



Voices of Lycoming Oral Histories

Lycoming College Archives - Snowden Library

Oral History of

Dr. William J. Gallagher III

Alumnus, Class of 1970

Date: April 3, 2008

Interview conducted by: Julie Dougherty

Transcribed by: Alysha Russo

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William Gallagher

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Dougherty: I'm speaking with Bill Gallagher who is a graduate of Lycoming College in—

Gallagher: 1970.

Dougherty: 1970. And this is an archival interview of alums and I'm Julie Dougherty from the archives. Okay, Bill, tell me where you were born and received your early education.

Gallagher: I was born in Delaware County outside of Philadelphia. Do I have to mention the year? (laughs)

Dougherty: No, absolutely not.

Gallagher: Actually, it was 1947; I was one of those great influx of baby boomers—parents who went through the war years and the depression. I grew up in Delaware County—attended two different high schools down there but I ended up graduating from a place called Springfield High School which turned out to be the reason that I ended up at Lycoming coming from there. Because I had gone to a very large Methodist church at that point—before the United Methodist Church—and my senior minister (of our four ministers in this very large church) was a fellow by the name of Wally Stettler who was a long time member of the Board of Directors here at Lycoming College.

I went to a fairly progressive high school in that town—Springfield High School—we had about 400 and some odd members of our graduating class and I think there were only about 7 or 8 people who didn't go to four year colleges back at that point. I originally went to the University of Pennsylvania when I was planning on being an engineering major and actually I was an engineering major for a couple of years there along with about twenty-five other members of my class who went to Penn. We had the type of high school where—I never had to go back to a reunion, we'd just look and see kids I went to high school with on television like Elaine Garzarelli (who used to sit right in front of me in my calculus class) was the person for Shearson-Lehman Brothers—used to be on Wall Street Week all the time who predicted the stock market crash in '87. And right in that same row in my math class, a fellow who sat all the way in the first seat was Art Durbano was the editor of our high school newspaper and for years he wrote the movie reviews for *TV Guide*; he took over when Judith Crist had retired. He was educated at Columbia and Columbia Journalism School. The president of our senior class went to Harvard—it was that kind of a place.

I think I kind of ended up at an Ivy League College just because that's what everybody wanted to do back then. I really didn't like engineering that much—I got kind of pushed into it simply because of my background. My parents thought that would be a good thing. One day I was discussing this with my minister—I told him I wasn't real happy in college although I kind of liked Penn itself, I just wasn't happy with what I was doing there. He asked me a seminal question, "Did you ever think of going any place else?" And actually I hadn't. He said, "Well if you went someplace else, where would you want to go?" Well, number one I kind of wanted to

get away from home, so I said, “Well, I wanted to go someplace else rather than around here in Philadelphia and I’d rather go to a smaller college where they treat you a little more personally.” He popped the question, “Do you know anything about Lycoming College?” and I said, “Not really”, other than the fact that I knew a couple of people who had applied there, including one person I was friendly with at that time who had gone to our church. So he said, “Would you be interested in someplace like that if you could go there?” This is about in January of semester break, right after Christmas and I said, “Well, I don’t know.” And at that point he picked up the phone in his office at church and he called the person who at that point was the director of admissions and set up an interview. I go home, tell my parents Reverend Stettler just said I might be interested in going to another college. The interview was the next week, my parents took me up there, had the interview, they said they would accept me and I just made a split second, snap decision: I’m going to transfer.

Dougherty: And your parents were happy?

Gallagher: Well, they were happy. They thought they were going to get me away from the bad influences of the large city school and up to a very nice Methodist college.

Dougherty: Where there was nothing but angels up there?

Gallagher: Absolutely. I just kind of made a snap decision and I ended up a week later coming up and transferring. Actually it was harder—

Dougherty: In the middle of the semester?

Gallagher: Yea. No, it was at the very beginning of the semester. Lycoming’s semester was just starting—

Dougherty: The middle of the school year.

Gallagher: The next week after I’d done the interview and I moved into Wesley Hall with a fella who was also a sophomore and something had happened to his roommate—I forget what—I don’t know if he had dropped out of school or something. So they just put me in there and I just began school the following week.

Dougherty: Do you have any idea what the school population was then, what the student population was?

Gallagher: At Lycoming?

Dougherty: Mmm-hmm. At that point?

Gallagher: My recollection is it was somewhere in the vicinity of about 1400; something like that.

Dougherty: About what it is now.

Gallagher: Yeah. It was not that much different. I think it’s always been—aside from some changes back maybe in the ‘80s or something—it’s been relatively stable. It never has gotten

very large beyond that but it was a good size school and ultimately I think there was a point when I probably knew almost every kid who was in school. It was smaller than my high school.

Dougherty: And it's advantageous, I think, to the students to have the small school feeling.

Gallagher: Yeah. So I started school that next week and never looked back. I have never regretted it.

Dougherty: What was your major?

Gallagher: Well, that was the one thing I was a little—I had some problems with my parents, particularly my mother. She said, "Well, what are you going to study if you go here?" because they didn't have an engineering school. She figured it was going to be math or something in science. I said, "English." I had wanted actually to be an English major—I had applied to maybe four or five colleges: Drexel, Delaware, Penn, and Princeton. I had only applied to one place as an English major—that was Swarthmore. My parents were absolutely dead set; they were not going to allow me to go to Swarthmore, particularly to be an English major.

Dougherty: Why?

Gallagher: Well, we lived right near there. My house was half a mile from Swarthmore's campus. My dad actually walked from our house down to the train station in Swarthmore every day and my mother would go and pick him up. Back then—this is 1965—they just thought there were nothing but "hippies". Or beatniks actually, back then they weren't even hippies yet. They were just a bunch of bearded barefooted beatniks at Swarthmore, so she thought that would be the worst place in the world where I could go. So, that was out so when I told them I wanted to be an English major at Lycoming, my mother's immediate reaction was, "What are you going to do with that, just teach?"

Dougherty: As if that was sinful.

Gallagher: Yeah, well not sinful, it was not remunerative. They thought the best thing that could happen to me was to get a good job and make a lot of money and so forth. And that actually was not what I intended, it just kind of worked out that way. Anyway, that's a long answer to the first question.

Dougherty: That's fine. Tell me about your family.

Gallagher: My family was very kind of typical for their time period. They were born in the '20s, grew up through the depression and they were very small-town folks. They knew each other from the time my mother was about twelve or thirteen years old. The first time my dad ever ran into my mother, when they were young teens, he looked at her and says, "I'm going to marry you." And ultimately did after the war was over. My dad was an excellent athlete, he was one of—oldest of three children in his family—an old Irish heritage out of West Philadelphia and eventually just out of the suburbs just outside of the city. He was a state track champion. My mom's family came from down south, the Tidewater area of Virginia. My grandmother eventually moved up—they got married up here in Pennsylvania.

Dougherty: Did you have siblings?

Gallagher: I have one—a brother. He's five years younger than I am. He has all the hair and all the athletic ability. (laughs)

Dougherty: I don't believe that.

Gallagher: He actually came to Lycoming right out of high school as well but he did not finish school. Actually, he didn't finish college until about four years ago. He finally, after spending twenty years of taking a class here and there—got an excellent job. He probably made twice as much as I ever did after dropping out of three different colleges. He ended up getting a business degree from Widener University. He was here at Lycoming just for first semester after he got out of high school and decided he wasn't that crazy about going to college at that point.

Dougherty: Well, not all students are.

Gallagher: It's not for everybody.

Dougherty: Not for everyone. Okay, you did live on campus then in Wesley?

Gallagher: Yep. Started out in Wesley—lived there for that spring semester of 1967 and got introduced to body surfing in Wesley Hall where they used to flood the halls and you know, just go "shooooo"—seeing if they could go on their backside from one end of the hallway all the way to other end of the hallway.

Dougherty: That's the first I've heard of that experience.

Gallagher: Oh yeah. They used to actually just turn all the showers on and block up the doorways down at the end of the hall—the fire doors at each end—and they would just get water all up and down the hallway.

Dougherty: Was this on the first floor?

Gallagher: This was on the first floor.

Dougherty: Well, fortunately for that. Was there anything underneath that floor that got—?

Gallagher: Well, there was probably some crawl space, basement area and other things but—

Dougherty: But no furniture or finished rooms or anything?

Gallagher: Nothing like that, no.

Dougherty: What else did you do?

Gallagher: The RAs were not real happy about that. I remember our RA was a fellow who entered the ministry—Paul—oh, I can't think of his name now. But no, they were not too happy. This happened maybe at two or three junctures throughout that semester that I was there. Kids did have a ball doing that.

Dougherty: Was that the only wild thing that they did while you were there?

Gallagher: No, probably wasn't the only wild thing. My roommate was a Sigma Pi. They weren't always abiding by all the campus alcohol rules, I think even at that point. Everybody was very serious about it then. They were the days when I first came there—coming from a place like Penn where I had lived in a fraternity house at Penn and even the freshman dorms looked like your average State Store. Everyone there just totally ignored alcohol use and just expected it. And coming here and realizing people were getting thrown out of school for having the smell of liquor on their breath—that was quite a shock. It was probably a good atmosphere for me because I could kind of dry out. I shouldn't mention that. (laughs)

Dougherty: So where did you go after Wesley?

Gallagher: After that first year I went to—I moved in with a fella who I had gone to high school with, Greg Hockman. We had gone to the same church together—Covenant Methodist Church in Springfield—and we sang in the choir together there. He was a very good musician. We got a room up in the fourth floor of Skeath Hall. I was in Skeath for those next two years.

Dougherty: That was before it was just a freshman dorm then?

Gallagher: Yeah, absolutely. Skeath was the new dorm at that point and we had a nice little room right up on the lateral hallway of Skeath. Our room got to be well-known and visited often. It was decorated interestingly—we had on the tiles—the ceiling tiles which were like these—we had put alternating blocks of black crepe paper, or construction paper rather. We created a little chessboard and we had chessmen stuck into the ceiling and we had one of these long arms that people would get things down from shelves in an old country store and we would sit there and play chess. We had black lights all over the ceiling and posters of Jimmy Hendrix and everything. Greg was a—he went into music on a permanent basis after graduating from college—as fitting a biology major. In fact he worked for Robert Sides while he was here in college and then got a job with Dr. Robert Moog—Moog Synthesizers—and he became a salesperson and designer for them and actually put in and installed an electronic music lab here for Glen Morgan at the college back in the 1970s which was kind of a big deal. I mean a little college like this with a big electronic music lab with all these synthesizers. Through the 70s he also was a sound technician for several rock groups—he toured with the Beach Boys, Emerson, Lake & Palmer and a number of other people who were big at that time.

Dougherty: So you roomed with him until you graduated?

Gallagher: No, just for one year. Roomed with him all of the 1967-68 school year and then we got an apartment together the following summer. We were both staying here in Williamsport; he was working for Sides and I worked for the Sun-Gazette as a newspaper reporter and sportswriter for the Sun-Gazette. Covered a few things—got to write a little bit about when Robert Kennedy was assassinated and covered the Little League World Series—had my own column the week of the World Series, one of my highlights. Then the next year I stayed in Skeath for three quarters of the year with another roommate—someone I had met here at Lycoming and still am friends with—Phil Barlett—graduated in '70. Then that was interrupted by the fact that I got married to my first wife, Melodye Hamer who was a graduate of the Class of '68 and had been the managing editor of The Bell when I first started writing for them. I kind

of met her there through some other friends when she was living over in the honor dorm, Rich House.

Dougherty: So Rich House was still in use then?

Gallagher: Oh yeah, Rich House was a very, very active group of interesting young ladies back then.

Dougherty: So there were no co-ed dorms at that point?

Gallagher: Oh, none. Not even close. At that point in 1967-68, everyone still had to go to mandatory chapel, mandatory cultural events. You had little IDM cards in two different colors, I think one was yellow and the other was pink, and you had to hand them in when you went to the number of chapels, programs that you had to go to and also the other various cultural events that you had to go to.

Dougherty: Did you need excused absences in those?

Gallagher: No because you didn't have to go to everything, you could pick and choose what you wanted to go to and I think you only needed to go to like two or three of each of them in a given semester. The women still had some fairly strict hours; I believe they had to be in at least by 11:00. I think it might even have been earlier than that in all the women's dorms during the week. It was a little bit later on the weekend—11:30, 12:00. Dean Felix was pretty strict about making sure that was observed. But that was the nice thing—the people at Rich House, in the honor dorm—didn't have those hours that they had to abide by, so it was nice having a girlfriend up there.

Dougherty: Was that when President Hutson was president?

Gallagher: No actually at that point, when I first came here, President Wertz was still here and it was during that summer, 1967, when he was elevated to a Bishop and then Mr. Detwiler from the Board of Directors took over as the interim temporary president at that point during the '67-'68 school year.

Dougherty: Do you want to talk about that time?

Gallagher: Well let's see, let's make sure I'm saying that right first of all. No, I'm saying that wrong. No '67-'68—all through '67-'68 Bishop Wertz was still the president. It was '68 when Bishop Wertz—President Wertz—became a Bishop and Detwiler was made the president. That would have happened like in August of '68, I guess. I'm skipping a year there.

Dougherty: What did the students think of him when he first came?

Gallagher: Well, at that point I was the managing editor of the newspaper and I used to get to see him and talk to him quite often—seemed like a reasonable guy. What I remember about Mr. Detwiler was he was a captain of industry. He was running whatever it was called—Alcan Cable, something like that—and I remember he had been in World War II and was like one of the youngest colonels. He was in a tank division, I think. He had really been—you know, had a

quite outstanding resume but he was probably not in touch and in tune with an academic world other than helping to run it as a business.

I think those years right in the late 70s, or late 60s rather, were probably very pivotal—as pivotal for Lycoming as they were for a lot other colleges. We talk about the year of 1968, there was just so much that was going on there. You’ve got Martin Luther King being assassinated in April, Bobby Kennedy being assassinated in June, Lyndon Johnson making his very famous speech. I can remember being over in Rich House watching television, wanting to see what LBJ was going to say when he was addressing the country and all of us sitting there watching the TV just in absolute, utter shock, when he announced that he would not seek and would not accept nomination for president again. That was, if I recall correctly, in the spring of ’68 is when all the campus uprisings happened at Columbia University and the group that took over the main administration building up there at Columbia. So there was just a lot of stuff going on. The college was still essentially owned by the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Church still; we were just becoming United Methodist at that point—the connection with the EUB church.

So I think like so many other parts of society, there was an undercurrent going on here that was probably caused mostly by the effects of the Vietnam War. I could remember—I never really thought too much about it until the very first night I was here at Lycoming. First night I moved in here down in Wesley Hall, I can remember stopping by a kid’s room around the corner—the very end of the u-shaped hallway—and one of the guys, someone from New Jersey, had a friend of his that he went to high school with visiting him. This young guy had just come back from Vietnam and he started talking about all kinds of things that he had seen and done and I just remember being struck by one thing. He had said, “Oh yeah, last Halloween we made a jack-o-lantern out of a gook’s head.” And he was talking about somebody who they suspected of being Vietcong and they had killed, they had hollowed out his skull and used that for Halloween. I just remember being absolutely horrified—that’s not the way we’re supposed to act. I think that was the first step toward my being a little more radical and more sensitized to what other people were thinking and feeling at that point. That for me was kind of just a personal odyssey but I think the same thing had been going on with a lot of people. I definitely was not some campus radical although I was probably seen that by some people. Unlike the true radicals we had like Murray Ross, who used to subscribe to a communist newspaper *Gamma* or *Gramana*.

Dougherty: Were you close to Phillip Marshall as well?

Gallagher: No, not really. I knew Dean Marshall just to say “Hello” to him. I had one thing that I used to do but that was all—I had a lot of inside information about faculty because John Graham, who I had had in class as an English instructor for Brit Lit, was the secretary of the faculty. I used to meet with him on a regular basis every time there was a major faculty meeting. He would just brief me and most of all it was just done on background with the idea that I wasn’t going to print all this but just kind of—I would come to him with some questions—well, I hear this or I hear that—and he would kind of set me straight and say well, this is what really happened, this is how this worked. Because as an average college student, we knew nothing about faculty politics or how things worked, we just listened to some of the faculty members. It seemed like a lot of them were all in the English department at that point, most notably a fella named Martin (Mose) Durst who came from Brooklyn and Marty (Mose) Durst was kind of like the foremost figure on the left hand side of college politics on the faculty level

at Lycoming at that point in the late 60s. He wasn't just kind of like a radical compared to everybody else he was sort of way out in left field and continued to be after he left Lycoming. He's the guy who later became head of the Moonie organization in the United States. He became like the head Moonies somewhere up in New England.

Dougherty: So when this all broke between Detwiler and Marshall, were all of the students on the side of Dr. Marshall or was it—?

Gallagher: No, very definitely not. There was a real—it started the year before—a very definite split among I would say actually almost three groups of students. And I probably would have been considered somewhere in the middle but depending upon who you oriented—I would have considered myself somewhere in the middle, but depending upon who else was looking at it, you're seen as either leaning here over to the left or leaning here to the right by the one group or the other. There were—when I ran for student government president, having only been here for about a year, which was kind of absurd—the only reason anybody knew me was simply because of writing I'd done in the paper. I was running against a fellow named Rick Brown who eventually was the Chieftain of the Class of 1970—belonged to a fraternity, was considered a very kind of low-key, kind of a little bit on the Republican right side, somewhat.

At that point I think mostly student government was, like most student governments in high school or college at the time—just very—they got along with everyone, you know the hierarchy, just put on homecoming and that was about it. Several of us had seen the possibility of doing some more activist things with student government and as I said, it was a strange election and I—half of it I think I can't remember exactly—but I think there were people stuffing the ballot boxes on both sides, concerned about who was going to win and who wasn't. Eventually, after a second election, Mr. Brown was elected and that was the spring of '68. Now as everything happened within the faculty—Dean Marshall basically being fired and all of the repercussions of that—you know, here's Rick Brown running student government. And I think an increasing number of students on campus sort of saw student government and what they were doing and their response to this is irrelevant, which led to the person who was the editor of the newspaper at that time, Tom Herron, resigning that position. I took over as editor of the newspaper as he was then running for student government president against a fellow by the name of Mike Schweder who was already active in Republican politics on a local and state level. He had never lost an election ever since he was doing things in student council in high school. He basically got beat very badly by Tom and we had several other people installed by the end of the year and at that point things were actually starting to settle down a little bit. They had had a number of protests and things that were occurring throughout the second semester into 1969 happening on campus, culminating in a large kind of sit-in/teach-in—I don't know the exact name they went by.

Dougherty: Did Mr. Detwiler speak with the students at any point?

Gallagher: Yeah, he did. A lot of it was considered kind of one way conversation in several places. Just looking through this—this all started happening, I guess, oh, let's see—again, without going through the newspapers, I really don't remember exactly. It started with a rumor that was going on about the fact that contracts were going to be changed with faculty and that happened between semesters—between the first and the second semester. The implication was that they wanted to simply reinforce the religious relationship to the Methodist Church. I guess it was kind of—what supposedly was happening was that they were going to reinsert this

little clause into the contracts that had once existed that was kind of like a loyalty oath to the Methodist Church, I think. That was the first thing that came out and within the next week—two weeks—we then had Dr. Marshall resigning—“resigning”. Then I remember biology prof, Dr. Mobberley, became the temporary dean for a time. This is the other part I remember—Mr. Detwiler sending this long letter out to everyone, all parents, everyone on the campus community, about exactly what was going on. At that point it said, “The student body seems to have some internal and external reason to think that it may be their job to run the college.”

Dougherty: And did you?

Gallagher: Yeah. (laughs) At least I think there were several people. It was at that point in the very beginning of February when everything really started kind of hitting the fan—I guess you could put it. There were just meetings going all over the place—there was a new community college thing called A Town and Gown Council that was formed right at that point. Let’s see, the student government was given permission to hold a kind of open forum to discuss everything that was going on and President Detwiler was going to go to that. A lot of people kept trying to find out exactly what had happened with Dean Marshall and he basically didn’t say anything; he just left without trying to point any fingers to anyone, he was a real gentleman about it.

Let’s see, then there was the petition. There was an impromptu meeting of faculty members at the end of January. They had drawn up a petition and I guess it had forty-eight members of the present college faculty signing it and Mr. Detwiler refused to accept the petition because the executive committee and the board of directors had stated that Dr. Marshall would not be rehired—and that’s essentially what they were asking for, for him to be rehired. That was one of the things asked for in the petition. [Mr. Gallagher is quoting from the February 7, 1969 issue of *The Bell*, a student newspaper.] “Following the rejection of the petition”—this is our front page news that the students are seeing—“the acting president attempted to return to the petition to the four who had submitted it. When they refused to take it back, Detwiler tore it up. He said that he did not read the names included, but he was informed that forty-eight members had signed it.” Dr. Marshall had explained that he had nothing to do with this, he was not instigating at all. We just had a number of faculty members at that point all saying that they were going to take positions some place else or resign. That was worrying everybody. This more or less had happened just as the second semester was starting and it was bothering everybody. It bothered parents, bothered students, obviously the faculty were having just a real reaction—at least a certain group of faculty members. People in the English department, the philosophy department, a number of others just were up in arms about what was going on.

Dougherty: Well I’ve been told, just recently, that it’s taken up to now, to this time frame, to really recover from all those faculty members leaving.

Gallagher: In a way, yeah. The irony is, not that many people actually left right at that point. Very few people really followed through on that. I mean the—

Dougherty: But the student population dropped.

Gallagher: There was a—right—there was an English prof by the name of Bob Byington at that point. Bob Byington was this little guy who was very charismatic and an extremely good speaker and I’m sure—and I can remember when we had this big meeting over in the Academic

Center—you made reference to the fact that some student had gotten up and said, “You know you can’t buy”—President Detwiler had said, “If one faculty member leaves we can just hire somebody else” and this kid had said, “You know you can’t buy professors like Bob Byington.” So right after this was said—a little bit later on—Byington got up to speak in front of everyone and he says, “I would like to”—and I don’t remember his exact phrasing it was something—“to correct a canard that has been said here. Someone mentioned that professors like Bob Byington can’t be bought. I would like to say yes I can,” kind of released a little bit of the frustration. You had other things just bouncing back and forth. You had this big meeting—here’s a front page picture at that point—a number of kids raising their hands who said they were going to—were thinking of transferring.

Dougherty: And some of them must have.

Gallagher: Yeah.

Dougherty: But by the time you graduated—

Gallagher: Finally did get this response from Dr. Marshall that was kind of defending himself against some of the things that were being suggested or implied about why he was asked to leave.

Dougherty: Did you ever find out why he was asked to leave?

Gallagher: Not specifically.

Dougherty: What was your opinion of—?

Gallagher: My opinion was simply that he was defending the faculty and disagreeing very directly with some positions that President Detwiler was taking and he was just told that we can’t work with you anymore in your position and he was asked to resign and so he did, rather than facing some kind of a fight over it.

Dougherty: So by the time you had graduated, had it died down?

Gallagher: Yeah. I mean it died down between the end of the spring ’69 semester and when everyone came back to school in the fall of ’70—or the fall of ’69 rather I meant. And throughout that ’69-’70 year, things were not placid but a lot of things just changed, period. Again, I think the college was a little bit of a reflection of what was going on nationally. By the fall of ’69, up until the events at Kent State, things had more or less settled and simmered and in contrast to what had gone on through so much of 1968, it was—I think everyone was just getting tired of all of the—

Dougherty: Unrest, yes.

Gallagher: You had just a whole bunch of different things going on at the time.

Dougherty: That was the timeframe, I think.

Gallagher: Yeah. If you look at the letters to the editor, some people were concerned about airfares and other people are writing about what's been going on at Lycoming with Dean Marshall and everything else. It was at that point where the editor of the newspaper, Tom Herron, decided to resign and try to focus on what was happening in school.

Dougherty: So tell me about, how did you get involved with the newspaper?

Gallagher: Oh, well that was pretty easy.

Dougherty: And what positions did you have?

Gallagher: I'd always liked doing that. I said the way I got involved was simply through the person who I later married, my first wife, Melodye. She was working as the managing editor of the newspaper at the time and I had used to do a little bit of—I'd done a little bit of writing in high school for various publications and just enjoyed writing. I think I had actually done a couple of little satires I had shown somebody. She asked me if I would like to do something—write my own column for the newspaper and that was in those first few months when I had first come to Lycoming. So the following year I did a couple of little test things, I think at the end of spring semester of '67 and then I just started writing a little column called "Reflections", which was my very meager attempt to try to be like Art Buchwald. It actually had kind of a following; a lot of people told me it was the first thing they read in the newspaper. It was silly for the most part and we took on easy targets. I remember when they finished this building I called it something like "The world's largest junior high school bathroom"—they put in the tile all over the place and so non-descript architecturally compared to the other buildings on campus. I would just pick out little targets and two or three hundred words each week that were in a lot of cases just easy things.

Dougherty: And then you moved on to—?

Gallagher: Then I became the managing editor of the paper the next year and then eventually the editor when Tom quit, to run for student government president. Then I kept my fingers in a little bit after that but by that point, in April of '69, I got married in the middle of the second semester. I was married; I was living in an apartment and all of the sudden the stuff just didn't seem quite as vital anymore although I basically kept serving as a newspaper editor during that semester I got married. I needed to get a part time job, which I did. I always had done work on campus—I had worked for Larry Swartz originally when I first got on campus and the Department of Public Relations doing a couple of jobs for him—mostly doing all the taping of our chapel series and a couple of other odds and ends.

Dougherty: Oh, I didn't realize you were involved in the chapel series.

Gallagher: Mm-hm. I actually physically did all the taping of every single one of those and [-idently]. I thought I'd mentioned this to you before—it was funny, when we had the choir and the band down in Harrisburg at our Whitaker Center down there where I work as a volunteer now, that was the first time in thirty however many years I had seen Bishop Wertz. He came over—because he lives only about—the nursing home that's he's in is only five miles away from where I live—and I just went up and introduced myself to him and told him I used to go in and once a month we would tape a series of introductions that Mr. Swartz had written up and I

would just tape those for President Wertz at that point and he still remembered that. That was uncanny.

Dougherty: We're working with the reel-to-reel tapes right now. We're going to have some of those on the web.

Gallagher: Yeah, but I would just take his introductions and we were still doing obviously just all mechanical stuff—I used to be able to sit there and just splice those together. I could actually take an “s” off of one word and make another word plural. And Larry had showed me how to do all of that on an old big Ampex machine we had stored somewhere over in the old Long building, back when that was still the library.

Dougherty: Over in Long Hall you mean, Long Library?

Gallagher: Yeah.

Dougherty: What other campus organizations were you affiliated with?

Gallagher: Oh, I hate to mention that but—

Dougherty: Why?

Gallagher: I was affiliated—disastrous—with the Circle K but we won't even go there. I was—I messed them up.

Dougherty: I won't tell.

Gallagher: Someone decided to make me president for some reason and never should have, but um—mostly almost everything I did was connected predominantly with the newspaper and then again student government. Back when one of the big positions in student government was called the Editorial Policy Chairman who basically sifted through all the proposals and all the legislation that they did.

Dougherty: Who were your best friends on campus?

Gallagher: My best friends.

Dougherty: Other than your wife that you married.

Gallagher: When they set that up I was on the tripartite group and the Town Gown Council. My best friends were again, my friend Greg Hockman.

Dougherty: You still keep in touch with any of them?

Gallagher: Oh, yep. I still keep in touch with him. I was just out to visit him in California, just a little more than a year ago. He still runs a sound business out there. I still maintain contact on a regular basis—we probably email each other several times a week—with my one other roommate, Phil Barlett. We used to see each other a lot more often, particularly several years ago—he was rehabbing a sail boat and I was trying to show him how to do that when he was

living in Baltimore. We worked on the sailboat together for about a year before he had to move and sell the boat.

Dougherty: Did he ever sail it?

Gallagher: Very little. We spent more time working on it than actually sailing it. I maintain slight contact, just casual contact with various people—actually I just emailed back and forth with my ex-wife, just about three or four months ago. I still read a lot of sailing magazines—I used to do all of that—and reading a thing called *Cruising World* and I open it up and boom, there's a picture of my wife and her husband. They were on a service down in the Caribbean—they'd be living on a sailboat ever since about 1996 or something like that, down in the Caribbean—that's what they did when they retired.

Dougherty: That's a neat life.

Gallagher: Yeah. And they do it more or less—they offer several services—mostly they—this article was all about the perils of sailing—everything from piracy to people coming in and stealing thing. And that's what they do; they alert people through a website and through some single side band transmissions to problem areas and difficulty and various kinds of criminal behavior among the sailing community all throughout the Caribbean and the northern part of South America. And Melodye also runs a program to get books for what are mostly minority—

Dougherty: Underprivileged children?

Gallagher: —down in various islands. That's why we were communicating back and forth; I was going to help try to find some more things to be able to ship down to the other places.

Dougherty: That's neat. Where did life take you once you graduated from Lycoming?

Gallagher: Oh, where did life take me? Actually it took me in a direction I didn't expect. I really thought I was going to go to graduate school at someplace like Iowa and work on writing; that's what I had planned on doing. I got my teaching certification just as kind of a back up; I did that with kind of like an extra semester in the fall of '69. After I graduated in January of '70, I was over in this building at the education department and Dr. Zimmerman was still here (before he became superintendent out of Montoursville, he was head of the education department) and his secretary was opening mail. I'd been talking to her and she said, "Well, do you really want to get a job?" I said that, "Yeah, I had be doing a little bit of substitute teaching in South Williamsport and Loyalsock and places around here," and she goes, "Here's the kind of job that you should have. They are looking for a writing teacher and a track coach at Shikellamy High School." And I went, "Where the heck is that?" And she said, "Well, it's down the road, not that far away, down in Sunbury." I had no idea where Sunbury was.

Dougherty: Would you like a bottle of water?

Gallagher: No, thank you. Unless you want some?

Dougherty: No, I'm fine.

Gallagher: And so she actually called—I found my life changing because other people were doing things that I wasn't doing myself—like my minister. That's terrible, I can't remember her name now, but she called down to the school district—the superintendent's office—and actually made an appointment for me and so I thought, "Okay, so I'll go down." This was after the whole semester was over; this was actually in the summer. I went down and they actually wanted me to go for two interviews—one was for a job teaching English at the high school and they also had a position in what was their junior high school at that point. So I went down for the high school position and interviewed with the principal and the head of the English department and by the time I got two blocks away to the junior high, the principal tells me, "Turn around, they decided they want to hire you." So I went back to the high school and they hired me on the spot.

Dougherty: You must have been impressive.

Gallagher: Well no, I think it was just one little thing—they were about to engage in an experimental program in teaching what at that point was called Elective English—little mini courses which were very uncommon back then in '70 and I told them how much I was interested in that and actually studied a little bit about it. So at that point I figured, what the heck, I'll take this job and—because my wife who at that point was working for a Lutheran Church over in South Williamsport as director of Christian education and she had more or less committed to being there for a couple of years. I thought, yeah, I'll take this job for a year and then I'll go back to grad school. And that one year turned into twenty-three—teaching English and then becoming head of the English department at Shikellamy. And then I left there to go to down to the other position I had down in Dillsburg where I became assistant principal. Yeah, I didn't really expect to like it that much.

Dougherty: You must have been good.

Gallagher: Well, I don't know if I was good, I just guess I never felt like doing anything else. I was content.

Dougherty: You're very active in the alumni organization. Have you always been?

Gallagher: No, actually that is another one of those things—with people that I manage to stay in touch with. I got really—while I still lived at Sunbury, I used to stop by campus all the time because I would come up here every few weeks when I was still getting allergy shots right down here on Pine Street, so I'd stop at campus and see people. You know, as the years go by, there are fewer and fewer people who remember you and then when I finally moved away in '93 down to Harrisburg-Carlisle, I just never came back up here at all except for one reason and I don't know if I had told you that story.

I had been very fortunate—I was able to live out one of my little dreams and fantasies—when we used to mention Rich House—how things tied together—we used to go down over lunch time in Rich House and we would turn on the television set they had there and sit there on the couch and watch television. During the middle of the day, they used to show the original version with Art Fleming, of Jeopardy. We all would, like everybody does, we'd sit there and we'd try to answer the questions and I just used to be able to answer a lot of the questions. People used to say, "Well, you ought to go on Jeopardy." And I said, "Yeah, maybe some day." Well, fast forward about almost 30 years, 20-some years. I was doing my sabbatical—I was

finishing my doctorate at Penn State—and I came home on one weekend and I see this thing on television that they're looking for Jeopardy contestants on the CBS station up in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. So, my wife says, "You know, you've always talked about wanting to do that." I used to watch it every night when the new version started with Alex Trebek. And I said, "Yeah well," and so I called and they said, "Oh, I'm sorry; we basically can only take so many people. We've got appointments for everything." So I gave this lady a sob story, "Oh, I've been wanting to do this ever since I was in college—[inaudible]—can't you squeeze me in?" And she says, "Well, okay, I'll tell you what. You come up"—you know, they had like two days of auditions—she says, "You come up at the end of the day on"—it was on a Friday or something like that—and she says, "We'll work you in." Okay, great. So I go up there and you have to go through several different things. I take the test—it was maybe 60 or 70 people wound up taking the test and it's a little 50-question quiz and you only have to get seventy percent. Well, out of that whole room of sixty or seventy of us, four people passed the test. So the four of us then went through another series of things where we have to go through all this stuff. Well anyway, to make a long story short, I got to be on Jeopardy.

I went back to Penn State and right as I was starting to pack up and get ready to leave at the end of the summer, somebody calls and says, "Hi, this is so-and-so" and I thought it was a joke because I had told a couple of people at the college about this and they were grad assistants and I thought somebody was pulling my leg. I said, "Oh sure." Well, five minutes later this guy calls back and says, "This really is so-and-so and we met you in Wilkes-Barre and would you care to be on the show? Are you still interested?" And I said, "Well, yeah. What do I have to do?" Well, they told me you have to fly out to Los Angeles at your own expense and do a lot of other stuff. So, I thought well, okay, when am I supposed to be there? Next week. So I call my wife and made another snap decision—okay, well, we can't afford to do this but let's do it anyway. So, we went out there and it turned out that I won a little bit of money, so—

Dougherty: Good for you. How long were you on? Were you on one day?

Gallagher: Just a couple of days.

Dougherty: How wonderful.

Gallagher: I ended up winning about \$18,000—that was before they had like—that was when the categories were only worth half as much as they are now.

Dougherty: That was a nice—

Gallagher: But you know the reason I won was I answered the final Jeopardy question, the other two people couldn't. And the reason I could answer the final Jeopardy question was when I was here at Lycoming, I took a course in the American presidency and I can remember one day the prof—I can't think of the prof's name but anyway—mentioned that Theodore Roosevelt was the youngest president of the United States. And of course all these hands shot up because we all grew up with JFK and we knew President Kennedy was the youngest president. He corrected us smart-alecks, and says, "No, President Kennedy was the youngest president ever elected. Theodore Roosevelt ascended to the presidency after"—and he starts telling us the whole story about the assassination and how it happened in Buffalo, New York and that made President Roosevelt the youngest president, although he wasn't elected to the presidency at that age. That stuck with me. McKinley was assassinated in Buffalo. The final

jeopardy question was, “Which two presidents were assassinated in Washington D.C.?” [hums Jeopardy music] And of course everybody knows Lincoln and I knew Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, so that left McKinley and Garfield. I’m thinking, well, McKinley was assassinated in Buffalo—that was when Roosevelt took over. I knew nothing about Garfield so by process of elimination it’s got to be Garfield. So they start going down the line and they—there was another person there who was—I was in second place at that point by about \$1,000—and they ask the other person and the person says “McKinley”. Okay, they get to me and I go, “Garfield” and that’s correct. They go to the guy who’s the champion and he unveils “McKinley”. I won because of something I remembered from a class at Lycoming, that I had no reason to remember, but it just stuck with me. So Lycoming basically made me a Jeopardy champion.

The alumni magazine had done an article at that point and that’s when I really started getting involved—to answer your original question—with the college again. Because in this interview for the alumni magazine about Jeopardy, someone asked me whether or not I had any regrets about my college career. I said I only had one and that was I never picked up my diploma—it was held because I hadn’t paid my extra \$15 or \$10 diploma fee. So they said, “We’ll look into this.” So about two or three months later I get a phone call saying they found my diploma along with a whole file drawer of others that had been moved out of—moved over into Long Hall and just stuck in a back room someplace and this all came from, I think, Emily Bichle somehow had turned them into—oh yeah, I remember, we used to take those things and that hadn’t picked up their diploma, we used to put them in the filing cabinet—

Dougherty: I wonder where they are now.

Gallagher: Well, they found these all. They started contacting people because how I mentioned this back in ’91 and I don’t know how many diplomas actually got repatriated with their owners.

Dougherty: And where they went. I mean they should be in the archives if they still have them.

Gallagher: These are beautiful old sheepskin diplomas back in 60s and early 70s and so I’ve got mine all framed in my office now—used to have it up in my classroom in and in my office when I was an administrator—thanks to all of that. I wrote the college a check for my diploma fee plus a lot of interest. (laughs)

Dougherty: So that’s how you became involved.

Gallagher: Yeah, so I kept in touch with several different things. Then when we had brought the choir and the band down to the Whitaker Center in Harrisburg, I got drawn into that because I was working at Whitaker and was working with the committee down the south central group of people who had started that. And through several contacts, mostly from Andy Bucke and Andy Bucke was on my floor in Skeath Hall. I used to run into Andy at least once a year—a couple times of year—because back when I was working in Shikellamy, we had a very active speech and debate team and Andy used to run the debate team at his high school so I would see him all the time. We would just talk a little bit here and there year after year after year after year. Well, fast forward all these years to about 19—, 2000, 2001, something like that—actually we’re up to about 2003—my daughter comes home from high school one day at the start of her junior year and talks about her English teacher she thinks is really cool and says

“Mr. Bucke”. Mr. Bucke? All this time when I would see Andy at these speech and debate tournaments, I never knew exactly what school he was with—I knew it was somewhere down around Harrisburg. So I said, “I wonder if it’s the same guy?” So I called and it’s Andy. So he’s got my daughter in high school and we started talking about Lycoming and he mentions the fact that he’s on the Alumni Board, so he was the one who had enticed me—

Dougherty: Made the connection.

Gallagher: —had suggested me for that.

Dougherty: And so you’re still here.

Gallagher: Yeah, I’m still here.

Dougherty: Are you president of the Alumni Board?

Gallagher: No.

Dougherty: Just on the board, okay. What issue or issues for the future of Lycoming College, in your opinion, should be addressed?

Gallagher: Hoo, boy. I should have read these things ahead of time and thought about that one. What issues? We’ve been doing so much. Again, Lycoming has enjoyed great stability. The endowment—the way that has improved over the last ten years I think really bodes well for the college. When you get to be my age you start thinking about money, you take things for granted. Lycoming seemed like a really inexpensive college for a private college to me when I went here compared to what I was paying at the University of Pennsylvania which at that point was like the second most expensive college in the country. Unfortunately I had to pay things at Lycoming—I had everything covered with scholarships at Penn, but they were all for engineering. So I was kind of sensitive and always been very grateful for the grants that I did get when I was here that allowed me to get through.

I think that financially they are in relatively good shape and always have been. I think that their purposeful decision not to try to expand the student body beyond where it is—or what they consider to be about their maximum of 1500-1600—I think is wise because I think some colleges, as the number of students who are interested in going to college expanded, kind of overextended themselves. I’ve seen places get into trouble for that.

I think—I am always amazed at some of the students that they have here and their accomplishments and just how good they are. The new archaeological emphasis with our two very renowned people coming in at this point, I think has terrific implications for being able to bring people in, in a very specialized area without even a department—just considered an offshoot of religion—the religion department. I think it’s just really terrific.

But we had terrific teachers. I’ve been to four different colleges all together—actually more than that. You know I did my undergraduate work here, got a master’s from Bloomsburg, I have a doctorate from Penn State and I’ve taken course work at several other colleges. And I’ve been fairly heavily associated with some other places: up at Bucknell, I’ve done course work and I’ve done other things at Susquehanna, and some other colleges down around in

Harrisburg. I can honestly say—and that also includes having spent three semesters at Penn—I never ran into anybody who was any better than some of the professors that I had here. I had some great professors: Byington, Don Wall, Mr. Graham—a lot of people were terrific. I remember Neale Mucklow teaching philosophy like it was yesterday. Other people that I knew, simply by reputation, even though those classes I didn't take myself—people like Dr. Piper. The continuity we've had with two people in our choir I think is just beyond amazing. I think that would be one of the things that they continue to be able to engage that level of individual faculty member that they have been so blessed by for so many years. I think that is—when my daughter was looking for a college even though for several reasons she decided not to come here, that was still our whole emphasis—going to a small liberal arts college—a place where you could get individual attention and really be able to blossom.

Dougherty: Where you're a person and not a statistic.

Gallagher: Exactly. That's the difference between being at a Penn or a Penn State and being here. Some people can thrive in that atmosphere but I think the average person is much better off—plus I just believe in the whole concept of a liberal arts education and this is a real, true liberal arts school by any variety, number of measures.

Dougherty: What advice would you give an incoming Lycoming College student, or any college?

Gallagher: What advice? Take advantage of everything that's available. There are just so many activities, clubs, organizations, courses. Probably one of the enduring advantages I had was the fact that I spent—I was able to take—because I came in with a few more credits than the average student would have had by that time when I transferred here—I was able to take a lot of things out of my area that I otherwise probably wouldn't have. I was the only junior English major—I was the only junior period—taking the religion department's senior seminar. I was just—I was fascinated by what they were offering to the religion majors; the course basically having a lot to do with English and some of the romantic poets and this just whole wonder. I got a whole crash course for three or four weeks in the history of Protestant theology; Feuerbach, Schleiermacher, you know, just all kinds of things. That was just as important to me, even though I never used it in any practical way, as anything I took in my major.

I got a wonderful education in journalism. I could have been a professional reporter/journalist if I wanted, without ever having taken a journalism course at the college level, simply by what was available to me in working on our little college newspaper here, made a lot of contacts. Again, Larry Swartz had helped me get my job down at the Williamsport Sun-Gazette and I think they respected the people here.

Dougherty: I think some of our students still work at the Sun-Gazette. I can think of three or four offhand that go from here to there; not permanently, but temporarily. It's a start.

Gallagher: Had a very nice relationship. We had another young gentleman who graduated—I guess it would have been in the class of '69—who had been working with Larry and had worked for the Sun-Gazette too and he went on actually—became sports information director, working at a college out in Ohio—I forget which one it was now. I just became a teacher.

Dougherty: Not "just".

Gallagher: Well.

Dougherty: Think of all the lives you've impacted. That's wonderful.

Gallagher: There are just lots of opportunities. The accounting expertise that someone like Logan Richmond gave people; you know there were just all sorts of possibilities in all kinds of things that are available to someone here.

Dougherty: That's wonderful. Is there anything else you'd like add that I haven't asked?

Gallagher: I don't know. The only other thing we were talking about originally was just—I think probably the thing I had more fun doing other than the newspaper was when we had the old Ragged Edge coffee house.

Dougherty: Oh yes!

Gallagher: That was just—that was a delight. I can remember talking to Chip Edmonds back at Homecoming telling him that I just loved listening to his mother Peggy—she'd just sing down there on a regular basis. We had some really—again, for a little tiny college, we had people who made their mark in a number of ways. And some—I could pull out one of these newspapers here someplace and you've got my silly little thing that I'm writing, making fun of something and then the next week, the next page, here's Ken Allard who is over at University of Edinburgh then and you know all through the first Gulf War and every time something comes up, CNN used to use Ken Allard as their expert on military affairs. He's just writing little things back in our newspaper—I felt honored to be doing stuff in the same issue that he was even when he was back in college.

Dougherty: And did you know at that point that he was going to be this wonderful personality?

Gallagher: No, I didn't, but Ken had a real—we were miles apart politically. He was obviously just a very, very sharp incisive mind. What I've always appreciated and the thing I always tried to develop in my own writers was the ability to take a subject and dissect it and be very factual and you know, have a foundation that is well researched. And Ken always was that way. I had no trouble realizing that he would be the author and the expert that he eventually became.

Dougherty: This is wonderful. This is just a wonderful, wonderful interview. Thank you very much.