

## **Sybil Novinski Oral History Transcription**

**1 Callie Ewing** I am with Sybil Novinski in Irving, Texas. I want to clarify that I am going to

**2** record this interview, and it will be uploaded to the UD oral history repository. Is that all right?

**3 Sybil Novinski** That's just fine. It will be my pleasure.

**4 Callie Ewing** All right. So, first of all, tell me about your elementary and secondary education.

**5 Sybil Novinski** I began in the public school near our house, a wonderful public school.

**6** Walked to school, and walked home. Then I transferred when I got close to making First

**7** Communion and so forth to the Catholic school near our parish, St. Joseph Catholic Church, in St.

**8** Joseph, Michigan. And was there until I graduated from high school.

**9 Callie Ewing** Let's see; you went to Marquette for your undergraduate education?

**10 Sybil Novinski** I went to Marquette.

**11 Callie Ewing** And what was that like?

**12 Sybil Novinski** Oh, it was wonderful. I went to a small Catholic high school. I think there were

**13** 19 of us in my high school class, and I wanted to have a big experience, go to what I thought

**14** was a great big school. And of course, I was very interested in the influence of Jesuit education

**15** and the history of American education and so forth. So, that's how I landed at Marquette, in the

**16** College of Liberal Arts. I'm not sure how large it was, probably about 8,000, and Milwaukee was

**17** a fascinating city. And thus I am interested in cities. Marquette. Made many good friends there.

18 Got elected head of the Union Council. The Brooks Union was called the Brooks Memorial  
19 Union. Worked of all things in the admissions office. One never knows ... about the little things  
20 along the way, as then I later was in charge of admissions and recruiting at UD. So that little  
21 background actually was very helpful. I was an English major. That is not what I intended to do.  
22 I thought I would be a doctor. One of the reasons I chose Marquette was their medical  
23 school: well-recognized med school. Got admitted to medical school after three years of  
24 undergraduate work, and then decided not to do that.

25 **Callie Ewing** Why did you change your mind?

26 **Sybil Novinski** I'm not sure; there was part of me that knew that there were things that I was  
27 fudging about that I did not really understand. I got better grades because I was a dutiful girl and,  
28 did careful work in labs and so forth. So I got as good or better grades than — it was mostly  
29 men — than the guys in our classes and so forth. But at that time, med school had a big emphasis  
30 on chemistry, and there was just, it didn't seem like something I wanted to deal with. Either that  
31 or I'd have to go back to the beginning and learn my chemistry again. I guess that was one of the  
32 reasons. I'm not sure. You know, sometimes you get what you think that you want and then  
33 you don't want it. And, but, of course, that was very difficult for my parents to understand.  
34 They, you know, had to have something to tell Grandma and the lady at the store and everyone  
35 who asked every day, “Well, what is Sybil going to do? What is she majoring in?” So I quickly,  
36 I'd taken a lot of literature and courses in New Criticism, which was the hot topic at the time.  
37 But I hadn't done things in the right order. Marquette was very good to me because I was a  
38 reasonably good student, and they would let me take several classes that met at the same time,  
39 and I would alternate going to class and so forth, so, anyhow, I got my degree. Was  
40 accepted for a grad program there in some kind of reading, educational instruction. Decided not  
41 to do that. Went home. After about two weeks at home, my parents said, “So now what are

42 you going to do with yourself?" And I said, "I don't really know." We lived 100 miles from  
43 Chicago. I was quite familiar with the city. And so my parents said, "We'll stake you to a couple  
44 of weeks at the Y on the Near North Side, and you should go and look for a job." So I spent the  
45 first week reading *The Brothers Karamazov*. And then the second week, I thought, hmm. So I  
46 bought a newspaper and realized that there were employment agencies. These were all very  
47 valuable experiences for the rest of my life. It's really not so hard to find a job. You need to look  
48 for one; it's what you need to do, and that's what I learned. I went to an employment agency,  
49 took a test. Got hired by Gillette in the Toni division and spent a year or so there,  
50 being a marketing research analyst — had not a clue what that was before I started it. And, met  
51 my wonderful husband who was artist in residence at Marquette and taught my younger brother,  
52 which is how we met. (That's another story.) We ended up coming to Texas for what we thought  
53 were two years. While I was at Gillette, I learned an enormous amount in that year and a half  
54 about business and research and advertising and so forth. And then, of course, they also had the  
55 fringe benefit — paid for graduate school. So I did I think maybe six courses at the University of  
56 Chicago under some very famous faculty members like Bruno Bettelheim. Who later, of all  
57 things, gave a lecture at the University of Dallas. So, then we came to Texas. But, that was a  
58 wonderful time.

59 **Callie Ewing** What were the courses that you took at the University of Chicago?

60 **Sybil Novinski** Well, they were mostly in educational psychology. That was at a time when  
61 everyone was arguing about nature versus nurture; we are still trying to find a balance. How do  
62 you influence a child's learning? And so forth. There was also a wonderful course in Rogerian  
63 therapy; Carl Rogers was a very important psychologist. He taught a course, a therapy course,  
64 which was very important. But I didn't finish that degree. But the experience, and the experience  
65 of being in a great city, and sensing the pulsing ebb and flow of a great city, and managing the

**66** transportation and walking everywhere was significant. And, being there, on Lake Michigan. I  
**67** grew up on Lake Michigan; St. Joseph was on the Lake. I was very fortunate in my growing up.  
**68** My mother and father, I think, probably read every book in the city library, so we consequently  
**69** read every book in the city library. Very, very fortunate in that way.

**70 Callie Ewing** And so...

**71 Sybil Novinski** Because you are sitting there, I keep looking that way. I'm not sure which way  
**72** I'm supposed to be looking.

**73 Callie Ewing** Either way, it's fine; you don't have to look at the camera. Just ignore the camera.

**74 Sybil Novinski** Ok. You're much more interesting than the camera.

**75 Callie Ewing** So at some point, I remember that you did doctoral work at SMU, right?

**76 Sybil Novinski** Excuse me. Not doctoral work — just graduate work.

**77 Callie Ewing** Ok.

**78 Sybil Novinski** That's why I finally earned my master's.

**79 Callie Ewing** Ok, ok.

**80 Sybil Novinski** I earned my master's in English. SMU was very good to me. Dr. Perrine, famous

**81** SMU English teacher was my major professor. And I did an impossible thesis topic for just a

82 master's-level degree; I took on the idea of progress. There's a famous book written by J.B. Bury  
83 called *The Idea of Progress*. One begins with somebody like Thomas a Kempis, and *The*  
84 *Imitation of Christ*, and asks, "Can you improve?" You read *The Divine Comedy*, which ends  
85 with us walking into heaven, improving that much. You ponder such ideas and all these things,  
86 and you hope civilization is getting better, or your area of it's getting better. Actually it was all  
87 related to what I was interested in. Just interested in the human condition. It was just such an  
88 enormous topic, but eventually I got it done and delivered it, at about the same time as I was in  
89 the throes of delivering our first child, in 1963, Michael. But. SMU was very good to me. I stay a  
90 little bit in touch with SMU, you know, give a little bit of money every year, in gratitude.  
91 Because that master's was important, and Dr. Perrine was very patient with me pursuing that  
92 theme and its ramifications. And then, at UD, because the graduate school began in '66, I began  
93 to take courses towards the Ph.D.

94 **Callie Ewing** I think that's ...

95 **Sybil Novinski** And I never finished it. I probably have finished all the coursework, or most of  
96 it. I knew along the way that with five children, and trying to do all different parts of  
97 university administration, that I would never get a dissertation done.

98 **Callie Ewing** Right ...

99 **Sybil Novinski** And I came to understand that universities need good administration. It's a very  
100 important task since it makes it possible for the faculty and students to do what it is they're  
101 supposed to do. But I enjoyed those graduate classes so very much; it was like a breath of fresh  
102 air every week. I'm sure you have the same reaction.

**103 Callie Ewing** Yes, yes, definitely.

**104 Sybil Novinski** Where you say, “Oh, goodness. I have a brain.”

**105 Callie Ewing** Yeah.

**106 Sybil Novinski** I have a brain. I'm not just cooking, cleaning, worrying about whether these  
**107** classrooms are in order. You know, deciding on the budget for this or that department. Let's  
**108** think about the big ideas.

**109 Callie Ewing** Right.

**110 Sybil Novinski** Which are the reason you get up every day.

**111 Callie Ewing** Right.

**112 Sybil Novinski** Marvelous thing.

**113 Callie Ewing** I think, you know, we probably already covered this a little bit, but all of these  
**114** experiences of education that you've had, how do you think you've applied those in your life, in  
**115** your career? I know that's a big question.

**116 Sybil Novinski** Oh my. That's quite a question. It's just, been, I mean. If you're alive, you are  
**117** learning. And, to foster imagination and creativity is just essential to everyone's happiness.  
**118** You know, I remember from an early science class learning, being reminded that if you're

119 alive, you're changing. Change is inevitable. Your action changes things — when you walk past  
120 a chair, you have changed that chair and that experience has changed you in some way. It all  
121 helped so much to try to understand where students were. I spent most of my life essentially  
122 counseling students and understanding the relationships between students, what they were  
123 studying, their lives, and with their faculty. I remember the days of trying to explain American  
124 high school students, because that's what freshmen are, to the Cistercian fathers; their  
125 Hungarian background was so different. It was just fascinating every day, to solve problems, to  
126 make it possible for people to go on living, being creative, encouraging their curiosity. Because  
127 ...

128 **Callie Ewing** Yes, right.

129 **Sybil Novinski** ... that's what gives people hope. That is making it possible to grow.

130 **Callie Ewing** Oh ...

131 **Sybil Novinski** But when Tom Hibbs reminded me that he was so grateful to me, and of course  
132 I don't remember this at all, but he had had kind of an in-and-out career because he was a  
133 transfer student and had been through seminary and out of the seminary, was assigned to a  
134 dorm on campus with a roommate who was definitely not a good fit. And somebody told Dr.  
135 Hibbs to go and see me and see if anything could be done. And apparently I listened to him and  
136 just immediately said, “Oh, well, you need to move. And I think we can find you a room in  
137 such and such a dorm.” And he said it made everything possible when he moved, I think, to  
138 O'Connell. That was essential for his success. That was essential so that Tom could continue  
139 learning. Sometimes you can put up with things, and sometimes you need to change it in a  
140 different way. Putting up with things is sort of changing, too, adjusting yourself when possible.

**141 Callie Ewing** Right.

**142 Sybil Novinski** Everybody has to have a little bit of clay, so you can be molded a bit. By your  
**143** faculty or the great book you're reading or the painting you're trying to solve, to make into  
**144** something that isn't working. Or that story you're trying to write, Callie. You know the process,  
**145** I'm sure, and desire to finish the task. I think all the time about what Pope Julius said to  
**146** Michelangelo: "Let there be an end to this!"

**147 Callie Ewing** So what were your impressions of UD when you were first there?

**148 Sybil Novinski** Oh, heavens. You have to try to imagine it yourself — this was 1960. There  
**149** was nothing. There was nothing on the hill except a few mesquite trees, six brand-new  
**150** buildings, all pretty ugly, but they were of the architecture of the time, and they were  
**151** speckled. You would have a dark brick every now and then mixed with tan. We came from  
**152** the Midwest, lake and rural country, which had trees. It was beautiful. Dallas wasn't  
**153** very exciting either. This was 1960; we were just across the river with the university  
**154** graduating its first class. And we've always felt like we were newcomers, since we weren't  
**155** really at the beginning. But there were very exciting people already at the university. A few lay  
**156** faculty, the Sisters of St. Mary and the Cistercians. Both orders had an international  
**157** background. And of course, you know, the Cistercians are an old, old order coming off the  
**158** Benedictines, 11th century. All those different parts of their background, all the different  
**159** languages. Would you have expected in Texas in 1960 to find all those people speaking  
**160** different languages? And have a college that required a language requirement? And of course,  
**161** the Cowans were there, converts with a big vision. When I wrote *50 Years of Vision and*



162 *Courage*, I meant to emphasize that vision was central. Everybody had a vision. I mean, even in  
163 the very beginning, that the Sisters went to a brand-new bishop, because we had a Bishop  
164 Lynch for 40-some years or more. And then Gorman took over, and he was just kind of trying  
165 to figure out how many churches he should try to build and what in the world he should do.  
166 And these nuns came and said, “We think there should be a Catholic university here, four-year,  
167 open to everyone.” And he said, “What?” But they had taught everybody. They taught  
168 Constantin's children and Maher's children. They raised 2 million dollars in about six months.  
169 What a gutsy, crazy, wonderful thing. Thank you, Sisters and Bishop. You know and then, of  
170 course, there's this wonderful thing about building something. You feel like you cannot wait  
171 until you finish, and you never finish, like building your family. If it goes well, you're never  
172 done; your family gets larger, more connected. Children get married, grandchildren,  
173 great-grandchildren. You just don't leave it. It's just very exciting to see things come to be. And  
174 the notion of curriculum. Even though the curriculum improved, it included, even from the very  
175 beginning, the basic areas that I did at Marquette; it was part of any Catholic higher education.  
176 Of course, you did theology and philosophy. Of course you did history and literature and  
177 English and science. And that's just what you did. Not just at Catholic schools, but every  
178 school. Because that was, that's what made college ...

179 **Callie Ewing** Right.

180 **Sybil Novinski** That's what made an educated person. And it was all there, and people  
181 were open, and welcoming. But you just have to imagine. There is a wonderful picture in the  
182 history of Dr. Brasted, the first president, standing out on the barren hill. I mean, it wasn't; it  
183 was a pasture, after all; it wasn't supposed to have trees. But, he is just standing there, and just  
184 kind of looking, and I've always thought he was saying to himself, “What have I done? Where

185 have I come?" And so forth. Irving had maybe 25,000 people at about that time. [State  
Highway] 183 was brand  
186 new when we came. But it was very clear that things were moving along. And before you knew  
187 it, Texas Instruments came and changed the game. Brought those, started bringing those  
188 companies from the East. And of course, brought some Catholics. There were no Catholics in  
189 this part of the country, you know. So. It was pretty exciting. But then in 1963, we assassinated  
190 a president. That stopped things for a while. Everybody had to figure out how to recover from  
191 that. It was another important moment for the university, and the city. It brought people  
192 together in that strange way that disasters do; "Goals for Dallas" ended up being a way for all  
193 kinds of disparate people to speak to each other. And the university was very much part of  
194 making the "Goals for Dallas" program happen.

195 **Callie Ewing** What was your relationship with Louise Cowan like?

196 **Sybil Novinski** Oh, my goodness. Well, she was beautiful and talented, and she wore black  
197 glasses, and we all had to get used to that. Her eyes had been ruined. She could see, but they  
198 were very ugly and wandered around, I think, underneath the black glasses. She was, well, she  
199 was an incredible teacher. She was kind of like an important aunt that you were, she was older,  
200 of course they were older than we were. An important aunt, and or something. Not quite like a  
201 grandmother; I'd never want to say that. But. She was a model, certainly, for me. I once told  
202 somebody, and this is one of my strongest images of her besides at the podium — I've never  
203 seen anyone know how to use a microphone the way Louise Cowan could use a microphone —  
204 we need her around to train us! But one of my favorite images of her was peeling a peach and  
205 apple. You see, the university didn't have food service after 6 o'clock. And so if you wanted to  
206 entertain anyone, I mean, this was when I developed the first parents' weekend, for instance;

207 one had to shop and bring the food to campus to have receptions. Actually, during the day you  
208 often did your own set-ups as well. You didn't just order something.

209 **Callie Ewing** Right ...

210 **Sybil Novinski** Anyhow, we were entertaining somebody in Gorman Faculty Lounge. I can't  
211 remember what the group was. And of course, Louise had taught all day, and I'd worked, and  
212 she was peeling a peach. Beautiful hands, you know, and of course, talking about Russian novel  
213 because she was teaching Russian novel, at the same time! And then, you know, over the years,  
214 she became a very close friend. This was their house. This was their living room. I just ran  
215 across a picture recently in the archives of both of them in this living room, and I thought, 'This  
216 is familiar. Oh, that's our house.' They actually put in the bookcases, enclosed the piano room  
217 for a small dining room, which I didn't realize until years later. But when he became president,  
218 the board said, "You really need to move to Dallas." So, they moved to Dallas; we had been  
219 here often. Everybody entertained; there were few lay faculty in those early years, and we had  
220 no money. Often, on Fridays, the lay faculty would say, what have you got left in your  
221 cupboards? And then we'd have a potluck, often here, because certainly the Cowans fostered  
222 that tradition of eating and talking together; the round table — this is not their round table; their  
223 round table was in the Cap Bar for years and years and years. When my husband and Pat Daly  
224 created the Cap Bar, we moved it over there. But. We'd sit around the table, and argue and talk,  
225 and everybody'd bring food, and it was very civilized. It was the way, you know, it ought to be.  
226 And I think that still exists at UD even though UD is much larger now. So it exists within  
227 departments; people get together who know each other for civil discussion and celebration,  
228 sometimes. It depends on how old your children are at the time and ... oh, I have so many  
229 stories about family and faculty and students talking and laughing in this house.

**230 Callie Ewing** So what were some of your most memorable experiences as an administrator at  
**231 UD?**

**232 Sybil Novinski** Oh, my goodness. I looked at that question and thought it impossible to answer.

**233 Callie Ewing** I know, that's another ...

**234 Sybil Novinski** And trying to figure out what experiences are enjoyable — when they were  
**235** happening or in retrospect! Because UD was so new I had to develop so many things —  
**236** ceremonies, curricula, policies — and to have the freedom to do that, to decide, oh, we need a  
**237** parents' weekend, or we need a different kind of alumni weekend. For graduation, this is the  
**238** way we should probably do it; it needs to be more than what we did last year, and so forth. It  
**239** was always memorable, interesting, because I would range between designing brochures,  
**240** editing the catalog for 25 years (it was the major recruiting piece — prospective students could  
**241** really read about what one would explore/study/take if they came). I learned that from  
**242** the University of Chicago. You see, I wanted to go to the University of Chicago when I was in  
**243** high school. There was a program that you could go to as a senior in high school. You could go  
**244** and you could read the Great Books there, at Chicago, and we just lived 100 miles from  
**245** Chicago. My parents wouldn't let me do it, but I still have the miniature paperback. Great  
**246** Books. Think, to have studied with Hutchins and Adler. I wanted to go there because they sent  
**247** me a catalog with course descriptions. You could actually find out what you would read, what  
**248** you would study, the questions you would ponder. Since I knew this was important to me, I  
**249** assumed that bright high school students everywhere would be interested in curriculum. Thus,  
**250** that's kind of what I tried to do with the UD catalog, put in important speeches by Don Cowan,  
**251** or other people, and interesting course descriptions. Some history, artwork, etc. And of course,  
**252** we had an incredible designer, Walter Ender who designed those booklets that we had for years

253 that got us more national notice practically than anything else. People suddenly became aware  
254 of this little school in Texas because of Walter Ender's catalog design. We used the symbols he  
255 developed for years on banners and other brochures. Another wonderful thing: welcoming  
256 students in our house. Often before they would go off to their Rome semester, for instance,  
257 everybody would come over here and have a farewell party. This house is admirably laid out to  
258 accommodate lots and lots of people. They came at Orientation, too. Transitions were always  
259 memorable, sometimes difficult. But, you know, so I don't know if that's what you know. I  
260 remember the transition between '77 to about '80. That was really something. Certainly  
261 memorable. But we got through it because, I really think, of the faculty and their attitude  
262 toward what they teach. It's the curriculum, and I'm not talking about just the Core. I'm  
263 really talking about a sort of approach. Always try to figure out what is the question. What are  
264 we trying to answer? What is this for? As O'Neil Ford, our great patron architect, one of the  
265 great architects of the 20th century, said, "The hardest thing to do is to recognize the  
266 obvious!" And I think one of the things we tried to do is recognize the obvious. That is, you've  
267 got to have great plans. But there's the obvious that you need to fix sometimes, so that you can  
268 go on. It was wonderful to have our children grow up in this environment and to have four of  
269 our five children go to UD. There are so many stories I can tell about all five helping their dad  
270 set up for some ceremony such as the incredible Advent Masses in the gym — remember, there  
271 was no church until 1985 — Lyle became the master of changing areas into sacred spaces. All  
272 the boys went to Cistercian of course, and they walked over to the Registrar's Office after  
273 school, or to wherever I was working at the time. They were also used to being picked up at  
274 school by fabulous office staff like Barbara Lunch or Denise Schuler. Have I answered the  
275 question somewhat?

276 **Callie Ewing** Oh, I think you have.

**277 Sybil Novinski** Ok.

**278 Callie Ewing** Let me see how much time we have; I'm not supposed to go over an hour.

**279 Sybil Novinski** Oh, I'm sorry. You've got to pick up ...

**280 Callie Ewing** You probably have a clock around here somewhere.

**281 Sybil Novinski** Oh, I don't have a — you need a clock?

**282 Callie Ewing** No, I've got one on me. We're ok; we've got a little bit more time.

**283 Sybil Novinski** All right. Ok, good. You're just supposed to do this for an hour?

**284 Callie Ewing** Yes.

**285 Sybil Novinski** I see. Ok.

**286 Callie Ewing** Ok, so what about memorable students? Are there any that stand out, particularly,

**287** in your mind?

**288 Sybil Novinski** Oh, that's really unfair, because there's so many.

**289 Callie Ewing** I know.

**290 Sybil Novinski** There's so many. I don't know, I don't.

**291 Callie Ewing** Well, I remember Eileen Gregory.

**292 Sybil Novinski** Well, I know where I was the first time I met her.

**293 Callie Ewing** You were the reason she went to UD, right?

**294 Sybil Novinski** Well, not just me, but one ...

**295 Callie Ewing** You were the reason.

**296 Sybil Novinski** Well, she was going somewhere else, and met somebody, the way she tells it.

**297** Met some students outside Carpenter Hall while she was there. But she was an Irving girl, as

**298** was her brother, David Gregory, famous eye doctor in Irving who also went to UD. But. She

**299** was visiting and just got impressed, kind of, by them. And she came to talk to me, and I signed

**300** her up. It was, you know, again a reminder that although the environment's important, the

**301** people are the most important. That's one of the things I remember because I had an

**302** office at the end of Carpenter Hall, which was storage for the first library; the office was filled

**303** with boxes. I was surrounded by boxes. The catalogs had just come. There was no place to

**304** store them. They were stored in my office. So I had a desk and a chair and a chair for a visitor

**305** and boxes. It was really pretty terrible, but Eileen didn't care. Oh, I remember a marvelous

**306** experience. UD had these incredible intellectuals, the McDermott professors. Thank you,

**307** Margaret McDermott. Every day we should all say, the whole city, the whole region, should

**308** say thank you to Margaret McDermott, for endowing the McDermott. But Mortimer Adler was

**309** one of those McDermotts early, after, I think he came right after Jacques Barzun; Barzun was

310 the first, and the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century came to UD and sometimes  
311 they would unite — several at once. Mortimer Adler sat in my office and chatted with me. I  
312 said, “Dr. Adler, I cannot believe that you are here. I wanted to go to the University of Chicago  
313 when I was a senior in high school.” “You know,” he said, “well, you should have come. You  
314 would have been good, you know.” And it was just a marvelous experience. I had experience;  
315 you just never know about the students. After. Last Wednesday, apparently it was board  
316 meeting time. So Lyle and I were getting out of the car to go to choir rehearsal on Wednesday,  
317 and rehearsal's at 6 o'clock on Wednesday, getting out of our car and I heard this voice calling  
318 my name and turned, and of course, the sun was behind it, looking down the hill to Clark Hall,  
319 couldn't tell who it was. I wouldn't've recognized her anyhow. But it was Mary Devlin Capizzi,  
320 and she just came over and proceeded to tell her daughter, who's a freshman with her, you  
321 know, how grateful she was to me for something that I, of course, do not remember. But, you  
322 know, we immediately exchanged emails and I said, “Well, the next time you come to town,  
323 let's get together,” and, so, she's already sent me a couple of emails.

324 **Callie Ewing Good.**

325 **Sybil Novinski** And there are just so many of them and they're all, you know, for years, my  
326 husband went and taught on the Rome campus. Actually, for quite a few years, in both fall and  
327 spring, he would go for about two weeks and then come back and teach his classes at UD on  
328 Saturday to make up for that time. My goodness. But of course he was very close to all those  
329 students, and Ellen Rossini is always running into those students. Joe Hogan just sent best  
330 wishes the other day, and Joe was an important figure, and he works closely with Catholic  
331 Charities. I'm not quite sure what he does, and everything overlaps. Very small world. I  
332 learned — I'm not sure who told me this: “Don't burn your bridges. You may need to cross that



333 river again.” You know, one of my sons taught Joe's daughters. So it's such a small world. Tom  
334 Hansel, who tutors all the children of the wealthy people in town, it seems; he tutors them. And  
335 he comes over, once a month, brings dinner, just to catch up, you know.

336 **Callie Ewing** Yeah.

337 **Sybil Novinski** But there's so many of them, and I was reading; when I was 80, three years ago,  
338 my daughter sent an email to everybody that she could find on my email and in her friends and  
339 said, “Send my mother a birthday card.” Well, they did. And so I have them. And, you know,  
340 when all that happens, you in a way don't really read them because you've got a lot. I always  
341 read my Christmas cards, you know several months later, really go over them. And so I did that  
342 the other day because Ellen Rossini was asking questions about certain people. And it's just  
343 amazing. Some of them wrote long, long letters. Don Guyspower just sent a long letter to my  
344 husband. And he's sent two kids to UD already. And you know, I'm trying to think, who is this?  
345 There were Hanafees and Devlins. Lots of families, you know. And lovely Eileen, hmm,  
346 Eileen? Ellen? Meinert. She and her husband have just given money to endow a scholarship  
347 in my name, and they're trying to raise a lot more money for that, you know; you really need a  
348 lot of money if you're gonna have an endowment that can make any difference. And that sort of  
349 thing. And UD was so important to her. So important. So, they are all memorable, and great,  
350 crazy stories. You know, and some you got to know better because they knew my kids, and  
351 they would hang out together and get in trouble together. And I would try to get them out of  
352 trouble. My motto was, because you know I was on disciplinary boards and things, and of  
353 course, if they were there at the same time as one of my children, I would say, “Now, I don't  
354 really want to know anything, I just want to know, is this a person who should be part of our  
355 community? Is this a mean person? If they're mean, I don't want him, or her. We don't do mean.  
356 Wild, crazy. That's fine. Climb the tower when they're not supposed to? Oh, well, you know.

**357** Break a few ceiling tiles in the dorm? If boys don't do that, there's something wrong with them.

**358** So, you know, they need to be reprimanded and pay for the damage, but it is not the end of the

**359** world.” But, you know. I feel terrible, all the people I'm forgetting that I'm sure would want to

**360** be remembered by me.

**361 Callie Ewing** No.

**362 Sybil Novinski** But it's hard to pick them out. When my daughter sent that note, it must've been

**363** at least 100 cards. And that was just to about three graduating classes. That people went to that

**364** effort was pretty nice. Well, we've been very blessed, you know. A blessing to have something

**365** to work on. To have a worthy work is a great blessing.

**366 Callie Ewing** So who would you say in the world of education have been your greatest

**367** influences?

**368 Sybil Novinski** Who has been my ... ?

**369 Callie Ewing** Just in the overall world of education?

**370 Sybil Novinski** Overall?

**371 Callie Ewing** You mentioned Mortimer Adler.

**372 Sybil Novinski** Yes.

**373 Callie Ewing** Louise Cowan?

**374 Sybil Novinski** Well, Don Cowan.

**375 Callie Ewing** Don Cowan.

**376 Sybil Novinski** Don Cowan's the great educational theorist and the really great writer. If you  
**377** haven't read his book of essays, which I assume is still in the bookstore, I would read them.  
**378** Because the kind of creativity, you know; he was a futurist. So it was always, he wasn't really  
**379** worried about the job you got after you graduated. He's worried about the job that needed to be  
**380** done for the world 10 years after you graduate, because that's when students would move into  
**381** places of influence. That's when you really made a difference. There was just no way to really  
**382** know what the world was gonna be like ... In the big scheme, he certainly knew. He certainly  
**383** prophesized where we would be at this time, all those years ago. In the '80s and '90s, he was  
**384** very clear about the turn of the century, and what would come. And so certainly he was very  
**385** influential. My kindergarten teacher was an amazing educator. She had a way, I guess, of  
**386** teaching people to read, and getting us to love reading, that I've always remembered for  
**387** some reason or other. A teacher, my German teacher, at Marquette. Scared me to death. It's an  
**388** impossible language. Don't ever try to learn German. But my mother was an Austrian and  
**389** German, and we had lots of German books. All the classics in German, on the shelves in our  
**390** house. And so, I thought, well, I should learn German, so I can read those, in German. Oh, my.  
**391** I took lots of German, took advanced courses in German. For a long time, I could still read it  
**392** very well. Never, never really speak it, because unless you're around people who speak it all the  
**393** time, you don't get that feeling for any language. You have to be in it. But that German Jesuit  
**394** — he was so kind, and so scary, at the same time, and that was very influential in my life. And  
**395** I don't know how you are, but the little things that in your life, you read a phrase, you hear

**396** someone say something. So they might just throw it out. A priest once made a remark. And I  
**397** can't remember which priest it was anymore, but he said, "You can give hope or despair every  
**398** day to people. That's your choice. You can give life or death. That's your choice." And you go,  
**399** oh, my goodness. That's right. You can walk across campus and smile, and cheer people up, or  
**400** you can just ignore them, and you don't know what you miss. Not that we can all do great  
**401** things every day. Such insights and experiences have been just as influential as anything. My  
**402** own parents and all their reading. They weren't perfect human beings by any means. But they  
**403** dealt with things; they thought about things. And were generous in those thoughts. So many  
**404** ways we learn and grow — for example, everybody should spend a lot of time with Faulkner  
**405** and Flannery O'Connor — the metaphors they give you are very instructive in life.

**406 Callie Ewing** Yes. Well, I think it's been about an hour.

**407 Sybil Novinski** Thank you.

**408 Callie Ewing** Thank you so much.

**409 Sybil Novinski** Thank you. You've heard a lot of those stories before.

**410 Callie Ewing** Well, now we have a, a record of them.