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Transcript Log of Interview with Royal Hartigan 7 Oct 2020

HI-367-A, Purcell

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00:00:02-0:01:01: Introductions of narrator and interviewee

0:01:02-0:07:48: Narrator discusses family and growing up in Pittsfield, Massachusetts

- ❖ “They gave me a life that was in a certain way almost like a paradise.”
- ❖ “We were blue-collar. Really, really blue-collar.”
- ❖ “It was like a house, you didn’t think of it as a refuge from an uncaring, cold world.”
- ❖ “Everybody was connected.”

0:07:49- 00:09:45: Narrators speaks about his K-12 education

00:09:45- 00:20:38: Narrator talks about his time at Saint Michael’s College

- ❖ “It was a wonderful school. I felt at home.”
- ❖ “I wanted to be a priest, interestingly, so I majored in Philosophy, and studied with a lot of wonderful professors. One of them who is still alive, Father VanderWeel...(he was) one of my greatest and most influential teachers of all time.”
- ❖ “I was wondering, like, if it would be too much to dance cheek to cheek with a girl.”

*It should be noted that the noise in the recording is from the narrator’s spouse cooking in the adjacent kitchen

00:20:39- 00:26:31: Narrator speaks about political climate and student population at Saint Michael’s during the Vietnam Era

- ❖ “We had a mix that I think reflected society.”
- ❖ “We had very few people of color. Because I had gone to public schools, that felt a little not weird, but I just noticed it.”
- ❖ “A lot of the blue-collar people were, if not progressive, democratic.”
- ❖ (About a discussion with a classmate on the events in Alabama on the Edmund Pettis Bridge) “And I said look at the pictures, who’s hitting who?!.....and all I remember after that was that he took the magazine and hit me over the head with it, and then walked out!”

00:26:32-00:29:55: Narrator talks about his choice to join the Peace Corps

- ❖ “I saw just an advertisement about third world poverty....and it really struck me. I think it was African children that were all malnourished and you could just see their skeleton almost... they were so thin.”

- ❖ “And I asked everybody what should I do....and (Professor) Hurley said “forget all that stuff!” He says “go out in the Peace Corp, it’ll be the best time you ever had in your life! It’ll give you a real sense of yourself.”

00:29:56-00:31:54: Narrator talks about Peace Corps training

- ❖ “We didn’t have any more than we needed, and I didn’t want any more than I needed.”

00:31:55- 00:44:33: Narrator talks about his Peace Corps assignment in Dagupan City, Philippines

- ❖ “I didn’t know much about the Philippines, and at the time I had no preference, so they gave me that.”
- ❖ “It was sort of like the same as where I grew up...everyone was close together, everybody knew each other.”
- ❖ “I worked as a medical social worker trying to get patients blood and medicines...”
- ❖ “They gave me much more than I gave them.”
- ❖ “So everything was human beings in their three dimensional reality, which I loved and now cherish, and miss it.”
- ❖ “That felt really nice to not be like above them and living with the people in the culture.”
- ❖ “Why do I, that I grew up with my parents in Pittsfield with the house...why do I have a full stomach, why do I have an education?... they were no different than me, but they didn’t have that...”
- ❖ “I felt deeply that there is zero reason why it needed to be that way.... it’s just wrong!”

00:44:34-00:53:54: Narrator speaks about the Philippines in the context of the Cold War

- ❖ “It’s always the servicemen.... who pay the price.... Not the politicians or the generals or anyone else.”

00:53:55- 00:54:59: Narrators speaks more about the Vietnam War in the context of his own life and understanding

- ❖ “Joining the Peace Corps...that wasn’t a deferment...”
- ❖ “But, there’s a lot of people of who didn’t have that luck, and my heart goes out to them. And a lot of them fought. They did for what they believed. Even if they were deceived and used wrongly by politicians, that’s something to be honored. They really believed in something.”

00:55:00- 00:57:41: Narrator speaks about other Peace Corps volunteers and SMC alums being drafted

00:57:42: Narrator and interviewer take a break

00:57:49: Narrator and interviewer come back from break

00:58:21- 00:58:50: Narrator talks about hearing about an SMC classmate who was killed in Vietnam

00:58:51- 01:03:55: Narrator speaks about his experiences while serving in the Philippines

- ❖ “My father had a stroke and so they had to reach me, but even that wasn’t easy to communicate with them.”
- ❖ “Then you go into the military base and its almost like you have to revert back to your American paradigm. I remember when I went on the US military base, it was this strange feeling.”
- ❖ (About encountering Americans on the military base) “I might as well have been from Mars.... I couldn’t relate to them. I couldn’t.”

01:03:56- 1:13:36: Narrator speaks about the Peace Corp’s influence on his thinking

- ❖ “Now I don’t call myself an American. I’m not saying it’s bad to be an American, but I’m not. I don’t think that way.... I don’t think of myself as owning anything.”
- ❖ “But I don’t need five shirts...I need one, then I only should have one. I don’t have a right to two.”
- ❖ “Some things are objective!”
- ❖ “When somebody’s hungry, that’s not debatable... There’s no two sides to that.”
- ❖ “In a certain way, during that time, I had to say goodbye.....to my previous set of assumptions.”
- ❖ (Talking about Philippine people) “Despite all that, they have open hearts.”
- ❖ “Given all that, my heart goes out also to all those people...with the Christianity they wear on their sleeve....I feel sorry for them. Because most of them will never know what I was honored to know as a result of learning and growing at Saint Michael’s and that incredibly life changing cultural experience in the Philippines in the Peace Corps. Those six years changed my life.”

END OF INTERVIEW