

Monmouth Memories

Monmouth Memories Oral History Interview

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Interviewee: Symmone A. Fisher

Interviewer/Transcriber: Christian Vieira, Monmouth University Student

Symmone A. Fisher was born in Beth Israel Hospital in Manhattan, New York in 1990 to Gregory Fisher and Rosemarie Walton. This eventual professor was raised throughout New York City, at one point or another residing in Brooklyn, Queens, and currently in Long Island. Being the second of three daughters, many of the responsibilities of taking care of her grandmother fell to her because of the immediate access she had to her, creating a special bond. Her father was not a formidable presence throughout her life. There was not one place in particular that Professor Fisher preferred during her childhood, but it was in Long Island, New York where she was able to start choosing activities in which to participate. There were fonder memories from these activities, for home life was rough at times, and the ability to branch out had not been available much while younger. These activities, such as athletics, were a way to get out of the house, an outlet of sorts. Professor Fisher attended Longwood High School in Middle Island, New York, where she still coaches their track and field teams. In about the tenth grade, Professor Fisher decided to try out for their soccer and track teams, predominantly because both these sports were non-cut. After competing in the soccer season that year, Professor Fisher tried out and found success on the track team. While in high school, it had been her dream to pursue a career in the sciences such as biology. Becoming a medical examiner was her dream.

The process of choosing which university to attend was more complex for her than most. Many factors had to be taken into consideration before any decisions were made, and there were other options being considered as well. She had originally decided to attend Virginia Commonwealth University, but was also recruited by Sacred Heart and

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Monmouth. After taking trips to Sacred Heart and Monmouth, Professor Fisher knew that Monmouth was the place for her. This influential trip had roots in the fact that she was being recruited for track and field, and while on the trip, she had the opportunity to meet the head track coach who would end up being a strong presence in her life, almost like a second father. The professor's parents were not influential participators during her decision process.

As Professor Fisher started her undergraduate degree in 2008, she lived in the Pinewood dorms her freshman year, but would end up living off campus for the next three years. Being somewhat far from home was tough on her because she was so used to being close to her grandmother on a daily basis, and now the only chance they had to talk was over the phone, which took an emotional toll. Her grandmother was diagnosed with colon cancer during her freshman year, and the last time the two spoke over the phone was a month before her grandmother passed away. This made life at Monmouth very tough, on top of all the other problems one deals with when attending college.

While at Monmouth, she tried to get an on campus job, which ended up not working out, but eventually became an orientation leader which was successful. Other than that, there was not much time for extracurricular activities because of the grueling track and academic schedule. Professor Fisher decided to take a lot of credits freshman year, with the workload not being the hard part, but the actual courses themselves proving to be challenging. Starting out as a biology major, Professor Fisher did not understand why there was more chemistry involved in biology than actual biology. She struggled with chemistry and ended up having to withdraw from that course.

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The very first influential class at Monmouth was her English 102 class, which introduced her to the concept of feminism by showing the original stage production of the *Vagina Monologues*. Then, during the summer of freshman year, Professor Fisher fell into the course Introduction to Political Science, which opened her eyes to the possibility of pursuing another major. Eventually, she would change her major to political science with a concentration in international relations. Women's Health with Dr. Hope and Gender and Sexual Identity with Dr. Mezey were two more influential classes for Professor Fisher- so influential, in fact, that she decided to pick up a double major, incorporating sociology into her academic schedule.

During her junior year, Professor Fisher tore her ACL meniscus, rendering her unable to compete for the rest of that year, and eventually redshirting the senior year of undergrad. This horrific injury made troubling times even tougher, as motivation would dwindle on days in which even the most common facets of life, such as mobility, became an issue. But, during her senior year, Professor Fisher was nominated and eventual winner of an award at the 40th Anniversary of Title IX event for Monmouth University honoring senior year women. This was an extremely high point for her, and she was eventually nominated to the state and national version of this Title IX event, honors that she says will always live with her.

Professor Fisher fell into the master's program here by chance, because of redshirting her senior year as an athlete. Professor Fisher noted that she would rather have received her master's in sociology, but since the University did not offer one, she chose the next best choice for her, which was public policy.

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While at Monmouth, Professor Fisher noticed a stereotype that was prevalent throughout the University. The stereotype was that minorities (especially African-Americans) only came to Monmouth if they were an EOF student or an athlete. SGA even made a PSA refuting this stereotype. Being an athlete and a minority herself, though, made the professor question the validity of this stereotype. Professor Fisher has since noticed an increasing amount of diversity here at Monmouth. In fact, she credits the political science and sociology department for being extremely diverse, and one of the reasons it is a pleasure working with this team. Other advancements Professor Fisher has seen while at Monmouth include an increasing effort to provide events and groups that support civil rights movements that are relevant to our generation, such as the Drag Show and the Vagina Monologues.

Two weeks after Professor Fisher walked at graduation she started teaching her first class. Monmouth had new sociology classes and the faculty asked if she was interested, and of course she said yes. She still holds a very positive relationship with her co-faculty members, whom are her mentors. Moving forward in the world of academia, Professor Fisher has accepted a position with Teach for America.

If Professor Fisher were to give any advice to students who will soon be graduating Monmouth, she believes that for our generation, a college degree does not prepare you for all the potential issues one might experience in the “adult” world. It might take a few years for one to find their groove. There will be difficult times, and though the knowledge you gain in college is invaluable in the decision making processes of life, it cannot give you preparation for everything. Establishing oneself after college is truly a tough endeavor, but

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she stresses that it is possible to accomplish all of one's goals with hard work and determination.