



TRANSCRIPTION COVER SHEET

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Interviewee(s): AUDRE LEE COIA KUROWSKI

Interviewer(s): CHRISTOPHER ALLISON

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This is an oral history interview with **AUDRE LEE COIA KUROWSKI**. It is being conducted on **JUNE 10th 2022** at **DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY** and concerns **Coia-Kurowski's time of being a student at Rosary College (now Dominican University) she is class of 1957**. The interviewer is **CHRISTOPHER ALLISON**. This interview is a part of the **INSTITUTIONAL LEGACY PROJECT**. This interview has been **RELEASED**. Documentation of permissions is included in the **MCGREAL ZOTERO 'INSTITUTIONAL SAGA PROJECT' LIBRARY > ORAL HISTORIES** archival record.

Audre Lee Coia Interview

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

1950s, class reunions, pianos, music department, Dominican sisters, roommates, teachers

SPEAKERS

Christopher Allison, Audre Lee Coia

Christopher Allison 00:04

So we're good. Okay, well welcome Christopher Allison. I teach history here but also the director McGreal Center. And the date is June 10. What is your name?

Audre Lee Coia 00:24

My name is Audra Lee Coia Kurowski. My maiden name was Coia.

Christopher Allison 00:32

And what year did you graduate?

Audre Lee Coia 00:34

I graduated in 1957. This is our 65th reunion. Yep.

Christopher Allison 00:41

Congratulations.

Audre Lee Coia 00:43

Thank you.

Christopher Allison 00:44

So tell us– tell me about your time at Rosary.

Audre Lee Coia 00:47

Well, I went to Trinity, which is back a couple of blocks. And I took music in addition to college prep. I played piano since I was a little girl, my mother started me and then I had nuns from first grade all the way up through high school. And I was recommended by my music teacher, Sister Marcus to come to Rosary and interview for an opening in the music department to become a music major. So I interviewed with Sister Ignatia, who was the head of the department. And I remember I played Mozart's fantasy, and wasn't crazy about the piece. But anyway, she said they would accept me and the only stipulation I put on my parents because they said, we will only pay if you want to go to Rosary College. I said, okay, but I'm an only child, and I would like some social life in addition to going to college, and I would like to live on campus. And they said, fine. And I only lived three miles east in Austin right off of Division Street. But they were kind enough to pay for this experience, which I felt was part of my becoming an adult because I was not socially comfortable in a lot of situations. And so I came here, and Sister Fredericus was the dean, she was very wonderful. And she said you will be sharing a room with two other girls, you'll be in a triple with Della Bond from Libertyville, Illinois, who is now in Heaven. And Mary Jane Deneen, who is now married Jane Bauman, who came from Marengo, and the three of us were in the room together. Well, this was my first experience, sleeping with other people my age, and Della and Mary Jane couldn't stop talking. Nine o'clock, 10 o'clock, they're still talking. And I said, you girls, you know what the rule is, shut up. So I wasn't real popular. But I've learned since then, not to say shut up, just be still. So that was one of my first experiences. Second was, I really enjoyed the camaraderie with all the residents. And I had a sponsor to make sure that I felt comfortable and everything I'm trying to remember her name. And for some reason, I've known it for a long time, but I can't think of her name right now. But I think of her all the time, because she'd check in and say, do you need anything? Are you, you know, missing anybody? So they really sponsor you and help you get situated. The next thing that I can tell you is that I had lovely experiences in the dining hall in this other building there in the rest– in the social hall in the main building. They had a beautiful big grand piano there. And every day before supper, all the residents would gather, and I would sit at the piano and I would give them what I call our before dinner music. And so I got to be well known for playing the piano. And I enjoyed doing that very much. They no longer have the piano there. I don't know what happened. They moved it out. So then each year, I had to give a recital with another person. One year, I was paired with Ann Willits, who eventually became a sister. She was singing and I was playing piano. She was doing her half and I was doing my half. And for my senior year, Sister Genevieve Pinion, who became my major professor, had to memorize 75 pages of the second part of the Beethoven sonata in D because it was either there or hire an orchestra, and an orchestra was a little bit a lot of the range financially. So poor Sister took it upon herself to be the second part. And she did it flawlessly. And my senior recital went perfectly. And a lot of nuns came because she was performing. So it got a lot of publicity that way. She recommended me for a Master's at Northwestern in music, which was an honor. And anyway, I eventually got a Master's degree. And I taught school in Franklin Park after I left. And so my experiences here were wonderful. I couldn't say more for being a supportive institution to help young people. Because when you're young, you don't always have your head on straight, you know. So, you know, that's my story. And I'm sticking to it.

Christopher Allison 05:53

And you taught me music for your whole career?

Audre Lee Coia 05:56

–for Franklin Park. Yeah, there's two districts here. I don't know why my memory is foggy– foggy, there's 83 and 84. And I forget which one I was in. It was the East School on Maple Avenue in– in Franklin Park, brand new building. Very lovely. So I was blessed. So and then I met my husband got married and moved out to Mt. Prospect. And that was– so then we had two children. So okay–

Christopher Allison 06:24

Did they come here?

Audre Lee Coia 06:25

No, my older daughter went to her father's alma mater, U of I in Champaign Urbana, and my younger daughter wanted to seek California. She went to Caltech, in Pasadena. And then she graduated with a lawyer's degree from UW Madison just about 10 years ago. So–

Christopher Allison 06:45

Thank you.

Audre Lee Coia 06:46

So that's it.

Christopher Allison 06:47

Thank you for your time.

Audre Lee Coia 06:49

Oh, it's my pleasure, Chris. And I'm looking forward to a beautiful afternoon.

Christopher Allison 06:53

Yeah. Thank you. And are you–

Audre Lee Coia 06:54

Thank you.

Christopher Allison 06:55

–okay signing this?

Audre Lee Coia 06:56

Of course.

Christopher Allison 06:57

Just this portion, just your name here. And then there's two options for the copyright. One of them is–

Audre Lee Coia 07:03

What's the easiest for you?

Christopher Allison 07:05

The top one. The top one's easiest for us. And yep, and then– your name, your address and signature at the bottom.

Audre Lee Coia 07:15

Yeah.