

Interviewee: Mary Brunelle  
Interviewers: Sadiya Bruce and Eddaliz Correa  
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Transcribers: Sadiya Bruce and Eddaliz Correa



Overseen by: Dr. Carl Keyes, Assumption College

**Abstract:** Mary Brunelle was born in Franklin, Massachusetts in 1988. She moved to Worcester in 2000 to attend Assumption College and is currently still living in Worcester. Before moving to Worcester, she felt as though she was already familiar with the city since many of her family members, including her mom grew up in Worcester. In this interview, Mary discusses the strong impact of education. She originally attended Saint Joseph College in Connecticut, but later transferred to Assumption College as a junior. She touches upon the difference of the colleges' environments and the difficulties of being a transfer student. Now as a librarian at Assumption College, she also reflects upon the different experiences of once being a student to now a staff member. Throughout the interview, Mary relates back to the importance of family and religion in her life. Her family was the influence in her choice of being a Catholic woman, and she briefly describes the uneasy situations she went through as a young Catholic girl in high school. In this interview, Mary also elaborates on her writing career and her dreams of being a published author someday.

**EC:** Our names are Eddaliz Correa and Sadiya Bruce. We are here with Mary Brunelle and the other interviewer is Sadiya Bruce. We're in Worcester [Massachusetts] and it is April 12th, 2011. We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's health, education, work and politics and community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with your work. Thank you for your help in this important project. Is it okay to record your oral history today?

**MB:** Yes.

**SB:** Okay, so let's start with the first question. It's just like some general family information and information about you living in Worcester. So, we would like your first maiden name and if you're married you can also add that to the end as well.

**MB:** Okay, I'm not married so, Mary Brunelle.

**SB:** Okay, cool. And then, when were you born?

**MB:** August 16th, 1988.

**SB:** And so you haven't been married, so I won't ask you that. What cultures/ethnicities do you identify with, like in your family background and stuff?

**MB:** My mum is 100% Irish and my dad is 100% Franco-American, so he's French-Canadian descent. So I'm half Irish, half French.

**SB:** Wow. So, do you have any information, any interesting facts about your parents?

**MB:** Well, my mum grew up here in Worcester. She has two siblings—two sisters—and they all grew up in Main South [Worcester], which is over near Clark University [Worcester]. And my—her parents—my grandparents, came over. They were born here, but my mum's grandparents came over from Ireland from County Cork [Ireland] and County Kerry [Ireland]. And the Irish culture was very important for them at that time and my—some of my cousins are very involved with the Irish heritage and they're involved in some Irish—there's like Fiddlers on the Green is when a meeting place for Irish people down by Saint John's Church down on Temple Street [Worcester]. So, that's been an important part in my family. My dad grew up in Biddeford, Maine so he's further away but, you know, all of my dad's family speaks French. His first language is French, so I grew up hearing it and I took it in school, so I can speak it and read it pretty well. So, that was in the family as well.

**SB:** I wish I could do that. [Laughs]

**MB:** [laughs]

**SB:** So, have you lived in Worcester all of your life, or did you...

**MB:** No I was, I was born here, but I grew up in Franklin, Massachusetts which is about 45 minutes away, southeast, and I moved to Worcester when I transferred into Assumption

[College] as a junior. So, that was in the year 2000, so I've been living here 11 years.

**SB:** Wow. Okay, and then the neighborhood you lived in was it, like what was it generally like?

**MB:** When I moved to Worcester?

**SB:** Yeah, when you moved to Worcester.

**MB:** So I, my first apartment was on Highland Street [Worcester]; that's down near the Price Chopper... [grocery store]

**SB:** Yeah. [laughs]

**MB:** Everyone knows the Price Chopper.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** So, so that's nice. It's a nice area. It's right across from Doherty High, so there's a lot of high school kids running around, but I was—it was a quick and easy ride to Assumption and obviously that's why I chose it. I originally thought I was going to commute from home, from my parent's house in Franklin, but I worked over the summer before going in as a junior and it was just, it was just too hard. The drive, so that's why I got the apartment. So...

**SB:** Oh, that's cool.

**EC:** Okay, where do you live in the city now and have you lived in multiple areas?

**MB:** I lived in my first apartment on Highland Street for about five years and then I moved further out. I live now near—on—just off of Lake Ave. [Worcester] near Lake Quinsigamond [Worcester].

**SB:** Oh, okay.

**MB:** On the Shrewsbury line down there and it's a beautiful area and I moved in 2005, so I've lived there for about six years. And, I like it a lot. It's very residential, you know, Worcester is—some parts of Worcester are so city, you know what I mean? Like Main Street and everything, but where I live it's so residential. A lot of kids, there are baseball diamonds, and there's a football park and stuff like that, so it's a lovely area, so I'm very lucky.

**EC:** [laughs] That's good, that's good.

**MB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Do other family members live in the same area?

**MB:** No. My—I do have an aunt and an uncle who live here on Salisbury Street [Worcester], just around the corner from the college. My grandparents were always here, as I said my mum grew up here. When my mum married my dad, they moved away, but my grandparents lived on—in Main South until they passed away a couple years ago. So, I always had family in the city and we always visited growing up, you know? My mum would take us to visit my grandparents and we would come here to Assumption and feed the ducks...

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** Yeah, we would feed the ducks when were little, so you know I didn't grow up in Worcester but I definitely feel like...

**SB:** Always familiar with it.

**MB:** Yeah, connected to it.

**SB:** That's good, that's good.

**EC:** So, do you have any other siblings or is it just you?

**MB:** I have an older brother. He's [hesitation in voice] 31, soon to be 32 next week.

**SB:** [laughs]

**EC:** [laughs]

**MB:** He's in Boston [Massachusetts]. He went to WPI [Worcester Polytechnic Institute] so we were in school at the same time. He was at WPI; I was at Assumption, so we would you know, hang out and go for lunch and stuff.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** So, and then he went to grad school at BU [Boston University] in Boston and now he works at Harvard University [Cambridge, Massachusetts].

**SB:** Oh, wow.

**MB:** Mhm.

**EC:** Wow, so he'll be able to see this...

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** Check right in.

**EC:** Okay, we can start by asking you some questions about the city of Worcester as itself. Do you think that there are any challenges that the city still faces that it did back then? Do you think there's a change in the challenges that we face?

**MB:** In terms of like socially?

**EC:** Just like the city itself, I think.

**SB:** Yeah, what changes you have seen over time from when you first moved to Worcester to what it's like now, or anything that you've noticed improve or, not really.

**EC:** Or disapprove.

**MB:** I haven't really noticed too much. I do think that they—they're, you know, I think that they had some hard times before I was really here and aware of it. You know what I mean? But, I think that they've gotten, you know, they've really cleaned up a lot. They do a really nice job with the parks and you know, Elm Park and Institute Park, I think are great places to, to hang out, you know. If you leave on your lunch break like around noon there's so many people walking around that kind of thing and I think that's great for a big city to have those kinds of gathering places, but I can't really say too much about the changes I would, I don't think.

**SB:** Okay. Do you have any, do you think there are any distinct characteristics that make Worcester what Worcester is.

**EC:** You even named a couple just now.

**SB:** Like the parks. Are there any monuments or like [pause] distinct buildings that just make Worcester different from other cities, you think?

**EC:** Yeah.

**MB:** Well, I think the Centrum which is now called the DCU Center, you know, that was the place to go when I was little and we used to see like New Kids on the Block and stuff like that

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** My mom took us when we were in the fifth grade. I was so excited.

**EC:** Wow.

**MB:** Um, so the Centrum and then um, you know the library, you know they just did—redid the library recently, maybe like, —I would say within the last 10 years. That’s a beautiful building down there now and I think that’s a real source of pride for the city I would say, especially as a librarian you know, it’s fun to think about Worcester Public you know?

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** And I think the education system obviously. I don’t know too much about the public education system, but certainly the colleges and universities of, you know, being a part of—you know the library world, we often have region meetings and so many regional meetings happen here in Worcester ‘cause there are so many colleges. There are so many meeting places and it’s a central location for the Northeast, do you know what I mean? It’s easy to get to especially with all the highways and things like that so; I think a lot of people come here. I just went to one last week it was at Holy Cross [College of the Holy Cross, Worcester] and it was for the whole New England area and so people are coming from Maine, and Vermont and stuff so, you know, it’s really a meeting place so...

**EC:** Wow, okay, that’s great. So, you think that there are any historical events that have occurred in Worcester that you can think of that maybe had an impact on your life? Do you think?

**MB:** [Pause] I can’t think of anything off the top of my head. I think probably it’s just ‘cause I’m—I’m young. You know? [laughs]

**EC:** Yeah, there wasn’t like a big event that...

**MB:** Yeah, not in the last 10 years that I can think of.

**MB:** Sorry guys. [laughs]

**EC:** It’s all right; don’t worry about it at all.

**SB:** So what was your favorite musical group? Or song? Or...I know you mentioned New Kids on the Block, but...

**MB:** Big!

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** In fourth grade that was big. So, like growing up do you think?

**SB:** Yeah.

**MB:** New Kids on the Block was big.

**SB:** [chuckles]

**MB:** What else did I listen to? Mariah Carey a lot that was one thing. Boys II Men, you know. [laughs]

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** You guys laugh but it was like, you know, it was really exciting.

**EC:** No, I understand, yeah. Since you seem like music is a big impact or like it had an impact on you now that you can think of, do—were there any places that like, you would hang out? Like maybe go to a club or things that you and your friends would do as a gathering?

**MB:** Mhm, those kinds of groups, we were pretty young. But, like I said we saw New Kids on the Block here in the Centrum and we saw Boys II Men and Mariah Carey at the Centrum as well. And, you know, my mum would take me and a couple friends or that kind of thing. So, that was, you know, you felt really cool, you know what I mean?



**SB:** [laughs]

**EC:** [laughs]

**MB:** For Mariah Carey, I know my mum sat at a different area, you know what I mean?

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** So we could be on our own.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** But mum was still watching out for us, so that was really exciting. [laughs]

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** And I remember, I guess—let's see, in high school it was R.E.M. and I remember going to an R.E.M. concert and taking a limo, you know what I mean? So being on our own that was pretty cool, right?

**SB:** OOhh. [Laughs] That's nice.

**EC:** Wow.

**MB:** Away from mum and dad and you know, we were too young to drive so we were able to take a limo, so, so that was pretty fun.

**EC:** Wow.

**MB:** Yeah.

**EC:** How do you think that girls were treated in school? During your age, do you think that it's any different now? Do you think?

**MB:** I, I do think, I think—first of all, I think this project is really interesting 'cause I think I would love to hear some of the other interviewees as well and what they have seen.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** I think I got a great education. Like I said I grew up in Franklin, which is not exactly Worcester, but I got a wonderful, wonderful education. And, I noticed—I don't know if I really say much about the gender issues, but you know, I certainly—well, actually I went to—I should also say that I transferred into Assumption as a junior and I went to an all-girls school for the—my first two years. My freshman and sophomore year.

**EC:** Oh.

**MB:** At Saint Joseph College in Hartford [Connecticut].

**SB:** Ah, I almost went there!

**MB:** Did you?

**SB:** Yeah! [laughs]

**MB:** [laughs] That's really interesting. Nobody has ever heard of it!

**SB:** I never heard of it either. And I, I think it kind of came up because, I don't know, my guidance counselor put it on the list.

**MB:** Yeah.

**SB:** And I was like, that's whatever, but yes. [laughs]

**MB:** It was a really good school and they were all about women's education there.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** And I think that for me formed a lot of my feelings for education because it was so easy to, you know, it's just, it's just a different atmosphere if there are no men around. So, I really enjoyed it but I was glad to go to Assumption and have a different experience as well because I feel like I did the girl thing and now, you know I'm starting to have like a more general experience. So, I think that that was really important to have those kinds of women you know, women education opportunities.

**SB:** So, just keeping on education...

**MB:** Mhm.

**SB:** I know that you went to St. Joseph and you have transferred to Assumption.

**MB:** Mhm.

**SB:** Did you find any like, any difficulties transferring from such a—an all-girls school to a liberal arts college or anything like that?

**MB:** Yeah, let's see. I—it—I transferred in as a junior so, I was already sort of on the out socially 'cause everyone had sort of formed their social groups and I also was a commuter. I, you know, I had the apartment on Highland Street.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** I was here during the day, but I wasn't here on nights and weekends so I wasn't living in

the dorm, so I did have—I didn't—I made a couple friends, but you know, I'm closer with the friends that I had at Saint Joseph College. I still keep in touch with them a lot more than I do with my Assumption. You know, we're friends on Facebook or whatever, so I feel like I formed my, my college friends at Saint Joseph College.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** So, yeah I had a hard time fitting in socially but that's—I'm just a shy person. I'm not a joiner, you know what I mean?

**EC:** [chuckles]

**SB:** Yeah.

**MB:** So it's hard to fit in when you're already sort of feeling like you're on the outs, but it was okay. I mean, I say that but I should also say that I loved it here at Assumption.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** I got a great oppor—you know—education, and I went on to grad school very quickly after that. But, I loved the English department and the theology department. I was an English major and a theology minor.

**SB:** Ohh.

**MB:** And, I had great professors so I, you know, as much as the social issues were my own thing.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** But, I had a great education, so I wanna say I can't say enough good things about Assumption.

**SB:** Okay, that's cool. So did you, did you find the education—well, I, I guess you found the education really well compared to Saint Joseph's and...

**MB:** Yeah. Absolutely. I always felt like, you know, I think I'm a good—I know I'm a good student and I worked really hard. I remember going in as a freshman when I was at Saint Joe and, you know, some of the other students—some of my classmates, you know, felt like they weren't really prepared for—to do the, you know, the thesis or that kind of thing.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** They didn't get the kind of public high school education that I did so I was lucky. So I felt ahead of the curve then and—but I really felt like I expanded my skills and I gained a lot of knowledge here with the English department. I think that they— and I think you should take advantage of the opportunities around you. I did an independent study both in college and in graduate school, so, you know, if you're a go-getter and you realize what you want, you gotta make it happen yourself. If the college doesn't offer the course at the time that you need it—the spring that you need it, you know.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** You gotta make sure you go out there and get it; find a professor who will help you. You know, that's really important, but I got a great education here. Definitely.

**SB:** [laughs]

**EC:** I'm an English major too, so...

**MB:** Yeah? Oh good for you!

**EC:** Yeah.

**SB:** [laughs] So, I know that you're currently a librarian here, but have you always had like a job during your entire life? Or when did you first get your first job? Or your first real job I guess I can say after college?

**MB:** Right. Well, I babysat my way through ...

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** .... through junior high and high school like every other American girl. But I got my first paying job, I worked at the Church—the—Saint Mary's Catholic Church [Holden, MA] in the rectory, so I like answered phones and I stuffed envelopes. You know, those kinds of...

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** ...menial tasks. When I was about, I would say thirteen years old, and then when I was fourteen I think I worked at CVS and I was a cashier there.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** And then—so that was fun, we got a twenty percent employee discount, which was huge. [laughs]

**SB:** Nice!

**EC:** Wow.

**MB:** So all kinds of schools supplies and stuff like that, so that was good. And then, let's see... When I was sixteen [ponders] and then I worked at my dad's company. My dad at the time—he's worked at the same physical company but it's changed hands that bought out. At the time it was Ciba Corning and then it changed to Bayer, like the aspirin. And I worked at his company. They were all about nepotism, so you know if you had children your kids were automatically hired and so. [laughs]

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** It was great, you know. I got a lot of good experience working—it was—I worked in the manufacturing department so there were a lot of men and sort of, you know, tough macho types there as well, so you know, it was good to be—to have that kind of experience. And I did that for a while and then, let's see, I worked as a student worker when I was here at Assumption. I worked in the Office of Institutional Advancement for Tom Ryan, one of the VPs [vice president] down there. In the Bishop Wright [Assumption College] building is why I'm pointing down there.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** Let's see. And then, one of the women that I worked for at the Institutional Advancement I—she left and went to UMass Medical School [University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts] and she liked me so much, she took me with her so...

**SB:** Oh! [laughs]

**MB:** I know. It was a great opportunity.

**EC:** Wow.

**MB:** Yeah!

**EC:** That's great.

**MB:** It was—it was great. So she did, you know, she was in the development office of Institutional Advancement so I did a lot of those menial tasks but I also, you know, found out a lot about the, the donation world and how you go and ask very rich people for a very lot of—you know, a lot of money.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** You know, million dollar gifts, that kind of a thing. And we did like, you know, we worked some of the golf events and things like that all those events you have to wine and dine the big donors.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** I did that for a couple years and then I did that obviously when I was in school and then I did that 'til I graduated. And then I graduated in 2002 and I started work—in May—and then I started working in August at the library and I've been there ever since!

**SB:** Wow.

**MB:** Mhm. And then actually, I should also say I did—when I started in 2002 at the library, I was part-time on the weekends and then I worked part-time during the week at a place called Audio Journal here in Worcester. They read newspapers and magazines and things to people over the radio and it's for blind people; people with visual disabilities.

**SB:** Aw!

**MB:** So I did a little bit of on air work, but I mostly did marketing for them. So I did that for about a year and then I went to grad school and I was going to grad school full-time during the week and still working at the library part-time on the weekends until I got my Masters—my Masters in Library Science. So, I did that until 2004 when I got my Masters and then I've been full-time at the library ever since then.

**SB:** Ah!

**MB:** So that's my full working history. [laughs]

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** The whole deal!



**EC:** Wow that's a lot

**MB:** Yeah.

**EC:** That's great though. Wow.

**SB:** So, do you—do you have like a different outlook on Assumption 'cause I know like—not, a different outlook but a different perspective since from being a student to now being a actual staff member. Like, do you see a lot of things that you haven't noticed before when you were a student?

**MB:** Yeah. Definitely and I think you start to think differently.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** You know what I mean? First of all I think we're, we're more removed from what the students you know—I, I like working with the students at the reference desk. I like seeing the students and talking with them. And, of course I read the Provoc [Le Provocateur, Assumption College student newspaper] but you hear more of the faculty issues.

**SB:** [chuckles]

**MB:** And what's going on, you know.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** Through the email that way. So, you start to, you know, my first couple of years here identified more with the students, especially looking and—so young, people would come to the desk and they would think I was a student, but I was like 'no!'

**EC:** [laughs]

**MB:** “I’m a real librarian. You’re stuck with me.” You know? So, the first few years I definitely identified more as a student but now I obviously, I identify more as, as an, you know as a staff member. And, and I don’t know—are you guys both freshman?

**EC:** Yes.

**SB:** Yes.

**MB:** Yes. I think there’s been some faculty turmoil. I don’t know if you’ve heard much about, much about that. But the faculty have been a little bit unhappy I think recently and I think that that’s a shame ‘cause I think that that rubs off the wrong way and I—you know there’ve been some things mentioned certainly on campus, but even outside it’s gotten into the local newspapers and things. And I think that that’s really a shame because I think the best thing for me about Assumption is the community.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** And I think a lot of people say that. I know we hired somebody recently for one of the positions of the library and the inter—the person we were interviewing she asked us all at the table what do you like most about Assumption? And we all said community. We all had the same idea...

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** Because it’s, it’s really such a big part of our culture. And it’s a small school and I think that, that, excuse me, is really important for, for being happy at your job. I think for people our age, my age rather, it’s easy to move on to another job very quickly.

**EC:** Mhm.

**MB:** You know, one year, two years, three years. But I’ve been at my job for nine years now and

I don't see myself leaving. I think that community is really important. You know, a big part of that. So, I would feel bad if Assumption got a bad rap recently 'cause I—you know, I think that, like I said, this is a great school and I think that we're just going through a bumpy road right now. [laughs]

**EC:** Yeah, I understand. I could agree with that.

**SB:** So, during your education at—either at here, I mean at Assumption or at Saint Joe's, I know that you mentioned a lot of networking and just how important that was to you. Who were your mentors or people you looked up to during that time to help you through the college experience?

**MB:** Yeah. I think mentors are extremely important whether they're just, you know, not just faculty, but whether they're just faculty or your—you know at your job. I, I had the one person that I worked for here at Assumption who then went to UMass Med [University of Massachusetts Medical School], her name is Meg. We're still in—in touch a little bit as well. She was wonderful in terms of not just teaching me the ropes but how to be, you know, a strong female professional.

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** And you know to grow a little bit not—and not act like a kid, you know what I mean? For instance, one day—so I was answering the 'phones all the time and one day the personal assistant to Denis Leary, the comedian. [laughs] .....

**SB:** [laughs]

**EC:** [laughs]

**MB:** .....calls and she's like you know, the personal assistant and I was like 'Denis Leary?! The actor!!'

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** You know, and that's not a professional...

**EC:** Yeah.

**SB:** [laughs]

**MB:** Way to answer the phone. That was like a very juvenile thing, you know, way to act, so...

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** I think it's important to have strong female characters in your life who can show you how to, you know, be calm and cool and collected.

**EC:** [laughs]

**MB:** Like somebody who's connected to somebody famous answers the phone, so I—you know I was very lucky to have the influence of, of these women. Meg was one person but there were a lot of strong characters like that and of course if you're dealing with those kinds of donors and important people, you know, they—you have to act a certain way not just over the phone, but at those golf events and things like that. When, you know, these people have money, you know what I mean?

**SB:** Mhm.

**MB:** So, you gotta make sure that you represent your co-workers, and the institution that you work for. So, that's, that's real key in terms of being, you know, a professional in the field. Also, if you have great professors, you know. The English department I think is, is awesome.[Professors] Lang and Land, I think especially are, are great people who—that you can learn from and you know, grow in your own English skills and your communication skills. But, also that you know, I did an independent study with Professor Lang and I—it was for writing publication, so there was no course like that, but he knew that I was interested, pardon me, in writing and that I would want to submit work to journals and newspapers and things like that. So, he taught me a lot on the side, you know, I mean I've got—obviously I got credit for it. But, I

made it my business to make sure that I had that, that kind of mentor and I think that's extremely important. Like I said before, you really have to go at it. You know? Know what you want and find a way to make it happen, you know? Sounds very cheesy and...

**EC:** [laughs]

**MB:** Cliché.

**EC:** No, you're right. You're right.

**MB:** But it's not gonna fall into your lap.

**EC:** Yeah.

**SB:** Right.

**MB:** You know what I mean? So...

**EC:** I understand.

**EC:** I think that's right. Well, it seems like when you were talking about the religious aspect of it, when you were talking about how you helped out doing like the checkout system at the library, it seems like being a librarian is a big role in your life and you've based your life around it I think. Do you think that that is something you've always wanted to do or is it something like being a librarian is something that just came to you?

**MB:** Let's see, it was always just percolating in the back of my mind. A lot of women in my family were librarians or they worked in libraries, just in high school or that kind of thing. But I did have two women in my family who were full time librarians so, I had always been thinking about it. I was an English major and I tried to get a job after college but even then in 2002 it was very difficult to get a job right out of school. I feel very bad about people getting out of school now because it's even worse. But even then it was difficult so I took the job at Assumption thinking "Oh, I'll try it out, I'll see if I really like being a librarian" and it just

worked out that there was an opening and it turned out that I really did like it. I really enjoy it and in order to be a librarian you need a Master's Degree so then I knew I should go to school and that's when I went to graduate school. I think, you know, for me, I like being a librarian because I believe in the power of education and I don't necessarily want to be a teacher in front of, you know, thirty students. Excuse me but I, you know, God bless people who do because we need good teachers but that's not for me so this is this is a way to be involved in education and in Catholic education without actually, you know, being a teacher. I really enjoy it. I love working with the students and I'm very happy at my job so and I think that that's rare for people my age to actually say that.

**EC:** Say that they love their job.

**MB:** Yeah.

**SB:** That's good though I think that's really good.

**MB:** I'm very happy.

**EC:** So you feel like you are successful because this is what you're happy with your job and it's not something that you regret in life like you are not happy in a difficult job so you feel like you are successful.

**MB:** Yeah, I do and I wouldn't be doing it if I weren't happy because I easily could make a lot more money if I went to a state school for one thing. So I'm not in it for the money, you know. You don't become a librarian to be rich by any stretch of the imagination. I had friends who were education majors and they went out and they started teaching and they realized that they didn't really like it. And that's a terrible situation to be in. If you went through four years and you got your degree and you're like "now what do I do", you know what I mean, I mean now we, like I said, the problem of even getting a job but I would never want to be in the position of disliking what I do or, you know, that kind of a thing, so, and I think, you know, especially as I said the difficulty in the job market even if you... so let's say you don't find a job in in your field and you have to take some sort of crappy entry level job that you don't like that's not even related to your degree I mean that's no good either. To be stuck like that it's not good for anybody. It certainly wouldn't be something that I would want so I it just worked out for me really well that I was able to find a job that I was semi-interested in and I found out that I really loved it so I am I am very lucky.

**SB:** So being a librarian are you really big on reading?

**MB:** I am, yeah!

**SB:** Do you have any favorite books?

**MB:** I just got a Kindle for my birthday recently which I really love because now people don't know what I'm reading (laughter).

**EC:** Yeah that's true.

**MB:** You can be on the T in Boston and nobody's looking, you know, criticizing some *Twilight* or something, yeah, so I really like the secrecy of that. I'm a big fan of classics; I like Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte. I'm reading, re-reading, *Villette* which is by Charlotte Bronte. I've probably read it like four times now and I'm re-reading it now; like the classics but I like new fiction as well. I like *Twilight* and I've read .....

**SB:** Love *Twilight*

**MB:** ..... I've read all those books several times

**SB:** Looooove *Twilight*.

**MB:** Yeah, they are they are really really fun, you know. I joke about being embarrassed about it but there are a lot of women my age that love *Twilight*, you know, watch the movies and they have the soundtracks and everything so, you know, yeah. So let's see what else I just read another good book about vampires called *A Discovery of Witches* and it was called *Twilight* for adults. So, you know, [laughter] that was good and what else have I read recently. I just read a book that I absolutely hated and I put it down so I'm not going to talk about that one but [laughter] yeah I think I think reading is so fun. There's nothing for me there's no other way to escape, you know what I mean? You watch TV, you watch a sitcom; it's over in a half an hour and you're right back to worrying whatever you were worrying about, you know, before that but with a book you can really escape. I find myself thinking about it in the shower or while I'm cooking dinner or something, you know what I mean, like it stays with you

**EC:** Yeah.

**MB:** And it stays in your head so much more for, at least for me, than like, you know, some movie or TV show, although I certainly watch my fair share of movies as well.

**EC:** I would agree.

**MB:** So, yeah, so I think, you know, and I think that that comes from, you know, the kind of culture that I had growing up. My mom is a teacher and my dad is a software engineer so education was always important; that was instilled in me my childhood. I have these great photos of me as a baby sitting on the couch next to my dad and he's reading to me, you know what I mean, so I think it's

**EC:** So cute.

**MB:** Yeah I think, you know, I love like I get really misty eyed when I look at those pictures [laughter] but I think I think that it has to be instilled in you as a child. It's so important to read to children because there's just nothing like it, you know, so it's certainly forming your education habits obviously what kind of student you'll be in school but it's a real gift to have a great book I really do.

**SB:** I think that's always a good childhood memory is you like always remember the little stories your mom used to read to you during bedtime.

**MB:** Yes, definitely, yeah I think that's it's great for the for the kid but it's also great for the parent too, you know. It's a great bonding experience and there are wonderful memories to think about I totally agree [laughter. ]

**EC:** I would agree. Do you think, besides reading, do you think there are any other activities that you use to escape from your job and like from your struggles in life, do you think?

**MB:** Let's see. Well, so I was an English major and I've actually -- one of my New Year's resolutions for 2011 is to get published, so now that I have a full time job and everything I feel like I can get back into writing and do it for fun, you know. I had trouble breaking into the publishing industry but now I feel like maybe I can just get published as a freelance writer. I've been thinking I want to sort of write for some of the Catholic newspapers or magazines about being a young woman in the church and seeing some of the unrest that's happening in the Catholic Church that kind of thing, growing up Catholic. When I did my independent study here at Assumption with Professor Lang the over arching theme was growing up Catholic and how that affected me as a student when I was really young. That's how, you know, I'm thinking about that now and when you know when I was in my early twenties moving into my adult years. So I think writing can help a lot in terms of thinking about your life and thinking things through and that kind of thing and I generally like to keep with my friends online and on email which seems to be sort of an outdated, you know, means of communication with Facebook and everything and text messaging. Several of my friends were English majors so we're big into writing but you know it's nice to be able to connect with somebody. If they're far away then, you know, it's great talking but then the next best thing is writing. I want to be able to do that professionally, for my professional life but it's also a great, you know, means of escape, like I



said, just thinking things through, working things out.

**SB:** So how do you define success in your life and has that definition changed from when you were younger to how you look on it now or

**MB:** Let's see, I don't think I've... let's see, when I was younger. I don't really have a sense of what I felt like success was when I was younger. To answer the first part of your question I think I would say success is as I've already said before, finding happiness in your job and happiness both in your work life and in in your private life. I am happy to say I have a great family and, you know, a wonderful set of friends, you know, so I think that's successful for me. Sometimes you're asked on your job what are your goals and things like that and I don't necessarily find myself an ambitious person because I think, thankfully, I tend to be pretty happy with my life and if something weren't and, you know, if I weren't happy for some reason I'm sure I would do something to change it. But I'm lucky to say that I have a job and a family that I really love so I don't really I feel like that's success. I don't feel like probably just the nature of my work, like anyways, we don't have a structure where you work your way up like in the corporate world where you can start in the mail room and then be president in a company (laughter), you know what I mean, there are a lot of steps on that ladder and it's not the same where I am, so it's a good thing that I'm happy because if I were ambitious person I would be in the wrong job I think, you know what I mean, so I would say that I am successful and, like I said, not for money reasons or anything like that because it's certainly hard to have a mortgage and you know all those other utility bills and be just a librarian but, you know, I make ends meet and that for me, that's enough, you know, I'm happy.

**EC:** Yeah that's what's important.

**SB:** So I know you've had a lot of words of wisdom during this interview [laughter] I've come to notice that so based on your own life and like what would you say to women and girls that are growing up in this day and age and for future generations like if you had any advice you'd give them.

**MB:** Let's see what can I say without being sappy or cheesy [laughter]. I think that, you know, when I reiterate what I said before about finding something that you can relate to, you know, that you can have as a mentor... I think that that's really important to have strong role models and I think that that comes from you. That came for me a lot at my first school at Saint Joseph College. It was an all-female school and so it was very easy to find strong role models there. I had one professor that I was very close to, and the head of campus ministry; she was a female, obviously, and I was close with her as well, so you know, but I also think it's important to have strong

male influences, you know. I had an older brother and I had a very strong relationship with him. He's my best friend actually. You know, we're very, very close so I think that makes it easy to have guy friends and to have boyfriends, you know, because you already have men in your life and I think it's that's real important. But if you don't have a brother, you don't have a brother you know (laughter). There's nothing else you can do about that but, you know, for me personally, that was important for me. So let's see, so yeah, just having strong role models I guess would be the most important thing. The other, you know, may be the other set of words of wisdom that I had was about going after things if it doesn't fall into your lap. And, you know, for one example would be for graduate school. For me, very quickly after college, after I got my Bachelors, you know, I wasn't exactly in love with writing papers and you know, I wanted a little bit of a break. I took one year off but, you know, I felt like I had to do it before I got too far out of the habit of writing papers. I didn't want to go ten or fifteen years because, you know, then I'd just feel like I'd be in a different place in my life so you do things out of your comfort zone and go after things even if it's, you know, not the easiest thing to do and I guess that's what I'd say [laughter].

**EC:** So are good words of wisdom honestly [laughter]. I think that works, I think that's great. Alright we're going to talk about health issues. Are there any health issues that you think impacted your life or those in your family that you can remember?

**MB:** Health issues, like physical health issues?

**SB:** I guess so.

**EC:** I would think, so yeah I would think so.

**MB:** I don't know. I mean I certainly have my own health issues. I have a bad back and you know, thirty years and I have like this skeleton of [laughter] an 80 year old, you know what I mean, so I think it's hard to be a young person and have arthritis and things like that. It's not, you know, it's not fun to have to go to the doctors all the time and I've been to tons of physical therapists and right now I'm wearing a pain patch because I ...

**EC:** Awww.

**MB:** ... have so much pain. I don't want that to affect my life even though it encroaches on certain things that I can't do. Because of that, but you know, you do what you can, you manage and you go through it so I don't know what else I have to say. I'm glad to say I have a lot of good family history in terms of health but one thing I could say is probably about my

grandparents. My grandparents passed away in the past couple of years. They passed away very quickly one after the other and that was really difficult. It was, it's hard to see people fail like that, you know what I mean, you see them break down. My grandfather passed away in 2008, and my gram in 2007 and my mémère [grandmother] in 2007. I still, once a week, have nightmares about them and being in the hospital, in the nursing home with them and my gram was in Autumn Village for a while and that's down on Lincoln Street and we used to go visit her. I think that certain experience almost everybody can relate to and it's still affecting me. It still seems like I'm still going through it. I'm not quite over it yet, but I was very lucky to have known all my grandparents and, they were, all four of my grandparents lived into their 90's so .....

**SB & EC:** Wow.

**MB:** ....we have very good family history so I'm very, very lucky. My dad only knew one of his grandparents and it was his paternal maternal grandfather and that grandfather died when my dad was like 10 I think. So I think having the family structure is very important. I think we started off very early talking about the family and hearing about Worcester and that kind of thing and those kinds of things my grandfather would tell stories. We're getting off topic but my grandfather would tell stories. He went to (The College of the) Holy Cross and he talked a lot about that and he talked about his mother's death when he was very young. His father had four little boys to take care of and so my grandfather went to work very early to help support the family and that kind of thing. You know that's it it was wonderful to hear his stories, you know, I think that generation they were so good at storytelling [laughter]. Much better than we are now. I don't know if it's the effect of technology or what but I don't speak like, like you know, we don't speak the way that those kinds of people did in that generation and he, you know, he used to have lots of wonderful stories so I was, you know, we were, I was lucky to have known all of my grandparents.

**EC:** Wow, it seems like family really plays a big role in your life for sure until now. It just shows that your family structure is very well.

**MB:** Absolutely, I'm very, very lucky.

**EC:** Yeah. Well do you think that not only has family made an impact on your life but is there anything politically that could have impacted you that had like an effect on you?

**MB:** Well, politically. I think it's hard to identify obviously as with the Catholic faith but I think it's hard to reconcile that with politics these days, you know. I don't consider myself a political person although I certainly I keep track of politicians and I and I think about the news and I

watch the news I'm an Independent registered Independent so I don't identify with the Democratic or Republican party but you know, it's, you know, it's unfortunate to watch the news and think about the people having their debates and things like that, you know, things that were just happening with, you know, the possible government shut down, you know, but I think that's probably very scary. I think that it's hard to be a Catholic and listen to those and make decisions and, excuse me, think about, for instance, you know I'm pro-life so there's very few pro-life candidates out there. So it's hard to get behind anybody, you know what I mean, and some of the pro-lifers, pro-life candidates are crazy! [laughter] so it's hard to find a strong political person that you can get behind. I, in the last election, I voted for (John) McCain because I was happy to vote for a woman, for Sarah Palin, but she hasn't exactly stepped up to the plate you know what I mean, she's not really a strong person I feel like I can get behind, so I would love to see, you know, see a female in on a major ticket and you know what I mean, I think that that's something that will happen in our lifetime but it's incredible that it hasn't happened until now, you know what I mean? Some of the other European countries have female leaders. And it's incredible that the U.S. is so far behind that way. I think, I think it's hard to get behind somebody because I'm Catholic but also it's... I wish I could vote for a woman, you know, so I think I think that will come soon but it hasn't happened yet.

**SB:** I think that we're on our way because I think that even the fact that we have a black president...

**MB:** Right.

**SB:** now and it took like so many presidents to get to just that one. I don't know, like I never looked at it, at how religion can so impact like your political views and values and stuff and I definitely see the correlation.

**MB:** Yeah, yeah for me pro-life is probably takes precedence over everything, so that's so important that other issues of education or, you know, social activities or that kind of thing or, you know, anything like gay rights, those become secondary for me because I feel so strongly about the pro-life issue. It's like I said, there's just so few decent normal politicians that identify as pro-life it... they're just not out there.

**EC:** Yeah, I understand what you mean.

**SB:** Yeah.

**SB:** Hmm, let's see. Oh I do have a question, actually. I know that you mentioned you were

really really involved in campus ministry at both Saint John and Assumption, are there any like extra other extracurricular activities you're involved in or sports or anything that you played or...

**MB:** No, I played tennis when I was growing up in junior high and high school but I ripped up my shoulder so I had to stop that after a while, I miss it. I wish I could play tennis even now. Let's see what else did I do? I, let's see, other curricular, so I did the service, you know, I did the community service and I did the, you know, some Catholic groups and youth groups, things like that. No, I I think that's all I have to say about that. I did babysit a lot which you know doesn't sound like much but I think you can learn a lot about being an adult and, you know, certainly learning obviously a lot about kids and I learned that I don't really like kids that much (laughter). It's not something that I'd be interested in at all at least right now although if it happens further down the road fine but you know I certainly got a feel of kids that way but you know I think that that's you know you get paid for it but that in itself is kind of a social service as well because you know there were I was the only kid my age high school junior high kid my age on my block and so the people all of the women who had kids they all turned to me because I was it you know what I mean so that in and of itself was kind of a social service because they had really no other opportunities. I do, you know, I do think I learned a lot that way and yeah, so I don't I don't think I'm answering your question but I don't think there's anything else I have to say about that (laughter).

**SB:** So you seem very, very happy about your life and very, very comfortable with where it's at. Have you, have you, how could I say this. are you, are you confident with the way that you made your choices in the past days or do you have like (**SB & EC:** any regrets)? Anything that you wish you could just kind of go back and maybe do it once more to make it right like that time or...

**EC:** Or maybe do something more than like that you want back in your life or...

**MB:** Well I touched on this earlier I guess I probably should have done more out of my comfort zone to making friends when I was here at Assumption. You know I think it was just easy to just slip into class and sort of sit in the back of the classroom and then go home to my apartment, you know what I mean. I wish, I guess, I wish I made more of an effort. I do have one close friend that I, we still keep in touch with and I keep in touch with her now but I probably could have made a lot more of an effort to be involved and be more friends with her friends and that kind of thing. So I think, I guess, I wish, I would have made more of an effort at that time during my life but it doesn't really affect my life now. I certainly made friends in grad school and I made one of my closest friends I met at UMass (University of Massachusetts) when I was there at UMass, so I think it's now, I think it's hard to make friends and it's something that I wish I were better at but I'm naturally just a shy person. So and then and especially now, being so, you know, so as I said

a lot of my friends are in Connecticut because that's where I went to school in the early years ( My closest friend at Assumption, she lives in Connecticut, so she lives down there and then my friend from grad school lives in Boston so I really only have I have a couple friends here in Worcester. In terms of just, you know, you have a long day at work and you want to go out to dinner with someone, you know, and it's ...

**EC:** It's hard to find someone.

**MB:** Yea it is, it really is. Worcester is such a big city, you know what I mean, and I work pretty hard during the day. I'm really tired; I don't want to really feel like making an effort at the end of the day, you know what I mean, I don't, I would not really know how to, so that's probably a regret in the making, [laughter] you know what I mean, that I'm not doing more to meet people. But I don't know, I just don't really know how to go about doing it, but I hope, like I said, I hope the service, the community service that I'm trying to get involved, that I'm with now at the hospital or that kind of thing, I hope to meet people that way. But that's, you know, as much as I like to say "get out of your comfort zone", it's not easy. It's, you know, you got to practice what you preach, you know what I mean [laughter]. It's not something that, you know, I'm not proud of it but that's just the way it is and I'm trying to work through it.

**SB:** Do you have anything to ask, anything else?

**EC:** I don't think so [laughter]. I don't think so. Now that we're working to tell the full story of the history of women that has been recorded in the past is there anything that you'd want to include any more or do you think that you should say any

**SB:** Final thoughts?

**MB:** Wrap it all up [laughter].

**EC:** Yeah exactly anything that you want to wrap up or bring up?

**MB:** I don't know, I guess ... I guess my only final thought is I'm just going back to my Catholic faith and as hard as that was sometimes growing up in terms of people who weren't Catholic, would ask questions, you know, all the kids at school, "Why do you do this? Why do you not eat meat on Fridays during Lent," you know that kind of thing. And you know I didn't really like that. I didn't really represent the Catholic Church, you know what I mean, but now it's something I'm really proud of and am glad to get involved in any kind of conversation. Like that is great because I think it's a teachable moment. I think it's great to teach people things they don't know and certainly the Catholic faith, so I think, like if I were speaking to a young girl

who was having some sort of issue like that, I would say, you know, you might hate it now but it might turn out to be something that you really... I shouldn't say that I hated, I didn't hate being a Catholic [laughter] but I, you know, it was very, sometimes it was very uncomfortable

**EC:** Hard to accept, yeah.

**MB:** When you sort of felt like an outsider when people were asking you questions at the lunch table, you know that kind of thing. But yeah, it might turn out to be something that you can really cherish and enjoy when you get older. So, you know, any kind of words of wisdom would be, you know, work through it and again get out of your comfort zone. [laughter] That seems to be my choice of phrase of the day, I don't know why.

**SB & EC:** Yeah [laughter].

**SB:** Well thank you very much for your time this was a really good interview. I really enjoyed this so I'm -- I'm very glad you agreed to do this and thank you [laughter].

**MB:** Thank you for contacting me!

**EC:** No problem!

**SB:** Okay.

**END.**