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Lois Brun, Ginny Saxton, Ann Persensky: Marian Library Oral Histories

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University of Dayton

Marian Library

Marian Library Oral Histories: Lois Brun, Ginny Saxton, Ann Persensky

Date: 25 September 2018
Interviewees: Lois Brun, Ginny Saxton, Ann Persensky
Interviewer: Kayla Harris
Recording by: Ryan O'Grady

00:00:05 [Kayla Harris]

This interview is being conducted for the Marian Library 75th Anniversary Oral History Project. The interviewer is Marian Library Archivist Kayla Harris. The video recording is being done by Digital Projects manager Ryan O'Grady, and we have three narrators with us today Lois Brun, Ginny Saxton, and Ann Persensky. Today is Tuesday, September 25, 2018 and we are in Roesch Library. Thank you all for agreeing to be a part of this project. So, could you each introduce yourself and tell us about your current or former occupation? Whichever order you want.

00:00:48 [Ann Persensky]

Okay, I'll start. I was a school teacher for 33 years, I taught in Fairborn, with sixth grade students, mostly. Middle aged kids, somebody has to love them, right? And then, my husband died in 1993, and then I volunteered at St. Elizabeth Hospital for a while, and then, do you want to know how I came to this? Or you just wanted to know history, right now?

00:01:20 [Kayla Harris]

Start with that, first. We'll get to that in a second. Okay.

00:01:25 [Ginny Saxton]

Oh, we're ready. I'm Ginny and I've been at the Marian Library for 19 years. My career, well, a mother. I worked at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in laboratory of nuclear medicine for 20 years, and then I was retired, and then my husband passed away, he'd been a professor here. So I didn't want to volunteer at a hospital, and I wanted to work at a library. And after a year, I came over here to

work in the library because I like books, and they assigned me to the lady in charge of art, which I was afraid I'd break. But it turned out to be really special, and so I do a lot of work with the nativities, with the Christmas displays, and that's it.

00:02:25 [Kayla Harris]

Lois do you want to give us an introduction?

00:02:26 [Lois Brun]

Okay well after I raised my nine children, I still had a 16 year old at home, and my husband ended up being on disability, and so I got a part-time job as working in the daycare center for Immaculate Conception daycare, for 19 years, and then I was on retreat when Michele Devitt happened to be on the same retreat and said that Sister Jean was in dire need of help because this big donation coming from Australia needed to be unpacked, and I said that sounds like something I could do, so I've been here ever since.

00:03:25 [Kayla Harris]

Well that was going to be my next question, what brought you here, specifically, to the Marian Library? So I know Ginny and Lois have touched on that a little bit, and Ann if you want to chime in with your to UD story as well, that'd be great.

00:03:38 [Ann Persensky]

Well I received a phone call from Connie Breen, she was one of the starters of this whole thing to get Father Roten to display some of these creches and things that he had, and she told me that Father Bert Buby gave her my name to call me, and being of Irish decent, if the good Father asked you to do something, you gotta do it, right? And then there was an invitation to go to Connie's house for some kind of reception-

00:04:14 [Ginny Saxton]

Reception

00:04:15 [Ann Persensky]

Of some sort, I forget what, or just with, to meet people, and so I went, and Harry Mushenheim said, I said to him, "I don't know why I'm here, and now I know why I went to that luncheon." And so it was Father Bert who recruited me through Connie Breen, and so I came, and they were downstairs on the second floor, and it has exploded since then.

00:04:41 [Kayla Harris]

How did you know Father Bert?

00:04:43 [Ann Persensky]

I was on a retreat he had. I was one of Burt's babes, that's what we called ourselves. Father Burt had a retreat out at Bergamo, oh I don't know, first one I went to was 1979, and so I was there, until he quit doing it, and then a couple times after that with whoever substituted for him, but anytime we were ever around him we just always told people we were Burt's babes. That's probably, I shouldn't say that, you probably shouldn't put that on there.

(laughter)

00:05:20 [Kayla Harris]

No, no

00:05:21 [Lois Brun]

It's already being taped, I think Ann.

00:05:23 [Ginny Saxton]

Too late

00:05:25 [Kayla Harris]

It's a good story. Okay and Ginny you said you wanted to volunteer at the library, and Lois, you said you came from a retreat with Michelle, what retreat was that?

00:05:43 [Lois Brun]

It was a late retreat, Ascension Parish has every year, led by the light, and um, I wondered whether that was the year that Father Buby had the retreat? (chuckles)

00:06:03 [Kayla Harris]

So can you tell me a little bit about what you do for the Marian Library. Maybe start with the typical day, or however you want to describe it.

00:06:21 [Ginny Saxton]

I think it's been a thing that's evolved from over the years that I've been here where we had just a few pieces, relatively few that were organized and labeled, and then as more and more people contributed items, they had to be photographed and documented, and so it grew until it got to be where we had so much, that we should share it. And then things were loaned out on campus to other parishes, and now the work has been moved over to a general, a regulated workshop, a big area, where we can work especially on that, and then we just, it's just constantly finding thing to loan, and checking things back in, so it goes all year around now, even though it's nativities.

00:07:21 [Ann Persensky]

I started probably a year or two before that Australian collection, and it had outgrown what Ginny started with, and they had moved over into this building and were down on the second floor, and the thing I remember most about that was I sat next to Harry, and Ginny and they were showing me how to wrap, and how to protect them, and then all of a sudden, we got this donation that came. Some lady found it in her attic, remember that? It was all out of cardboard, they ended up making a- we had to wash every piece with distilled water, and Father made a, actually a big setting out, it was over there on the seventh floor, called the creche mountain, but when you looked at that you said, why are we keeping this? You know, and then what they turned out and did with it, I think Michelle Forrest was still here for that.

00:08:13 [Ginny Saxton]

Mike did a lot

00:08:15 [Ann Persensky]

Yeah

00:08:16 [Ginny Saxton]

Mike did a ton

00:08:17 [Ann Persensky]

Mike Foley repairs and repairs and repairs, and he does amazing things, well those guys who are over there do amazing things. Well you saw that train set, they just built that, and the houses and everything to go with it. But, just getting that stuff cleaned up, and then bang, the Australian collection came and there were over, I know over 1285. I know more than that, that had to be inputted into the computer, and they went from everything to one that's built on the head of a toothpick, that's over there.

00:08:57 [Ginny Saxton]

A straight pin.

00:08:56 [Ann Persensky]

Painted on the top of a tack, I mean this lady had a collection of all kinds, to huge ones, and it took quite a while to- do you remember how many? Boxes about this size?

00:09:10 [Lois Brun]

165.

00:09:10 [Ann Persensky]

165 boxes filled with nativities. So we were moved up to the fourth floor where they had some more room, not where we are now, just a little room, and we started unpacking those, and cataloging those-

00:09:29 [Lois Brun]

And taking paper out, and folding it, and stacking it, and stacking it. There were tissue paper and

00:09:38 [Ginny Saxton]

Heavy paper.

00:09:41 [Lois Brun]

And unprinted newspaper, paper, and we had brown paper on tables like this, and we'd make a line and as we'd unpack, okay this piece goes with this set, and this set and this set, and we had to get all of these sets together.

(chuckles)

00:10:03 [Kayla Harris]

So were the sets sometimes not all, like all together? Maybe they were all in the box?

00:10:09 [Lois Brun]

They were in the box, but yeah we got to match them up.

00:10:11 [Ann Persensky]

So you just wrapped the pieces and put them in there.

00:10:14 [Lois Brun]

So somebody would be sitting there just doing the smoothing the paper, because Sister Jean we did not waste anything.

(laughter)

We're probably still using some of the same tissue paper.

00:10:32 [Kayla Harris]

And so, for the record, for future listeners, the Australia collection, that was Elizabeth van Mullenkom?

00:10:41 [Ann Persensky]

Van Mullenkom. And it came 2009, you said.

00:10:46 [Ginny Saxton]

January, I think they were hoping. It came on a container ship from Australia, and, where did it come into, Seattle, or someplace? And then it was shipped, trucked, to Cincinnati, and then from there, came here. And then the movers just unloaded and unloaded and we just had boxes down the whole hall of these sets, and some were tiny and some were huge, big paper mache ones that the pieces would stand this tall-

00:11:23 [Ann Persensky]

Almost life sized.

00:11:21 [Ginny Saxton]

And so, it was just, just amazing, this lady just had everything.

00:11:29 [Kayla Harris]

Now the Marian Library does.

00:11:31 [Ann Persensky]

Yep, that wasn't the only one. Then we got the Larish Collection, and we got the Davis Collection, and then we got the Bruce Collection, and people were just, have heard about it, and now when they're ready to downsize their collections, they've heard about the Marian Library. And we're outgrowing what we have now.

00:11:53 [Ginny Saxton]

Should we say what a community project it has turned out to be?

00:11:57 [Kayla Harris]

Yeah

00:11:58 [Ginny Saxton]

Father Roten thought, we have all this, and somebody should see it, so we got all the materials in January, we'd hoped to get them before so that the following Christmas,

00:12:11 [Kayla Harris]

The Australian materials?

00:12:12 [Ginny Saxton]

Yes, they made, they had the whole first floor, lots of shelves on the second floor, and shelves on the seventh floor here, and they made an open house, called At the Manger, the city, the community was invited to come, on Saturday after Thanksgiving, for kind of a family celebration. And there was musicians and there was food, and there was the display, and little

games for the kids, and it got to be where be where people started saying, they kept coming back, are you going to have it next year? That was the shocker, we thought, oh my gosh, we're going to do this next year?

00:12:54 [Ann Persensky]

I've heard people disappointed that we haven't done it the last couple years. They said it's been part of their family tradition, and I have one of my relatives, come from out of town, and what do they want to do is come here and see the nativities.

00:13:10 [Kayla Harris]

So it's been a little bit downsized due to the renovations, or revamped a little bit.

00:13:17 [Ginny Saxton]

There was no place to properly display it where you could do everything like it's usually done, to have enough space for the people to come, and you know, it just had to be postponed.

00:13:27 [Ann Persensky]

Was it last year we did behind the scenes? Or was that the year before?

00:13:32 [Ginny Saxton]

Last year, they did open up here they could come and see our work area, and some displays in other places, but it wasn't as elaborate as those first ones.

00:13:43 [Kayla Harris]

How did the people receive seeing the behind the scenes?

00:13:46 [Ginny Saxton]

They really were kind of interested, they didn't, I think they were surprised, to see how much was there, and then we had the train up there, and the kids were beside themselves to see the train, with the stops at the, it was almost like the stations, the enunciation, the visitation, all the way around, the birth, the escape into Egypt. All those, the train would stop, there would be a narration, short narration, a little song, then it would move on to the next site. It was a big hit.

00:14:23 [Ann Persensky]

It still is.

00:14:24 [Ginny Saxton]

Yeah, it's still there.

00:14:27 [Lois Brun]

Yeah they have, the university has really moved us around cause I know when I came, and it was the couple rooms, I mean, that's NCR building, that floor was basically all open except for a couple rooms, and we were there, then we had to pack everything up, and move to the fourth floor, and a lot of our stuff was there on the first floor, and that was the year, after we moved to the first floor, that somebody left the water running, on the second floor.

00:15:09 [Ginny Saxton]

It broke.

00:15:12 [Lois Brun]

Water main broke or something on the second floor, and got a lot of our stuff wet on the first floor.

00:15:21 [Kayla Harris]

What type of clean up did you guys have to do?

00:15:23 [Lois Brun]

Well, I think it ruined a lot of our bases.

00:15:27 [Ginny Saxton]

The figures and the statues were pretty well protected, they had the plexiglass cover over the top, with fabric covers, and then sheets of plastic. So the water didn't, we didn't have much art damage,

00:15:45 [Ann Persensky]

The bases

00:15:45 [Ginny Saxton]

The bases, the wooden bases had water stains, you know, several inches.

00:15:51 [Ann Persensky]

Those are expensive little buggers.

00:15:53 [Lois Brun]

Yeah I think weren't they about 300 dollars a piece, I heard?

00:15:56 [Ann Persensky]

I don't, I heard the plexis, the covers that go over 'em were that, the bases I don't know how much they were, but

00:16:07 [Lois Brun]

And then they moved us, did we get moved any place else, again, or did they finally get us upstairs

00:16:30 [Ann Persensky]

They, we were up on the fourth floor, in one small area. And then they elaborated the area, and gave us a storage area for all of the artwork, and the nativities, and the Mary statues, there's a lot over there.

00:16:34 [Lois Brun]

Pictures, and-

00:16:36 [Ann Persensky]

Yeah, the flat art. And that's one of the things I do, somebody comes in and donates something, well it was Olivia the last one that would do that,

00:16:51 [Kayla Harris]

Olivia Gillingham?

00:16:53 [Ann Persensky]

Yes, I think, I think that's what her last name was, would come in and make a record of it, and write all the stuff that was, and just set it on a table for me. I had to go out there and find a location for it, I still do that, I was doing that today. I think she left about four things, when she left, I came in, that you find locations for. And then I help people find locations, like she's trying to find her stained glass right now for one of the tables they're going to set up.

00:17:30 [Kayla Harris]

When you say, find locations, so find like a spot that's open, or find a spot that it would fit in with?

00:17:36 [Ann Persensky]

Both, I look, you've been over there you see they have all those boxes and they're about full, and then sometimes something has gone out and not come back, or been broken and we'll put a little sign in I that says, room for more, and but at first it was like all the Australian Collection was together, as much as possible, then the Davis Collection is pretty much together, and the Larish Collection and the Baker Collection, you know these people that have donated like the Friends of

the Creche, now that they know about it, so now I've given up trying to just keep everything separate, now I'm just trying to find a spot that it will fit in. Like an example, we had this two little candles holders that came in, and they were Peruvian, and that's one of the she left on the table for me, and I thought where in the heck to put it? So I went around and looked up on the computer, Peru nativities, and found one that's like a centerpiece, that you could use as a centerpiece, so I decided to put the little two candle holders beside it, you know, even though these were current, and that was like an MLA or MLD, now explaining that, most of the identifications they've put on it, ML, meaning it's the Marian Library, then if it's an MLD, it's Marian Library, Davis Collection, and MLA, is Marian Library, Australian Collection. Now we have one that's ML, and it has a B in it, that's the Bruce Collection. (laughter) You know, so it's, maybe an MLA, that I stuck an ML in. You know, I just have to find places to put em. And as fast as I can put em away, Ginny takes em out.
(laughter)

00:19:38 [Ginny Saxton]

I think, Father Roten has been kind of the backbone of this, the nativities, and he, well he's from Switzerland, and then he travels, a lot, and gives lectures, a lot. So he knows people all over the world. And people know we have this library, of art. And quite often then, they'll call up and say, you know, I can't take care of this anymore, would you be interested? And so, he will evaluate and decide whether this is something that would fit here, cause we certainly want it to be well cared for, so we really get items from all over the world.

00:20:26 [Kayla Harris]

So then Ginny, do you do some of the matching? Like if someone comes and says, or a parish, or a location comes, and says we want x, and then, is that something you kind of do, where you pick things that you think would-

00:20:42 [Ginny Saxton]

A lot of people do that, now like there might be a parish that wants, maybe they have a mission somewhere in Peru, that Christmas they'll want Peruvian nativities, so we kind of work with that, all of us, when somebody makes a request for something, we kind of think, well what do they like, or what's their space like, or you know they kind of say, you know, we'd like African, or we would like European, and so we hunt, we can actually go to the computer and insert those names, and it will bring up sets that match that title.

00:21:22 [Ann Persensky]

But there are actually two different, Ginny does mostly on campus loans, and Jean Nickleman does mostly the outreach, for these various parishes, she and Ann Malone, right? They try and

get the, parishes will call, you know like my parish, St. Luke's in Beaver Creek, always gets eleven settings every year, since they found out about this.

00:21:50 [Lois Brun]

That was part the thing we did when the Australian shipment came in, part of our job was to measure each piece, what was the tallest, and what was the shortest, or the widest. Because when people request a set, for department, just like Ascension, we have shelves, so you know, a set can only be so, well I think they can, shelves can be raised, or lowered, but I think the depth is such and such, so she's limited to what goes there, so the computer has the height and the weight. But that was our job too, when that big shipment came in.

00:22:36 [Kayla Harris]

Probably very time consuming.

00:22:38 [Ann Persensky]

Oh yes. Oh yes, all of them, when they come in big like that.

00:22:43 [Lois Brun]

So then we have to wrap these things when they go, and it depends upon where they're going, who's transporting, I mean they've got to be wrapped in tissue, and plenty of bubble wrap, so that if they're jarred, that they don't, you know, you look at those delicate fingers and crowns and things, and unfortunately they don't always wrap them like we wrap them to send to them. So all those pieces have to be unpacked again, when they come back, and each piece checked.

00:23:23 [Ann Persensky]

And then each piece returned to their location.

00:23:28 [Lois Brun]

So that's why we are working all year round.

00:23:32 [Ginny Saxton]

But it's delightful to know how much people enjoy seeing them, or when you deliver to an office, or take them to a parish, and you walk in, and say, I've got some nativities, and they just, oh really, okay! So they're very excited to get them and to set things up.

00:23:51 [Kayla Harris]

That may partially answer this question, but why do you volunteer? Why do you continue volunteering for the Marian Library?

00:24:01 [Ginny Saxton]

Well, there's a lot to do, and you like doing it, so, there is a little bit of an advantage to being a volunteer because you can say, I'm going on a family vacation in a couple of weeks, so I'm not going to be here, so there is the flexibility, and everybody works together really well. We have a good time when we have lunch time together.

00:24:30 [Lois Brun]

And we can choose, pretty much choose, everybody has a gift, and some people don't like to wrap, some people don't to do other jobs. One gal liked to measure the fabric that was donated to us, and we didn't know whether we had a one yard piece or five yards and she'd measure it, and pin it onto the fabric, so that when our men need new fabric for a background set, why he knows he's got enough material there to do the job. But she didn't like wrapping, she didn't like to straighten paper, so we knew kind of what other people like to do. Now I'm kind of handicapped in a degree, they bring a lot of work to me, and I don't have to lift some of the heavy, when you get stoneware, and heavy ceramics, and if they're stacked five to a stack, and the one you want is on the bottom,

00:25:46 [Ann Persensky]

Always, always.

00:25:48 [Lois Brun]

I'm either not tall enough, or I can't lift all of them, so they bring stuff to me.

00:25:55 [Ann Persensky]

And when she says they bring stuff to her, we also bring people to her, somebody comes, a new volunteer, I said, this is Lois, you sit down with Lois and she'll teach you to, wrap carefully, so we don't just bring boxes for her.

00:26:10 [Lois Brun]

And the first thing is, no knots, no tape, and what else is it?

00:26:18 [Ginny Saxton]

Now the dream of this art ware being stored, as well as it is, is amazing. To think we have the boxes, we have little pictures of each piece on the front of the box, and that was something that, well there's no way we could do that, they'd be too tiny to see. They're not, it worked.

00:26:42 [Lois Brun]

Yeah that's evolved over the years.

00:26:44 [Ann Persensky]

I'm not at all computer savvy, or anything. I mean I almost retired, almost, before the computers became into schools, not really, but almost, because I retired in 95- 96 was my last year teaching, but it's amazing, what you can do, you know, you make those, she said put picture, Sister Jean, I don't know why she asked me to do that, and I learned how to do that, the most frustrating thing to me is when they update the computer all the time. Stuff gets lost, like right now I can't do some of the things they want me to do, cause it disappeared from the computer. And until one of those students come back, to know how to, Anna Dorsey, I need Anna to come back, and tell me, find it, cause she put it on there originally, then they did some update or something like that, bang, it's just gone. And you don't know why it's gone.

00:27:42 [Kayla Harris]

How were they categorized before they had the little identifying pictures on the front of the boxes? How did you find what you needed?

00:27:51 [Lois Brun]

Numbers on the box, catalog numbers on the box. Yeah there's a catalog number on the bottom of each item, so if there's 10 pieces to a set, all ten pieces have to have.

00:28:05 [Ann Persensky]

The ML number

00:28:06 [Lois Brun]

The ML catalog number on them.

00:28:09 [Ann Persensky]

But back when there was just down on one floor, and they only had a few of those cabinets, cases, you know where you'd put them in, Sister Jean would write on, have you write on the box, what's in it. Okay, and then I think when I started they had A through G, and that's each cabinet had fives shelves on it, and that would be cabinet A, cabinet B, cabinet C type thing like this, and now we ran out of, the whole alphabet, so now we went through double the alphabet, AA, BB, CC, then we ran out of that, now we're AX, BX, CX and I think we're about out of that too, and we have no place else to go anywhere. But they, we quit writing on the box and then learned to do thumbnails, those are the little picture that are on the box. And Sister Jean taught me how to do that. And so then, that's how ended up on the computer a lot.

00:29:14 [Lois Brun]

So all of our artwork too, the pictures, they all have, they have the tag with the catalog number, but now they all have a picture.

00:29:23 [Ann Persensky]

And I had to do that too, she taught me how to do that too. And it's all that flat art, and then some of the flat art is in file cabinets, and then they have the little thumbnails on the front of the file cabinets, showing everything that's in there.

00:29:43 [Lois Brun]

Sister Jean was hilarious, she rescued everything that she could from NCR, or that was in this building that looked like it was going to be gotten rid of, or someplace else. Chairs, and cabinets, and tables.

00:29:59 [Ann Persensky]

If it was out for the trash she had it.

00:30:01 [Lois Brun]

You name it

00:30:01 [Ann Persensky]

Even when students left the campus and left stuff out, you know they graduated and didn't want to take it home with them, if she saw something she thought we'd use, she'd had it. (laughter)

00:30:15 [Kayla Harris]

Very, resourceful.

00:30:17 [Ann Persensky]

Yes she was

00:30:17 [Lois Brun]

Oh yes. She didn't waste anything.

00:30:20 [Ann Persensky]

Knowledgeable too.

00:30:25 [Ginny Saxton]

Yeah, she's retired, and she lives in Waukesha, Wisconsin now, and we miss her.

00:30:36 [Kayla Harris]

Do you, any of you, have a particular piece or art, or a nativity, that's a personal favorite at the Marian Library?

00:30:48 [Ann Persensky]

From the collection, oh.

00:30:49 [Kayla Harris]

Yeah from the collection first.

00:30:53 [Ginny Saxton]

Oh that's too hard to pick one. Yeah I was going to say

00:30:55 [Kayla Harris]

Or a couple.

00:30:56 [Ginny Saxton]

No I think every time you see one, you see something special about it. There are some, sometimes there's a style you like better than another. You might like colorful, you might like wood carved, but all the pieces are really fine work, and so you appreciate everything.

00:31:16 [Kayla Harris]

What style do you think you like then?

00:31:19 [Ginny Saxton]

I have a couple of styles, I kind of like the traditional, that would be the European, now that there are some that are more colorful statues, then the German has a lot of wood carved, and the African has the black, ebony ones that are beautiful, and then there's Israeli art wood, the olive wood, that's their style, so they're all very pretty. Very beautiful.

00:31:55 [Ann Persensky]

I think it changes in time when you see one, but right now my favorite one is the one that's on the seventh floor, from Africa, you know each figure cut from a different tree. And didn't even know that ebony, the further in you carved on it, the color changed. And that's kind of strange, but I think that's a gorgeous set, that's my favorite one. Then the other one I like, or I like to see, is when they make a Jesus that looks like he's Middle East, and a Mary, and a Joseph, you know, I like the traditional, you know, blonde haired blue eyed, European ones, but Jesus was not European, he was Middle East, and but still I like the colorful one, and trying to help Ginny find things that people write down, and sometimes they aren't specific, they say, I want a large one, and you don't know whether they want one that has a lot of pieces, or they want one that's tall, you know, a large nativity which

00:32:57 [Kayla Harris]

Can mean different things

00:33:01 [Ann Persensky]

Can mean different things, as you try to interpret those things, we found some we hadn't seen for a while, and we enjoyed that, looking, finding them.

00:33:12 [Kayla Harris]

What about you Lois? Do you have a particular style or pieces that-

00:33:18 [Lois Brun]

Probably the more traditional, like the Fontanini, but I admire the Llardo, and some other really fine porcelain ones, but as far as personal to have in my home, they're too fine for me. But you know, I admire the artwork in them.

00:33:44 [Kayla Harris]

Do you have nativity sets at home? And if so, how many, what are they like?

00:33:51 Lois Brun]

I have right now, a Jim Shore, but I have one that I haven't used for years and it's the old style that they used in the forties and the fifties, it was my mother-in-laws. And with the great big stable, but it takes up a lot of room and it's a lot of work for me to get out, where one box will take care of Jim Shore's but I always kept my mother-in-law's cause she spread, she lived in a double, and she spent one whole wall, with the help of my husband when he was at home, create a mountain out of old fashioned, what did they call it back then, oil cloth, and painted it gray to look like mountains, and so the shepherds and the sheep were up on the hill, and stars painted on there, and took up the whole, like I said, a whole wall in their living room.

00:35:03 [Ann Persensky]

That's traditional

00:35:04 [Lois Brun]

But I needed the space to live in, I couldn't spare all that room.

00:35:08 [Ann Persensky]

That's traditional in some European countries, I think, where they have a whole, or maybe it's a different, I don't know where it is

00:35:15 [Lois Brun]

It's almost like that one

00:35:19 [Ann Persensky]

that mountain, the Fontanini, that creche mountain?

00:35:22 [Lois Brun]

Is it the creche mountain that one that's got that big, we had it right there by the elevator, on the second floor?

00:35:30 [Ginny Saxton]

That's the Italian

00:35:32 [Lois Brun]

Yeah that they redid everybody, rearranged everybody every year.

00:35:41 [Kayla Harris]

Do you two have nativities in your homes?

00:35:45 [Ann Persensky]

Yes I do, but I keep giving them away, and then I joined this Friends of the Creche, and they have four and five hundred and I have two sets, one is stained glass that my brother-in-law made, so I have it. And then the other is, my brother gave to me, and it's Unesco company, but it was, they have a setting thing called little Bible figures, and he would give me, I would have Noah, and all these little Bible figures that I would put out, and then there was a nativity made by them, and he got it, and so I have that one, which is there, and other ones I have given away to people. So I just have two nativities, and I get them out, and I like them both.

00:36:47 [Ginny Saxton]

My main one is a Fontanini that my daughter started the collection one time, with the stable and a few of the pieces, and over the years have added more and more, you know, camels and kings and that's one. I have one I really like, it's a pewter one, it's only about five or six inches tall that my daughter got when she was traveling in Europe. Then I have a little tiny one that is Mexican, it's blue and white, the little figures, and Father Roten had given to us one year for Christmas. I have maybe five, I don't collect, per say.

00:37:24 [Ann Persensky]

Yeah, I have a lot of nativity ornaments on my Christmas tree, but not whole nativity sets.

00:37:42 [Kayla Harris]

So earlier you mentioned that you guys have a good time together when you do lunch. Are there other activities, or just tell me a little bit about the social aspect of volunteering for the Marian Library.

00:37:59 [Ginny Saxton]

Most of our socializing is here. We live in various areas of town, and so we, it's mainly that, maybe some go out to dinner once in a while, or.

00:38:13 [Ann Persensky]

Jenny Waylan invites all the volunteers over to her house in the summer to celebrate the end of the Christmas season, and this year, celebrating the end of it, we were already in to the next one. But, she's been doing that every year since I've been here.

00:38:31 [Ginny Saxton]

Oh really?

00:38:31 [Lois Brun]

Yeah, she has a garden party outside.

00:38:34 [Ginny Saxton]

She has a huge backyard, it's just beautiful.

00:38:35 [Ann Persensky]

She has a tennis court in her backyard, so she can fit a lot of people sitting out there.

00:38:40 [Lois Brun]

She rents the tables and chairs and everything and sets it up and everything.

00:38:47 [Ann Persensky]

She and,

00:38:48 [Lois Brun]

She can't work with us anymore cause she's got to be what, in her nineties?

00:38:53 [Ann Persensky]

Oh yeah.

00:38:53 [Lois Brun]

And you know, ailments.

00:38:57 [Ann Persensky]

Wheezy.

00:38:57 [Ginny Saxton]

McGinnis,

00:39:02 [Ann Persensky]

Mary Louis McGinnis, Weezy we call her. She and Jenny and Connie, we call them the founding mothers.

00:39:11 [Ginny Saxton]

Yeah

00:39:13 [Ann Persensky]

Of the creche collection, and Weezy, she came to the, she doesn't see very well or hear very well, one or the other,

00:39:27 [Lois Brun]

See

[Ann Persensky]

Yeah, Weezy, but she came to the last one we had, what was it, in June?

00:39:36 [Ginny Saxton]

The garden party.

00:39:37 [Ann Persensky]

Yeah it was in June this summer, so we got to see Weezy, but Connie, God rest her soul, passed away, and so Weezy and Jenny are the two remaining. You should interview them.

00:39:50 [Kayla Harris]

I hope to.

00:39:51 [Ann Persensky]

Okay.

00:39:53 [Lois Brun]

So when we have lunch, we usually sat with prayer and remember anybody who needs prayers. And sometimes if a question comes up about something, and people with their smartphones, while, they'd check it out and we'd have a little discussion, what Siri has to say. (laughing)

00:40:17 [Ann Persensky]

Oh I never thought about Siri being a volunteer. (laughter) and Google, you'll have to put Siri down, and interview Siri.

00:40:26 [Lois Brun]

And somebody is always baking and bringing it to share.

00:40:38 [Kayla Harris]

What would you like to see for the Marian Library in the next 75 years?

00:40:47 [Ginny Saxton]

I would like to see better permanent display spaces, where not only it's just nativities, but where the public could come in almost like a,

00:40:57 [Lois Brun]

Museum?

00:41:03 [Ginny Saxton]

Yeah, a museum, a bigger space than what we have, and good shelves and good display areas and that is hard to do. But I mean it's grown so it's so fast, really, it's been maybe fifteen years when we've exploded in the number of items that we've had. But we have so many things that would be nice, and the public would enjoy it, but it's hard to find a space, how to get the proper display areas and equipment, so, that's a goal, I think.

00:41:46 [Ann Persensky]

It is, it'd be expensive.

00:41:48 [Lois Brun]

To make it a part of the University, I mean keep the Catholic theme there, that there is still Christianity in the University.

00:42:03 [Ginny Saxton]

And close enough that the students could walk to it. That's the other problem, if you have it a few blocks or even farther away, although, we do have this campus is really spread out, since we've got the current place now, so who knows what kind of design might come up

00:42:30 [Lois Brun]

There was a discussion a couple years ago about being on River campus, and they asked opinion and I think the majority of us felt like that was too far away from campus. Again, too far away from the chapel and center of the University.

00:42:55 [Ann Persensky]

I think that another handicap that you have on having these displays is parking. People can't just park, go in and see it. You have to go through the parking decal, and all this other stuff just to get a, so if you know, if say a church got a group together to come, then they need to find a place to park, and sometimes that's difficult, I forget what group was here, cause I was doing the Mirror of Hope talk for them, that's the other, we got that going, and but several of them, I had to get my car, and take them from here, that was when we had the behind the scenes one too, that they were here first, so they split them in half, and some couldn't go because it was a distance, between there and there and there was no place for them to park. So, I drove them over, a couple, and some other people, I think did too, and so I think, and I don't know how you go about finding parking for visitors, so they have a couple spots, but you know if it was a whole group coming from a church, there's not too many visitor spots, and you can only be parked there for what, 30 minutes? With your lights flashing.

00:44:20 [Ginny Saxton]

Yeah.

00:44:22 [Lois Brun]

Is it the same on Sunday?

00:44:25 [Ginny Saxton]

No, I think Sunday the lots are open.

00:44:32 [Ann Persensky]

Do you still have to go through and get - see I don't know

00:44:34 [Ginny Saxton]

No

00:44:34 [Ann Persensky]

Because I have the pass, so I know you can park on any lot with your pass, but I didn't know if you could park on any lot without any, I don't know either.

00:44:49 [Lois Brun]

Yeah, parking is a big thing. I mean I even hesitate to ask anyone to volunteer, if they drive cause I know, to buy a pass is expensive, and for just volunteering, you know, that price that they charge, and luckily I don't drive anyway, and she picks me up, so that's one less car. I don't have to worry.

00:45:15 [Ginny Saxton]

When you ask about a parking place.

00:45:19 [Ann Persensky]

Why do I keep going? Well for one thing, I have to pick up Lois. (laughter) If I'm done, she's done, right.

00:45:27 [Kayla Harris]

Accountability

00:45:29 [Ann Persensky]

I call her, I told her I'm her Uber driver, so.

00:45:36 [Kayla Harris]

What do you see as the future for the volunteer program for the Marian Library?

00:45:45 [Ann Persensky]

I would say I'm one of the youngest ones there, and I just had my 76th birthday. Oh, cut, no but what I mean is I think they need to find, of course, you have to go mostly with senior citizens, cause others are working, you know during the day type too, I still think there'll be a lot of, there's a lot of things to do, usually. You know to come over here, we stopped amid something, just walked away and left it sitting there.

00:46:23 [Kayla Harris]

Well, thank you for agreeing to be a part of this, and telling more stories about the Marian Library, and the amazing work that all three of you do, and everyone, all of our volunteers.

00:46:36 [Ann Persensky]

They do.