

Mill Valley Oral History Program
*A collaboration between the Mill Valley
Historical Society and the Mill Valley
Public Library*

JOE ANGIULO

**An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Debra Schwartz in 2016**

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In this oral history, Mill Valley music man Joe Angiulo discusses his nearly four-decade-long career as a music teacher in Mill Valley's public schools, his family life, his community involvement, and his abiding love of music. Born in Ohio in 1941 to Italian immigrant parents, Joe recounts moving to California after graduating from high school, originally touching down in Sacramento where an elder brother of his was living. A trumpeter since the age of 12, Joe decided to move to San Francisco and study music at San Francisco State University. In 1966 he got hired to teach music—strings, to be exact—in the Mill Valley School District. In 1972 he married his wife Gail Retka, a French teacher in Mill Valley. Four years later, just as they were about to have their first child, Joe, they bought a house a stone's throw from Park School, where this oral history interview was conducted. A daughter, Vita, followed a few years later. Joe recounts his teaching career, including the hard times after the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, and describes his longtime friendship with fellow music man Bob Greenwood. Joe retired from teaching in 2002, but has remained active in the community working as a volunteer on the committee of the Milley Awards, the Mill Valley Chamber Music Society, Marin Music Chest, and the Southern Marin Hot Meal Coalition. This oral history concludes with a paean to music, which Joe describes as part of his being and his humanity, and as providing, moreover, the quintessential social experience.

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Oral History of Joe Angiulo
December 2nd, 2016

Editor's note: This transcript has been reviewed by Joe Angiulo, who made minor corrections and clarifications.

0:00:01 Debra Schwartz: Today is December 2nd, 2016. My name is Debra Schwartz and I am here with Joe Angiulo, one of Mill Valley's music men, and I'm sitting in this beautiful home. Your home is lovely, Joe.

0:00:17 Joe Angiulo: Thank you.

0:00:18 Debra Schwartz: I am sitting here on behalf of the Mill Valley Library and the Mill Valley Historical Society and, firstly, I just would like to say thank you so much for contributing to our oral history program.

0:00:30 Joe Angiulo: Well, it's certainly a privilege to be included with some of the names I've seen on file with the oral history program. I'm impressed, and I'm very grateful to be included. Thank you.

0:00:44 Debra Schwartz: Well, you're really big part of our community, Joe. We were so grateful when you and Bob Greenwood presented at the First Wednesday speaker series called "Mill Valley's Music Men"¹ and so many ex-students showed for that presentation.

0:01:05 Joe Angiulo: Yeah. I've known Bob for over 50 years, and a good many of the students that I had of course he had also. So it was a real treat to see those in the audience and those who also performed afterwards. And, again, I want to thank you for coordinating and making it happen because without you, it wouldn't have.

0:01:40 Debra Schwartz: That was my pleasure. For those that are younger, perhaps, or didn't grow up here in this area, you and Bob Greenwood were longtime teachers here of music. You were an orchestra teacher for the Mill Valley School District. And we've already talked a bit, so I know a bit of your history here as a teacher, but before we jump into that I'd love to hear a little bit about where you were born, some of your family history, just to give us the backstory that helps us to understand what eventually brought you here to Mill Valley, and just set you on the course of your life.

0:02:19 Joe Angiulo: Okay. I was born in northeastern Ohio in a town called Canton, Ohio, which is probably known for the Pro Football Hall of Fame if nothing else. It was the industrial area of northeastern Ohio. My father Giuseppe was born and raised in Puglia, a district of Italy. He came to this country when he was 18. He was born in 1900

¹ The event's full title was "Twenty Questions with Mill Valley's Music Men" held on June 1, 2016.—Ed.

so he came to this country in 1918, I believe, and settled in northeastern Ohio, living with his brother Bartholomeo, who came to this country several years prior to that. And so, he became a laborer with the Republic Steel Corporation in Canton, Ohio. My mother, who was also an immigrant, came here as a 12-year-old with her family to Canton, Ohio. Her name was Concetta Longobardi and she was born in San Cono, Sicily and came to this country when she was 12. They met in Canton, Ohio and were married in 1927.

0:03:39: I have three living siblings, three brothers: Nicholas, who is 83 years old, my brother John, who is 81 years old. I have a brother Bart, who is 78 years old, and I will be 76 in January of this coming year. The oldest sibling was a sister by the name of Mary, who died at the age of 86, two years ago, on November 30th. As you can see, I have three brothers who are surviving who are older than I am so we have good genes in that respect. I became interested in music when my brother Nicholas was in high school and he played trombone in the band at the high school that we went to. And so, listening to him play — and then my brother John became a musician as well playing saxophone. So it was natural for me to gravitate towards music and I started studying trumpet when I was 12 years old in Canton, Ohio.

0:05:02: When I graduated from high school in 1959, it coincided with the graduation of my brother Nick from what was then College of the Pacific in Stockton. He was a music major and he got a job teaching high school band at Sacramento High School in 1959. My parents came to California for his graduation from College of the Pacific, and when they came home I had just graduated from high school that same summer. And my brother Nick had told them that if I wanted to go to school, I could move to California, live with him and go to Sacramento City College free. I didn't have a job at the time so I decided I had nothing really to lose. So I came to California, lived with him for two years, and went to Sacramento City College. I graduated in 1961 and started San Francisco State the fall of 1961. I went to San Francisco State, subsequently, for four years and earned a Bachelor of Arts plus my teaching credential, at the time, was called a special credential which meant I could only teach music from grades kindergarten through 14th grade, through junior college. I had that ability. I played in the band. I played in the orchestra. I did a lot of chamber music in college. San Francisco State at the time was an excellent school for music. I graduated in 1965 and I had no idea what I wanted to do really. And so I started graduate school at San Francisco State. In December, I think, it was of 1965, I got a phone call from a friend. Coincidentally, I had breakfast with him this morning. [chuckles]

0:07:16 Debra Schwartz: What's his name?

0:07:17 Joe Angiulo: Wayne Colyer. Wayne went to San Francisco State. He's a couple years older than I am so we knew each other. He owned a music store in Novato, and I was teaching studio lessons, trumpet, in Novato, as well as going to school at San Francisco State. And he called me in December saying, "I heard there's a job open in Mill Valley. I think you ought to look into it." As I said, I really wasn't doing anything very productive so I decided to come out and take an interview. And I interviewed with the then superintendent, I think his name was Jim McConnell, and as I remember the

school district office was right above the drug store, which was right above D'Angelo's, yes, right now, those offices.

0:08:20 Debra Schwartz: Lockwoods, the old Lockwoods.

0:08:21 Joe Angiulo: Yeah, the old Lockwoods. Those offices were then the school district office. I interviewed there. By the way, I didn't know my way to Mill Valley. That was an interesting thing. I lived in the Richmond District, and found my way to Mill Valley. And then, I had an interview with Dominic Bobbio, who was the principal at Edna Maguire, which at that time was a seventh and eighth grade school only. All the other schools in the district were K-6. Dominic was a musician. He was a house pianist for one of the radio stations in San Francisco before he became a principal. I interviewed with him. They asked me, "The position is for strings, can you teach strings?" And I, being brash and not very bright at the time —

0:09:20 Debra Schwartz: How old were you?

0:09:22 Joe Angiulo: How old was I? I was 23 years old, I guess, or 24.

0:09:28 Debra Schwartz: Young, brash, and not too bright.

0:09:29 Joe Angiulo: Young and brash, and full of vinegar and sass, as they say. So I said, "Yes, of course, I can teach strings." Well, I had one semester of string pedagogy with — I can't remember his name now, I should, forgive me. And I came here in mid-year in January of 1966 to start teaching at the schools in Mill Valley. And I had — so I found out, although it was a very small program of string students — I had some exceptionally talented young musicians, 12- and 13-year-olds who could really, really play well. And so, I took the job. With the beginners, I had enough knowledge about strings to keep them going. The beginners were fourth graders. And then at the end of my first semester of teaching in Mill Valley, this would be June of 1966, a gentleman came up to me by the name of David Smiley, who was a violist with the San Francisco Symphony. He had two children in the Mill Valley School District. One of which was in the fifth grade, and he was one of my students. Well, actually, to be more honest, I was one of his students, because he could play circles around me. And he could play circles around a lot of my colleagues at San Francisco State who were much more advanced in age than he was.

0:11:22 Debra Schwartz: This boy?

0:11:22 Joe Angiulo: This boy of 10 years, yes. Well, it turns out, this young man is Dan Smiley. Now, Dan Smiley just turned 60 last year. He'll be 61 on December 25th of this year. He was 10 years old at the time. His father, as I said, was David Smiley, who was a violist at the time with the San Francisco Symphony. And David came to me after the presentation that I gave at the end of the school year, the concert. And he informed me that, although I may be a good musician, I needed to know a little bit about how strings work. So he offered to give me lessons. Well that was an opportunity. That was a

no brainer. That was an opportunity you take advantage of. And so I was very fortunate, as I often tell people who know me, I said, “Sometimes, it’s better to be lucky than good.” And I was very lucky. Because if it had not been for the kids that were in the program, when I took the program over, and the fact that this gentleman decided to take me under his wing, and teach me, I would have withered out.

0:12:43: I would have failed at this job. I’m sure I would have failed. But I studied with him for five years, before unfortunately, he had a heart attack at a young age — I think he was only 42 years old — and passed away. And I never did study again after that with anybody, because I felt for what the job that I was doing, if I took classes, and learned materials and so forth and so on, that I could do the job adequately. So I stopped studying with him five years after I started.

0:13:26 Debra Schwartz: How often did you study with him?

0:13:28 Joe Angiulo: I studied with him for five years.

0:13:30 Debra Schwartz: But, I mean, once a week?

0:13:31 Joe Angiulo: Once a week. Yes. We had a lesson once a week, unless his schedule, or my schedule postponed things. But it was pretty steady for the five years consistently. I never became really, really good on violin. My opinion is, as an adult, learning to play a string instrument beyond a certain level of ability is almost impossible. Because those connections of playing have to take place at a young age, at the age of five, six, seven, eight. After that it becomes more difficult. The other negative about that is that once you learn to become fairly proficient on one instrument, your expectations for the next one that you pick up are high. Within the family, like from trumpet to trombone, may be easier. But going from a brass instrument to a string instrument is a whole new ball game. And so I find that it was very difficult to become proficient. David Smiley insisted that I play and do some playing. He got me into the Dominican College Orchestra, sitting in the back of the second violin section. And I remember they put — I don’t remember who the conductor was, but it was the “Overture to the Marriage of Figaro.” My brain understood what it was, but my body just didn’t respond fast enough. From the eyes to the brain, to the fingers, by the time the message got to my fingers, we were several measures beyond that.

0:15:24: I got to the point of anticipating playing the first note of every measure. And that’s about all that I could achieve. If you know the overture, it’s really, really fast. Anyway, I played, and I studied with David for five years. I had some good students those first few years, and they all moved on after three or four years. And that’s when I told Bob Greenwood — he often tells me that — I told Bob, I said, “I didn’t know what I had, until I didn’t have it anymore.” And Bob found the same thing out. Because, when Bob started working at Tam High, he was the choral and band teacher. He did not do the orchestra program. When I started teaching strings in the Mill Valley School District, Mabel Pittenger was the orchestra director at Tamalpais High School, and she was for several years. So Bob was not the orchestra teacher, so when he started teaching orchestra

was a few years after I had started working here, and he experienced the same thing. Because he had Dan Smiley. He had Terrie Baune.

0:16:45 Debra Schwartz: These were students.

0:16:47 Joe Angiulo: They were students.

0:16:48 Debra Schwartz: Exceptionally gifted students.

0:16:49 Joe Angiulo: Exceptionally gifted. Dan Smiley, who is a member of the San Francisco Symphony, Terrie Baune, who is Concert Mistress with the Oakland East Bay Symphony, Mariko Smiley, Dan's sister, younger sister, who is a member of the San Francisco Symphony. Several other wonderful violinists. Tompkins — but I can't remember her first name — a Tompkins who is a violinist in New York now. Also, I had all these wonderful players who went to Tam High. Then Bob had them for how many number of years. And then he had to learn the materials, and what worked for certain students, and what didn't, what worked for certain groups. By the time 1971 rolled around, I was pretty well established, and I felt pretty comfortable doing my job. Subsequently I taught for, what, another 30 some years after that, and had some really fine kids over the years and some very memorable experiences teaching. In the course of my teaching career, I met my wife Gail Retka, at that time, in, I think, 1967 when she started working in Mill Valley School District. She was hired as a French teacher for the seventh and eighth grade, and we were very good friends for several years and got married in 1972. That was a big event, especially in the school district, especially with some of the kids, because we couldn't go anywhere without running into somebody. I remember one incident when we were dating —

0:18:52 Debra Schwartz: You mean where were you two went?

0:18:54 Joe Angiulo: Yeah, when we were dating, we went to movies in Stonestown and, lo and behold, ran into two students.

0:19:01 Debra Schwartz: So you're like, "Busted."

0:19:04 Joe Angiulo: Yep. [laughs]

0:19:06 Debra Schwartz: Mr. Angiulo.

0:19:07 Joe Angiulo: When we got married in 1972, I said there were several earth shaking events that happened. One was Watergate, and the resignation of Richard Nixon as president, and [another was] Ms. Retka seen with Mr. Angiulo. [laughs] Those were big events in Mill Valley that year.

0:19:30 Debra Schwartz: Before we go on a little further into your career, apparently it seems that your best teachers have been your students so far and parents, but I'd like to hear your impressions about the area, moving here first from Ohio to California, very

different place, and also your first impressions about Mill Valley, and the basic ambience of the area when you first arrived so we can capture it in a more vivid way.

0:20:04 Joe Angiulo: Right. Well, I moved to Sacramento to go to school when I was, let's see, 18. I guess, it was — yeah, I was 18 years old, so I had no expectations of what I was going to experience. Sacramento was a good two-year respite. I mean, I visit my brother on occasion, and I really don't like Sacramento [chuckles] but that's me. I could not live in the Central Valley.

0:20:46 Debra Schwartz: Too hot?

0:20:46 Joe Angiulo: Too hot. I was born and raised in Ohio but, as a kid, weather is no factor, whether it's hot or whether it's cold. Northeastern Ohio had very warm humid summers and snowy, not extremely cold winters, but snowy cold winters, and they still do. I could never move back to Ohio either. When people ask me where I'm from, I say I'm from Canton, Ohio, a very good place to be from. [chuckles] But that's the extent of it because I don't have any desire nor would I want to move back there. But when I first moved to the Bay Area, and I moved to San Francisco in the fall of 1961, I lived in a boarding house. I don't know that any of those exist anymore.

0:21:47 Debra Schwartz: Do they even exist now? What was living in a boarding house like?

0:21:49 Joe Angiulo: When I registered at San Francisco State, I went to the housing office because I knew no one. I was by myself. I was alone. I was on my own. I had my trumpet and a suitcase with clothes and that was it. So, I looked at housing and I — although I was born in a house where my mom cooked really wonderful meals, I didn't know how to cook. I figured the best situation for me would be, if I could live somewhere where I didn't have to worry about meals. I didn't have a job so I needed to have a place I could live and eat. So I moved in, I remember it was, I can't remember the number but it was between Anza and Balboa on 19th Avenue. The house was owned by Abe and Anne Shomer, two very nice old — an old Jewish couple — and they ran a boarding house. They had six guys living there.

0:23:05 Debra Schwartz: Mostly students?

0:23:06 Joe Angiulo: No, I was the only student. Everybody else — and this is a reflection on San Francisco and the Bay Area at the time — they were professionals. Well, they weren't professionals; they worked in industry. One was an engineer who worked for Ampex Company, which made sound equipment at the time. I came home from school one day, and there was suitcase on the floor in the room that I had. It was a double room and there was nobody else there. And there was a name of Gerald Violet, and his address was Marseille, France. He was a tool and die maker and that was a skill that he could market himself. What he used to do was go to a town, work for six months, pick up and go to another town, find a job, and he was experiencing the United States. He was in Algeria with the French army, and when he got out of the army, he said, "That's

enough of France for me,” and he came to the United States with that skill. So there was a tool and die maker, there was a guy that worked for Ampex, a couple of laborers of different nationalities, and most of them were from Europe. I was the only student.

0:24:31 Debra Schwartz: How much did you pay?

0:24:33 Joe Angiulo: Gee, how much did I pay? I have no recollection how much the rent was, but I do have a recollection of after two years of living there, moving to an apartment in the Richmond and sharing it with three other guys who were students. It was a two-bedroom furnished apartment with a garage, and utilities included, and my share was \$40 a month. It was a \$160 a month for a furnished, utilities paid garage supplied apartment building at 2311 Cabrillo St.

0:25:11 Debra Schwartz: You can remember the address?

0:25:14 Joe Angiulo: Yes.

0:25:14 Debra Schwartz: Oh my gosh.

0:25:15 Joe Angiulo: Yes, well, I go by there once in a while. The building is still standing, although I have my doubts that it'll ever survive some earthquakes. But it was a six-unit building and I didn't tell you this earlier, but I should. Gail, my wife, who's from Minneapolis, in about 1967 or '68 used to go home every summer. I never went home because I was working. And she always gave up her apartment in the summer. So one year, she calls me and says, "I'm coming back 'cause I gotta go to work." I think this was 1969 or 1970, and I said, "Well, the apartment right across the hall from me is vacant if you want to take that one." So, she moved in there, too. She lived in the apartment across the hall, same floor, apartment across the hall.

0:26:15 Debra Schwartz: So you were living there while you were teaching?

0:26:18 Joe Angiulo: Yeah.

0:26:19 Debra Schwartz: You commuted back and forth — in my mind, I'm still stuck in your rooming house, but you mean your own apartment for \$40 a month.

0:26:28 Joe Angiulo: Yeah. I lived in a boarding house for two years. That would be '61-'62, and then moved to an apartment building. I think I lived there at least 10 years with any number of other students who came and went. At one time, sometimes, there were only two of us in the apartment, but the rent was so good that it was hard to give up.

0:26:58 Debra Schwartz: But you're living in San Francisco at quite a poignant time in the city's history.

0:27:04 Joe Angiulo: Yes. If you haven't read *Season of the Witch* it's a book that you must read. But, I read the book, and I remember all the events and incidents that

happened, but I was one of those rare — I don't know if that was rare — the Vietnam War was going on, and although I was concerned, that wasn't my primary concern. My primary concern was going to school. And so, all these things were going on, but I didn't participate in marches, I didn't participate in a protest.

0:27:38 Debra Schwartz: You didn't have the summer of love, no long hair?

0:27:41 Joe Angiulo: No, I didn't go to the Haight in — oh, there's a 50th anniversary coming up next year, 1960 — what would that be? Seven.

0:27:52 Debra Schwartz: Seven.

0:27:52 Joe Angiulo: 1967. No. Gail went to a lot of those things in 1967, so she tells me. But I didn't go with her 'cause we were just colleagues at that time. Yeah, I got the apartment in 1963 or '64 and I lived there until we got — and when we got married, we lived in her apartment on Cabrillo for one year, and then we moved to Sausalito to be closer to work, so we didn't have to commute.

0:28:26 Debra Schwartz: What was Sausalito like?

0:28:28 Joe Angiulo: When we lived there, Sausalito was wonderful. We lived on Spring Street, right above the Army Corps of Engineer.

0:28:39 Debra Schwartz: Off of Bridgeway.

0:28:41 Joe Angiulo: Right. And we rented from a lady who lived in Mill Valley, who lives not too far from here. She owned that building, and we rented a wonderful apartment overlooking the bay. We had a wonderful view. It was, unfortunately though, in the windiest part of Sausalito, 'cause every afternoon, in the summertime or in the spring, the fog would lap at the top of the hill and it would just howl. So we could never sit outside and enjoy where we lived. We lived there for two years and then when we were going to have the birth of our first child, we decided we needed to find a house. That's when we bought this house in 1976.

0:29:30 Debra Schwartz: I'm going to risk asking how much you paid for it, because it's going to hurt to hear it.

0:29:36 Joe Angiulo: Not at all. We were looking all over Southern Marin. I had made the decision that we would not move any farther than Corte Madera or Sausalito. It had to be within a very short distance of Mill Valley. We looked and looked. We looked at a lot of houses. We looked at a lot of places that we couldn't afford and when we found this house, we couldn't afford this one either, because Gail was pregnant, and at the time the lending institutions would not lend to a double income. They only included one income for a house loan. No, no I take that back. Gail was working so they included both of our incomes for the loan, but little did they know that when we bought the house and it closed in April, as of May, she wasn't going to be working anymore for a year. So they gave us

the loan, the house was on the market for \$65.5 [thousand], and I think we paid \$65 [thousand] or something like that.

0:31:01 Debra Schwartz: And we're located very close to Park School.

0:31:04 Joe Angiulo: When I would start my day at Park School, I would leave my house at 8:25 AM and be at Park School at 8:27 at the latest.

0:31:14 Debra Schwartz: [chuckles] That's walking.

0:31:16 Joe Angiulo: Unless the traffic was really bad. [laughs]

0:31:19 Debra Schwartz: Well, we don't have to guess too much what this place would cost if you were to sell it now.

0:31:24 Joe Angiulo: Well, I think, our house has been the median for Mill Valley over the years. And of course it's much more house than when we bought it, because we've added a bedroom, a bathroom, a laundry facility, and finished the basement for the most part.

0:31:46 Debra Schwartz: I think you would do very well if you had to sell it. Let's just say that.

0:31:50 Joe Angiulo: But I tell my children — getting back to my — I have two children, my son Joe, who is 40 years old, and a daughter whose name is Vita, which was my grandmother's name on my father's side, who is 37. Both at home living in the city of San Francisco right now. My daughter just changed jobs, she's working for Google now, and they're working her very, very hard, so she says. And my son who is currently unemployed, worked for Bonham, the auction house in San Francisco, for 10 years producing the catalogues.

0:32:44 Debra Schwartz: Okay, we're going to take a quick pause here, 'cause we know there's going to be noise and we'll be right back. [pause] Okay, we had to take a little pause there, because we had some sound interference. But we're back. Joe, I think it's safe to say that since you first purchased your home here in early '70s things really have changed as far as the expense to live here. What you would pay for a house — which really makes me think about the kind of community you came to when you first started teaching in Mill Valley, the kinds of people that lived here and how they socially have changed overtime, the shifts in culture and demographics, and the kinds of students you might have be teaching over time has changed.

0:33:45 Joe Angiulo: When I first came to Mill Valley as a young person of maybe 23 or 24 my first impression of Mill Valley was one of a community much like I had come from, like I was born and raised in, not so much because it had industry, but because it had a diverse population. I had students whose parents were laborers; I had students whose parents were professionals. I worked with kids whose dads went to work every

morning in San Francisco but wore work clothes, not a suit and tie, because they worked at Burger Meister, or Folger's Coffee, or Best Foods, or whatever. And I remember talking to parents because they would come in and introduce themselves. It was an interesting time in Mill Valley. Being a young person, I did not, after work, spend much time in Mill Valley, after my work day was over. So I missed out on a lot of the — what I later learned was a lot of the turmoil at Tamalpais High School and Bob Greenwood mentioned a lot of those things, I'm sure, in his interview about what went on in the late '70s and early '80s.

0:35:20 Debra Schwartz: We're talking rock 'n' roll and drugs.

0:35:23 Joe Angiulo: As I mentioned, there's a film about the history of Tam High which was very revealing to me because in the late '60s and early '70s, when I was finished working, I got in my car and went back to San Francisco. I was not involved in the community per se. It was a startling and enlightening experience when we bought our house and then finally moved here, just before our son was born, because suddenly I was not only working here but I was a member of the community as well. And my relationship with the students didn't change much but my relationship with people that I ran into, in the market, in the bank, just walking around town or whatever, suddenly I was working again. You are not only working during the regular hours but suddenly you'd be recognized and I'd have to —

0:36:30 Debra Schwartz: Be Mr. Angiulo.

0:36:31 Joe Angiulo: Be Mr. Angiulo and not just a guy walking around town at home. My attitudes towards the people didn't change, but you had to be on guard. And unfortunately, for my children when they got of school age, they had no privacy whatsoever. Because everything that they did, I learned about or my wife learned about. They couldn't walk down the street with somebody without a day or two later, me learning that they saw Joe or they saw Vita doing this or that somewhere in town. Unfortunately for them, they had to suffer through an experience that only a child of a teacher going to school and working in the same community that they live in. But, that was the only experience they had. So, they learned how to deal with that. The community when I first moved here was unusual because I worked most of the time at Edna Maguire, which was a seventh and eighth grade school. If you look at the hills like Horse Hill, it was totally devoid of structures and trees.

0:38:01: It's hard to imagine that if you stand in the playground at Edna Maguire, and you look at the hillside surrounding Edna Maguire now, there's no open space. All you see are trees and homes. When I started working here in 1966, those hillsides look like Horse Hill. There was nothing. And, of course, the train was still running from the north through the Alto Tunnel right next to Edna Maguire School on the path which is now the bike path, into the marsh, past Tam High and into Tiburon or to Sausalito, because that's where the train terminated.

0:38:52 Debra Schwartz: And this is what year?

0:38:53 Joe Angiulo: This was 1966, '67, all the way through whenever they stopped running the railroad which was in the mid '70s, as I recall. But we had a freight train every day. I remember my classroom was bordering the playground, near the railroad tracks. And I used to have orchestra rehearsal, at 2:00 or 2:30 in the afternoon, and we'd have to stop because the train would come and he'd blow his whistle and the conductor would wave up back at the caboose and so that became a regular routine.

0:39:27 Debra Schwartz: The kids would wave back?

0:39:28 Joe Angiulo: The kids would wave and the conductor would wave. Yeah. But that soon ended when they stopped running the trains, of course. This community has changed over the years, and I'm sure everybody who's lived here for more than 10 or 15 years will attest to that. Traffic was not a problem ever when I first moved here. East Blithedale had two times of busy traffic and that was the morning commute and the afternoon commute, and then the rest of the time it was a quiet street. It's not quiet anymore, 'cause we live near enough so I can hear Golden Gate Transit buses all the time.

0:40:12: The population has changed a lot. I found towards the end of my career — which ended in 2002 — that a lot of people who buy here with small children live here through the school years of their children and then they move away. And fewer and fewer are buying — from my perspective now, this is only my perspective — are buying into the community as a long-term resident. And I think that if you look at city government and the people who run for office, they're people who have been here for a relatively short time, the Wickham family not included in that group. But I think if you look at the history of the mayors and the city councilmen in the '60s and '70s, they were second generation Mill Valley residents. And I really wonder, I've not looked into it, but I wonder how many of those people there are. How many second generation Mill Valley residents are there now?

0:41:33 Debra Schwartz: Does this does concern you, and why?

0:41:35 Joe Angiulo: It concerns me from the stand point of participation in the community and its activities. I'm on the Milleys committee, and we're having a terrible time getting new people to work on the committee. We've all been doing this for 20 years, and we have only one young person on the committee. We're not going to be able to continue doing this because we're growing older, and it's time to hand — Abby Wasserman, Trubee Schock, David Fromer, Connie Kroeck, myself, we've all been doing this since almost the inception of the Milleys. And we need to find new blood to help us, and that new blood are people who have the longevity to be able to buy into what we do. The Milleys is one.

0:42:45: The other organization I work for, or volunteer for, is the Mill Valley Chamber Music Society, and we have much the same problems, from two standpoints. Our audience has, our subscription, over the years, has fallen steadily for the past 10

years because of competition. There is a lot of competition now for that Sunday afternoon time. If you look at the pink section, there's all kinds of musical events happening all over the Bay Area, whereas when we started 30 years ago, there were many, many less opportunities. But the audience is getting smaller, the audience is getting older, and we're not replacing our audience with younger members. And I think it's because, again, it draws from those people in their forties and fifties who are the second generation living in Mill Valley who tend to gravitate towards chamber music, which to me is an acquired taste. It's not something that — and having taught children for many, many years — this is not something that children are willing to attend. You don't do that.

0:44:00: That's why I bring chamber music to them as an outreach person for the Chamber Music Society. I take professional musicians into schools. So I bring a string quartet and play for a small group of students, and they get to see and hear at the same time what a string quartet is. Just what is it? And why is it such a 300, 400-year-old institution? Why is it still surviving? Well, if you get to see how it's done, you get to appreciate that. That's why I do outreach with the Chamber Music Society. But the arts institutions and organizations in the whole county are suffering, and I think it's because of that, because we don't have a nicely established, long-term residence in the county anymore. We tend, I think, tend to be more transient. As I said, people move in, and then when their children don't need the excellent schools that Mill Valley provides, they move away to a cheaper place. They make a fortune selling their real estate, selling their house, and going somewhere else where it's cheaper to live. That's my take. It's not an educated, researched opinion on my part; it's my feeling. It's what I see, having lived here for almost 50, well, having worked here, and lived here for over 50 years.

0:45:39 Debra Schwartz: When you were working as a teacher and Prop 13 came in, talk about that a little bit.

0:45:45 Joe Angiulo: Oh, that was a bad time. That was a bad time for me and for my wife. Because in 1976, when Prop 13 was passed, right after I bought our house. We bought our house and moved in in April 1976, and Prop 13 was passed in November of that year. Now, it was great, my property taxes were cut by three-quarters, I paid one-quarter my second year living here than I did the first year I moved in. But it also had a very negative effect on arts programs in the schools, and it had a very negative effect on the library program, the French program, every program that was peripheral to the classroom. Gail lost the French program; it was dropped in 1977. We had a bad year, although we moved into our house, there were several major events in our life that, one a year would've been sufficient. We bought our house, our first child was born, and my wife's mother passed away, all in the same period of less than 12 months, so that was difficult. She lost her job, had to take another job within the district, and my program became an endangered species. I had a colleague who taught band and I taught orchestra, and then we had two vocal teachers. Well, over the period of several years, from 1977 to 1990, the whole vocal program disappeared in the schools. My band teacher colleague, Tod Fleming, had a stroke in 1984, and his position was not filled.

0:48:00 Joe Angiulo: One music teacher for the whole district. In 2016, this year, there are seven music teachers in the Mill Valley School District, full-time. And not too many years ago, I was a music teacher, the only music teacher in the whole district. Now, I have to credit —

0:48:26 Debra Schwartz: For middle schools?

0:48:27 Joe Angiulo: No, no. For the whole district.

0:48:29 Debra Schwartz: Because Bob had retired by then.

0:48:32 Joe Angiulo: No, no. Bob taught high school. It was a separate district altogether. No, this was kindergarten through eighth grade. And now there are seven full-time music teachers. At one time, I was the only teacher, and it was hard keeping the program, because I was teaching band and orchestra from 1984 until 1992. I did band and orchestra. I spent more time driving from school to school than really doing an adequate job. And at the time, just before he retired, Pat McDonough, who was the superintendent at the time, I presented a position paper to the board saying that the way things had been the previous six years I couldn't maintain, because I felt I was doing an injustice to the students I had, because it was more a park and rec program, rather than music education. And I said, "You need to hire somebody to lessen the burden, so that my load wasn't so heavy." I gave it to McDonough to present to the board because he was retiring. I said, "You owe me one. You owe me this." And so we hired a half-time position and that went to Max Perkoff, who was, when he was in fifth grade, a student of mine. And now he's the music teacher at Del Mar School in Tiburon and he's a professional pianist and trombone player. So Pat McDonough left.

0:50:22: We were granted a half-position more. And the next superintendent, I can't remember who it was, may have been John Harder, I don't remember. I've gone through several. But eventually, Barbara Young became superintendent in Mill Valley School District. And she was very supportive of the arts. It's very important for a music program or an arts program or a library program to have an administrator in the front office who understands what you do, appreciates what you do, and supports what you do. Because she did. I admire her for it. She asked me what I thought a really good program would be. And that's when the vocal program started in schools. Jessica Nichols, I believe is her name, started teaching vocal music at middle school, I think it was 2000. And she has built an incredible program. And I said, "You need a full-time string teacher. You need a full-time band teacher. You need K-5. You need somebody to teach K, 1, 2 vocal program." Now, that's what happens in schools. And it was Barbara Young who really helped initiate that program. And the wonderful teachers that were hired to do this program.

0:52:04: Because of Prop 13 and the *Serrano v. Priest* decision, which was a statewide court decision that local districts could not set their own amount of money per student that they spent, whereas we could before. That's when the state started collecting all the funds for schools and then redistributing on several different formulas. It really

negatively affected Mill Valley. And there were times in 1977 and '78 when my program was on the docket. I was getting pink slips saying in March my services wouldn't be needed the following year, and being as I was credentialed to teach only music, that meant I would have been out of the job completely.

0:53:13: Mill Valley, much to its credit, was I think the first district in the state to pass a parcel tax measure, which needed two-thirds majority because of the Prop 13 passage, because of the law. You could only do that if you had two-thirds, you could pass a special parcel tax, which Mill Valley did. And now almost every school district in the state has one. Mill Valley was a pioneer in that regard. The other thing that helped me and the program survive was Kiddo!, which was then the Mill Valley School's Foundation, started by Trish Garlock and Penny Weiss, back in 1984, I believe it was, and their initial charge was to do it for two years, and then get out of the business. Well, they've been in existence ever since, and Kiddo! is a story unto itself. But they did help the program. Every arts position in the Mill Valley School District is now funded through Kiddo!, so considering how many teachers —

0:54:33 Debra Schwartz: Maybe you could describe a little bit about what Kiddo! is for those that are listening. This is donations.

0:54:39 Joe Angiulo: Kiddo! is a program of business partnerships, and individual contributions. They set up a program where businesses “adopt” a classroom, and they have to, in essence, donate so much money to become an adopter of the classroom. If you go around town, you'll see photos of classes saying, “Thank you for adopting our class.” There's a business partnership, there's also individual donations that come from families of kids in school, and from what they call alumni of which I am one. I've given to Kiddo! ever since it started, and still do. It's an organization which is solely for funding programs, arts programs, and other programs in the Mill Valley school districts. But, 1977 and '78 was fairly difficult because I'd get a pink notice in March saying my services wouldn't be needed, but at the same time, with the nature of what I was doing, I had to prepare for next year —

0:55:56 Debra Schwartz: Oh, my.

0:55:58 Joe Angiulo: And also put a product out there at the end of the year showing what I did. It was not easy. It was a very, very difficult couple years, just maintaining, keeping up the energy, and trying to stay positive and do the job. But, fortunately, as I said, the parcel tax, the first one passed — and I don't know about Measure E this year. I don't know if they've really counted all the votes yet, but it was very close to either passing or failing. But every time it's come on the ballot in Mill Valley, it has passed since it started, since the very first one. I got to give credit to the community, they're very supportive from this standpoint.

0:56:52 Debra Schwartz: You are really involved in the community, too. You moved here, you were a teacher, you were an adjunct community member, because you were teaching, but then you moved here, and you're involved with the Milleys, as you said.

0:57:06 Joe Angiulo: I'm on the Milleys committee.

0:57:07 Debra Schwartz: And?

0:57:08 Joe Angiulo: And the Chamber Music Society and Marin Music Chest, and I volunteer for a hot lunch program once a week.

0:57:15 Debra Schwartz: A hot lunch program, which one is that?

0:57:19 Joe Angiulo: There's an organization called the Southern Marin Hot Lunch Coalition, and it's a number of churches and organizations throughout southern Marin, and we supply a lunch. Mill Valley's Greenwood school gymnasium, which we use as a lunchroom because they have a kitchen is — we're the only one that serves a hot lunch every Tuesday to anybody who wants to come. And, most of our clients are what are called "anchor-outs." They live on their boat on Richardson Bay, and we have a van that makes a run to Sausalito, and picks them up and brings them for lunch. So we have a lunch every Tuesday, early lunch, and I've done that ever since I retired, so I've done it for 12 years, 13 years now.

0:58:16 Debra Schwartz: Where do you get the food?

0:58:19 Joe Angiulo: We buy it. There are ladies who do the cooking, and there are volunteers from the community who offer vegetables, a hot vegetable for each meal. So it's the community that does it, and we get food, we get donations from Whole Foods. What we don't use, well, the van that picks up people will drive it to St. Vincent's in San Rafael, and so we don't waste anything. But I've been doing this for a long time, and it's amazing how many people show up for our lunch program, and we ask no questions. They're not all penniless and homeless. Some of them just come because they enjoy the social interaction. A lot of single men, older single men, will come for lunch because they like to talk to the people who work there and the people who eat there. And I've been doing that a long time. The other organizations I've worked on for many years — I've been a musician all my life so the two organizations that I work for, the Music Chest and Chamber Music, is because I like to stay involved, and it's a way for me to be involved with the schools and the students because of the outreach that I do by taking musicians into schools. There was one thing I wanted to mention —

1:00:00: During the '70s, late '70s and '80s, early '80s, when I was having a hard time I had to really defend the program with the board, though not a very supportive school board at the time. And partially, it was because the program was almost nonexistent, because it had turned relatively into a recreation program, as I said, before we started adding teachers. And there was a board member who had been on the board a good many years, who upon his retirement — I think it was actually after I retired, it may not have been though, must have been while I was still working because I went to the meeting where there was a little reception for him — and he made a public pronouncement and apologized to me publicly for having voted against a number of measures that would've

helped my program. And he apologized saying that he later realized that was a mistake. You don't hear that very often from a public official. That doesn't happen, I don't think it's going to happen with this current presidential — anyway, I don't want to get off on that. Then when Barbara Young retired from the district, she also acknowledged that she had learned what a good music program should be by pumping me for information. Those were two very wonderful positive experiences in my career.

1:01:58 Debra Schwartz: Was that — professionally, to know that you — not just your efforts but your experience and the wisdom of what you're doing, that somehow impacts in long-term —

1:02:08 Joe Angiulo: Right. And perseverance. It was perseverance because those years I could have gone and looked for another job, but as I said, I lived in Mill Valley, I bought into the community and I wanted to see the program when I retired be a hell a lot better than when I started. And when I retired in 2002, there were at least four or five music teachers in the district. So it was a lot better.

1:02:44 Debra Schwartz: Almost anything is better than one! [laughs]

1:02:46 Joe Angiulo: Yeah, well yes. Two is better than one, isn't it? But the people that are working now in the district, the music teachers, are all exceptional teachers. They're wonderful teachers, all of them.

1:03:01 Debra Schwartz: Do you have any students that stand apart in your mind? Some student or a moment, an experience in your career that you just think about.

1:03:10 Joe Angiulo: Well, I have several students who became professional musicians. But that's not what I was doing. I saw my charge — as Bob said many times, "We're not teaching music, we're teaching kids through music." You've got to like children, first of all; the subject matter is secondary of importance. You take a child and you're teaching this discipline, and that discipline carries through the lifetime no matter what you're doing. By learning music, you learn that things don't come immediately. You have to work at something to really achieve excellence. I've had some students who have become quite excellent musicians, but that's not what I wanted. I wanted students to learn to appreciate when they go and hear a musician play, what it takes to get there. And I think I was very successful at doing that. 'Cause I had a lot of students and a small fraction became proficient enough to be professionals. I have three former students who are members of the San Francisco Symphony. I have a former student who's a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. I have a former student who's the concert mistress of the East Bay Oakland Symphony.

1:04:58: I have many, many former students who are what are called "freeway musicians" in the Bay Area who play in a lot of organizations. A lot of musicians who were successful playing in New York and other parts of the world, actually. There was a time in the world where American musicians, if they were really good, could get a job almost anywhere in the world. They craved American musicians because they were

trained to play not only Italian, or French, or German music, but they could play it all. And if you're a musician trained in France in the 1970s, 1980s, you were trained to play French music, but not so much German. They're like night and day. But I've had a lot of students who have become successful professional musicians, and I keep in contact with them. They communicate with me, or I call them, and they call me. But I've had students who went into other fields, who still use music in their lives; and music has become very important in their lives.

1:06:18 Debra Schwartz: What is music in your life? Beyond the teaching.

1:06:24 Joe Angiulo: It's my mantra. I remember when we first got married, my wife and I, I usually would come home first. She always spent too many hours at school. And sometimes, she would come home, and I'd be lying on the couch, listening to music, and she'd say, "What are you doing?" I'd say, "I'm listening to music." She says, "But you're not doing anything else." I said, "No, I'm not reading, I'm not working, I'm listening to music. That's an activity, as far as I'm concerned." And it's something that I could withdraw from the day, by doing, by listening, because I could block out. It's my form of meditation. I could block out everything and just listen. Because every time you listen to, say, Beethoven's 5th, every time you listen to it, you listen and you hear something you haven't heard before. That's a fact. And when you go to a live performance, it's even more so.

1:07:46: A lot of people say, "Why do they play that same stuff over and over and over again?" And it's because every time you listen to it, you get something different and you get something new. Music in my life — it's part of being a human being, is part of me being a human being. And it's part of my existence. I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't turn that on and listen to it. And when, Gail's not home, I turn it up really loud.

1:08:21 Debra Schwartz: Do you have any favorites?

1:08:23 Joe Angiulo: Favorites? No, I remember asking my orchestration professor at San Francisco State, one year, which of the Brahms symphonies was his favorite. And his reply was a good one, and it become mine as well, and it's: "the one I heard last." I like them all. I listen to classical. I listen to romantic. I listen to modern music. I listen to jazz. I love big band. I grew up as a big band aficionado, going to hear Stan Kenton, Les Brown, Gerry Mulligan — all the big bands — Ted Heath. When I was a kid in Canton, Ohio, they always did a summer tour. All those bands would come through and play for dances, which was wonderful. And as a high school student, I could go there and listen to them for a minimal amount of money, you could go in and listen to Count Basie. It doesn't get any better than that.

1:09:36: I love most all music. I love musicals. I played, when the middle school started doing Broadway shows under Joan Deamer in 19 — when my daughter, Vita, was in the sixth grade, I believe. Joan came to me — I think it was '92 or '93 — and said, "I want to do *Guys and Dolls*, would you play?" And I said, "I haven't played — " I had literally had not played trumpet in 20 years. And I said, "How could I say no?" Max

Perkoff conducted the show, and I played trumpet and a couple of other colleagues played in the pit. I think we were five or six, and it took me several months to get my chops back in shape. But fortunately, it's a musical, so in musical, you play one number and then you get to rest for a while. So I didn't have to play for half an hour straight. I got through the show. I played several shows.

1:10:42: And then I conducted the last 10 years that she did shows. I conducted all but the last two. Because I love musicals. We did *West Side Story*, which was quite a challenge to play, as well as conduct. I would get musicians like Wayne Colyer, whom I mentioned earlier in this interview, an incredible saxophone player and clarinet player. And I had, coincidentally, breakfast with four of the guys that used to play all those shows. Bob Fields, who's 88, Colyer played saxophone. Wayne, who's a saxophone and flute player, who's in his early 80s. Jim Dalrymple, who's a drummer who used to teach biology at Terra Linda High School but was an incredible drummer, played all the shows in San Francisco, the musicals that came through town back in the '70s and '80s. And Tod Fleming, who was my colleague here, before 1984, who played a number of shows also. So, music is my life. I don't know what I would've done otherwise.

1:12:02 Debra Schwartz: You teach music and it's part of the way that you stay level and inspired, it sounds. Are there life lessons that you can pass along through the process of teaching music and experiencing music?

1:12:25 Joe Angiulo: I think the only life lesson you'll learn by learning an instrument or participating in a group is, number one, you learn what a wonderful social experience playing a musical instrument is. Because unless you do it alone, which not too many people will do, you participate in a group, whether it's a quartet, an octet, or a big band or an orchestra. It's a social activity and you'll learn to cooperate with one another, you'll learn to listen to one another, which the world certainly needs more of. And you'll learn that the only way to do it well is to really work at it. You don't turn the switch on and suddenly learn to play. And if it's worth doing, and you find that you really enjoy it, then you're going to work hard enough to get as proficient as you think you want to be in order to enjoy the experience of performing. And, let's face it, it's performing. If you don't perform, there's no reason to work at it. Performing is a real charge, it's a real energy booster. It makes you feel good while you're doing it, it makes you feel good at the end also. I remember, and a lot of musicians who play for a living, you build up this energy and you work and you do this, and then it's done and you can't immediately go home and go to bed and expect to go to sleep. It just doesn't happen. You're so wound up.

1:14:25 Debra Schwartz: You're high from —

1:14:26 Joe Angiulo: You're high on what you've done. And that's exhilarating. You don't have to have booze or drugs to get that high. You get that high doing what you're doing, and it's amazing. I talked to musicians who do it for a living, they are really passionate about it and it's wonderful to hear that. Because you don't hear a mathematician talk about his — well, I haven't, maybe it's because I don't run around in

that crowd. But what other profession or what other activity inspires you to do that except the arts?

1:15:16 Debra Schwartz: Before we close this wonderful interview, may I tell you a story?

1:15:24 Joe Angiulo: Sure.

1:15:26 Debra Schwartz: Well, we were preparing for our first Wednesday presentation with you and Bob Greenwood, “Twenty Questions with Mill Valley’s Music Men,” and we had a wonderful time, the three of us talking about your careers, what it had meant to you and what you’d gotten out of the town and experience as teachers, what being a teacher brings to a person’s life. And, also — which you couldn’t really speak to — but what you bring to the students’ lives in interesting and lingering ways. And so, really, without you being too aware of it, I did contact some of your former students and asked if they might be willing to perform after the Q and A for your presentation. And I immediately got responses back from several that were really sorry to say that they couldn’t attend because they were performing, many of them traveling all over the place. But several did, I think there were seven students.

1:16:36 Joe Angiulo: I believe so, yeah.

1:16:38 Debra Schwartz: Then they were glad, happy, to be able to participate. They wanted to, but they had a condition. And that condition was that before they would play, they’d each have an opportunity to speak. Who am I to negotiate? I’m so grateful they were coming. That’s exactly what happened. At the end of your presentation, the doors opened and in came these students, and each one of them had a little story to tell. “Thank you, Bob Greenwood. Thank you, Joe.” They talked about the effect that your teaching had on their lives, and how they used the lessons and inspiration as teachers and performers, as adults. And it was quite moving, do you recall?

1:17:30 Joe Angiulo: Absolutely, it was very memorable, yes.

1:17:31 Debra Schwartz: Yes. But what I didn’t expect would happen is that after they played their piece — after they had all spoken, and they had said such really beautiful, moving things about both of you and the impact you’d had on their lives, and then they played and were all done, and everybody’s clapping — instead of bowing to the audience, they all turned to you and they bowed.

1:18:00 Joe Angiulo: That was great.

1:18:03 Debra Schwartz: Yeah, that was great. I think we can conclude this interview now. Is there anything we haven’t talked about that you’d like to say in conclusion?

1:18:17 Joe Angiulo: I don’t think so. There is no conclusion, it goes on.

1:18:22 Debra Schwartz: Yeah. Well, Joe, on behalf of the Mill Valley Historical Society, and the Mill Valley Library, and the community and the town of Mill Valley, I thank you so much for taking the time to share your experience and your story, and for all that you give to our community as a teacher and in all the various ways that you continue to contribute.

1:18:45 Joe Angiulo: Well, I thank you for taking your time, Debra, for doing this. I mean, this is exceptional. You're doing an exceptional favor for the community and for the city, and for the Historical Society. Because this is important, I think people 50, 60 years from now — whether they listen or they know it's there — there's a handle on what Mill Valley was like if they're interested in finding out, and hopefully, they will want to know. I remember seeing photos saying, "Do you know who these people are?" That shouldn't happen, and because of you, it won't happen.

1:19:32 Debra Schwartz: And the Historical Society, Library, and you.

1:19:35 Joe Angiulo: It will.

1:19:36 Debra Schwartz: But we'll try our best, won't we?

1:19:38 Joe Angiulo: I'm a small part, thank you, though. [laughs]

1:19:41 Debra Schwartz: Alright, Joe. Well then, we'll say, "Adieu."

1:19:44 Joe Angiulo: Thank you very much, Debra.

1:19:45 Debra Schwartz: Thank you. Handshake, and we are off.