La Salle University
La Salle University Digital Commons

Spring 2015

Interview of Margaret McCoey, M.S.

Margaret M. McCoey
La Salle University, mccoey@lasalle.edu

Matthew Riffe
La Salle University, matt.riffe@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/histdeptohall

⚙ Part of the Educational Methods Commons, Higher Education Commons, Higher Education Administration Commons, Management Information Systems Commons, Mathematics Commons, Military History Commons, Online and Distance Education Commons, Oral History Commons, OS and Networks Commons, Programming Languages and Compilers Commons, Science and Mathematics Education Commons, Technology and Innovation Commons, United States History Commons, and the Women's History Commons

Recommended Citation

Interviewee: Margaret McCoey

Interviewer: Matthew Riffe

Interview dates: March 23, 2015, March 30, 2015, April 13, 2015

Interview location: Professor McCoey's office in Holyrod Hall at La Salle University

Field notes written on April 22, 2015 and corrected on April 29, 2015

<u>**The Interviewee**</u>:

Born in the Oxford Circle area of Philadelphia in December of 1957, Peggy

McCoey attended St. Martin of Tours grade school where she graduated in 1971. For

high school, Mrs. McCoey attended Little Flower High School where she graduated in

1975. After graduation, Peggy attended La Salle University where she received a

bachelor's degree in Computer Science in 1979. The next year, Peggy began teaching as

an adjunct professor at La Salle, a position she held until 1998. In 1984, she received her

Master's Degree in Computer Science from Villanova University.

Over a span of a thirty year career in technology, Peggy has worked

professionally for a software development company, defense contractor, and a consulting

firm. She has also been involved in development of operating systems, data management,

human resources, finance, procurement, and sales. Starting in 1999, she served as the

Director of Digital Arts and Multimedia Design program where she oversaw the

evolution of the Dart curriculum into a multidisciplinary offering of computer science,

English, art, and music. In 2005, Peggy moved from Director of Digital Art and

Multimedia Design to the Director of the Master of Science degree program, a position

she currently holds. Also, Peggy teaches courses for both the graduate and undergraduate

programs at La Salle in the Computer Science department.

Within the La Salle community, Mrs. McCoey has participated in the Faculty Senate for two terms. She was the chair of the Committee on Committees for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years. During those same years, Mrs. McCoey also co-chaired the Career Services Advisory Committee, which servers in an advisory role to inform the development of the career-related services at La Salle University.

Mrs. McCoey is married to her husband Ed, and has two children: John and Kathleen, both who are graduates of La Salle University.

The Interviewer:

I, Matthew Riffe, was born in Feburary of 1988 in Philadelphia, PA. I earned a bachelor's degree in history from Immaculata University, which located in Malvern, PA and run by Immaculate Heart of Mary nuns. In the summer of 2010, I began working full-time at the National Constitution Center, located in Philadelphia, PA. It is the only museum dedicated to the teaching the United States Constitution. I began attending La Salle University in the Spring of 2013 in pursuit of a master's degree in the field of history. In the summer of 2015, I will begin researching my thesis on James Wilson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and one of America's Founding Fathers.

Background:

In the spring of 2015, I began the Oral History course at La Salle University taught by Barbara Allen. For the final interview, the class had to select a member of the La Salle community or a United States war veteran. I initially thought of interviewing a

war veteran, who was volunteering at the Constitution Center. But he became weary of placing his record in the Library of Congress. It wasn't until the month of Feburary did I consider Peggy as an option. Luck would have it that my family would run into her and her husband at a local Italian restaurant we both frequent. A week after the chance meeting, I emailed Peggy and asked if she would be interested in being interviewed. She was enthusiastic from the start, and a great help in providing me her C.V., along with some background information regarding her professional career outside of La Salle. As I complied background information on my subject, I quickly realized that Peggy would be a great interview from having spent over thirty years in some capacity at La Salle University. I was very intrigued by her connection with the Digital Arts and Multimedia Design program that she helped develop in 1998.

After a series of emails that went back and forth, I sat down with Peggy in mid-March to talk about the overall goal of the project and the interview process. She was gracious enough to block out three Mondays on her schedule to conduct the interview. In the meantime, I began compiling a questionnaire based on the subjects I wanted to cover in the interview. I ended up sending my list of questions to my professor, Dr. Allen, who gave me some useful feedback.

<u>Description of the Interview:</u>

In a series of three interviews, Peggy and I spoke for just under a hour each time. Since it was my first professional interview, I specifically wanted to spread out the interview to multiple dates just in case Peggy spoke at length during one of our appointments. (That, however, was not the case.) Our first meeting was held on Monday

afternoon, March 23, 2015 in Peggy's office, which is located in Holyrod Hall. During the three interviews we were not disturbed. Peggy's office is quite large, and there was a spare circular table in the center of the room that we used. It was tidy, quiet, and in order. Thinking about it now, it's noticeable that Peggy's coursework is computer science—as usually program directors have papers and books everywhere. But other than a massive collection of books on a bookshelf, and a rather hefty looking personal computer on her desk, the office space was nice. The tone of the interviews were conversational and relaxed. It was quite helpful that Peggy and I knew each other, as I was not the least bit nervous in asking questions—rather most of the nerves came from knowing the interview was worth 40 percent of our grade for the semester.

The lengths of the interviews varied. The first interview, which focused on childhood and her undergraduate experience at La Salle lasted 37 minutes. The second interview, which focused on her professional career both at La Salle and outside of the school, lasted 53 minutes. Finally, our third interview, which focused on her interests, lasted about forty minutes. After our final interview, I thank Peggy profusely and told her I would let her know how I did. We often spoke of my impending trip to Ireland at the start of the summer.

Note on recording:

For recording, I used an Apple i-Pod Touch that had a Voice Memo application. I tested the device numerous times both in class during our practice interviews and at home. I was satisfied with the sound. In terms of organization, the device worked very nicely too. I had no problem putting it on my laptop and opening the file. For

transcription, I used Windows Media Player, which I found more suitable to use than

iTunes.

Editing the Transcript:

Since it is a partial transcript or log, I did not have to worry about too much editing.

1) I focused on keeping a chronological sketch of the interview by inserting timestamps at the change of a topic.
2) I used brackets to insert information regarding various people, places, or things that the average reader might not know.