

MC.0356

Interviews of the Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project

Mary Frances Wagley – Class of 1947

(interviewed by Katherine Cherry Liu)

June 3, 1999

MIT Women's Oral History Project

Interview of: Mary Frances Wagley
name

1947 Chemistry
year graduated major

major leadership roles (see attached CV)
accomplishments

Interviewed by: Katherine Cherry Liu
name

2000 Urban Studies & Planning
year major

Interview: 6/3/99 ~ 2 hours
date length of interview

Bexley Hall 209B, MIT
location

circumstances

Supporting documents available:

see attached CV
personal

general-archival

Cherry: Today is June 3, 1999, and I am interviewing Mary Frances Wagley, class of 1947, about her life and MIT experiences.

My name is Cherry Liu and I'm from the class of 2000.

I want you to begin by sharing something about your early years and about the environment in which you grew up.

Mary Frances: I grew up in Westchester County just north of New York City. At that time it was still quite rural. My father had grown up on a farm and he loved animals. If anyone gave him two of anything, he would propagate them. So we had horses, donkeys, sheep, goats and even deer. It was quite unlike the White Plains of today. I grew up with lots of freedom and remember my childhood as a very happy one.

Cherry: Were you interested in sciences when you were young? What was your schooling like?

Mary Frances: I went to Rye Country Day School which was about seven miles distant from our house. I remember we received subscriptions to *My Weekly Reader*. Anyone my age will remember this publication. When I was in third grade I read an article on chemical engineering. That sounded like lots of fun and since I always wanted to know how things worked, I thought I might be a chemical engineer when I grew up. I was a good student and nothing seemed impossible. I went away to boarding school after eighth grade — to a girls' school in Virginia. There I discovered I was better in math and science than I was in English and history. I think one gravitates to what one is good at. The article in *My Weekly Reader* came back to me, and I took all the science courses the school offered.

Cherry: How old were you when you went to boarding school?

Mary Frances: I skipped first grade, so I was young for my class. I was 13 when I went to Foxcroft and just 17 when I graduated. I entered MIT at 17 and as I was in one of the wartime classes that was accelerated. I graduated just after my 20th birthday.

Cherry: So when you went to boarding school, was that when you became interested in MIT?

Mary Frances: Although it was a small girls' boarding school, it had already sent two graduates to MIT, Harriet Aldrich Bering '44 and Emily Vanderbilt Wade '45, who is on the Corporation and very active at MIT. She was two years ahead of me

at school and we knew each other well. When I was looking for colleges, she was already at MIT and suggested that I would like it. I ended up applying only to MIT, which was rather a bold step, but it worked out.

Cherry: What boarding school was this?

Mary Frances: Foxcroft. It's still in existence — a very small girls' boarding school. It's still all girls, which is unusual. But studies now conducted by the American Association of University Women indicate that girls often profit by single-sex education because they get to take leadership positions. Also, there are no guys around to tell them they can't do science and math. So Foxcroft was a hospitable climate for me.

Cherry: Why didn't you look at Wellesley?

Mary Frances: I thought of Bryn Mawr for a while, as a number of my classmates were going there. But a very wise dean at Foxcroft said she thought I would not flourish there because I would want to do the things my more social classmates were doing but I would also want to excel at academics and I'd be caught in a conflict between the two.

Cherry: So MIT, with Paddy Wade's help, was the choice. Did you visit, or did you just come?

Mary Frances: I applied in the days — you realize, I've had my fiftieth reunion — when you could ask for an interview with the admissions office. I've forgotten now who interviewed me, but he had the authority to tell the applicant on the spot whether she was admitted or not. He spent most of the interview telling me that I didn't want to come and I spent most of my part of the interview telling him that I wanted to come, and that I was quite sure that I had as good scores as any of the guys in his folders. We went back and forth with this discussion until finally he said, "You are a very stubborn young lady. We will probably let you in, but you won't like it at all." It was true, they did let me in. It was not true that I wouldn't like it at all. I liked it from the beginning.

Cherry: That's nice. Did you have a certain dorm that you lived in when you were here?

Mary Frances: Well, there were no women's dorms. Paddy had an apartment across the river, and she invited me to join her. So we roomed together. I wished we had dining facilities because it was very hard to walk across the bridge, buy groceries,

and cook dinner — all after a three-and-a-half-hour lab. I would have been happy in a dorm with a commons, but we survived.

Cherry: And they had the Smoots?

Mary Frances: No, I think the Smoots came afterwards. There was a trolley car that ran over the Harvard Bridge. It cost ten cents, but we walked unless the weather was terrible. Every time we walked we put ten cents in a milk bottle. Then if the Red Cross or somebody came soliciting, we would give them a handful of dimes and tell them that we had, in effect, earned this by walking across the bridge. Admiral Byrd is said to have pronounced that bridge the coldest place in the world. He explored Antarctica so he should know cold places.

Cherry: Lucy Miller in Resource Development said you are the daughter of JC Penney, the man who established the department store chain?

Mary Frances: That's correct.

Cherry: Did your father influence your high academic aspirations? And if so, how?

Mary Frances: Yes. He had five children. I had three half-brothers and a younger sister, and he assumed that we all would do well. I guess that expectation was felt. My dad did not have a college education, but he was very proud that two boys went to Princeton and one to Harvard. I went to MIT and my sister went to Stanford. He also said to all of us that he would pay for any advanced study that we did as long as we clearly were studying and not just staying out of the work world. I went to Oxford after MIT and it was awfully nice to know that your father had promised to fund you as long as you were purposeful about your studies. The moment you weren't purposeful, the funding was to be cut off.

Cherry: So when you described your childhood and growing up in a rural environment, was that before your father established his stores?

Mary Frances: No. He started the stores in the west, in Wyoming, in 1902, and by the time I was born in 1927, he had almost retired from business. My sister and I saw quite a lot of him, and we always had fun. He was an outdoor man. He liked to fish and he taught me how to fish. He gave me a rifle when I was ten and taught me how to shoot. I guess he was used to having boys and having a girl was a surprise. But he was a good parent. I often think his greatest legacy to me was never implying that there was anything I could not do just because I was a girl.

Cherry: And what about your mother?

Mary Frances: Mother was quite a different person. Whereas my father loved the country, my mother was very urban. She was of German ancestry and her family had been professors at University of Heidelberg and University of Freiberg. I guess her main contribution to my education was saying that if I did well in school and in college, I could probably do some postgraduate studies in Germany. That certainly was a carrot. However, I graduated in 1947 just after the war and so clearly it wasn't a good time for a young woman to go to Germany. So I went to England as a second choice. Mother came from an academic family and I'm sure that had an influence on me.

Cherry: Did you speak German at home?

Mary Frances: No, because my grandparents wanted to learn English as quickly as possible and to have their children — my Mother's generation — grow up speaking English. My grandmother lived with us for a while and I learned a bit of German from her. That made German classes at MIT a bit easier than they might have been.

Cherry: Who would you say were your mentors when you were younger?

Mary Frances: I don't really remember having any particular mentors. I was very fond of the head of the math department at Foxcroft. The school did not teach pre-calculus because there was no demand for it. She tutored me through pre-calculus so I would be prepared for calculus at MIT. I remember being very grateful to her for going to that extra trouble..

Cherry: Would you please describe your MIT undergraduate career? Would you say that it was a typical MIT experience? Or a typical woman's MIT experience?

Mary Frances: Well, I guess I must say the latter, because it's hard for me to say what a typical MIT experience is. Women constituted only a few percent of our class. I think MIT was very thoughtful. For the first two years, we were all assigned to a section. There were always two women in a section so you never were completely alone. Once I decided to major in chemistry, the situation changed, as there quite a few women in Course V.

We were disadvantaged in some ways — for instance, there were no athletic facilities and no dormitories for women — but we were advantaged in other ways.

The professors learned the women's names quickly because there were so few of us. Being known made me feel comfortable. I never had any hesitancy about going to a professor's office to ask questions about something I did not understand. So on the whole, I think we women were blessed in our course at MIT. I was not really aware of discrimination. There were some put-downs from classmates and some teasing, but if you didn't rise to the bait, it wouldn't be worse than teasing.

Cherry: So would you say that your fellow male students and your professors treated you like other students ?

Mary Frances: ... I had a competition with a fellow student in my section. Each of us wanted to be the top of the section. He was far more aggressive than I. If he got a 9 out of a possible 10 on a quiz, he would complain to the professor. That was not in my nature. I wouldn't complain. But it gives me some pleasure to recall that I ended up with a higher grade point average than he had.

Cherry: And this was when you were a freshman?

Mary Frances: For two years the members of each section stayed together because we had the same required curriculum: four semesters of math, and of physics, two of mechanical drawing, and at least two of chemistry. In addition we all had to take two semesters of English the first year and two semesters of history the second year. We did this all with the same classmates. It was very regimented. I don't think today's students would tolerate it. But by the end of our sophomore year we all had the same background and were prepared to start our majors.

Cherry: So you graduated from MIT in three years?

Mary Frances: We graduated in three years because that included two summers. I can't honestly remember which summers they were. But I can remember when VE day occurred in 1946. Karl Compton was President at MIT. All the bells sounded and a public address system announced that we would all meet in the Great Court (now called the Killian Court). We thought surely we would get two or three days of vacation. Instead, President Compton said that we were very important people and that the knowledge and skills we were acquiring were important to the nation and to the ongoing war in the Pacific. So we should go back to our labs and to our classrooms. President Compton was so inspiring that we went back to our studies with new purpose. We didn't get two or three days off, but he boosted our self-esteem.

Incidentally, Karl and his wife, Margaret, invited the co-eds (that's what Tech women were called in my days) to tea once a month. My roommate, Paddy, and I tried to arrange our schedules so we could go. Not many students get the opportunity to have tea with the college president and his wife. That's another one of the advantages we women had.

Cherry: Were there any female professors that you remember?

Mary Frances: Not that I remember. We had the Margaret Cheney Room, which I guess is still in existence. We all had keys to that, and it was an all-female refuge where we ate lunch and played a couple of hands of bridge. There was to be very little distinction as to whether you were a freshman, a senior, or even a graduate student. We were small enough in numbers that we all knew each other and there was a lot of camaraderie.

Cherry: How did you decide to study chemistry? You said you were interested in chemical engineering. That was a major, right?

Mary Frances: Right. Chemical engineering is Course X. I originally planned to major in that, but one of the requirements was a summer practice school somewhere off campus. The living facilities were primitive and the men's dress was distinctly casual, and the bathrooms were communal. One day two professors called me in to see them and they explained the living conditions to me. They suggested that I would learn as much by switching my major to Course V, chemistry. I had become fond of many of the chemistry professors so the change was not difficult and on the whole it was a good move for me.

Cherry: Would you say that a lot of women might have been originally interested in chemical engineering and then ended up in chemistry ?

Mary Frances: I can't answer that. I know that the Navy had an Officers' Candidate School at MIT and those men could major only in engineering subjects. They could not major in chemistry or biology or other sciences. That meant that the science courses were small and the women could be in the majority — an unusual situation at the Institute in those years.

Cherry: Were there a lot of students serving in the military while students at MIT?

Mary Frances: Yes, there were. I remember a lot of Chinese naval personnel, as well. I used to study in the Eastman Library, and a lot of the Chinese navy men also

studied there. I was impressed by the length of time they could sit still at a library table. I have always had “jumpy legs” and I have to get up and walk around after a while. None the less, when I was in a class with Chinese naval personnel, I discovered I did as well as they did. So I concluded there is no particular advantage to being able to sit still for long periods at a time.

Cherry: I was wondering if there was anything special during your orientation.

Mary Frances: I don't remember any orientation at all. I think it was like throwing the baby in the swimming pool and saying “swim.” I do remember getting the MIT catalogue at home and being very excited and wanting to take all the courses, but then realizing that I had to take the requirements first. I guess somebody showed us where 10-250 and other places were, but I don't recall that a great deal was made of orientation.

Cherry: So you sort of just learned things on your own?

Mary Frances: You learned things on your own. The Margaret Cheney Room was a great resource and source of information. We were not pampered at all and we didn't expect to be pampered. Sometimes I read in *Tech Talk* — I do read it — about all the services for students. And I think it's right that they are available, but we were expected to be much more self-reliant. I didn't expect any hand-holding, although, as I said, the professors knew the co-eds and I felt comfortable going to see them during their office hours if I had any trouble with classes.

Cherry: What activities did you pursue at MIT besides studies?

Mary Frances: Study, study and more study and household chores.

Cherry: Honestly? You just studied? Were there a lot of programs?

Mary Frances: I suspect there were, but we were accelerated. We had three 16-week terms a year which was 48 weeks out of 52. That didn't give us time to catch our breaths. In addition, we had to get and prepare our food and walk from Boston to Cambridge. In the summertime the Boston Pops used to play in the Shell. I remember saying to myself, “Do I have time to go listen to the Pops and still come back and do my problem sets”? Some evenings the answer was “yes” and some evenings the answer was “no,” but I always enjoyed the Pops wherever I felt I could spare the time. Otherwise, my nose was pretty much to the grindstone. I

didn't find the work hard, I just found there was an awful lot of it. If I wanted to do well, and I did, it took all the time I had.

Cherry: Were there activities that you did at Foxcroft that you were serious about?

Mary Frances: I rode horses. I played basketball. I spent as much time outdoors as possible. When I came to MIT I realized that I would have to change my lifestyle, and I am glad I did. It was worth it.

Cherry: Did you ever expect to serve on the Corporation?

Mary Frances: I don't think I even knew there was a Corporation.

Cherry: Is there anything you would like to share about MIT?

Mary Frances: I wrote for our 50th reunion yearbook that one lasting legacy of my MIT education was the emphasis on getting things right. That has always stayed with me. And since marrying a physician, I can see that is necessary in his profession as well as mine. You cannot get the therapy wrong, or even just slightly wrong. I have a great respect for accuracy, and I learned that at MIT. I like the way scientists and engineers think — logically, rationally, and mathematically.

Cherry: How did that carry over when you went to Oxford to study?

Mary Frances: Well, it was a real culture shock to go from MIT to Oxford. My MIT education was: lecture, recitation and labs. And, at night, problem sets. There was nothing like UROP and multiple versions of 8.01. I never learned to learn on my own. In England students learn at an early age to learn on their own. The transition was very difficult for me. I saw my thesis advisor in the beginning and he'd pop into my lab two or three times a week to ask how things were going, but I didn't get any instruction and little direction. I wandered around rather aimlessly until I discovered there were lectures to go to and some of them were germane to my work. My Oxford experience made me confident that I could learn of my own — a skill that is really useful.

Another aspect of culture shock was that my MIT education had emphasized practicality. Oxford prized theoretical knowledge. In fact, the Americans there in 1947 used to remark that the most useless knowledge at Oxford was the most

sought-after. That was not quite true, of course, but it seemed that way to us at the time.

Cherry: In what other ways did Oxford differ from MIT?

Mary Frances: The D. Phil. at Oxford is strictly a research degree. There are no course requirements or exams. There is only the completion of an original piece of research and the defense of this before three outside examiners. Graduate students start on their research right away. I got my degree in three years — just a few days after my 23rd birthday.

Cherry: Why did you choose Oxford?

Mary Frances: Well, I told you my youthful fantasy of going to Heidelberg or maybe Freiberg did not materialize because of the immediate postwar circumstances. I applied to both Oxford and Cambridge. Cambridge was reputed to have better science than Oxford, and I was accepted at Cambridge. However, they told me that I could do my research at Cambridge, but my degree would come from Queens College, Dublin, because Cambridge did not give degrees to women. So I thought: “a pox on your house, I’m going to Oxford.” I had also been accepted there, where they were enlightened enough to give degrees to women. Incidentally, Cambridge changed this policy a few years later.

Cherry: Is there anything else you would like to say about Oxford?

Mary Frances: Oxford is really quite far north. So much so that in the winter it got dark around 3:30 pm. In many ways that made it a good place to study because one was not tempted to go out and take a walk. Summers, of course, you get it back and it’s light until almost 10 o’clock at night.

I had a lot of fun at Oxford because I didn’t work as hard as I had at MIT. I was the only American woman, except for wives of Rhodes Scholars. There were also lots of unmarried Rhodes scholars. I had very active social life, which was really fun after having almost no social life at MIT. I traveled abroad with some of those fellows, and I still keep up with many of them. And I made lasting friends at my College, St. Hilda’s. It was an enriching three years.

Cherry: Do you think there were any expectations because you came from MIT?

Mary Frances: Quite definitely. I doubt that I would have gotten into Oxford if I had not come from MIT. I was in a way, an experiment. Oxford didn't really know whether or not they wanted more Yanks in addition to the thirty or so Rhodes Scholars that came each year. They did need research people as they lost many young men of university age during the war. I think Oxford was unsure as to exactly what its postwar climate would be. I remember being impressed that they took a lot of veterans, but they made little attempt to provide the support systems they needed. I tutored a woman who had been in the WACS, the Women's Army Corps, who read chemistry, which is the English way of saying "majored in chemistry." She never took calculus, yet all her courses presumed students had that background. I tutored her while thinking there's something wrong in admitting students and not providing the necessary remedial help. MIT is much better at that, as is demonstrated in the MITES program.

Cherry: From 1950 to 1953 you were at Smith College and you taught chemistry there. I was wondering why you chose Smith College. Was it because it was a women's college?

Mary Frances: Well, I was in England, and job-hunting in the States. That's not an ideal situation. I wrote to the MIT chemistry department and said I wanted to try my hand at teaching. They replied that Smith College was looking for a chemist. I also interviewed for a research job at Princeton and was offered both jobs. It was a difficult decision. I choose the teaching job and it was a happy choice. I absolutely adored teaching, and it was, I think, what I was meant to do. I enjoyed my three years at Smith enormously and would have continued had not Dr. Philip Wagley persuaded me that I'd like to change my name and my location and come to Baltimore. That ended my Smith career.

Cherry: I noticed that there was a slight time gap in your CV.

Mary Frances: There are some gaps. Shortly after Philip and I married, the Army Medical Corps decided they wanted him. So we did a bit of wandering around with the Army. That is part of one gap. When I finally settled down in Baltimore, I did research at the Hopkins Hospital because I thought I'd better know this institution where my husband was spending many hours of each day. I worked in the division of chemistry in the department of medicine and discovered I really didn't like research as much as I liked teaching. So I taught off and on at Goucher College whenever there was a vacancy in the chemistry department.

Cherry: I see. So you and your husband married right after Smith.

Mary Frances: Yes, we married in 1953 after I left Smith.

Cherry: And then you taught chemistry in the Nursing School at Johns Hopkins?

Mary Frances: Yes, I did teach at the School of Nursing.

Cherry: What was your favorite experience of the three?

Mary Frances: I loved teaching at Goucher. It was very much like Smith - a good liberal arts college with a strong science bent.

Cherry: Then there is sort of a five-year hiatus between your years of teaching and before you became Headmistress of St. Paul's School for Girls.

Mary Frances: Those five were occupied with three children. When our youngest went to kindergarten, I remember thinking: "I will get retrained and go back to teaching chemistry." I didn't go back to teaching chemistry, and I guess I decided that it was time for me to do something else. Just by chance I sat next to the President of the Board of Trustees of St. Paul's at a party. He was beside himself because the Headmistress had announced her retirement. That's when I thought, "I think I could run a school." So I applied, and many interviews later I was appointed. Our own children were then 6, 9 and 11, and this school started at fifth grade and went through twelfth grade. So our children grew up with the school. It was a very happy experience for me. I enjoyed running the school. It had 230 students at the time. I was not only Head of the School, I was the director of admissions and the business manager. I had my hand in just about everything and I loved the variety. It was a time of a lot of ferment in the school curriculums. For instance youngsters were introduced to mathematical thinking in addition to learning their times tables.

The sciences colleges, including MIT, were active in rewriting textbooks. There were new high school courses in physics, chemistry and biology. It was an interesting time to be at a school. I loved the age group I was dealing with and having children at home in the same age cohort was helpful.

Cherry: Would you say this was a college preparatory school? Did you encourage any of your graduates to apply to MIT?

Mary Frances: Yes. St. Paul's School for Girls is a college preparatory school. We sent one student to MIT — Nicole Schultheis '77. She majored in biology and went on

to get a law degree. She is very active in women's health issues. I am very proud of her.

I often thought that studying chemistry was good training for running a school. That may sound surprising, but chemists often imagine an ideal gas and then describe a real gas in terms of its deviation from ideal behavior. Likewise, I could think of the perfect curriculum if there were no parents, no teachers, or no students. The real world deviates from the ideal! I served as Headmistress for twelve years, from 1966 to 1978.

Now and then I questioned why I was in such a privileged situation. All my students were well-fed; and well-housed. Most of them had good parents. I asked myself why I didn't go to an inner-city school? But I realized I had no background or training for teaching in an inner-city, deprived neighborhood. So when there was a chance for me to run the social ministries program for Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, I said to myself: "This is exactly what I've been looking for."

I wanted a chance to make a difference in the lives of people who have not had all the advantages that I have had. I found it difficult work. We ran a shelter for homeless men and tried to do some job preparation and help them find jobs. We'd get them entry-level jobs and three months later they'd be back in the shelter. Most of them were homeless because of addictions or emotional problems. These are deep-seated problems and the solutions do not come easily. With youngsters, things usually work out. They may be late bloomers, but eventually they bloom. If you come from a very deprived background, the deck is stacked against you. I found my five years at ESM to be eye-opening and to some extent, rewarding work, but it was also difficult and often discouraging.

Cherry: Besides a shelter, what other sorts of ministries did you do?

Mary Frances: We ran a summer job program for youngsters. We participated in food bank. I think my greatest contribution there was putting an organization together and getting it on a firm financial footing. Because of my MIT background, I've never been scared of numbers, but church people generally don't like numbers. So I was the unusual person who said: "All right, let's tackle this budget, and we've got to balance it." The agency flourishes, by the way, and I'm glad I had a role in getting it on its feet.

Cherry: Why did you stay in Baltimore?

Mary Frances: If your husband is a Hopkins physician, you can't move.

Cherry: I see, so was he a teaching professor?

Mary Frances: He was what Hopkins calls "part time." He had his own practice, but he taught, as well. He initiated the Hopkins course in Medical Ethics and taught it for many years.

Cherry: You also served as a corporate director of Maryland National Bank

Mary Frances: Yes, but before that I was the first woman elected to the MIT Corporation in 1970. I remember walking into my first meeting. It was a daunting sight. There were all these men, and I thought, "They must put them in uniform." They all wore dark blue suits and white shirts and conservative ties. It was a formidable group. I learned quickly that Visiting Committees were an important aspect of the Corporation's work. It's through the Visiting Committees that a Corporation member learns how bits and pieces of the Institute work. I have served on a lot of them over the years and I have chaired Philosophy, Psychology, Humanities, and now I chair Athletics. And that's where you put in quite a lot of work. You help set the agenda, then run the meeting, and finally write the report. The latter task is time-consuming.

Cherry: What exactly does the Visiting Committee do?

Mary Frances: Well, let me tell you what I tell the members of the Visiting Committees that I chair. I tell them that I see our role as being "informed advocates" of the department with the senior administration. To be informed the department will have to provide us with good background material explaining both their successes and the problems they face. Unless the department does this honestly, the Visiting Committee has a hard time being a good advocate. We depend on the input from the department.

Cherry: How was it that you became involved with the Corporation?

Mary Frances: I honestly don't know why Jim Killian chose me as the first female member of the Corporation but I have always tried to be faithful in attendance, in doing all my reading, and in participating as I felt able. Of course an invitation to join the MIT Corporation is not one to be turned down. I did ask my board of trustees at St. Paul's if it would be all right, and as expected, they said yes. I'd come back after some meetings of the Corporation and think that St. Paul's and

MIT had the same problems. We just needed to take off three sets of zeros. While MIT was talking about millions, we were talking about thousands. but the problems were the same. I've learned a lot from my association with the Corporation and I certainly have enjoyed it. Now as I look around now and see young people on the Board, a racial mix and maybe 30% women, I am pleased to have been chosen as a pioneer. We've come a long way since I walked into that room when they all seemed to be dressed in some sort of corporate uniform. I always thought my role was to do the best job I could and that this would pave the way for other women.

Another great experience for me was being President of the Alumni Association. Again, I was the first woman in that role, but I guess I was getting more confident as a pioneer. Bill Hecht, who was the Executive Vice President of the association, was a wonderful help to me. We traveled together with a slide show about women at MIT which I had assembled ...

Cherry: So that also was an appointed position, or was that voted upon?

Mary Frances: That was a selected position The committee that does the selecting is elected so it is not an outright appointment.

I'd like to comment on one other experience that is really special, and that is being on the Executive Committee. This is a small committee that meets once a month and is really the policy-setting body of the Institute. That's where you learn how the Institute works. I think I've served seven years on the executive committee in two separate periods. I also served on two presidential search committees- the one that chose Paul Gray and the one that chose our present president, Chuck Vest. The latter is the first "outsider" since Karl Compton. I am privileged to have known seven Presidents of MIT — Karl Compton, Jim Killian, Howard Johnson, Jay Stratton, Jerry Wiesner, Paul Gray, and Chuck Vest.

Cherry: What does it mean to be a Life Member of the MIT Corporation? What are the qualifications and what does it entail?

Mary Frances: I guess you should ask the Chairman of the Corporation. It's certainly an honor and it indicates you are someone who has served well and whom they want to keep on the Corporation. That ends when you're 75, and you then become a Life Member Emeritus I am approaching that age and I know I will miss my active association with MIT. The Institute has been an important part of my life for many years.

Cherry: I have a final question, where do you see MIT going in the next ten years? What's the vision you have of this Institute?

Mary Frances: I have read very carefully the task force report on Student Life and Learning and I think it is absolutely right on. MIT has always had education and research but it may not have given enough attention to community. This report attempts to initiate a balance with community forming the third leg of a stool without which the stool is unstable. MIT is a very individualistic place, and unless we work at building community, it just won't happen. In addition, I hope that graduate enrollment doesn't overwhelm the undergraduate enrollment. I think that's a hazard. I hope we don't get too dependent on foreign money or on industrial money. I think this money comes with strings attached and with the danger of exerting too much influence. I could not write a prescription. I think MIT is an enormously exciting place. I just love to walk down the Infinite Corridor. It's positively energizing just to look at the people. Even after normal closing time it's just full of people, talking, bubbling with ideas and enthusiasm. Some people say that science is just about done. I happen to think we are just scratching the surface and that the future will be even more exciting than the past.

I believe the women of the school of science who documented that there has been discrimination against women took a great step forward. That the president took the study seriously and said: "Yes, there is a problem and we've got to fix it" is to me just wonderfully typical of MIT. If the facts are there, you acknowledge the facts. And if the facts are not what you want them to be, then you say: "We've got to fix it." The playing field will be leveled. And someday we will have a Madame President of MIT. I don't know whether I will see her, but you will, and I urge you to cheer her on. So, Cherry, I am about talked out. But thank you. You've done a wonderful job. I am not a woman of many words. I think sometimes scientific training causes that. I want to be sure I say what I mean and mean what I say, and that's not easy.

Cherry: Thank you.

(End of Interview)