

May 14, 2004

To: Ellen & Judy

Fr: Zena Beth

Re: Veronica O'Sullivan interview

I talked with Vernie on Thursday, May 13. I tried to keep the conversation focused on her work but there are many asides such as her amusement over a large woman who was a BHS teacher. The woman got engaged. Vernie was, I think, at Rochester with her mother, when a friend of hers wrote to say that the bride-to-be had picked "Buttercup" as her silver pattern — after all these years, Vernie still thinks that's hilarious! So, I wouldn't even transcribe those asides; she'd be horrified to have that in print.

At age 92 or 93, Vernie is sharp as a tack. I took some rough notes so here are some facts.

Grew up in the family home on North Wyoming (either 802 or 726) right below the BA&P yard at the Stewart. East of the old St. Mary's church — the existing one was built in '31 or '32.

Graduated from Girls Central in 1929 with the last class to go to the old school on Quartz at Montana.

She considered joining an order but decided to attend Butte Business College instead. Studied there for two years when it was in the Owsley Building, northeast corner of Park & Main

Worked at the School of Mines for Prof. McAuliffe, who was then football coach, (although I do remember him, I can't remember his first name) Walked to work and even went home for lunch and back.

Worked for Maybelle Hogan, County Superintendent of Schools

Then for — I didn't get the name

She "wore three hats" when she worked for Dr. Loren Mondloch, who was the county physician. She was his secretary for both county matters and his private practice and she ran the county Tuberculosis Association. When she left, they hired three people.

Started her own Catholic bookstore at 112 W. Park in 1944, in what is Terminal Food today. She went around to the parishes to be sure she wasn't in competition for their mission sales. Owner sold the building so she had to move.

Moved bookstore to 127 N. Main a couple of doors north of Hannifin's. A woman came in to order "a yard of green books."

Again, the owner sold the bldg so Vernie moved the goods which, besides books, were Catholic statues and rosaries and stuff and crystal, into a small house her parents owned in the same block as the family home. A

man representing a book company called on her there and said he needed a manager for the book department at Hennessey's.

Vernie managed Hennessey's book department for 10 years, 1952-62.

Their dad died in 1957; their mother in 1966.

ALERT — I don't know that you should include this about her marriage. She and John Justin Sullivan who she always called Jack were married on Nov. 22, 1962. He was a Christian Brother who taught at Boys Central. I think it went like this: he left town and then came back. He became County Superintendent of Schools. Jack left her for another woman in 1977. Although she's very up front about this, I would hesitate to put it in print without her permission.

She worked ^{for Co. Treasurer and her} as liaison and executive secretary for the Senior Citizens Council.

Vernie was elected one of six Silver Bow delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1972. One of the rights she proposed passed almost unanimously. Amusing story

When Tom Judge was gov. Evan Barrett was working for Judge and called Vernie to ask if she would be on the Coal Board. She served two years.

At the end of the tape, I talked to Father Sarsfield about Father Callaghan so that's where the Vernie stuff ends.

In an earlier phone conversation with her, Ellen, she suggested you interview Janet Gallagher who was with the Welfare? and then Job Service for 48 years. She's in a nursing home in Seattle but apparently Vernie thinks she is interesting.

Possible second interview: I told Vernie that I'd let Ellen decide if she wants more material and, if so, I would come back. She said I'd be welcome! Also, she said you were darling when you were a little girl! "All the Shannon kids were darling."