

Introduction

I'm Charmaine Tomczyk, Project Director for the Coastal Carolina University History Project which includes collecting histories from individuals who contributed to the university's development. Today I am interviewing Anne Trainer Monk who currently works in information technology services as the Digital Content Manager for Coastal Carolina University's website. Anne has held various key positions at Coastal including Assistant Vice President for Marketing Communications and is an award-winning editor. Prior to coming to CCU in 1990 [sic 1991], Anne had a career as a newspaper reporter.

Transcription of Monk Interview, February 18, 2016 Interviewed by Charmaine Tomczyk

Q1. Hello, Anne. I'm so pleased you agreed to be interviewed today for the CCU history project. Anne you've been at Coastal since 1991, I think. You had quite a career before you came to Coastal and I want to begin by asking you about that career as a newspaper reporter before you came to Coastal in public relations. Tell me about that journey and why you chose to work in academe.

Prior to my career as a journalist I finished my undergraduate degree at Coastal in English and I do remember quite fondly when I first introduced myself to my advisor. He was none other than Tom Trout. He had on canvas deck shoes and khaki pants and a fishing hat with tie flies on it. I thought "I love this man." And *Venus on the Half Shell* was on his door. I don't know how many may remember that office; it was above the library at the time.

Tomczyk: That was the second floor of the library.

Yes. So I did some freelance writing for publications around the area and was hired at the Loris Sentinel in Loris, South Carolina to be a reporter. Probably two months after that I became editor. (It was a very small staff.) I learned a whole lot about Horry County and Coastal kept coming up as a point of interest and growth through those years and I would cover the school board and county government; just about anything including large vegetables. [chuckle]

Tomczyk: The Loris Sentinel is still around today. At the time you were there, was it a weekly newspaper?

Yes, it was a weekly newspaper. We were doing our stories on typewriters. It would be typeset and then pasted in with a wax roller. It was a messy process and editing was very difficult and required an exact-o-knife. But it was great fun and I'm so glad that I learned the business that way.

I do remember an undergraduate student here and at the time we had a typewriter to do envelopes and someone asked her to go and she wasn't sure even how to turn the typewriter on. So times have changed.

After the Loris Sentinel I went to graduate school in Columbia and worked at the Associated Press so that was kind of big time journalism, moving stories about and recasting them and hitting "send" and you weren't sure where they were going; not sure of the reach. But it was a great, great experience as far as how the news business works. I appreciated that chance.

Tomczyk: How long were you with the AP and what was your position there?

It was a night editor of some sort and I would work like until like four in the morning, recasting. It was broadcast rather than print. So I recast some news stories in broadcast speak, if you will. It was a great, great experience. And I heard from a friend of mine who was in the master's program at USC with me that there may be an opening at Coastal. I didn't think very long about that. I thought that would be great to go back to the beach and back to Coastal.

Foolishly I thought it would be the Coastal that I left, but as we know, change is part of the culture here.

Tomczyk: How many years had transpired since your graduation here and then returning?

Six years; something along those lines. But in that period, the residence halls came on line in 87 when I was gone, so that changed the institution incredibly and it was a great victory as far as Coastal versus USC was concerned.

Although there were many stipulations about the resident halls: what percentages of our enrollment were allowed to live on campus; those sorts of things. It did change this institution.

Tomczyk: Tell me more about that because I did speak with Dr. Bob Squatriglia who was VP of student affairs at that time that was happening. What was your impression of the residence halls since that was one of the stories when you were here? How did we get the residence halls and why were they important?

I think the early leaders, namely Dick Singleton started it and Ron Eaglin carried it through as far as standing up and saying to USC "it's time for change and you need to support us." Chancellor Eaglin put his whole career on the line with the belief that Coastal would be successful as an independent institution. We should all be very thankful that men like that took those stands. It took courage and tenacity and all of those good things. There was a whole crowd behind that independence movement eventually.

Q2: When you were here at Coastal, you were director of public relations for many years and were important in contributing to things like the administrative council, you were a part of that, especially for President Ingle (Ron Ingle, our first President of CCU). Can you share some of the high profile news releases that happened at that time - in retrospect- that you remember?

At the time we would generate news releases as quickly as we could about, say an event coming up, a concert. And then in the process of copying and stuffing envelopes; this was before the fax machine even was part of the whole, it was very laborious and the students would assist with that. We would have paper cuts to be sure. [smile] We would do that several times a week. At the time our office was right in the same hallway with the President's suite., back when we had the original telephone extensions that started with 2001 and ended I think with mine 2017. I don't know if anyone realizes those early numbers. It just went around in a circle in that wing of the Singleton Building. I'm just one of the few that still has 2017 as one of those low numbers.

We were in many ways very responsive in the way that we reported news of the university. We didn't have the chance or the staffing – there were two of us – to get out in front of things and craft, you know, features, and those sorts of things, of important stories to tell. Even today the university is faced with how we need to tell our story. It's a challenge. Communications is a bit like the tide; it keeps coming and

coming and coming, we never have enough. Or maybe it's like parking on any campus; it's never quite right. There is never enough.

Tomczyk: And it's always an issue, front and center.

It seemed like many of the big releases were Fulbrights, the first Fulbright scholars or those sorts of things. Enrollment reaches an all-time high –that was every year! But in that year, in that moment it was always a big story. New degree programs, first master's programs awarded. All of those things were big stories for us at the time.

Athletics was coming to its own. I know the basketball program I remember Russ Bergman. They were pretty successful.

Tomczyk: They made it to the Final Four.

Yes, and I remember the basketball team. It seems like it was spring break. They were walking around campus and had arms full of t-shirts that they had made and they were trying to pass them out, or I'm sure they were trying to sell them or something. Those were fun times, early on. And now you look at athletics and the role it has as part of university life and community wide, it's amazing.

Tomczyk: In looking over the history of the university, I found we had a lot of important people come to visit us, either as commencement speakers or Kimbel Lecture Series. Are there any of those kinds of -- I don't know if I want to call them dignitaries, --but any of those individuals that you recall as unique or particularly newsworthy?

In the early days, Gloria Steinem was on campus.

Tomczyk: That was for the Women's Conference, right, that Sally Hare was doing?

Yes, back in the 80s, wasn't it? Maybe 70s that was prior to my time here, but I remember because a woman of that stature was truly impressive to me then, as it is now. I wish we had more of those kinds of women on campus. Maya Angelou was on campus. I heard her speak and something she said in her lecture – and I'm completely paraphrasing – about when you know that you've written something powerful, you take your words and ball them up and through them at the wall and if they stick rather than fall down to the floor, then they're good. I thought of that a lot; my takeaway.

And of course Desmond Tutu, when Archbishop Tutu was on campus that was truly remarkable.

Tomczyk: Our first speaker for the Celebration of Inquiry conference.

Yes. Just to be in the presence of that man. He was so kind and gentle; it was a life changing experience for me and I know that students and other faculty and staff around him that day felt it was very special.

Tomczyk: Clearly the news business has changed over the years. You talked about that a bit when you talked about turning on a typewriter earlier and I first thought a manual typewriter. Can you talk a little about some of those changes over the years and how did your role and delivery of the news at Coastal maybe change because of the industry changing a bit.

Of course technology has driven everything and that's true of every organization. When the fax machine became prevalent, then that was our distribution method. It was much faster and less labor intensive. Then when the internet came about, what a great way to post your news and happenings. Our internet was, I believe, August 2006 was our first website and it had 8 main pages and today there are thousands of pages on our website. I just remember looking at it skeptically, "where is this going? I didn't quite understand it." But you catch on quickly and realize the potential of these sorts of things. And now with social media, I mean, it's a whole different ballgame. And there is immediacy to the news business of course. The daily newspapers are updating throughout the day kind of coverage. And everyone with a phone seems to be a reporter to some degree. You have to learn to respond to that and act within those parameters.

Tomczyk: So your day was not necessarily an 8 hour day. You could be "on call" on a weekend if something happened. Can you tell us some about those circumstances? Like when you were called off hours - under what circumstances were you called 24 hours, for what kinds of things?

Generally those were the emergencies; say a student was in an accident or something of those kinds of things. I do remember prior to Dr. DeCenzo being named that was a very, very difficult time in many ways as far as the media scrutiny that we were exposed to.

Tomczyk: From the beginning of the search, right? [Absolutely] Naming the candidates, the interviews, the Board's decisions.

Yes, I remember we had a news release ready to go announcing the President and quickly it was pulled back. Those were very challenging times. And I'm not faltering the media at all because the media are the representatives of the public of course, in theory. And to ask those questions it's important. And as a public agency I think it's really important we do business in a transparent manner. It's really important while protecting certain things that are not exempt from Freedom of Information law.

Tomczyk: This question is a little off from my list but what you've said prompts me to think about our relationship with other media in the area, the TV stations and the other newspapers. Since you were a news reporter yourself, how did Coastal collaborate or relate to the other news outlets in the area?

I think we had in those early days a unique and gifted position in that the major newspapers of the state were not covering the area. And in those days the newspapers were the big game.

It changed to some degree with television of course. But, we all knew one another. We knew the reporters. I think we had a close relationship. And I do think for the most part that the reporters understood where I was coming from as far as sharing information with them. I think my background as a journalist helped with that too. It wasn't guarded or threatened or anything of that sort. Of course we would always run something that could potentially be sensitive by the President.

Some of those things could not be released for example a couple of NCAA incidents, some of that in the investigation portion. You don't send that out. I think our relationships with local media have been really good over the years. They got a little more aggressive with the advent of the internet as far as getting things first.

I do remember one reporter following me from a reception of some sort, following me back to my office in the Singleton Building. It was like 9 o'clock in the evening. But that was the only time I remember that I would face that kind of aggression from a reporter.

Tomczyk: What kind of news were they seeking from you? Do you remember the story at that time?

I don't recall the story but I believe it was probably one of those NCAA incidents that we couldn't yet talk about because there was legal action.

Tomczyk: I remember a reporter calling the library to find out what door I left out of in the evening. They wanted to interview me. I was the Faculty Senate Chair and it was a time during independence and they wanted to know the faculty point of view. But I left so late at night they weren't out there when I left.

Is there anything else, Anne, about relationships with media outlets or other businesses? You know we were so connected and still are connected with the community in so many ways. Were there other relationships that impacted your job or influenced your position?

The relationships that are most memorable to me have been relationships with donors and friends of the university. Some of those are truly special. For example, Tom Edwards was a wonderful guy and I happened to get to know him and Robin very well through their gift to the Humanities building. Sadly Tom didn't live long enough to see the building open. I think the butterflies we released held his spirit in some way.

Tomczyk: Was that part of the ceremony. [Yes] I remember they were giving out little bricks – wasn't that the same ceremony? [yeah] But I didn't know about the butterflies. I guess I missed that actual part of opening.

Yes, I remember the grandchildren were very young and they were floating around there and then the butterflies went. At first if I recall the conversation came up - a balloon release was suggested. No, a university cannot do that.

Tomczyk: Weren't there concerns about the atmosphere then?

And what happens to the balloons when they come down?

Tomczyk: The building openings were a big part of the collection I see. There was always a big ceremony for a building opening. You mentioned the Edwards Building which had a unique fanfare for its opening. Do you remember any other building openings that became newsworthy, that had a unique approach or twist to them?

Yes, early in the 90s when the Wall building was officially open, I remember that distinctly. It was an outdoor program in the circle in front. I don't remember who the primary speaker was, but I do remember the trains were going by. And you would hear that on the soundtrack today. I was particularly anxious about that, having been part of the scripting. Funny the things you remember. That was a big one.

I remember when the Prince Building was dedicated.

Tomczyk: Eldred Prince was there at the time; he was still living?

Yes. Sadly the speaker called him Mr. Price. In error, yes. So many others, the ground breaking for the football stadium.

Tomczyk: The Brooks stadium

Yes, at the time the former soccer and football stadium for Conway High School. We played soccer there. It had not been active so the field was all grown up; you know weeds. I remember finding a watermelon growing out in the middle of it. It became a great metaphor for growing something out of nothing. So we had a watermelon on the lectern for that groundbreaking.

Tomczyk: I believe at one of our Founder's Day celebration. One of our founders had been quoted as "from small acorns large big oaks are grown". [Yes, I love that quote.] Now I like the watermelon quote now too.

Let me ask you a question about the changes at Coastal. What do you see as the biggest change at Coastal in the years you've been here?

Obviously the size of the institution; from the size of the enrollment. I do remember when we hit 2000 students and we thought "wow, that are really expanding." And now with over 10,000 students and 70 undergraduate degree programs and a list of graduate programs including the PhDs. It amazing, the growth that way. And students from all over. I remember when I was here as an undergraduate student here and I'm from Vermont and that was absolutely unheard of. They would ask me to speak because they wanted to hear my Vermont accent. But now we have international students they are from everywhere it's wonderful. I don't know that we have all 50 states represented but we are close to that and many countries as well.

Tomczyk: So what do you see as the big Challenges as Coastal moves forward.

As we move forward I hope that we don't lose - and I'll say intimacy - but that closeness that you can enjoy when you're smaller as far as knowing students and the relationships among the faculty and staff too. I hope that we don't get so big and busy and so entrenched in our own functions that we lose that, especially with the students and the alumni when they come back. That's fabulous, fabulous stuff.

And to hear from an alum: One young man called three years after I had him in class -- I used to teach communications. He wanted to thank me - just out of the blue. Oh my gosh -- for what?! He said "You gave me a chance and helped me get that internship." Oh, Gosh, I didn't think anything of it; that's what I'm supposed to be doing. It's really wonderful to hear as our students go out in the world and build their careers. And maybe you had a tiny impact; it's a nice little bonus.

Tomczyk: That's very well said. I think all of our faculty would like to think they have that impact on some of their students. They will come back and realize the significance of their work here. So what do you think, Anne, is the most significant event at Coastal that changed you or had an effect on you while you were here.

Without question I would say independence. When that came about – wow those were times - let me step back to the historic vote between the Horry County Higher Education Commission and the Coastal Educational Foundation held in Athenaeum hall in a room we called double-o three. That was a very moving moment in our history. I was in there of course the media covering it. I do remember for some reason Jimmy Johnson was not in there with the group he was peering through the glass door to my left and when he heard them all voting unanimously, I just saw him gave a thumbs up and off he went. I thought that was that kind of quiet leadership. He was instrumental – as were so many others -- in that whole movement coming to fruition; independence. When the governor came and signed the legislation on the steps of the singleton bldg. These were huge moments in our history.

Tomczyk: That was Governor Campbell?

Yes, Governor Carroll Campbell. The legislative delegation was all there. Clark Parker had some buttons made with the date and the name of the institution, the university. I remember him handing those out. We didn't have a lot of time to prepare for that day. It was announced according to the governor's schedule and at the last minute. But I do remember we felt like we needed some kind of dramatic effect for the moment so Facilities rigged up a banner that you pull the cord and down it would come that said Coastal Carolina University. I just remember worrying so much that that thing was not going to stay up there. And in our big moment it would come crashing down. But it worked just beautifully.

Tomczyk: So we had timing on our side in more ways than one.

Absolutely. Absolutely. When we became independent, Ok, so now we were a university. I don't think we were entirely certain that payroll could be run without all of the support we had from USC. All of a sudden, it's like a child going off to college, "oh, what do you do?" We didn't have a logo; we didn't have a university seal. Our Board of Trustees met for the first time July 1st, 1993. We didn't have a mace, an alma mater; we had nothing. It was fortunate we got to start from scratch.

I do remember traveling up to check on the progress of the mace, the construction of the mace. It was a faculty member at Winthrop University. He had done maces for various royalty and what have you, other universities as well. He was very well regarded. What we didn't think of is the weight of the cypress handle.

To use a baseball metaphor, we should have corked the bat. The mace is often carried by the senior most faculty member; they're up there in years and it is **very** heavy. I wished that we thought of that back in the construction process. But it is a beautiful mace. And the silver cup and the athenaeum of course on the top and on the very bottom is the state of SC seal and I remember having conversations with Mr. Ward about that being on the bottom or placed where it could be easily removed in case we became a private institution someday. So there was some good planning.

Tomczyk: Always thinking ahead. And Mr. Ward was the man at Winthrop who designed it? Or did we design it and he made it.

He came up with it. We knew the athenaeum should be a prominent part of it. He did the silver work and the wood work he was remarkably talents. That was a fun project. Our alma mater was written by the then poet laureate of SC., the words by Terri Sinclair. That was a beautiful addition to our traditions. Coming

up with the logo and letterhead; we were starting from nothing. At the time in the public information office it was Nancy Burton and myself. She was the administrative assistant and we would ask “Geez, what are we going to do now?”

Tomczyk: You probably had a lot of questions coming in from outside now that we were independent, asking questions about our future and who we are and what we plan to do?

And we had those questions on campus. [laugh] But those were fun times. Ron Ingle as the first president he was great to get us going.

Tomczyk: it really called for a creative nature, didn't it? Do you remember anything else about all those things we had to create ourselves, like the seal?

The seal was created through board of trustee member Oran Smith. And he is a trustee member today. That was a nice gift. It had obviously the waves underneath the athenaeum. The athenaeum: We were fortunate that the Kimbel family supported that way back in the 60s I think their background was from Chapel Hill – University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill; of course they have the well. They thought it would be important that we have a symbol, a campus symbol. So the Athenaeum was constructed not as part of the building but afterwards.

Tomczyk: Was the athenaeum originally in the center of campus, in the horseshoe?

No, it was always built on the portico of the then student union, but it was not part of the original construction project, it was added on. It's never been moved. It is a beautiful structure. We see it throughout the campus; on the top of the Prince building, the shape of the Wall board room's College of Business.

Tomczyk: We have replicated it in our design and architecture around campus. I believe there is one on top of Baxley hall.

Yes. From a campus planning standpoint it's pretty remarkable how the central axis of campus goes right through the Singleton Bldg. – Prince Bldg. the Wall building – and straight on back to the residence halls and the Commons Dining Area and Chanticleer Drive I believe Mr. Wall walked that through the muck and mire and determined here's where the road should go.

Tomczyk: And therefore the curvature of the Wall building?

Yes. I do remember behind the Singleton building in the 70s and 80s it was a coquina like parking lot and it was just a mud hole. There were two by fours to get into some the portable where faculty had some of the offices. It was pretty rough at times, but fun.

Tomczyk: Were there portable offices as well as classrooms, or just faculty offices?

I remember just offices. It's fun to talk to some of the former faculty about who they were office mates with because it wasn't necessarily someone in humanities, it might be a cross of politics and business for example. I think the relationships were very close among the faculty.

There was a – what did we call that building – the faculty house. It was pretty much a shed, but there was a great spirit of togetherness. Faculty would go and bring their adult beverages.

Tomczyk: It was right near the lake which is still unnamed behind the Wall building.

I've heard Turtle pond I think. But I don't know that we had anything official.

Tomczyk: The faculty house would have monthly gatherings.

And probably conducted some of the faculty senate-like business there. I don't know.

Tomczyk: Informally and unofficially. There was a small fee faculty would pay because there were meals there; there was food there. On certain occasions they would have canoe races, do you remember those?

No, I don't remember canoe races. That's great. I should be interviewing you, Charmaine.

Tomczyk: No, it's good to confirm some of what I recall because it fills in the pieces. Is there anything else that would be interesting for our history?

I think it's interesting now that the students in Chant411 now call me to answer their questions. I thought I was still young. I just hope that over time that this kind of spirit that can do spirit and energy that is Coastal, that we can retain that and pass it along to generations that come after us. Because it is a special place; there are many of us who have been here many many years - and that's by choice.

Tomczyk: I suppose the ways we meet that challenge is to do those things you've talked about, having celebrations and gatherings that we plan so we can commemorate our achievements.

And football has done remarkable things for this institution and not just as an athletic team; bringing alumni back and getting the community engaged. It's been amazing. You think of events like Dick Singleton would say “**That's** a Coastal Carolina moment.” The start of football was one of those. How do we even do this? David Bennett was the perfect person to get that program going and it continues to grow under Coach Moglia's leadership.

All of our athletics that *can do* spirit I think is captured in a guy like Coach Gary Gilmore who used to run baseball out of a rusted trailer. I remember we were hosting a regional baseball tournament. We had to bring in bleachers and the whole thing in order to accommodate the NCAA requirements, but it created this really exciting environment. We can do this; we can do this. I remember the announcer TV, or radio rather, talking about the trailer, where that was the home of Coastal baseball. You know guys like that who are giving lives and truly love this place and love working with those students; whether you're coaching a team, whether you're providing inspiration in the classroom, or connecting them in an internship; I hope we don't ever lose that and that we can celebrate it more, too.

Tomczyk: It has a ripple effect, because since we've gotten football it seems like all the other sports have gotten more fanfare as well. Doesn't it? We hear more about baseball and its new stadium and soccer has gotten more attention.

And the women's sports. And lacrosse is the 18th intercollegiate sport. Now we have sand volleyball so we have 19. It's nice to see the women coming along. I think the new softball complex is a really positive thing for women's athletics on this campus.

Tomczyk: It's strange to think we began as a commuter college and now have all the components of a large university.

Yes!

Thank you, Anne.

I don't know how useful that is or not.

Tomczyk: Of course it is! All of it is. It helps validate what I've been seeing in the written documents. There's always a story behind the document as well as you know, just like the news there's a story behind the news report. I think having these interviews help fill in what was really happening at Coastal at that time. So thank you!