

Oral History Interview with Catherine Louise Lane
Conducted by Angela Baker June 3 1993

Transcription By: Armin Shujaatullah February 12 2000

AB Okay so lets just start off with a little bit of background information on you. could you state your full name please?

CL It's Catherine Louise Lane.

AB Okay and your date and place of birth

CL September 21st 1955, and in Germany.

AB Okay what's your educational background?

CL Did B.Sc. from Dalhousie a BA from Saint Mary's and about half way through an MBA.

AB Oh I see. How many years have you been associated with Saint Mary's?

CL I think I first started working here in summer of 1984 or '85 I'm not sure of which one.

AB Okay, and what capacity were you first working?

CL I'm, I was temporary secretary.

AB In what department?

CL Excuse me, I've, lost my voice today. I started out at, was working for an agency with two leagues in economics and then I went for almost a summer in continuing education and then I worked in political science and I was there for about five years.

AB Okay. And so how has your role changed over the years at Saint Mary's?

CL Not really.

AB So what do you do now?

CL I'm a secretary.

AB Secretary. Could you describe this program, and the Saint Mary's presence at the World Trade and Convention Center and its purposes?

CL It's a downtown campus. It, it does professional continuing education for business people down town it also runs EMBA program and some weekend programs.

AB What's the EMBA program?

CL Executive MBA.

AB So that's aimed at working professionals who...

CL People who have been in the work force for a number of years and are fairly senior.

AB Okay. Let me see. So can you describe your experience an-at of being a staff member at saint Mary's how and that-how has that changed

CL I think when I started here I was [kind of] happy to get a job

AB Yeah

CL And , and I became in-involved in the union at some point. I think I started out as a secretary in the union and then was the president for two years, so that gives you a different perspective on things.

AB How is that?

CL Well you're involved in negotiations and you're you're arguing on behalf of all these people. You deal with things like that.

AB Okay, let me see. So, you've seen a, a change in the growth of size of the university and the programs that are offered. Can you describe the changes that you've seen?

CL Um, well [like] in the first year I started in political science they had about 15 or 20 majors and by the time I left there they had 60 or 70.

AB So how did that effect the relationships?

CL Oh, it really made a difference. it went from you know, knowing every body by their first name to having a lot of students that you just didn't even recognize.

AB And how bout the academic programs that were offered in say the political science departments [and say] what they had for a number of years?

CL I think they started to change after a couple of years because they getting a new faculty, old ones were retiring. But I, I'm trying to think, one thing I think that the impression I got [cause] they really didn't discus it with me, is that they were trying

to get more of a Canadian...political science specialization as opposed to Dal which is broader, and does a lot of the international political science

AB I see. So how long have you been here at the world trade and convention center?

CL Maybe three years this fall.

AB Must be a very different type of ...

CL Yeah this is, more of an administrative type of job, it's and the students are of course they've all, they're all mostly adults.

AB Yeah, so what do you think they're trying to gain from their experiences here in comparison to the students that you saw in the regular campus?

CL Most of them down here are taking business education and they're trying to advance in their jobs, is the usual...

AB Okay, lets see. Are there any significant changes or events that stand out in your mind while you have been working at saint Mary's? Take your time.

CL I think the university as a whole?

AB That or any specific.

CL Its hard to think of anything specific that started to change like everything is sort of gradual over the years.

AB What gradual changes have you seen?

CL I think there's become-there's a lot more students, its getting a bit more bureaucratic.

AB How bout the students themselves. Are they different now than they were in 84, in any way? Age or ethnicity or those type of things?

CL I'm trying to remember when I was in a part—down there, no they were pretty consistent.

AB Consistent?

CL Mostly like, it seemed like most of them were from the, the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

AB Yeah

CL You know quite a number of them were from Nova Scotia there wasn't really very many from outside.

AB How about in terms of age?

CL There'd be a few mature students but there wasn't really a lot in political science they, they don't offer much in the way of evening classes so, there's [less] attraction there for mature students

AB You were involved in continuing education for a while too

CL Yeah, that department's changed quite a bit. I was away for five years and then you come back and see the, it's grown immensely, have a lot more programs

AB Yeah

CL Yeah it's much busier.

AB What different programs do they have now

CL Well when I started there, they either didn't have or they were just considering having computer training courses, and that's a really big thing now, as far as campus goes. Down, down here, since they opened up down here which was about three or four years ago they've been able to expand the programs they have. Like a lot of certificate program

AB M-hmm, such as?

CL The the diploma in marketing, international business, financial management, management development for women.

AB Oh really.

CL Yeah.

AB Are those popular courses to study? Or are they at a growing stage?

CL I think they're at a growing stage. Marketing and international business, is pretty well saturation, it has been for a couple of years, and the other programs are newer, so they're still developing.

AB So what, so what other changes did you notice in the faculty that you were working with over the years?

CL Well when I started in political science I had it was all male. There was only about six or seven professors there and, and most of them had been there for years and

years, so some of them retired and they had, they got in younger professors and they got in some females so.. that makes a big difference.

AB Yes I can imagine.

CL Yeah.

AB Okay in what ways do the does the staff faculty mix socially? Do you find...

CL The staff and faculty, um

AB Not necessarily together but just and type of interaction.

CL There isn't usually a lot, like there might be an occasionally-go out for dinner or after work, but not usually a lot in most departments I would think. They keep pretty separate. Like the staff tends to socialize with the staff, and the faculty with the faculty, so..

AB Yeah. So what ways do you s-uh, interact with your other staff members

CL I don't [know] too much. They have, the union has a a lot of events that they organize for the staff members

AB Oh yeah

CL Most departments here have regular staff get together that everybody in the department, our department doesn't have any faculty working directly for it, so..

AB Oh I see.

CL A little different.

AB Do the faculty come down here and just teach a class and then leave?

CL Yeah some, most of them are taught by faculty, some of them are just hired directly by us for course by course thing.

AB Oh I see and they are business men in the community or..?

CL Sometimes yeah. They're professional trainers. They, [here's] a group of people, professional adult trainers that do work shops and things like that.

AB Oh I see. Let me see what else. So how have you seen the research facilities change at Saint Mary's since you've been there?

CL I haven't really, I haven't really noticed I mean change like... It's, uh, younger professors tend to be more interested in research than the older ones, probably because they, they're trying to advance further than that.. The facilities aren't... physical facilities aren't really that great as far as I understand.

AB How bout the staff. Have you seen them increase much over the time you've been here

CL Yeah, they they have a fair amount although its hard to tell the university's tending to rely on like government a lot like short term contracts and things like that, so its hard to count heads.

AB They come and go a lot

CL Mm, even with the faculty, tends to be a lot of part timers, lot more than there used to be.

AB Okay, that's about everything that I wanted to cover. Is there anything that you can think of that you'd like to say about the university?

CL Not really, I think you-there's a lot of changes going on, people are examining things, and university's kind of going through and awkward stage. Where it used to be so small and everything was so central you know I think its hard for people to give up some of their, their uh I don't know, their power.

AB So how do you think it-its being, its awkward now,

CL Uh

AB In what ways

CL Even things like you know like they're [never] trying to change a lot of the internal business procedures and administrative procedures I [think] they meet with some resistances.

AB Trying to deal with the new numbers and that kind of thing

CL Yeah

AB Okay, well thank you very much

CL Oh, okay. That wasn't too hard!

AB Not too scary!

CL No!

END OF TAPE