

VIRGINIA REIDMAN-DANGLER ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT

Interviewee: Virginia “Ginny” Riedman-Dangler
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ABSTRACT

Biography

Virginia “Ginny” Riedman-Dangler is the daughter of Paul and Mary Kay Klee Dangler. Both of her parents were raised in Rochester, New York, during the Great Depression. Ginny’s mother, Mary Kay Klee, was born in 1927. Mary Kay attended Sacred Heart Academy and Nazareth College with the goal of becoming a writer. She was later denied employment due to gender discrimination and subsequently became a secretary. Mary Kay went on to document her experiences during World War II through a number of published short stories and poems.

Summary

In this interview, Ginny discusses her participation in a book project called *Before They Were Our Mothers: Voices of Women Born Before Rosie Started Riveting*, to which she submitted a story entitled, “And the Cardinal Sang,” written in her mother’s voice. Ginny further describes her mother’s experiences with growing up in Rochester during the war and her aspirations to become a professional writer.

Keywords

mother, Rochester, Great Depression, Sacred Heart Academy, Nazareth College, writer, short stories, poems, newspaper, secretary

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02:21 – Breakout of war; mother in grammar school and high school
03:24 – Mother’s aspirations to become a writer

04:13 – Discussion of *Before They Were Our Mothers* book contribution
06:57 – Story of mother writing in college; reflecting on circumstances
09:04 – Reading a passage from book in mother’s voice; experiencing the war in Rochester
10:57 – Discovery of mother’s high school/college writings after her death
11:35 – Reading of mother’s writing from 1944; possibly a valedictorian speech
14:10 – Sacred Heart sisters encouraged women to support the war effort
14:49 – Summary of “And the Cardinal Sang” story about mother in book; work aspirations
16:18 – Mother’s war memories; family, attending Sacred Heart
17:17 – Mother writing short stories and poems for the Nazareth College literary magazine
18:53 – Conclusion

STORY TRANSCRIPTS

Story 1: Mother’s College Reflections [07:14 – 8:40]

[In] the story that I wrote, my mom is going into college. Actually, she’s in college doing some writing of short stories. Part of the story reflects on my mother reflecting on how she was able to go to Sacred Heart at the time. They were poor, again, because of the Depression. And her father was ill at the time. And so, I believe my grandmother had to work to bring in some income.

She was able to go to the Sacred Heart Academy because she earned a scholarship. And [in] the story, also, she’s reflecting on how she was able to go because the parish priest at the time was able to purchase the books and provide money for the uniforms.

CSK: *And was this Roman Catholic?*

Yes. Yes, it was Roman Catholic. So, I was always very touched by that story when she would share that story with me.

Story 2: To the Class of 1944 [11:23 – 13:06]

After my mom passed away, we found writings from high school, as well as college. And there’s one writing that I will read from.

CSK: *What are we looking at here? It’s an original typed page?*

Yes, this is an original, an original typed page with her own edits—sections that are scratched off, crossed off in pencil, as she’s editing herself. It seems as though it could be a piece from a [Sacred Heart Academy] valedictorian speech because it does address the grave times in 1944.

CSK: *Would you read some of that for us?*

Sure. And she writes: “We are happy today in the joy of achievement, for we have reached at last the goal of years of earnest endeavor, enriched with many lessons which will serve us and enable us to serve others in the years to come.

“But we are serious, too, for we realize that we are graduating in grave times, and that we also must look stern things in the face and be warriors, ready to turn our hands and hearts to labor and charity and endurance. We are serious, but we are not afraid, for we know that we are not unprepared. We are going into a troubled world.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

Current 1

Ginny Riedman-Dangler holds the book, *Before They Were Our Mothers*, to which she submitted an essay in her mother’s voice about growing up in Rochester, New York, during World War II (Photo Credit: Celeste Schantz Kovachi)

Current 2

Cover of *Before They Were Our Mothers* (Courtesy of Ginny Riedman-Dangler)

Artifact 1

Portion of a speech written by Ginny’s mother, Mary Kay Klee, addressing the Sacred Heart Academy graduating class of 1944 (Courtesy of Ginny Riedman-Dangler)