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(Track 1 begins)

LF

We're here today with Jane J. Seeley ...

JS

Call me Jennie.

LF

... who we call Jennie who is our former, acting director of the library at Naugatuck Valley. Jennie, let's start with a few questions about your own history, what brought you to Naugatuck Valley Community College. I know it wasn't called that then but if you could just tell us a little bit about your background

JS

O.K. I started back in October of 1969 as a library assistant. I had been going to the UConn branch in Waterbury and some family issues came up and I needed to drop out of classes for a while. At the Silas Bronson I noticed there was a notice on their bulletin board for a library assistant. I'd never had any formal experience in the field. I just would love to go into libraries and spend a lot of time there, and I thought, "Well, let me try this." I did. I passed the test. My first interview was with Patrick DeAngelis at Kennedy High School and this was obviously called Mattatuck Community College at the time. And he hired me. It was a good interview. He was trying to put together a library staff at that point, he only had a secretary at that time. The college would hold their session after the high school let out. This would be from 2 till probably 9, 10 at night. The college library was sharing the collection of the high school library. We had a section of shelves that were devoted to college material. It really wasn't a heck of a lot. You're talking eight to ten shelving units. We had mainly some reference material, things of that nature; and of course this was before computers, before online stuff.

LF

What year was this?

JS

This was back in 1969. So we would go into the library once the high school let out, and that would be our library. We would switch over the circulation material. We would hold library instruction in that room; we'd use the copy machine ... so basically sharing. But we really had a small collection. And of course the faculty was small because the college was really just starting at that time being put together. Pat hired a second staff member. Well actually, let me back up. He did have a staff member, Mary Watts. She was there as a part-time library assistant. And suddenly I showed up. She said, "Who are you?" and I said, "Oh, I work here!" and that was our introduction. Our former boss sort of didn't let us know what was going on. Shortly after that he hired Rosalie Levinson as assistant director. Pat handled all of the administrative and Rosalie was basically working as reference and getting, trying to get a collection together and so on. So that was pretty exciting.

LF

How many classes were in session during those years?

JS

I honestly couldn't tell you because the college was so split up. Administrative offices were downtown I think it was in the Chase Building, across the street from City Hall. We had a business office, accounting, and so on. We had some classes at the high school. Harvester Road campus later on had nursing classes. So we were sort of all over the place and being a library assistant at that time I paid absolutely no attention to how many classes. I just basically tried to learn my job and contribute to the library.

LF

But you'd say far fewer classes than obviously are held today?

JS

Oh yes, yes, way way fewer. And the faculty as I said was a handful of professors and instructors, and many of them taught high school and would work in the evenings.

LF

On the same campus? In the same building?

JS

Probably, in some cases.

LF

You were still in high school at this time?

JS

No, I was actually in my second year ...

(Track 1 ends)

(Track 2 begins)

JS

... at the UConn Waterbury branch.

LF

Were any of the people who were teaching at that time still teaching at the end of your career here?

JS

I know Jerry Pagano. Dennis Rich was one of the early ones, I don't recall if he was back at Kennedy High School. Paul Gurn I met at Kennedy High School, but he's since retired. Jim Crowley. Joe Cistulli was an English teacher but of course he's retired. But of those who are still teaching I can only confidently say Jerry Pagano, and Jim Crowley. Those are the ones that are still here.

LF

How long was the campus at Kennedy High School?

JS

I knew you were going to ask that!

LF

When was the next move?

JS

That's where looking through all my paperwork I didn't have the specific dates but we can go back and look at the yearbooks and college papers for the exact dates. There were several moves. From Kennedy High School we moved to the portable buildings, some are still here, on the present campus. The library was in one of the buildings that housed the culinary program, so that was the library. From that point on - we were there for several years - those were happy times, they really were. We didn't have a restroom in there, so it was quite a hassle, especially in the winter. When you needed to use the restroom you needed to get your shoes on, your boots on, your coat on, and go off to where the graphic arts area is because that was the nearest restroom. It was a small library, obviously, and then it was built - sort of partitioned - into offices. At that point I was still a library assistant. I handled InterLibrary Loans, working in Technical Services. Because we were small we did all sorts of things.

From that move, we moved to Kinney Hall. And again, we were there for a number of years. Now, let's see, I'm talking, from when I started in sixty-nine ...

When we moved. Let me just back track just a little bit. When we were at Kennedy High School there were plans, all kinds of meetings that of course I was not privvy to, but I was aware of, for building a higher education complex which would include a UConn Branch, Waterbury State Tech, and Mattatuck Community College at one time. Our director was involved with the meetings and other various higher-ups on campus, Dean Iorli and of the course the president, Dr. Kinney, and so many others in just planning and

working with architects and so on. It was going to be quite a long process; therefore we had a series of temporary moves. As I mentioned the first temporary move was to the portable buildings on campus.

Waterbury State Tech, which was across the parking lot, was still Waterbury State Tech and we did not share any facilities with them. With these meetings the director of Waterbury State Tech's library, Helen Hahlo, was involved with the meetings; Burt Cesare, the director the UConn Branch library and I believe his assistant, Janet Swift was also involved with meetings regarding this. But it was basically Burt Cesare at the time and as the time got closer then the assistants became involved much more.

As I mentioned we really enjoyed the temporary buildings because of the camaraderie of the various people. Where the student center was is where the dining hall that is used for the program, the restaurant that is on campus now.

(Track 2 ends)

(Track 3 begins)

JS

We had the custodial staff in there, and I remember Dick Walsh, one of the custodial staff, he'd always have pots of food going and you'd pop in for lunch. He had stalk pickles on campus. It was more of a relaxed, casual atmosphere than of course what we have now; we were a lot smaller and we were able to do that get our job done and all kind of work together. When we were at the campus at the portable buildings the library staff started increasing too. A reference librarian was hired at the time, Chris Martulla. He stayed just a few years.

Do you have any questions about the campus there?

LF

Were the temporary buildings more numerous then than they have been in the last few years? I know at this point we're tearing them down and getting ready to build our new building, but it seems so hard to squeeze all what goes on on a college campus into those, what are there, 4 or 5 temporary buildings?

JS

Well they weren't because remember we still had the Harvester Road campus and we still had various offices in other parts; not everything was here.

LF

All the classes took place in temporary buildings?

JS

Not all the classes because some classes took place off-campus. I'm quite certain that there probably were still classes at Waterbury State Tech but again it was, sort of, you're kind of immersed in what you were doing at the time.

LF

So what we now know as the building that includes Kinney, Ekstrom, and the library buildings that are all attached in one large building structure: that was all woods? It was a field? Was there anything going on there?

JS

Those were woods.

LF

Woods. So it was undeveloped

JS

Yes. That was the area they selected, and they started building right over there.

LF

How was that, to work through the process, the building process.

JS

Wow. Working through the building process. Kinney Hall was the first place to be built. Again, as library assistant, other than being involved with meetings with the director, Pat DeAngelis, and Rosalie his assistant director, I wasn't involved with working with the architectural staff or anything like that. We'd look at plans and so on. But as far as with the building going on, it didn't affect us all that much because we were still where we were. The biggest thing was planning moves galore; you know how bad it is moving your own home, so you can imagine, as small as we were moving the library collection from the high school. Well of course we had professional movers, but we packed, unpacked; did a lot of that. Moving them to temporary building, and then by then of course our collection increased. I remember the Junior College Opening Day Collection that we had, it was kind of ready-made, and getting those was such a big process, getting those cataloged, and not having online materials. It was pretty laborious. Rosalie and I would often go to the University of Hartford to look through their Library Classification books because we couldn't afford our own; with titles and authors and publishers and dates we had so we could get cataloging material there.

LF

This was of course back in the days of the card catalog where you have to type everything up on a card.

JS

Yes.

LF

Subject headings and all that.

JS

I did a lot of typing and then I remember, this is when we were at Kinney Hall too, we got this little automatic stencil card maker and we would type the stencils for library cards on these big long sheets and then we'd run them off. we purchased a lot of cards of course from the Library of Congress, but there were some of those you just couldn't find, home-grown books, and things you needed to get done, so we ended up doing that.

LF

What was the main area of collecting in those days? Did you try to support the curriculum or did you just try to ...

(Track 3 ends)

(Track 4 begins)

LF

... provide basic reference materials and a broad array of nonfiction materials, or how...? Could you talk about that a little?

JS

We had a basic reference collection of all the main sets, the encyclopedia of religion, philosophy, a couple of encyclopedia sets. Hitting all of the main subject disciplines. Of course we purchased trying to work with our curriculum. Of course it was a lot smaller than what we have now. We would read reviews, get faculty input. Pretty much what is done now but of course, again, I keep throwing in the online stuff. You guys now have a lot of help with, you know, all the Baker and Taylor tools, everything that you've got at your disposal. Before you'd sit there and read *Library Journal* and read through and make your selections that way. We did have the print tools like I mentioned, the opening day collection, recommendations that were there. You really, because you didn't have a lot of time, you relied a lot on recommendations and of course budget too.

LF

Now our collection is upwards of 50,000 items. Would you say that back in the day when you moved to say Kinney Hall, were you taking a thousand items? Fifteen, ten thousand? About how much, so we can get a visual idea.

JS

Hmm. Yikes. It certainly wasn't 50,000. When we moved to Kinney Hall, our collection spread out from what we had. We had a lot of books that we had to box when we were in the portable buildings, because we didn't have the space for them.

We'd get a lot of donations. We would go to libraries that - colleges that were closing for example, and purchase some of those books and that was a lot of fun. We would go to publishers and we would be able to go through, I wouldn't say warehouse, but where the

company is, and would be able to go through their stacks and just say, “We’ll take this, this and the other thing.” So it was kind of book shopping. In a sense what we sometimes do now with Barnes & Noble. I’d say maybe 20,000 or so.

LF

Which was probably adequate back then. I have a question, Jennie. Kinney Hall - - when it was first built - - was it built with a connection to connect it to the S building and the L building or was it built as a free-standing building?

JS

It was built as a free-standing building at the time.

LF

They had plans down the road to connect it?

JS

Yeah. I imagine they did. When we got into Kinney Hall, the library had - - was it the fifth floor? As you know, the way the floors are numbered in Kinney Hall, you come in from one direction they don’t make sense.

LF

Yeah, you come in from the fourth floor, I think?

JS

I think we had the fifth floor. So at one end we had the main reference area and then across the hall we had periodicals. And then you walked down the hall and then another room was offices. Then our collection was five classrooms down. One by one by one. We’d have signs all over the place. The director’s office was at the end of the hall on the right hand side.

We had audio-visual; the counseling center which became part of the SLRC, Student Learning Resource Center, at that time. Pat DeAngelis, the library director then, became the director of that. That was after Dean Cistulli had seen a model working at one of the colleges that he was attending I think for accreditation. He brought back the idea of combining those areas because you’re dealing with students and learning and so on. So basically they were where they are now in Kinney Hall.

The classrooms’ doors were locked because we could not have them freestanding with people just going in and taking whatever they wanted. So we would try to have student workers who would go with the student, help them find what they were looking for and come back. So talk about a closed ...

(Track 4 ends)

(Track 5 begins)

JS

... collection. It really was not a browsing collection. At one point we tried having a desk in the hallway and having the doors open. Again, all of this depended on staffing and it turned out to be a nightmare in a sense because we were located by the cafeteria. So you can imagine the noise level.

LF

There was a cafeteria in Kinney Hall?

JS

Yeah.

LF

What is that space now?

JS

Oh, gosh, I would have to go back and... you know where the, is it the Career Center? Up in through that area you've got the Career Center. When they made the walkway things changed a bit. But we had the cafeteria down further at that end. So you'd have...

LF

Not too many people can remember back that far.

JS

I'm hoping I'm remembering it correctly! But I remember the noise level with the elevators there. The person at the desk, and often times it was me, you'd try to sit there and look approachable and try to do some work. We'd have signs, "Please be quiet. You are entering the library area" posted in that whole corridor.

That was one of the ways that we just tried to accommodate the people and it was difficult. I think of all of the places that we were, that was the most difficult way to have a library.

LF

It seems like it would have been... when a lot of things were coming together people needing books because they didn't have online sources.

JS

At that point, when we got into Kinney Hall, we started getting online sources; our first one was *Newsbank*. But it was not *online* online, they were CD sources, so I should rephrase that.

LF

But people needing to use the library for a lot of what their extra background materials whereas now they could go find something in a database from their home, or find an

online book. So there must have been a lot of activity around the library at the time and yet you probably were much more condensed, and unnerved by noise and activity.

JS

Plus, you know how it is doing library classes now, imagine doing library classes in one room and sometimes we'd even be asked to go to a classroom and do library instruction, and you'd go with your traveling cart and say, "This is *Readers' Guide*..." and you'd go through and explain what it is and try to let them know what they're going to find when they get to the library. "Because of the arrangement, the doors are locked; you need to go through the card catalog, and staff will go with you," and oh, it was difficult. Space-wise you had very little room for periodicals. It was a small, small area. Of course we didn't have as many periodicals as you do now, but we had a collection of microfilm so we had several microfilm readers. The back issues of periodicals were kept in one of the offices so that we would have to go in and get back issues. Reserve materials were used a lot. Again, because of not having online.

LF

So then there was a big move. After all the building and the planning first, and then the building and there was the big move to our current location.

JS

I remember a lot of planning. My boss, Pat, gave Marsha Konofski who was part of the counseling center and me the task of selecting library furniture. Not being library decorators, and of course we were working with other people, but they were trying to color code various rooms. But we poured through catalogs. We ended up buying things that we didn't need. For example, like the map case. At that point we did have maps, but it's not something that we really use right now. There were other, like, film cases and things too, that we needed at the time but technologies change so quickly that we found that we really didn't need a lot of those things. I remember going into the new building where the library's located now, just looking at the architectural drawings it's kind of one thing but then when you're into the building ...

(Track 5 ends)

(Track 6 begins)

JS

you're saying, "Hmm. What are all of these heating vents doing here? That's where on our plans we were putting our book collection, our reference books." The building was not designed properly. We went through all of the, after all of the staff was able to walk through the building, they invited us to make a list of everything that was a problem, that wasn't working. Even prior to looking at the architectural plans, thinking that's not going to work, that's not going to work. Again, my input was minimal compared to say, Rosalie's and Pat's of course and that of the higher-ups. So many things just didn't work. For example, where we've got the circulation desk, those little spaces behind were supposed to be offices. They didn't come out far enough. Then the staircases where the

offices are located, we had no clue what that was supposed to be, with the little balconies. No elevator, as you know. Having the stacks closed the way they are, that was also a problem.

We were one of the first community colleges that had a new library so we were sort of a show place at that time for all the other community colleges that were starting to build. There was a lot of input from Janet Swift who was assistant director at the UConn. John Kiernan became involved; Helen Hahlo had passed away, so he also became involved with the planning; they were on the Director and Assistant Director level. I mentioned that working with selecting furniture and all sorts of things of that nature.

That was all on top of doing your daily library grind of reference. I was reference, interlibrary loan (laughs), circulation ... Mary Watts was still working at the time. She was always part-time. When we were at Kinney Hall and in the temporary buildings I believe she became full-time. Dennis O'Connor came to the library when we were at Kinney Hall too. He started as a volunteer back then. But staff-wise, we were always a very small staff.

LF

And that was the time too when the merger was taking effect, or starting to be planned.

JS

Yup, lots of talk was going about the merger. The technical college students resented moving in with the community college because thinking that watered down their education because they were a technical school and their emphasis was on technology. We were more of a liberal arts school, so it was bringing those two together that was difficult. Lots and lots of meetings.

LF

Did you ever try to separate out, in terms of the library collection, the two schools or when you moved into the current building did everything get mixed in together?

JS

No. We worked with John Kiernan. Edie Reynolds who was on the A-V staff. Also worked in trying to cull the collection of Waterbury State Tech's. It was an older collection. A lot of materials was there that wasn't discarded. There were a *lot* of *Readers' Digest* books and things of that nature. Our director Pat sort of said, "Okay." He gave a cut-off date. Which I don't remember at that time. But anything that's older than this date, put blue dots on those, so there was a system.

LF

We still have some of those blue dot books! (mutual laughter)

JS

You do! So working with that, so no, we did not take everything, we did not take their entire collection. We merged what we could. Of course there was a lot of new material that needed to be purchased too.

LF

The reason I ask that, is because, and it still is evident that there was a Helen Hahlo section of the library, and a Max R. Traurig section of the library; their pictures are there. Or a dedication.

JS

Roy D'Arcy.

LF

Roy D'Arcy. Can you talk a little bit about those people and why they are honored in that way in our library still?

JS

That was to remind that we were two separate institutions and we merged into one. Helen Hahlo was the director of Waterbury ...

(Track 6 ends)

(Track 7 begins)

JS

... State Tech library and Roy D'Arcy was a beloved English professor and actually he was at Mattatuck. He started at Kennedy High School. He was killed in an auto accident. The merger was at that place, at that time, sort of in the forefront. It went to a vote and we decided to name it the Roy T. D'Arcy Memorial Library.

LF

But the overriding name was Max R. Traurig when you all convened at the current location?

JS

Yes. I'm trying to think and I hope my memory serves me correctly. When we were at ... let's see Roy was alive when we were at the portables. When we were at Kinney Hall ... I don't remember when he died. I'm trying to remember if we were called the Roy T. D'Arcy Library when we were at Kinney. I believe we were.

So in our case, that carried over. The Max R. Traurig Library is the name of the entire library. We were given a nice healthy sum by the family, and one of the stipulations was that it would carry his name, and it did. I imagine there's still money that the library can draw from that.

LF

So the library began to grow in leaps and bounds into the space we're in now?

JS

Yes. We moved into the new space in May of 1990. Summer of 1990. The summer semester was the first semester here. As you can imagine, there was just so much to get done. And shelves to fill. Because there were so many shelves and so few books we ended up taking out the top shelf and the bottom shelf to stretch things out. There were some kooky ideas because we were supposed to accommodate the library of UConn; as you know, they did not move, and also Waterbury State Tech; they moved. Before the decision was made that the UConn branch's library was not moving here the director, who is now Janet Swift because Burt Caesar had died. The plans were to have the factions - - I shouldn't say the factions - - the various service points of the library with various people. So circulation was to have been Burt Caesar; he was to have been Associate Director of Circulation. Janet Swift in Reference. John Kiernan ended up, he was to be partly in Reference, but he ended up in Serials. Rosalie was the Technical Services. Pat was going to be the director the library. They had talked about sort of having a rotating directorship but I'm not sure where that went because things just went in a different direction.

LF

At that time were you still getting your Bachelor's Degree, or had you gotten your Master's Degree yet?

JS

Let's see. This time I did write down some dates.

(Track 7 ends)

(Track 8 begins)

LF

O.K. There we go.

JS

Liz, you asked about at what point I had gone back to school and gotten my Master's and so on. As I mentioned earlier, when I came to the college in 1969 I only had a couple of semesters, actually 2 years of work at the UConn branch under my belt and I had quit school. When I started working at the college, the director said, "You really should go back and get your Bachelor's," which I did. From start to finish, back in 1969, it took close to 15 years because I was just taking one course a semester, and stopping and starting.

Now back in '78 I had my Bachelor's but I didn't have - - well, I was close to getting my Bachelor's but I was not near my Master's. But the administration had a lot of faith in me, and they went to the state and to the union and even to the other community college librarians, and I remember this big discussion on this and I felt like I was being picked apart, but it was decided that because of my commitment to the college and service to the

students that in '78 I would be taken from classified staff and made an unclassified EA which put me on a higher level. I wasn't considered a full librarian at that time but pretty darn close, which made me feel pretty good to tell you the truth.

LF

It was well-deserved.

JS

But the stipulation was that I needed to finish my college education; I had a year in which to do so. So I did that. From there on it was, "Oh my God I've been going to school forever." I talked to my boss, Pat, and I said, "Do I really need to go for my Master's? I'll be thirty years old by the time I finish." Right now (laughing) I can wish I were thirty but it seemed forever when you're in your twenties. And he said, "And how old will you be if you *don't* go for your Master's?" I always remember that. It was the same thing, plugging away, of course, here and there. It took me five years to get my Master's.

LF

Driving down to New Haven?

JS

Driving down to Southern, to New Haven in evenings ...

LF

After having a full day here.

JS

After having a full day here. And Saturdays, and coming home at 10, 11 o'clock at night. I was officially a Librarian I starting in 1981. Then progressed. I didn't put in for promotion; it seemed like such a hassle, so I kind of stayed where I was. Then I did go for promotion in '84, so I was a Librarian II back in '84. Then kind of progressed.

LF

At that time, were there any programs for Library Master's degree in any other area except at Southern? I know back then, I think, there were some programs at a few other schools...?

JS

Columbia ...

LF

But not in Connecticut?

JS

Not in Connecticut. There wasn't the online option or anything like that. It was basically getting in the car and driving down there.

LF

Did you feel like you were at an advantage since you were working a library and you were able to apply those library - - skills of course you already had - - but the theory?

JS

Yeah, it made you concentrate more, however, on the areas you were working in. So at that point I was in Reference and that was my main interest, so the Cataloging courses at three o'clock in the afternoon, or four or five, you'd start kind of dozing off a little bit. I hate to say it but it wasn't what you were basically doing. With the Reference, I really loved Reference. I had also taken ...

(Track 8 ends)

(Track 9 begins)

JS

... taken courses back at Northwestern Community College too when I was at Kennedy High School. This brings me back, with Marie Yanarelli, I think it was. She was pretty formidable in her field. But they had a lot of Library Assistant courses there because they had a Library Assistant program. I worked through that and got through that. Again, I liked Reference, I concentrated in Reference although at that point I was doing other things too.

LF

In those years right up to and around when the library moved into its current home, did it seem like the library was an integral part of the whole campus, the activities on campus? Did it seem like, sometimes nowadays I feel like we're off in this corner, we don't interact as much as we could if we had more time with the rest of the campus.

JS

Ah, yes and no. At Kennedy High School very definitely because that was a drawing spot. Our boss was a pretty dynamic boss. We always had faculty coming through, talking, sharing a cup of coffee. Classes coming in. At that time to, the student body was pretty active. Teach-ins, protests, all sorts of activities going on. They took over the library at one point (laughter). It was weird.

LF

Were you a hostage?

JS

No, we just laughed. They took over our director's office; stuff like that. I remember bomb scares where you had to leave the building and you really had no place to go. When we moved to the portable buildings, that was hard because, here we are a separate building where, again, where you are now you can come from the cafeteria, you can walk

down to the library, you can come from various buildings without putting your hat, coat, boots on and all this kind of stuff. If you want to get a cup of coffee you just walk out and get one. So, that was difficult. But still, we had a lot of faculty coming in because when they were teaching in that area it was a good drawing spot. You'd always walk into our director's office and there would be faculty sitting there talking about politics and quite different from what it was now. There would often be students there sharing the discussion, everyone was kind of welcome, it was much more casual. A little different atmosphere.

LF

Interactive.

JS

Yeah. The problem, again, with the library here where even though it's a new building, you're still sort of removed from where all the activity is. Such as when we were in the portables you were kind of removed but because we were smaller, fewer places to go. Now you're a large campus, there are so many places to go, the library is not the only place to a get on the computer or things of that nature. With the design, that was one of the big problems that we discussed was, why is the library entrance here, all the way, with an iron gate? It really should be over in the walkway area. Problem was, the way it was designed with the doorway, and the floor would not handle the book collection. At one point we thought of putting the reference collection up there and having that sort of a main entrance. But we were told, "No, you can't do that ." If the library were in the walk way area, and again, part of it is with the electronic classroom, still, unless that room is staffed it's not an open, welcoming area. The new libraries have now take that into design: you walk in and everything is wide open. I think this college is probably due for a new library.

LF

Well maybe in the next generation. Let's get back to you now. I was wondering if you could talk a little but about some of the challenges in your time here, you already mentioned a few, and some of the high points of your career here.

JS

Working here has been a high point of my life because again, I've been employed here for well over 33 years. While I was here, not only did I grow, but the college grew. Even though I've worked here for over 33 years, every ...

(Track 9 ends)

(Track 10 begins)

JS

... few years we'd be planning a move, we'd be going into another building. The focus of education would change. The focus of libraries would change. So it was exciting being in that type of an atmosphere. Moving, just not only a physical change of place but also

mental, technological, theoretical. It was great. We always, the challenge was keeping up. I had gone, I had taken a couple of courses in, again, this was way back. When I got my masters back in the '80s computers were just coming out and when I graduated they came out with a class Microcomputers in Libraries, so I went back to take that. But that's peanuts compared to how things were racing ahead. So in addition to working we would go to workshops, meetings, talks galore, just to get us up to speed.

One of the high points was going online with Bibliomation. Rosalie took a sabbatical back, let's see, I think I jotted it down, when we started going into, in 1983. When automation was coming into the forefront. So, she took a sabbatical and looked at how Bibliomation was working, which system we should go with. At that point I sort of became an acting assistant director. So that was kind of exciting. Here I was a dopey little library assistant who sort of moved up and suddenly the assistant director's gone and I had to start carrying that. My boss found a way to get me a few extra hours a week so that I would be able to also do some work here and some at home, and not try to get everything done within the 35 hours. So that was exciting, kind of looking at the administrative end a little bit more.

I had mentioned buying furniture and getting involved in something that was totally foreign to me. I kept telling Pat, "I'm not an interior decorator!" (laughter)

So Marcia Kenofsky and I, oh we'd have all these little pads, and draw up the way furniture should be, and looking through catalogs, and meeting with sales people galore, and we went through that. Oh, gosh, so many things.

LF

I think you did a wonderful job.

JS

Just so many things though.

LF

Your interior decorating, what we inherited anyway, and what we work with, you did a great job.

JS

Well some of it's still working. The good thing is we were able to use nice quality furniture. Those tables are going to last a long time. (laughs)

One of the high points too was the people here. Meeting all of the various people and seeing them also go up through the ranks. I mentioned Joe Cistulli, English. He was such a wonderful dean. The other deans that we had. This is kind of a little side line. We had a dean of students, way back when we were in - - I think it was in Kennedy High School. Remember the professional staff meetings that we have? We would have them off campus. We would have them in like the Preston Hill Inn at one point, and various other places. We were even invited to Dean Schuster's house at one time, not for a staff

meeting but for a lunch. Rosalie and I, and so on. I remember at that lunch he brought up to Rosalie that he did not think the library director's secretary should be wearing jeans to work (laughing) or pants for that matter (laughing)... so ...! Just to show you the way things have changed.

LF

Were the students, just in their attitudes and their habits, very different in the late 1960s when you started, than they are, than what you remember when you were about to retire, just in terms of their commitment to education or would you say it's about the same, just a different...social setting?

JS

I'd say back then probably more of a commitment. We were an evening college. Most of the people were looking to upgrade their positions. A lot of them were working parents, which of course you still have now. You didn't have, you didn't, it doesn't seem to me ...

(Track 10 ends)

(Track 11 begins)

JS

... that we had as many of the young students coming right directly out of high school, that you have now, back in the '60s. We had a few but it was mostly people looking to upgrade and go forward. I found them intimidating because I was young at that time! As I grew steadily older they ceased intimidating me after a while because you're older. It was hard telling people, "Quiet down please," type of a thing. As the college got bigger, the marketing took hold and it became a really great place for students to come right out of high school, to start their college career at a community college. So you find in the fall you get quite a lot more students coming in from high school. And still being - - a community college is great in the sense that it tries to meet the needs of so many people. Whether you're out of high school, you don't know what the heck you want to do, you can start there.

Back then we also had the nursing program which was wonderful and that's grown by leaps and bounds. And going into the other various medical fields.

Now, students I think, I think when we were back in the '90s and 2000s now, with the technology changing, you've got all that to deal with, where we didn't, with the cell phones and, doing inappropriate things on the computer whereas before, we didn't have that plagiarism type of a thing, where you've got that now. I think that, and I don't want to generalize, but I think that back then, even maybe going back ten years, I think students were a little more serious in their pursuit.

LF

Couple questions we get frequently that I think you'd be best to answer: In the Reference area, there's a series of black and white photographs on top of the bookshelves. Can you talk a little bit about what those are?

JS

Those photographs were taken when we were in Kinney Hall. It was the Heroic Individual program. From what I remember, I don't know if it was a grant or what but a company or organization had selected various colleges, and visited them, and wanted to take photographs of the representative students, faculty ... a lot more were taken than what we have there and then some, I think when you go into like the President's office and some of the other offices you will see sketches of some of those students. There was that portion of it too. I honestly don't remember the purpose of it other than to show to society that the face of the college student, the community college student, is young, old, black, white; various ages, pursuits, well-dressed, dressed in jeans, baggy clothes, whatever.

LF

The other question is, people ask about the plants. I know that that was that something you took great care and trying to attend to so could you talk a little bit about the plants around the library, especially the larger of them.

JS

When we moved into the library it was so stark, especially with the balcony offices with the white walls and everything. I loved plants. At one time I had over two hundred houseplants in an apartment that I was living in. I loved houseplants, I even knew some of the Latin names of them. I decided, why don't we put some hanging plants and have the vines trail down the walls, and it worked out pretty well ...

(Track 11 ends)

(Track 12 begins)

JS

...cause you had the contrast. We selected basically the philodendron or pothos, the variegated philodendron-type plant, to put on top of the balcony walls. You had some sky light and those did pretty well for the most part because they didn't require much sun.

Then started getting a few larger plants. Some were from my house that outgrew my house that I brought in, like the crown of thorns that you see, which I haven't seen yet; I hope it's in halfway decent shape.

LF

It's still there, in L501. And all the other little ones are all babies of that one that you brought in?

JS

Pretty much, pretty much. I had a large Christmas tree cactus which I also brought in; the large plant that's out in the hallway, that also - - I think that was given to us at one point - - we also had a large palm tree too which sometimes I would take home for the summer just to rejuvenate. The plants looked great but the problem was repotting them, trying to keep them rejuvenated, cutting back.

I did most of it. Dennis, I enlisted his help, and then you started helping too, and some student workers would help me during the summer to repot them; we'd do it up in 501. Talk about a thorny problem. (laughs)

LF

Are there any other things you want to mention about your time here?

JS

I just want to say that I enjoyed it very, very much. I made some lifelong friends here. Becoming the acting director was bittersweet because Rosalie, as you know, was director and she left because her husband was ill back in 2002. That was an opportunity for me to either step forward or to stay where I was which to me would have meant taking a step backwards. Although I felt it was quite a challenge and I didn't know if I was ready for it, but I knew it was something I had to do, that I had to try. That I had mentioned before, we were always short of staff and at that point, Liz, with Rosalie gone, our part-time Reference librarian Genevieve gone, we were short of staff once again, as always. I found that challenging, trying to be director and also knowing what it was to be a librarian on the floor, working in Reference, being stuck in Circulation because no one was in, or there was a problem.

So I felt that I couldn't step back and say, "Well, we're just not going to do this, we're just not going to do it." Certainly things we could not do. We cut back our hours because we were short of staff. We cut back certain services. You decided what we could do or could not do with library instruction. So there were places where we had to cut back. But it was a good point in that I could see how much needed to be done, how far we had come, and that we're still growing and there's so much more to do that the library is a real exciting place and really *needs* to be part of the college campus.

It's difficult, again, because of location and because of learning styles and all of those things. It's I think a matter of looking at other libraries too and see how they're handling it, not only just here in our own little back yard but in the United States. Libraries are being built all over the place and it's not because people aren't visiting them, it's because they are.

That, that I think something that I never thought I would be, from someone who did not have a college degree, started as a library assistant who had no clue, then working up to getting a few clues, going through school, which I thought would never end...

But here I am 57 years old and wondering where the heck the time went. (laughing)
Knowing so many wonderful people when I was here.

LF

I want to thank you very much for sharing all these stories with us.

JS

You're very welcome. I wish that I had a few more exact dates and times for you. I did not have the paperwork at home.

LF

We can revisit.

JS

Thank you.

(Track 12 ends)

(End of interview)