

*Monmouth Memories*

Monmouth Memories Oral History Project

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Interviewee: Dr. Enoch Nappen, former Political Science Professor

Interviewer/Transcriber: Nicole Benis, Monmouth University Student

Dr. Enoch Nappen was a former Political Science professor here at Monmouth University. He retired in the summer of 2015 after nearly 5 decades at MU.

Dr. Nappen grew up on Florida Avenue in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He says Atlantic City was a very different town in those days. He lived two blocks from the ocean. During the winter, the town's population was around 50,000 people, yet when the summertime rolled around it skyrocketed to about 250,000 people. Dr. Nappen reflects on his childhood by speaking about his wonderful family. He mentions he had two older brothers, much older than him. He also explains that there was no cursing in their household and no one ever argued. Whether it was his parents or his brothers, he never heard arguing. He just was not used to that. Dr. Nappen went to Atlantic City High School and says it was a beautiful building before it was demolished to become a casino parking lot.

Dr. Nappen said that he always knew he would go beyond just college and that he would further his education somehow. He concludes that this probably had something to do with the fact that his father was a magistrate when he was growing up. Dr. Nappen mentions that education was regarded very highly in his household. His mother got an education which was very rare for women at the time; however, he notes that his grandparents mortgaged their small store in Philadelphia in order to send their daughters to school. He further notes that while his father was a magistrate, he received no formal education on the topic. In fact, Dr. Nappen explains that his father dropped out of high school as a sophomore to work and help support his family. Interestingly enough, Dr. Nappen speaks about the influential nature that his father had

## *Monmouth Memories*

on the community. He recalls that parents would bring their young children to his father as a scare tactic; trying to teach them right from wrong. He also mentions that his father was an elected official; therefore, the basement of his childhood home was set up to have a campaign headquarters. His father's law office was also in the front of their home. Dr. Nappen remembers going up to the door and listening to what his father was telling people as advice. He had nothing but positive things to say about his childhood from his family life (mentioning how his mother helped him study spelling every day after school), or his first job being an usher at Lyric Theatre for 50 cents an hour. He reflects on his life as a whole with fond memories; family playing a huge role in his happiness.

Dr. Nappen attended Rutgers University on a full scholarship as a Political Science major. During his undergrad career, Dr. Nappen was enrolled in ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corp), since at the time everyone had to serve sometime in the military. Dr. Nappen mentions that Rutgers University was a very different school when he attended. The class sizes were small and it was a private institution. Dr. Nappen also says since it was an all-boys school, if you wanted to date a girl, you had to travel to the Douglass campus across New Brunswick. He also reminisced on his roommate the first semester of college. He notes that since he did not hear cursing or arguing growing up, he was shocked to hear all of the "four letter words" his roommate used. He said that his roommate left the second semester. However, he also mentions the fond memories of his fraternity life at Rutgers. He talked about the rushing process and what he coined "hell week." He notes that of course he had to pledge, but the process was not dangerous like it is today; rather it was fun and silly. Dr. Nappen mentions that he was required to wear an onion around his neck on a string. If someone made him laugh, he had to bite into the onion. He also recalls that he could not brush his teeth, shave, or shower for a week. He notes

## *Monmouth Memories*

that when he could finally do those things at the end of the week, he fell asleep shaving! Dr. Nappen has fond memories with his fraternity brothers. He claimed that 2/3 of them were Jewish and 1/3 were Catholic; meaning they couldn't have ham on Fridays. He also mentions that having a house mother and a chef in the fraternity house was a great way to spend his college years.

Upon graduating from Rutgers University, Dr. Nappen applied to Rutgers Law School and got accepted; however, he had to put time in the military first. Dr. Nappen was a part of Army Intelligence where he was stationed at Fort Holabird in Baltimore, Maryland for training. He then went on to take courses in typing and interrogation tactics. Dr. Nappen mentions that he did so well in the six month program that he was contemplating switching to the Monterey School to learn Japanese. However, that would require extra military time and, after all, Dr. Nappen wanted to attend law school.

Dr. Nappen mentions that a free weekend he had while in the military was a huge turning point in his life and would ultimately change his career path. He went to visit Rutgers University. He stopped by to say hello to his fraternity brothers and some of his professors. He notes that the chairmen of the Political Science Department approached him about a scholarship for a Masters in Political Science. The scholarship was called the World Peace Fellowship. With this, he would receive a free education and an additional \$3,000 (which he says was a lot of money in those days). Dr. Nappen mentions that he did not want to insult the man so he went on the interview for the scholarship; however, he had no intentions of doing it. He still wanted to go to law school. Dr. Nappen wound up getting the scholarship and even wrote a letter declining it. However, after much consideration, Dr. Nappen's mother convinced him to take this opportunity

## *Monmouth Memories*

because he could go to law school later on. This very step changed the course of Dr. Nappen's life.

After receiving his Master's Degree in Political Science, Dr. Nappen heard about a job opening at Monmouth College; somewhere he had never heard of before. He had an interview with the President of the college and a few deans. They were looking for a professor that could teach many subject areas. Dr. Nappen says he did not know any better and therefore he did. In 1960, Dr. Nappen became one of the two Political Science professors at the whole school. Dr. Nappen recalls that even as a Political Scientist, he taught seventeen courses over his career at Monmouth University. He taught the Rise of Western Civilization for two years and for the first five years teaching, he taught a new course every semester. However, Dr. Nappen says he enjoyed teaching many different courses, as this allowed him to see the interdisciplinary connections between various fields.

Dr. Nappen notes that early in his Monmouth career, professors were required to teach five classes a semester; now he says they only have to teach three or four. Furthermore, he said he liked teaching because it was not like a forty hour per week job; as he could learn, study and teach all in one. Dr. Nappen also recalled that if another professor was sick and you covered their course, you were paid an extra \$4 and with that he could take his whole family for dinner at Perkins in those days. Even though Dr. Nappen said he does not like talking about money, he noted that his first salary here at Monmouth was \$4,000.

Dr. Nappen mentions all of the positive and warm memories that Monmouth has brought him. He says that in the beginning of his career the Political Science Department fell under the History Department (along with Sociology and Geography). Dr. Nappen also recalls that there was a building named The Willows since it was under willow trees and that the Political Science

## *Monmouth Memories*

Department had offices there and a few classrooms at one point. This building does not exist anymore.

When reflecting on the history of Monmouth University, Dr. Nappen mentions how connected he felt with his peers and students. He mentions that in the early days, Wilson Hall was the heart of the campus. He mentions that essentially, everything was located here. He said that the Wilson Annex was where the teachers had their offices. However, when this was a private home, that is where the maids and butlers would have resided. Dr. Nappen says that below the annex was the school bookstore. The current Admissions Office was previously the college's library. He also notes that the current location of the Bursar's Office was a kitchen where faculty would get their food. After receiving their food, faculty would sit at two long tables in a cafeteria on the main floor. He mentions that this was a nice way to get to know his fellow colleagues and he essentially knew everyone at the school. He does state that over time as departments grew and more buildings came about, he started interacting with less and less people. He even mentions that at faculty meetings in recent years before his retirement, he barely knew the other faculty members since the university had expanded so much since his first few years here. Dr. Nappen also mentions the beautiful architecture present within Wilson Hall. He recalls exploring the various floors. He notes that some rooms had a French feel to them, others Mayan or Aztec, and other rooms reflecting the time of the dinosaurs. Dr. Nappen liked the idea that Wilson Hall tried to encapsulate many time periods in history throughout a luxurious and elegant building. Furthermore, he points out a love/hate relationship he had with a particular room in Wilson Hall. He says that he believes it was room 106. Dr. Nappen says that this was the Billiards Room; however, there was a mystery door behind the bookcases that actually stored the cues. He said this was very neat to him, however, he did not enjoy teaching in this classroom as

## *Monmouth Memories*

he felt like he had to shout in order to be heard since the room was soundproofed for the billiard games.

Dr. Nappen said he enjoyed teaching at Monmouth because it reminded him of when he went to Rutgers. There were small class sizes and professors got to know their students; they were not just a number. Although Dr. Nappen never imagined teaching-- he claimed he could have worked for his father-in-law and made much more money-- this turned out to be what he loved. Dr. Nappen mentioned that he decided not to attend law school and after teaching for a few years and gaining confidence, he decided to attend school for his Doctorate in Political Science. He makes it clear that at the time he received his Doctorate from New York University, it was not necessary in order to be a professor, however, it was something he wanted to do. He simply loved learning.

Dr. Nappen knew that he would have high aspirations for himself as that is what his parents had done. His father may not have gotten a formal education, however, he wound up being in elected office, a magistrate, and the president of any club he joined. Dr. Nappen also notes that his mother would become the president of the ladies auxiliary. Essentially, he knew he was destined for something more. He talks about the era he grew up in and how he viewed smoking and drinking as bad. However, he remains strong in the fact that he would not give in to peer pressure, yet not make anyone feel bad about any decisions they decided to make. He also mentions accounts of his grandchildren doing the same and respecting their values as opposed to caving into peer pressure. He further reflects as a proud grandparent on their accomplishments thus far.

Dr. Nappen says having the childhood he did shaped his whole outlook on life. There were wealthy politicians who came into his home and poor people as well. He mentions the most

## *Monmouth Memories*

important thing that he took from life thus far was to treat people as individuals since he met nice poor people and mean poor people, and nice rich people as well as mean rich people. Dr. Nappen truly evaluates people as individuals rather than by their race, political affiliation, or how much money they have. Dr. Nappen said that was the beauty of Monmouth. He claims that he truly enjoyed the years spent here- so much so that he decided to stay past the time of traditional retirement at sixty-five years old. Dr. Nappen stayed until this past summer 2015 term, when he was almost eighty-five years old, because he truly enjoyed teaching and because the department members he worked alongside with were some of the best people he knew.

Dr. Nappen credits Monmouth University for many things throughout his life. He was able to send his children to college; where they received their masters and later become lawyers. Both of his sons enjoyed their time as Monmouth University students. One became student council president, the other valedictorian. He also mentions that one of his sons came up with the song that would be sung at the graduations after winning a contest. Dr. Nappen had nothing but good things to say about Monmouth University.

Furthermore, he reflects on the life at Monmouth when he first started as opposed to when he retired. He notes that Monmouth had just become a college about four or five years before he began teaching. Previously it was a junior college. He also notes that the average age of students was about twenty-seven at the time, and he was the professor at only twenty-four. Monmouth was viewed as a great educational opportunity for people that did not want to travel to Rutgers. Monmouth was a very big commuter school at that time. He mentions that the commute, however, was blocks or miles, not what commuting is considered today. He further notes that there were fraternities at Monmouth in the early days he taught here; however it was hard to live on or around campus in the beginning. He notes that the opening of Brookdale

## *Monmouth Memories*

Community College was a big threat for Monmouth since they did not know how far Brookdale would expand. However, with time, Monmouth continued to expand and there were no worries of Monmouth being outshined by Brookdale.

Having dorm buildings was a huge problem at first for the communities around Monmouth. Making an expansive college campus was something that neighboring communities such as West Long Branch, Long Branch, Oakhurst, Ocean Township and Deal worried about. The community was unsure as to whether or not they wanted to incorporate a college campus into their towns.

Dr. Nappen always kept busy outside the classroom as well as in. He took up going to antique stores and flea markets, especially at Englishtown. He would go at 3 am on Saturdays to look for artifacts that had to do with campaign materials such as pins, photos and books. He eventually wrote a book titled “Warman’s Political Collectibles: Identification and Price Guide” which was published in 2008. Dr. Nappen’s book has sold over 3,500 copies and is currently sold on Amazon. He was also the pioneer of Monmouth University’s unique internship program. While the Political Science Department had students intern in various areas, he realized that learning about future careers and how to conduct oneself in a job setting was of utmost importance in order for a student to secure a job upon graduation. Therefore, after much success with internships in the Political Science Department, he proposed a plan to make internships a campus wide degree requirement. The internship seminar would be in a class setting of no more than twenty students. The students would then have an internship in their field that would allow them to gain work experience. He humbly notes that he received an award for this outstanding accomplishment.



## *Monmouth Memories*

Starting out as one of the two Political Science professors in the department, from 1960 until 2015, Dr. Nappen made a huge influence on not only the Political Science Department, but the university as a whole. While his concentration may have been in constitutional law or the presidency, he enjoyed teaching courses that students would comprehend and remember. He wanted to make an impact. After all, Dr. Nappen says his most important take way from life is to not take it too seriously. He values a good sense of humor and feels that this makes him stay positive. He hopes that Monmouth's future is still filled with the compassionate teachers, bright students, and small class sizes that made it great from day one. Dr. Nappen notes many fond memories that he had over his five plus decades teaching here at Monmouth, and he hopes that the University can continue to grow and change to become an even better institution while not forgetting its roots.