

Oral History Interview with Mary Anne Hotchkiss
Conducted by Kathleen Lingley, 2003
Transcription by Danielle Dungey, 2005

- KL- What is your full name?
- MH- My name is Mary Anne Hotchkiss. When I went to Saint Mary's, it was Mary Anne Boudreau.
- KL- And what years were you at Saint Mary's?
- MH- I started in 1969, graduated in 1972, stayed on for two years when I went on to Dalhousie (should I say that?) to take a Master's degree in Math and [I had] to stay in residence for those two years.
- KL- Do you remember any of the professors that you had when you were here?
- MH- Oh my heavens. That's a tough question. Yes, I remember them all but I don't know if I remember their names. Dr. Singh, of course as I took a lot of Math, so I had two Dr. Singhs: the younger one and the older (they were one of my favourite professors actually). I'm trying to think of my [Zoology] professor, I think it was Dr. Bowes; psychology, Dr. Young; oh my...if I saw a list of names, I could probably pick them out.
- KL- Do you remember anything about the ones, like any classroom memories or anything of the ones that you mentioned?
- MH- What I remember the most actually is when...see my first year was the first year women were allowed in residence and I came from a very small village [?] and here I am in the big city of Halifax and then to top it all, I mean the ratio was like one to five or one to seven, girls to guys. So it was like... this was a culture shock for me. So I can remember being a science student, [in] most of my classes there were very few girls, so I'd be one of two or three. So that was a little intimidating but it was okay. And the professors of course were very good. Most of my professors were East Indian cause I took a lot of mathematics and statistics. It took a little while to get used to the accent but once you did, that was fine. And I just...I don't know, I just have great memories. The instructional classes were small- like they weren't huge. I suppose they would be bigger today. So you got a lot of individual attention. I found too that the professors were very assessable any time that you had questions or...you know, they were very welcoming: especially in the Math Department, I really had a good experience there.
- KL- Oh great.
- KL- You lived in residence. You were in the Vanier Residence?
- MH- Yes, "A House".
- KL- What was that like when you were there with all the girls?
- MH- It was great. It was really good. Again, there was just very few of us: we only had "A House" and "B House". So we all got to know each other quite well. Although it's funny because all the "A House" girls and there were the "B House" girls and like, "oh, you're from B House". You know, there was bit of a, not a rivalry, but you didn't know them as well. Everyone in the houses knew each other very well. No locks on the doors- no locks on the bedroom doors. So those of us who were lucky...I mean you never had a single room first year, but those who had a single room second year, there were certain single rooms that the drawer underneath the bed would open near the door and that was your lock. So a few people had locks and that was it. Of course, it locked, the entrance way going up to the...and you had a little intercom. It's still that way I assume. So

we used to meet in the lounge quite often: have sing songs and get togethers. I mean we had no VCRs, movies, nothing like that, so a lot of the entertainment was what we would provide. We had black and white Tvs, three channels- that was it.

KL- [Oh no].

MH- I know [its] hard to imagine nowadays. But I don't know. It's really great. If you can imagine now, you going camping and the great experience that that is. It's just like getting away from everything. Well for us, that's how life was. So you did spend a lot of time together getting to know each other; talking; like I say, sing songs; and staying up half the night chatting rather than sitting there watching a movie. So that part is great memories. Yeah and we only had, I don't know how it is now, but we only had the one phone in the hallway for each...

KL- Each suite?

MH- Right. Is that how it still is?

KL- Yeah, it used to be like that when I came here my first year and now I think every room has their own one.

MH- Oh wow. Luxury...yeah.

KL- So what sort of residence rules were there?

MH- Now this is where you'll have to check with Elizabeth Chard. I know the rules were definitely a lot stricter than they are today, but I can't remember the exact times. But I don't think there was any visiting during the week but on weekends, I can remember Sunday afternoons but on the weekends, on Friday and Saturday night, it was something like 11 or midnight. Yeah, something like that. And the same thing for the male residence. And I can remember our first year, I think it was our first year here or second year, oh what was his name with the Student Council...the President of the Student Council, Mike [Devertai] I think his name was, and they called this big meeting in the cafeteria and we all showed up. We didn't know exactly what it was for and it was to change the rules because the rules were too strict. So we all went, all the residence students, went in the cafeteria and we all broke curfew at the same time. So we figured no one could be disciplined if we all did it. So we broke curfew and I think we got it extended to midnight or one o'clock or something by doing that. So we were heard. It was very organised, very peaceful. But it's funny, Keith was telling me (Keith, my husband who I met at Saint Mary's) that is now, this Mike [Devertai] is now a priest in Trinidad.

KL- No kidding?

MH- Interesting.

KL- Wow.

MH- Yeah. And Father Labelle, I can remember, was the President at the time. So yeah, that was a big move for us. I mean this was really scary to go in to break the rules: I mean whoa! But then we got an extension and like I say, I don't quite remember what the times were, but it was quite strict compared to today.

KL- What sort of things would you have in your residence room? What sort of things did you have in your residence room? Was it just your clothes and that or were you allowed other things?

MH- Oh gosh, we didn't have very many...no, we wouldn't have like microwaves of course or anything like that. We didn't even have phones like I say. So you'd have your schoolwork, your clothes, maybe a radio and that was...

KL- [?]

MH- Oh yeah.

KL- So did Elizabeth Chard live in the residences as well?

MH- Yes.

KL- Where would she have lived?

MH- She lived I believed in the married quarters in Loyola.

KL- Okay.

MH- That would have been in '71 though because that only was built in '71. Prior to that...oh my gosh, this is terrible. I should remember all this. Like the entrance of the "A House", there's a little apartment there and I can remember the den mother living there: Mrs. Habib, I think her name was and I can't remember what year. But Elizabeth, I can remember her living in Loyola but I don't remember where she was the first year.

KL- So what the den mother be responsible for? Making sure you were in by curfew?

MH- Yeah, making sure we didn't break rules and no guys were in the residence and not to noisy and all that kind of stuff.

KL- So were boys allowed to come up to the residence during the weekend?

MH- On the weekend, yeah.

KL- On the weekend. Okay, cool.

KL- What sort of sports were there for women when you first came to Saint Mary's?

MH- Not very many. I think the organised sports as far as...well, Kathy Mullane I think came on board...I think it was '73. So they just had intramural. I had played varsity basketball and volleyball in high school, so I joined intramural and I thought okay and it wasn't quite what I was used to because having played organised sports, the intramural...I don't we even had a referee. When you play basketball, right, you're not supposed to pinch and this kind of stuff, so it was kind of funny. We did that for a little while. My sister and I...was more of an athlete than I was. As far as intramurals, I mean there was volleyball, basketball, football, field hockey I guess and probably soccer but those weren't sports that I played. So I really unfortunately didn't pursue that. I became very studious so as far as getting together with the girls Friday and Saturday nights, going out...I mean downtown was not...we weren't allowed in bars. There was the LVR and that was it. And that was the only bar that women were allowed in and you had to sign in a guy.

KL- [Are you serious]?

MH- Yeah, otherwise we weren't allowed in taverns or anything.

KL- Where was the [?]?

MH- Oh you know [?]....

KL- I've heard of it, I just don't know where it was.

MH- Lord Nelson.

KL- Oh okay.

MH- Yeah, so that was it and the drinking age was 21, so I graduated with a Master's degree the same year that I was allowed to drink. So that was quite something. Yeah, so mainly everything went on on campus but we didn't have the Gorsebrook Lounge then either, so we had dances in the gym, which is now the basement of the theatre auditorium. So that was a big event. Oh my goodness, there was a dance on the weekend. And we'd have Ryan [Spancey] and groups like that on Saint Patrick's Day. It was really a community: everything that went on pretty well went on on campus. So a few of us would venture downtown once in a while but it was not at all the way it is now.

KL- Did you have Winter Carnival when you were a student?

MH- Mmm hmm.

KL- What sort of things...do you remember anything about that?

MH- We'd have groups come in, I remember Stepping Wolf and you know and there'd be parties and Hen Fests. Hen Fests were like after football games and [?]: "Hen" representing Father Hennessey. So it was more like activities like that: dances and activities like that were the main...what I remember the most. I don't know if there were a lot of other...but of course, the football games and the parties and that kind of thing.

KL- So everyone would go out to the football games?

MH- Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Everyone would pretty well...or they'd watch it from residence but, you know...that was major events. And in 1973, of course, we won the first Vanier, or that's the last time we won the Vanier Cup for football. And basketball also won and hockey made it to the finals, so it was like a dynamite year. It was so exciting: the fans would really, really support it. But Winter Carnival, I can remember ice sculptures and I don't know, various activities...again, I'm not the best one to remember all this stuff.

KL- Would the students carve the ice sculptures?

MH- Yes, I do believe some of them would. And we had [Hans Moristat], he was the caterer then, and he would make beautiful, beautiful ice sculptures for banquets and activities.

KL- Wow.

MH- Yeah, he was a private caterer: German, very nice.

KL- That sounds really neat.

MH- Yeah.

KL- Do you remember anything about initiation or the first week that you were at school?

MH- I remember hiding a lot. Yes and oh, I can remember this one girl...and of course, here I was from this small, little community and like oh no, what's going to go on her, but I can remember

they'd look for you and they'd carry you down to the football field and hose you down and make you run and make you do all kinds of silly things. But I pretty well got away with very little: many of us would just hide when we'd see her coming. But it wasn't as organised as it is today. I think they were sympathetic with the fresh [acts], I think.

KL- You guys got off easy.

MH- Yeah we did.

KL- I know you said that you didn't go downtown a lot but were there any other student hang outs around the city that a bunch of you would go to or something?

MH- Not a lot really. Maybe the guys did that more and maybe the city slickers but being from a small town, I didn't venture out downtown for much. I didn't go out to eat or...I remember the Garden View restaurant, I mean ugghh, on Spring Garden road. When I think about it, I won't tell you what they used to call it. Did you ever here of [?]?

KL- I hadn't, no.

MH- It was called the "Gag and Spew". Isn't that terrible? But it was mainly going out to eat, going to a movie. Like I say, we weren't allowed in bars or anything like that, so it was quite different. Everything pretty much went on on campus.

KL- Were you part of any societies or social clubs?

MH- The Science Society. I can remember that I first here, again not knowing anything, and they had all the different booths with the different societies and I think I [ended] up buying cards for every society because I was told I should. So that was...I remember Donna [Calheart] talking me into buying I don't know how many different ones and I found out later that, you know, the Science Society (cause I was a Science student) was the only one I was supposed to buy (and maybe the Residence Students Society). But I can't remember really being that involved, other than the Residence Society and food committees and stuff like that.

KL- What would the Residence Society do?

MH- It was mainly just, you know, to hear any complaints or it was...I don't remember organising, you know, activities but just seeing if you like the food and what we'd like to see changed and just going to a few meetings and just, you know, being a part of that.

KL- You mentioned earlier the Student Council President organising that whole thing about the residence hours. Was there any sort of things like that going on when you were at Saint Mary's?

MH- Not really, that was the big one. Food fights, I can remember a few of those in the cafeteria, so you had to be careful. If one person just decided to throw one roll, well then that was it, then another roll and then a few more. So, you know, that was probably the extent of that kind of stuff that I can remember. We were pretty tame in those days.

KL- Was there a dress code when you were here?

MH- No because we wore mini, mini-skirts and my husband reminds me all the time when my daughter gets ready to go downtown. I say, you're really going out dressed that way? And he'll say, remember the days. I can remember walking to class, going up the stairs and holding my books behind me so that if anyone was walking behind me that I could sort of hide a little bit. I mean they were...I can't believe how short we used to wear our skirts. I mean, I found quite a few years later in the attic, I found this little thing and I was looking at it and thinking, what is it? I thought

it was a little cape. But we wore the hip huggers although we didn't have the midriff showing- we'd always have something tucked in. But the skirts and the pants were hip huggers, so the skirt was very, very tiny and I thought it was a cape but it was one of my mini-skirts. So I got rid of the evidence so my kids wouldn't see that. We wore the bellbottoms. I don't know what you call them today. But it's so similar to the clothes of today, the wide leg. Do you call them bellbottoms? Is that what you're calling them?

KL- They're called flares.

MH- Flares? Yeah, so I mean its come full circle. We wore platform shoes, I mean it's just, polyester- I thought I'd never wear polyester again and here we are. So yeah, as far as...and we all even shared. We always...everyone wanted the long straight hair in those days, so if you didn't have straight hair, you'd iron it. And again, I'm seeing all this, the same sort of look again. So yeah, as far as dress code, we weren't told not to wear mini-skirts or anything like that.

KL- What was registration like? Did you have to line up in a big line?

MH- Yes, I can remember being a little confused because we didn't know where you were: like you had to go to the Registrar's Office and where's the Register's Office and they'd tell you what building. Of course, you didn't have as many students as today. I think you'd go in the gym at the time and later on the Mulit-purpose Room, which we know call the Conference?

KL- Yeah, the Conference Room.

MH- And all the professors would be there and they'd all advise you and help you. It was pretty good. I mean at first, the first year it's a little overwhelming cause you don't know where...and then the Business Office and having to, you know, straighten your accounts and all that kind of stuff. But no, I didn't find it too bad.

KL- Where did you buy the books?

MH- We bought the books at the Bookstore.

KL- Where was that?

MH- But where was the Bookstore?

KL- Hard question?

MH- Yes, oh my goodness. Well we did have the student centre, so it must have been...

KL- [Well that's where it is now].

MH- Yeah, cause that's all I can remember. I'm thinking of the one at Dal, but...whoops, sorry, [I] shouldn't mention that.

KL- You were one of the first classes of the [independent] Saint Mary's, right?

MH- Well I guess women were registering full-time the year before.

KL- Okay.

MH- But my year, 1969, was the first year women were in residence. It was officially co-ed in '68.

- KL- Okay. Do you remember any sort of discussions around co-education, sort of like the public thought at that time?
- MH- About Saint Mary's becoming co-ed?
- KL- Mmm hmm.
- MH- As far as public, no. It's funny, I find, I don't know about other students, but once I got on this campus everything was about the campus, everything was about classes, everything was about the professors, everything was about the other students. And as far as really being involved in the political aspects of things, for some reason that wasn't interesting at the time-later on, it became interesting but the first few years, the interest to what was going on outside the community, it was like everything was within Saint Mary's. But as far as, you know, getting any feedback or negative feedback from professors or administrators, not at all, I didn't find that. But I've talked to some other girls that attended and they found the opposite: they found that they had a hard time breaking in, but I didn't find that at all. I thought it was all very welcoming. Yeah...quite happy to see us arrive. Although, Father Hennessey used to tease us all the time and he'd [say], oh, this place will never be the same now that you women have, you know, come over here, it used to be so fine with all men. You know, tongue in cheek. But I know he was really happy to see us on campus. No, I thought everything was quite positive.
- KL- Do you remember any other stories about Father Hennessey?
- MH- He was just a great guy, very, very concerned with the students and the students, you know, were first. I don't know...Saint Mary's was Father Hennessey and Father Hennessey was Saint Mary's. It just seemed like he was always such an important part. He was Dean of the men at the time and of course, the Jesuits played a huge part in Saint Mary's and of course, it was a Catholic university at the time. He was just there at all the sports activities. And [he] just really, really, loved Saint Mary's and you could sense that and you just felt that comfort of being around him that he loved this place and therefore, you were going to love it too. He was just a great person to know.
- KL- That's great.
- KL- What was Dr. Chard in charge of as Dean of Women?
- MH- Well she was in charge of all the women in residence, so the, what you call RA's now, the Dons. She'd have, you know, meetings. Of course, she'd have to have meetings with the Dons and make sure that everything was, all the rules were followed. Of course, placement of students in residence. I'm trying to think of what else that would be disciplinary...I became Dean of Women, just Assistant Director of Residence (once I graduated, Mrs. Chard went on to Registrar). So I should...I'm trying to remember all of my responsibilities. Yeah, it was mainly discipline, placements, making sure the Dons were...making sure that all the students were behaving and following the rules and if anyone was homesick or the occasional time a few girls would get into it and you'd have to go and solve those problems, roommate problems, whatever. When I was there, I also had conferences, I was conference [woman]. Now they have different people doing all those different things. But going back to Father Hennessey, I should mention, he actually married Keith and I.
- KL- Oh, did he?
- MH- Yeah, so that was quite nice. He came down to Matagan. He didn't venture out to the furthest that people would ask him, you know, to do weddings, christenings, and whatever, so much so, I was very pleased he came to Matagan and christened our first child too.
- KL- Oh wow.

MH- Yeah. And he married my sister and her husband. So yeah, he was a saint.

KL- That's really neat.

KL- What sort of changes did you notice when the Jesuits left?

MH- Wow, of course, it wasn't so much a Catholic university. I think maybe that's when I found more changes with the rules, like I don't know exactly what it is now, is there any visiting regulations or if it's just wide open?

KL- Wide open, do what you want.

MH- That would not have happened, I don't think, when it was a Jesuit university- maybe they would have made it a little bit more lenient (not quite as strict). I don't know, I can remember, you know, when I was here, all the many Catholics, we'd all go to church every Sunday (I don't know if this is still a priority with students) cause we had the church right on campus...well, now there's still Canadian Martyrs. So I think, from what I see, there's still that core that feel that, you know, that's important. And of course, you don't have to be Catholic to go to church- it's Christian more or less now. But as far as huge, dramatic changes like all of a sudden overnight, no, it was quite gradual. Well, all the core people were still here, you know, a lot of the Jesuits were still here even if it wasn't, you know, a Jesuit university. So it wasn't...it was very gradual and not drastic.

KL- [Which were] your first impressions of Saint Mary's coming from a smaller place?

MH- [?]. It's funny cause, you know, in Halifax everything was so big to me cause I was just from a small community but I just found the people very nice, very caring, that they really cared about who you were and I came with me sister so that seemed to be very special: "oh, there's two of you here at the same time". I mean, you just felt so special, you know. I can remember at Student Services, it was Ken [?] at the time (it's funny cause that's where my husband works now), and the fact that there were two of us in the same family, oh there's a little, you know, scholarship, bursary that you can have because they're two of you here. It was just, like if you didn't ask, they would tell you cause it was still small enough that they would seek you out and give you information rather than you having to, you know, find out on your own. So it was very personal, very welcoming: I really felt it was my home away from home. It was really nice.

KL- What do you find sort of changed now that you have your daughter, who's at Saint Mary's right?

MH- Mmm hmm.

KL- What sort of changes have you noticed in [any of] her experiences from yours?

MH- Wow, I should have asked her that. Of course, it's bigger, you know, not dramatically so but it's bigger than when we were here. Of course like I said, the rules and the residences and stuff are more open and there's the Gorsebrook Lounge right on the campus. Although, the main difference I find is students today have the downtown experience that we didn't have: mostly everything was on campus for us. Yet I find, like my, of course, my kids didn't live in residence, so they didn't have that experience that I had: they were what we called the "Day-hawks then". Yet being involved in sports, you still had that sense of community that I think I had in residence- there was still that comradeship. And I still think that people at Saint May's feel very, very close, so whether or not you're all downtown, I think they all meet at the same places and they all sort of congregate at the same places, so they have their little mini-campus downtown I think. But there's still that sense of loyalty and belonging, And if I dare mention Dal again and of course, by the time I went to Dal, it was at the Master's level so it's not like undergraduate, but it was more like a job, like you'd go there and you'd do your thing and go home; while at Saint Mary's, I don't know, it was more of a [hubbub], it wasn't where you went to work, it was where you lived, where

you did everything. Yeah, so I don't think it's all that different. You know, when kids are young and all a sudden they're with the same age group where there's so many of you at one place, you know, there is that sense of belonging: you have something in common obviously.

KL- Well, I asked all my questions, did you have anything to add that I didn't ask you about?

MH- Oh my, I did have a couple things that I jotted down, but I think we pretty well covered everything except I can remember in those days, the boys, I mean, the long hair. I wrote in my letter to the Bell's mentioning how I used to cut hair for a few people in residence including Father Hennessey's and I used to get in hot water with [Luigi] the barber because he'd say, you're taking away what little business I have, cause all the men would have long hair and sideburns. Well now, I find men, boys spent more time with their hair than the girls do. I mean they dye and they get it cut and its you know...so that was quite different in those days.

KL- How did you ever come to cut Father Hennessey's hair?

MH- I don't know how I came to cut hair period. Well I think I started cutting Keith's hair, like I said cause they used to let it grew long, so just a little trim. And I cut the hair of the girls in residence and word just got out that I would cut a few friends' hair and then Father Hennessey found out and says, hey, how about cutting my hair and I said sure. So yeah, that was funny. I think we pretty well covered everything.

KL- Alright, I'll just turn this off then.

Tape stops, then resumes.

MH- I can remember like sometimes it was too noisy to study in residence or of course, I didn't have a single room my first year, so I just wanted to go and find a spot where I could study and you'd get an empty classroom or whatever. And I can remember, there was a janitor, Francis who's Italian (I can't remember his last name), and I, he got to see me quite often and I'd stay, you know, I'd stay 'till 10, 10:30 because even in the library sometimes you'd meet people and you'd start talking and, you know, you wouldn't study. And he'd always come and check on me and he'd make sure that I'd walk back to residence safely. But anyway, I found this spot and it's still there, I went to see it recently, it's a bathroom on, well now it's at the bottom of the Theatre Auditorium.

Tape stops-end of side one.

MH- **[First part is cut off by tape]**...but just down the hall, there's a ladies' washroom and no one hardly ever used it, I mean, no one knew it was there and when you first walk in, there was this huge counter, so I would sit there with my chair and I'd have my own private office and that was my own private office. And poor Francis would check around 10, 10:30, knock on the door and I'd say, I'm gonna be another half hour and he'd say, okay make sure you let me know when you're done, and he'd make sure I got to residence safely. But that was my private office. I was so excited. I mean, I did the best studying ever there. So yeah, that's one of my fondest memories and just oh gosh, a month or so ago, I went to see it and it's still there- they painted it. They painted it white I think, my counter. But that was very special, so now I don't know if with people going in and out, it wouldn't be a private office anymore. Anyway, I had to share that memory.

KL- That's a good one.

MH- Yeah.

Tape stops-end of interview.