

*Monmouth Memories*

Monmouth Memories Oral History Interview

Date: November 15, 2017

Interviewee: John Kessler

Interviewer: Alexis Martin

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The “Kessler” name will forever hold a special place in the hearts of Monmouth University students thanks to Monmouth alum and longtime supporter of the school, John Kessler. He and his wife (and fellow alum), Henni Kantor Kessler, have generously given back to the University in more ways than one. This patronage, and much more, are the subject of this oral history interview.

Mr. Kessler grew up in West Orange, New Jersey and attended West Orange High School where he was involved in a number of athletics; including baseball, football, and swimming. After high school, Kessler spent two years at school in Emporia, Kansas before transferring to Monmouth College (now University) in 1965 as a sophomore.

During his years at Monmouth College, John Kessler played for the varsity baseball team. He was also involved in Greek Life at Monmouth, pledging the fraternity Phi Delta Sigma his senior year. Kessler also noted his college job, working as a dishwasher at the famous Inkwell, which allowed him to meet many Long Branch residents.

However, Kessler’s true love was football. At the time that Kessler transferred to Monmouth College they did not have a football team, but this would change with Kessler’s future involvement in the school. Realizing that Monmouth, in 1992, was largely a commuter school, Kessler knew that the creation of a football team would bring spirit, pride, and funds to the school. With his advocacy and support, the program was approved—and it has grown at an astronomical rate. Recently, in fact, John and Henni decided that a new stadium was just what the program needed. This interview was conducted shortly after students of Monmouth

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University were blessed with the spectacular Kessler Stadium. For the motivations behind that amazing gift and more- listen to the full interview!