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Department of Special Collections and University Archives

Interviewee: Bob Doran

Interviewer: Michelle Sweetser

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Simmons Grant Oral History Project: Bob Doran Interview
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Michelle Sweetser: Looks like we are recording now. And for the record, I'll just start by saying that today is May 10th, 2016. And I'm Michelle Sweetser, the University Archivist, and I'm here interviewing Fr. Bob Doran, who served as the first director of Campus Ministry from 1970 to 1972.

Bob Doran: That's right.

Michelle Sweetser: That's right. So I just wanted to kind of start by talking about your circumstances, kind of getting this thing started. I know Fr. Raynor asked you to serve as the first director of Campus Ministry. Why do you think that Marquette wanted to make a move from the kind of Committee on Spiritual Welfare, which had been in place, to a campus ministry program? And how did both work together and inform one another in the early period?

Bob Doran: Well the history of it, came out of what was in those days known as the Quade report. Quentin Quade was, I believe at the time he chaired this committee, he chaired a committee on the Christian identity at Marquette University. I believe he was still in the Political Science Department at that time and he eventually became executive vice president, I think was the title--

Michelle Sweetser:--yes--

Bob Doran: --for a time under Fr. Raynor. And probably as a result of a lot of the work that he did by chairing this committee. The background was a conflict, this was the time of the Vietnam War. And there was terrific amount of student unrest with regard to the military and the presence of the military on campus. And so the issue that sparked the whole striking of this committee was whether the ROTC belongs on a campus that calls itself Christian. So what they decided to do was let's look at the whole question of what it means to be a Christian University, so not just *this* question. And as a result of this, they decided that what was a Committee on Spiritual Welfare should be expanded into, and subsumed into, a new Office of Campus Ministry that would be funded a little more generously than the Committee on Spiritual Welfare was. And Fr. Naus who was the person that was doing the spiritual welfare, who was in charge of it, he just became a member of the Campus Ministry staff, and continued to do everything that he was doing. And I think he kept his office over at the Brooks Union and I believe he still kept an office over there. But the woman who was his secretary became *my* secretary and when we located the offices for Campus Ministry at Merrity Hall—which no longer exists—it was a small building, part of the property that the Dental School is on right now, right across the street from what was then Children's Hospital, which now is Humphrey Hall at Marquette. So a lot of changes have taken place in the existence of buildings and the names of buildings and all that sort of thing. Now that much I do remember, how much else I'm going to remember I don't know. But the content was a Quade Report—is that in your records, the Quade Report?

Michelle Sweetser: Yes, and I think it is titled something like, *The Christian Character* -¹

Bob Doran: That's what it was, that was the mandate of that committee. So the Campus Ministry came out of that, and I don't know if we were the first of the Jesuit universities, but this was a development that was taking place in other Jesuit universities at the same time.

¹ A Special Committee on the Christian Character of Marquette University produced in December 1969 a final report titled "University and Catholic," which came to be known as the Quade Report. This report was later distilled and put in a more readable form in 1977 under the title "University and Catholic: Final Report of the Special Committee on the Christian Character of Marquette University."

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Michelle Sweetser: I was going to ask about that, because I did see some records that indicated that maybe Marquette was a little bit behind some other peer institutions--

Bob Doran: That might be. I really don't know—I really don't know.

Michelle Sweetser: Ok, that's fine. Why do you think you were chosen to start the Campus Ministry program, what unique talents did you bring?

Bob Doran: Well, I think they wanted a younger person and I had—I was doing doctoral studies, but because of context and particularly one person in particular, whom I had taught as an undergraduate – as a high school student at Creighton Prep, when I did my teaching, Jesuits do in those days we did part of formation was to do three years of high school teaching. And I taught at Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha. And one of the students when I came here to do my—I finished in 1966, and then I came here in '69 to start the doctoral program. And this fellow was a student here, and I had a lot of contact with him, and through him, got into a fair amount of pastoral work and ministerial work of different kinds with undergraduate students, and so Fr. Raynor was aware of that. And it might have been Fr. Sullivan, who later became President of Seattle University, who passed—maybe gave Fr. Raynor that recommendation that I might be somebody to be approached about that. I'm not sure of it, but I—it's Fr. Sullivan's name. I know he talked to me about this, and he may have communicated to me that Fr. Raynor was interested, or he might have suggested my name. Anyway, he was in the mix there.

Michelle Sweetser: Sure. And who was this student who kind of got you into the pastoral work?

Bob Doran: He was the student who was the person that we honored as the alumnus of the year just last Saturday night—Richard Sibbersen and we honored him and his wife. They met here, they met—they both were involved with Campus Ministry. But he was the student.

Michelle Sweetser: And what kind of minister work were you doing then with him, and as you kind of came into this position?

Bob Doran: It was just meeting a lot of students and being around them, you know. But it wasn't anything formal—I did a number of—I said Mass for students around the campus and that sort of thing. But I think it was the fact that I also just got to know a lot of undergraduates through him.

Michelle Sweetser: Sure, that makes sense. So what were the early goals of the Campus Ministry program?

Bob Doran: That's a good question. You know we were feeling our way for quite some time. We wanted to make ourselves known, not only to the student population, but also to the academic population of the campus. And so we—so first of all I had to assemble a staff. We didn't have a huge budget, but I managed to assemble a staff of I think five or six people. One other full-time person. No—I think I was the only full-time person, the others were part time. And set up our offices in Merrity Hall. And the whole first floor—Merrity Hall had three floors: the first floor were the offices of the Campus Ministry, the second and third floors were a new Jesuit community, a small Jesuit community. That would be without—that would *help* the work of the Campus Ministry. And then there was a basement which we ended up using for a number of events. We remodeled the basement and made it available for meetings and social events and that sort of thing. And then we had to figure out, okay, what are the most important priorities. Well, we wanted to contact faculty, so myself and one other staff member, Sister

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Maureen Lynch, who was my—I think she had the title of assistant director. She was only part time, I guess she was also doing a program in theology. Well we went around visited as many academic departments as we could and spoke to the faculty, and some were very welcoming and others couldn't care less. But anyway, we made contact there. We were in charge of the liturgies on campus, we set up various retreats, we set up counseling, we were available for those sorts of things. And then we were involved in a number of social justice issues like war and peace and contact with the student organizations that were doing social justice-type things. There was a MUCAP—Marquette University Community Action Program - I don't know if that still exists or not, but we had some contact with them. We did what we could to connect with people in the city who were involved in social justice work, racial justice, and connected with the campus and whatever they called it at UWM, it might have been the Newman Center, something doing something similar over there. Anyway, we kept busy.

Michelle Sweetser: I don't doubt it! That's a lot of responsibilities. You mention you didn't have a huge budget--

Bob Doran: Nope. I can't remember exactly what it was, but you know the way the salaries are at the university today and what we were paying then, it's just a vast difference.

Michelle Sweetser: Right. Your staff you said of five or six was part time. How did you identify and recruit your staff? I want to kind of learn a little more about that. Were your staff members trained in Campus Ministry work? And how did you settle on the roles individuals would take on?

Bob Doran: Well Sister Maureen had done that kind of work before she came here to start a graduate program in theology, and I just kind of sized up from the beginning that she would be very competent at this kind of work. I also wanted a strong feminine presence on the staff and she provided that, and then there was another woman—Margie Laurance—who, Fr. John Laurance, who teaches now at Marquette—it's his sister. She worked with us for a couple of years. How did she connect with us? I can't remember, I don't remember. Fr. John Mace, who was also graduate student with *me*, did some work with us, but he kept his doctoral program alive as well and he was also the coordinator or sub-superior of the Jesuit community over there. So, I knew these people or got to know them and really didn't know Sister Maureen until we were in classes together and I got to know her quite well, I just decided I would like her to work with me and she did—she was willing to do it. And then I wanted a Carmelite because there was a Carmelite community on campus at that time and they had their own outreach into the—so I also hired a Carmelite priest, Fr. Ed²—I can't remember his last name, it's terrible. It was a long time ago.

Michelle Sweetser: It was.

Bob Doran: Anyway, so that was it I think. It was through personal contact but also identifying certain things that were essential, definitely a strong feminine presence, and definitely a Carmelite, and definitely some Jesuits.

Michelle Sweetser: Aimed to have a mix.

Bob Doran: Have a mix, yep.

² Ed McCartan

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Michelle Sweetser: Great. What did you see as some of the more successful programs in those years, and why do you think that they were successful?

Bob Doran: I think, for those students who were—who wanted like regular liturgies on campus, I think I did a quite good job. Vatican II had, you know, recently ended and was quite a change in the liturgical life in the Church and a lot of, and this is not to criticize them at all, but a lot of the older Jesuit priests were not used to this—and you know, the Mass in front of the people and facing the people and all of that, and they were very uncomfortable doing it. Well I had just been ordained and this was the only thing I knew, so I wanted people who could do that sort of thing. So we also had—when we had staff meetings there were others who were not formally on the staff, because they weren't being paid by the Campus Ministry staff, but they were Jesuits who were in the residence halls, who *did* have this kind of contact with the students, they also were part of us—part of the staff. So I think we did—I hope we did, but I think we did, revive the liturgical life of the campus. And at that time the situation at Gesu was very different from what it is today. It was not a place that attracted students; it does today, but it didn't then. And so something had to be done along those lines, or otherwise we were going to lose the student population. Fr. Naus had always been very successful in attracting students. He had a Midnight Mass on Saturday night, at Schroeder hall where he lived, which was extremely successful, and very popular, and brought—he filled the place on midnight and Saturday going into Sunday. But we needed more, and we did more than that. Retreats and counseling. We did what we could, and as we got to be known, I think that the students came to us—with a lot of those things that it's up to them to come, but let it be known that we were doing these things *sub rosa*. We did a—because of the issue of the war, and the option which was definitely highlighted in Quentin Quade's report, but was never really implemented by the University, that in addition to it they recommended that we keep the military on campus, but also that a strong representation of an alternate option with regard to these issues be established, peace studies now we have *now* the Center for Peace, but there wasn't anything like that at that time. We did do these things—we got into trouble for advertising it, because some of the donors and some of the members of the Marquette Board complained that we were offering draft counseling, because there was a draft in those days, students had—I mean I was witnessing students afraid of being drafted, because and—afraid either because they didn't want to, or because they were conscientiously opposed to at least *that* war, if not war in general. So we did establish a draft counseling center, but we had to stop advertising. But anyway we kept it going. Now, you know I was thinking about this today you know, because in this time, there would be no problem with that, but in 1970, and this whole, I mean we were just getting used to the Church's commitment to issues like peace and justice and those sorts of things, and, so it was not—it was not well received by *some* people that we did this, and yet there was no way that I was going to stop it.

Michelle Sweetser: So a lot of young men took advantage of that.

Bob Doran: They did, yep.

Michelle Sweetser: I actually had a question about it, so you covered that nicely!

Bob Doran: You know, we were really implementing one of the recommendations of the Quade Report by doing this, but we couldn't use that as an argument, we just had to do it.

Michelle Sweetser: Sure, sure. And when you say you kind of reinvigorated the liturgical life on campus, this was--

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Bob Doran: --I hope we did, anyway.

Michelle Sweetser: --or you believed that you did. This was primarily through the residence halls?

Bob Doran: Joan of Arc as well, and the residence halls, I think. And there was a nightly liturgy at Merrity Hall, every night at ten o'clock. And some nights that would draw quite a few students. It was a very informal-type liturgy, we sat on the floor. We had an altar that was just a little stand like this. And I sat on the floor—or whoever was presiding—I would do it some of the nights. I couldn't do it now, because I couldn't get up off the floor! But in those days I was younger. And that drew quite a number. It was a small room, but sometimes the room was quite packed.

Michelle Sweetser: Sure, sure. And students helped to develop liturgies, or came to--

Bob Doran: Yes, I think so, and they helped publicize it.

Michelle Sweetser: You talked a little bit about the space in Merrity Hall, and it had three floors and the like. Did you find that it was well suited to the Campus Ministry program? Was its location an asset, or perhaps not?

Bob Doran: I think we probably would have been better off with something that was more centrally located on campus. But this was the only thing that was available. And we did want to have a community as well, and in this building we were able to do the offices on the first floor of the community, or the second and third, and it did become quite a center of activity for a lot of things and social events as well as in the basement. So it—yeah, it worked out ok. But it was very different from what that they have now. You have the Campus Ministry offices over in the Union. But we got it started, anyway. It was kind of a makeshift operation: small budget and mostly part-time staff. But you know, we got it going, we got it off the ground. I was only in it for two years because I agreed to interrupt doctoral studies, but I didn't want to quit doctoral studies so I would do it for two years. And when it was over it was not a problem for me to just leave it and go back to doctoral studies. I was able to do that easily.

Michelle Sweetser: And do you think that that two year commitment was a good enough term to kind of make--

Bob Doran: --to get it started? I think so. And you know, it's been going ever since.

Michelle Sweetser: Yeah, it has! A continued success. And when you left I think it was James Sauve who took over.

Bob Doran: James Sauve, took over and I'm not sure how long he was in there.

Michelle Sweetser: We had some records, I don't know off the top of my head. So I kind of want to return to—you mentioned earlier that you tried really hard to reach out to various departments on campus. The academic side, and that some were accepting, and some were not. Why do you think that some of the departments were receptive and others not? What was it that they might have been reacting to?

Bob Doran: I think some of them just didn't see, you know, why they had to devote part of one of their faculty meetings to a group that had really nothing to do with their department. And that was the feeling that we got—I mean, it wasn't hostility, or rudeness, or anything like that. It was just a kind of, you know, "well, thank you. But now we've got to get back to our business." Whereas other

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departments—there were faculty who were intensely interested in this, and in the development of a center like this on campus. And then some of them became a very supportive and in fact, we had Sunday morning Mass at Merritt Hall for faculty. And that Mass is still going today.

Michelle Sweetser: Where is that held today?

Bob Doran: It's now—it was being held in the Jesuit Community Room, it's at 1404³. I didn't have anything to do with it. I was gone from the University for twenty-seven years, and then I came back in 2006 and was surprised to find that that group, including some of the people that were there in those days were still meeting on Sunday mornings. But at any rate—and these were people that were largely found in the English and philosophy Departments, I think. But they were supremely supportive of what we were doing.

Michelle Sweetser: Do you remember any names or individuals in particular?

Bob Doran: Andy Tallon, who's still around, was part of that. And Pat Coffey, Kathy Coffey-Guenther's father. Do you know Kathy?

Michelle Sweetser: I do, but I never put those two together.

Bob Doran: I knew him from doctoral studies. He was doing his doctoral studies, I was doing my master's studies in St. Louis—at Saint Louis University and I got along very well with him and his wife Maureen. *I think it's Maureen*—anyways. So those are names that I can recall. John McCabe in the English Department. Someone else probably. Who was chair of philosophy? It was on the tip of my tongue and now I can remember.

Michelle Sweetser: Yeah, I don't know it quite well enough. Good! And did you find that there were any kinds of challenges in having the mixture of clergy and lay staff within the department? In your unit.

Bob Doran: I don't think so, I think there would have been if I had been an older school-type Jesuit, who was a *clericalist*, not just a cleric. I've always disliked clericalism, I never liked it. I never wanted to be part of it. And so I think that by the time I was ordained, the handwriting was on the wall that the future of ministry was collaboration with the laity. It's not top down, you know? So I didn't find it hard. And I don't think others did at all. That I can recall, anyways. I wasn't a great administrator--

Michelle Sweetser: No?

Bob Doran: No, I wasn't. That's not my expertise. I had pastoral skills and I had academic skills, but administratively, the two times that I've tried it wasn't really a great success.

Michelle Sweetser: Ok, we'll leave it at that. You mentioned a little bit earlier that at that time, Gesu wasn't attracting students. Can you talk a little bit about some of the challenges that maybe were presented by the fact that Marquette doesn't have its own parish, exactly? And what kind of tensions--

Bob Doran: Yeah, under the present circumstances I think it's very different from what it was then. I mean, there are student Masses and students go to the regular Masses at Gesu now, so it's a very different situation. And I don't know, what, if any, are the—if there are tensions *between* the Campus Ministry and Gesu today, I don't know what they are or not. In those days there were in the sense that I

³ 1404 W. Wisconsin, home to the Jesuit Residence at Marquette from 1973-2015.

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think the parish resented the fact that the university went ahead and set up a campus ministry—what’s wrong with the parish, you know? So there were some of those tensions at that time. And of course there were some things that could only be done at the parish: marriages could only be done at the parish, and I think that’s probably still the case. There were a number of students—and every year I made a petition—I mean every year for three years before I became director and the two years that I was in—that they allow weddings to be held at Joan of Arc Chapel because there were a number of students who wanted to be married at Joan of Arc, and they just—it was the diocese that would not allow it. And I don’t know whether they have ever gone beyond that or not, whether weddings can be done at Joan of Arc. I don’t know.

Michelle Sweetser: I’m not sure either.

Bob Doran: But there were students that wanted that. So, in those days the tension was that I think the parish felt that we were kind of an upstart.

Michelle Sweetser: Ok, sure. And why do you think it was, that students weren’t going to Gesu?

Bob Doran: I think the, the—in general, I have to be very careful, that, how far is this going to be—

Michelle Sweetser: --sure!

Bob Doran: I think there wasn’t—the—the comfort with the change to the post-Vatican II Church. It just took a while for the parish to catch up.

Michelle Sweetser: And students were ready.

Bob Doran: Yeah, they were ready. Definitely ready. And some of them wanted even more than Vatican II was ready to offer, but they certainly wanted what Vatican II had provided. But now I think it’s very different.

Michelle Sweetser: Could you talk maybe a little bit about how Campus Ministry addressed the needs of minorities, international students, and students from other faiths—non-Catholic faiths?

Bob Doran: Well what we tried to do when I was director was to connect, and we did connect with the pastor—the Lutheran pastor at the Lutheran Church on Nineteenth and Wisconsin. His name was Alan Davis, in those days. And he became a member of our staff, not paid, but he was on the staff because he used to do things in his parish for Lutheran students attending Marquette. And so he met with us and he came to our meetings. And so there was some collaboration there. And then there was a Jewish professor of political science, Bob Freedman, who came to our meetings and was a liaison at least with Jewish students. Whether he was a rabbi or not I don’t know. I’m not sure. I think through those years we wanted to do more for racial minorities than we did—than we actually accomplished. And I think we felt—even in those days, and it’s much more acute today—how segregated the city of Milwaukee is. It’s one of the most segregated cities in the United States. And we can’t seem to crack that as a city. And I know Archbishop Weakland said his biggest regret as archbishop was that he couldn’t do anything—that he wasn’t able to make any inroads on that problem, the racial divide in the city. So I don’t know whether we did much there to help, you know? I mean we certainly were available to minority students. We did not have a minority person on our staff, and that was probably a mistake, in those days. But I did have to assemble the staff quite fast.

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Michelle Sweetser: Sure. So you had these people kind of attend either as liaisons, or kind of—did you offer any programming as a result, geared towards people of those—students of those faiths, or was it kind of more taking in information and incorporating as you planned?

Bob Doran: It was more of the latter, I don't remember much in terms of programming. Now, I may be forgetting some things, but I don't remember.

Michelle Sweetser: It's ok. Were there any programs that you tried in those first two years that just didn't seem to work at all? That students or others didn't respond to?

Bob Doran: I can't think of any.

Michelle Sweetser: Yeah? That's good!

Bob Doran: Yeah. It is. I never thought of the question, but I can't think of any. I think we did what we were supposed to do: get something started, you know? Under—you know, fairly strict circumstances in that the budget was small and the facilities were ok and—we made them work. But I don't think there was anything that was a flop. [Laughter]

Michelle Sweetser: That's impressive!

Bob Doran: Not that I know about! Other people might say, "Oh I remember they did this and it was awful!" But I can't think of anything like that.

Michelle Sweetser: And I missed this question I mean to ask it earlier, and that's kind of what you say as the primary religious and spiritual needs of students at that time. What was it that they really needed as they came into a university setting?

Bob Doran: As is the case with students today—but it's more pronounced today—but it was definitely the case then, too. There were varying degrees of familiarity among the undergraduate students with the Catholic tradition and with what was going on in the Church. With those who were—who really wanted to be a part of the post-Vatican II Church, I think the need was simply to provide them an opportunity to be part of it, and I think we definitely did do that. But there were others who came to talk to me, and to others on the staff, who—you know just wanted to air their questions or their problems, and they weren't all Catholic. And there is very much a need today, I found it in teaching undergraduates, that there's a great deal of background work that needs to be done just to inform people as to what's going on, and what the history is—what the history of the Church is. A lot of people even coming from Catholic backgrounds are pretty illiterate in regard to scripture and the history, and the Catholic tradition of so on. Or even for instance that there is a very strong Catholic social teaching, which is one thing that we can be proud of I think from Leo XIII right down to the present time. The Papal encyclicals on social justice issues are very strong and very forthright. But a lot of students don't know that. They don't know anything about it. So for some in those days, and even more so today, it's turning ignorance into familiarity. But with others, it was just providing them an opportunity to share their faith with others. They wanted it and I think we did do that.

Michelle Sweetser: That's all the questions I had. Was there anything you want to add, or anything that I maybe missed and didn't ask about that you think is important?

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Bob Doran: No, I don't think you missed anything. I'm surprised that I remembered as much as I did!
[Laughter] No, I don't think you missed anything. I'm glad that we got it started. I'm glad that it's still going. As far as I know, it's going strong. I don't—I'm very much into the academic stuff now, and I don't have time to do a lot more than that. I'm confident—I'm aware of that fact of how old I am and how much I still want to get done before I can't do it anymore, so my energies are very focused these days.

Michelle Sweetser: That's understandable.

[audio ends: 00:36:06]