



**Mount
Sinai**

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INT 0334

Interview with Mark Clarke

Interviewed by Angelyn Thornton

August 20, 2020

COVID Memories: Hi, can you hear me? [silence] Can you hear me?

Mark Clarke: Yes, I can.

CM: Okay. Hi, how are you?

MC: I'm fine.

CM: Good. I have some things to read right off the top.

MC: Okay.

CM: This is Angelyn Thornton, marketing coordinator for Levy library at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai interviewing via Zoom. Today I'm interviewing Mark Clarke. Is that right?

MC: That is correct.

CM: Okay, great. Please do not disclose any personal health information regarding patients or other persons. If you do disclose your own health information, it will not be covered by HIPAA. To start off, please tell me your name, department and institution.

MC: Mark Clarke, I am in the Nursing Department, I am in unit 630 at Mount Sinai Morningside.

CM: Great. Can you tell us more about your job at Mount Sinai?

MC: Yeah, well, basically I am the unit secretary, which means I see everything that happens on the floor...I discharge patients... [Inaudible]

CM: Do you have a particular story or event that you would like to have recorded?

MC: [Inaudible]

CM: I'm sorry I'm losing the audio on your end, I can't hear you right now.

MC: I'm sorry.

CM: Oh, okay. There you are. Yeah, sorry about that.

MC: Yeah, I'm saying that it was like waiting for the perfect storm. You hear about it. You hear about it on the forecast and then you wait and you wait and then it comes. Then you start seeing the patients coming in, and you say, 'Wow, this is, this is a real deal.' I felt this way when this thing just started sometime in March.

CM: How do you think that it changed your day to day life, both at work and at home?

MC: Well, at work, I had to be masked up all day, which is something new. I'm accustomed to wearing a mask, not for all day. And at home, my son, my younger son was in school, had to stop from school, so I had to be there supervising him, doing his work on the remote classroom. Also, I had to be taking the train to work because, at the time, coincidentally the garage that I parked in was beginning to...was closed. So I started taking the train just as soon as this thing hit. So that was a little scary for me. Concerning, I should say. As a precaution I was more careful, was concerned I might bring things home to work. Sorry, to home from work. Thankfully, that didn't happen.

CM: What would you consider the toughest part of your day right now and, on the opposite side, what is the best part of your day?

MC: The toughest part of my day right now is sometimes I reminisce on what happened in the past and I find myself going back through our book log, looking at the names, trying to remember the face of the patients. I also remember some other family members who I have come in contact with and I wonder, from time to time, how they're doing.

Right now, the best part of my day is that I can now communicate. I can...I have time, more time now to sit with my coworkers, laugh around, talk around and joke with them, to intermingle more. So that's great.

CM: How has living through this experience made you feel?

MC: Well, it gives me a better appreciation for life. Everybody says that, but when I look back and I see patients coming in who seemed normal, they seemed all right, and you know, over the next two or three days, they were gone. [Inaudible] It's very strange [not audible] very fragile, things can just happen overnight. So you live your life, and people always say that, as if that were the last day, and you give your best or try to give your best. And that's what the little things. Appreciate everything.

CM: Absolutely. What gives you comfort during this time?

MC: That the worst is over, at least for New York here. So, that is comforting. Things seem to be back to normal at work. So the tension, it's not there as it was before. Everything seems to be returning to normal, at least in this region of the country. So I'm hopeful that this too will pass, and pass soon.

CM: If the virus were to just magically disappear tomorrow, what is the first thing that you would do?

MC: Stop wearing a mask. [laughs]

CM: Right, right. [laughing] Me, too.

MC: But, I'm, I'm not the party type. So, you know, as far as the lockdown is concerned, it didn't affect me that much anyway. I stay home anyway.

CM: Do you have a single, particular memory that will stay with you from this experience?

MC: Yes. I have an experience going down to pick up something from a family member and taking it to the patient. I met the patient. The patient was great. Next thing I know, on my return to work the next day, the patient was taken to the ICU and, of course, he didn't make it. It was a bad experience.

But also, there are good experiences, too. Because I remember distinctly, there was this patient at work, who the doctor would allow the wife to come up because, you know, he was supposed to be on his last days. That patient eventually was discharged from the hospital to a nursing home for rehab and recovery. [inaudible] That was great. To this day, that song, Come With Me [?], it's a Mount Sinai song. And so, from time to time, I go back and I listen to this song because I think it was so invigorating, also uplifting and encouraging.

CM: So I will leave it up to you. Is there anything additionally that you would like to add about your experience?

MC: [inaudible] I still wonder about the families [Inaudible] I wonder "Is there somebody up there?"

CM: Okay, great.

CM: Well, those are all the questions I have for now. I appreciate your time and your participation in this project.

MC: Thanks very much.

CM: Okay. Have a good day.

MC: You, too. Bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW](#)