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# Interview of Sidney J. MacLeod, Jr., M.F.A.

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## FIELD NOTES

**Interviewee:** Sidney James MacLeod, Jr.

**Interviewer:** Amy E. Brooks

**Interview Date:** March 15, 2013

**Interview Location:** LaSalle University, South Campus (Communication Center, room 214)

### **The Interviewee:**

Sidney MacLeod (often called Sid) was born on June 20, 1933 in Chicago, Illinois. He is the oldest of three children and the only boy. He attended Saint Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota and went to Catholic University in Washington, D.C. for graduate school. After graduate school he was drafted into the U.S. Army where he served two years on several domestic military bases. He began working at La Salle in 1959. In 1961 he married his wife, Mary Jane. They have four children (three sons and one daughter). He continues to work at La Salle full-time. When he retires he looks forward to travelling with his wife.

### **The Interviewer:**

I, Amy E. Brooks (b. 1975 in Philadelphia, PA), grew up in Philadelphia, PA, and earned a B.S. in Psychology from De Sales University (then Allentown College of St. Francis De Sales) in 1997. While I was a college student my parents moved to a suburb of Philadelphia, where they still live. My husband and I were married in 2006 and reside in the same suburban town, which is located approximately twenty-five minutes from Philadelphia. I have been a teacher for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia since 1997. Until 2001 I taught seventh and eighth grade math, science and religion. Since 2001 I have taught Social Studies classes at the high school level, including courses such as World History, American History, Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Criminal Justice.

### **Background:**

I became interested in interviewing my elders at a young age. As a child I asked my paternal grandfather many questions and listened to his stories with great interest. When I enrolled in LaSalle's M.A. in History program I learned about the Oral History class that I would be required to take and immediately thought of several people I would like to interview. When I finally, took the class in the Spring of 2013, La Salle was celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our instructor, Dr. Barbara Allen, informed my classmates and me that in honor of La Salle's 150<sup>th</sup> year, we were required to interview a member of the La Salle community. Dr. Allen gave us a list of possible narrators and on that list was Mr. Sidney J. MacLeod, Jr. Although I had never met Mr. MacLeod, I was interested in

interviewing him since he was a professor in the Communications Department and I personally have a lot of interest in the Communications field.

On Sunday, February 17, 2013 I emailed Mr. MacLeod. In the email I introduced myself as a history graduate student, explained the course and project assigned and informed him that Br. Joe Grabenstein and Dr. Barbara Allen, suggested him as a very important person on campus to interview. I asked Mr. MacLeod if he would be open to being interviewed and let him know that it will consist of a lot of questions about his life, with a special focus on the time he had spent at La Salle. I felt that he would want to know what the interview was about before he agreed to participate. He promptly emailed me back on February 20, 2013 and stated that he would be willing to participate and suggested I choose some dates and times so we could begin to schedule a time to conduct the interview. We continued to talk via email, and decided that we would conduct the interview on March 15, 2013 at 12:30 pm. Prior to the interview Mr. MacLeod sent me his C.V. and I read about him on LaSalle's website, in John Rossi's book Living the Dream, and through a search I performed through digital commons (found a report from the Faculty Senate at a time when Mr. MacLeod was on the committee).

On March 15, 2013 I called Mr. MacLeod around 12:20 to let him know I had to pick up the recording device in Olney Hall, and then I would drive over to the South Campus to conduct the interview as scheduled. I arrived around 12:40 and met Mr. MacLeod in room 214 of the Communications Center.

**Description of the Interview:**

The interview was scheduled for Friday, March 15, 2012 at 12:30 p.m. because Mr. MacLeod was conducting pre-registration meetings in the morning and would be available in the afternoon. This was also a convenient time for me, the interviewer because my sister, who attends Temple University, was on Spring Break and was able to babysit my son. I noticed that I was running late so I did call Mr. MacLeod to let him know I was on campus, apologize for running behind schedule, and let him know that I still had to pick up the recording device. I arrived about ten minutes late. When I finally arrived at Mr. MacLeod's office it was the first time I had met him in person. We shook hands and I introduced myself, apologizing again for my tardiness. Mr. MacLeod is seventy-nine years old and in fairly good health, however he recently battled cancer. Mr. MacLeod has a full head of white hair. He was wearing a red sweater, which was in support of a group of LaSalle students who had gotten lost, but were luckily found, on recent mission trip. We chatted briefly about the interview, and Mr. MacLeod seemed very enthusiastic about it. He informed me that he had interviewed his mother before she passed away, and he wanted to record our interview for himself and his family. He also stated that the chair of the department was interested in having a copy of the interview. I then explained that the interviews will be posted on LaSalle's digital commons. We also decided to film the interview since Mr. MacLeod had a video camera and tripod in his office. Before we began I asked Mr. MacLeod if he needed or wanted a drink of water. He responded that he had a drink, and pointed to his Coca-Cola on his desk. We began recording after checking to make sure all three recording devices were working.

A potential danger for me during the interview was not asking for clarifications at times when someone more familiar with La Salle's history and campus would have known to follow up and seek a better description. I tried to use the silent question and allow for digressions. I did reassure him before the interview that he did not have to answer any question that made him feel uncomfortable. There were times I think I should have not interrupted, asked for clarifications or asked follow up questions. I should have said "wow" less and did more active listening by nodding or shaking my head.

After the interview was over, I thanked him numerous times for being open and willing to participate

This was my second Oral History interview and the length of this interview was much longer than my first. I used the Paul Thompson questions as my guide. Mr. MacLeod was very talkative, open and relaxed even though it was the first time he had met me in person. Since Mr. MacLeod has such a wealth of information to share, especially regarding La Salle's Communication Department, I think a second interview would also be beneficial.

#### **Follow-up:**

On Monday, April 29, 2013 I emailed Mr. MacLeod to clarify a few things. Mr. MacLeod had said his parents were set up by a mutual friend they knew. He said they were a family who lived next door to his mother and owned a funeral home. I asked Mr. MacLeod if he knew the name of the family or the name of the funeral home. He responded back with these and other clarifications. I wrote the more detailed information in the log, but put that information in brackets to indicate that Mr. MacLeod did not say those specifics. I also wanted to verify the spelling of many names Mr. MacLeod mentioned and made sure the log had those names spelled correctly.

#### **Note on recording:**

For recording, I used an MP3 recorder provided to me by La Salle's technology department. Mr. MacLeod had a great interest in preserving a copy for his family, so he had a recording device ready. Before we began recording we discussed the possibility of having it videotaped with the equipment he had in his office. We decided to video tape the interview in addition to audio recording it. Mr. MacLeod had made a copy of the video on DVD. I let Mr. MacLeod know that Brother Joe Grabenstein would probably be interested in obtaining a copy of the video. After the interview I asked my husband to transfer the interview on a flash drive so that I could hand it in to my professor. Then I played the entire interview again at normal speed in order to write the required abstract and log. I stopped it and replayed it many times in order to be as accurate as possible.