

Marie Casey 5-15-2014

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

May 15, 2014

MARIE CASEY INTERVIEWED BY WILLIAM FISCHETTI

Marie Casey: So, my name is Marie Casey. My middle initial is A for Anne. I'm named after my mother and so I've needed to distinguish that her middle initial is C. I'm a writer. I founded and run a firm called Casey Communications that I started in April 1983 and we've had a niche for a long time in construction, real estate, labor management, marketing, communications, but have expanded into corporate histories and biographies in recent years.

William Fischetti: Okay. So where were you born?

Marie Casey: So I was born near the University of Missouri-St. Louis on a street called Groveland in Northwoods, one of the many municipalities in Normandy township. My parents moved in five days before I was born from Old Monroe, Missouri. I was the fourth of eight children, third girl out of seven girls so I grew up with all these siblings in Ascension Parish. That was the center of our lives, the First Ascension Parish in St. Louis in Northwoods and grew up in that community.

William Fischetti: And where did you go to school?

Marie Casey: So, elementary school was Ascension and then Rosati-Kain High School, an all-girl Catholic high school in the central west end and University of Missouri-St. Louis. I followed my oldest sister to...my oldest sister started at Rosati in 1966, I think, graduated in '70. My second oldest sister started the next year, then my brother came and went to McBride and I followed along with all my other sisters to Rosati. So there are some stories about growing up in Northwoods that may be of interest.

William Fischetti: Sure.

Marie Casey: So, I don't know if you know Northwoods. It was one of the early suburbs and it was built in a very wooded area with lots of springs. So lots of the houses would settle over time and get bumped up with concrete. Around

the time I was in 4th grade, it started becoming integrated and I would hear neighbors talk about this in derogatory terms and I would get on my bike and go investigate what people were saying about our new neighbors and I found none of it was true and our new neighbors, who were African American, were just wonderful and I loved growing up in an integrated neighborhood. It's really what I treasure and I wish all of St. Louis had that.

William Fischetti: Did it, over time...did you experience "white flight"?

Marie Casey: Definitely. There were a lot of people moving to North County and St. Charles and there were a lot of...I was 10, 11 at the time and so I didn't really have a full understanding. My mom and dad, unbeknownst to me, were attending community meetings to make sure there was a good transition and they were working to build the new community. But I didn't understand. I heard things like, our new neighbors were paying a lot more than homes were valued at and there were certain real estate practices going on that were not fair. But I didn't understand more than that. I just knew a lot of my classmates were leaving and I was getting a lot of new classmates.

William Fischetti: What else about growing up...

Marie Casey: So, there was a lot of adventure for me. Originally we were pretty insulated because I think it's hard to keep your eye on eight kids at once. The first seven of us were born in eight-and-a-half years. My mom was a graduate of Webster College so she really saw her vocation and her career as being the raising of her children. So, among other things, we had summer school and she would teach us geography and mythology and art, this one-room schoolhouse in the basement, all ages. But then when we were old enough to get out on the street and explore ourselves, I would get on my bike or walk for miles and try to get lost because there were all these different communities in the Normandy area and each was so distinct. Maybe that fueled my early love of architecture which I've written so much about and admire so much in St. Louis and the craftsmanship behind it. So there was a park program at Northwoods Park and we would all go there and as soon as I was old enough, I started helping as a volunteer with the little ones. There was a YMCA, the only outdoor YMCA in St. Louis, was at Bermuda and 70 and that was beginning well into my elementary years. I graduated from Ascension in

1971; it replaced Holiday Hill which had been at Brown and Natural Bridge but they didn't have classes and all like the Y did. So we, the six youngest, all became really strong swimmers and competed together. We formed our own medley relay team, number four, five, six and seven out of the line-up of us, my sisters, Martha, Mary, Monica and I made a complete relay team. So that drew people from a wider area in Normandy and several of us, including me, ended up working as lifeguards and swim instructors. Also when I was 10, my parents had a family meeting and my dad had just lost his job and they wanted to get our minds around a concept and what I remember, but my other siblings don't, is that we were told we were expected to go to college and we would need to pay our own way, beginning with our senior year of high school. And so that made me very industrious, from that point on, and I started...I had a babysitting job for our neighbor next door. I started in 6th grade, every day after school. Then I figured out I could operate a lawn mower so in 7th and 8th grade, I went and arranged to cut neighbors' lawns and get \$5 or \$10, whatever it was then. Then, when I was 14, I started circulating those sales coupons for Tip-Top Cleaners and we'd get paid cash and I'd get dropped off different places and I would put them on cars and in shops. Then I started cleaning their stores, their North County stores when I was 15, again paid in cash, and as soon as I was 16, I started working inside Tip-Top Cleaners in the Normandy Shopping Center, which is now North Oaks, Lucas, Hunt and Natural Bridge. And all my sisters worked there too. So you can see it was a big family affair.

William Fischetti: I think Kenn lives at Bermuda and 70 and I'm trying to think...

Marie Casey: Yes, it's now a church. They filled in the pool. It had an old home and there was a 25-yard pool and the lifeguards were unbelievable. They were all Normandy High School students and Normandy had a great swim team and diving team and they were just people I looked up to so much. I still remember many of their names and it's been a long time.

William Fischetti: Do you still swim?

Marie Casey: I do, I do still swim.

William Fischetti: What did your dad do?

Marie Casey: He was the district manager for Farmer's Insurance and his office was on Natural Bridge near Newstead and that was another great thing about

growing up. Dad, because he ran this agency, we would go in to the office with him and play office on weekends and then, on days when I didn't have school, sometimes I would just accompany him. And so I really got to know my way around a big swath of St. Louis, just because he'd take me wherever he was going, to, you know, these little markets and shoe repair places. Then as I grew older, he would take some of us to sales meetings with guys in other places in Missouri and I took piano lessons so he had bought the building where he had the Farmer's Insurance agency, from a music store owner named Joe Plischke who lived on Duchesne off Florissant Road and he gave the first four of us piano lessons as part of the deal. So I learned how to play piano and so I would go with my dad and a couple of my younger sisters to these sales meetings and I would play the piano while he would get everybody pumped in song. Then my mom would take popular songs and convert the lyrics to some sort of rousing sales call to sell insurance to people. Then he lost his job, like I said, around the time I was 10 and then he went with another insurance company, Ozark National Life and he headed up their St. Louis operations. When I was about 16, my parents' marriage fell on the rocks and they divorced when I was 19, in 1976 and that was really very hard but I also felt like...well, my mom was left with six of us to raise on her own and she had come back to UMSL actually to get her certification. She had her degree from Webster in sociology with a minor in physical education and then she came back and got certified and taught in North St. Louis at Mark Twain and Mark Twain branch primary kindergarten and primary grades for about 20 years. So she raised us really on a teacher's salary, the last six of us. So all of that combined to make me very hard-working and industrious.

William Fischetti: Were there any teachers in particular that really inspired you that you can name?

Marie Casey: Yes. Well, in grade school, there was a nun who was then called Sister Mary Donald but she changed her name in the early '80s back to her original name, which was Sister Joan Albach and she was originally from Ohio. She was our music teacher. She was also homeroom, reading, history, for 7th and 8th grade and she was very tough on the outside but I could see her inside. She just was very kind-hearted but she demanded everything you could give. So when I was in 6th grade, I started going to her 7th grade reading class and then when I was in 7th grade, I went to her

8th grade reading class. In 6th grade, she got us started writing weekly journals that we needed to turn in. This turned out to be a great idea because they had over ordered notebooks and they wanted to sell them. They were Ascension School notebooks, so they told everybody they had to, in 7th and 8th grade, they had to buy a \$1 Ascension School notebook and keep a journal. Well, she would go through these journals and comment on all of them. What I didn't realize at the time is that she was cultivating the writer in me because I got in a habit...we also had to find one article that piqued our interest or generated some thought, tape or glue that into our journal and write about it. That was so brilliant because she was very much a current affairs person as well as a history lover. The other thing she did was, we lost the free piano lessons when my three older siblings stopped practicing but I kept practicing on my own because I really loved piano. So, in 7th grade, I participated in a talent show where I can taught myself Romeo & Juliette and it was serviceable but it wasn't like what I would learn with a teacher. She came up to me afterwards and said, "Come to the convent at 9:00 A.M. Saturday. I'll take you on as a student." I was overjoyed. She did that for two years, would never accept payment. They had recently come out of the habit so I would make her clothes: skirts and blouses and things, to try to pay her but she would never accept payment. She was just remarkable. I also had a second grade teacher, Flora Bomgartner, who lived in the Normandy area also and she encouraged us to illustrate and write book reports, so while I was in 2nd grade, that was such a great idea that I did over 100 of those. There were these teachers who really encouraged reading and writing and then my mom would take us every other Friday night to the St. Louis County Library on Natural Bridge, the one that was across from Mother of Good Counsel Home east of here. We would all check out the maximum six books and read them and then take them back. So there was a lot of reading and writing and other creative...we all learned how to sew. Our high school graduation gift from our parents was a sewing machine that I still have and use. So that was a great experience because Rosati-Kain High School brought together students from all over. There were over 100 parishes represented and it was a group of bright and creative young women. There were about 100 students per class, give or take. There, there were amazing teachers, really committed, long-term teachers. Two really stand out for me, Sister Carol...I never am sure of her last name...Dubrulet is what it looks like. She was the music teacher and then

this pint-sized little nun named Sister Sheila Marie Hetterman and she was the newspaper sponsor, the RK Occasional Newspaper, and she also taught Shakespeare and English Comp and things like that. Both these sisters/teachers were perfectionists but also they would pull it out of you. They were just so enormously dedicated. I sang a little bit but then I was the pianist for the freshmen chorus and then the glee club and the RK Voices, the smaller ensemble. The work that Sister Carol had everybody do was...I look back and I think no other high school was doing that level of music and harmonizing. She's still alive. The other two I've mentioned are now dead. But just remarkable transformational teachers.

William Fischetti: So you obviously kept in contact with them?

Marie Casey: Yes, I did.

William Fischetti: They must have really inspired you.

Marie Casey: Yeah. Well, I was just so grateful and there were so many others. I mean, just...I'm so, so grateful. Another, Sister Miriam Katherine Wesselman heard about a program called "Close Up" which was an opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. for a week, so I got money together and went and I ended up being a political science major I think partly because of that experience, getting so turned on by meeting the people in D.C. who were our government, our representatives and our senators and press secretary and, you know, all those things. That was an experience that enlarged my vision of the world. We didn't travel a lot growing up. We went to, like, the Ozarks to visit my grandpa pretty much, or camping or to Wisconsin where my dad's family was.

William Fischetti: Did you come to UMSL because of economics or...

Marie Casey: Yes. I got scholarships, academic scholarships and was accepted at Northwestern, University of Michigan, Drake, Georgetown, Wash U, but none of them...since I was paying my way, I couldn't afford that. I didn't know the concept of student debt and I don't think it would have appealed to me either. So I actually enrolled at SIUE and I went over for the orientation and I thought, this isn't any different from UMSL and it's a long drive. So I walked to UMSL the next day and asked if I could enroll late. It was three weeks into UMSL's semester versus the quarter system at SIU-Edwardsville, and they let me take nine hours but I had to go ask permission from each professor. So, again, I started UMSL with personal

relationships with professors like Chuck Granger, who is still here, who told me I'd probably flunk out, but it was okay with him, and of course, he made biology so fascinating that I didn't flunk out. I loved his class. And I had Ruth Jones for Poli-Sci 11 and I was hooked by her. So from the beginning, it was just a great experience. Somebody mentioned to me there was a newspaper so I went and I started writing for the UMSL Current and then the chairman of the Political Science Department then, Lyman Tower-Sergeant, apparently was looking for a research assistant and the secretary in the department told him about me and I got offered a job as his research assistant. So for my entire time here, I read Utopian novels on microfilm for him and took notes. He's still...I see him periodically still and he is still using my notes, he tells me.

William Fischetti: What year did you start here?

Marie Casey: So I started in September of '75 and I graduated in August of '78. I went through quickly because, by then, I was really tired of being poor. I had gotten an apartment with a friend in the Loop when I finished my first year and so I was living on my own and paying my own way and cobbling together a couple of different jobs. I was a stringer for the Suburban Journals and then I was researching for Lyman and writing for the newspaper and then I was hired by the university's news department. It was then called the Office of Public Information, as a writer. So I knew I just needed to practice writing, that you only get really good at it by writing a lot and having editors who are willing to give you feedback and I had that every place I went, people would give me that.

William Fischetti: So did you ever consider being a reporter?

Marie Casey: I did and that was originally my goal and so when I graduated, I had interned at Channel 4 and I knew from that I didn't want to be in TV. I had interned for Wayne Goode who was then the House Appropriations chair and he was my House Representative. I knew from that that I didn't want to be in government, or at least in elect...you know, the...and so, I thought, well, I'll be a reporter. So I went down to the Globe Democrat and I interviewed and tested. They didn't have anything but I think he was the managing editor or the editor, Ray Noonan, happened to run into Tom Finen who was then publisher of St. Louis Construction News and Review and he said he was looking for a staff writer. So he called me and said, "I told them to hire you. Call him," and Tom was good enough to

hire me with no background in anything related to what I covered for the next five years. So I became a trade journalist for five years before starting my business, and loved it, just loved it.

William Fischetti: How did starting the business come about?

Marie Casey: Well, so, I had been at St. Louis Construction News Review almost five years and my learning curve had decelerated. It was starting to flatten. I had come in knowing nothing and during that time, people started asking me...some of the people I interviewed asked me if I freelanced because of my ability to write understandably about somewhat esoteric subjects like geotechnical engineering or concrete or things like that. So I started doing that and then when my learning curve slowed and I started having ideas about how Tom should run his business, he was fine with the way he was running them. It was just time for me to go. So I thought about, well, I could see if the Post Dispatch would want to hire me or I could see if Fleishman-Hilliard would be interested or I could start my own business, and that's what felt right in my gut. So that's what I did.

William Fischetti: When you started, what was your business?

Marie Casey: So, it was very minimal because I thought I had three clients and they each went dry right then. There was a bad economic time going on. Somebody told me the Business Journal was looking for some freelance reporters so I thought, well, while I'm figuring out what I'm going to do in my new business that isn't busy, I'll do some writing for them. And from that, one of my first clients came. It was Sachs Properties, the developer of Chesterfield Village and so I started working with them in '84. Through an old St. Louis construction company from the 1800's, Fruin Colnon, I met their president in the course of doing my work for St. Louis Construction News and Review. He had his secretary track me down to see if I'd be interested in doing work with them. So that became an early client. I'm still working with their successor organization and it's not even in St. Louis anymore. Then, things over time, you know, I just started picking up different clients and figuring out...I really wished I had taken a business class or two. I never did but my clients ended up being teachers and all the people I had interviewed about their businesses, I thought back on what they told me and so that all went into the business knowledge I eventually developed. But I would have recommended

taking business courses. Had I even thought I would go into business, that wasn't my game plan. I thought I'd be a journalist all my life, yeah.

William Fischetti: So I assume the business has been fairly successful?

Marie Casey: It has been, yeah, and it's been so fun because I've taken the opportunity to continually recreate it. So, one of the things I didn't realize was unique at the time was, I really focused on business that I had knowledge about so I only would accept clients who had something to do with architecture, engineering, construction, real estate development or labor management relations because I covered contracts. Every time a craft had a contract expiration, I would cover that. So I developed a niche in that and that's what we became known for. Then the Tax Reform Act of '86 came along and the industry went topsy. All this work dried up. So I realized then maybe I could leverage knowledge from one industry into another and I expanded, by 1989, I think. I was doing the history of Schnuck Markets, their 50-year anniversary book and then ended up essentially functioning as their external PR department until the early 2000's when it was really time and I recommended that they take the function back in-house. They had grown so dramatically and they had a limited budget with which to do this work. So I helped transition that. But still probably half our business remained in this niche and I'm told by national reporters and editors that they don't know any other firm that's like us in the country in doing that. But it was just a decision to build on what I knew and to be of value to clients. They didn't have to teach us everything about their industry. We knew their industry. We still needed to learn about their business.

William Fischetti: Well, was being a woman, do you think that helped or hindered?

Marie Casey: Well, you know, I was thinking back on some of my Construction News times. There had been prior female reporters for St. Louis Construction News and Review and so they'd had a fine experience. I never experienced any lack of access or anything but I did experience assumptions. I remember interviewing an older...maybe 20 years older than me...project manager on the St. Louis Children's Hospital Project when it was underway on Kingshighway and I started asking the questions I needed answers to write well about this project in a way that construction experts would be interested in reading, that would share something new, and I could not get him to tell me anything substantial.

He assumed I really didn't know construction. So as I recall, it was a structural concrete building which is different than a steel-framed building and so there are different questions you ask. And so, I just thought, how do I convince him we can go deeper? And so I started asking him very specific questions about the concrete they were using, about PSI and whether they had used any add mixtures or what kind of...you know, all these different kind of technical questions that I wouldn't use in the story but that would convey that I was a little further along than I had been when I started, and he said, "Oh, you know about construction," and I said, "This industry has been my teacher for three..."...I think it was three years now, and I said, "I just would appreciate it if we could go deeper than we've been." Well, that changed everything and I think what happened is, I hit the industry at a time when many of the men who were leading the construction companies and the architectural and engineering firms and the construction trade unions, they had daughters who were my age or maybe just following me and I think they could see in me their own daughter and their daughter's aspirations and so I encountered incredible openness and helpfulness and, for my part, I did my part of it. When I didn't know anything about construction, I would go to the children's section of the library, check out a book to get the vocabulary down on whatever I was writing about. If I was covering construction of the Jefferson Barracks Bridge or whatever it was, I would get a basic understanding and then I would imagine, what are all the questions somebody would have about this. Then I would go into each interview and I'd say, "I don't know your business. I'm a political scientist by training, so if we could pretend I'm in kindergarten and then I'll let you know when I'm ready for 2nd grade or 5th grade level or whatever." The entire industry, it was like they took me on as their pupil. So I learned so much from people who are accustomed to teaching because the construction crafts are passed on. It's side-by-side work. Engineering happens the same way, you know, architecture. There is such a teaching tradition. So it just so happened that I was covering an industry that was very accustomed to sharing. And I absorbed as much as I could.

William Fischetti: So, in the construction...

Marie Casey: Yes.

William Fischetti: How much of that is architecture?

Marie Casey: In my work now, you mean, or in all the coverage?

William Fischetti: Yeah, when you were working for...

Marie Casey: A lot. I mean, I came to have a real appreciation...I had had a professor here who, one of our assignments, I think it was an urban history class...one of our assignments was to go out in St. Louis with a camera and take photos and write an essay about, if we could live anywhere in St. Louis, where would we want to live, and that was this new discovery and I still have that paper. I think I had this innate appreciation for the craftsmanship and the imagination that went into...St. Louis has an incredible built environment and it's because we've been this melting pot. All these fine craftsmen came from Europe and brought their trade and they had guilds and they formed unions. The bricklayers started here; the electricians started here; the iron workers had their national headquarters here for a long time. So there was a lot of history and pride with that. When I was at Construction News, there was something...the AIA sponsored, once a month, called Architect Sunday and sometimes it would be about a new building and sometimes it would be about an old building or a district and I always wrote a preview of whatever was going to be toured. So that was an amazing education in history and the built environment and architects and engineers historically. Some of the conditions, I was fascinated to learn that the old post office was built on quicksand and how they steadied that in a way that that building is still quite plumb and level, through its many renovations and its current use.

William Fischetti: When you're writing these business histories, do you ever do architecture firms?

Marie Casey: You know, I haven't yet, I haven't. I've done some construction, financial services, there's been one home building firm, insurance. I have done the sheet metal workers, Local 36. That took the form of two exhibits, a huge photo montage that's tidbits of history and five videos that are embedded within. And so there's an architectural aspect. Sheet metal workers do so much, architectural sheet metal and HVAC and all kinds of things. I'm looking at this picture of the Arch. They did so much on that. But I haven't done any architectural firm histories. There aren't a lot that have lasted over 100 years, you know? So that's a great question. One of

our clients is HOK and they've done a history before we were involved with them but it would be interesting, you know, taking a St. Louis firm that is a global leader, really a thought leader in all aspects of architecture. It's fun working with them.

William Fischetti: So, do you ever just go out and check out architecture?

Marie Casey: Well, I look at buildings all the time. I don't stop. My calendar is a little overloaded to stop and research but buildings tell great stories and I can look at many buildings and figure pretty closely what decade. A lot of women could do that for fashion. I can't do that, but buildings, I could do that.

William Fischetti: I take it you enjoy what you do.

Marie Casey: I do.

William Fischetti: That's certainly worth a lot.

Marie Casey: Yeah. We get to work with some really incredible clients and I learned early in my business to only work with people I like, trust and respected and I've resigned clients when that wasn't the case. You don't always know starting out and sometimes things change. We've just been so blessed to work with some firms literally back to the '80s, even the Pride Construction Industry Labor Management Group that was born in St. Louis in 1972 out of tremendous labor strife and labor management strife. That is the granddaddy of all construction industry labor management groups nationally and it has less fervor and focus now than it did when there was this huge need for it. But they've been a client since 1986 and we were chosen as a firm that both labor and management could agree on, based on my fair reporting through the years on contracts and all. But, yeah, I think of the people and the projects we've been able to touch too. We worked on, early, through the end, communications for the old post office redevelopment and I had so much material in my files. When I went to do this sheet metal history, I had old material from the '80s about some work I had done with Local 36 and their contractor organization, (SMACNA), a national craftsmanship contest that they had participated in. I'm trying to think, you know, in terms of...backing up a minute on points of influence, my dad was always up. He would wake up in the morning whistling and he was just a really happy person and I remember, I've always been an early riser. When I

was a kid, I would wake up at 5:00 and need to be quiet until everybody...so I read. But he would shave and I would just go visit with him and make him breakfast. This was when I was eight, nine, and I remember one morning, as he was shaving and whistling, asking him how he could be so happy every day, because it really struck me as a child and he said, "Well, I'm in sales. Nobody wants to see a down salesman," and that told me something about his outlook and his decision and being a person for others and thinking about other people, you know? When he and my mom divorced, I remember one day he was back and he was leaving and I was figuring out college. It was after I had graduated and I guess they weren't divorced yet but he had moved out and we were down in the basement and he said to me, "I'd really like to figure out a way to help you with your college expenses," and I...being the parent to my father, said, "You can't do that. That would be unfair. You aren't doing it for anybody else in the family," and he said, "Well, I just want you to know, I believe in you and I think you can do anything you want to do." I think that wove its way into every cell of my being, him saying that with such authenticity and there are many women who have been in the world doing new things who haven't had a father in their life, but I know so many others who were greatly influenced by their father's belief in them and I would say I'm among them. But it was my mom's constancy and her demonstration, her daily demonstration of discipline and passion and raising kids is a long haul journey and then her going back to school with all these kids still at home. I have no idea how she did it. I was 13 when she did that. Her youngest was 3. She's the only one she put in preschool. All the rest of us were home with her. I have no idea how she did it but she did and it was really good that she did because otherwise, I don't know what would have happened because my dad went AWOL for a few years after they divorced and she wouldn't have been able to support us, but she was. Self-sufficiency was a big theme in our family, as you might imagine, and so, learning how to sew, getting a sewing machine for a high school graduation gift, that literally was about clothing ourselves, being able to cloth ourselves, and express ourselves creatively. I come from a family of tremendously creative people and my mom, she grew up in North St. Louis. Her mother died when she was two and so her father was left with a five-year-old son, a three-year-old daughter and my mom, who was two. He moved in with his family. He was the only one who had ever married. So his mom was still alive at that point for another

eight years or so...maybe seven, and he had three sisters who were still alive, and a brother and they all worked except the one who stayed home and took care of the meals, who was really a surrogate mom to my mom, incredible woman. One was a comptometer operator so she was a woman working in...it wasn't the railway exchange; it was the precursor, really, to UPS and didn't like her job but would come home and be...so she was mathematically phenomenal and then would come home and sew beautiful outfits for my mom and her sister. Then the other one headed up a secretarial pool at the GM plant in North St. Louis. So my mom came from these women who had careers and I don't know, I think she just saw a new world that her daughters would be going into and did her part to prepare us.

William Fischetti: How about your siblings?

Marie Casey: Yeah, so the oldest four of us are all entrepreneurial. My oldest sister, Meg, has had a company where she designs and makes sports uniforms, primarily for college, high school and select teams. She started in business, I think, maybe 1978 or '79 after being an art teacher for several years and that allowed her...she stayed home with her kids so she had her business in her home. My sister, Marilyn, has done many things and lived many places. She now lives in Colorado. She's a massage therapist and an artist as well, primarily with bead art but painting and she's phenomenal. My brother is brilliant. He received a full academic scholarship to Washington University. He's the most well-read person I know. He has this incredible memory and appreciation of writing and authors. I always know to go to him if I'm looking for a good book. He's an amazing carpenter and he does all this custom carpentry work. He's always worked on his own except for stints with opera theater and the rep and he is known in certain parts of St. Louis, if you need something that nobody else can figure out, go talk to Paul. He'll be able to figure it out. So he is mechanically brilliant and book brilliant. So then the sister after me, Martha, she was always a great dancer and she became a video editor at Channel 2. She was the shop steward for IBW Local 4 in Channel 2, the video crew. She did that for 20 years and then she started a family, took time out, worked a while in my business doing the video work and then decided she really wanted to become a yoga teacher so she did that and she's also kind of back to what she loved, teaching swimming and diving, coaching swim teams and diving, in this area. She lives in Bellerive

Acres. The next sister, number six in the line-up, Mary, is the art director for Channel 2 and Channel 11. She has just won her 14th Emmy. So she is phenomenal and she does Pointillism art for fun, like, Eshen's work. I don't know if you're familiar with it, where there aren't any lines. It's all done with dots...unbelievable. Monica is a musician. She's number seven, and a composer and a teacher. She's in St. Croix teaching music in Christiansted. She has produced a couple of CD's of her original work and when she's back often performs at...it's skipping my mind...in Grand Center, the theater, the community theater with the perfect acoustics that was originally the Ethical Society, begins with an "S" and it has two syllables.

William Fischetti: Sheldon?

Marie Casey: Sheldon, that's it. She will often perform there. And then my youngest sister, Michelle, who also worked in my business for a while; several family members have had stints in my business and have been great contributors. She has worked for a company called Medical West in their breast prosthesis center and I think of her really as a sculptor. She has helped women who have had mastectomies and I've had so many women tell me that she made them feel whole again with the fit and the products and all that she was able to bring and has done a lot of education of oncology, doctors and nurses to help shift some of the surgical practices that will make post-surgery better for women who have had breast cancer.

William Fischetti: I guess that little family meeting turned out okay.

Marie Casey: Well, what I think is funny: My brother has a very faint memory of that meeting. I told you he has a great memory. None of my other siblings remember anything about it. But I think I so loved learning that the thought of not being able to go to college because I didn't have money to go to college was about the worst idea anybody could ever pose to me. And so, it really inspired me, so much so that when my second oldest sister was here at UMSL, she had not saved enough. She spent most of the money that she earned as a librarian. So she came to me for a loan and I was able to loan her the money to pay for her tuition and she paid me back in time so I could pay mine.

William Fischetti: My siblings never paid me back.

Marie Casey: No?

William Fischetti: Okay, well, is there anything you'd like to say?

Marie Casey: You know, I think one other, maybe a business principle rooted in childhood is cooperative economics. One of the things that we figured out as a group early on is, as we celebrated Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day, our parents' birthdays and each other's birthdays, that our quarter a week allowance or whatever it was went a lot further if we pooled it and so we started figuring out how to chip in together for things that we wanted to give to one another and I think that just taught me something about how we can do a whole lot more together than any one of us can do apart and I see that here at this university, all the ways in which former students are helping make an education possible for current students and future students. I just think it's the way to go and it's kind of counter cultural with what goes on in the biggest corporations now, right, with this great dichotomy between the richest and the poorest and how much more dramatic it's gotten, and really it's pretty simple: we'd all be better off if we all shared a little more.

William Fischetti: Yeah. You don't need everything.

Marie Casey: No.

William Fischetti: I mean, I never minded paying taxes but apparently a lot of people do.

Marie Casey: Apparently they do.

William Fischetti: When I drive around on the roads nowadays, I'm like, come on, let's put a little money into...

Marie Casey: I know, let's chip in together and fix this road.

William Fischetti: Well, thank you very much.

Marie Casey: You're welcome.

William Fischetti: This was a great interview.

Marie Casey: Thank you.