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## Stryker, Marian A Oral History Interview: Retired Faculty and Administrators of Hope College

Conrad Strauch Jr.

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LIVING HERITAGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Mrs. Marian Stryker

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Hope College Archives Council  
Holland, Michigan  
1978

## INTRODUCTION

The Hope College Living Heritage Oral History Project consists of a series of interviews conducted during the summer of 1977 by Nancy A. Swinyard, and the summer of 1978 by Conrad J. Strauch with persons who, in years past, were members of the faculty and administration of Hope College. Upon the completion of each session, the taped conversation was transcribed and then edited by both the interviewer and the interviewee for clarity. While accuracy is desirable, the viewpoint of the interviewee is maintained. Some alterations were suggested by the interviewer during the interviews and in later correspondences, but the researcher will discover discrepancies between the interviews themselves and with published sources of information. Therefore, the researcher must be aware that these differences exist, and seek to understand the perspective from which all statements were made. Tapes of all interviews are stored in the Hope College Archives.

No claim is made that the information contained within these transcripts is absolutely accurate. No two people share identical viewpoints, and the separation by time from the interviewee's experiences on campus can sometimes intensify this divergence.

Without the support of Dr. Jacob E. Nyenhuis, Dean for the Humanities, and Mr. William K. Anderson, Vice President for Business and Finance, this project would not have become a reality. Dr. Elton J. Bruins, though busy with his own pursuits, willingly lent his guidance and support. The success of this project can be attributed to the efforts of the interviewees, each gracious, receptive and cooperative.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....iii  
Preface.....v  
Biographical Sketch and Summary of Contents.....vi  
Interview I .....1  
Interview II .....15  
Appendices .....26  
Index .....31

PREFACE

Interviewee: Mrs. Marian Stryker

Interview I: June 8, 1978

Mrs. Stryker's home in Holland, Michigan

Interview II: June 23, 1978

Mrs. Stryker's home in Holland, Michigan

Interviewer: Mr. Conrad Strauch, Jr.

MARIAN ANDERSON STRYKER

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Maian Anderson Stryker is the daughter of James Arthur and Elnora Lynch Anderson. She was born on May 6, 1909 in Greensprings, Ohio. In 1927 she came to Hope College where she was awarded the AB in 1931. After graduation she attended the Tiffin Business University in Ohio for one year. Then she went to work at the Parmenter-Van Eenenaam Law Office in Muskegon. In 1933 Marian left Muskegon and went to work at the Secretary of State's Office at Lansing. Leaving that job in 1936 she married John A. Stryker. They had three sons; John Alvin, M.D., James William, and David Philip.

The death of her husband in 1946 caused her to move from their home in Grand Rapids to Holland, Michigan. Come May of 1947 she was appointed Secretary of the Alumni Office, the position she held until her retirement in June, 1974. Marian also served as editor of the Alumni Magazine from 1949-1974, and was instrumental in getting the Alumni Directories of 1951, 1961 and 1971 published. Because of this work, Marian was affiliated with the American Alumni Council from 1948-1974.

During our interview Marian was able to add some colorful side lights to the facts already known about the time she spent here at Hope. She was also helpful in adding some new information on such areas as; the Alumni Clubs, the Alumni Board, fund raising by the Alumni Office, and the Alumni Tours. She also tells about the state the Alumni Office was in when she came and the attempts made to get the office up to the point where it is now. The presidencies of Lubbers and VanderWerf are also discussed. And of course, like all alumni, she gives a colorful and informative account of her student days at Hope College.

INTERVIEW I

CONRAD: How did your association with Hope College begin?

STRYKER: To begin in the beguine, as they say, it all happened in 1947. My husband had died in November 1946 and I had moved my family here in March. The family included three little boys and myself. When my husband died, I thought immediately of Hope College, Holland at least because - well, when I was a student here I was anxious to graduate and get out of Holland, it seemed so provincial to me then; I wanted to get out in the bright lights. But, believe me when this happened to me I couldn't get back here fast enough because I know that the forces for good were stronger here than other forces, and when you have three little boys, they're 3, 6 and 8, you think of that. I knew I would go to work and in Holland it wouldn't take a half hour to get to the job; it takes about 5 minutes to get anywhere in Holland.

So, I came back and was pleased to learn that Dr. Lubbers had contacted my brother-in-law, Kenneth De Pree, about my coming to work at the college. I had had secretarial training after Hope College; Hope can always use secretarial help; so when I was settled I applied to Dr. Lubbers office. Dr. Lubbers had been my English teacher when I was a freshman. Dr. Lubbers gave me a choice of three spots I could fill: the Alumni Office, or his secretary although he had a good one at the time, and I forget what the third one was. I felt immediately that the Alumni Office would be right for me. I was always interested in people- I was no great student, although I did get a life certificate to teach in Michigan when I graduated, I never expected to teach anyway; in those days it was the only thing you could prepare for at Hope if you were a co-ed. Dr. Lubbers said he was very eager to get an alumni office started. In fact, he and Willard Wichers had started one, there was a little office on the third floor of Van Raalte Hall. The wife

of a seminary student had been working there part time for a few months setting up the office. She was leaving soon anyway; it was May 18, 1947 when I started. It was a matter of getting it down in black and white. I was always very proud of the fact that Hope College Alumni had an organization the first year after the first class graduated. The first class graduated in 1866 and they had an alumni meeting in June of 1867 and there has been an alumni meeting practically every year since. I think that during the war they didn't meet for a year or two. But there was an organization; a president of the Alumni Association and a secretary. The secretary had addresses of alumni who came to the annual meetings and as many others as possible, but they couldn't handle it completely. So my job to begin was to go through the college catalogues and get the names of all the graduates and find out where they were; then, too, Dr. Lubbers was ambitious to have us include in our file the names and addresses of those who had attended Hope only one, two or three years. Many of them didn't go on to another school and this was their Alma Mater. That was a big job. We had to go through the registrar's records. Dr. Lubbers got help with that, he hired Sandrine Schutt, a Grand Haven teacher, an alumna, to go through the registrar's records in the summer. So, eventually we got it all straightened-out making it possible to get out an alumni directory in 1951.

Although we had thought of publishing a directory, the impetus for the project came from an alumna, Ilona Szabo Smith, who was graduated the year after I was. I was graduated in 1931 and she, in '32, and she was a people person. We called her Lynn, she liked to remember all the people she had known at Hope; when it came Christmas, she liked to send Christmas cards and exchange recipes, but didn't know where they lived. Lynn had been a psychiatric nurse and had just recently married. Her husband was an engineering consultant in New York City. Well, Lynn wrote that she



had been talking over with her spouse that she'd like to suggest that the alumni get a directory together, and he said, "Well, that is a good suggestion, but if you're going to make a suggestion like that you better send some money," and so she did; she sent a check for \$1,000 and that was a lot of money in 1950, believe me. And so that gave us the impetus to get the first directory published. That was a big job of course.

So, on through the number of years I was there, the college alumni roster was a big item, to keep track of all the alumni as they graduated and those who hadn't graduated, but would like to get our printed material, and that was the largest part of the office work in a way. Because our people were very mobile, they came into the days when people changed jobs. It used to be that there must be something wrong with you if you left a job; you should stay in the same job for fifty years, but they started moving around and to keep track of them and their new jobs was a big part of the office work and still is. But we went into the computer about 1966, something like that, and that was a headache. In the early days it was an awful headache but it all straightened out and it worked real well and I'm glad we did it at that time.

But then in the meantime, of course, the part that I probably enjoyed the most in alumni work was editing the Alumni Magazine. Now the Alumni Magazine had been started in 1947. Dr. Lubbers had appointed Willard Wichers the Director of the Alumni Office and he, of course, was very part time because he had a big job of his own working for the Netherlands government. But he did get out six issues of the Alumni Magazine beginning in January 1947. Everyone was pleased to have it because up until then they only had word of mouth although there had been clubs - Alumni Clubs in some areas where we had a concentration of alumni: like, for instance, Albany, New York, New York City, Grand Rapids, Wisconsin. Oh, they didn't

meet on a regular basis, but there were the clubs. The Alumni Magazine was a great thing. It was needed, so in 1949, the October issue, it was a quarterly magazine, I became the editor of that magazine and that I loved. It was so thrilling to hear from all those alumni, both men and women, who were doing interesting things, outstanding things and I always felt that all of ~~of~~ the Hope people were really doing something outstanding, but there are those who really do extraordinary things that merit publication.

Another thing I enjoyed very much was the membership in the American Alumni Council and we had a big conference every year. The first one I went to was in Williamsburg, Virginia. It was such a thrill not only to see Williamsburg, but to meet all those people who were doing the same work as I was and talking to them about their patterns of operation and their alumni. I always came back and felt pretty good about our alumni, especially about the fact that our alumni liked to get together. Dr. Lubbers had said that we have an annual Alumni dinner at graduation time that is very well attended, people just wanted to come. At the time I left the college in 1974 we were having about 500 people at that dinner every year. Now in these years since 1974 it has grown even more, so much so that they're going to put an addition on Phelps dining hall because there are so many alumni attending, growing every year, of course they have to have more space to put the tables; of course the enlargement is due primarily to the growing student census. Yes, the Alumni dinner was a big part of our program too.

And of course keeping in touch with the alumni. I always felt that the alumni office was the medium of communication between the college and the alumni of the college. One of the best read features of our magazine was always the class notes. They were published according to class and people could look at that part if they didn't look at any other and read about what John is doing, or what Bill or Sarah is doing or whoever. I always

enjoyed information on what our young alumni were doing. I was always so happy that we published in each summer issue the names of current graduates and what their plans were if they knew them. It was just a wonderful job.

I came to the realization that I felt of myself as the personification of Alma Mater. I love all the alumni. I was happy when they succeeded, suffered with them when they had problems, was delighted to see each and everyone, alone or in groups. I always said that I had the best job in Holland, everyday I loved it. It was just great to go to work every morning because there was sure to be something exciting, someone to hear from. That was the main part. It meant keeping up with these people, going to club meetings. At least once a year we tried to get around to all the clubs and that was very exciting; although those annual meetings came so quickly, sometimes they asked to wait a year because it seemed like we'd just been there.

And our clubs, we always had very fine attendance in Washington D.C. People there liked to turn out for our meeting. We had an alumnus there who entertained the club several years at dinner in his home...in the homes it was always very nice. And colorful people attended: the nationally known minister Joseph Sizoo, a Hope grad of 1907 who had been minister of the St. Nicholas Collegiate Church in New York City, he had been pictured and written up in Life Magazine and we were pretty proud of him, he always came. And these dinners were given by Raymund Zwemer, the Executive Secretary of the National Academy of Science, he was quite an outstanding fellow. His father, Sam Zwemer was a graduate of Hope College in 1887. Sam was the first missionary to the Muslims- he was a tremendous man, a pioneer missionary among the Muslims and he was a colorful man too. And then, of course, New York City, we had many very fine club meetings there in Marble Collegiate Church.

Our first directory was in 1951 and that was the 100th year of the Pioneer School, so then we had another one in 1961 and another one in '71, those three I edited. There's been one since and that's the fourth, although on the first page it says "this is the third," but that one was the fourth.

CONRAD: What about the Alumni Board?

STRYKER: Willard Wicher was the first Director of the Alumni program and then Clyde Geerlings followed. He was the director, I was always the secretary. I considered myself the secretary, the communicator. And so, Clyde Geerlings took over as Alumni Director, oh about 1947 maybe '48, he was teaching physics and he also taught aviation during the war years. So the Alumni Board, all the colleges were getting Alumni Boards in those days so we had to get that too, and we started that in 1951. For a long time it was a matter of having alumni in various areas of the country who could speak for Alma Mater from the experience of having been on campus recently. I always felt the Alumni Board was important, we never had any particular power as far as the college was concerned, except to nominate alumni for the three alumni on the College Board of Trustees. But it was a good thing to have people out there who got into the college a couple times a year and could be anchor men so to speak in the areas, particularly those areas where we had clubs. The board was composed of representatives from those clubs, which would make it geographical. The president of the Alumni Board would call a meeting, through the Alumni Office, at Homecoming time and at Graduation time. At the meetings the director of admissions would be on the program, other administrative officers, and the President of the college would give the Board members a run down on the state of the college, studentwise, moneywise, and about the buildings being built, and such. We always felt that eventually the Alumni Board would have more power, if

that was needed, and when the Personal Solicitation Alumni Fund was started, the board members were good people to have to carry the ball in their areas. Some people complained, naturally, that it was costly to bring these representatives in and what were they doing for the college - well, that's an abstract thing, we always thought it was fruitful.

The Alumni Fund was started in the early fifties in a low key way. Letters were mailed to the alumni a couple of times a year giving them information about the college and asking them for a gift to maintain the style of education they had at Hope and it did quite well. Dr. Harold Dykhuizen was elected President of the Alumni Board in 1956. He was interested in alumni giving and he worked to send stronger letters to the alumni for funds. Other colleges were making more persuasive appeals. So in 1957 a series of fund letters over Dr. Dykhuizen's signature were well received. At the end of the year the Alumni Office sent the letters to the American Alumni Council competition, and this series of letters received a citation award, judged by Time-Life Publications and the award was presented in 1958 at the AAC National Conference, the letters were shown on the screen by Time - Life presenter. I was there to receive the award. I was very proud of that national recognition. The letters were written by an advertising company, Bill Murdock here in town - they were breezy, they were clever, they really were. Another wonderful thing that happened in 1957 was when Hope College was sited one of the Top Ten Private Co-ed Colleges in the Chicago Tribune list, we were number ten; Dr. Lubbers always said there was not much difference between 9 and 10, but there's an awful lot of difference between 11 and 10.

Our fund letters did well, but then, of course, we had to do better, so in 1963 we had our first personal solicitation fund drive. I remember that first personal solicitation program. We took a goal of a hundred thousand

dollars and I had to get the Alumni Board and people from different communities to be personal representatives. We had those people go around to the meeting to get alumni reved up to call on alumni face to face, and by golly we made it. So then in 1964 we had to do more, so we went for \$125,000 and we made it; so the next year \$150,000 and we made it and went right on up to \$300,000.

We reorganized as we went along you know and there were new directors along the way and then we had Big Name Alumnus. Fritz Yonkman took the chairmanship of the fund. He said he wanted it to be Fritz and Janet because they were Hope classmates and always you never talked about one without the other and he had his selected committee members giving \$10,000. That year 1967 we won first in our category of colleges, large private co-ed colleges, the American Alumni Council Mobius Strip and a check for \$3,000 from the U. S. Steel Foundation. That was one of the biggest days of my life, just out of the blue we got this announcement that we were getting the Mobius Strip and \$3,000 for Improvement in Alumni Giving and we had not done it to compete. We had sent in our records each year and it was such a thrill, I raced right into Dr. VanderWerf's office without rapping on the door or anything. I was so thrilled, you see, that was just marvelous. But the big thing to me was that it was not a deliberate competition. Hamilton College, a men's school in Clinton, N.Y. won the overall first for all categories of colleges, but that's a small men's school and they went in with real competition and won the \$5,000 national prize; but we won first for large co-ed private colleges and that was one of our finest successes.

CONRAD: You speak a lot of times of your relationship with Dr. Lubbers and you say Dr. VanWylen is interested in Alumni, but you seem to have not spoken about Dr. VanderWerf's period.

STRYKER: Well, Dr. VanderWerf was a great scholar. He graduated from Hope

College when he was 19, I think, and he was the valedictorian. He was a great scholar, a great chemist; he had been a teacher of Chemistry at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. He was a real pet of the Hope Chemistry Department, Dr. Van Zyl's star, and a dear person. But he was so able, the way I look at it, he was so able himself and so eager he could not give you a job and let you do it, you know, he had to do it, because that's just the way he was. And all the time he was at Hope College he was writing text books. He always had only four hours of sleep a night, got up at four o'clock every morning and worked on his chemistry books, brushed up on his chemistry or bringing his text books up to date. And he was an academic man, he was interested in bringing the college up to date academically, which he did. It was painful for the college to go through such a metamorphosis in such a short time, but he did it. He was not a man who cared to go out after money, he wanted it, of course, he was very eager for us to get the money, he needed the money and that sort of thing, but he shied away from asking for it. I guess he didn't feel competent enough in that. It was very hard to work in Dr. VanderWerf's regime, although he was a loveable man and we liked him and he had a very fine family and his wife Rachel was such a darling and she is so able. There were a lot of improvements in that era: the Second Century Club was started, you see he was here during the 100th anniversary of the college. And he brought in programs of excellence: like bringing in Dr. Christiaan Barnard soon after he had done the first heart transplant, and that was a beautiful, beautiful occasion. It was a convocation, November 23, 1968, in the chapel at eleven o'clock in the morning - if there's anything that's lovely it is a convocation in Hope College's chapel at 11:00 in the morning, the windows are most beautiful and the chapel was completely filled and the academic processional was simply gorgeous, and here coming in last, Dr. Christiaan

Barnard, his charisma, there was a light about him, he was just a very charming and humble man. His speech was so pertinent too, he spoke on medical techniques of heart transplants. Then there was a beautiful luncheon in Phelps Hall. The Phelps dining room was filled with Hope medical men from all over; our Jim Poppen whom we look to with such pride, a neurosurgeon, a member of the class of 1926 and who played baseball. He was from Overisel and he was always interested in anatomy - Miss Boyd taught German here for many, many, years, and I have heard her say that Jim Poppen, evidently one of her pet students, would bring in parts of animals, probably to take to the lab, and he'd show her: "Now isn't that wonderful the way that works," he'd say. He had an international reputation, he had been a surgeon called for the greatest of South America, and the great of Spain, and France. He had operated on Jack Kennedy's back and was called to see what he could do for Bob Kennedy following the assassination. He made a speech at the luncheon, talking about medicine, baseball and all those interesting things, you know, Hope College. Well, then the excellent program which came next was in early 1970. ~~1970~~ Borman the astronaut was here on February 19th. Those were probably the most outstanding programs we ever had.

CONRAD: Something I've found is that you were here at Hope College in the late 20's.

STRYKER: O yes, I started college in 1927.

CONRAD: Has Hope changed a lot since then. I know it's grown tremendously, but how about the atmosphere here?

STRYKER: Well it has developed, let us say. When I was here there were about 500 students and that would be the outside figure and the tuition was \$60.00 a semester.

CONRAD: That's a big difference!

STRYKER: There was such a great story about that too. Henry Steffens was



Hope College treasurer for a great many years; he was a graduate of the class of 1930. And John Winter was a graduate of the class of 1930 also. And John Winter said that in 1926 when John and Henry started to college—we used to pay our tuition to the registrar, you just lined up and went in and paid it all then, and there said what you planned to study, everything was done that day. And so John Winter was following Henry Steffens and they got up to Topsy Welmers' desk and Topsy said tuition was \$60.00; "\$60.00," says Henry, "\$60.00! I don't want to buy the college, I just want to go here!" The tuition had been perhaps \$35.00 a couple of years earlier and I guess Henry hadn't heard about the raise. But, you see it wouldn't be nearly as funny if it weren't for the fact that Henry was the treasurer all those years when it kept going up. When my son John started to college it was \$200.00 a semester which wasn't bad, but 200 was quite a bit at that time, that would have been '56. We used to tell that story at alumni club meetings and everybody just roared and rolled in the aisles. That was a story.

Of course when I was a student here we all majored in English-Modern Language or history or chemistry. And then if you were a woman, of course, there wasn't anything you could do except teach. And we had the Hope High School at that time, over there where Columbia Cottage is, and that was the Hope High School. We did our practice teaching over there, six weeks, two of us. Ethel Cunnagin and I were assigned to English with Clarence DeGraaf as our critic teacher and he was a wonderful teacher and he didn't let us teach very often; he let Ethel teach more often than he let me teach. I can remember only one time when I taught and I taught Milton's sonnet on his blindness and we had a wonderful class; Henry Kuizenga, who is an outstanding minister now, and Dick DeWitt, the one who, with his brother, gave the DeWitt Center; they were in that class so through the years

whenever I see Dick at a cocktail party he comes over to me and quotes that sonnet on Milton's blindness. I did alright that day, but believe me I didn't get a good mark in teaching, I didn't expect to because I never wanted to teach anyway, it's not my aptitude. I went on to business school. I really wanted to go into merchandizing, but this was 1931, there were fewer places to do anything then than there has been now in the last few years when people have been having a difficult time getting a job. So I went on to business school which was better for me the way it turned out.

There wasn't much for a girl to do and at that time there were about a third as many women as men in the college. And I was always interested in that for during my years as Alumni secretary the gap closed so that now, I don't know -

CONRAD: There are more women now than men.

STRYKER: I think so too. I was always sorry to see that happen, you see I'm not a women's liber. I still think that women are certainly marvelous but that they are geared to the personal where men are geared to the big picture. I guess though now women are as geared to the big picture, I see women on TV doing things in finance, and so many of our girls now are going into business. Mrs. Ponstein was telling me that her daughter - they have three daughters, this one had majored in business here at Hope and then went to Northwestern University and got her masters and had received all kinds of offers from business departments. Before I left the college I was interviewing women in different majors and I was amazed how many were out there going into business.

When we were in school the Homecoming program started. It evolved from the Armistice Day Parade they always had in Holland after World War I. Always in early November they paraded, people came back, students came back for that, so then the college took it over, rather the students took it over

in the 20's. Lois DeWolf Ten Cate was the second chairman of the Homecoming. To that was a nice addition, and when we were students here the city's Tulip Time got started. And really great strides have been made since those days in the 1920's, almost everything has developed; electronics, TV, and radio was just new at that time.

CONRAD: What about your Alumni Tours?

STRYKER: Of course another nice aspect of my job was the Alumni Tours. I have always felt that I was the only one that could handle those; that was because I wanted to go and it was up to me to decide where we were going. Tours always had the backing of the Alumni Board, They recommended that we have alumni tours since other colleges were having them. So that was very nice and we started. As I told you I went with Dr. Fried and the students to the 1964 Vienna Summer School and then the next year we had an alumni seminar in Vienna and they joined the Alumni Summer School to some extent. We were there 10 days, it was a very nice thing because the people attended - I think there were about 20- we had lectures on art and music of the area and field trips here and there, it was very interesting, a very good program. Then we didn't do anything until 1968 when we went to Scandinavia, Prague and Vienna where we saw the students in the Vienna Summer School that year too.

CONRAD: Did many alumni go on these tours?

STRYKER: Oh, really when you consider the number of alumni we had, there wouldn't be a lot, maybe 20, 25; but like Herb Marsilje, who is a good alumnus and a travel agent, said, you can never get a big group of people to go because mother is sick or my daughter's going to have a baby or some son's going to graduate or something like that. It just is impossible to get a big group, so 20 or 25 is a good group and they always enjoyed it. We always took American Express Tours and that in Europe is just great because they are

strong enough - they have the clout, you're going to have rooms, they have paid for those rooms the fall before you go in the summertime, and you're going to have a good tour director and you're going to have a good bus to travel around in, and you're going to have good food. You can go to Europe on a much smaller amount of money, but I would never try to build up a tour in a cheap way, because people want it cheap but they're not going to like it.

Then in 1970 we had two tours, one was the British Isles Tour, that was just a beautiful trip. That same year, '70, was a back to back tour, the people from the British Isles Tour left London one night and the next morning the Oberammergo Tour came into London. Then we went to the Netherlands, France, Germany and the Oberammergo Play, Italy, we had a fabulous time. In '71 we had just a very small group to go to Spain, Portugal, and Morocco. And then in '72 we had another back to back, one Alpine and Rhine, and then they left from London and I had to get quickly over to Athens for the Aegean Tour. Then in '73, that was my last tour as Alumni Secretary, that was to Scandinavia, Helsinki and Russia. Since then I have finally "graduated" from Hope, from '27 to '74, someone said it took me that long to graduate from Hope. Then people said, "Where are you going to go, Marian, let's go someplace" -- "Where do you want to go?" "Oh, I don't care just go anywhere." So last winter we went on a caribbean cruise, we didn't have very many maybe 6 or 8. Then this year, the 9 of us just got back, we went to Hawaii. I had never really any great desire to go to Hawaii, but one of the gals, Cornie Van Voorst- just retired from the Sentinel, had been on several of our tours and she nagged me to get a group together to go to Hawaii. When I thought of Hawaii I thought of ocean to ocean tourists, and that's what it is, but oh we had a marvelous time.

CONRAD: Well, I think this would be a good place to end our interview.

INTERVIEW II

CONRAD: What do you remember about Dr. Dimnent from your school days?

STRYKER: I remember Dimmy, everybody called him Dimmy but not to his face, we called him Dr. Dimnent then. He was such a character that it was fun to have him to talk about and to talk over all the different things he said that were so strange. I was in his economics class and we were seated alphabetically, always, in all classes at that time. He had a way of getting the class started and he always started with A or he started with Z. My name was Anderson so I got called on practically everyday. Abraham Antar sat next to me, he was an Arab, and Dr. Dimnent often got to him. Otherwise he went back to Zidama or somebody in the back of the room and he got a chance to speak and maybe somebody with a V did, but in between they just had a free ride.

It was characteristic of Dr. Dimnent to get started on something and then he would go off on tangents, but they were always interesting, and they were things that had some bearing in some way on what you were talking about. I remember one time he got off on telling us how to cook prunes. You mush the prunes, dried prunes, and then you pour boiling hot water over them and let them set three or four days, and then they are just perfect. Another thing about the fact that he went off on tangents was the fact that in those days you had chapel at 8:00 in the morning and he very often led chapel or else had something to say to the students before he let us go. We were all just delighted because we always hoped that he would get off on a tangent and we would miss our first hour class. He would go on about certain problems that people were having that pertained to economics and maybe it didn't. But he would always end up with, "That's life."

Another thing about him was his pronunciation, he was great literarily,

if there is such a word. He was very literate and he had a great command of the language, but he always said Russha and Prussha, not Russia and Prussia. He was a very interesting man, a very likable man. As I went through the country as alumni secretary nearly everyone who went to school when Dr. Dimment was the President or who had classes with him had some story to tell that was very interesting.

He was a man of so much knowledge, he really had to know more about more things. That was spoken of by our great alumnus, who was a great politician and a fabulus orator, Gerrit Diekema, he graduated from Hope in 1881. He was an outstanding lawyer, and a fine, fine orator. He could think on his feet, they always said, "Diek can think on his feet." When Dr. Dimment resigned from the presidency of Hope College, Dr. Diekema talked about Dr. Dimment and he made such a great run down of all the things that Dr. Dimment had done. Then he said, "Dr. Dimment know more about more things than anyone I know," and he did. As I reviewed his life I found that Dr. Dimment was an individualist.

Dr. Dimment's big push through all the years he was there was to get the chapel built, and he raised that 400,000 dollars single-handedly. Not only that but he worked with the architect, but you did a lot on your own in those days, there weren't so many people. It was a lot easier because there weren't so many people who had to put in their opinions. That was Dr. Dimment's monument, to himself really although he called it the Memorial Chapel. It was named Dimment Chapel after he died.

His program of education centered around the life purpose of the student, culture without an objective and service was to him without meaning. It was said of Dr. Dimment that he grew to be the man the creator intended him to be. You see the teachings of the church were very strong during those days and very much repeated; I don't mean that they are not there in this day,

but it's just a little different approach. Dr. Dimment believed in self-reliance and independence. The cornerstone of his administration according to Dr. Lubbers was his conviction that the focal point of education must be designed for service to the church. He often reiterated, "As goes the college so goes the church." Theology was to him the basic foundation and unifying principal of higher education. But the liberal arts college, he was convinced, must through a firm commitment to Jesus Christ be outside the realm of theological controversy. One should pay more attention to literature and economics, that sort of thing.

CONRAD: Especially economics!

STRYKER: Yes, especially economics. Dr. Dimment of course taught Greek. He came to Hope College as a young man to teach Greek and then he added economics. He was the treasurer of the college at one time, and he was registrar of the college. And in addition to his teaching he served on the Board of Trustees of Western Seminary. He was a great man for pageants.

CONRAD: Oh yes I've heard.

STRYKER: Pageants, Pageants for everything! All history was in pageants. He was the author of the last pageant we had at Hope College which was in 1941, celebrating the 75th anniversary. He wrote the pageant "The Pilgrim." He not only worked very hard on the text of "The Pilgrim," but he also did research on the manner of dress in those days and he directed it and selected the music; he knew about everything. In 1938 he headed the Michigan Authors Association. He was just a very fine man, yet a very humble man. A quiet man around the house I guess. He was single all his life.

His sister Mrs. Dykhuizen was the hostess for the college when he was on the campus. Mrs. Dykhuizen had twin daughters; Geraldine and Adelaide who graduated from Hope in 1926. And she had a son Harold Dykhuizen, we always called him Bud. He was at school the same time I was, a real social

butterfly, a fine fellow. He went into medicine and he became a very successful urologist in Muskegon. He died in 1967, he had been president of the Alumni Association.

Dr. Dimment went with a gal here in town for 15 years and then he decided marriage wasn't for him. He and Dr. Nykerk, he was another bachlor, went around together. They got beautifully dressed up on Sunday afternoon and went calling, people liked to have them call. In those days people didn't watch television so they had time to converse a little bit. Dr. Dimment and Dr. Nykerk are memorialized in Hope's chapel with bronze tablets.

CONRAD: Do you remember much about Dr. Nykerk, I've heard about his Oxford accent.

STRYKER: He graduated from Hope College too, and then he went to Oxford for, I think six months, and he came back and he never spoke Dutch again. He always spoke with an Oxford accent. He was a real terrific man. He was a fine speaker. He did a lot to develop music in the community, started choirs and things like that. You see the community was relatively new in those days and he was able to do that. He was a fine teacher, a teacher of literature. He taught Wordsworth, Milton, and he taught Browning. I took Browning with him, I liked him because he thought I read Browning so well, then you had to read out loud.

He was a strict, purist about not smoking, and of course drinking, nobody did that. He would flunk a young man if he walked down the aisle and he smelled tobacco on him. He was adamant against that, he was even stronger than the surgeon general, believe me.

He trained, I don't think that's a very good word, but he trained orators. Our orators very, very often came back with the M.O.L., Michigan Oratorical League, first prize, and even some national ones. We got the Washington Bust, that's in the Archives. Dr. Nykerk was a very interesting



man. He lived in the women's dormitory, Voorhes Hall, that was interesting. Mrs. Durfee was there too of course, she was the dean of women.

CONRAD: Where did he live in Voorhes?

STRYKER: He had a nice little apartment there. And he died there, he died in the bathtub in 1936. He was an interesting man. He was a colorful fellow that you could take off on and make fun of, not in front of him of course. You don't have characters like that any more, or do you? Do you have characters like that at Hope, one's you can make fun of? I think it's more fun. But now things are more open, people call professors by their first names, and there isn't that barrier of the generations that there was in our day.

CONRAD: I think the lack of the barrier might account for the loss.

STRYKER: Yes, but you miss an awful lot, it's a lot of fun to do things surreptitiously. (laughter)

CONRAD: Why don't you give us a little about what Lubbers was like when you were here?

STRYKER: He was my English teacher when I was a freshman and he had been teaching there for several years. You see that was 51 years ago and he was a young man, he must have been 31 when he was my teacher of English. He also taught debate. He was great, a greart speaker. I don't say orator because he was warmer than an orator, an orator gives a set speach. He was very articulate.

I don't remember so much about anything in the class, except that we all liked him and we liked his teaching. He was a great man to quote the early literary artists. I know he liked Van Dyke very much, and Wordsworth. He quoted a lot of beautiful, beautiful poetry which we all liked to hear.

Dr. Lubbers left in 1928 and I believe that it was at that time that he went to Northwestern University to study college administration, he got

his PhD in college administration. Well, then he came to Hope College. He realized that Hope College was a college of quality. Here had been just a little struggling college all through the years, but somehow our graduates went out and made names not only for themselves, but also the college in graduate schools. That way we were getting a reputation and he didn't feel that people were aware of it. So he set about to make the members of the college community, and the constituency that supported it recognize the stature of their college and build upon it.

It was 1945 when he came back, that was just the end of WWII. Dr. Lubbers had vision, he knew instinctively that there was going to be a new burst of interest in collegiate education, led by and demanded by the GIs. But even further than that he knew that we should continue the tradition of academic excellence and Christian service. We had to face new problems because there was a whole new ball game. WWII changed the world. Dr. Lubbers' largest achievement, I suppose, was in bringing the church, the community of Holland, the faculty and the student body to this level of awareness of the excellence of Hope College, and to continuing that. It was a great challenge to Dr. Lubbers because he had to gear up for rapid growth.

In 1945 there were 401 students, and by the end of three years it had gone up to almost 1300. There came the barracks and students were married, why that was unheard of before that, students were married and they had babies and everything right there on the campus. I tell you it was a new ball game. But Dr. Lubbers had a saying, I don't know if it was really his but it was his as far as I'm concerned, that "Times of crises are times of opportunity." It was no small thing to sell the board on the fact that we had to modernize Carnegie Gymnasium, making it better and bigger, and build Durfee Hall, and build a central heating plant and the music hall and Kollen

Hall and Phelps Hall and Van Zoren Library and renovate Graves Hall. Why that was just beyond anyone's highest dreams that we'd need any more classrooms or dormitories at Hope College. There had been women's dormitories, Voorhees and also Van Vleck, but to think of building another women's dormitory was quite a thing; but more than that we had no place for the men. The men were housed in homes around the city, people were happy to have the men as their boarders, they made maney that way, very little, but very little was a lot in those days.

Dr. Lubbers was a very fine speaker and he would go to any church, he and Mrs. Lubbers would go to any church. Any church could call him and ask him to come on a Sunday night, a Sunday morning or anytime. He never turned them down, even if there were only twelve there, that never bothered him because twelve people are twelve people, that radiates out. He did an awful lot to bring the college and the church together. It had kind of drifted apart, there hadn't been much done for a long time, but a new era like this might build it up and he was very happy to do that. With these church groups, he had to face them and spell it out alright because they always had problems. Congregations were always concerned about the social practices of the young people on the campus: dancing especially, that was such an old hat. They had complained about the dancing and had "withheld" their gifts because of dancing on the campus; just because they didn't dance in their day and they were jealous.

The Board of Trustees was so big, there were 67 members of the Board of Trustees and they were nearly all ministers, ministers from small communities. I remember so well how Dr. Lubbers worked so hard to get the Board of Trustees to talk about something besides dancing. The first three or four meetings that they had after he came here were spent hashing over that old stuff, and here Dr. Lubbers was so enthusiastic about getting started with all these

other big problems that we had. He finally managed to pick out enough people and got them to start other conversations. He did a marvelous job at that, I don't think anyone, anyone, could have handled that particular situation in that time like Dr. Lubbers did.

CONRAD: Do you have any recollections about the time when dancing began?

STRYKER: Students did dance but I can't tell you just when it began. They could go off campus and dance like they always had. They always had dancing at the women's literary clubs when I was in school. I can't tell you exactly when it was that they had the first dance on campus, but it should be written in big letters.

CONRAD: Yes, it caused enough of an uproar.

STRYKER: Dr. Lubbers spoke so well to the alumni, he always had just the right thing to say to them and they just loved it. He started the alumni office and organized the Alumni Association. He was called upon to speak to national conferences of educators and faculty.

He always talked a lot to the students and to the trustees and always, always, in a positive manner, raising their sites and suggesting larger goals, in such a diplomatic way. During my alumni travels several students told me about how when they were freshman they were in the Kletz, which was in the basement of Van Raalte, and they would be down there having coffee and Dr. Lubbers sat down at the table with them and talked to them. They just thought that was the most wonderful thing in the world, to think that the President of the college would have coffee with them, but that was so natural for Dr. Lubbers. He liked young people because you can do something with young people; the teacher in him. I always said, I never went into his office to get some problem solved when I didn't come out with the problem solved and having learned something also. He always left you with something to raise your sites. He was a real fabulous teacher.

He was good at raising money. It doesn't sound like much now, because of inflation I suppose, but he had a way of inspiring people to give money to the college and that had been neglected. I think it was the beginning of getting money in this area. Dr. Kollen had done that well but he had always gone east to get mney and so did Dr. Dimnent.

Also Dr. Lubbers activated the Women's League of Hope College. That had been started in about 1925 but he manipulated them in someway, it was marvelous, to get that going and he inspired them to take on the furnishing of the new buildings, like Durfee Hall. Well that was a huge project for those women, \$50,000 to furnish that, I thnk it was. With all of them working together, they soon had \$50,000 that they had spent on Hope College and they are still going on. I've forgotten how much but I'm sure it's over a million that they have provided for furnishings for the various buildings on the campus. It took Dr. Lubbers to encourage them. Also Dr. Lubbers started the Michigan College Foundation, which was a big thing.

He had the ability to change people's minds. Alumni, ministers, and so many people would come back and so many of them said this campus has certainly changed; but even more changed was the thinking of the trustees, the faculty and the students.

And then of course the big thing happened in 1957 when Hope College was listed among the ten outstanding colleges in the country. That happened on an Easter morning, I recall, Dr. Lubbers called me to see if I had heard about that, I hadn't then. Well that just lifted us right up to cloud nine. And that's when he coined the phrase, "On the pedestal or on the spot." Now that we had that we had to achieve to be worthy of it. That helped Dr. Lubbers a lot in raising money for these buildings.

The Lubbers era was a great, great great era. We turned not only the corner, I think we turned handsprings. Yet everybody liked him. He was

well liked, a social man.

Another thing I think he did so well, we had these buildings on the campus, but they were crudely furnished and he called in Esther Nykamp who was an interior decorator and she refurnished all of these buildings. Dr. Lubbers felt that so many of our students came from good homes, but they were not used to such nice things around and so he wanted them to get a feeling for nice furnishings and pleasant accessories and all that sort of thing. So that was a really nice thing. Esther Nykamp was an alumna, she graduated from Hope during the time that I was a student.

I've always had such a great admiration for Dr. and Margaret Lubbers because they did so much, so very much for the students. For years they had a reception for the graduates in their home. I suppose you have heard about that from other people.

CONRAD: Yes, I've heard about that and about how he dealt with student and faculty problems.

STRYKER: He was fair, he was fair about everything, not that others haven't been. It's at the time that you are at college that you notice those things. Well everyone knows about Dr Lubbers. Now he's 83 years old. He and Margaret and Paul Fried and I play bridge two times a year, he loves to play bridge. I'm happy to see him, I'm happy to get together, he's still a great man.

CONRAD: Well, thank you for the interview.

A reflection written by Marian Stryker in 1974

It has been by observation during my years as Alumni Secretary that Hope Students are basically of the same character type no matter when they enroll and work through their student years. It is my view that basically they are updated prototypes of those eight young men who were the first class to be graduated from the college in 1866. The students who march through the Halls of Hope, with continuing stepped up cadence, cherish individual freedom, but unite in their common goal: to live a good life, to live a life that counts at the highest level of his understanding and ability, to do the best in his respective place, then give the glory for success to God, from whence direction came.

The march through the Halls of Hope has been poetically spelled out in one of Carl Sanburg's lines;

HOPE IS AN ECHO; HOPE TIES ITSELF YONDER, YONDER, YONDER -----

A reflection written by Marian Stryker on March 8, 1974

In my view, The Hope Spirit is that portion of God's program decreed at the time Albertus D. Van Raalte and his associates worked with inspiration and enthusiasm to establish this "Anchor of Hope for this people in the future."

I feel that all who fit into this pattern, established by God through Van Raalte, will find their way to Hope. Here they become a community of people who cherish their freedom as individuals, but unite in their common goal - to live a good life, to live lives that count at their highest level of ability and understanding, who do their best in their respective places, and give the glory for their successes to God - from who their direction came.



A story written by Marian Stryker on July 20, 1966

One of my most satisfying efforts was a story I wrote, a true story, for the Sentinel supplement on the college. For several years the Sentinel would publish a supplement on the college at the beginning of the fall semester. This was 1966, the Centennial Year; it was something that came to me in a rather dramatic way. To me it speaks poignantly of the color, the stability, the Spirit of Hope College:

The Hope College Alumni Secretary has the privilege of greeting and talking to many of the graduates who visit their Alma Mater. The tenor of the following "Hope College Story" is often repeated in her office in the Alumni House. This recurring theme was dramatically spelled out by two callers last August.

During a week just following the Watts and Chicago riots, a young alumnus of the class of 1961 called at the Alumni House on a very stormy Monday afternoon. He asked for a few addresses, then encouraged by the secretary, he sat down and quietly said that this was his first visit to the campus since his graduation. The secretary remembered this young man from when he signed up as an alumnus in 1961. It was his intention at that time to go into criminology following his service obligation. He had been a psychology major at Hope.

Upon questioning on this stormy Monday afternoon last August, the subject alumnus reported that he was working with the Chicago Police Department. He had completed a "hitch" in service in Southeast Asia.

In his conversation, he spoke of his work with the Police Department, of the recent riots. He also spoke of his service in Asia, of how difficult and frustrating it was to be in a land where the natives minds worked so very

differently from ours. He said quite humbly that he often relived minutely his life at Hope College, and that it was his memory of his fine years here that kept him going during those difficult months.

As he left, he said, "This place - I hope it never changes. It has a fairylike quality about it. It's good to know that there is a place like this. I was not a good student. I grew up in Chicago. No one took much interest in me. I came here and whatever I needed, they always helped me. If I needed money, they helped me; if I needed grades, they helped me. My years at Hope College were the most blessed of any in my life. I just hope this place never changes."

As this young alumnus went out the door into the still dark and dreary afternoon, the secretary was filled with the conviction that he had returned following his first years of frustrations as he started his career for a bit of refreshment for his spirit on the Hope campus.

On a beautiful sunlit Friday afternoon of the same week, an alumnus of the class of 1925, an honored teacher in the graduate school of one of our great midwestern universities, called at the Alumni House. He came by appointment to discuss with the secretary a project of his class.

After transacting his class business, he spoke of a trip he and his wife were to take shortly to the Orient to attend a congress of men in his field. This trip, he said, would be a returning to spots where he had spent some time a few years previously when he had been a teaching consultant to Oriental universities.

Then, this great successful man, about to retire from his important professorship, looked out the window into the peacefulness of the campus on the late Friday afternoon and said, "This place - this place must never change. It must never lose its uniqueness." And the secretary thought she detected a tear in the eye of this highly educated alumnus.

He went on, "In our travels around the world we often ran into Hope men and women. It was just like reaching an oasis in the desert. Wherever we met them, they were in positions of importance with people. They were respected because, it seemed to me, they knew how to help people. Everyone seemed to feel a oneness with them. No barriers had to be overcome to talk to them. They were great! Hope College must never change!"

The secretary noted the drama of the week. A young, average student, in the stormy early days of his career of working with the deprived and despicable calling on a stormy Monday afternoon, expressing his hope that Hope College will never change, that it will continue to be a place where everyone helps those who need help - where one can return to have his spirit refreshed. The older scholar, "out in the sunshine" following a highly successful career in the graduate school of a great university, declaring that Hope College must never change, that it must remain a community of good and average students with the Spirit that will go with them to aid those in the riot torn areas of our world as well as to aid those whose talents take them into the ivory towers.

## INDEX

- Alma Mater 5,6
- Alumni
  - Board 6-8, 13
  - Clubs 3,5,6,11
  - Director 6
  - Dinners 4
  - Directory 2,6
  - Fund 7
  - Magazine 3-5
  - Office 1,3,4,6,22
  - Roster 3
  - Secretary 12,14,16
  - Tours 13-14
- American Alumni Council 4,7,8
- Antar, Abraham 15
- Barnard, Christian 9-10
- Big Name Alumnus 8
- Borman, Frank 10
- Boyd, Laura Alice 10
- Chicago Tribune 7
- Church 16,17,20-21
- Computer 3
- Cunnagin, Ethel 11
- Dancing 21-22
- Dean of Women 19
- DeGraaf, Clarence 11
- DeWitt, Dick 11
- Diekema, Gerrit 16
- Dimmy see Dimment
- Dimment Chapel 9,15,16
- Dimment, Dr. Edward 15,16,17,18,23
- Drinking 18
- Durfee Hall 20,23
- Durfee, Winifred 19
- Dykhuisen, Adelaide 17
- Dykhuisen, Geraldine 17
- Dykhuisen, Harold 7,17
- Dykhuisen, Mrs. 17
- Fried, Paul 13
- Geerlings, Clyde 6
- Holland 1,12,13,20
  - music 18
- Homecoming 6,12-13
- Hope College
  - Board of Trustees 6,20-21
  - Women's League 23
- Hope High School 11
- Kennedy, Jack 10
- Kennedy, Robert 10
- Kollen, President Gerrit 23
- Kuizenga, Henry 11
- Literary Clubs 22
- Lubbers, Margaret 21,24
- Lubbers, President Irwin 1,4,7,19,20-24

Marble Collegiate Church 5  
 Marsilije, Herb 13  
 Michigan Authors Association 17  
 Michigan Colleges Foundation 23  
 Michigan Oratorical League 18  
 Missionaries 5  
 Mobius Strip 8  
 Murdock, Bill 7  
 New York City 5  
 Nykamp, Esther 24  
 Nykerk, Dr. John 18-19  
 Oration 18  
 Overisel 10  
 Pageants 17  
 Personal Solicitation Alumni Fund 7  
 Phelps Hall 10  
 Pioneer School 6  
 Poppen, Jim 10  
 Registrar 17  
 Second Century Club 9  
 Sentinel 14  
 Sizoo, Joseph 5  
 Smith, Ilona Szabo 2  
 Smoking 18  
 Steffens, Henry 10-11,17  
 St. Nicholas Collegiate Church 5  
 Stryker, Marian  
     Alumni Office 1,4  
     Alumni Magazine 3-5  
     Alma Mater 5  
     Women 12  
 Ten Cate, Lois DeWolf 13  
 "The Pilgrim" 17  
 Treasuer 17  
 Tuition 10,11  
 Tulip Time 13  
 U.S. Steel Foundation 8  
 VanderWerf, President Calvin 8-9  
 VanderWerf, Rachel 9  
 Van Voorst, Cornie 14  
 Van Zyl 9  
 Vienna Summer School 13  
 Washington D.C. 5  
 Welmers, Tosy 11  
 Western Seminary Board of Trustees 17  
 Wichers, President Wynand 1,3,6  
 Winter, John 11  
 Women 11-12  
 World War I 12  
 World War II 20  
 Yonkman, Fritz 8  
 Yonkman, Janet 8  
 Zwemer, Raymund 5  
 Zwemer, Sam 5

## Biographical Information

Name (full): Stryker, Marian Anderson  
Birth: Date: May 6, 1909  
Place: Greensprings, Ohio

Education: Elementary: Kansas, Ohio  
High School: Postoria High School, Postoria, Ohio  
College: Hope College Degree: AB Date: 1931  
Business School: Spencerian Business College, Cleveland Date: Summer '30  
Tiffin Business University, Tiffin, Ohio Date: '31-32

Personal:Husband: John A. Stryker Dates: 1910-1946  
Occupation: dentist, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Married: Oct. 15, 1936  
-----Parents: James Arthur and Elnora (Lynch) Anderson  
Residence (Hometown): Kansas, Ohio  
Children: John Alvin, M.D. Occupation: Radio Theropist  
James William, Occupation: U.S. Army Offider  
David Philip, Occupation: Corporation Pilot

## Professional Experience:

Parmenter-Van Eenenaam Law Office, Muskegon, 1932  
Secretary of State's Office, Lansing, 1933-1936  
Secretary of Alumni Office, Hope College, May 1947-to June 30, 1974  
Correspondent, Grand Rapids Herald 1953-1958

Publications: Alumni Directory 1951  
Alumni Directory 1961  
Alumni Directory 1971  
Editorial Alumni Magazine 1949-1974

Tour Promotions: Alumni Seminar Vienna Summer 1965  
Scandinavia, Prague, Vienna Summer 1968  
British Isles and also Oberammergo 1970  
Spain, Portugal, Morocco 1971  
Alpine & Rhine, also Aegean 1972  
Scandinavia, Finland & Russia 1973

## Affiliations:

American Alumni Council, Dates: 1948-1974  
Treasurer District 5 Dates 1959-1973  
President, Holland Concert Association, Dates: 1970-72  
Secretary, Holland Council for the Arts, Dates: 1973-75; Trustee 1975-  
President, Holland Century Club Dates: 1966-67  
Patron, Hope College Theatre 1972-

## Listings:

Who' Who in American College & University Administration 1970-71 Cromwell-Coller / Education Corp.  
Who's Who of American Women 1975-76 and 1977-78 Marquis

Retired:: June 1974

## Activities since 1974:

Wrote History of the Hope College Women's League 1975  
President Hope Church Women's Guild 1978-  
Elected to Synod's Editorial Board of Church Herald 1978-  
Worked parttime at The Country House, Holland 1974-76