

**Oral History Interview with Robert Hayes**  
**Conducted by Angela Baker, June 4, 1993**  
Transcription by Jeff Lipton, February 22, 2000

AB: I want to get some background information. Please state your full name.

RB: Robert Gerald Hayes, Esquire, BA, SMU, 73. Wanted to make sure you got all that in there.

AB: What's your date and place of birth?

RH: Ontario, 29, 3<sup>rd</sup> of 33.

AB: OK, Could you describe your educational background?

RH: BA, Saint Mary's, 73. I came out of the Canadian navy, so I suppose that would be part of my educational background. I was in the navy for seven and a half years until 1958, and that is the year I went to Saint Mary's, in the fall of 58.

AB: OK, so how long have you been associated with working there?

RH: We started, or at least I was first associated with the university playing football when I was in the navy. I came over there to help out Elmer MacGilvery, a priest at Saint Mary's, a Jesuit priest. Coached the team a few times because they were going to the championship and that's when I made the first association back in 1957. Association through Saint Mary's was through Elmer MacGilvery and some of the other priests who were interested in sports.

AB: So how did sports develop while you were there?

RH: Well we started off with two hundred students in the university and we had actually, we had more representative teams in those days than we do in these days in spite of all the noise we hear about how many teams we have. They weren't of the calibre without doubt because there was two hundred and some odd students there, so just about everyone had played.

AB: What sports were played?

RH: Well, we had two football teams, a junior varsity and a varsity football team. We had two basketball teams at one time. Two hockey teams at one time. We played in tournament sports as they had called them then in volleyball and a swimming, curling, golf, track and field, we went in them all, but the calibre as I had said, the level of competition, wasn't what it is now. Consequently the money wasn't as heavy, the outlay, the experience wasn't as heavy as it is now. So its more specialised, you don't, many of our students played two sports, hockey and football, very common, and basketball and football was not uncommon, although Franky Baldwin was the basketball coach for many years and worked there when I first went there in 1958 as an employee. He ran the bookstore; he was the

manager of the bookstore, manager of the canteen. Coached two basketball teams, various other activities. So whatever I didn't coach, Franky coached, so I think they have four or five hundred of them up there replacing just the two of us now, or at least in the bookstore or canteen they have!

AB: So as the school grew while you were there, what changes took place?

RH: Oh well, changes took place out side of course that affected us inside. I was very happy with the Jesuit priests running it and it being a non co-educational institution. I liked that and I have great respect for the Jesuit fathers who were educators and all around guys as far as I can see and many of them are good friends of mine and my wife. As fewer and fewer priests were available to teach there, it became more difficult to recruit faculty. More lay faculty came in and we became co-educational in the sixties I believe after a long battle with Mount Saint Vincent with the late Father Labelle and the president of the Mount, who is Sister... the name escapes me unfortunately and they were at loggerheads because we were trying to amalgamate the two universities, Saint Mary's and Mount Saint Vincent, which of course doesn't make any since to anyone that we shouldn't have two universities. Catholic universities at the time. I suppose ours is still Christian whether or not its Roman Catholic to the degree it was then - I know it isn't, not that that makes it bad or good, but its different. We lost that battle, I think our president and the Mounts' president couldn't see eye to eye, ear to ear, or any other way. They went their way and we went our way and then we began co-educational of course and we grew rapidly and expanded rapidly and stayed in the black which is most important to universities and governments and the students as well. So those are some of the financial changes of course.

Student body, faculty, the faculty union that came in and I remember the great Art Monahan who I consider a friend of mine, trying to encourage me to join the union. I'm not a union person, I never joined it. Not that it shouldn't bother me, but I felt the unions took away the atmosphere that we had and maybe we couldn't of held it because we became to big, but there became an issue of administrative verses faculty, students verses administration and students verses faculty union on many occasions. In fact I remember the faculty were going to go on strike one year and a most unlikely guy came to talk to the student council president because at that time I was Director of Student Services as well as the Athletic Director. I heard this conversation and he said, this faculty member who will remain anonymous, said to the president of the student council, "Just go on and tell them if they don't teach then you'll promote the transfer of students [to] Dalhousie University and there wouldn't be any students here for them to teach". I they think that when they brought that to the faculty union's attention and to the moderates upon the union who really didn't approve of some of the actions they were taking anyways, but didn't say enough to stop them that, that had through them to a head and the faculty union backed off and there was no strike.

They didn't get all their demands, but it was a very tough time at Saint Mary's for three or four years and the other universities were taking advantage of use

because they could point the finger and say there is nothing but turmoil there. You don't want to send your son or daughter at that school where the faculty are going to go on strike, or may go on strike, and that was a difficult time for the university, but we got through them and of course the undergraduate and recent graduate see over eleven hundred kids graduate and that's three times more, four to five times more students then were at the university then when I went here.

AB: So what effect did that have on sports [inaudible]?

RH: Well the faculty union used athletics as a whipping boy and said that it was using too much money, cutting into their salaries, and it really wasn't. Since that time all the percentage of dollars per student spent on sports and recreation/athletics and recreation at Saint Mary's has significantly increased and I'm very happy that it has. These sports, when ever there's a, not whenever, but many times when there is an issue on campus as you saw in Saint FX just recently were they wanted to get rid of their football team because it was a financial drain on them and they didn't of course and the University of Toronto is another example. Whenever there is a little bit of a squeeze, athletics certainly feels the brunt of it, and quickly.

AB: What effect did the introduction of women have?

RH: Well it had quite an effect just being from the athletic budget alone, had quite an effect on our budget, because we were going to be involved in the women's athletic program and their intramural program and I once talked to the president Dr. Carigan who kept a very tight rein on funds of the athletic department, but a good supporter of us too. So he said you can have five thousand dollars to run the women's program and that was a few years ago. Five thousand dollars to run three varsity women's teams, plus the intramural program wouldn't even handle one team. I said what is going on here Doc, there's no way we are peeled back as it is. So he said, well that's it, but we took moneys from the men's program, which was under funded and put it in the women's program. So we had two under funded programs and that went on for many years. When the Tower was built recently they put the operating budget up sufficiently and I'm glad they did because we were in the hot dogs and mustard, we sure weren't eating steaks, when we were on the road. So that, women coming into sports had quite an effect on the budget, but it also had an effect on the general atmosphere I think. It wasn't an all boys, or all boys club, I'm sure as the ladies would say any more. There was fighting or discussions let me day, controversy over the budget, because the basketball coach wanted his share, and if there was a women basketball coach, they would want their share. The field hockey coach, soccer coach and there wasn't enough to go around. It caused some conflict on the staff, I can speak as the athletic director on that one, but we got through it and our teams were, to use a term I don't like, competitive, they haven't won too many championships, but they have been competitive.

AB: So how did the staff you were in charge of change over the years?

RH: Well it changed from Franky Baldwin and myself to, well we had a full-time hockey coach who was also the rink manager and basketball coach Brian Heaney, Les Goodwin before him. I was a full time basketball coach, he had other duties, but his primary function was coaching basketball. So our staff increased by seven or eight people and on the rink of course, being built when that came about that increased the staff because we needed rink personal, the ice makers and assistants in there. Then when the student population increased we put more people in there for intramurals, a little more emphasis on the intramurals. Not what they have now because we didn't have the facilities, we had a real problem. We had all these students and they could have pumped more money into the intramural program, but there was no place for them to play, unless we had gone over to Dalhousie and rented their facilities which they said they didn't want to do because theirs was full, so we had a problem there with too many students and too few facilities.

AB: So how did the students themselves change over the years when you were there?

RH: Well physically you couldn't recognise them in the 70s, they had to have that hair down to their ankles or they weren't happy, and I wasn't coaching them, and I would look at the coach and say that would be tough for me to have. We had a basketball coach and he wouldn't let them have hair like that, but the football coach, Al Keith, good guy, friend of mine. He would let them have the hair and earrings. I would say boy, Al, what the hell is going on. Is this a circus or what? The kids questioning it. You could pretty much tell them. Instructors in the classroom and in the field, you could tell the kid something and he doesn't get into a philosophical discussion and he accepts what you say for the most part anyway, and that has changed considerably. The class attendance has changed dramatically, we really enforced it and we didn't have an opportunity to play during exams. I'm talking twenty years ago. You had to be there during exams, there was no games off campus, that you could miss any classes from. We had a set number of classes you could miss, if you missed too many, then you weren't going to write the exam. Attendance, compulsory attendances had quite an effect, I'm sure that they will say that it's really the responsibility of the student, but unfortunately most of the freshmen, or many of them, aren't responsible when they come there, and they sleep in and their regimentation to a great degree is gone. The parents send them there with different ideas now, they're not sending them to a nice Jesuit Catholic school to get straightened out and go out in the world of business as they once did. I guess you could use the word morality that certainly has changed because there wasn't that cohabiting to a degree that there is now, and it is accepted now. Accepted or not accepted it's a fact. So that there has had quite a change. But that's a reflection of society as well as well as the university's particular bent. However. Angela what else can I say to you?

AB: How about the ethnic origin of the students? Did that change over the years?

RH: Well it was Irish Catholic here at Saint Marys, primarily and a lot of the Jesuits were Irish too. Father Hennessey, O' Donnell, many of them were Irish in origin

and so were a number of the faculty were there to, were of Irish descent. Now its quite a mixed bag I would say on the religious grounds I'm sure more than 50% of them would be atheist or non-Roman Catholics or agnostics. Where as in those days, well as a matter a fact we used to have a football team one time that was kind of unusual because there were about 50% that were not Roman Catholics, and we had a game we played at Saint Patrick's Day, basketball with the "Micks" versus the Protestants. It was a nice game really; there were about fourteen fights. It only happened one year, and I said we better not do this again. I don't think we had two black students in there. We had more black students I think on our basketball team one time then for any other reason we would have them in Saint Mary's, and now there is quite a mixture of international education program has I suppose has attracted some of the Oriental students, or Asian students is what they want to be called so don't hold that one against me, I'm just a little old. I call them Orientals, but they're Asians. So the mixture of that is quite significant and of course their ideas are there too.

AB: So how about the age of the students? Has that changed at all?

RH: Yes, I would say. I'm saying this without any evidence but I think they're older, I think the students are older some of them are dropping out and coming back. That didn't happen, as often I don't think back in those days. Went to grade twelve then you went to Dal or Saint Mary's. Now there out for a year or two working or they can't get into the university or some other reason or they're in and there out and then come back. That wasn't as common in those days. There wasn't that much flexibility I don't think because they didn't have student loans and that had a dramatic effect on the student population because tuition was two-hundred dollars there. That was difficult, for a student to raise two hundred dollars if he comes from the north end of Halifax and if he didn't get a job during the summer, two hundred bucks was a lot of money for them and it was difficult for them to come to Saint Mary's and Saint Mary's helped a lot of students that didn't have that kind of money. Father Bathhurst was the controller at the time, and I know kids of many times went to him and didn't have enough money for meals and he would help them out. Whether or not they can operate that fashion today because of the numbers. I suppose you could say it was a more caring place because it was more personal in those days, and the Jesuits were interested, from my perspective in sports that was [inaudible] was one of their beliefs, in fact its in one of our universities charter in the first page at one time calendar, and it may still be there. Christian values and health, attitudes and lifestyles, not in those exact words but that's what it meant and remember, Angela, the playing field is the laboratories of the humanities. Guys like Burpy Hallet hate it when I say that because that's why I'm alive. You might not know Burpy Hallet but he's been here for about two hundred years I think.

AB: I interviewed him last week.

RH: Oh did you? He's one of the old timers. We were fortunate in that we had people like Dwight Harold Beazley who stayed there, and engineering and science a guy

named Ryan. Pinky Ryan was the Dean of Science and Engineering for many years there, and Al Sabeen who was our chemistry department almost at one time. They hung in there when the salaries was really low and made that school some of those people. The lay professors as well as the priests that were there.

AB: So how did your relationship with the students change over the years?

RH: Not change because I wasn't coaching them. I was very personal with them, I just didn't ignore them when they come to practice late, I wanted to know why you came to practice late and I don't believe you so get around that field about fifty times at the highest rate of speed, and don't be late again. You can't treat them that way of course, but my relationship changed because I stopped coaching. It's a very close, coach player relationship, as a coach teacher. A teacher, you can't get that close to most of your students, but you have to be fairly cognizant to what your doing because it effects there play on the field, you become interested, you get too... Too interested, and you get too tied up with them sometimes that it sort of takes you away from your personal life because of all this massive family who are your student athletes. It's difficult to separate that. I don't see that same close relationship, because, actually, to use football as an example, we have a lot more players, physical bodies on the field than when I was coaching. We didn't have as many, and they can carry more players and they have more funds to support them. So it's a little less personal, but there are more coaches, to use football as an example, Larry's got five assistant coaches, too many in my opinion, none the less, but the have a lot of assistants, but they are part time and they don't, or can't relate the same way as a guy with a full time university employee could. They do relate to them and they to some of them, some of them are different than others that coaches referring to and they can be more personal. Overall I don't think your as close to them as you used to be, because of the numbers and just because it's the way it is.

AB: So what do you think students want to get out of their athletic experience? Do you think that's changed?

RB: Some of them think they are going to become professionals, but very few of them ever will. But it's a dream they have, they have it when their in high school, they have it when they're playing little league baseball, or little, minor hockey. So there's that little bit. There is some glory attached to it in their minds and admiration by some of the other students, dislike by some of the other students and by the faculty likes and dislikes. So there's that, there is some ego involved there and there is a chance to win, which is why you play, find out who is going to win as your probably aware or otherwise you wouldn't go and play. To come back to your question Angela which is why do they play or are they different now? Give me that question again.

AB: Do they want to get something different out of their experience?

RH: Well, if there were any chance that they were going to get paid they certainly would want to do that, if there were scholarships available and there are in some universities and there are a few in ours. Some assistance there in the second year that they can get, but they would be much better off putting their time, if they put as much time into their studies, actually studying that they put into athletic activities, their average would increase and a number of them would be scholarship students who aren't now because it does take something away, but it also gives you something. I would say this is as an advised person in favour of athletics under the right circumstances, that it does make a person better for instance. Something that a lot of people don't experience at that level at the university varsity level because they just don't have the talent and everybody can't play, everybody doesn't have it.

It is a good feeling if you happen to be on a team, the camaraderie and fellowship or, I hate to use that word fellowship because there's women playing sports but I'll use it, both ways, both teams. There are men's and women's teams; there is a unity there that may help you when you're out in the big world trying to get a job. So there are some benefits and I think its important that the non-student athlete, the kid that comes and watches the game has an impression that's these are some people that they would like to be, they would like to go out and play. Most of the students that go to those games wish that they were playing that game. Male or female. One of the things that I did forget is attitudes towards me or me towards the student athletes. I don't have any now that I'm not at the university, but I always felt that the women were easier for me to accept. They were not always swearing in the dressing room. Their not the same way as guys are. Now they're going to be because their demanding everything that guys want and have and I think that will change but there just seems to be a difference, they were having fun and they might cry after they lost a game, but they had fun. They weren't looking for reward; they would go out and sell cookies to raise money. You can't get these guys on that football team; hockey team or basketball team to make cookies or this to raise some money to go on a trip, but the women did at one time at Saint Mary's when they first started. I can remember Kathy Mullane and Helen Castlegate raising money to take them to Bermuda to play field hockey, or to go to England to play some activity, basketball or whatever and I don't think you could do that with men. You could do that thirty or forty years ago, but not now, and I don't think that will last with the women. We're not going to sell some cookies so somebody can go on a trip. Let the athletic director raise the money. It was refreshing to have women with that attitude and there have been women coaches that didn't mind. They minded, but they did anyways.

AB: Did you ever have any reactions from the other faculty members like negative or positive towards the athletes?

RH: Yes, I had both. They will remain unnamed. As you are aware that many of the priests when there was a change over in the church. Many of the priests got out of the organisation and got married. One of them happened to be a priest from Saint Mary's who used to be on my case quite often about the violence of football and

hockey etc, etc. So a number of years went by this priest got out of the order and married. I was in the arena one day, our hockey coach Boucher, and he said "guess what", I said "what", he said, " You know who was out in this office". I said "No". He said, "Father so and so, he's married now, and he's got a son, and he's enrolling in our hockey school". I said, are you kidding me Boucher. I said, make sure we get a hold of him and lean on him, and tell him his dad is a jerk.

Yes, there was, some because we didn't communicate I don't think as well as we could of partly because we weren't in the union and we weren't faculty members so we were branded as administration and if there some conflict between the faculty and administration, we were in that bag. We were thrown in there that would bring them to say... Well, brought some of them out of the woods, I thought they had no opinion about athletics, but I found out that they had quite a strong negative opinion, and some who would support you, but no as many as the nay-sayers that would come forth under any kind of administration/faculty conflict. You certainly would find out who your friends were then. We had one named Danny McGinnis. I don't mind putting his name down. He's not with us, he went to Saint FX, but he was a faculty member and he started a, he did a survey on athletics and it was aimed at academic inexcellence, non-excellence to prove, that such and such has happened and the academic level of the student athlete is not that of the average student and I think he went to Saint FX because it was such a terrible paper that he did and it was widely circulated amongst the faculty and administration, and the president got it so we did a critique on that ourselves and we pointed out some of the people whose marks he got back from nineteen fifty five, I think he went back to. Some of them weren't even student at the school and he had taken pictures of the teams and they would be playing on our teams and they weren't our students. I said, this is a little of inaccuracy on part of the Sociology Department at Saint Mary's, but he did a very bad job actually. I don't mind saying that on tape, and this critique, which wasn't circulated but gave it to the president and a few of the deans and they didn't say that there was anything wrong with our figures. So there was some negative feels there, not only just verbal but some as we really went out and chased us to try and get us, and of course it's like having your picture put in the paper and saying this guy beat someone over the head with a baseball bat, if there's a retraction six months later you don't remember that, you only remember what you saw in the paper about the baseball bat. So that, what you're asking, there certainly were some negative ones.

AB: But there was positive ones too?

RH: Yep, a guy like Ed McBride, was a political science professor. Not that he would go around yelling and screaming on behalf of the athletic department, but he would show up at the games. There's a lot of them, Burpy Hallet as much as he might say about sports, he comes to the games. There's a lot of them who would not really come out and say, yes I'm in favour of sports, but they're at the games and it depends on the age of the faculty to. When your faculty is into their late fifties and sixties they're not quite as keen on as going to the games as when



they're in their thirties and forties. No question about that. Particularly in that rink of ours, if there happens to be a hockey game they're not interested in going in there because it's a little chilly.

AB: Well that's about all I wanted to cover. Is there anything you can think that you would like to add?

RH: There are many things I can think of Angela, but right now I'm thinking about going on putting that deck in, in the back of this house, but I certainly enjoyed it.

**Tape end here**