

Gabe Logan interview with Monsignor Louis Meyer

November 11th

Gabe Logan (GL): Hello, first some history before we get to the CYC, in case I come across anything that you can clarify me on. Through eighteen hundreds and late eighteen nineties; did you play then, through the ninety twenties what do you remember hearing about the soccer leagues?

Monsignor Louis Meyer (MLM): Well the soccer leagues were at that time, to my knowledge, were basically ethnic groups and also sodality teams like St. Theresa's and St. Mathews, and those were the ones who basically made the leagues; they were not to my knowledge, well Ben Miller and Scullen Steel but they were a little bit later...., but to my knowledge the amateur thing was made up basically of the ethnic groups; the German club, the Spanish club, which was sort of down South Central, and then there were teams like Ben Miller's, Stix Baer and Fuller came later, but they came later. Let's see when I was in high school; no that would be nineteen twenty something, I used to go down to Sportsman's Park and that was when they first leagues.....

GL: Now, was the on Grand....

MLM: Yes, the baseball park

GL: The new Stadium?

MLM: No, no not the new stadium, it was on, Dowdier and Grand, St. Louis and Grand.

GL: That's further north?

MLM: Way north, It's was the old baseball park, and there was a soccer league in there. And then after that I presume that it got a little bit too expensive and they played up at Sicilar's North Side Port, which was on Grand and Crondellette It used to be a "south let parking" and in the wintertime played soccer. It

was basically a semi pro type of thing. Of course I mean there were guys we picked up a few bucks playing soccer and then they got into the United States football association and got into the amateur and then pro, professional soccer.

GL: Ever hear about a team called the Kensington's?

MLM: Oh sure, I heard about them, but, I read about them.

GL: They were all made of...

MLM: They didn't have a goal scorer?

GL: No. My next question is about the sodality league, St. Theresa's and St. Matthews

MLM: There were two, the won every year, almost won every year.

GL: They, now were they mostly CBC kids

MLM: No, I don't think they were mostly CBC. I think they were just a bunch of Catholic kids. I don't know how far back the colloquial league went, I mean that's the eighth grade, I don't know how far back that went, but I know that that colloquial league more or less pulled into the sodality. Now, I remember the St. Theresa's and St. Mathews those were what you call, a sort of the Irish Mafia. They were mostly Irish kids in that area. Once more it was sort of an ethnic thing. No necessarily as strongly ethnic as the German club or the Spanish club, but the sodality, that league in that area was made up of Irish kids, which was sort of ethnic. That's how it where brought over it was not an emergence. And one of the reasons I feel for the growth of soccer was because soccer was the main sport in our seminaries. And, when, we always joke, and we say when a priest was ordained he walked out with a bible and a pair of soccer shoes. And so when he got into the parish, he naturally had baseball and in the wintertime he had going on soccer. I think that's one of the reasons soccer is so...in the city of St. Louis, it's because of the parish. Very few parishes didn't have soccer teams.

GL: How come the CYC and the CYO...

MLM: That's the same

GL: Yeah, that's what I thought. But, were they, there were like four other sports besides soccer

MLM: Oh gosh yes

GL: Baseball, volleyball, basketball. Did the CYO Chicago, why didn't soccer take off there?

MLM: I have no idea. We often wonder because there is a lot of, in the Catholic concept, because there were a lot of ethnic groups up in Chicago; the Polish and the Czech-Slovakians. Just like New York too, soccer, mostly in New York. That's the reason we always gave the, considered St. Louis as the amateur soccer capital of the United States. We never had professionals, but most of the kids in soccer were American born, they were not ethnic groups at all. That's what we thought was very fortunate in once sense that we were sort of the grassroots of developing American soccer which now finally has come reasonably into its own with the professional league that they have going right now. [Which in a strong sense is drawing crowds]

GL: Yeah, we just got our team in Chicago.

MLM: Oh yeah did you

GL: Yeah.

MLM: Oh yeah that's right

GL: It came out of the anniversary of the great fire

MLM: Yeah I know. Well Chicago has some strong ethnic teams though. You know, I can't be specific but I know.....

GL: CYC teams?

MLM: Of you have to remember that the coast, California out there, was semi ethnic, mostly Spanish. And so when some of ouror CYC teams would win their section they would go out and maybe play teams that are Mexican, Mexican or Spanish. Then we would go to Chicago and play teams, where guys would come back and we would know what the hell they were talking about, and they would be

hollering in Czech or Spanish or hollering in German and Polish. Yeah, there was a strong Polish area here, but they were mostly baseball players.

GL: Um, this is another sticking point I have. In the thirties the American soccer league, the pro league collapsed, it faltered. And St. Louis continued the pro league and there was a guy in the pro league named John Marre. M-A-R-R-E

MLM: Oh Johnny Marrie?

GL: John Marrie.

MLM: He ran the cabinet.

GL: He's credited with keep soccer alive

MLM: That's right. Johnny Marrie. That's right.

GL: What do you know, I don't, I don't know a thing...

MLM: I don't know a thing about him because I was a kid.

GL: Mmm hmm.

MLM: But to my knowledge he's the one that they picked, is there another name in there? [Johnny]

Madwire?

GL: D-Y-E-R

MLM: Yes

GL: I want to say Fred maybe

MLM: No. See I used to go out with a priest by the name of Johnny, a priest by the name who would take me out to Sportsman's Park and I used to run coffee from their press box, down to their coffee room and bring coffee back to the guys. Bring coffee back to the guys. Then Dent McSkimming was really the top notch here, you know that.

GL: Yeah, the sportswriter.

MLM: Yeah. Yeah, and they used to get the money, the gate money to McMan, who was an assistant priest; he was a soccer nut, and they gave it to him because they never trusted anybody to take the money. So they had Mcman take the money home. Because, there wasn't that much money, but I remember that Coca Cola played there, Stix Baer Fuller played there, [Ontego] played there, Jimmy Roe; he's still alive, he might give you some....

GL: I'll want to meet with him then.

MLM: Yeah, Jimmy Roe is still alive, Stix Baer Fuller, Coca Cola, I can't think of some of the other ones.

GL: Jimmy Roe and...

MLM: He's in, he just went into the Hall of Fame

GL: Yeah, Eddie Walsh, Ed Walsh?

MLM: Yeah

GL: [Joe Sturbain ?]

MLM: Yeah

GL: I'm meeting with them Monday

MLM: Yeah, they'll give you a lot I guarantee you. See, they were men, I was a kid.

GL: Okay. So your, does Johnny Marrie

MLM: Johnny Marrie, if I remember he ran a tavern and he really kept it professional, I can certify that.

GL: The tavern, was it an ethnic tavern?

MLM: To my knowledge. See, now I was a kid then and I just think that Johnny Marrie's tavern is where they hung out. Like later on, Joe Numie's tavern was the place where the guys came in. In fact that's where [Charlie Blue] wrote his stories he never went to any damn soccer games. He would sit in the salon or Joe Numie's down the street here. Joe Numie could tell you a few things too. And the guys would come in from [Grand and left] and guys would come in from the fair grounds and be dancing.

GL: Oh that's classic.

MLM: I mean nobody really knows that except guys like myself. And I'm sure, because I tell you why, it's because we were so mad that we went to the CYC and that we didn't get any space. One of the reasons is, our crowds never, you know I mean, the men who coached our soccer teams just didn't go after the game, or the players didn't go after the game to drink beer. Well, he wasn't supposed to be open, but you know how that is; he was not open officially. I mean customers wouldn't come in, but I mean the soccer crowd would. And to my knowledge [Charlie Blue] wrote his column sitting at the bar with a typewriter on. I'm being a little factious but I sure maybe you get the picture. At a table or something and they come in, "Oh, who scored a goal?" "Oh yeah?"

MLM: Well that was a good way to do it, because he could be at the Sherman Park he could be at the fairgrounds, he couldn't be down at Crondellette and he couldn't be down at Cherokee you know.

GL: Personally, did you, what was your soccer playing?

MLM: Oh, I played soccer at the colloquial level. Then I played soccer in the seminary which was a high school team, and then I played of course on a college team. Then when I was ordain I played with the, CYC with St. Paul's, and then after two years I just quit because Sundays became a real problem. And I was keeping someone else from playing in the sense that I'd have a twelve o'clock mass, and the game was at one o'clock and I would play the second half and keep some other kid from playing. Now I played soccer all the way through, and of course when we were in college we used to play pick -up games, we were never in the league. Every Friday night, almost every Friday night [Stick Burn Floor] would come out and practice against us, out at the seminary.

GL: When you say the seminary.

MLM: That's where I was at Cardinal Glen.

GL: That's no longer

MLM: That' still there

GL: Is it? Okay.

MLM: And we had a very fine soccer team

GL: Cardinal Newman is the one I'm thinking of that shut down.

[.....]

MLM: Yes, we had a very find team. And we got to know Watson, Gonzales, [Brogue]

GL: Billy Gonzales?

MLM: Yeah. Piano legs Billy Gonzales, and father John Hickey who death we celebrated the other day.

Gonzales hit a shot at John. John was a tall man. He was about six nine; tall, lean, and a very good goalie.

And Gonzales took a shot, and John tried to stop it, and it went through his hands.

[.....]

At least in my case, Watson was a tremendous center half for Stix Baer and Fuller. When I was ordained Watson and I coached together. Watson would coach my team; my grammar school team, and he would come once or twice a week and coach the kids. See, I really don't believe that the church gets enough credit for soccer. For instance I was can give you an example. Of course I was pretty close to most of the city. When I was sent to presentation, which is St. John's outside of the city. I got permission from [Writner] high schools superintendent [Mr. Hayward] to start a soccer field; the soccer field [at the home] high school and a soccer field at [Whitner] high school too. And how I got that, in fact the other day I was telling a guy. You know I was a young priest, and I didn't have much money, but I knew the guys down at city hall. So I said would you believe that the city truck got lost and they made a turn and ended up at the high school? And, would you believe that Pete Long got an order to mark a soccer field and by God, he got the wrong address and marked Whitner field. You know, they weren't supposed to do that, but they did it. So Pete Long used to make my soccer fields on Friday night. See, and I mean, father John Hickey he had Hickey field down at the Pine Lawn. They built that field, and everything else, and it was run by father John Hickey himself. See I said a lot of the guys who came out were on soccer teams and they had soccer in their Parish. God, the number of soccer team that we had. See, when each

Parish has two to three teams, and I believe they still had instructional leagues, they divide the teams in half and have lots of little fields. And know you have really remember that soccer really come full circle for girls.

GL: Yeah I wanted to ask you about that also

MLM: I don't know if I am helping you

GL: Oh, yes you are. With the roots of the CYC and Father Maxwell, according to Mr. Robinson's book, this came out of the war; WWI, and it was kind of a continual development.

MLM: It began around 1944, well a little before 1944.

GL: The CYC?

MLM: Yeah.

GL: What was its purpose?

MLM: The purpose of it was to set up a network made up of social, cultural, religious, and athletic.

Those were the four things; social, cultural, religious, and athletic. And then there was the youth council and each parish that was associated would send two representatives and we would have conventions.

Somebody would be the president of the youth council and the secretary of the youth council etc. And

then we had adult sponsors and we had training courses for them to help them with the social, cultural, religious and athletic. Now, the ones that really boomed were the athletic and the social. We used to

have the crowning of the CYC queen, every, now I can't remember exact dates. They had the crowning

at the Kiel Auditorium, we crowned the CYC queen on the boats; the big CYC boat rides where we would have twenty six hundred kids get on the boat. And we would have all the flair and {imitates fanfare} you

know. So those two, and the cultural; we had one act play and we would put on shows down at the Kiel

Auditorium and the American Theater we would put on Finnegan's Rainbow, Annie Get Your Gun, Forty

Second Street, those were all big time productions on the big stage, and that was important. And of

course, the office never did anything with the religious, because we believed that the belonged in the

parish. To each priest, that was his job, to really develop the spiritual life. However, we did have big a mass at one of our conventions. We had a convention here in St. Louis where we filled both sides of the Kiel Auditorium, and we had about three hundred children in the choir. Truman came to the mass. He talked at the mass, at the convention.

GL: [Oh from the Harriet St. Church?]

MLM: Yeah, from that church. I might have a book upstairs for you; I have a picture of myself with him. Bishop Truman. But, that was the main thing. There was a wonderful...How I got involved with the CYC is a, I was at our lady presentation parish and I was a young priest. At that time they only had about sixteen basketball teams. I went down there one day to see Father Maxwell and I said, "This whole thing is a mess," I said, "I could run this whole thing with both my hand in pockets and on crutches." Well, two weeks later I got assigned to the CYC. {laughs} Well, I leaned towards it. I was the athletic director in the seminary and I knew how to schedule, I knew how to schedule umpires and referees. I mean when I see a mess, and I was wrong in this sense, because of the fact that he had no staff. He ran it out of the boys club at nine fifteen Lafayette, that's where the CYC started nine fifteen Lafayette, which is now a bridge over highway fifty five. No, I think it's gone. It was a boys club, and he was head of the boys club. And behind him, I remember this, I see this so often. No one stoops so low, no wait, no one stands so tall, as one who stoops to help a child. And that was a plaque behind him in big letters. No one stands so tall as one who stoops to help a boy. Of course that's because it was a boys club, but you could say boy or girl. And father Maxwell, he was made a pastor ofhe had a parish that never needed much attention, the [annunciation] was down to six grade, or somewhere down there I don't remember exactly. So when he was given a big parish he could handle it. So Lloyd Sullivan was appointed the CYC director, and then he picked me as his second.

GL: Was father Maxwell a soccer player?

MLM: No, father Maxwell was more administrative. He knew the soccer ball was round, and the baseball was round. But he was more; he came to the things he was invited to. He didn't lean towards those things but he knew about them. He knew me, and that I ran basketball. He ran the boys club, which was a big job, and he ran a summer camp; the boys club had a summer camp out at high ridge. So, I mean for him to try and run, such a thing as huge, and of course, you have to realize when you have two hundred and some odd so parishes, that's a huge thing to keep channeling in all this, and boy you need a big staff. That's where you have Monsignor Sullivan and Rosalie Cully who was his secretary, and then became Monsignor Sullivan's, and ultimately become mine. I think we did a reasonable job. We were nationally known for what we did. Because most deices, like Chicago, their program was mostly basketball and boxing. We sent a boxing team up there and we got clobbered, because they were mostly foreigners, and we had a huge boxing tournament down there. We fought with the Silver Gloves at Wells stadium, I don't know if you remember, but at that time it was a racetrack, where the [Gilligan] football team is now. No, not the football team, [Gilligan's athletic field] the SLU.

GL: So that's what that was?

MLM: Do you know where the merchant exchange was? That's part of Well's stadium too. We did a lot of boxing out there, but they have all that in the archives.

GL: That brought back a memory. I just put one and one together there. See I am originally from Oklahoma and I was the only kid in the state that played soccer. Because the order was Kapachin order where I went to grade and they were from Poland. They were the group that played soccer. It's just kind of clicking in here, I never considered that. So, you already said that other than soccer you had basketball, boxing, volleyball...

MLM: Baseball, softball

GL: But, soccer was the outdoor winter sport?

MLM: Yes that's right, but volleyball was the girl's winter sport. And we got into trouble with the referees, with the women's referees association basketball because of the fact that we didn't use girl's rules and they were furious. A girl by the name of Jill or Chris I can't think of it.....

GL: Three on three?

MLM: Yeah. Only certain ones could shoot. I don't know if you know the girl; I don't remember the girl's rules very well...

GL: Yeah, three could shoot and three defend.

MLM: Yeah, that right

GL: They couldn't cross half court.

MLM: Yeah, whatever it was, yeah. So, we played boys rules. That one reason why I believe that our girls high school teams win all these tournament; because they all played in the CYC playing boys rules. I feel very strongly about that.

GL: Well, it makes sense, it makes perfect sense.

MLM: Yeah, because most of the public school never had public soccer. Some still don't, and some do, I guess it just depends upon where they are. It's the same thing with girl's basketball. But the winter was when the girl's basketball finally came up. Girl's basketball was more than girl's volleyball, and that was really the girl's basic indoor sport. The indoor sport was basketball.

GL: What was the CYC itself made of? Now I've heard; I'm not working on the gender or race issue or anything like that. Singelists, especially the Catholic Church I've always thought had such a big part in integrating before civil rights came around. Was soccer...

MLM: Baseball started it all. Father Monsignor Malloy took his visitation team over to a family park and he had black kids on it.

GL: That was up north?

MLM: Yes north, and they refused; the umpires refused

GL: When was this, about the forties, fifties?

MLM: Oh, around the fifties I guess. I bet Burnsville could tell, they have the statistics down there. I don't know. And so, the Arch Bishop got totally upset about that and he told us. That's when we really started the CYC as it is today. CYC at the beginning, we would gather all our baseball teams, and send them down to the parks department, and the park department did all the work; set up the leagues gave umpires etc. So Monsignor Sullivan and I got called in one day after that [bru-ha] and said, "We're stating our own." So we had a big meeting down at the Knights Columbus building down on Grand and [Auto] and at the Banol building, B-A-N-O-L building, that's where we started. Then I got a meeting with all the priests together and then the next thing, the real problem was getting fields, because only the municipal leagues had them. So somewhere along the line someone made a decision that we would go according to when these things started. Well the municipal leagues thought that they had [been first]. Well they forgot that the sodality league started by Monsignor Tullie started around about 1903 or so, long before any of those other leagues started. So, there used to be some really hot arguments at the meetings, about the division of fields and basketball courts. And so, we have proof that the Bob Whites, which was run by Peter Tullie which was a sodality league existed way before the others. So we, very fortunately we able to get first pick on all the fields and that made a lot of people very upset and very angry because they thought they had us in a corner. I mean, not badly, but I mean they felt, "Hell, we are entitled to these fields," fairgrounds one, fairgrounds four, Crondellette and Sherman Park. When it came out; we have newspaper clipping of all this stuff, we walked right in and had first choice. But, we were very prudent, we never for the CYC, we never took Diamonds 1 and the fairgrounds. That was always the premier, Diamonds. They had soccer on Diamond 2, and 3, but we never took that because that was the premier. I think they knew that we weren't shooting them. It was just the fact that we didn't pick that as our first choice. We took Diamond 4, I guess. Yeah, I played on Diamond 4; we took Diamond 4 and 5 and 6. But, they weren't very happy about that. Not the parks department, or Parks

and Recreation or Recreation and Parks, or whatever they call that. But, that's the way it came out and the way the CYC got started. Not only that, but we were the first one to integrate the boat. The [Strictless].....

GL: The what?

MLM: The [Strickless] Steamers. We had our big boat rides. They never heard of a kid, a black kid going on a boat ride, a black person on a boat. But, we had black parishes up north. And Monsignor Grannich and Father Malloy they would send us a busload of black kids. I remember, to use a name, Pat Carroll they were very upset. We never said they were coming or they weren't coming. But I knew when that bus with black kids came they weren't very happy. They wouldn't dare say anything, because that would be really.....because knowing Ritter, Arch Bishop Ritter's stand.

GL: What was his stand?

MLM: Well, he wanted Catholic schools to be integrated. And St. Edwards refused a black kid and he sent them a note saying, "If you don't accept these black children into your school, St. Edwards School, I will close the school and the church." And of course there wasn't anything those people could do. I mean if they wanted to they could say hell no. But you see that's church property and he would have closed the school and boarded up the church and the school and taken the priest and then most of us would have to go to a public school.

GL: That's.....

MLM: See he was dynamic. Phillip Hickey who was the superintendent of public schools here says that it was Carl Ritter who saved us from any major race riots. We never had any major race riots. We did have one at the fairgrounds park, which was an incident in the swimming pool. But, we never had any burnings, or fighting's or slashing of windows. And Phillip Hickey, who was the superintendent of all the public schools firmly believed that Arch Bishop Ritter, or Carl Ritter at that time, was the one who really saved the city from any horrible racial problems. Not that they still don't exist.

GL: Right.

MLM: But, he said this is what it is going to be and the Catholic people of course followed him. Not willingly in many cases, because that was a tough thing.

GL: Oh yeah, I'm just thinking wow, that's a whole dissertation there in that alone.

MLM: Yeah.

GL: Now, when the CYC got started would you just limit yourselves to CYC play, or would you play in the municipal league? As well as soccer...

MLM: No we just played on our own. The teams got into what they called Junior Cup, which was national and Senior Cup, which was national; and we got in. And then what we did to get some prestige to our teams; we brought in teams from Europe and played at the public school stadium. We had a great game where the CYC all stars tied Liverpool.

GL: The 66 game?

MLM: Yeah. We brought all these foreign teams in and it was a way of keeping some of the really good soccer players on CYC soccer teams. Because Cootis and them never brought anybody in, whoever it was, they never brought anyone in. [We lost our shirt] and we brought Pele in and we brought in the Santos team the CYC played at Bush Stadium. We had twenty thousand people there.

GL: Santos?

MLM: Santos, yeah. That's right Pele was a good friend of mine, still is. But, anyways the CYC was the one who brought Pele in from South America. Pepsi Cola people wanted him to come over here to promote soccer and they needed, the state department needed some reason to get him here. So we went around to all the Catholic schools, and all the kids signed a petition to bring Pele here. He came and he had a clinic over here at Magnum field and he had a clinic down at Fluorescent at the big field there and the fence broke down because people were so excited. We had motorcycle escorts and everything. He stayed at the Rectory over here down at St. Marionettes. And of course we went over to

Germany, because the CYC goes every year to the World Cup. No, not every year, every four years. One time Joe Carenz and I went to the World Cup, and we never had enough tickets, so went in on the Brazil team bus {laughs} in Munich.

GL: Let's see, that would have been in the seventies. That was, yeah I wanted to know about the clinics and form teams.

MLM: Yeah we had clinics all over, we used Pele's videos, I mean VCRs.

GL: So when for example when Liverpool came, or the German All Stars, or [Calasco said]; would those players do clinics for the kids?

MLM: No, they were sort of in and out. Their bar bill was very expensive

GL: Who would help out with that? Would the Bush's...

MLM: At that time no, we did that all ourselves. Then later on we got Bush and Pepsi to sponsor the junior league. Then they, towards the end, we did district league to give the good kids a chance to play the other good kids. We tried our best, we never really got it going, but we tried to start a system in the senior league, like they have in England. You know first division, second division and the winner of this division would move up to this one and the last one here, you know.

GL: Sure.

MLM: I don't remember, but I think that wasn't too successful at the time, because the teams in the second division were not really good enough. So the team that would move up was not better than the team that moved down. In my recollection

GL: Do you know Mr. Ted Konsavich, Konsavich or Franz Sprain?

MLM: Those names that...see I have been out of this for a long time.

GL: See when I was playing in St. Louis they ran the Budweiser...

MLM: I knew of them...

GL: Danny Long?

MLM: Oh he is still a very good friend of mine.

GL: Is Mr. Long still living?

MLM: Oh yes.

GL: I grew up playing soccer in Oklahoma and you would hear of Budweiser support.

MLM: Oh yes, they were very good to us, for years. Now why they dropped I don't know. I think a lot of this stuff is built on personal...I think when Denny got out of there it was pretty hard to handle. I'm sure you know.

GL: Yeah, that pretty much what I've always thought.

MLM: Yeah sure, but you can't say that. We lost, I say we because when I was with the CYC we still had Denny. See Denny was a good friend; still is. When I got out Father Welch and them never had the same relationship with the brewery as I did.

GL: Mr. Corey, Mr. George Corey...

MLM: Yeah, George

GL: Now in 1950 I have that he also managed the baseball program with the soccer program. Now did the CYC and the Corey League, did the teams compete? Did they have a very amiable relationship as far as working together?

MLM: Yes, we had a very good relationship. We got along really well. George Corey and I were very good friends. Monsignor Sullivan and Corey were good friends too. When George died his son did well with it, but the Corey League is not longer in existence. It was spotty. He had dreams of the big stadium, and I don't know what happened. He wanted to have a Corey Stadium and a Corey Park, but I don't know what happened to that. When George died my relationship with his son was very meager. We only have one conflict and it was that George didn't care and we did. We didn't want the CYC kids playing the CYC and the Corey league. We felt, and I think we ultimately got the rule in. See the CYC was basically for everybody, kids that were good, bad etc. See we lost the sponsorship of Pepsi, no Coca Cola. The first

year we had a Coca Cola team and the Coca Cola team never got the proper press in terms of winning. So Coca Cola wanted us to set up a premier team. And we said that's not what the CYC is for. The CYC is for kids in the parish to play together. So, Pepsi Cola came to me, [Bud Klein] came to me and said, "We would like to sponsor you," and I said "No". They knew that I was very loyal to Budweiser. Another brewery wanted to sponsor us and I said, "No, no way," because, I sold a lot of beer for Budweiser. Not as a beer drunkard, but see I would go to church picnics and say, "This Budweiser is pumping in big dough, you ought to have a Budweiser beer." Well, anyway it worked out that way. Well, when Coke brought the Pepsi into it, so got a reasonable amount of money from Pepsi.

Then as time went on we felt that we should set up the district leagues so the good kids could play against the good kids. But, we lost Coca Cola because they wanted a Coca Cola team to play against Cootis and whatever other teams there were.

GL: Did the CYC allow, for example if you had a Lutheran kid in the area, and he wanted to play in the CYC?

MLM: Basically, no. See we basically felt that if it's a Catholic team, then we should bump a Catholic kid out because....not that we were mad at anyone...

GL: Right

MLM: We just didn't feel that...

GL: because it was Catholic oriented...

MLM: However, the kid had to be in a school, at a Catholic school. However we also counted the religion classes. This was where a kid from a public school was to the Catholic school for religion class. And that kid could play on the team because he was...

GL: Okay

MLM: That was basically how it was

GL: And then when Mr. Corey began the Corey soccer...

MLM: Well we were happy about Corey

GL: Sure. So then you had two city teams, so every kid in St. Louis...

MLM: Yeah, that was the whole point we were delighted because that saved all of us the problem.

GL: How did the CYC.....actually what was George Corey like?

MLM: What?

GL: Can you shed a little light on what Mr. Corey was like as a...

MLM: I think George was a big heated guy; George loved and kids and he saw that there was a need in the city for kids who were not part of the Catholic Church's program. Like I said we did not deliberately make it that way, it just happened to be a Catholic program. Just like the Lutheran league or the YMCA, but that was mostly the industrial league that was run by the city. I don't think they had soccer, the industrial; they had mostly baseball and basketball. I think that George Corey filled a need for the younger kids. There was nothing for the: now I don't want to use the word Protestant, I don't want to use the word kids who weren't going to church, I don't want to use that. But George saw a need for kids who were outside the realm of the, well I don't want say Catholic Church because if you get that on print people think you're, you know.....

GL: Yeah, I know

MLM: They think you are being non-ecumenical or anti-whatever...but we set up a program for a church that was Lutheran, I don't know what the rules are now, maybe they allow Catholic kids in now. I don't know what that is now. But, see there are schools up north that have more non Catholic kids than Catholic kids. Because blacks could go to school there, because the black people didn't want to send their kids to the public schools and they were willing to pay the tuition. One school up there I think they are 60% black...So there were kids from St. Thomas school who played on St. Thomas's soccer team.

GL: The city of St. Louis has such a tradition with Catholicism. When you were running the CYC, in the forties and fifties, just a ballpark figure, what percentage of the kids do you think were Catholic?

MLM: The only thing I would say, well some people would say 60%, but I think at one time we were around 50 plus %.

GL: So half the kids in the city had access to soccer if they wanted?

MLM: Oh I would say so.

GL: And if they really wanted to play there were other leagues?

MLM: Oh sure, if they really wanted to play there was the George Corey league etc. George had nothing about religion or anything. But George, Monsignor Sullivan and I both agree that he filled a great need. I think he built up the concept that we were the soccer capital; the amateur soccer capital. See it is pretty hard for people right now to believe that. We had lost... See one of the sad things that happened, was when the CYC kids moved into the high school. [De Schmitt] and all them they had good kids. I mean they were reasonably coached, they knew the ball was round etc, and they knew some of the terms; sweeper, striker etc. So we were the first ones, before the state held any high school tournament, we did, and we had the approval of the state association to run and high school tournament. It was run over here at Magnum Field, which is a very fine soccer field, one of the best in the city. At that tournament, particularly at the finals, semi finals, quarter finals there were many more college soccer coaches there. I said this many times; that we, in the sense, we could get any kind into the service; navy, air force, whatever it is, who could play soccer. And they, the air force and them would sometimes get the kid who not the greatest, because at that time; at the beginning, as you know MSU won the national title every year, well, all the sudden they were looking at colleges and we had kids going to up to Michigan State, many of our kids were going to Indiana, we had kids going over to San Francisco, down to Miami etc. And that's what happened to the team; they would milk all of our good St. Louis players and SLU, which at that time only had a club team; later on it become a full blown team, SLU never had any scholarships for these kids while these other colleges had room and board and all that. So we lost a lot

of people. As time went on Marty Clark just lost his [Finnast Larry Kids], because kids don't want to go to a program where they don't have the opportunity to go to nationals. Now they are back in it now...

GL: Yeah, they have that boy from Creighton. How is he doing?

MLM: I don't know

GL: When the 1950 World Cup came around, were any of those boys, I know [Keyhill] wasn't involved with the CYC, but were Wallis or [Colombo]...?

MLM: No, no. See I have a saying; you have to put something back in the kitty. I'm noted for that. You have to put something back in the kitty unless it gets empty. And, really [Keel] is the only one, and [Borgie], they are really the only two at that level. The other guys have just faded out of the picture. I don't even know if they are still living. I know Colombo is, but see Colombo never...See at that time most of the guys who played soccer on Sundays like [Ambrose] and that whole area there, they were mostly boozers. I don't mean bad boozers, but they were the tavern crowd. That's one of the reasons why St. Louis has never been able to get up, because we have always been beer drinkers not champagne drinkers. So nobody was going to pay fifteen dollars to see a soccer game. They'll go if they could get in, but they're not going to pay fifteen dollars a ticket. That's where we really lost. Like the Stars, and [Bocsh] we still have a gem out here....

GL: Yeah, it's beautiful. They're not using it unfortunately, but I think it could be a...

MLM: Well, yeah, but see St. Louis is not attuned to pay a high price for soccer. Even with the indoor soccer; which I go to those games, I have season tickets, but it is just brutal. However, I think from what I have seen of the indoor, they can handle a soccer ball better than anyone in my time of the present time. I mean they are clever. They have the mechanics and they got the moves. But, they couldn't have the same moves out on the turf.

GL: Do they still have a full St. Louis team and is Doran still running.....?

MLM: Oh yeah, yeah. Pretty much they sneak in one or two, but as a whole they are pretty much all St. Louis University or St. Louis kids. They; Doran has, but most of the other guys like John [Keel] who isn't playing anymore, and some of the others don't have, whatever you call, I guess the word I want to use is skills. But they won. They were always at the top. One year they lost by one goal in the national championship. I think they played equal with them, but if they would have had just a little more finesse, the players. I mean don't get me wrong, they were good, [Ebert] and them; I mean they could get a ball by me 'wham.' And Joe, what the heck, I can't think of his last name right now...

GL: Clark? Joey Clark?

MLM: Oh no. This is a player on the Ambush. Oh what the heck. But when he had the ball you could barely see it. He was left footed. I can't think of Joe's last name. But anyways, I can't seem to think of any of the guy's names right now. But, I think that indoor soccer is; I mean thank God we got it. We don't have a professional team. Thank God we have an indoor soccer, which I think is more like indoor hockey. I mean they are banging each other again the wall, it's crazy.

GL: It's pretty brutal.

MLM: It is.

GL: You mentioned Robert; Bob, Guelker? Now he succeeded you?

MLM: No, no, he was the sport director, he ran the sports. I was up here and Bob was here. He did mostly sports and I more or less did the cultural, social, and religious.

GL: He went on to SLU's...across the river...

MLM: The one reason was, he started coaching the seminary out there, and he did that for nothing. He also coached at St. Louis University and he did that for nothing, maybe six or seven hundred dollars. He worked for us, which is a low paying job. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't good. And we had such a meager pension plan and all that. So Bob came to me and said, "I have a chance for some really big bucks." And I said, "Bob there is only one way to go." The pension plan, the health plan; see we had all that but

nothing compared to what the state school could give him. So Bob left and we picked up Joe [Parensa] who is coming up and going into Washington University Hall of Fame sometime this month, I forget which month and what day. Maybe it's this Saturday, or next Saturday.

GL: Did Guelker play soccer before he...?

MLM: I don't think Guelker; well he may have played on some team for fun.

GL: Was he a native of St. Louis?

MLM: Yes, St. Vincent's parish downtown.

GL: Okay

MLM: They lived on [Rector] Street. Bob Guelker was never a soccer player, but did you know he wrote a book?

GL: He just loved the game that much?

MLM: Yes. See he was a clever, I want to say mathematician but that's not it, there is a word I can't think of it, but he knew the game. You don't have to play the game to know it. He knew the systems and the W's and all those things.

GL: And the [Parensa] came along?

MLM: Yeah, Joe came along and took his place and the CYC office. And Joe himself was a very fine soccer player. He played with Cootis; I think he was a goalie with Cootis on a couple championship teams.

GL: There were a number of brothers there, [Parensa] brothers?

MLM: Oh yeah, and the [Parensa] brothers, Bob and Joe, were good friends. The [Parensa] brothers got their college education over at SLU. They were good. They attributed that to their father and to [Bob Broker] to be able to get their degrees from SLU. And with that, Dent McSkimming who was a great soccer reporter for the Post, I went to him once and said, "I would like to look for something for, that's prestigious." And we had lunch one day and he said, "Why don't you think of gold, silver and a bronze boot." So every year the CYC has a big dinner for kids that are prestigious and it's considered one of

the... everyone in soccer really wants to get the gold boot or the silver boot. And there is an age limit too; you have to be so many years to get the gold and so many years to get the silver. And this year at the big banquet Bob [Braet] is giving it for his contribution in soccer. Then we had a bronze hoop. I remember one day Bob and I were saying, "What can we do with the bronze boot?" So Bob was over at SLU and Joe [Parsena] said, "Why don't we set up the bronze boot between Southern Illinois and St. Louis University?" And that's how the bronze boot started and it was played every year at this stadium. And each year the crowd got bigger and bigger. While Jim Botkin who was the place kicker and later became the athletic director of SLU, he insisted that this be played on college.

GL: Why?

MLM: Well, that's what he did, and it ruined it. First of all if you are looking for Guelker field, they named it after Bob. If you are looking for Guelker field over there...Owen who goes to school there...then you'll get lost trying to find it. So when they dedicated it; that was the coldest night you ever saw. It must have been about 5, no I better not say; I don't know how many people were there. So somewhere along the line it was stopped, the competition of the bronze boot. Well now I think this year they started it off again and we were thrilled about it. And once again I told, Mike [Kayos] to make sure that St. Louis University know that the CYC is the one who started the bronze boot and that we had a great loss because it cost us nine thousand dollars just to put the key in Bush Stadium. And the crowd got bigger and bigger and bigger and we thought, oh my God we are actually going to make some money all of a sudden, and then Botkin moved it.

GL: It's always like there's some...

MLM: Well he didn't know soccer, he was a football guy. Just like Jim Hart, they claim that he is a horrible athletic director down at [Carbondale].

GL: Well now the boy, I marked him a couple of times, a huge striker, his name starts with an M; Moyer, Meyer, he's at SLU now, one of the athletic directors?

MLM: He's a director?

GL: He's an assistant. Steve Meyer?

MLM: I don't know.

GL: Okay.

MLM: See, I have basically; I am one of those guys where I get finished with something and I don't...

GL: You put it away...

MLM: See, because when you retire you pick up entirely new interests and you can't keep up all your old interests. For instance there are a lot of banquets and that I just go out of going. The [MAC] is throwing a big one for sports personal, and man I hate going to those things. To me these are all boring, and I've done it and I can't.....

GL: Okay.

MLM: Well you know you sit through all this crap. And then you get a guy up there and he's had about ten scotches and he talks and he talks and he talks. And then another guy goes up and he talks and he talks. Well the amateur soccer; oh god they had their banquet, they had about close to 12 or 15 hundred at their banquet, recently. And they had a guy up there; they had two guys up there Robben, R-O-B-B-E-N, he got up there, and he explained his whole life; well, nobody wants to hear about his whole life. And there was another guy, and he spoke for about twenty minutes, and another guy talked for about thirty minutes and everybody was saying come on let's go home, we don't want to hear this. But, you know the last thing is a prestigious thing so no one wants the leave before, you know, they guy who is really being honored. You don't want to leave. All they want to do is see the three minutes with him. See I got the Bob Burnes award from the soccer, the amateur soccer, and I went up there and took three minutes, and then they all {claps}.

GL: You were speedy.

MLM: Yeah I was, and I wished everybody else would be. Well, I know because I sat through all this crap. When they ask me to do an invocation, I always insisted that I do the invocation at the beginning not the end, so I can duck out. {laughs} Also I don't want to sit at a [dies] I want to sit at a table, and make sure the table is by the door, near the door.

GL: My next question has to do with the ethnic community and the ethnic teams. There is a couple of ways I want to look at this and one is; for example you mentioned the German club and Ambrose on the hill....

MLM: The Spanish...

GL: The Crondellete team...Now would they exchange players? Now, while actually the German clubs; a lot of these guys were native born St. Louis's and so were their parents.

MLM: It's like the Sundays morning athletic club, I think they just became members. However, I think the Spanish club was pretty much Spanish, because it was down by St. Mary and Jo down by the river on Holly and Michigan or Minnesota, or wherever that is called, and they had a clubhouse. Now I think the German sports club started out pretty much [Acht ya], you know [Acht to]. But I think [Hensy] was one of the famous center forwards, but that is the only one I can remember. The name pops up, wonderful center forward; bald head, a guy about six foot ten, he could bang that ball like mad. However the greatest header was Doggie Schuler who played on [Shoe Markers] down on Chrondelette Courtyard. But, Doggie's dead. [Shoemakers] championships team was made up of a good crowd; the Conner's, Murphy, Franklin, and Schuler.

GL: They were in the...

MLM: Yeah, the [Shoemakers] won a couple of the championships and they would pick up the crowd...the [Shoe Markers] would pick them up in their limousines and take them down to the...{laughs}...oh they were good players, no doubt about that.

GL: So the club; was there the exchange of players?

MLM: I think they were pretty set. It was pretty hot competition. I don't think a Spanish guy would have played on the German team, well maybe he would have. See that goes back a little bit to the; see, I never paid much attention to their line ups and that was because I had enough problems. See, I was for a while; I was writing a sports column for the Review and I think that's one of the reasons I got the Bob Burnes award, because I wrote a sports column in the Review. So, my problem was trying to get all the names and gathering all the stuff and I was running around like crazy. In fact Bob [Braet] called me a frustrated sports writer, which probably I am. You know, I had that background and after I while when I got into a parish it was just too much for me. I had to take care of the parish.

GL: With the, I've read your article. Do you ever remember soccer games preceding or following a baseball game?

MLM: Oh no. See the soccer field ran from right field to, it ran from right field center field, to left field. It skirted just a little bit of the infield. Basically the bleachers were the better seats. It really ran along, at Sportsman's Park, along the bleachers. I don't know if you know that configuration.

GL: I've seen pictures, pictures with huge crowds.

MLM: Oh yeah. When the city had its championship at the fairgrounds they had huge crowds down there; huge crowds at the fairgrounds park. They had portable stands around the square and they had chicken wire all around so no one could sneak in. Of course they had kids sneak in and they had policeman to keep people from sneaking in. But, you know the policeman would look the other way when those kids would sneak in, because they could care less. Once in a while they would come and whack you in the butt a little bit.

GL: All right well that pretty much does it then.

MLM: I don't know if I was able to give you any specifics.

GL: Let me tell you. What I looking at it, is why St. Louis embraced soccer and the rest of the nation regulated out to the ethnic clubs. I think that the CYC the biggest.....

MLM: Oh I would defend that to the nth degree, because that was started, as I told you. In my day, before and after my day, when I priest was ordained, as I told you, he would come out with a bible and a pair of soccer shoes.

GL: Was that just in the St. Louis seminary?

MLM: Basically. We had, for instance we had a class reunion from 53 years of priests, and this class reunion was in Omaha. Well guys were there from Oklahoma, Kansas City, Omaha or course, Green Bay, Madison, Rock Island, Chicago, Memphis, and of course St. Louis; there were seventeen of us, well that's where they were from. But, I'm talking about; basically I feel that soccer had its effect because of the Catholic Church. It was the most natural setup; it didn't take a heck of a lot of work in the sense. I mean it took a lot of work [to tie it]. But here you have Holy Innocents and St. Mary Magdalene, you have Lady of Sorrows, you got up here, St. Raphael's, St. Gabriel's, and right down the block there you have St. John the Baptist, and you got St. Francis de Sales, St. Angus, St. Margret's. Each one would dump in five or six team in different age groups. I would like to, see this is another thing, when the Wolfsen's were here, Wolfner or Wolfson, they came to us and offered to give us 90 thousand dollars if the CYC would start a little league baseball, no a little league football league So I went and talked to several doctors at St. Mary's and St. Johns, and several pediatricians in the area and the consensus was that was stupid. These kids first of all, their bones are not, whatever you want to call, strong. Also the guys who would be coaching them, were going be has been college and has been high school players, who knew nothing about the anatomy, physiology, or psychology etc. You know, they were like, "Kill them." So, I said, "No." And they were really disappointed. However, there were some little leagues in football. They still have some; I'm not sure about here, maybe they have one. A friend of mine ran one and I always told him that the insurance on these kids, you know the insurance of these kids; these kids could be really hurt.

GL: Yeah, you don't think of that.

MLM: Oh yeah they don't. You know the hits they take. So, they were governed by height and weight, but then you have a kid who is 12 years old playing kids who are 9 or 10 years old. I mean he may not be heavier but he still is older, so, you know, but anyways. So, this is an interesting story. Magnum field over here is a premier soccer field. It is kept up and still being kept up. We used to have bleachers there, but they took them down because they could hold about 36 hundred or so. They took them down, but that is where we held all of our championship soccer games; small ones and big ones. I think it was too hard to keep up so they sold the frames to [Devert] high school and they redid the woodwork. I was disappointed. But, anyways we had dreams of putting in a 'U' in over there of bleachers. Well, when the St. Louis football Cardinals moved to Bush Stadium, we were offered those portable stands if we could move them. Man we were thrilled. Bob Guelker, Bob Guelker had all kinds of SLU guys who were going to take them down. We had [South Hampton] who was a really wonderful Catholic Man, he owned a big trucking company, you know with those long trucks, those flat beds. So we were going to move and them and set them up over here. They would have held about maybe 15 thousand, something like out at Bush. Well, anyways at the last minute they decided to give the stands to the Illinois [Garberdale]

GL: The Stadium the people...

MLM: Yeah, so they were all transported down to [Garberdale] which needed some stands, or whatever. So, we were terribly disappointed because we had all kinds of architecture up, you know like those concrete posts. So, as I look at it now, I see that would have been an unbelievable expense to keep up that view while using right field, center field and left field. So for a while St. Louis baseball team used our field. It is still a real fine soccer field. You know, we have it watered, and the water comes up and sprinkles; it automatic and all that stuff. But, see the soccer people saw a great potential and in Church's, I would say [convictional/conventional chart]. For instance I was sent down to Bolivia, La Paz; we have priests down there, missionaries. So Ritter said he'd like me to go down there and work;

because I was head of the youth department, and see if I could get some youth programs going. Well I went down there, and Dan [Stretcher] who was here the other day, was down there, and so was Casey who is now the Bishop. So, I got down there and thought I'm not needed down here. Every block, I'm being a little facetious, but not totally. Every block had its own soccer team, own coach and own management. Well, right there you had a group; I mean you didn't have to form anything. So I came back. Kids wore their soccer shoes to school down there. That's the sport down there. They kick soccer balls, little tennis balls and tin cans on their way to school. And so, that is sort of the story of my life. I mean, I guess some of it didn't relate to soccer, but some of it did.

GL: It was fascinating. I would love to see a picture of you and [Harry S.]

MLM: Oh yeah, excuse me. I hope I can find it...