

**Juanita Brunelle**  
Oral History Memoir

Interviewed in person by Jennifer Rudolph

December 18, 2013  
Massasoit Community College

**RUDOLPH:** This is Jennifer Rudolph, coordinator of public services and instruction at Massasoit Community College library. Today is Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and I am interviewing for the first time Professor Juanita Brunelle. The interview is taking place in the Louison board room at Massasoit Community College, One Massasoit Boulevard, Brockton, Massachusetts. This interview is being conducted by the Massasoit Community College library and is part of the fiftieth anniversary oral college history project. Thank you so much for coming, Juanita; I appreciate that you're helping us with this project. And I wondered if you would tell us a little bit about yourself, where you grew up and went to school?

**BRUNELLE:** *[talking at the same time]* My pleasure. I grew up in the northern most town of New Hampshire—a town called Pittsborough, which is 400 square miles, and when I was living there, there were about 700 year-round inhabitants. It was a big hunting and fishing tourist area, so the population would double in the tourist season. We had one school, grades one through twelve, which—as I look back on it—I think was kind of nice that first graders could see the seniors who looked so adult. And so most of the activities in school in the town revolved around the school, which was, again, I think was a plus. So I graduated from high school and set my sights on college; most of us were looking at colleges. I had been to Worcester, Mass, where some of my brothers and sisters lived and decided to go to Clark University, where I majored in modern languages, French and Spanish. French was my major and Spanish was my minor. My dream was to go to France, and at the end of my senior year, I got a scholarship to the Bryn Mawr Summer Institute to go to France, which was my dream come true. So I spent that summer after graduating from college in France with a lovely family in the south of France—Avignon, France—and got a chance to go to Spain for three weeks, back to Paris for ten days. Continued my studies at University of Rhode Island in French with an assistantship, and I

was originally going to go into the Peace Corps with my fiancé, but we split up, so I didn't want to go into Peace Corps by myself and thought of going to VISTA [AmeriCorps VISTA], since I spoke Spanish and was interviewed and pretty much accepted and decided I should really get a job.

So, I called Clark University, and they told me there was an opening at a place called Massasoit. So I applied mostly just to practice interviewing because by then it was the middle of the summer and I figured that I should get into the interviewing circuit. So I came up to Massasoit and was interviewed by Charlie Caputo, and it was my only interview. I was offered the job—which was a big surprise—teaching French and Spanish. So I started here in '68. The school had one graduation. It was in the Frolio building in Abington. There were many of us right out of graduate school that were hired that year. I think it was the first big hire after the opening of the school. So, Jack Keating, myself, Ann LoDolce, Trudy Collins were some of us that were hired that year. I was actually still finishing up my master's, and it was kind of like a little private school. We were young, in our twenties, very enthusiastic. We had a lot of veterans coming back from the Vietnam War who were eager to go to college. So we were teaching students that were not that much different in age from us.

I felt that I needed to spend more time in Europe as a language teacher, so I spent three more years at Massasoit and was looking for a job overseas because you could take a leave of absence from your job and still have your job. I got a job teaching in Switzerland for a year in '72, '73. And I taught in a French international school. I was the English teacher in a French school for children K through 12, so I created the English lessons for children from kindergarten through twelfth grade, which was a challenge and interesting. I had small classes, had to create a lot of my own materials. Switzerland was beautiful. At the end of the year, I decided I wanted to come back and continue my career my here at Massasoit. I felt I had more freedom as a teacher here; I had more freedom as a woman here. Many things about Europe that I really loved; I'd like to spend more time in Europe, but I felt for my own career plans and my family, it was best to come back. So I came back with a sense of bigger commitment perhaps than I had before about really developing a career here. It was shortly after that that Ralph Sarro, who was head of Continuing Education, Dean of Continuing Ed. at the time, that asked me if I would be

interested in teaching GED to Hispanic students in Brockton. And I was eager to do new things, and I said yes, and that ended up with my being in contact with people in Brockton who were more interested in setting up an English as a Second Language program, which I had not heard of before. At the time I was still teaching French and Spanish. And so I got involved with Self Help in Brockton, and we set up an E.S.L. program at the Hispanic Center in downtown Brockton—Ida O’Donnell was the director at the time—and started teaching E.S.L., which I really loved, and continued teaching here, French and Spanish, but was very much interested in setting up a college E.S.L. program. So that was one of my pursuits for the next few years was to bring E.S.L. into the college level. And so in the eighties, I started creating some E.S.L. courses and ended up having four courses, which still exist, and had work created, tutors in the ARC, and as many help programs as we could for these students, kept the enrollment low for students who would get a lot of personal attention, and so forth.

**[0:07:13.5]**

**RUDOLPH:** Could you tell me a little bit about how you attracted students to the E.S.L. program here in the beginning?

**BRUNELLE:** Well, there actually were E.S.L. students here at the time before I actually created the courses. The English Department was sort of struggling with trying to deal with students whose English was not native. And so I started tutoring some of the students, and of course I was still doing the community services E.S.L., so I was a likely person to help out. So, when I decided to actually go through curriculum with a couple of courses, I think the English Department was happy to have somebody create something for these students, and so I started with one course, split it into two, and then added three and four. So it was a process that responded to a need that was becoming bigger and bigger here as Brockton got more and more minority populations. Brockton’s always had a lot of minority populations. During the eighties, it was named as the Gateway City, meaning that it was eligible for certain funds to help people coming into the city. It was very hospitable to people coming in because there was housing that was lower than the Boston area. There were jobs. There was public transportation to Massasoit. So it was a likely candidate for people to come. Many times we would see people coming from, say,

South America, Central America, or Puerto Rico even, even though Puerto Rico is part of the United States, it was still a language barrier in many cases. They would come to Florida; they would migrate to New York; they would come back to Boston, and then Brockton would be a likely place for cheaper housing or job possibilities and so forth. So Brockton was a likely candidate for lots of E.S.L.

**RUDOLPH:** Did you find at that time that you were talking about the returning veterans from Vietnam—although we’re speaking in the eighties now—but was that a time when —

**BRUNELLE:** [*talking at same time*] It was late sixties, seventies for returning veterans.

**RUDOLPH:** Did you find many Vietnamese people living in the Brockton area?

**BRUNELLE:** Yes, at that time, right after Vietnam fell, we got lots of Vietnamese students. You could see the population shifts in our population in our classes. We had many Vietnamese students at the beginning. We always had a notable group of Hispanics from various Central and South American countries, not necessarily one country, but a number of countries. And over the years, we’ve seen those population shifts. We’ve also always had a smattering of students from Europe, and at the present time, Brazilians are a big incoming group. Haitians are very predominant. We still have a big Hispanic population. Cape Verdeans are very prominent now. So again, you can see the population shifts in our E.S.L. classrooms.

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**RUDOLPH:** Do you find that those students stay here at Massasoit and go on to complete a degree or get a certificate—that you’ve had in the E.S.L. classes?

**BRUNELLE:** They do, but there’s a wide variety of reasons to come. Many of them—I would say most of them—have jobs. They’re blue-collar jobs for the most part. Even though many of these students have advanced degrees from their own country, they don’t necessarily translate into a white-collar job here. They may come and take one or two courses and get a promotion at work because their English gets better. They may get a certificate. They may get a two-year degree, and some of them already have manager jobs and some [*phone rings in background*] in retail places. Some do go on. We have many

success stories. We're very proud when we see a student actually graduating from Massasoit with a degree because that takes more than three years—usually three or four years to actually finish. I had one student from the Hmong community. We did have a group of students from the Hmong population, also from Laos, right after Vietnam fell because Laos had supported us and we transported a lot of those people to America. These people were mountain people. They had not had any of the amenities of modern life like electricity. They were mountain people who had farms. They adjusted very well because they stayed together as families and as clans. And one of my students I know got a master's from Bridgewater State in counseling. There are many students who have gone on and done many, many things. As a matter of fact, Pamerson Ifill, who is Chair of the Board, I don't know if he ever had E.S.L. His English was quite good, but he was definitely one of our minority students, and as I say, I would like to see more of more publication of what our students have accomplished because they really have added a lot to the college in terms of diversity. They've also been very successful in many, many ways. But Massasoit has been a real plus for them.

**RUDOLPH:** Well, thank you. You've gone through quite a few of my questions here, but that's okay. When you first came to the college—you've told us a little bit about some of the E.S.L. students—but do you find that the students at that time were different than the students that we have now? In perhaps the age when they start coming to Massasoit or in what they hope to accomplish afterwards? How are they perhaps different from what we see as our students today or isn't there any difference?

**BRUNELLE:** I think there are some differences and some similarities. We're dealing with students now who are very technologically adept. They're very plugged in to their technology. They often are ahead of us teachers in terms of their technology skills. I don't think that they have sometimes the traditional abilities to do traditional research, although they can do research on the internet very easily. So I don't think the library is as central a part of the campus as it used to be, which I regret to say. But I think that they are doing a lot of research on the internet. I'm not sure they're reading as much in terms of traditional textbooks. As you know, more and more textbooks are online, and there are various ways to get information that are not just in textbooks. So, I think also I think probably the big change is that with more and more minority students on campus that are

struggling to sort of get a place in the new society. They're working a lot of hours. And I think that those of us who've been teachers a long time feel that education is a central part of our life—very, very high on our priority list. I think for many of these students who are working probably two jobs and trying to bring up a family and go to school that they're not spending as many hours studying as we would like them to be. And that's a very general statement.

**[0:15:46.7]**

**RUDOLPH:** Do you think that because of that, courses change for one reason or another?

**BRUNELLE:** Well, I think the whole curriculum changes over time to respond to different needs. There is obviously more technology in the college. There are more online courses. There are more hybrid courses, all of which I think is the wave of the future, and I think there are many, many good things about it. I think what I fear that we may lose in all this is that classroom situation. I've been told in working in trying to upgrade my technology skills that it seems it's a best scenario for this new technology is a hybrid course, where you have some classroom contact and you have some online contact. And if you look at the curriculum over the years, it definitely has changes. We've added more courses for women; Women and Literature, for example. We've changed some of our majors. We've added new majors. We've phased out other majors as the needs change in society. I think it's important to know that Massasoit has many, many medical programs. I think that's our strong point and that the medical profession is where there are a lot of jobs, from blue collar up through professional jobs. So I think that we try to adjust to the changing workplace as well, and I think community colleges are able to change perhaps a little faster than four-year universities because we're new, and so it's easier for us to change, I think.

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. You mentioned some of your colleagues who were here when you first started. Are there any other memorable colleagues that you can think of?

**BRUNELLE:** There are so many. There are so many. Of course Charlie Caputo was my mentor. I'm sorry that he left the college, and he has since passed away. Anthony Simeone came from Boston State. For many years it was Charlie and Anthony and

myself in the department as full timers, and those were very good years when I was also setting up the E.S.L. program. John Nionakis, who was a part-time with us for many years, who's since passed away. Cristina Ajemian and I felt that he was our mentor, even though I don't know if he knew that—a retired a faculty member. And of course I worked with Cristina Ajemian for many years as well, who's since retired. There've been so many people that I've known through the Massasoit community that I think it's been a wonderful thing. I never expected to spend all the years I did here. Most of us who came in in '68 sort of had on the back of our mind that we would move on. Some of us did like Ann LoDolce, who was hired when I was, has been an attorney in Boston for many years—she's in the process of retiring now—I'm sorry, in the Brockton area. So, I think I've been blessed to be a part of a higher educational community. There's just been many opportunities for travel, for study; I was on a Fulbright to China. I felt like all the years I spent here, there were no two years alike, so it was exciting. I like to try new things, and I always had the time and the energy and the opportunities to do that.

**RUDOLPH:** Okay, thank you. What part does the college play in the community? One of the things that you've talked about was bringing E.S.L. students from your work in the local area but how else do you see the college fitting in the Brockton area? What does the college provide for this community?

**BRUNELLE:** I think that, and I don't know how one does the study like this, but I think that Massasoit has been very influential in the Brockton area. It's the only college in the area—in Brockton. I know we have liaisons now with other colleges, but basically, Massasoit has been the college for Brockton, and I don't know how one does a study to show how many people have gone through here and improve their education, improve their economic situation, improve the quality of their life. I also think that we provide theater, we provide a place for the senior citizens. I think it's been extremely important. I'm happy to see the senior citizens here with their activities and coming to college. Massasoit's motto, "Education for Life," I think is very important. I've always enjoyed having students from seventeen to eighty here in our classes interested in still getting more education. So, I think Brockton would be very different without Massasoit. As I said, I don't know how one measures all the influence, but I think it's multi-leveled how we have influenced the community.

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**RUDOLPH:** Okay, thank you. What do you see as some of the college's biggest accomplishments?

**BRUNELLE:** I think that there has been, over the years, from the beginning, more and more interest in connecting with the community, connecting with community organizations. Workforce Development I think has been very important in terms of making connections with different agencies. We also have an E.S.L. program in Stoughton called Adult Basic Education that is under Massasoit's umbrella. And we have many, many programs like that. I think that those are real accomplishments. I think it's good for people who are in a community service agency for one reason or another to see that there's a path to Massasoit and to see that there's a path beyond Massasoit. I think that we've done very, very well in our sports, partly. I think soccer of course has been our shining star partly because we've had so many foreign students who are very, very good in soccer because soccer is a very big sport throughout the world. It is not as big in the United States, but it's the passion sport that my students talk about. They're all—I say all—so many of them are very passionate about soccer. So we get these young people coming here who are very, very good at it—better than our American students for the most part. So I think that sports have added a dimension to Massasoit. It's been very important.

**RUDOLPH:** And do you think it's hard sometimes for our students to participate in sports considering their economic background, and perhaps, as you said before, they have families and jobs very often?

**BRUNELLE:** It is. And I think there are some provisions for them through the athletic department. I'm not sure what they are, but I think there are some cases where they're helped. A student has to be full time to be on a team, which is a challenge because they have to have at least twelve credits. So yes, I think there are a number of students who would like to play sports but just are not qualified in terms of their time and their academic careers and so forth.

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. Do you see that the college has any disappointments? Or do you see any disappointments?

**BRUNELLE:** Well, I guess I would say room for improvement. Um [*long pause*], I would like—I think in an ideal situation and I don’t know how it would be possible—for students to take a summer or let’s say an institute of learning to be a student before they start the academic courses. I know of some cases where at the very beginning, students were told that they were not admitted to the college until they took some developmental courses and passed them. I think the open-door policy is a plus and a minus. I think for many of our students, it’s not that they have a lack of capacity to do the work; it’s that they have not trained to be students. I also think that for students coming from other cultures that American higher education is quite different in many ways, and they have to learn that as they go. So, if there was a way to have students go through a six-week summer institute or something like that to help them prepare to be students, I know we have the college prep course, what is the name of it now? It’s changed so many times—there was a three-credit course.

**RUDOLPH:** Oh—College Experience?

**BRUNELLE:** College Experience. I think that’s a help. I think students benefit from that a great deal. I think it would be better if we could have them do that before they start taking their other courses. But I’m not sure that’s possible, given the makeup of the community colleges.

**RUDOLPH:** It’s hard, I think. What are the most difficult problems that you faced at the college, and what were the outcomes?

**[0:26:19.8]**

**BRUNELLE:** [*long pause*] I think that even now, I think there is an issue now involved in the state-wide E.S.L. association—MATSOL—Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers for the Languages. It’s the Massachusetts branch of the international TESOL [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages] organization. There’s great concern about how E.S.L. fits into curriculum, and I’ve always known that E.S.L. was sort of a new thing for higher education—it still is. I believe very strongly that it should be given credit as a foreign language because these people already know two, three, four other languages. There’s a debate that still goes on and is going on right now about what place E.S.L., if any, should have in higher education. I think that our students add a lot of

diversity to the campus. I think that many of our community college students have not had the opportunity to travel. They have not had an experience of another culture, and that these students can teach us a lot about cross-cultural experience. And I don't think we've really done enough in that area. I think there is a great potential there for seeing these students not as a problem but as an \_\_\_\_??. I'd like to see more of that.

**RUDOLPH:** Okay. I'm going to move onto some questions that I wrote specifically for you.

**RUDOLPH:** You've told us a little bit about your progress from modern language professor to E.S.L. professor, although it seems that it wasn't from a language professor to E.S.L., it was an addition of E.S.L.

**BRUNELLE:** It was an addition. I still am a French and Spanish professor, right.

**RUDOLPH:** So, you see these as two parts to a whole, Juanita Brunelle?

**BRUNELLE:** I do. Maybe not the whole because another thing I got involved in along the way was internationalizing the curriculum. And I think that's all part of being interested in other cultures and wanting a campus to be more aware of cross-cultural experiences, the international scene beyond just the local scene, and that grew out of my interest in languages and E.S.L.

**RUDOLPH:** There are always discussions about adding to the core or adding to the experience of our students, and do you see that as one of your missions to add this cultural component?

**BRUNELLE:** Yes. I created a cross-cultural communications course many years ago and taught it for several semesters. It started with Brenda Mercomes as my Division Chair. We team taught it, and then I taught it by myself. I'm now working at Roxbury Community College part time and working with the chair of the language department who is interested in internationalization and trying to share some of my work with her. I think that the college in general—any college—is richer if that component is added. We live in an international world; it's a world economy. Our students are going into not just a local economy but a world economy, and I think the awareness of cross-cultural issues, communication, is often lacking among our native American students. I have read reports

that even though our students may graduate from the best colleges that they may not have a cross-cultural experience and that the American way is only one of many ways in the world and that the American way has to be adjusted when you go out into the world, and I think that we really need a lot more of that kind of education.

**[0:30:25.7]**

**RUDOLPH:** Do you see that idea of cross-cultural education being added to other disciplines, where our country is so involved in business overseas, for example?

**BRUNELLE:** Well, we have a seven-year grant, a SACHEM [Southeastern Association for Cooperation in Higher Education in] grant you mentioned it in one of the questions. Because I was interested in the international component, I went to the first MaCIE Conference in Massachusetts—the Massachusetts Council on [for] International Education in the 1990s and saw that other colleges—this is a consortium of all the public higher education institutions in Massachusetts—twenty-nine higher education institutions, public education, that are interested in international work, whether it's sending students abroad, bringing students here, internationalizing our curriculum—there's many facets to it. I was very excited about that and came back and Richard Rapacz was here at the time. He was the one who got us the China Fulbright. Dean Yess was the Dean of Faculty and approached them and said, I want you to do more here. And he gave me some release time to work on it. I invited Peter Coburn to work with me from another discipline because I think we needed somebody from social sciences. And we started looking at a grant and found out that some of the SACHEM colleges that had not been active in SACHEM, another consortium, were interested in writing a grant. So over a period of two years, we succeeded in getting a grant funded from the State Department of Education and got a second grant, which we extended for a year. So we had a total of seven years of grant-funded activities to internationalize the curriculum and promote foreign languages with five colleges in southeastern Massachusetts. We had a very good consortium because we had two community colleges, Massasoit and Cape Cod. We had a state college, Bridgewater State, which is now a university. We had UMass Dartmouth, a university, and had Stonehill College, which is private. So we had a really good cross-section. For seven years, we offered workshops; we offered seminars; we offered summer

institutes; we offered winter workshops; we had a newsletter to promote this activity. So it's kind of sad to see that not focused on after the grant money ran out. But MACIE continues very actively and various colleges are doing various things. Bridgewater State has really opted to focus on international education in the last few years, and more colleges are doing more.

**RUDOLPH:** Do you see us doing more soon?

**BRUNELLE:** I hope so. Since I've been retired for a year and a half, I'm sort of out of the loop of what's happening. I would hope that that would be a focus at some point on a strategic plan.

**RUDOLPH:** As a professor of languages at Massasoit, how do you view the trends in language education? Are we moving toward an introduction of languages to even younger students? Do you feel that we as a country are falling behind or catching up, and how does Massasoit fit in the scope of things?

**BRUNELLE:** Massasoit is doing quite well, I think, in terms of language offerings. I was told a number of years ago when I was very much involved in the state-wide union. Ira Rubenzahl, who was the president of our union at the time—by the way he's now president of Springfield Tech Community College—said to me that we had a more solid language program than many of the two-year colleges, and I think that's probably true. I don't think languages has ever been a big enough focus in the United States. We sort of have an attitude that, you know, the world can speak English, and right now, English is the international language, so that reinforces that. But I think that that experience of cross-cultural awareness comes largely through studying language. So I think we are behind in that. I think we have a certain arrogance as a culture in terms of feeling that the world should kind of do what we're doing, how we're doing it, which isn't necessarily the best and the only way to do things. I think we'd be much better off if we could see a number of perspectives. So I would like to see the United States be more focused on foreign language study. I don't know how much it will happen. When I was teaching in Switzerland, in my experience in Europe has been that students in high school are learning a number of languages because they're surrounded by countries with different languages, and they can travel to different countries very easily. But I think their focus is

really important, and I think the Europeans—and again I’m talking stereotypes, but I think the Europeans see us as rather unsophisticated in some ways. And I think part of that is that we’ve been very lucky as a country. We’ve had space; we’ve had resources; we’ve, you know, been able to develop, and people have had its American dream, which is still very, very active that you can do better here, which I think is very true and wonderful. But more awareness of the rest of the world I think would be interesting. It’s interesting that some of my foreign students have said that they’re appalled at how little we know geography in this country, and it is very, very true. Students from other cultures have told me that they take geography right through college, and I’m one of the people that wasn’t great in geography, and I’ve learned a lot from my students, but I think that geographically, we are not as aware of the world as we need to be. We are a world leader—we should be much more aware. But I think if you asked many students to find twenty countries on the map, I’m not sure they could.

**[0:36:49.5]**

**RUDOLPH:** Do you think that puts us at a disadvantage as a world power?

**BRUNELLE:** I think it does in the sense that we have the military and economic power. We certainly have good intentions, I think in the world. But I don’t think we are seen with the level of sophistication that we think we are seen as. I think that people’s perception is much deeper than we give people credit for. For example, I think that we have—and again I’m stereotyping—but I think that we have the attitude that when people come here, they’re just grateful for everything. And this is not true. And if you listen to some of these students talk, they are perceiving things and making choices all along the way—how they want to raise their children; what kind of cultural things they want to keep; what kind of things they want to change. One of the big issues of people coming here is that family life changes. Parents are much more strict in general in other cultures than they are here, and that is a big change. And that causes a lot of conflict in the family. I’ve seen many times in my travels, a student being more vocal or demanding—or young child, I should say—and the response is often, Must be an American child. So, I think we’re very good in terms of encouraging our children to be creative. I think one of the reasons that we have a lot of inventions in this country is because we do learn to be

creative and we're very good at critical thinking. But I think we can learn something about child-rearing from other cultures. I think we need to listen more to other cultures.

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. As a professor in a community college in a city with many immigrants, do you see Massasoit leaning toward teaching languages of its immigrants and concentrating on that, and do you see Massasoit advancing bilingual education to service business in its communities, in the health fields, for example?

**BRUNELLE:** Well, we already do serve many of these communities by offering French and Spanish. We now offer Arabic. For a while, we offered Chinese. We've added Portuguese to our curriculum largely because of the big Portuguese-speaking population. I think that we do quite well there. There have been issues about whether we should offer Haitian Creole, whether we should offer Cape Verdean Creole. In Haiti there's a movement to get Haitian Creole the national language rather than French. In Cape Verde, there are many movements to get Cape Verde Creole to replace Portuguese. One of the problems with Cape Verde is they have ten different dialects in two different islands, so which one is going to be predominant probably will be the island that's the most economically powerful because if you look at how language develops and what language is dominant, it's the economically dominant group, politically and economically dominant group in a country that determines that. There have been some community services courses of those languages. There was a gentleman who teaches the Cape Verdean Creole here, by the way, for credit. So I think there is a real good attempt to respond to that. The problem is building up a clientele that is ongoing, and many times when we start these languages, we have a group that is interested in them, we don't have a continual, new group coming in that is interested. So to keep the numbers up is difficult. But I think it's quite good, quite good, what we do.

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. You talked a little bit about your position as coordinator of the E.S.L. program here at Massasoit. Could you tell us a little bit more about the development of that program—how you got that up off the ground?

**[0:41:26.9]**

**BRUNELLE:** Well, as I said, I started tutoring for the English department, the students that needed extra help because their first language was not English. And then finally

proposed one course, which was a beginning. And after teaching that for about a year, I went back to curriculum, and I said we really need two semesters, so we split that into two semesters, and then the reading teachers in English approached me and said that the students whose first language was not English needed more reading development. So I created the third course, which was Reading for E.S.L. And again, the climate of the time was such that people were receptive to that. Then went back a few years later and said, We have reading and writing and now we need the speaking and listening, so I added the fourth course. I never felt that we could afford to offer more in a 60-credit, two-year program. I never felt that we could offer more E.S.L. credits. I thought that was quite good. Other colleges—and we're dealing with this in MATSOL [Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages] right now—are going back and forth between how many credits are being offered for E.S.L. and how many are not. It's a big issue right now. So, I felt that we were doing well and that we couldn't push our luck. We did add one transitional E.S.L. class that is taught through community service. But it's a transition into our program. Community service workforce development has been very receptive to our sort of monitoring that course—setting up the syllabus, having input into who teaches it; many times our part-timers or full-timers teach it. I've taught it before. That came about through a liaison with the adult learning center, which has a big E.S.L. program. And Massasoit feeling that from them to us we needed a transition program. When Dr. Rose was president, he very much wanted us to do more with E.S.L., so we created that program, that course. So if students are tested—and we do all the testing for our students; it's sort of a separate branch from the American students that have to come in and take the—what do you call it? The state-wide test?

**RUDOLPH:** The MCAS?

**BRUNELLE:** No, not the MCAS. The Accuplacer.

**RUDOLPH:** Yes.

**BRUNELLE:** They take students who identify themselves come through us, we set up an appointment, we test them individually, so they do not take the English Accuplacer. We place them, and once they're in our pipeline, we recommend the courses into English. They go through the E.S.L. program and into Intro. Writing and Intro. Reading. If they

want to test out of that, they have to then take the Accuplacer. So, we sort of created things as the need has arisen. When the ARC started, Steve Tooker started that, and I was one of the people that he brought in to serve the E.S.L. students, so we always have had presence in the ARC for E.S.L. and languages. So again we've tried to respond to whatever need arose where we could add services.

**RUDOLPH:** So, to clarify, the ARC is the Academic Resource Center.

**BRUNELLE:** Yes.

**RUDOLPH:** So students who decide to come here and want to take E.S.L. classes must reach a certain level before they take a class.

**BRUNELLE:** Yes. And because of that, we started meeting with some of the agencies years ago, and through that, we developed a list of programs in the area which I haven't kept up over the years. We have a list of fifty or sixty agencies in the greater Brockton area that service E.S.L. adults so that when they come to us and they're tested and are ready for us, we can say, Go to this program or Go to that program, and Come back and see us when you're ready. So we don't like to just say No. So many of them do and come back and are retested, but they do have to be at a level where they can take some other college courses. Usually the format is that basically if they want to take four courses, which is full time when many of them are on financial aid, they want to be at full time. The scenario is they would take two E.S.L. classes and two other non-E.S.L. classes. For example, math is a good one because they probably know math in their own country even though they don't know the terminology. And then we look at the background. If they've had some accounting, if they've had some computer, we try to find that fourth course for them. But many of them are part time also. So maybe they're only taking two or three classes. And then the second semester, they're taking two other courses with E.S.L., hopefully two other courses, and then they're in with American students. But they're already with American students in some of their other courses unless they're just doing E.S.L. So, there's always been that trying to bridge the gaps between E.S.L. and make sure these students are ready for the next step when they leave here, so that's an ongoing challenge.

**[0:47:15.4]**

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. You had mentioned a Fulbright Hays group study project in China with colleagues from Massasoit, Bridgewater, and Cape Cod Community. Would you tell us a little bit about this project? What it was, how it happened?

**BRUNELLE:** Richard Rapacz was here, and he was very much interested in international education. He was interested in these kind of study abroad programs. So he created the grant with the two other colleges, Cape Cod and Bridgewater, and was successful, and seven people from each college went. So we had to apply and be accepted, and I was accepted luckily. There were seven of us from Massasoit. It was myself, Peter Coburn, Sharon Brown, Barbara Napoli, Richard Rapacz—I'll have to think of the other two. *[pause]* But there were seven of us in all. We went to China for six weeks. It was something that I had never thought in a thousand years that I would be standing in Tiananmen Square in China *[laughs]*. It was 1990, and we spent a month at a language school in Beijing. We were in dorms. And we studied Chinese. We had been studying—we had actually about a six month preparation time also where we every Saturday, went for these all day long seminars and then we also took some Chinese lessons. So, when we got to China, we continued our Chinese lessons, and we also had many lecturers come in from the colleges and universities and professions around us, and then we would have a field trip in the afternoon. For example, we had a doctor come in and talk to us about Chinese medicine. And then we visited a Chinese hospital. So it was a very full agenda. Very, very rewarding.

**RUDOLPH:** Very cultural as well.

**BRUNELLE:** Very cultural. And then we of course we went to the Great Wall; we went to Tiananmen Square; we went to the big places in Beijing. Then we traveled to Xian which was the old capital of China, where the wonderful terracotta soldiers were—just absolutely unbelievable. Went down to Qingdao, which was a seacoast resort area, and down to Shanghai and came home. So it was an incredibly good six weeks.

**RUDOLPH:** Now in your preparation, while you were here, what kinds of things did you do to prepare besides the Chinese lessons you said you had?

**BRUNELLE:** Lots of reading about Chinese history. Books written by different people that spent times in China. These all-day seminars were telling us about China in general.

Some of the Chinese art, for example. One of our colleagues from Bridgewater had spent time in China, knew an artist, and spent one afternoon showing us a lot of Chinese art; so various things like that. The attitude, the idea that China kind of operates on a group mentality, but we're so much more individualistic. In terms of looking at the individual, we were told things like, Don't try to do things as an individual; you're a group, part of a group. In other words, if I wanted to visit a language school in Beijing, I couldn't just go and knock on the door. I had to have an intermediary introduce me. You had to set up these things ahead of time. So it was a different concept of life, I think, that was pretty extraordinary, and many of us had traveled quite extensively. Conor Johnston was another person that went. He had traveled to Sweden. He's from Ireland. But it was like being on another planet for a while. It was quite, quite different.

**RUDOLPH:** Very interesting. You also spoke about both MaCIE and SACHEM. I'm wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about what they are. I know you told us what those acronyms mean. What they are and one of them you had—was it SACHEM that you had the grant with?

**[0:51:51.2]**

**BRUNELLE:** Yes. SACHEM was a consortium of I believe it was originally nine colleges in southeastern Massachusetts that had formed [*clears throat*] very early in Massasoit's history. I think Phil Sheppard was one of the founders that I found out later in my travels. A group of colleges had come together and decided that they could cooperate in certain aspects like cross registration. At one time when Al Desrochers was here as a faculty member, he was a SACHEM rep. There was a SACHEM rep. from each college and they would have a conference once a year and share various—whatever workshops—whatever they could that were interesting to the whole nine consortium colleges. And then it kind of seemed to fade into the background so that people didn't really think about SACHEM. It was the Southeastern Association of Consortium of Colleges in the Southeastern Mass. I can't remember all the words for it now. And then, as I said, when Peter Coburn and I started looking for grant money to internationalize, we were told that some of the other SACHEM colleges were interested. It was Dean College, Wheaton, Stonehill, Massasoit, Cape Cod, Bridgewater, UMass Dartmouth; there were

nine in all. We got contacts and invited representatives to come. And we had various people come and lots of interest, and we sort of went to a what we call a dry run of writing a grant because many times when you write a grant, you kind of go through a practice session, and you don't really expect it to get funded, but you see from the comments where you need to change it, which is what we did. And so we sort of boiled down to five colleges that were interested and let the colleges know that if you want to be on board, you have to be active in this by a certain date. Five colleges responded. It was, again, Stonehill, Massasoit, UMass Dartmouth, Cape Cod, and Bridgewater. So we wrote the grant and got funded and, again, continued our activities for the next seven years. So even the year before that, we were very active. We actually went to see a person that had been recommended to us on the Cape—Sophia Peterson, who had a long, long resume in international education and became our external evaluator and consulted with her about what we should do and how we should do it and so forth. So even before the grant started, we were very active in terms of planning and so forth.

**RUDOLPH:** But, the SACHEM group is not limited to language or is it?

**BRUNELLE:** The SACHEM group could be—and there are students, for example, if their course offered at Stonehill that's not offered here, a student can cross register and pay Massasoit fees and go to Stonehill for that course. So that piece still exists, and there is something on the website about SACHEM—about cross registration. But SACHEM wasn't created for internationalizing, but because of the grant, it became the vehicle for internationalizing. But there are various things that SACHEM could do beyond internationalization if there were people on the campuses that wanted to get together and cooperate.

**RUDOLPH:** Those same colleges are still involved in SACHEM?

**BRUNELLE:** I don't know of any actual SACHEM meetings as such. I think at this point, as I said, individual colleges have or have not taken up the mantle of internationalization. Bridgewater, I know, partly because of the president Dana Mohlar-Faria has, in the last few years, added a lot of staff for the international component at Bridgewater.

**RUDOLPH:** Interesting. And MaCIE?

**[0:56:08.2]**

**BRUNELLE:** MaCIE is the Massachusetts Council for International Education, as I mentioned, is twenty-nine colleges and public higher education in Massachusetts. I was very involved in that. I haven't been involved in the last couple years since I've retired because I've been doing other things, but again, certain colleges were very active; some colleges were not. We did have a conference at Massasoit. We have a yearly conference, and I did host that. The vice president of MaCIE usually hosts the conference and then becomes president, which I did. So Massasoit did have a state-wide conference one year; it was the best attended one, very well attended. And they are very much interested in study abroad programs. They have tried to open their doors to students from other colleges. If they have a study abroad program, invite students from other colleges to join them. They have a program that Massasoit has participated in quite regularly, which is a faculty member goes two weeks to the Netherlands and visits various educational institutions there, and then a faculty member comes here and we host them. So we've had various people participate in that. And that's only for two-year colleges. At the MaCIE conference, partly from my pushing, we always have an E.S.L. roundtable, so we have a group of people that meet and discuss E.S.L. issues across the state. But if you go to one of those MaCIE conferences, you'll see various workshops. So there'll be people there—lawyers from immigration talking about the latest immigration issues. People who are talking about classroom activities that they've created. Maybe internationalizing a course and so forth. When we were doing the grants, we would always have a workshop at MaCIE on some of our workshops that we had done through SACHEM. So there's a wide range of activities. It's a very, very good conference.

**RUDOLPH:** It sounds like an active group, too.

**BRUNELLE:** It's very active, yes. Middlesex Community College has been very active. Their president has been very active in internationalization.

**RUDOLPH:** It sounds like something that we'll continue to do, hopefully.

**BRUNELLE:** Hopefully, yes. Joia Souza was the rep for the two-year Netherlands program for a number of years, and I think she's still now one of the reps. on MaCIE.

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. I understand, and you mentioned it briefly earlier, that you were actively involved in the MCCC bargaining unit for some time. Can you tell us a little about the origins of the union on campus?

**BRUNELLE:** When I came here in '68, the union was forming. We were invited to a meeting. There were no contracts at the time. It's my understanding that Massasoit was the first institution of higher education in Massachusetts to unionize. Harold Gay and Tim Fitzgerald were very active, and Tim became the president, and so we had actually quite a good contract. And I've heard my colleagues say, because I don't know if you want me to quote this or not, but that we knew more about bargaining than the other side did at that point [*both laugh*]. And so we had quite a strong contract. And various colleges started to unionize. At that point there was a board of community colleges, state board of community colleges, one for state colleges, one for universities, so there were three separate elements. So, the community colleges negotiated with the community college board. And I think it got to the point where there were five to seven different colleges, community colleges, that had contracts, and I think the board decided that they didn't want to have to negotiate with all these different colleges. So, there was a movement in—something passed that said it had to be one union. Because we had been so active, it did become the MCCC, and Tim Fitzgerald from Massasoit became the MCCC president. We were a little concerned that maybe our contracts would be weakened from having to join other colleges, but we worked pretty well. I had been involved in the union from early days. I had been invited to be the secretary and then at some point after I came back from Switzerland, got more interested in union activities and got on the negotiating committee, which makes up the asking package. At that point we'd had a couple of contracts, but we hadn't really dealt with big things like the faculty evaluation. And so there were some big things that just hadn't been dealt with. And then from that, I got on the negotiating team, and we ended up negotiating for about a year and a half for a big contract. We sort of tread water for about eight months. The board sent in somebody to talk with us, but nothing much was happening. But it gave us a chance to really solidify as a team. So after eight months or so—I think it was about six or eight months—the board hired the new community college board president who was Jules Pagano. And I guess one reason he was hired because he had union negotiating experience. So at that

point, it became much more intense. My understanding is they said to some presidents that they wouldn't want presidents on the other team, and so four presidents became the team. It was a very interesting experience, so it was Jules Pagano and the four presidents and five of us. We went through very intense organizations. We negotiated on weekends, on holidays. They took us out of school. They gave us substitutes so we could negotiate full time. And we finally came up with a contract—a much bigger contract than we ever had before—that had to do with teacher evaluation and lots of things that we hadn't dealt with before. The contract was passed, and after that experience, I became the legislative liaison for lobbying in the state house for a short time. But I had also started the E.S.L. program, and I wanted to spend time with that, and I felt I couldn't do both, so I kind of backed off on some of the union activities—still active but not as active—and continued being supportive of the union, but not necessarily an officer in the union. I did some local work but focused more on the E.S.L. component. But it was a fascinating experience. It was like getting another master's.

[1:04:01.1]

**RUDOLPH:** *[laughs]* Has it changed much? From its beginnings? As a small group?

**BRUNELLE:** *[pause]* Well, I think it's grown. Um *[pause]*, certainly it's grown with all the fifteen colleges being represented now, all the fifteen colleges under one contract. Dennis Fitzgerald is the state-wide grievance coordinator for Massasoit—has continued in that job. Tim Fitzgerald moved on into MTA—he actually was the acting director of MTA for some time. So we've always had lots of involvement from Massasoit. I haven't been on the state-wide level for a lot of years, but there's a lot of work that goes on. How it's changed? I couldn't really say. I think obviously people have changed, but I'm not sure that I think that there's still a strong component of union activity.

**RUDOLPH:** And do you still see your work in the contract today?

**BRUNELLE:** Do I see my work?

**RUDOLPH:** Your work that you worked on?

**BRUNELLE:** Yes, I think that the evaluation process of evaluating faculty and professional staff has basically been tweaked here and there, but that whole component

was there because of that contract. Um [*pause*] I think some of the things that existed before a unionization came from AAUP [American Association of University Professors]—like tenure, sabbaticals—that were incorporated into our contract, but we also had the benefit of those things that AAUP had already established as a professional organization. So, I think it has changed in some ways. I think the promotion piece was more complicated and strenuous than it is today. I think that was a change. But overall, I don't think it's changed dramatically.

**RUDOLPH:** Thank you. I've just about gone through all of the questions. Are there any questions that I should have asked you that I didn't? Or are there any additional comments that you want to make about something that we discussed or didn't discuss?

**BRUNELLE:** I think that, again, this is my own perspective. I think each president has brought different aspects to the college. I think that President Musselman obviously began the college; I think he was very dedicated and had a vision. I think that some of our early leaders had vision. And not that we don't now, we do, but I think we were fortunate to have people that were really committed to community colleges. I remember my first year here, Marilyn Maxwell was getting her doctorate and asked me; she did a little interview for her project. And talking about it, and even John Norton, who was my first division chair, saying things to me like, We can't correct some of the—indicating to me that we were better in some ways than higher education in general, which was a real surprise because community colleges are sort of the bottom of the heap. And I think that the teaching in community colleges is excellent. I think that we have brought teaching into higher education more than it was before. I think that higher education traditionally was faculty doing a lot of research and publications, which is very important, but we were focused on teaching, and one of the things in the evaluation was eighty percent teaching, twenty percent publishing—if you published, that's great, but we were really focused on teaching, and I think we've added that; I think there's very good teaching in community colleges. So I don't think that community colleges get the recognition that they should. Even a colleague of mine at Northeastern said to me, it was interesting because they're trying to organize part-timers now in private schools in Boston. And we talked about it, and she made some comment like, “Well, now that you're teaching at Northeastern, you're more a part of higher ed.” or something to that effect. And I said,

“We’re not that different.” But there is that perception that we’re very different; sort of like, well, community colleges can take care of it—you know we’re going to do the real academic things, and community colleges can do the other stuff. I understood, and I’m not an expert on it, but from the foundation’s report a couple years ago, it seemed that there was a real push to make community colleges more of a workforce development place. And I’m not against that. I think that everybody should have some skills to get a job; I absolutely believe that from high school. But I think to take away the academics would change the atmosphere very much, and I think that would be a mistake. I think that we do a lot of good academics here. Our students in terms of capacity—and our star students are as good if not better than students that I’ve seen anywhere, and I’ve taught at various places. Again, I’m not an expert on every place, but one of the things that I felt in the SACHEM grant was that foreign language faculty had a really good situation—we had a very cohesive group for seven years of foreign language faculty and E.S.L. faculty. And the internationalizing could be any of the other departments, but we were a very cohesive group. And we were very similar—whether we were at Stonehill or here. Stonehill offers more upper level courses because they’re a four-year college, they can offer more literature. But basically, the delivery of language study wasn’t that different, and we learned a lot from one another. And again, if I were to evaluate the teachers, I don’t think that the quality of teaching is better in one place than another. But I think that’s something that is not generally accepted.

[1:11:08.2]

**RUDOLPH:** And do you think the term *feeder school*, which we’re very often called a feeder school—sending our students off to Bridgewater or Stonehill or other colleges that that would not continue if we stayed with this workforce?

**BRUNELLE:** It would not continue; it would be another step beyond a technical high school, I think. And again, nothing against that, but I think to take away the college atmosphere, the academic curriculum, would be a real loss. I don’t think people realize how many people need the support that a community college offers in terms of tutoring, the ARC, the personalized focus on teaching that so many people need because they

simply haven't had it, and they really blossom. I think the beauty of the community college is that miracles happen every day.

**RUDOLPH:** And do you think the opportunities for many of our students would be lost if that were gone as well?

**BRUNELLE:** I think that many of our students are not ready to look at four-year colleges. They're just not ready. That's a long haul. I remember when I was in college—I was always college-bound—that four years was a long time, and we were told, and I think it's still true that your biggest drop-out rate comes in your sophomore year at a four-year college. And I was one of those [unintelligible] that thought [*sigh*], I just don't know if I want to do two more years. So I think for a student who is struggling, who maybe hasn't had a pre-college background, who's got a lot of responsibilities to take on, a four-year commitment may be too much. I don't think they'd do it.

**RUDOLPH:** Okay. Well, thank you very much, Juanita, I appreciate your taking the time to spend with me today.

**BRUNELLE:** Do you have any questions?

**RUDOLPH:** Do I have any questions? I think you did a great interview.

**BRUNELLE:** Thank you [*laughs*]. One of the things I didn't tell you was little personal stories that I—

**RUDOLPH:** Do you want to tell it?

**BRUNELLE:** Well, I don't know. I mean there are individual stories. I'll tell you, but you can decide to cut them out or not.

**RUDOLPH:** Why don't you tell me.

**BRUNELLE:** I'll tell you a few that I told at the Joyce Zymaris thing. I think some of the things that make me smile. Joe Cleary, who has since retired, is a math teacher. He came—I think it was my second or third year to the college—and at the Frolio building, we had a little space that was sectioned off with little sort of solarteks?? partitions that you could hear through. There were four little offices, and I was in one, Anne LoDolce and Sam Burchill were in the front one. Joe Cleary and Jack Keating were over here,

Charlie was over here. [*gesturing?*] Well, we could all hear each other. Joe was a real practical joker. The first year I was here, there were no female sports—and I told this at my other graduation—I went to a meeting my first year, and the guys were saying, When are we going to have this sport, and when are we going to have that sport? And no women sports, and I said, “When are you going to have women sports?” And I knew the answer: when we get somebody to do it. I had played basketball in high school, but I had never coached, but I started it. And we had a small team, wasn’t very successful, but we get going and we got the uniforms and [I called??] Greenfield Community College that had a team, Now what do I do? I’ve done this, and so forth. Joe Cleary was very interested, and so I had the basketballs in my office, and the first night before a game, we’re ironing our numbers on our shirts in my office, and so forth, so it was very informal. Joe used to come in when I was talking to a student about French or Spanish and bounce the balls around my office and say, “Now Juanita, this is how you teach people how to dribble.” And so I’ve realized that if he took it over, he’d probably be a better coach. So after my first year, I said, “No I’m not going to do it.” And Joe took it over and it became very successful. But Joe, as I said—loved to play practical jokes. One time there used to be—where it’s the Great Chow now on Route 18—was the Alamo, and that’s where we used to hang out sort of like where we hang out at Christo’s now. So one day it was snowy like yesterday. Jack Keating and I and Joe left the Frolio to walk up to the Alamo. At the time, there was a superintendent of schools, I believe he was, in Abington who had his office there. And he was kind of a red-faced man who you could hear him shouting sometimes. And [*laughs*] we left the school. Joe picked up a snowball, and threw it at me, and it hit the superintendent [*laughing*] just as he came out of the building—right in his forehead, and the man got beat red and he said, “You students! I am sick and tired of you students!” and we said, “We’re not going to tell him we’re faculty members!” [*both laughing*] So, those were the kind of fun things that we had as, you know, young, single, right out of college, and so forth. We had a lot of fun things like that.

[1:17:07.9]

**RUDOLPH:** Others have told me that it was a great time.

**BRUNELLE:** It was, it was, it was. It was a lot of spirit. Yeah, one of the things that I regret that we don't do more of is the day before Thanksgiving—the one day before Thanksgiving was called Massasoit Day. And so they would have a princess of Massasoit and a king of Massasoit, which they thought was a little bit sexist, I guess, so they stopped it. But, it was a fun day, and students would come down from colleges that they had gone to, so it was sort of like a homecoming. So Wednesday afternoon before Thanksgiving, we would have lots of parties; we'd have a dinner; we'd have Chief Massasoit and Princess Massasoit, and see students from other colleges that came back, so that was a fun time. And then it sort of died down, so it isn't—I think they have a dinner or something now, the day before Thanksgiving. But it kind of lost its flavor there, for a while. I think that was kind of too bad.

**RUDOLPH:** Now, we used to have yearbooks, too. We don't have yearbooks anymore.

**BRUNELLE:** And that's too bad too.

**RUDOLPH:** Because a lot of students come back to look at those yearbooks.

**BRUNELLE:** I have a lot of those old yearbooks, yeah, yeah. So yeah, there was a lot of fun, just lots of energy, I think. Lots of optimism. When we were in Duxbury campus a few years later when we were waiting for Brockton to be built, that was a lovely, lovely place. But we went through that period—and people talk about the sixties as being the revolutionary time. If you look at it, it was really the early seventies. I think it was the year before I went to Switzerland that there were a series of bomb scares. I was living in Brighton at the time, so I would drive an hour to Duxbury. I would get there; everybody would be out on the lawn; the police would be there because there had been a bomb scare. Couldn't go into the building for 24 hours. We'd go over to Howard Johnsons on Route 3A, have a two-hour breakfast, talk about what are we going to do about this, go home. The next day, the same thing. I think it was the fall semester that we just didn't have a lot of classes because of these bomb scares. So when I heard about Harvard having a big bomb scare yesterday, it brought back memories. And that was when buildings were being blown up, so you couldn't just ignore it, so. So we went through that sort of turbulent period also, and students were revolting, and various things were happening.

**RUDOLPH:** Well, thank you, Juanita, I appreciate it. [*talking at same time*]

**BRUNELLE:** Thank you for your time and your patience, and your good listening skills.

[*end of recording*]