

Monmouth Memories

Date: May 26, 2015

Interviewee: Andrea Sacco Bornstein

Interviewer/Transcriber: Professor Melissa Ziobro

“It was a good ride, and the pleasure was all mine.”

Andrea Sacco Bornstein was born in 1940 in Long Branch, where she has spent most of her life (save stints in Florida and Texas early in her marriage). She stayed home with her children until they were school-aged, at which point she began to look for part-time work. She thus began her career at what was then known as Monmouth College in 1977 as a secretary for the Business Department, ultimately working her way up to Assistant to the Vice President for Enrollment Management- the position from which she retired in 2015.

Initially, Andrea worked part-time and had the summers off. As her children grew, she was willing to increase her hours/pursue positions of greater responsibility. Her first office was located in a house (now demolished), originally meant for the caretaker of Wilson Hall (when it was a private residence), located near where McAllan Hall and the Plangere Center are today. She recalled that there were only five residence halls when she started working on campus, no football team, and just a few sports teams. Cedar Avenue was “fraternity row,” until some rowdiness caused the community to evict the Greeks. On the growth of the campus over the years, Andrea said, “it makes you very proud to have been a part of it, to see it grow.”

After she was in the Business Department for about a year, Andrea was asked to move to Wilson Hall to serve as the secretary for the Dean of Registration. The President of the College at the time was Samuel Hays Magill. The atmosphere in Wilson was very friendly—Andrea noted it was more of a family-like feel than it is now. Eventually, President Magill asked Andrea to be the secretary to the President’s Executive Assistant. At that time, one of their many projects included research into starting a prep school on campus. They also worked on the first strategic

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plan for the College. Enrollment had begun dropping off following the Vietnam War, as students who had matriculated solely to avoid the draft left campus. Dr. Magill's "charge" was to plot a course for Monmouth in the post-Vietnam environment. (Andrea noted that every President has been given a "charge" by the Board of Trustees.)

Around 1983, the office for which Andrea worked became known as the Marketing Department rather than that of the Executive Assistant to the President. They were charged with ridding Monmouth of its "party school" image and establishing more academic credentials. This was easier said than done. The incoming freshman class in 1991 had only about 391 students—Andrea recalls how disheartening this was, not to mention the impact on Monmouth's budget and operations. She recalled it being a "somber time," with people going without salary increases, people emptying their own wastebaskets, dusting their own offices, etc, for over a year, but they "pulled together as a family like you couldn't believe." Determined to right the ship, Dr. Magill reorganized the college into departments and schools, similar to what we might recognize today. He started the football program to raise our stature, and initiated the process of seeking university status -a goal which would be realized during the tenure of President Rebecca Stafford.

When President Stafford took the helm, she hired a consulting firm to assist in the school's recruitment and help increase its academic standing. The Board of Trustees and administration realized we would have to give students scholarship money in order to remain competitive. A formula was developed to decide how much money students would be eligible for. Increasing our ranking in the *U.S. News and World Report* was also a big concern at this time. It was during President Stafford's tenure, according to Andrea, that the school first turned students willing to pay tuition away if they did not meet certain academic standards. With the

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football program and increased academic rigor, we began to look more like a “real” college and guidance counselors began recommending that their students consider us. (In her interview, Andrea often notes the importance of the matrix award funding for student recruitment, the football team, and the addition of men and women’s sports teams. She fondly recalled the football team’s first ever win, and praised Coach Kevin Callahan and his coaching staff for their work in helping to build our brand.)

Andrea notes that her office has worked with University Engagement, and discussed the important role alumni have to play in the successful operation of the University, from donating to mentoring and more. She discusses the tremendous growth the campus has seen over the years, from the Multi-Purpose Activity Center (MAC), to new residence halls and academic buildings, to improvements to existing infrastructure. Andrea noted that the beauty of the campus is a huge draw for students, and that you can always hear people talking about it on student recruitment tours. The administration recognizes this and invests accordingly.

The physical plant is not the only thing that has grown at Monmouth. Andrea acknowledges that the administration and staff have grown a lot, too, but feels that any growth has been very purposeful and is not just administrative bloat.

The student body has grown in size over the years, and become more diverse (in many ways- socioeconomically, ethnically, racially, geographically, etc). Andrea notes that increasing diversity is not an easy thing to do, and that, while we have made gains, we still need to do more.

A fond memory for Andrea is when *Annie* was filmed in Wilson Hall. She recalled of the experience, “It was magical.” This actually exemplifies the importance of engagement- an alum working for the film team suggested Wilson Hall as the location for Daddy Warbucks’ home.

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A less pleasant memory centers around a faculty strike shortly after she began working at the College. The strike occurred due to a rift between the faculty and President Stonesifer. She had to cross a picket line to get to work, until the administration eventually told the staff to stay home until things were resolved.

Without reservation, of her 37 ½ years at Monmouth, Andrea fondly recalls the many friends she made and notes, “it was a good ride, and the pleasure was all mine.”