

Monmouth Memories

Monmouth Memories Oral History Project

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Interviewee: Keri Sansevere

Interviewer/Transcriber: Kayla Kraft

Keri Sansevere, an adjunct Anthropology professor at Monmouth University, grew up in Freehold, New Jersey. Although she moved around numerous times as a kid, she ultimately returned to Freehold, but then moved a couple more times after that. Professor Sansevere always had a love for history. When she was young, she would take neighborhood kids on mock archaeological digs, pretending rocks were dinosaur bones and destroying her backyard in the process.

Professor Sansevere attended Monmouth as an undergraduate beginning in September 2005. When she arrived at Monmouth, she experienced culture shock, it was definitely not high school anymore. Her high school graduating class from Mater Dei, a private catholic school, was only eighty-nine students. It was also the first time in her life that she did not have to wear a uniform to school. However, she did feel that her rigorous training at Mater Dei prepared her well for Monmouth. She excelled academically.

As a student, she was introduced to Anthropology and to many great professors, including Professor Simonelli and Dr. Veit. She also took several classes with Professor Bill Mitchell. She took so many of his classes, she said she “minored in Mitchell.” Her first teaching observation was even done by Mitchell. She remembers a quote Mitchell once said that she really identified with, “One of the unifying factors of Anthropologists is that we like to observe people and we never feel like we fit in.” As an anthropologist, Professor Sansevere enjoys people watching and observing people’s gestures, proxemics, and interactions.

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Along with Bill Mitchell, who had connections to some of the great Anthropologists in the field, her other favorite professors were Dr. Veit and Dr. Schindler. She remembers Dr. Veit's contagious enthusiasm for archaeology and his gift of bringing artifacts to life. Dr. Schindler, an Experimental Archaeologist, had the gift of creating artifacts. One memorable class of his was Primitive Technology. These professors influenced her desire to teach.

Professor Sansevere majored in Anthropology, minored in History, and was the first person to minor in GIS, which at the time was a new program. She also took enough classes to minor in Archaeology, but in those years Anthropology majors were not allowed to minor in Archaeology.

While attending Monmouth, she was a part of the History and Anthropology Club. The club didn't do much, but a couple members did help her make chicha, a corn beer from the Andes, for an extra class project for honors credit. Sansevere also attended two Monmouth archaeology field schools, both at Point Breeze in Bordentown, New Jersey. The first time she went, she excavated a prehistoric site. The second time, she went as a team leader and excavated the site of Joseph Bonaparte's home, who was Napoleon Bonaparte's oldest brother. She also presented at a couple Archaeological conferences. Since her time at Monmouth, she has presented at at least a dozen conferences.

Because she was a commuter, she felt like she didn't get the stereotypical college experience. She didn't go to college parties, but didn't feel like her experience was lacking. Although, looking back, she wishes that she did experience it, because as an anthropologist, she likes to experience new things.

The crowded commuter lot is one aspect of Monmouth that Professor Sansevere remembers to be the same. However, back then, Bey Hall and McAllan Hall were the hot new

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buildings. Since then, Monmouth has built new dorms, Pozycki Hall, the MAC, and has brought in a new food service as well as began reconstructing the science building.

Some experiences outside of Monmouth include several internships at different museums, a GIS internship, and an internship at a CRM firm. She was even the Assistant Field Director at Ferry Farm in Virginia, which is the site where George Washington grew up. She has also presented about archaeology at a nursing home and had taught CCD for many years. One memorable experience was teaching a Cradles of Creativity class to gifted international students.

After graduating Monmouth in May 2009, she went to Temple University for Graduate school. She is currently on the PhD track. At Temple she again experienced culture shock. The professors were tougher and the program was competitive. She also had to walk past some impoverished, violent neighborhoods to get to class.

Professor Sansevere started teaching at Monmouth three /four years ago. She teaches classes such as Archaeology, Environmental Geography, and Cultural Anthropology. In the future she might like to teach classes such as a Vernacular Architecture class and a class studying minority experiences during colonization. Although she is not much older than her students (she is twenty-eight), she loves teaching and connecting with her students and inspiring them.

One critique about universities in general is that adjuncts are underpaid. She often finds herself seeking other employment during the summer to make extra money. She has been a nail salon receptionist, a camp counselor, and many other things. Another critique is that there seems to be a deep ageism in the field of academia. She feels that she doesn't always get the same respect because she is a young professor.

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Sansevere's favorite parts of Monmouth University were the academics and the networking. She also feels very privileged to be the only female archaeology professor at Monmouth, but she doesn't notice it because at Monmouth she feels at home. She remembers graduation day being a bittersweet and sad day because she was going to miss everything. However, looking back it is her favorite memory of Monmouth.