

Oral History Interview with David Flemming
Conducted by Daniel Gervais on March 13, 2013
Transcribed by Alison Froese-Stoddard

DG: Ok, we are now recording. I'll just start by saying this is Daniel Andre Gervais. The date is March 13, 2013 interviewing Mr. David Flemming. Could you please state your full name?

DF: My name is David Bruce Flemming.

DG: And what is the date of your birth?

DF: May 13, 1945.

DG: And where is the place of your birth?

DF: Halifax, Nova Scotia.

DG: Ok. Could you tell me a little bit about your background, where you grew up, if you moved around a lot, that sort of thing?

DF: I grew up in Halifax. I lived in the North End for the first 8 years, and then we moved to public housing off Bayers Road in 1953, we lived there for a while, and we lived in another house on Bayers Road. And in that time, I went to St. Agnes School. When I was in Grade 8, Saint Mary's High School was offering scholarships to boys, obviously then, who did well in Junior High, and I got, won a scholarship to Saint Mary's High School, which was sort of interesting because my father had gone to Saint Mary's High School, and my uncles, and one of my cousins, so....

DG: Quite a lineage.

DF: Yeah. But you know, having to pay to go there was bit tough. But the first year – I'm trying to think how much the scholarship was for – maybe \$150, and that was for the first year tuition. I think by the time I finished grade 11, it went up to 200 a year.

DG: Oh wow. So that was for grades 8-11?

DF: No, 9-11.

DG: Sorry, ok.

DF: That's all they had here at that time. By 1959, when I started, they only had one grade 9 class, one grade 10 class, one grade 11 class – because they were starting to phase the high school out. And I graduated on June 12, 1962, from grade 11, my junior matriculation from the province of Nova Scotia. And the following year, '63, was the last class. The year after I came in, they had a grade 9 class, and then my second year, they had a grade 9 class, and 9, 10, 11, and when I was in grade 11, there was only a grade 11 class – we graduated, and then the last class graduated.

DG: And how many students were in the classes at that time?

DF: They were fairly large. We probably had 30, 35. You know, fairly large classes. But they didn't, uh, everybody had good teachers...

DG: What was the dynamic like being in a high school as part of a university campus, or next to a university campus? Was there a lot of interaction with university undergrad students, or the seniors for the high school?

DF: There was within the high school. You know, we were obviously aware of the university being there. And we used to attend university sporting events and things like that. We tended to do things separately. We were on the second floor of the... what we called the Main building down on Robie Street, which had just been built in the '50s. And we had the South wing, I think, on the 3rd floor. The cloister was there for the Jesuits; they all lived in the dorm at the end, and I think it was the 2nd or 3rd floor that we had. Our classrooms were there, all together. But of course, we used the gym, and the university students would use the gym, and we would get to know some of the university students. So it was an exciting place, that way. It was nice in the sense that, um, you know, it's an all-boys school, so that obviously had a different dynamic than if I had gone to St. Pat's...

DG: Definitely.

DF: ...but the Jesuits were excellent teachers, and we had some really really good ones. I look back on my days at Saint Mary's, and a lot of things I'm proud of, of myself, I guess, I felt that a lot of the characteristics and traits that were instilled in me, came from Jesuit high School. It's ironic – my wife went to Loyola College, graduated, and she was still at Loyola before it amalgamated with Concordia. And you know, we take the same approach to things sometimes, and I think it has to do with that, that thing the Jesuits had. And yeah, it was overall a very pleasant time here. Learned a lot. And a lot of the things I learned, I didn't put to direct use academically, but it was always nice to have taken Latin, and to learn Greek, although I didn't make use of it. And even in the sciences and math, I didn't, and history.. But I didn't, a really general education that I don't think you get now. You certainly don't get it in high school. You don't get it university. Not as much.

DG: That could be.

DF: We were talking about, Chris Donahoe and I were talking about this on the weekend. I remember, my sons – I have three sons – they used to complain about having to write 5 exams in high school. We wrote 13 exams every term! You know? We had two a day, and you do one on Saturday morning. And you know, and then the following Monday. And you know, it was tough. And a lot of us didn't make it. Some of us were held back a year and everything like that, but you were... Really, it brought out the best in you. Plus, there was very much an understanding that you would participate in extra-curricular stuff, especially sports. You would leave school at 2:30 in the afternoon, and then after that, you went on the football field, or basketball...

DG: This was while you were at the high school?

DF: Yeah, high school, yeah. It was very understood that that was part of our education. Yeah, I was never, I never excelled in anything. I think, bowling. I was on the school bowling team. And I

think my last year in grade 11, I ended up being on the inter-class, winning team for football, hockey and basketball, so I had four trophies.

DG: Oh, excellent. So they... push is not the right word, but challenged the students for academic excellence, and sort of fitness of the mind, body and soul, I guess.

DF: They didn't push people to do it, it was just accepted that you were going to do it. You know, if you came to the high school, then you had to take part in that. Because you know, we would finish classes early, and you know, we weren't finished school then. So you still had to participate in intramural stuff. Even the nerds, you know? You were taking part in sports. And I think some kids might have gotten out of it for some reason, I don't recall that, but you know, we did as well as you could expect. But again, that was a neat thing. I really like playing football. I still – if I go to a field where they're playing football on grass, just the smell of grass in the autumn reminds me of that.

DG: Were there many crowds that came out for the games or anything like that?

DF: No. It was just inter-class. I think, you know football, we had maybe three teams. And we'd just play amongst each other. At the end of the year we'd have play-offs, and a sport night, and trophies and things like that. And I remember, I won an award for radio speaking. They had a radio speaking contest, where you'd get a script, and you'd step behind a curtain as if you were on the radio. And I won a prize for that. And uh, we used to take part in provincial special exams. Remember the Canadian Mathematical Congress had an exam, which was for high school kids all across Canada, and if you did well, you got a scholarship. I think I came 15th in Nova Scotia. It was a really tough exam – I don't think I finished half the questions. But our school always did really well in that. Plus sports, we were – basketball teams especially, the A and B basketball teams. The years I was there, I think we won the city championship in both divisions. Two of the three years, they won the provincials, a couple of years. And we had a really good coach – Frank Baldwin. He went on to found Basketball Nova Scotia. He was the coach of the University team as well. Yeah. It was a neat place to be. Most of us were day-hops, as we used to call it. Or a few that lived in residence in high school. More so in University. And so – there was always a lot of Americans here.

DG: And they lived in residence?

DF: Yeah, most of them lived in residence. They had gone to Jesuit high schools in the States.

DG: Ok.

DF: And that was the recruitment range of...

DG: New England, Boston, that sort of..

DF: Yeah. All New Englanders. All very... not usually very bright. A lot of them were good athletes, because that was part of the thing. Father Hennessey – he came, and Bob Hayes. They would go on recruitment trips down to New England. Hayes would always take Father Hennessey with him to assure the parents that this was a good place to send their kids and all that. So there was that...

We would get along well, the Canadians and the Americans. There wasn't a lot of rivalry, you know, in that sense. There was a bit of a gap between the dayhops and the residence students, because the residence students would be together more, they didn't go home at the end of the day.

DG: Were there many Newfoundlanders as well?

DF: There was one guy from Newfoundland that I remember, who was there. He went on to become a millionaire.

DG: No way.

DF: Last I heard, he had a plane, he had a fleet of aircraft or something. Can't think of his name right now, but yeah, he was in high school and university. But no, in high school most of the out of town people were Americans. That was in the early years, the late '50s and early '60s. By the time I finished university in '66, a lot of out of town people were coming from Ontario, starting to recruit from that way. But there was still always a... to some extent, the Americans on campus had far more influence than their numbers. I remember – this was my last year here, 600 students, and there were less than a hundred Americans, but the Americans were always involved...

DG: Oh sure, yeah.

DF: Involved in then student council, stuff like that.

DG: Go-getter attitude.

DF: Yeah. And I remember, during those years, the early '60s, of course, there was the Vietnam war thing, and that was sort of interesting because there were a lot of sort of anti-war protests being held here. And of course, that gave a bit of friction sometimes between the American students and the non-American students over that, because some of us were involved with the anti-war demonstrations and things like that. So that was a bit of a...

DG: Repercussions of the world Realpolitik were definitely felt.

DF: Oh you were certainly aware of that. You know, I remember the day that John Kennedy was assassinated. I was in a political science class. Somebody called the professor out and he came back in. Can't think of his name now, but he was there for years and years and years. He came in with tears in his eyes, and said the President of the United States has been assassinated.

DG: Even Walter Cronkite was emotional in the broadcast.

DF: That's right. And so they cancelled classes.

DG: Really, wow.

DF: I remember a bunch of us were in the gym, just sort of sitting around going, oh, this is freaky, you know. We had never thought of anything like this. Some guys were just shooting hoops, I mean, they had nothing else to do, class was... And I can remember one of the Americans came down from - he was in the chapel. He was just upstairs. He was really upset that we were playing basketball.

- DG: Oh, sure.
- DF: "Don't you know a great man has just died?" I mean, yeah, but everybody handles it the way... You go to church. You choose, you know? Life goes on. So there was that. The high school itself, was...Like I said, teachers had high standards, and if you didn't meet the standards, you were gone. You know, I knew students who I was in grade 10 with, and I went on to Grade 11, and they stayed in grade 10 for a second year, you know? And that was... That happened sometimes.
- DG: There was nobody being passed along then.
- DF: No. You either did it or not. Or if you didn't do it, then you were out and you went to St. Pat's or QE.
- DG: So discipline, but even more so, determination.
- DF: Well, one of the things that I've always grown up with, was a sense of responsibility. And I think nowadays, people know all about rights, but they don't know very much about responsibilities. And I think that one of the things that we learn first, is that people have responsibilities. We have rights as well, but you have to earn the rights. And you earn your rights by taking on your responsibilities. That sounds old-fashioned, but it was something that... I get annoyed sometimes when I hear everybody talking about their Charter Rights being stomped on by some stupid thing...
- DG: Yeah, parking violations.
- DF: Yeah, discriminating... And so you know.. but I'm of that age, and I'm that generation, but I think those kind of attitudes were instilled in us because of the education we had.
- DG: Citizen Santamarians. Conscious of their rights and their responsibilities.
- DF: Yeah, and conscious of the community.
- DG: Having a passion for academics, sport, but then also the world around you.
- DF: Yeah.
- DG: Like having a consciousness, reading the paper is something not a lot of people do...
- DF: That's right. We used to do current affairs and everything. We were expected to know what was going on in the world, and you know... I don't know what it would have been like today if I had gone somewhere else, but I certainly look upon my years in high school here, and university, as the positive ones, and ones that helped me subsequently along.
- DG: Culturally, how diverse was the high school when you were attending. Like were there many African Nova Scotian students, or students from Trinidad or...
- DF: No, no African Nova Scotian students. There were no African Nova Scotian students. A guy from Trinidad, but that was not in high school. No, we were all white. At the high school.

DG: Ok. They didn't start..

DF: They didn't start having Blacks here until I think my second or third year University. And that was mainly because the coach who took over from Frank Baldwin, the second basketball coach, he was recruited from New Jersey, I think. And he brought him here. And he brought, I think, four of the five starting players for the high school team that he had coached. And these were tall black guys...

DG: Yeah, yeah.

DF: And I always remember this one time, this would have been in '63, '64, something like that. I always remember, it was when they were having riots in the mid-60s, like at Watts... the civil rights movement. And they had a couple of these players from New Jersey on television, on CJCH, and Father Hennessey went on with them. You know, you guys are here, and what's happening back home? And they talked generally about discrimination. So he said, what would you guys be doing if you were back there now, not here at Saint Mary's? "Oh, we'd be out burning and looting with our buddies."

DG: Really, wow.

DF: Father Hennessey almost fell off the chair.

DG: I bet he did! Well, this would have been, I guess you remember too, the assassination of Martin Luther King Junior. And Bobby Kennedy right after that. Lots of heat taking place.

DF: Yeah, and that all took place after I left. That was '68. I graduated in '66. But this was the early '60s. But anyway, I remember that. So when you started getting basketball players from and football team, they were bringing a lot of football players from the States then, and Ontario...

DG: Thinking about championships...

DF: Yeah. I remember '73, I was living in Ontario then. And Saint Mary's won the basketball championship, the national title. We went in double overtime against U of T for the hockey and lost. Bob Boucher was coaching then, and then in the fall, we won the Vanier cup.

DG: Oh, right.

DF: Almost three out of the three big sports from a university which, by '73, was no more than 2000 people. But you know, sports was a big thing. But sport is big, was big in a lot of Catholic Universities in the United States. So that was sort of that American influence.

DG: Right, the sports fans.

DF: The Notre Dame fans

DG: Ok. What were your first impressions about the University when you... like, did you immediately after high school sort of go down the hall, and now you're in the University, or...?

DF: Yeah. Well, I wanted to do history. I did an honours history degree, so you know, it just seemed like the thing to do. I didn't have a thought, oh maybe I should apply somewhere else... One of the advantages in coming here, to high school here, was you did what they called a junior matriculation, which was grade 11. But that was recognized by the University as equivalent to grade 12. So it meant that you got some credits. I still did my University in four years after grade 11. Most people do four years after grade 12.

DG: Right, ok. Ahead of the curve from the high school.

DF: Yeah, so I saved a year by not going to grade 12. So when I graduated, I graduated from the 21st of May, 1966. So you know, I was a very young graduate, I guess, as were most of the rest of us who had gone to the high school, because we didn't go to grade 12. So yeah, you know it was just an accepted thing. I lived in Halifax, there was no thought about going away to University. Two of my three sons went away to University in foreign countries, so you know... I look back and maybe my life would have been different if I had gone to Carleton or something, moved to Ottawa for University. But you know, I expected to do that. My father ran a gas station, so you know, I made money in the summers. I was working on the gas station, the family business, and I felt a responsibility for that. Plus it cost more money to move away.

DG: So many things to consider.

DF: Yeah. But oh yeah, it was just the thing to do, and I did, as they say, In University I concentrated on history in an honours degree, then I went to Dal for a couple of years, and did some post-graduate work. I never did finish my MA – got a job, moved along. But a lot of the research I had done, on various politicians and issues in Nova Scotia. Got lots of things published.

DG: How did you find your department when you were taking history here?

DF: Here? Oh it was good. Jack McCormack was the head of the department. Stan Bobr-Tylingo was there. Stan had come over from Poland, I think, in the 40s. It was a really interesting thing that happened here, I guess after the war, and into the 50s, I guess. '56 or something. There were a lot of professors that came to Canada, and they came to Saint Mary's. They were all Eastern European. And they all had thick, thick accents. And some of them were so hard to understand. But they were all very brilliant people. And Elizabeth Chard, I was here when she started teaching history, and I think I took her Nova Scotia seminar. The first time she taught it, it would have been in '63, '62, I guess. And at that time in the history department, there were just three. MacCormack, Bobr-Tylingo, and Chard. And Hutton, I think was his name. And so by the time I graduated, I think a couple of other people had come on, but most of my history courses here were taken by those three. And in order to major at that time, you had to take 10 history courses. So I had a wide range of courses.

DG: What were the courses like?

DF: Oh, everything. You had to take European, you had to take Canadian, MacCormack used to do one on foreign affairs, world war 1, and diplomacy and stuff like that. So there was a lot to do, to take a lot of courses. So then I got accepted at Dal and went there. And then I ended up interested in marine history, and all my work experience after that with Parks Canada, and the Maritime

Museum, and other museums I worked for, had to do with the Maritimes being the Maritimes, and marine history.

DG: Ok, Yeah.

DF: So that was, uh, but I didn't learn a lot of that marine stuff at university, it was just stuff I picked up along the way. Became an interest. Plus the fact, you know, back in those days, you know, I do lectures at Carleton and Algonquin in Ottawa, from time to time for Museum Studies programs, and heritage conservation programs, and here I am with a BA, lecturing to these people, they're taking Masters in Museum Studies... I never took a Museum course in my life, and that's because they didn't have museum studies. You had a degree in whatever – if you were a botanist, you'd be a natural history curator, if you were a historian, you'd become a natural history curator. So that was how anything I learned about museology and heritage conservation was all based on some of my work experience. But the education I got here gave me a very good grounding for that. So I was always very thankful for that. Plus we had in high school and university, in high school we had very good teachers..

DG: How did your image of the University change or not change, your first impressions arriving at the high school, and when you graduated from the University? Obviously, there would have been some cultural shift, some gender shift, what sticks out in your mind?

DF: Well, the gender thing was always... these were young teenage boys... and you're going to school. And we would have to sort of go – well, I don't know about others, but every time we had a dance in high school, I'd call up this girl I knew from grade 8 who used to be a neighbour of mine. Need a girl, I'll call Sandra, you know? Dance is coming up, or the prom is coming up. And so, there was that. And of course, in University, of course, it was the same way. And it was only a couple of years after that that it went co-ed. It went co-ed in, '68? '68. I graduated in '66. There were a couple of women going to University here, I remember in University there were two. Only two. They were sort of older women who had come back to do specialized courses or education courses. But they really stood out because they were the only two female students at the university.

DG: Did it feel like it would be an inevitability that there would be, that the campus would become co-ed? Was there much discussion around it?

DF: No, no. We never thought of it. We knew what we had signed on for. It wasn't this, putting on demonstrations in front of the dean's office thing, that it should go co-ed. I don't recall that. It was just the fact of, this was the way it was.

DG: What were some of the sports you were involved in?

DF: Well I said, in university, in high school...

DG: High school.

DF: ... I played everything there was to be played, of course. Played hockey, football, basketball, that sort of thing. You know, intermural. I never was on any school teams or things like that. And

University I bowled, you know? And I was on the curling team in university for a while.. We went to a curling tournament in Antigonish.

DG: Ok. Did they have lots to offer?

DF: Oh yeah. And they was even an interfac basketball thing too. I never really played much when I was in University. I was really not that good. So by the end of university I was concentrating on more my studies, and things like that. But I was involved in Student Council, I was the CUSO representative, Canadian Universities Service Overseas? I was the CUSO rep here my final year.

DG: Was it an elected position?

DF: No, it was an appointed position. It was an ex-officio member of student council? And I was involved with a bunch of other students with my last university in making an evaluation booklet. And we did the complete first student course evaluation booklet for any university in the Atlantic Provinces. And what we did was sent out all these forms, questions, to all the students in all the classes, what you thought about the course, and what you thought about the professor. Collated them back, typed it up, made 800 copies and gave it out. And it became a little bit of a problem. That was because... Father Hennessey was the Dean at the time, and he met with us, and said, "you know, are you going to give this to the university to review before you publish it?" And we said, no, we hadn't thought of that. And this was why we were doing it, it was a student thing, it had nothing to do with the university. And it was a very subjective thing. The year before we had done a course information booklet which basically just told what each of the courses were, more than you found in the calendar, the academic calendar. But this was going to be.... there were some teachers were, didn't do well at all. Some professors.

DG: I can imagine.

DF: And a couple of them, I can remember, it was people who couldn't speak English very well. People were trying to... people just couldn't understand them. And I think the University was worried that feelings would be hurt, if they saw all that stuff. You know, this was right in the midst of students' rights, and all this stuff? Riots on campus... So our thing was, doing this subjective course evaluation. So there was sort of a veiled threat that this might not go down well for us if we didn't drop it. So we said at the time, you know, we will give copies to the Board of Governors before we release it to the students. And Hennessey and the President said, no, we think you should give us a copy before you print it. Just in case... lawsuits.. things like that. And we said, actually, no, the student council has hired a lawyer and we've had someone look at it, and you know, we're well aware. I remember this one strange meeting we had, and they were telling us it would be nice if we could do this, and I think it was Father Hennessey who said.. "Well, you know, perhaps it would be unfortunate if our years at Saint Mary's were tainted by something that would happen to do with disobedience" or something. Weird way to put it, you know. What he was basically saying, what we interpreted after we left the room, was that we were threatened to get kicked out if we didn't.... So we got very paranoid in our office at the time in the basement, behind the gym, under the stairs in the back there. So we got all of the Gestetner originals, packed them all up and took them home. One of the guys who I was working on this

with lived in the North End, and he packed all the stuff in his garage because we were worried that they might come in and take it.

DG: Into the office even.

DF: So we ended up that summer, we took a month off when we graduated, churned them off using a hand crank, 800 copies, 50 pages long or something, staple them all together. And you know, we gave them out, and never heard anything. There was no fuss. And then the next year, I think, we automatically did it, and put a fancy cover on it.

DG: You started something that was....

DF: We had taken it from nothing but a course information booklet to a subjective course evaluation booklet.

DG: Much more interesting information.

DF: After that it was no big deal anymore. But that was sort of an interesting thing. So I spent a lot of time doing that. You know, working on that. So I had my extra-curricular stuff. It wasn't so much sport as it had been in high school, it had to do with other things.

DG: When you graduated from the University, did you feel like you would always have a strong association with Saint Mary's, or if you felt you'd always have a special connection? What did you think?

DF: Well... I did. I did and I didn't, you know? I never felt the sort of 'rah rah' stuff. I had sort of gone beyond that. And I just didn't feel that I wanted to be involved with all that university stuff.

DG: You didn't have to paint your face, and...

DF: No, we never did anything like that. And I was only living... I was only here for two years after I graduated. I graduated in '66, and then in '68 I went to Ottawa, and lived there for seven years before I came back. And even when I came back, I didn't hook up with the university very much. I did a few lectures here, and meetings with some of the history professors, on marine history, but I got back into University that way, through the [?] Institute and things like that, Colin Howell, who if I had known, Colin and I went to school together at Dal after Saint Mary's. And so I didn't really get closely associated with the University again until '88, when we were doing this high school reunion. 1988 was the 25th anniversary of the closing of the high school. The high school closed in '63, so... Chris Donahoe called me, and a few other people, and said, Look. you're a museum guy, we need an exhibit for this, that's what museum guys do, would you like to curate the exhibit? Select the photos, collect some memorabilia...

DG: Right.

DF: So I said I would like to do that. So I went down and we met up in the building down there on Robie Street. And a lot of these guys, I hadn't seen since... well, certainly since University. Some of them I hadn't seen since high school. So that would have been 25 years, or 20 years at least. A

few people I had seen intermittently, but... within an hour, it was like we had never been apart. It was incredible, it just sort of all came back.

DG: The camaraderie.

DF: Yeah, the easy going.... People hadn't changed – but they had? And it was really quite neat. And going through that whole high school reunion thing. I guess, brought me closer to the university. Larry Uteck asked me to be on the Sport Hall of Fame committee, the Sport Hall of Fame that had been set up a few years before by Susan [Mattress?]. And then Larry was Chair, and they wanted somebody to be on the Board, who knew something about museums. Like, you know, artifacts and things.

DG: Ok, so is that.... David Flemming here...

DF: Yeah, that's me. That was in '95. That was the first one. I was on there from '95 to 2000; that's when I moved back to Ottawa. I was on the Board from '95 to 2000. And then I chaired the board for the last two years, I think. Larry was, the LS. So yeah, that was me. Actually, the person who recruited me was Heather. Heather Harris. She called Larry, and so told Larry to call me. And then Elizabeth called me – I had seen Elizabeth lots of other times, so first thing I was on the committee, and then the last three years I chaired the committee. Yeah, I was there from the very beginning of the inductions because I was involved in all of these.

DG: Did the 1973 Vanier Cup game, there were some great...

DF: Yeah. The Vanier cup thing was really kind of neat, because we had... I remember saying to Larry... What are the chances of getting the Vanier cup to have for the induction ceremony? So he said, "I think we could do that." So he got in touch with somebody. I got a call at the museum: "I've got something to show you!" So I got downstairs, and there was the Vanier Cup sitting on his desk! He hadn't told anyone – there were only 3 or 4 of us that knew. So when we were doing the induction, I was doing the induction, and I was reading off this little thing, the 1973 football team, and I said, "We have a special guest for the team. This guest was with the team, this guest was on the minds of each of these players every game, and it was with them when they were on the road, and that great day when Toronto won the Stanley Cup. This morning's guest was with them right through it all." And I can remember Billy Robinson saying, you know, there were a couple of girls who followed the team... Oh shit!

DG: Could it be?

DF: Anyway, I said, "Please welcome the special guest, the Vanier!" And in they walked with the Vanier cup. That was so neat. That was Larry – Larry was able to get that. So all of them got their picture taken with it, ... yeah.

DG: Well now, how does that sort of fit in with the SMU Sport Hall of Fame Heritage Centre, with the current project you're working on with alumni?

DF: Well, Chris... See, what we did, part of the thing we did with the high school reunion, we got a plaque. The plaque is on the front of, what do you call it now? The McNally building?

DG: Yeah, the McNally building. The big grey building.

DF: It just used to be The University!

DG: Yes, exactly.

DF: But there's a plaque, to the right of the front door about the high school, and the last day of the reunion we unveiled the plaque.

DG: Made of bronze,

DF: Yeah. And it was when the Sport Varsity Athletic Club book came out last year, I guess Chris and some of the other people were saying that they didn't have much on the high school, wouldn't it be nice to – because I mentioned, we didn't have maybe 120 kids in the high school, and they won provincial championship in basketball. Pretty neat! So he had called me, and told me that they were thinking about doing this, because I was the one who engineered the plaque, and ordered it. Of course, I didn't have the information; I couldn't remember who I got the plaque done by, and so, yeah. So what they wanted to do was get the names of some of these high school athletes, and get them up there. But they got in touch with Paul Puma, who's now Chair of the Sport Hall of Fame. So but I don't know.. the only reason, like I said, I told Chris, you know, I'm coming down in two weeks, maybe we can get together at the Midtown on the weekend, and that's when he told me about this stuff. So I guess I got involved with the University more when I was on the Sport Hall of Fame, and then in 2000 I moved to Ottawa, so you know, I stepped down, and somebody else took over as Chair. I forgot his name, used to be sports editor at the Chronicle Herald. And he was on for a couple of years, and then Paul took over. Paul Puma. And Mike Dougherty's been doing a lot of work with them as well. He's a good source for sport on the Huskies.

DG: Ok.

DF: So it was that sort of thing. I got more involved with that. Plus I was doing, you know, I helped organize a conference with Colin on the Halifax Explosion in the '90s, there... So you know, I had contacts with things here, I did lectures from time to time on various courses, and occasionally I'd go to a football game or something, but not so much for the football game, it was more for the people there. I was here last September, and I just happened to be here when the induction ceremonies happened, so I got to see a lot of my buddies.

DG: And the new Homburg Centre that we have here now...

DF: Oh yeah, all that stuff. I remember when the first, when Patrick Power Library was first built, someone said, "we're having a meeting in the library." Well, I remember when the library was in the Burke building, and before that, it was in the McNally building. When I left here, there were only two buildings on campus, the McNally building and the Burke building. And the Burke building was built basically as a library. So I guess my association with it over the last while has been more to do with sport than anything else. Just because of my time with the Hall of Fame Board, and everything else. Plus I had done a fair amount of research into that period, because that was interesting.

DG: In what ways do you notice how the school has changed since you attended? Obviously, the campus has undergone a dramatic change in structure, but do you notice things that are still the same as they were, or... There's a new diversity, but there's still a very communal feeling at the university. It feels like a big family for some people.

DF: Yeah, I don't... I haven't been here enough to have that much of an association to know whether it's still that family thing, or... I see the students here, sitting in the comfy chairs, and we had lawn chairs in our lounge! Picnic tables to eat our lunch on. And the library was one room, stuff like that. So I mentioned, they still have that, I do devote some time to alumni receptions in Ottawa. Senator Moore usually organizes it, both he and I went to school at the same time, and he always has it at the East Block at Parliament. So it's a neat place to have a reception, so I always go along. And again, I see people who I went to school with there, and there's a fairly active alumni group in Ottawa, but I never stuck around. I think the last thing I did in Ontario, I went to a couple of, in 2000, 2001, when we won the Vanier Cup, I went to the reception in Toronto. I guess my contacts are more with the Atlantic Canada Institute, people like Colin now that he's doing the sport stuff. And I think Colin did a lecture, one of the first sport history lectures in Halifax, at the museum. And we started to get into that. And I remembered introducing him at the time, and saying that when I grew up, you learned sport history in the barbershop. You'd go to the barbershop to get your hair cut, and all these old guys would stand around talking about hockey, or who's got better power, Richard or ... all this business. It wasn't an academic thing at all. Of course now, it's quite a big thing. And the conference that they do every couple of years comprise some really good people. So I have certain academic interest in Sports, which, you know has been associated with Saint Mary's for the last little while. But I never go to any of the alumni dinners or stuff, I don't play in golf tournaments, and that.

DG: Lots of technological changes, too.

DF: Well yeah, there certainly has been. But that's the same as anywhere. I don't come back here and feel, "Ah... I'm back home". I just come back to Saint Mary's, and it's changed... It's not a bad feeling.

DG: There's a certain time and place to it.

DF: That's right. I don't look back and think, oh, the good old days. I think the university's doing quite well academically, compared to a lot of other universities in the country.

DG: I was going to ask you – what are your impressions today?

DF: Yeah, it seems to have a good reputation. I remember in the 70s, I was living in Ontario the year we almost won all three of the national championships, of course then I said I'm from Saint Mary's!

DG: Yeah, yeah. Share the honour.

DF: Jock school. I didn't play anything, but yeah. And I remember when Saint Mary's won the hockey championship two years ago, and I got in touch with Patsy Calbury, who still works at the FA department, and told her – "Tell Trevor to save a lot of that stuff!" for the Sport Hall of Fame,

you know? You know programs, things like that, because people chuck that, and twenty years later, you want an inductee, and looking for all this stuff. I know, because I had to do this. So, “oh yeah, I’m going to make sure there’s everything”.

DG: Important to hang on to those things.

DF: It’s important to keep the stuff now. It’s easier to keep the stuff now, then to chuck half of it and try to find it 20 years from now.

DG: Well, it’s no good to say how proud you are to be from where you are if you don’t know where you were...

DF: Well, also it’s a question of, you get these team pictures and twenty years later people are going to be looking at these pictures going, who is this? Who is that guy? I remember him, or he only played one season with us, and stuff like that. So that was one of the reasons for the high school reunion thing, that I documented this stuff well, and gave it to them to keep until the University had an Archives and then we can give it to them. Then it’s up to the archive whether they want to collect the originals of the photos or artifacts, they’ll know where they are. Because I know enough about that through museum work for 45 years, people come to a museum and if you don’t document things, they can come back 20 years later to haunt you, and say, what happened to that compass I gave you twenty years ago? I don’t know...

DG: Without the documentation, I saw in the paper there that the fellow stole a million dollars’ worth of stuff. And you think, how could that be, but it’s...

DF: Oh, you know, you have a box of documents back that someone signs out and goes through, you know, you don’t take stock each year to make sure each document is there. I mean, most archives don’t have that sort of resources.

DG: Um, is there anything you want to add? Thoughts now, moving forward?

DF: Ah, I’d like to mention something about the teachers. You know, the teachers we had in high school, I think were exemplary. I think Father Power was the principal at the time, and we had Father Walsh, Father Lesage, we had some non-Jesuits, Mr. Chow, Mr. Harrington, Father Murphy... A lot of these people were characters, and we gave all of them a lot of grief. But one of the interesting things about high school is that we.... really caused a lot of trouble in high school. I mean, we weren’t all very good students. And I suspect that a lot of the stuff we did, in the 21st century would be called harassment. It wasn’t ‘evil’ stuff...

DG: No malicious intent.

DF: But I don’t think most classes could get away with this stuff. But you know, there were certain things. People used to tease me all the time. I would... Our science teacher, Mr. Chow. He was Chinese, so he couldn’t pronounce my name, which was Flemming; he’d say “Frayming!” So my nickname was Big Frame. I was a skinny little kid, I didn’t have a big frame. And other people had nicknames as well – one big guy, they called him Flossy. You know, it wasn’t evil intent, it was just... fooling around. But you know, teachers handled us well, and there was a certain

discipline. If you did things, you went to ‘Jug’, which was being kept after school and you had to do extra stuff like that. Of course in University there wasn’t anything like that at all, but it was stuff you expected in high school. And I think it was the kind of thing that... I remember most of these teachers fondly and remember the life skills they taught me as much as I remember – probably more so actually – than I remember the content. Father Russell was our teacher, I think in grade 11, he made Latin exciting, you know? If we did all our Latin, Monday through Thursday, and we all did well, then we would refight the Punic Wars in Europe, in BC days. We’d get our desks, and we’d have two armies, like two phalanxes, Hannibal and Hasdrubal. He would ask us Latin questions, you know, declensions and stuff like that. And if you got the answer right, you could move up a step. If you didn’t, you had to take your desk at the back. And the whole thing of strategy is war, if one team encircled the other, we won the war. But we used to love doing that, because it was our reward. But yet we were still learning. He was an incredible guy, I ran into him a few years later, he never became a Jesuit priest, he was just training. Ended up getting married, and ended up becoming an archaeologist. He was quite a prominent archaeologist in Ontario. And I remember telling him that, and he said, That crazy thing I did... But it was neat, you know? To have a teacher willing to take the time to do that kind of stuff for us.

- DG: You had to really get creative then, too. Now it’s easy enough to get in front of a screen, there’s a million programs to choose from, go to and make it an experience. You can hold on to the information a bit more.
- DF: And they used to do things, offer you incentives like extra points, if you did a term with extra projects. I remember we had a set of encyclopedias, and you know, I used to go to them and write up these little projects in the library. You’d get an extra point or something – probably you worked more for it than you were rewarded for, but again, they’d encourage you to do that extra research.
- DG: Go the extra mile.
- DF: So yeah, as I say that was neat. In University, all the professors were pretty good. Professor Hallett, who was a great English professor, Professor MacCormack, history guy... So yeah, overall it was a good experience. My high school years I think more fondly of, in the sense that it happened at a certain time in my life when I was developing and growing, but certainly I have no regrets about going to University.
- DG: And you always felt that the instructors had the best interests of the students.
- DF: Oh yeah. I mean, there were some of them who just put in their time, but very few. You know, I took Logic and Philosophy, and learned a lot, by taking a logic course. And taking philosophy – lots of people who go to university never take philosophy. But again, that tells you about teaching certain skills you can use most of your life. Use it in problem solving in all sorts of things. So the fact that we were exposed to all of that kind of thing, and some of it did stick, and some of it you can retrieve from the dark recesses of your mind when you need it. And I was always very thankful about that.

DG: That's fantastic. Well then, on the behalf of the Saint Mary's University Patrick Power Archives Library Resource Center, I'd like to thank you very much for taking the time to sit down with us.

DF: You're very welcome.