By that time she had toured, but you know, her voice was not as pretty as some of those others.

MT: Is that right? Huh. It hadn't improved with age.

SOL: No and it was so wonderful when she was here. She even excelled and went past the conservatory and everybody else, she could sight read so beautifully.

MT: And she had a beautiful voice!

SOL: I was so disappointed.

MT: Huh, well that's a shame. Because I actually, I was kind of curious about what her career had been. I guess she didn't have one, if her voice didn't continue to develop. I assumed that she had gone into a career in music.

SOL: No, Powell, she married a young man who majored in Biology. No, he majored in what Dr. Polo does. He is the record, the chief, record zoo man in St. Louis. And you know, they have a terrific zoo.

MT: Yes,

SOL: Well, he's in charge of all the records.

MT: Well, my goodness, that's a lot.

SOL: No, she doesn't . . . I was really disappointed because of all the young people that had gone here, I think she had the most glorious voice. But you know who's a tremendous singer? The Sister Rita Flaherty's niece.

MT: Huh.

SOL: She's going to at Metropolitan. She's also going to be featured in the William Jewell series.

MT: Really?

SOL: She was Joyce, a little girl, the youngest of the Flaherty family. She began her singing career in Europe. And see, some singers do that. They get renown in Europe and then they come over here. She's going to be at the, singing in New York this winter.

MT: For heaven's sake.

SOL: But she's going to debut at William Jewell. Like Pavarotti did.

MT: How old is she?

SOL: She's in her thirties. She's around 35. She's a metzo soprano and her voice is unbelievable.

MT: Well, that's wonderful. Yes.

SOL: She's a Shawnee Mission girl.

MT: Huh, I'll be darned. And what is her name?

SOL: She married in Italian. So she keeps that, but her first name is Joyce.

MT: Joyce, okay.

SOL: Now, can we go on with this some other time.

Part II – Interview with Sister Olive Louise Dallavis at Avila University, May 19, 2003.

MT: Now, Sister, when we left off, we were talking about life on the campus during the first year or so, on this campus. We were speaking about the students and how the, how their lives, especially the boarding students, how their lives were affected by being on the campus, especially since there was no dormitory and the schedules they had to follow and so forth. Let me ask you a couple of more questions about that before we go on to the next phase of this. That is, there was no library at this time, also. What did they do for a library?

SOL: We had a library from the very beginning.

MT: Where was it located.

SOL: In this building, this whole lower level was library. And it was constructed as library. And there was just one private room for the person who was the director of the library and I remember very distinctly that she was arguing with the architect that she did not want all that glass and the students looking at her. Mr. McCallum said, "Sister, for whom are we building this building?" She said, "Well, we're building this building for the students for the library." And he said, "Sister, you will have glass around your windows for you to look out at them. Whether they look at you, it's for you to see that they're in order."

MT: So they were able to use the library in this building before the rest of the building open?

SOL: The first building that we had was O'Reilly Hall. And this building was finished in late spring and we did have the books. Meanwhile, they just had to use the library wherever one was accessible.

MT: Okay. Okay.

SOL: This library, we did the best that we could.

MT: And then, what about a bookstore? Was there a bookstore in there?

SOL: Yes, the bookstore was over in O'Reilly Hall on the lower level in what was a basement storage area. Sister Ann Dominic was our first bookstore manager.

MT: Was she? Now see I don't remember that, either.

SOL: Yes, she was the bookstore manager. And right outside of that little bookstore is where the lay faculty would eat their lunch. They laughed about the one bulb that they had hanging from the ceiling.

MT: I should remember that. Now where, Sister Ann Dominic was then followed by the Haning's, by Mr. Haning, is that correct?

SOL: Yes, but then Mr. Haning, when he came, we already had the student center. That was several years later.

MT: Now how did you find Mr. Haning?

SOL: His wife was helping in the library. She had a husband who was retired and then he was able to handle the bookstore.

MT: I see.

SOL: He was there several years.

MT: He was there a long time, if I remember correctly?

SOL: Well a long time, maybe about three years.

MT: Oh, is that all? I was thinking it was more than that.

SOL: Yes. When I asked him about getting a better grade of greeting card, he said, "Sister, the students will not pay anymore than a nickel or a dime for a card," which was not true.

MT: I'm surprised you could buy a nickel greeting card in those days.

SOL: Dime. It was really a dime. The most they would pay would be a nickel or a dime. But that's not true.

MT: Well, now then. What about the Sisters that were on the faculty? First of all, roughly, how many Sisters were there on the faculty at that time?

SOL: I think there were about 12-14 of us. Now that does not include the people that were in the offices. So I would say, maybe actual faculty, there could have been about 12 Sisters. And then as far as the offices are concerned, you have to remember we had the Academic Dean and then we had the librarian.

MT: The registrar.

SOL: The registrar. That's right. But of course, these people were mostly by themselves. They had no secretary except Sister Anna. She did have to have a secretary. And then Sister, the Academic Dean had a secretary. Then I was the last to get a secretary. I had one of those recorders that Ron Bennett sold me and I was grateful he did because it taught me to speak.

MT: It does, you have to be prepared. Now we talked about where you lived before and where the other Sisters lived. How did the other Sisters feel about this unusual arrangement and their living conditions and so forth? Did they consider it a burden or did they enjoy it?

SOL: It was a burden. But I think that we were still of the era of the Sisters when you were given a mission, you accepted it and you did the best that you could with what you had. However, there were several Sisters who refused to stay to be missioned at the college - that I knew. And for whatever reason that they chose not to do so, the other Sisters made it all the more pleasant really. They were willing to put up with all those inconveniences. Even when the Provincial came with her assistant and they wanted to see how things were going, I remember they had dug a big ditch out here that was part, I guess, of this foundation, this building and I remember you had to jump over the ditch. And I looked behind because they were not keeping up with me and I looked and I said, "Well," and they said, "Well." I said, "Well you have to jump." So they jumped. Also when it was time to have lunch they were going to go off campus to eat. And I said, "Oh, why don't you eat with us." But they said, "You don't have any place to eat." I said, "Yes, we do. We have a small room right outside the women's laboratory up there." We had two hot plates there and a table and about six chairs. We had our sandwiches over there. And the Sisters from St. Teresa's, the old campus, they brought their lunches. They had their apples and oranges. Then Sister Ann Dominic said, she would ask them at night, "What do you want today, ham or bologna?"

MT: And that was it? That was all the choices.

SOL: Fruit, if they wanted fruit. But you know, you really don't eat that much for lunch.

MT: The sisters in St. Louis weren't accustomed to this type of luncheon.

SOL: And then they came and ate with us. Do you know that the engineer, the maintenance engineer at St. Teresa's drove the car. I wish I could think of his name. It will come to me. He was quite elderly. But he drove the Sisters and he must have made several trips to and from campus to bring them out here and then in the evening. They arranged that all themselves. I had nothing to do with that. The first year we did not have the chair beds and there were about six of us that slept at the hospital. Sister Irene was so good to us. And I remember some

nights, in fact, several nights that I was so tired and I think Sister Anna was even more tired. We didn't bother taking our clothes off, we just crawled in bed.

MT: That would be extremely uncomfortable in your . . .

SOL: We didn't get to sleep until about 10:30 or 11:00. And going home and then getting up early in the morning because we had Mass at 5:00.

MT: Oh my. It must have taken you at least 45 minutes to get to St. Joseph's from here.

SOL: Oh yes. And we were all new drivers 'cause I didn't learn how to drive until 1960.

MT: Right before . . .

SOL: So there were, there were inconveniences and then there were evenings where about six of us sleeping over here because by that time they had cots. And you can't imagine three cots in that little room at the end of the hall. The Sisters were practically sleeping on top of one another. And then they had just a clothes rack to hang up their habits. They had their own habits. And then we took one of the cupboards, mock cupboards and I had Art to fix us a shower. And then there were a couple of inconsiderate Sisters who used up all the hot water. And then there had to be a ruling.

MT: I guess.

SOL: You go into the shower and you come out as fast as you can. There was little inconveniences like that.

MT: Sure.

SOL: And then Sister Margaret Rinehart and I would take turns emptying the garbage. We had to go all the way to the Academic building and go outside and throw it in that big container out there.

MT: Oh, by that dock area?

SOL: Uh huh.

MT: Yeah, I know exactly where . . .

SOL: Then we had to lock up. We had no person that would lock the doors at night so we did that. I guess we opened them in the morning.

MT: Now was it a relief, in spite of all that, was it a relief to move out here instead of having to travel back and forth by car? I would think it would be.

SOL: Oh yes. But we were pioneers.

MT: Well, you were! That's right.

SOL: I know the scholarship sponsors, they had a meeting out here, and I'll never forget this because we were so happy. We brought them into this double-tiered classroom. And we carried on with our meeting and Rose Foyle was so sweet. She told me later that they went home and cried because we were so happy with nothing. And they, they just thought it was terrible! That really made us feel like we were heroines.

MT: Well you were in a way. And you knew it was going to end at some point, I guess?

SOL: We had no windows.

MT: Well, that's right. No windows, no food, very little hot water and nothing to eat. What could be better?

SOL: I had known a farmer who used to work this property and half of it because we didn't have the buildings, we let him plant corn. And I remember that first summer, he came in with a basket of corn and it was Mr. Effert's.

MT: Oh really?

SOL: Yes. He said, "Sister, I want to help you." And he said, "Now I will bring you some more of this corn whenever we have it." He said, "I do want to help you." And he did it the next year. Then he died the following year. So our provider didn't last very long.

MT: How long was that land cultivated? I sort of vaguely remember that.

SOL: That land was cultivated, I would say, we still let the land be used for other crops for at least three years.

MT: Really? I do sort of vaguely remember that.

MT: Now Sister, what about the students, the students also were as you just pointed out were pioneers too, because they had the same constrictions that the faculty members had. I guess to be blunt about it, one might ask, why anyone would come here as a boarding student in that first year?

SOL: Yes, and I'm amazed that the parents let them come.

MT: Also that.

SOL: And I'm trying to remember how many students we had. Really maybe if we had 20, 24 and they would have to get up early in the morning and we would drive them. They didn't have the fun of driving themselves. They didn't have their own cars, they weren't permitted to have cars. Then they were in a terrible neighborhood. And one of them was the daughter of my first cousin, Jim. And his daughter evidently, was very spoiled.

MT: Oh really.

SOL: And his wife and he certainly had spoiled the girl. But at the same time, they refused to let her come back 2nd semester. She's the one that I told you was killed.

MT: Yes, that was killed.

SOL: And they felt terrible. She was killed in St. Louis. He said I should have left her at Avila.

MT: Was she attending school in St. Louis at the time?

SOL: Yes, yes. And at that time drag racing was very prominent with the young people. But now those students really had nothing. When you stop and think about it, they must have eaten at the hospital. So they did have a good meal at night and they had good breakfast. But at lunch, they had to bring their lunch and Sister Margaret Rinehart took care of that.

MT: Did they have a strong spirit of camaraderie among themselves?

SOL: I think so. I think so, because even you can tell a big difference when you have a residence hall. Those students get to know everyone. However, today that residence hall population is very different. There are minority races, there are Asiatic and the students really have a whole different kind of experience. But in those days, it was more of a homogenous group. They were girls that their parents could afford to send them to school to college - even though the tuition was so low.

MT: Yes, and it was.

SOL: See tuition, up until we moved out here, was below \$1000. When we moved to the new campus we had to raise the tuition to \$1000 for the year.

MT: And even that, that's amazingly low. Even then, it was a low amount. Right.

SOL: They really chose you for that particular mission.

MT: As in, individual selection this would be someone who would work well in this situation.

SOL: That's right.

MT: Well, I think that's an excellent suggestion. I think I'm going to look up and see who they were and maybe we can work something in with them. Because they would be sort of minor heroines themselves. They were at the time. What would you consider to be your biggest challenges during those first few years?

SOL: Being a fledgling president and being the only woman in our group of presidents in Kansas City, my whole thrust was really to be representative of what a president should be and when asked to speak, to speak with a background of a lot of reading on higher education. I made it my business to read, read, read, read, read! In fact, practically my only reading outside of religious articles was professional. And my biggest asset was the Gonser and Gerber leaflet, so that when someone said, "And where did you get that information?" I would say to my fellow presidents, "From Gonser and Gerber." And once in a while would say, Gonser, I don't know what his first name was. I would say that's the same as Mr. so and so. Gonser, so they would look at me as much as to say, "And you, he said that?" "Well, if he wrote it, he must have said it." And Gerber I really don't remember as much about him as I do about Gonser. But you had to know what you were doing. Otherwise it would be a disgrace, really. And I didn't want to disgrace our order. However, in my second year as president, lo and behold, I became president of the Missouri College Union, for the simple reason that the college president took the chairmanship in rotation. So, that it was the College of St. Teresa's turn to head the organization, so I became president of that particular group of the Missouri College Union, which included the University of Missouri of Columbia, as well as a few other of the public institutions. But Dr. William English, was present representing the Chancellor at the University and I study my notes. I looked at the file, read everything that was in the file that was handed to me by the Missouri College Union which had about 16 or 17 college presidents. I was the only woman president.

MT: Really?

SOL: So when my confreres, after the meeting was over and after dinner was finished, they would go to the bar. And over drinks, they would decide the business of the next day. I, of course, said my prayers and went to bed as a fine Christian and young woman.

MT: Absolutely.

SOL: And here these fellows would come to the meeting the next day. But, I had read my file very carefully and William Jewell College, who by the way, gave me an Honorary Doctoral Degree. Dr. Cutliff was a good friend of mine, not then, now, during these years. Dr. Cutliff had written a letter which said, "I am asking again to please include William Jewell College, (which is now a 4-year institution) in the membership of the Missouri College Union. And he said, "My solicitation has been in vain these past years. But I am asking again, please consider membership." It was one item of business. The second item of business was, the Missouri College Union should really represent the private college in the State of Missouri and we should not have the University of Missouri, Columbia, as part of the Missouri College Union. So for the umpteenth time, we're asking that this be put on the agenda and that we ask the Missouri University of Missouri, Columbia to please withdraw from this organization. My two items of business, 'cause I had read all the minutes. Then I came to this, now you will notice Item 1 is a letter from President Cutliff of William Jewell College asking for admittance into the Missouri College Union. He has asked for, and I had the exact number of times he has asked, and it has been pushed aside, it has been ignored and now let us discuss it—open for discussion. They all started, "There's no reason why William Jewell can't be part of us. They certainly have fulfilled their accreditation, there's no reason why—all those in favor, aye. Anyone opposed, motioned carries, thank you. Then the next one was, University – oh, I said, Mr. English, Dr. English, would you kindly leave the room? This agenda has Missouri College Union should be gathering from private colleges only, would you please leave our room so that we can discuss this matter without your presence?" So he left the room and he was kind of young. He left the room and when he was gone, Father Van Akren stood up and said, "Don't you think you're a little bit presumptuous in doing this?" And I said in reading the minutes from the other meetings that have been here that this has been on the slate for a number of years and ignored. And I said, "This is what I found unfinished in the minutes, so that's why it's on your agenda." So then another president stood up and said, "Well now we have been talking about this for a long time." To make a long story short, they voted to put the University of Missouri out, they really did. And when Dr. English came back in the room and said, "Dr. English, the vote has just been taken that the Missouri College Union only consists of the private college. I think there were 13 or 14 or maybe more.

MT: Yeah, there were quite a few.

SOL: So he just took his hat and he left. Then about, I would say five years later, no sooner than that, I was called by Dr. Cutliff. They wanted to give me an Honorary Doctoral Degree and they wanted me to be the speaker. And guess who introduced me on the platform?

MT: Mr. English.

SOL: Dr. English. He said the only woman that's ever forced me out of an organization, he told the whole audience. He said, "This is Sister Olive Louise, she is our speaker for this evening, a woman of intrepid, whatever he called it. So I got up and that was one of my first experiences. And then, Margot, another experience that I thought was very good for me, there was new president installed at a college in South Missouri. Now I should remember, I imagine if I looked over I would remember. And because I was president of Missouri College Union, I was asked to speak to the incoming president with all the finesse and all the wisdom of the chairperson representing all these other presidents. And I only found that out just before I shortly had to get up to speak. So I thought what am I going to say, what am I going to say? So when people were talking, I was thinking, what shall I say. So I was looking at the program and it had this college as being the oldest in the organization. If the colleges would line up, it was the oldest college in the state. So that was my . . . I had about four sentences. So I stood up and said what an honor it was to be able to salute the eldest daughter of this organization and my next sentence to the effect that place that it had occupied in this part of Missouri and what it has influenced, what it has yielded and so forth. Four lines is about I put together, but it was enough. Then I proceeded, all the clapping. It was huge auditorium. I wish I could remember what it was. But, I received a letter from the Chancellor, he's at Washington University, I think, a very noted person. I don't think it was Danforth, at that time. But he wrote me a letter and said, "Sister, I wish to praise you for the succinct presentation that you've made." And he said that it was delivered very well and what you said was right to the point. He said, "I congratulate you." And I should have kept the letter.

MT: Well, yes. You should have.

SOL: His letter was about four sentences. But he was so pleased that it didn't go on and on and on.

MT: Yeah, uh huh.

SOL: But, those were two good experiences to put you right on your feet and you knew that you just had to stand up and to perform.

MT: Did you have quite a bit of, especially in the early time but over the years, contact with these president organizations and various other organizations that were local or statewide in nature in higher education?

SOL: Oh yes, you know why? Because that consortia was just a new word or consortium, some people would say consortium—then if you have a group of consortium then it would be consortia. And we were the first in the United States to begin its consortium and that we interviewed Dr. Ben Morton, was our first president of that organization.

MT: Is it Kcrche? Yeah, yeah.

SOL: Yes. Kcrche. And the ones that helped us with the money to pay was the Kansas City Trust and Foundation.

MT: Oh was it?

SOL: Because they were assured Homer Wadsworth and Chuck Curran, those people, and Nathan Stark, at that time was active, that's what we should do. So then we started the Kcrche we were in on the ground floor, would have been Akron, Dr. Scofield, Dr. Morgan of the Art Institute, Dr. Scarborough of Acre. Scofield and I were very good friends. I tried to remember the other college man from Park College.

MT: Park College and William Jewell.

SOL: William Jewell, yes. Their college at that time, was run by a clergyman, too. Dr., his name will come to me. He and I, when President Kennedy was assassinated, he had just brought me home from doing Missouri college work. Remember we were the habit then.

MT: Yes.

SOL: And here was this trim Baptist minister going out with a demure Sister of St. Joseph.

MT: Did that make that Baptist minister very nervous?

SOL: Oh, I think he was very nervous.

MT: I'll bet he was.

SOL: It was so funny, even I had to laugh.

MT: I'll bet he was. That was, so is the Kerche still in operation?

SOL: No, no. It's like everything else. It has its day and then after Dr. Morton left, Dr. Morton is deceased now. And Dr. Wood took his place but he also was from the University of Michigan. And he had gone through the course that prepared consortia directors. And so he took his place. He was in Kansas City 14 years, so see that lasted a long time.

MT: That lasted quite a while then.

SOL: And then there was another director after Dr. Morton and then it petered out.

MT: Uh huh, the need just wasn't there then.

SOL: It petered out when, and this was my song and dance, you are not to do, the consortium is not to do anything that the college can do alone. The consortium exists for us to be able to do things together that we could not afford to do by ourselves. That's why we have all these wonderful speakers.

MT: Yes.

SOL: And all these wonderful professors.

MT: All those speakers came through the consortium.

SOL: Not all of them, but some of them did. What the consortium provided was these great professors from the different sciences, the different disciplines. They would spend three hours over at Baker and then they would come over here to Avila in the afternoon. So we would have one in the morning and one in the afternoon. And what we would do, and they would stay for about three days. And then six colleges would put their funds together and pay them. Do you see how . . .

MT: Oh sure.

SOL: Then when the consortium started to dip into, when they started, I'm trying to think when they, I remember I stood up and I said, "That is something we all do for ourselves." And that was to enroll students. We do our own enrolling. We do not need Krcche to enroll for us.

MT: How on earth could they have thought they were going to, I mean physically, I don't know how you would do that.

SOL: Well, they would have a course and then they would enroll the students to come and to purchase and pay them that course. Do you see? And we don't want that. We don't want our students to be going off to other courses.

MT: No, no.

SOL: Those were not things why the consortium was started. It was mainly started because that was the era of getting great people in that you couldn't afford.

MT: And they did other economies with scaled type purchasing and that sort of thing.

SOL: Oh, yes, purchasing and sharing sometimes. You would get a professor in and that professor would spend three months or part of the semester on your campus, then the other part of the semester they would devote their whole time to the other campus.

MT: I know that the admissions offices has also cooperated through them.

SOL: That's right.

MT: We did some joint recruiting as somewhat. Speaking of those speakers, let me ask you about the jubilee year, 1966. Michael Novak and his wife, Karen, were the speakers or at least two of the speakers for that observance, and this would have been for the 50th anniversary of the college.

SOL: I have seen that in the booklet, in my calendar. I know I have, I do believe, that he was here for two days. I proposed three days but it was January 18th, was one of those days and he lectured of course, philosophically and she was an artist. So she was over in the art area the whole time.

MT: Uh huh.

SOL: They were excellent and I think I told you this that where he had said that America was not a melting pot. That really struck me, because I had always heard it was a melting pot. But you see, he was right. We have different ethnic groups, and by golly, those traditions are important.

MT: They are.

SOL: The African tradition is just as important as the Italian tradition.

MT: I'll bet that was kind of a revolutionary thing when he said that because everybody had taken it as a conventional wisdom that the United States was melting pot. And to a certain extent, it probably was in the earlier times because people were more anxious to blend in. But he may have been one of the earliest people to identify that this, the trend to maintain your ethnic tie.

SOL: That's right. And look at the terrible feelings that were present during the World War. See, I was too small of them, I wasn't even born. But I actually, our Sisters, we had a group of German Sisters, Sisters who came, German heritage taught at St. Anthony's. They had stopped teaching German, they had stopped speaking German and see people were denying their ethnicity. I know people would say I'm in America now. I don't want to speak those other languages. And those languages are so important.

MT: And they are very important.

SOL: And especially a child who can learn two and three languages.
Marvelous!

MT: I know.

SOL: But those speakers, now they did, they did enrich the campus.

MT: Absolutely.

SOL: And these people who came and spoke on the sciences, they were really paid attention to. I think the faculty were really appreciative. And then of course, you have to remember, those were the days when blacks were not appreciated and on the old campus, this was, I was on the old campus two years. During my two years I hired Dr. Massey in chemistry, brilliant chemistry teacher who had her students do studies and also do research then write up their research. We had Dr. Fields. He was in education. Then we had a Dr. Thurman. Dr. Phelps already was teaching for us, he was a favorite professor. We had a good five or six black instructors. Another instructor, a famous person who was here was Langston Hughes.

MT: Oh yes, the poet.

SOL: Langston Hughes was brought here by Mr. Webster. Mr. Webster, Tom, was a good friend of Langston Hughes. And when I told our English professor, Black, who was special, I think he's been here two years now, he was reading poetry from Langston Hughes and I sat next to him and I said, "You know, Langston Hughes was our guest speaker." He said, "He was?" I said, "Yes, Mr. Webster brought him here."

MT: When was that, do you remember?

SOL: It would have had to be, no Tom was with us on the old campus because Ms. Gallagher did not come out here to this campus, she couldn't. She was too weak really. He was a tremendous sociology professor and wanted to teach a college. We were just right to take him because he really was able to dig into the different tribal rules, visit those countries and so forth. So he was delighted to be on the college campus. Then Dr. Thurman, Dr. Fields, they were . . . people working in the public school system. Did you know in those days, this is something else, Margot, too, I remember walking into our hall the first year we were here. That would be '64 and the Catholic schools were discriminated against. Our graduates were fearful that they would not be able to teach in the public schools because of the prejudice.

MT: Really?

SOL: Yes, I experienced some of that. But that changed, that was right on the border of '64. '64 was our first full year here and that would be '64, '65. We came the Fall of '63, '64. But that feeling was still there, was still pervading that if you went to a private school, especially Catholic, you would not have an opportunity to teach in the public schools. And that was false.

MT: Huh? I did not realize that that was the case. At least not that late.

SOL: It was right on the edge of life. Dr. Thurman was another fine doctor. And I remember some of the Sisters thought we had too many blacks on our staff. And I said, "Sister, if you can find a white person that has this kind of expertise, we certainly would love to hire that person. But, we hire the person that has what is needed. And then within, I would say three years that whole picture changed. Because the government said you had to have black instructors. So they took Dr. Massey, they took Dr. Fields, Dr. Thurman, Dr., the very first one I mentioned. His wife and he are good friends, they have daughter.

MT: Oh, Dr. Phelps.

SOL: Yes, Dr. Phelps, he stayed and Dr. Webster.

MT: This was right at the beginning of civil rights movement, wasn't it?

SOL: Yes, and then you had . . . when they all started this business of tenure. Now I refused to give tenure. I said any president or any academic dean in his or her right mind would not want to get rid of a good professor. And then you had . .

(Tape 3 beginning with Side A)

MT: So, well, let's move on to the next one, which is the Steer Dinner. Now there's a change of subject for you. Can you tell a little bit about the origins of the Steer Dinner?

SOL: Yes, I was going down to the stockyards. There were a number of benefactors; I'm trying to think of a couple of them. One was a gentleman that was one of the first to sell meat that was already cut and boxed. He was quite active our first years and I also went to the stockyards to see several people who had cattle and who were very active in different charities. I should have looked over my list of benefactors. When they had the American Royal, I was invited by these gentlemen to come down and be part of the American Royal, which I did. I went down there. And lo and behold, Jeff Deamons, remember Jeff Deamons?

MT: I don't think I knew him.

SOL: You weren't here then in '76.

MT: Uh huh, no.

SOL: Jeff was down in the stockyards also and that year we had gotten about three steers. I thought it was steer, but they said steers. We had gotten about three steers. We had all this beef. This is interested because it was Jeff who said, "What shall we do with this meat, Sister?" It was really his idea. I think more his idea than my idea. I always credit him with beginning the auction. I really did. He was quite a handsome fellow and he knew it. He asked if we could have the dinner. I said, "Yes." And then of course, we borrowed, not borrowed, we rented everything. It was really beautifully, it was beautifully served and the tables were beautifully set. Of course, it cost quite a bit. That first Steer Dinner that we had, we raised \$15,000, clear. But I imagine that we could have had \$10,000 in expenses, because you had to rent all the silver and the china and tablecloths and just everything. I remember your mother missed the first one. But she heard so much about how beautiful it was from Della Zeller and those people who did come. We had about 200 people I guess. It was just so gorgeous, so your mother made her mind up that she'd come the next year. Well, the next year, I put my foot down; we could not rent all of those gorgeous pieces. Of course, the tables were not as beautiful as the other ladies had described it the proceeding year, but your mother liked it. Our cafeteria then cooked the steaks and so forth. I think they did a good job, I don't remember. But, we made it a point that steaks would go. We would auction the steaks and the very first box of steaks was purchased by Clarabelle McClear, one of our own alums. She was an older alum who was our first adult student on the old campus, then she came out here and finished. Clarabelle paid \$1000 for those 6 or 8 steaks. Then my mother purchased the first ticket. She came up from St. Louis for it, it was delightful and I introduced her to everybody. You know I said that my mother is here tonight and I would like for her to stand. And she stood up like a little queen and bowed to everybody. That first year, it was \$15,000 we cleared and we thought that was good. Then of course, each year, we got . . .

MT: A little bit more.

SOL: We found it a little bit better, then we had wine added to it and then finally we had some other prizes, especially Margot, some things of Margaret O'Reilly's and so forth. This year we raised \$345,000.

MT: Wow, that's wonderful. What a successful idea that was! Now was Jeff a faculty member here or was he . . .

SOL: Jeff had come from the University of Michigan that was doing a lot to prepare deans of students. He had really been prepared to be a dean of student, but we had Lynn Kupkey here. And so, Jeff worked for Lynn Kupkey and then I think he was about one of our first, what we'd say Development then. He was with us two years and the third year he told me after the end of that second year that he had some work in the Missouri Colleges Fund. He told me he was

leaving to go to I think, Lindenwood College. I remember he came in to tell me that and I looked at him and said, "You are no more ready to leave Avila, to be a fundraiser." I just told him, I said, "This is a disgrace!" I said, "That's terrible, when a person leaves Avila I want to be proud of them, that they really know their stuff." Like when you went over to Truman, they all wondered how in God's name you knew all you knew. You know how to work. Not that Jeff didn't know how to work. There are two years, you don't learn very much in two years. But anyway, he left us and he was at Lindenwood all of one year and then he was put out. The point is, Jeff did do us a good thing when he went through with that first Steer Dinner to be built on that all the time.

MT: Absolutely.

SOL: And I gave him credit to that. I think it was important, the idea.

MT: And it has been a wonderfully, successful idea! In fact, now everybody and their brother has a dinner with an auction, but at the time, the Steer Dinner was originated, was anybody else doing that?

SOL: The cancer . . .

MT: Cancer people.

SOL: They are a couple of years ahead of us, and then we're next.

MT: That's what I thought, this was kind of a unique idea.

SOL: And then you know who else has done very successful and I like what they're doing. I'm on the Board of Shawnee Mission Medical Center. They started with Christmas trees and we started with steaks. They've done a fantastic job! They have an involved Board. I've been on their Board, I imagine, for over 20 years and I've seen the growth.

MT: I think that's a very good organization.

SOL: And you know we had Hildagard twice and we had Bob Barker twice.

MT: Bob Barker?

SOL: We had Bob Barker.

MT: What did Bob Barker do?

SOL: He's the, he has the oldest show on T.V.

MT: Well, yeah.

SOL: The Price is Right. He was so handsome, he's from Springfield, MO. Channel 9 is his channel, which gave him to us free. For nothing.

MT: Really, you can't beat that price.

SOL: And his dear wife would come and she'd go to Springfield, MO and visit with her family and Bob would come with us.

MT: Was he entertaining?

SOL: Oh, he's wonderful! Oh, he's so funny and excellent. I remember one time, he had three boxes on the stage and he had the girls up there, women, and he told them at the end, "Now in one of those boxes there's a little mouse, so when you put your hand in there, whoever has the little mouse, you get the prize." And the audience would all go with him, you know. He did clever things like that. And one of them is the gentlemen who's been coming to our Steer Dinner's whenever he can be in town and it's Jim. I can't think of his last name now, but he was at our last Steer Dinner. He was there with Bob Barker and Hildagard.

MT: So Bob Barker and Hildagard were at the Steer Dinner?

SOL: No, oh. The Board felt, and I can just hear Charles Stevenson. We have to make ourselves known, we should do something once a year. We'll have a birthday party. So, if you notice on that one page of Hildagard, she was there for our birthday party. We had about four of them. Two with Bob Barker and two with her. Mountain Valley Water sponsored her through Mr. Eagen and Channel 9, Hartenbauer gave us Bob Barker.

MT: When was this, the birthday party? It must have been a while ago if Charles Stevenson was pushing it.

SOL: There were, that would have to be 1972. I think that folder you brought back. . . He said, "You know if that's successful, let's not change it." So he's kept it. Now what makes it, what keeps it, I think is especially now, I didn't like it the way it was three and four years ago. The auction was getting too long.

MT: Yes.

SOL: People were leaving and it was still going on at 11:00. That's for the birds.

MT: Yes, yeah—too long, you're right.

SOL: We couldn't get people to change, so Serena, I think is very good. Serena rolls with the punches. And now we didn't have a good auctioneer this year, that

part is true. Before we knew it, Tom said, "The auction's over." He was amazed, I was amazed, too. It was over. But anyway, Dr. Kramer, I think put his finger on it when he said, "If this is successful, why change?"

MT: Absolutely.

SOL: And the food is so good.

MT: The food was delicious this year and last year. I thought it was quite good this year. They have done, a very good job, the hotel has done a very good job with it.

SOL: And the decorations were good too.

MT: Yes, I do too.

SOL: And I didn't like those themes. You don't want a theme, you're going for an auction.

MT: You're going to eat dinner, you're going to eat steak. The earliest Steer Dinners were held on the campus.

SOL: Yes, until we reached 300 and then you can't have. One of the earliest ones we had Jack and Edna Bair were the honorary chairs. Of course, we rented chairs. One of the chair's broke that Jack was sitting on and he was a little bit of a guy. We laughed, he was laughing so hard and he says, "Oh, I'm all right, I'm all right." He said, "Don't bother, don't bother." I was so embarrassed. Of all the chairs, he was going to get the one that was going to break. Oh we had, and then it was not safe and then the students were waiting tables.

MT: Yes, I remember that too, now that you say it.

SOL: And then the food, no matter how they do it here, they just don't have the conveniences. What I like, is that they have stayed with the same hotel.

MT: Well that was my next question. It's always been at that hotel once it left here, is that correct?

SOL: They had it, yes, they had my dinner at the Muehlbach because the Muehlbach can only hold 600 maybe at the most. Now the downtown Muehlbach can hold much more, it can hold a 1000.

MT: So did the Alameda Plaza, as it was at that time, was the site and continued there until the present . . .

SOL: Uh, huh and I think people like it.

MT: Oh I think so too.

SOL: And the food is certainly good. I thought last year's was superb and this year's was good.

MT: Yes, it was very good.

SOL: So the important thing Margot, is Dr. Kramer's the one that said, "We will keep it as our main fundraiser."

MT: And he was right. Why change and it's continued to grow as you said all these years. I think this year must have been the largest group I've ever seen.

SOL: No, no, no.

MT: No?

SOL: We've had as many as between 650 and maybe close to 700.

MT: Really? How many were there this year?

SOL: This year, maybe 524-525.

MT: Oh, that just looked like a huge number of people in there.

SOL: But I thought this year the decorations were simple and they were nice and we didn't spend as much on them which I think was fabulous.

MT: Well, sure. It's a fundraiser, you don't want to spend the money on the decorations. I thought the decorations were quite nice.

SOL: I did to.

MT: I would agree. How long did you spend as president of the college.

SOL: How long?

MT: Uh huh.

SOL: 25 years.

MT: And what was your, what year was it when you . . .

SOL: 60

MT: Stepped down?

SOL: Oh, '85. They had this big dinner downtown, which was really nice.

MT: That was, you said, at the Muehlbach?

SOL: Uh huh.

MT: In the restored Muehlbach?

SOL: Uh huh.

MT: Great. What prompted your decision to resign?

SOL: What prompted? It was time! You know there's a time for everything, Margot. Twenty five years is a long time, but see what I had to do then was build. I'll always, as I said to Tom. I said, "Tom, what's important is whatever you build, you take care of." And I think it's harder for a man to see what a woman sees. Then I also think it's different when you are a Sister and living on the campus. So, you can't expect saying that Tom knows what he wants and Dr. Kramer does too. You just have to go up and down and right now, it's time for a campaign to restore things, sidewalks, and so forth.

MT: And that campaign is . . .

SOL: It'll have to start pretty soon. No, what prompted me is that there was, not that I thought that I was so effective, there were so many things that you, that are proper to an office. You can't tell me that you can do something in five years. It's, to me it's a minimum of 15 years or 20, 25, effective. If you're not effective, the president should be the first one who should know it. And there's a time to move on. I enjoy what I'm doing. I enjoy what I'm doing now as much as I enjoyed that job. Like people said, "You must have hated to give it up." I said to them, "No, I had my turn."

MT: Yeah.

SOL: You know that's so silly.

MT: Did it seem at some point though, that had been all you'd ever done in your life.

SOL: No, no.

MT: No?

SOL: Oh no. You've done a lot of things as a religious. You certainly have, Margot.

MT: Well, it was certainly a wonderful 25 years that the . . . did the change, over that period of time, I would imagine that the emphasis, the kind of day to day emphasis changed from as you said, building and trying to establish something to the point that you reach a point that the college was already fairly well established. It was kind of running on its own and you were able to change your focus from the building emphasis to something else. Is that too obscure?

SOL: No, because I really think, Margot, this is always, see now we handled really more students in the '70's than we do now. And at that time, we did not have computers. Sister Anna had a staff of about ten people and they would register over in the center and I hated to put into the computer. I waited as long as possible and then I knew I had to. Mr. Kemper called me from the bank and said, "I want to give you a computer." And I said, "Mr. Crosby Kemper, I don't have a one room on this campus that would house a computer that they had in those days. They had built this huge room and I remember going down to the Kemper's and looking through those windows and seeing that huge computer, \$3,000,000 and all that kind of bologna. And then I said, "No, Mr. Kemper, we don't have a space for that." And now our computer, you know the room, it's half the size of this. And they have it air conditioned and so forth. I won't say, we have not reached that enrollment of 2400 that we had in the '70's. And we didn't have all this staff. All of this was in my office. The publicity, they have won honors with that. Ron Bennett was here, Richard was here, people thought we had a huge staff. We didn't have any staff at all. In fact, all of these people weren't heading these offices. Remember Margie Beach?

MT: I don't remember her.

SOL: Margie, she was a good writer. Lou Sander, she was a good writer. Those people all contributed their talents that people thought we had a huge staff, but we didn't. We have a big staff now.

MT: And this was all before you had any computer systems, right?

SOL: Oh, we didn't have any.

MT: Yeah, it's all been done by hand and typewriters.

SOL: All by hand and typewriters. I didn't have a secretary, I had this.

MT: And this was hi-tech at that time, probably?

SOL: Uh huh.

MT: What do you think were the two or three most significant events that occurred for the college during your time as president? I'm asking you a lot.

SOL: You know, Margot, I did think that I had done somewhereOh! The most significant things that I had to do for the college, that was to get a set of By-laws that would assist the college to move ahead. Like I think our By-laws read, The Board of Trustees should be no less than 5 members. So that lets you elect 30-40, whatever you wanted. I wanted to get a good set of By-laws. My principal was always, "Don't do anything twice, try to do it right the first time. So that's why I had Mr. Gordon, Mr. Jensen and Mr. Blasco. I think if your father had lived long enough he was one, that was, who would send me something in the mail that I should be aware of. I was very appreciative and your papa was a very smart man. So, I wanted to have the articles of agreement and the By-laws, then the name change. I wanted the Foundation to be honest and then I wanted, I knew someday, we'd have to have men as students. So in those By-laws it didn't say just women. I think it says men and women. And also, that we would give not just the baccalaureate degree but when we had that by-laws that we give master's degrees. Although, at the time, we didn't give masters. And doctoral degrees, so that when we gave our doctoral degrees, it was in our by-laws that we were permitted to give doctoral degrees. I wanted that to be sure to be there. And then I wanted the Truman Lecture Series, I wanted, we would bring good people on campus. So, those were very significant.

MT: And is the Truman Lecture Series still ongoing, is that correct?

SOL: It's still ongoing and it's revived when we feel that there's a person strong enough. And I think Nancy Landon Kassebaum would be a tremendous speaker. And she's a good friend of ours.

MT: But it's not necessarily done every year?

SOL: No, not necessarily, no. When you have a person of significance, I think there are two points we've made there. It be a person who is significant at their particular time, lifetime and also speaks with authority, knows what they're talking about, like Colin Powell would be a tremendous person to have.

MT: Absolutely.

SOL: My most, also whatever we did on campus that we would do it correctly. Now our first four buildings won the distinguished architectural award for beauty and simplicity. That was with James, what was his name, James, James, Frederick James.

MT: Oh, Frederick James?

SOL: Frederick James is to Missouri what Mr. Hamil is to Kansas. And Frederick James was one of the judges. I was in my office on a Sunday working when I saw these four people walk across our campus and we had Marian

Centre at this building, we had the residence hall, so we must have the chapel, we must have had that convent, and then the academic building. We had four buildings, we didn't have four, we didn't have our convent, evidently because we slept in the third floor of the dormitory. It was O'Reilly Hall. I wanted the campus to be significant in the way it was laid out. And again, that's all part of this, whatever we do that you do well. And I do think like someone said, this building is very plain. But you can add some fillers to it and put the shrubbery that you would spruce it up. Right now while we don't have it, keep the grass cut, keep your sidewalks mended, the other stuff will come later.

MT: Yeah, exactly.

SOL: That's the way I feel. I don't know if that makes good sense or not.

MT: Well it does, and the name of the award that was given for the campus design was what again?

SOL: We have that up, it's, I have that written somewhere for you.

MT: It's a minor point.

SOL: No, it's not a minor point because it's beauty of design. Beauty and simplicity of design. That word simplicity intrigues me. I did write that down.

MT: Is there some type of a notification posted somewhere.

SOL: It is.

MT: Where is it? Do you remember where it is?

SOL: I can't tell you.

MT: I'm sure I'll find it as I look around.

SOL: But, I wrote it down somewhere for you. It's distinguished beauty of design, it's that.

MT: I'll find it as I go around looking at everything. Was there anything you wanted to accomplish for the college that did not happen during your time as president?

SOL: Oh, yes, endowment. Every university must have an endowment. And ours is the smallest, but we got started with nothing. Our biggest bequest was Margaret O'Reilly's \$200,000 and that purchased this property which was great! If we didn't have that \$200,000 I'm sure we couldn't have moved. This way it

happened to be \$200,000 and that's exactly what they charged for this land. What could be more evidence?

MT: And the Lord works in mysterious ways.

SOL: Yeah, He works in mysterious ways even though the developer pocketed that \$100,000.

MT: Yeah, that's true—another story but its still \$200,000 was what you needed and \$200,000 is what you had.

SOL: Uh huh.

MT: Is the endowment now . . .

SOL: 7 million.

MT: It's growing.

SOL: That's the biggest, now Tom's 11 million dollar campaign, 4 million of that is for endowment.

MT: Oh is it?

SOL: Oh yes. We need that. Rockhurst has about 37 million.

MT: Is that a reasonable goal, what Rockhurst has?

SOL: Oh, yes, oh yes. Ilus Davis told me when we were on a committee together, that he told Marvin VanAkron that he would not be on any board that didn't have at least an endowment of \$14,000,000. So he aimed to get Rockhurst \$14,000,000—they're up to \$37,000,000. So see they can do some things.

MT: Why did ? say that because he thought that such college wouldn't . . .

SOL: No, you can't operate because there is always fluxuation. You watched, my figures, I used to keep figures of the electricity and water and everything. I couldn't believe it when our budget was less than \$500,000. We were still clear about \$20,000-\$50,000 and I never saw books for two years on the old campus. Catherine Marie wouldn't should them to me. She told me that my business sense wouldn't fit, there still would be room in a thimble. I thought that was so funny.

MT: Well she, and the fact that you were the president didn't sway her in that decision then.

SOL: No, so then she wasn't nice to me anymore.

MT: Well, it doesn't sound like she was being nice to you then.

SOL: You would think that she would be nice to me.

MT: Well yes.

SOL: But she wasn't. You know what's amazing; I wanted the arts to be prominent at the college, too. And right now I feel so sad because the artist is pretty good and the drama is pretty good, but the music is not too great.

MT: That was one of your goals?

SOL: Oh yes, you must have fine theater and sensitivity. And we have had marvelous productions and we have students that have gone to Yale and Merritt, I can't remember what his name was, but he was Elephant Man. Can you imagine?

MT: Oh my goodness.

SOL: Yes, he performed in Texas—only thing is he died too young. You know how he died? He had a congenital heart problem that he didn't tell his mom and dad he had. When the theater was off on black night, which was Monday, I think, he went out to eat with the group. They had a storm and the lights went out and when they turned the lights on, there was Martin. He was Martin Merritt. He looked like Apollo, the god Apollo. That's how good he was. He was dead. He had heart failure. Theater is so important! Some of the pictures we have are just tremendous. See, I did not care for, did you see Something Funny Happened on the way to the Forum? See I don't like things that are loud and raucous and crude or uncouth.

MT: Yeah, I don't either.

SOL: To me, I see nothing charming in slapping your breasts and some of these other things. I thought, why teach that young stuff. Now I thought the other productions were fine. Arsenic and Old Lace, Dracula but what their musical was, I just didn't care for it.

MT: Okay, anything else about those things that did not happen while you were president, have we covered this pretty well you think, is there anything else you wanted to add to that?

SOL: Well endowment and the importance of the arts. The arts have not kept pace because we won a number of awards, high awards. We competed with St.

Louis University, Drake and our theater came out 1st Place. But you have to remember things change, there's focus at different times. I still think that the fine arts are an essential part of a campus.

MT: Especially a liberal arts college, I would assume. How do you think the University has changed over the years?

SOL: Well, it has the addition of men on campus, the fact that we had sports programs. But I'm also a firm believer that sports are essential. Especially to the young students, not as much to the older students. I do think the regular aged college student needs sports and I think sports have been an excellent addition.

MT: Very interesting. I hadn't thought about that. They need them.

SOL: They need to have this competition. They need to work as a team. Of course, my big love is Loot Olson of the Wildcats in Tucson. He is a model. He is a model coach and I think a good coach plays an important part in the life of a young man. You have to learn teamwork and you have to learn that you're not the star. You are the star if you make it easy for the members of the team to grow and to do their thing. That's what's important.

MT: I think that's all true. That is the essence of teamwork after all.

SOL: And Loot Olson never would permit one of his basketball players when out on the court to shoot his own balls. He had to play as a team and throw that ball where the young man was open to score.

MT: Do you follow basketball, Sister?

SOL: Oh yeah, I like it, I surely do.

MT: Do you? Is Loot Olson still coaching?

SOL: Oh yes and he just remarried and he married a young woman who has her father's company but she's the chief executive. It's an oil company in Pennsylvania.

MT: Well what better for someone from Oklahoma, right?

SOL: That's right. Tucson. And he is such a gentleman and he's a marvel of a coach for other coaches to show the tremendous influence that you have all those young men. And you see, also for the young women. They must learn teamwork.

MT: Now have you seen this happening here at Avila with the advent of the team?

SOL: I think so, I think so. Now once you have identified a good coach, you're just as jealous of that good coach staying with you as any good faculty member. We have tremendous faculty members who have stayed with us and have really made their discipline a top discipline in the community. Once our students go in Sociology to KU, the professors there are amazed at what our students get in the liberal arts curriculum, same thing with our nurses. That depends on the teachers and for sports it depends on the coach. Of course, we're just building some of our teams now. I like Tim Johnson. I think Tim is totally devoted to his discipline which is football. He wants those young men to really play with their hearts.

MT: Now the teams have been pretty successful, haven't they?

SOL: Oh yes. But then there are some that aren't. It's because you still haven't landed that special person. But they all are trying. I'm sure they're all trying. Now that we have a person who watches all of that, Mike Sharpe. I understand it's Michael's job.

MT: Is that the athletic director?

SOL: The athletic director. See you need a director that he can keep his eye on the various coaches.

MT: Yes, yeah I would certainly agree with that.

SOL: Sports are just as important as the arts. Good sports.

MT: I would not have said that, but I will certainly take your word for it. So this is why KU is so anxious to protect, although they did it unsuccessfully, Roy Williams?

SOL: Uh huh. You need to learn teamwork. I think sometimes, I know I have students come to the office with tears in their eyes that they didn't get an A. I felt so sorry for them. Did you do your best? Yes! Well if you did your best honey, that's all your parents can ask of you. That's all that anyone can ask of you. But I didn't get an A. So! Try harder then to get that A. But that shouldn't cause you to be that way. If you learn to do your best that's all you can do. I think I did my best.

MT: Well yes, I'm sure you did. You did more than many people would have done from what I can see. What about the colleges, the university's place in the community? Do you think it's changed over the years?

SOL: I think we're naturally, if you stay long enough people notice you. I do think you have to earn your place. You don't earn it by not working. I think you shouldn't be afraid just to be honest with the way things are. We are doing this,

we know this isn't quite up to par, but . . . If you don't see your failings other people will see them. That would be pitiful.

MT: Yeah, yeah.

SOL: To have other people tell you what's wrong with you.

MT: You talked about the impact of the male students, what do you think about the impact of the boarding students?

SOL: Oh, that's important. Yes. That's why I think that those dorms need to be changed. They need to be refurbished.

MT: Updated.

SOL: Yes. Even then, I think if campus is kept neat like it's supposed to be and the dorms also and you don't have to apologize for them. You see that's one thing, I was a very strict disciplinarian. Other people lived in that same dorm as you do. Therefore, you are not free to do this or do that. That was my thinking.

MT: Is that a hard message to get across?

SOL: It was a hard message because that's the way I wanted it, but it differs with whoever is in charge.

MT: But do the students understand that? Do they understand the idea that their actions have an impact on other people?

SOL: You know, Margot, there's a big difference when you have all women in the dorm and when you have men and women. When you have a dean of students that does not see eye to eye-but rather that this is their home. But I'm sure even if they were home the parents wouldn't let them put all kinds of things on the wall. This kind of thing. That needs a lot of discipline. As far as I was concerned, and see there's a big difference when you just have women. So I really can't say much. I just know this, that I would be very demanding and that's not my responsibility. Does that sound selfish?

MT: No.

SOL: Or mean of me? I just don't feel that that is the way I feel at the time I was president. Residence halls had furniture that was not to be moved. That would make it a headache for maids and the people in charge of that building. So why inflict something on them when you hired them to take care of the dorm and I tried to help them as much as I could. You see, that was during my era. It's different now.

MT: I would think that would be a hard thing to enforce. Because I expect there are a lot of college aged students now are accustomed to pretty much having things their own way in terms of their personal living space. And probably other areas too.

SOL: Yes, yes. I think though if I had to do it all over again and let's say I were in charge, I would still demand that there has to be cleanliness, there has to be certain things that you don't do in respect for the other person.

MT: Absolutely.

SOL: I think I would be very, very, I think I would be a tyrant. So it's good I'm not doing it.

MT: So it good you're not doing it. Well I do think you have to respect other people's needs and that may not be done all that much, but anyway . . . Let me move on to the next one. What impact do you think the changes in governances has had on the university?

SOL: When you say changes in governances, do you mean different people?

MT: Well, what I'm mainly thinking of is introducing lay people onto the Board.

SOL: Oh, that's fine. There are many capable lay people. That part is fine. I'm really very proud of our community. They have seen fit to have the layman be with us. No, no. It makes no difference to me who's teaching. Of course, you get used to that when you go to your graduate studies. I have mostly lay people from my teachers. All I want is a good professor who knows their stuff. Who knows their literature, who knows this, who knows that or their music, whatever it is.

MT: We've talked a little bit about what you've done since you resigned from the presidency, the work that you've done for the university. Maybe you could just summarize quickly what it is you do today.

SOL: This is sort of public relations which I always think that a president is public relations. You reach out to people, you make friends. That's all part of it. You don't do it in one or two years, people have to see that you're here to stay and you have to mean what you say. One thing I always said to be a person of integrity so you don't have to remember what you said twenty years ago. You can pick up the paper and say, "Yeah, that's exactly how I feel right now." I think that's extremely important now. What I'm doing now is PR then trying to raise money. I try to watch every way that I can. Now Phil is new with us, but Phil, I think is going to do very good. He has a good background; he's very good with people. I just called a benefactor of three years ago and I didn't go to see him last year or the year before but he's new in the community, his 6th year in the

community, but he's already made himself felt, so I spoke with his secretary. She said, "Now exactly what do you want, Sister?" I want to tell Bill I want to look at his eyes. I want to look into his eyes and say, "Please give me some money." She laughed and she said, "I will tell him that." I can't see him tomorrow, but we'll get together one of these days. The very fact that he would have seen me if I could have been there earlier, but I can't because I have an early morning meeting tomorrow.

MT: I just thought of one question that I think I skipped. That was the benefactors from the early period.

SOL: That was Margaret O'Reilly. Everybody has to remember that that was a remarkable thing for her to have done, to have left that \$200,000. It was the biggest amount of money that the Sisters had every received.

MT: Really?

SOL: And it could only be used for capital improvements. Then we had Judge Bunschu and he gave us \$10,000 and chairs and tables for the library for this place down there. Then I also had enough money that I got . . . another person that I put down here was Joe Zach Miller. That's Helena and Ardco's father. Helena still gives to the college. In fact, I hope to see her before too long. Kansas City Life has been benefactors from the very beginning.

MT: Really?

SOL: The Bixby's and Kansas City Southern, from the very beginning. Mr. Duranis, Clarkson, Bill Clarkson, Mary Clarkson, your family. I would say Ed and Mary Agnes Thornhill. They've always been very supportive. The Kemper's, Mr. Crosby Kemper gave me the first kiln when Margaret Rinehart said, "Oh we need a kiln and it just went out." So I asked him for a kiln and he said, "How much is it, Sister?" I said, "\$800." He sat right down and wrote me a check. But people said, "He'll never give you anything." You don't pay any attention.

MT: That's right.

SOL: People said, "Don't go to Mabee. Mabee's not going to give you any money." My fellow president said, "They don't give to a Catholic college." Mr. Moyer said to me, "How much do you want, Sister?" I said, "I would need at least \$500,000." "I'll see that you get that." We didn't have to write a proposal or anything. See those days have changed, Margot.

MT: Yeah.

SOL: Now you have to write and have a presentation of all of this, which is all right.

MT: Isn't it lucky that the timing worked out that you were able to go in and talk to those people personally and get those without having to go through all of this presentation stuff?

SOL: It would have been even better and oh, I had a Superior at the time that said, "No you're doing this and you're going out and asking for money?" That was not a favorable thing in the community. And many Sisters frowned on it, but now you know our order is doing it. They have an advancement office.

MT: Like mad.

SOL: Why do you say that?

MT: Well, because I keep getting letters from them.

SOL: Do you really?

MT: Yeah. Oh yeah, all the time. Now that makes me think of something else. When you made all these visits, you didn't take a companion with you, did you?

SOL: No.

MT: And that also was fairly new for the time, wasn't it?

SOL: Yes, but you know that started to change because many times when you go into an office, like President Ben's from William Jewell. Imagine with two Sisters.

MT: That would twice as bad.

SOL: Much of just one Sister, two Sisters on either side of him. Oh, I could just see him. You know he was like Scrooge. I laughed so hard, I thought he was so funny. But anyway, the point is, that many of these people today, many of the original Kansas Citians, their family is gone or they don't have a company anymore. Like the Reger. The Reger's had the Mercantile Bank.

MT: And also the Ranchmart Shopping Center?

SOL: I have no idea. All I know is that Mr. Reger, Nathan was a good friend. And then he was the first one I knew that sold a bank. I never knew you sold a bank. And then Mr. Abernathy was a good friend. And then Ross, David Ross, with, at that time it was Taylor Abernathy's Bank. David Ross is brilliant. I said to him, "Mr. Ross, you are the one person that I look at and I think, you are an enigma. And I said, "That word means a puzzle." I said, "You are a puzzle to me." He looked at me and said, "Why do you say that?" I said, "Because I'm

trying to read what you're thinking and I can't read one blessed thing looking at your face." He laughed, the thought that was so funny. He and I are good friends.

MT: I'm sure he considered that high praise.

SOL: I don't know, but David Ross has been a real friend. Taylor Abernathy, we still have those three stools over at our, in our lounge area. He said, "Could you use those, Sister?" I said, "Oh surely we can, Mr. Abernathy. Thank you, thank you." They're leather and we've had them 40 years. Imagine? They're wonderful people.

MT: Good leather, they'll hold up forever.

SOL: Wonderful people! But my heart is sad because we don't have those people anymore. Right now a lot of those people . . . Just like your father's business. Oh and I've seen there, James Kemper introduced me to Jamie, his son. Jamie introduced me to David, his son. Now Crosby Kemper, Sr. introduced me to Crosby Kemper who is senior now and then he introduced me to Chris who's president now at the bank. See how you, I've really lived through two generations, three generations and we're friends.

MT: That's the most important part, but of course, that's the successful part of fundraising, though. You get it. You don't get it from people who aren't.

SOL: But see, it's changed so much. I'm not one who believes what people say. "Oh it's a bad time." If I had listened to people on the old campus, it still would be a bad time.

MT: Yeah. It's always a bad time. There's no Christmas season that every lives up to the expectation of the merchant. So far I haven't heard of one.

SOL: You have hear of Question 15, was there anything that you wanted to accomplish for the college that did not happen as your time as president? Well during my time as president I kept the college debt free. Ongoing, keep debt free and keep the campus, whatever you have, to keep it clean and upbeat.

MT: Well I think that was a major accomplishment keeping it debt free at that time because there was no money.

SOL: Well, it was debt free. I hope it still is.

MT: I don't know either. I think that was a wonderful accomplishment on your part. Well is there anything else you wanted to mention that we haven't talked about so far?

SOL: No.