

## Departure Interview conducted by Archive Department

Interviewee: Joyce Diels	Division: Mathematics / Science
Years of service to MLC: 9	Years of service to the church at large: 44

Bode: This is an Archives interview of retiring Professor Joyce Diels, recorded on May 16, 2017, by Interim Archives Coordinator Lois Bode. Good afternoon, Professor Diels.

Diels: Good afternoon.

Bode: Thank you for agreeing to the interview for the Martin Luther College Archives. You're concluding 44 years of service to the church at large, of which nine were served in the math/science division at Martin Luther College, right?

Diels: That's correct.

Bode: What was your greatest concern when you began your teaching career?

Diels: Well, I was a little country girl and was assigned to downtown Racine. And what was a little country girl going to do in the inner city of a large city, and would I be able to deal with the problems and the concerns of the students at that time?

Bode: And was it a justified concern, or not?

Diels: It was just a lot of nerves that were there for a new teacher. The Lord blessed my work there, and I was happy to serve there.

Bode: And what was it like starting at Martin Luther College?

Diels: Well, here I was concerned about if I would be able to break into that cycle of fear of math and trepidation of math and help our future teachers to learn to appreciate the subject area and go out and teach that with some confidence.

Bode: Excellent. What in your time in the ministry makes you want to recommend the ministry to others?

Diels: The privilege of serving God, of working with his people, seeing the growth in our students—whether it is at the elementary level, or at the high school level, or the college level. Each group has its own challenges. And just being able to work with them and help them grow in those areas.

Bode: So what was your favorite, or least favorite, course to teach and why?

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Diels: Any math course is a favorite of mine to teach. I have enjoyed them all. But I guess teaching here at Martin Luther College, the Elements of Math was my favorite course. Just in that it was a way to work with future elementary teachers and help them learn more of the conceptual understanding of the mathematics that they were going to be able to teach, so that it wasn't just a matter of "here's the algorithm, follow it and you'll get the right answer," but "why do you follow that algorithm?" And seeing those "aha moments"—sometimes with college level students who were working with elementary math, and now showed an understanding of why they were doing what they were doing.

Bode: So what do you think those students are going to remember most about you or the courses?

Diels: Well, I hope that they would remember my passion for math. That they would remember that there are lots of different ways that we can approach problems, and as long as we are looking for those ways, that we'll find something that works if we are willing to try.

Bode: What advice do you give to a student, or do you think that you should give to a student at MLC? A new student?

Diels: A new student. New students need to get involved with the different activities that we offer here, whether it be athletics or drama, music or Meet Math. You have to sometimes step out of your comfort zone and try different things in order to grow and see what the Lord has in mind for you. I'd also like them to appreciate the vast amount of knowledge that's around them and to tap into those sources and the support system that they have here.

Bode: So, three words to describe you?

Diels: Well, let's see. I would hope that they would see me as a compassionate person, someone who is there to encourage them, and also as a faithful servant.

Bode: Excellent choices.

Bode: During your time here, what major changes have you seen at MLC, and how would you evaluate them?

Diels: The major thing that I see is our involvement with state licensure and the standards and things that we are asked to now prove to other people that we are meeting, while we have met them in the past very well, but coming up with that evidence now, which is an interesting thing to do.

Bode: What are some of your favorite memories that you have from your teaching or—you were a DMLC student, correct? (Diels: I was)—or from those student years. Either teaching, or student years?

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Diels: Well, I think the camaraderie we have on this campus is just extraordinary: to the fellowship, the way we can talk to any individuals, whether it's student to student, student to professor, professor to professor. Just that there is always that support there for you.

Bode: That sounds wonderful!

Bode: I understand in our world of Lutheranism we don't usually shout out our accomplishments. However, I'm sure that you have some and I would like to know about one or two of your proudest professional accomplishments.

Diels: If I start with my time here at MLC, I think adding the Elements class to our curriculum for elementary teachers has been one of the things that I'm most happy about. The fact that we are going to take a look at how we can develop more conceptual understanding for our students in mathematics becomes important in how we can use different manipulatives and different ways of approaching the subject area that for a lot of people is something that they find difficult or even distasteful at times. But how by looking at different ways of providing the information to the student can help them.

I think if I go back to MVL and my time there, adding calculus to the curriculum. It was our first AP course at MVL and it took a little bit of convincing of the administration that this was something that should be added to our curriculum, and I think the students really appreciate the challenge that they were given and also the fact that they had the opportunity to earn some college credit.

Bode: MVL is Minnesota Valley Lutheran, in New Ulm?

Diels: Correct.

Bode: Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Diels: Well, if I go back to my days at Manitowoc Lutheran High School, there are a few trophies in a trophy case where the students there were able to place first in the Wisconsin math contest, a math meet that they had there, and that's not something that a lot of our schools can say. (Bode: Nice!) So, kudos to the students there (Bode: Indeed!) and the hard work that they put in.

Bode: Indeed!

Bode: What are your plans for retirement?

Diels: I plan on moving to West Bend, Wisconsin, and spending a little bit more time with my family, doing some traveling. And then, I hope to do some tutoring in math so that I can continue to work with

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students and see the growth that they have in that area.

Bode: Excellent!

Bode: Well, we appreciate very much that you've interviewed with us today. And I know the Archives at MLC appreciates it and, I assure you, those who hear or read this interview years from now will also appreciate what you've shared with us today. We wish you God's blessings in your retirement. Thank you.

Diels: Thank you.

Interview date: 05/16/2017 Interviewed by: Lois Bode Interviewer's Title: Interim Archives Coordinator

Our interview will be conducted face to face. However, please feel free to write or type any comments onto the sheet. Your participation is voluntary. A written transcription of the recording will be shared with you.  
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