

Voices of the ARCHIVE - Massasoit Community College Oral History Project

Anthony Fusco
Oral History Memoir

Interviewed in person by Jennifer Rudolph

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Scituate, Massachusetts

RUDOLPH: This is Jennifer Rudolph, Coordinator of Public Services and Instruction at Massasoit Community College library. Today is January 26, 2012. I am interviewing for the first time, Dr. Anthony Fusco. This interview is being conducted by the Massasoit Community College library and is part of the 45th anniversary college oral history project. Welcome, Tony.

FUSCO: Welcome.

RUDOLPH: I'd like you to tell me a little bit about yourself, where you grew up, went to school?

FUSCO: Where I grew up, went to school.

RUDOLPH: Where you grew up and went to school.

FUSCO: We don't have enough time on the recorder. [*both laugh*]

FUSCO: I grew up in Waterbury, Connecticut in the 40s and the 50s. After high school at Waterbury, I went to the University of Connecticut, and there I studied life sciences majoring in cytology and cytogenetics—

RUDOLPH: Ooh, why don't you tell me what that is.

FUSCO: [*laughs*] That's the study of cells, organisms, and the genetic foundations for cell organisms; so in other words, how little organisms within your bodies form and probably the best way to do it is to say that it's just a biological, physical study of um, of sex. [*laughs*]

RUDOLPH: Oh [*laughs*], okay.

FUSCO: Of reproduction.

RUDOLPH: Um-hm. Alright

FUSCO: Okay and when I graduated university, Cindy and I came up to Massachusetts because there were very few jobs in Connecticut. And after working about a year in corporate for Stop

and Shop, I went and did research at Mass [Massachusetts] General Hospital. And while doing research at Mass General Hospital, I ended up being a medical photographer, and I was a medical photographer for about four or five years. During that time, I had gotten a master's degree at Boston University in media and technology. And after I'd gotten that degree, I ended up making the acquaintance of Dr. Frank Pilecki, who happened to not only be an associate dean at Boston University, but he also was just a recently hired dean for Labouré Junior College, which was a nursing school, and they needed to have somebody developing their media and starting a whole new type of pedagogical approach using media instruction or what they called learning activities packages. And so I worked at Labouré for about three years, from about '72 to '75, and in 1975, I found an ad in the paper for a media directorship at Massasoit Community College. And I went down, had the interviews, talked to Dr. Musselman, who was the president at that time, and Massasoit in 1975 had just started what they called the Phase Two construction for the building program. They had recently completed Phase One, and they moved to the current campus that they were on, but before that, they were in a series of temporary housings with Fernald School, the Howard School for Girls was another, and Duxbury—the monastery down in Duxbury was a third. So, rather than having all these in different sites, they wanted their own little campus, and they got a campus which was a converted pig farm [RUDOLPH: laughs] in Brockton. And the building project was in two phases. Phase One was completed. Phase Two was just started.

RUDOLPH: What was Phase One?

[0:04:47.6]

FUSCO: Phase One consisted primarily of all of the academic buildings—well, not all of them, excuse me. It was the Science building, the Business building, the Humanities building, and the Library, and Cafeteria building. And, so during that particular phase, until the completion of Phase Two, administration was really housed in the bottom floor of the Library. The Library was designed to occupy two floors, but from the very, very beginning, the second floor was kind of denied to Library use; it was taken over by administration. And the Library basically was and is and always has been exactly where it is and occupying probably the same square footage. During Phase Two, they completed the Science, the Humanities building, the Nursing building, and the Field House and the Administration.

RUDOLPH: Okay, where was the Nursing building? Is it what is the LA building now?

FUSCO: Do you know what—it's the one—the one right next to the—I can't remember the letter designation, but—oh, where was it during Phase One?

RUDOLPH: The Nursing building—which one was the Nursing building?

FUSCO: During Phase One there—

RUDOLPH: Phase Two.

FUSCO: Oh, Phase Two? Phase Two was where, was—

RUDOLPH: In the Humanities. It's in Humanities.

FUSCO: I think it's Humanities now. I think it's the H Building. If, don't forget, it's been ten years since I've been on that campus or more.

RUDOLPH: [*talking at same time*] Since you've been there, right. [*laughs*]

FUSCO: I mean, so, things may have changed.

RUDOLPH: They may have.

FUSCO: Okay.

RUDOLPH: They probably have. [*both laughs*]. So Phase Two, it also included the Administration building?

FUSCO: Yep, it included Administration building and the Fine Arts building.

RUDOLPH: Alright. And the Field House?

FUSCO: The Field House.

RUDOLPH: The Field House.

FUSCO: The H building and um [*popping sound*], and I think the Science building—

RUDOLPH: The Science building.

FUSCO: Was part of it. And the reason why they needed a media director was that they were putting in a full television studio in the Fine Arts building. And since my background happened to have, you know, a master's degree in media technology with an emphasis on TV, Dr. Musselman was determined that he was going to have a very decent TV studio. And so that was

one of the reasons why I was hired. The other one was to put together a good media program. They really didn't have any media program as such, at that time, this is 1975; media was just a series of projectors that were doled out from the Library. So when they hired me, really I was a part of the Library. Media did not exist on its own at that time, because I don't think they really understood where to put it, what to do with it, or how much resources was going to come in, but after a couple years, Media was separated from the Library, and it existed on its own so, media technology became, you know, its own entity. TV from the very, very beginning, it was questionable whether we really should have had a TV studio or not. We weren't really designed to do a lot of the teaching that would go along and use the TV studio, so the TV facilities became just a tool in which we could make some videos and show some videos. But really to be a part of pedagogy, part of the learning—it

never, ever took off because we never had the faculty resources to do that. And I don't think we really even had the interest of the students. There was not a big clamoring for at that time. At the completion of the Phase Two project, which was somewhere around 1977/78, Administration moved out of the bottom of the Library; moved up to where it was, and Media moved—we were occupying a section of the Library that is now used for cataloguing and for processing—that was Media, and we moved from there to free that up for the Library, and we moved downstairs. Then that existed for several years until then they moved Media over to the Fine Arts area, where I think it is still—

[0:10:40.8]

RUDOLPH: It's still—

FUSCO: They still—*[talking at the same time]*

RUDOLPH: Yes. It's still there. It's moved around a couple of times in Fine Arts.

FUSCO: Pardon?

RUDOLPH: It's moved around a little bit over in Fine Arts, but it's there. *[talking at the same time]*

FUSCO: I don't think the college really understood what to do with it. It was just something that was needed, but it wasn't as important as the actual curriculum-based endeavors—you

know, teaching and classroom work, and stuff like that. Those take precedence, and also the social programs took a lot more precedence.

RUDOLPH: Now, you started out as a biology major. And then you started working in hospitals.

FUSCO: Um-hm

RUDOLPH: And then you started doing photography, and then you moved over to media. That's quite a switch, moving from different areas. What—

FUSCO: The transition wasn't all that—I mean, I did photography way before any of the other stuff in undergraduate. I worked in the laboratories, the biological laboratories as a biological photographer and as a photo-bicroscopist, you know, and so I had that background. What happened is that while I was at Mass General, the only options that were open to me at the time were to either go get a doctorate and continue research or to try and utilize the skills I had, which in this case was photography and that type of stuff, and some other endeavor. And I started looking at the options that were available, and taking some courses. And I finally decided that educational media and technology blended a good part of the background that I had, and that was not a bad career jump for me because really I didn't have to get a doctorate at that time to really start making a decent, decent living and get myself a decent position. Soon after I got my master's at BU [Boston University] in media, I then enrolled in another master's program at Simmons in Library Science, and because at that time, I really started taking a look at teaching and learning and education and where it was going. Now to realize we're talking now in the [*clock chimes*] mid-1970s, okay, and at that point, the question was, Where is education and learning going to be in the next couple of decades? And I decided that it was going to be a blend of technology information science, which was basically librarianship and communications. And so I had started a program at Boston University, a doctorate program, that was blending those three ideas. And then all of a sudden I got my job at Massasoit, and so I just I sort of had to curtail something, so I just finished up my library degree, which gave me two of the three areas that I was looking at for how best to not teach but provide the learning and learning experience for the students. And as I progressed on through Massasoit, up around 1980, I decided that the communications aspect of it was really lacking as far as my background goes, and that the colleges needed it, and education needed it, and I took a year leave of absence from Massasoit at

that point, and I worked for Rollins Cable Company, and making educational programming, and stuff like that up in Andover. And I'm trying to learn what was happening with all the communications aspects—how you could blend those together with the other two, the librarianship and with the media and technology. I then came back to Massasoit and for the next three years, I also decided that things were happening in the computer field, and I needed to have a background in computers, so I brought in some of the first Apple computers on the campus and probably in the state community college system, I had the first networking system going; it was an old Corvus networking system, at that time, and so I started blending all of these together to have some sort of a unified learning environment for the kids—

[0:16:32.2]

RUDOLPH: Now that was—and let me interject here just a little bit because that was very perceptive—librarians were not into computers—I mean, this was very early in the personal computer.

FUSCO: Oh, I had a big, fat problem at Simmons because I would go in and I would talk about the delivery of information and the delivery of books via computers and communications. Now don't forget, this was at Simmons; this was in the late 70s, early 80s; actually, it was the late 70s. And the library students there had a real big problem with it because all they had were great big massive terminals. They were hitched up to OCLC [Online Computer Library Center] at the time and you had to sit in there with a teletype machine going, clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk [*tapping table*] just to get yourself some sort of a catalog reference in that—they thought this was really high-tech stuff. That was the students. The students had a lot of resistance. A couple of the profs did not. And so I ended up being able to give lectures on communications—and what I mean by communications is the electronic communications—cables and radio waves and stuff like that. Also what helped that a lot was I'm an amateur radio operator, and so therefore I had that technical transmission receiving type of background and antennas and all the electrons type of things going with that. But the librarians at that time were very, very resistant on having any sort of electronic, uh [*pause*], data in place of books.

RUDOLPH: [*talking at same time*] We have trouble with change. [*laughs*]

FUSCO: Well, actually—actually not necessarily so. The ALA [American Library Association] and the rest of them have always been at the forefront. Now they always tried to figure out what

you have to do with it, like how do you catalog this thing? Or how do you distribute it? But I find that there is almost a schizophrenic attitude within librarianship as far as the electronic media, the electronic transmission of information, and the old style of the books and everything else. But librarians were the first one to adopt the concept of information science as opposed to references and stuff like that. They came up with that way before people even began to understand—

RUDOLPH: Well, that's true, yes.

FUSCO: what was going on. But some of the old, die-hard bookies, you know—

RUDOLPH: *[laughs]* Yes, they were.

FUSCO: they loved to smell the ink. They like to feel the pages.

RUDOLPH: Yes, I still like paper smell. *[laughs]*

FUSCO: *[laughing]*

RUDOLPH: We've talked a little bit about how you came to Massasoit when Dr. Musselman was president there and that you came and you left and came back. How many years were you at Massasoit together?

[0:20:07.8]

FUSCO: On the books, I was there twenty-five years; I was there probably closer to thirty. What happened was I took a leave—I took a couple of leaves of absences, and one I took a leave of absence when I went to work for the Rollins Cablevision. A second in 1985, I ended up having a heart attack, and I was out of the picture for about a year—or close to a year. And then I came back and I worked for about four more years. Then I took another leave of absence to get my doctorate, okay, and—

RUDOLPH: And your doctorate's in?

FUSCO: My doctorate is in—it's a dual concentration from Boston University—it's a concentration in pedagogy and in computer information science. It was the first time that BU allowed that you have in a sense a double major, a double concentration in a doctorate program. And I felt it was very important at that time to do that because this was in 1989 that I had started my doctorate, and I finished it in 1991. But at that point I really could see where computers and

computer technology was really going to be a big influence in the education field. And primarily in the community college field because in the community college field, they really didn't have the luxury of time that a four-year college has. I mean they have to get their students in and out, and we have to use every resource available. And at that time at Massasoit, after my heart attack in 1985, '86, '87, I had stopped working in Media because the stress really was a little bit too much, and I had made a transition, and I transitioned over to the really new department of computer technologies, and that was headed up by Colin Moran. And so I worked with Colin for several years; took my leave of absence; got my doctorate; came back; and at that point when I came back, Sylvia Kostecki was in charge of the Library. She had taken over from Evan Foley, who was there for many, many, many years. And Sylvia and I got along famously; we got along very, very, very well, but about that time, she was not feeling too, too well, and she figured she wanted to transition out the administrative part of the Library and go back and just work within the Library environs, but not be in charge of the administration. And since I had an MLS from Simmons, since I had the background and everything else, they asked me if I would take over the directorship of the Library. And I said, Yeah, but I said, Really what should happen is that we should combine all of the different disparate entities such as television, media, academic computing, library, librarianship, and everything else—we should combine all those together and put them under the egis of one person that would be able to coordinate those and have them feed one upon the other and help so that we can have a richer, what would I would call a richer, resource environment for the students. And the administration thought about it and they said, yeah, why not? You know, so basically what happened is I ended up not only being in charge of the Library but also being in charge of Media and ended up being in charge of Television, ended up being in charge of computer uh learning, and all of those things and it seemed to have worked very, very well.

RUDOLPH: Now, you were there when there were no computers, [*FUSCO: laughs*] when this wasn't even part of it and then you saw also the transition very slowly to what we have now which is just—

FUSCO: Well—

RUDOLPH: Distance learning through computers; we have computers on campus; we—

[0:25:07.2]

FUSCO: Right. Well, during—

RUDOLPH: How did all that happen?

FUSCO: How did all that happen?

RUDOLPH: Yes.

FUSCO: That—[*pause*] that's a hard question to answer because there were several ways of—several phases in which things were happening. First phase was that people had to—we had to get some sort of technology on board. They already had in existence, they had a computer programming course. They didn't have a computer technology department [*background talking*]

FUSCO: So, the period we're talking about is 1981, '82, '83, somewhere thereabouts. At that particular point, nobody really was thinking about computer and computerized learning. What they thought about computers fell into two brackets: it was either programming, or the at that time the secretarial science department, who then became office administration and whatever the nomenclature is that they finally ended up using were looking at something like the Wang computer for word processing. And so therefore, they looked at computers as a tool to do things. Okay, so you know, you either learned to program or you learned to use them as word processors, and not even research—we didn't even have anything even remotely resembling computer research at that point. So, I took a look at it and said, "We have to start to getting something else in here that is not a mainframe computer or a special purpose computer like the Wang. So, Apple had just come out with [*clock chimes*] a decent little system at the time, and I happened to get a grant, and I diverted some monies from the grant to buy about ten Apples and to see what we could do with them. And it wasn't too, too long before I realized that we could then network them. So I took some monies, and I had another grant, and I bought a Corvus network, and down in the bottom part of the Library, I had a computer lab. And so then people started coming down to see what was going on with the basic computer lab that I had, and the programmers, the people teaching programming, came down and at first they said, Those are just toys. And then they could start seeing what was happening and they got kind of interested. Then the secretarial science people came down, and I was demonstrating word processing using the Apple, and they thought this was really pretty good, and one of the faculty members, Joanne Landry, said, "Hey, this is really cool." And she started scheduling her classes down there to use the Apples because they never ever did get the Wang. [*RUDOLPH: laughs*]. Well, actually, they

did get a Wang, but it wasn't until later on, and so she had her students up and going on word processing a couple of years before they had the main—by that time, IBM came in with their competition to the Apple, and the secretarial science people decided that they wanted to put in a laboratory for word processing using micro-computers. Again, they still were just thinking of them as tools, sophisticated tools, for the courses that they were teaching and that would probably bring us to about—[*pause; sigh/breath*] '89-90, somewhere

[0:29:57.5] thereabouts. As soon as I got into the Library—you know I had been exposed to what was happening out into the real world—and we started getting something like the silver platter in, which we had a whole series of computer disks that you could have—it was real kludgy, but it did have a lot of the indices and it had a lot of the reference works that we could look up, and we could look up references on it. And that worked out for a couple years. At the same time, I happened to get involved with the state commission on computers and computer technologies within the schools. This was in the early eighties, and all of the colleges and universities at that time knew that something was going to happen with this, but they weren't quite sure what. So, I happened to get myself onto a couple of the state-wide committees, and one of them happened to be the librarians committee, and they decided that we're really going to have to do something about getting reference works online into the Library. And all of sudden, the money started being freed up there because I happened to be involved with that; I made sure that Massasoit got some of that money diverted to it, and we ended up getting a couple of the connections to the state university system and to their reference databases, and that was the big thing at the time, the databases, the reference databases—are you going to go with Lexus/Nexus? Are you going to go with this? You know, which ones are you going to get? And so we were able to migrate and bring that onto the campus. At the same time, the governor had set up a commission for communications between all of the schools. Up to that point, the way they communicated was through dial-in lines. During the mid-eighties, I was on a commission to take a look at bringing fiber optics from all of the colleges and connecting them all. And I had a background in doing this because I had set up the first fiber optic communications between separate campuses when we had connected Brockton campus with the Canton campus using fiber optic technology. And what I did is I just made a contract with Comcast at the time to take about six of their fiber optic cables, and so we were ending up having communications between both campuses, and we were able to have resources and everything else. I don't want to get—I

can go really into the technology a lot and that would tend to bore people, so why don't you ask me some questions?

[0:33:39.1]

RUDOLPH: Okay, alright, I can do that. I wonder—since you were involved in Massasoit over a long period of time, how you saw the difference between what was going on in the early years—not necessarily with technology because we've covered that a little bit—but maybe what the students were like and maybe the different—and you went through also a lot of presidents. But how do you see the first the students—what were they like when you first were there and how were they different when you left in the mid-nineties, late nineties?

FUSCO: Well, actually, I left in '89 and '90, and so therefore I started seeing the first students in in the mid-seventies. Really interesting—the average student at that time ended up being a single woman with a couple of kids trying to get a job, and the actual mix of courseware in the mid-seventies was about seventy percent career-oriented and about forty percent or thirty percent liberal arts transfer. And so the kids that we would have would take the liberal arts courses, they would go to Harvard, they would go to BU, they would go to some very, very good schools, and the caliber of academics and the caliber of students at that time seemed to be at least high enough for them to be able to make the transition from a community college to some brand-name universities. Also, the career-oriented courses and the career-oriented students were getting jobs. They were able to come in for two years; they were able to—in that time you had secretarial science, they were able to get out, they were able to get a job. The faculty was really aggressive in in finding jobs for these students when they graduated. You know some of the other career-oriented jobs that they had were in in engineering, you know basic engineering practices, nursing was a big one. I mean you know I think there was a hundred percent placement in in the nursing. The other part of it is during that beginning part of my tenure there, there was federal programs to get all of the police and the firemen to have them have some sort of a college-level degree. So, we had a large number of policeman or firemen coming in and taking DCE courses so that they could get their associate's degree and consequently, they could get their pay raises or whatever they got. But they at least fit the minimum criteria that the federal government was putting out there for those types of professions. A few years later, maybe about three, four, five years later, the emphasis was on people going to colleges and universities; and so therefore, our liberal arts

transfer programs, the ratio went the opposite way—about seventy percent of those, of the students in the early eighties were transfer students and only about thirty percent were career students—career-oriented. And I think that switched a couple more times by the end of my tenure. Probably in the early nineties when we had acquired Canton, Canton became like a really technically-oriented program, and so people would go there for diesel, diesel mechanics, for graphic arts, for a lot of those programs. And in fact, we moved our whole engineering program up there; but there you would get a lot of career-oriented students. They would mostly go out and get a job after they finished. Brockton was trying to make the transition so it became more of a liberal arts area. I'm not quite sure how that played out after I left. I mean, you know, so it could be different. And I think that's one of the beauties about the community college is that it's not state, it doesn't stay where it was; it's always changing. And poor faculty, I mean you don't know what you're going to be next week because it was always new programs coming in; people want to have something done; people think that education should be this. And people were always trying to change to meet the times. Did that answer your question?

[0:39:51.7]

RUDOLPH: Yes—answered it very well, thank you. One thing I noticed about your resume was your involvement with what you said in your resume: the development of a long distance learning component to the information services center of the college—

FUSCO: Wow, that sounds important. *[laughs]*

RUDOLPH: It does! It sounds like distance education to me.

FUSCO: Like it's education?

RUDOLPH: Like it's distance education.

FUSCO: Oh yeah.

RUDOLPH: Yeah. And were those the beginnings? Now when you wrote your resume *[shuffling papers sound]*, I have your resume here.

FUSCO: Do you?

RUDOLPH: Yes. Ah, you wrote your resume—I don't know if I have it—it goes up to *[chair squeaks in background]* 1997 to the present, and I guess that was probably around 2000, right?

FUSCO: Yeah, yeah.

RUDOLPH: Probably. About, so those were the early years of distance education at Massasoit. And it kind of worked when you were involved as the dean there of those different areas, distance education was one of those areas. And so I'd like you to tell me a little bit about the distance education component that you worked on there because you did that.

FUSCO: Yeah. That was way back when. The pitch that I tried to give to the faculty and to the administration was, Here we are; we're a community college. Now this was during the mid-1990s, starting somewhere around in '94, '95, and I thought it was really silly that we would have single parents come to class at eight o'clock or have an eight o'clock class scheduled because that was the only class that they could get in the rotation that they were taking. And yet, they had to get like two kids, three kids to school; they had to get them out of the house and everything else, and if they were late, they were really chastised or they were punished or they were—you know, it was not easy for them. Also if you stopped to think at that time, and we had a number of those type of students working within the library environments, and they would have a rough time getting home [*clock chimes*] homework done because they had to take care of their children. And it occurred to me that, Gee, you know, maybe after they got the kids to bed, rather than watch television—I mean, they're still young enough that their minds are still sharp enough—why couldn't they get on a computer and do some of their coursework on a computer? The theory was there, okay? I think the need was there, and obviously it was because it took off. The problem that we had was the administration couldn't understand it. Faculty didn't really see that as something that was viable in their area, although every one of them said, you know that'll really work very well in this other area, but it won't work in our area. So what I did is we got several grants, and one of the things we wanted was Blackboard, in the very, very early stages. If I can remember correctly, I think Jim Ventola and Dave Hirschy really thought that this was a really neat idea, and they sort of latched on to it and started working courses. And it didn't take them too long to start using the technologies, and at that time I said, Gee, I need somebody to coordinate all this and um [*pause*] I just had a senior moment. [*laughs*]. I had Linda—

RUDOLPH: McAlpine

FUSCO: McAlpine. She's had several names, so I keep on forgetting whether I can remember—

RUDOLPH: *[laughs]* Which one she went back to—

FUSCO: But at that time, Linda McAlpine was working for me, and she was like really interested into the distance project, so I said, Why don't we just make that a whole separate entity? And kind of did without having any approval from anybody, and all of a sudden, you know, people started realizing, Gee you know, you could do things here. At that same time, we had put a forty-computer laboratory down in the bottom of the cafeteria, in the bottom floor of the cafeteria. And I needed somebody down there to kind of look at it and manage it, make sure it worked, coordinate what was happening, and so I put Linda's office down in the same area, and that went on for several years. I mean, for three, four years, and then we finally got different programs. I think we went from Blackboard to Whiteboard, which was another computerized distance learning program that they had there, and then we were starting to try to articulate with the universities to see if we can't get some sort of like AP [advanced placement] classes or something like that. And then I had left the college at that time. It seems every time I'd had gone back or touched base that things were still moving along quite nicely.

[0:45:58.2]

RUDOLPH: They are. They are. If you look at a catalog now, you'll see quite a few different online classes that are running, and it all started with you, imagine that.

FUSCO: Well, it had to start with somebody. *[laughs]*

RUDOLPH: It had to start with somebody. I think that's impressive. I was wondering about some of your colleagues. You spoke about Linda and distance education, and you talked about Jim Ventola, who always wants to be the first to do—I think he does a lot of things early.

FUSCO: Ed Lamay was another one who really latched on to media; he used media in his courseware. Oh, way back in the seventies and the eighties, he used to commandeer all my cotton-picking equipment. He had a full, multi-media course going on. You'd walk by his classroom and the walls would be shaking. He'd have music going and he'd, you know. Joanne Landry was another who would latch onto the newest technologies, then from her, the rest of the secretarial science people—the rest of them, the office and administration people, they got really involved with it. I think the things that really helped a lot of times was when we got PowerPoints going, and we started showing people how to do PowerPoint to take the place of the overhead

transparencies. Once that happened, and then we started getting many of the classrooms designed so that they could use the computer and computer technologies. And Don Mikes, was instrumental in doing that. He just loved to go in there and wire up stuff and make them go well.

RUDOLPH: Um-hm. And now every year, we have more of those smart classrooms coming in, so that's really good. There has been some discussion in the state about changes in the mission of the community colleges from an academic focus to a workforce development focus. What do you think about that?

FUSCO: What do I think about it?

RUDOLPH: Um-hm.

FUSCO: I think whatever is needed to get the students in and to get them educated to the point where they are productive; I think the profile of the students is most important. What do these type of students coming to the community college need? And that changes. Two years ago, three years ago, I would have said that quite probably students would really want to become career-oriented; they'd want to get a job and so should do that. And now I'm taking a look at what's happening outside and I'm sitting there saying, With the economy the way it is, I think we're going to go back towards liberal arts and liberal arts transfer. It's the cheapest way. Cheap is not necessarily a good word, but it's the most inexpensive way that a student can probably get a well-rounded, good, general education. I mean, I've always felt that the good faculty at the community colleges, they give a really good, solid foundation if the students really want to take advantage of it. The other parts of the community college mission, which was to be a remedial type of program for students, really had a problem; I think those were good because a lot of times students in high school don't really understand the importance of the decisions they don't make. And I think that we have offered some really good—I mean Linda McAlpine was probably one of the best examples. I mean she, if I'm not mistaken, she never went to college. She ended up being a single mother at one time, and then she came back to Massasoit and then by the end of her career at Massasoit, she had a doctorate in mathematics. I mean my gosh; where else can you do that? I mean Kenn Anania, if I'm not mistaken, was a product of Massasoit. He came there, he ended up going off and getting his, his degrees, and he came back, and he's teaching kids and everything else. I mean, talk about productivity; talk about influencing people, and you know that's all the community college, you know?

[0:51:19.8]

RUDOLPH: Um-hm. Very good. What do you see as some of Massasoit College's biggest accomplishments?

FUSCO: The fact that it became a really powerful educational entity in a portion of the state that at that time was rural on one side, and on the other side it was inner-city, but the identity with having a readily available, higher education facility in the community was not there. I mean, if you're in Brockton, the Brockton area, Stonehill was probably the closest that you had. And unless you happened to be Irish Catholic at the time to go there, there was mainly, most of it, or Wheaton was the other one; these were not colleges that were readily available to the, the general population. And they weren't available at a cost that they could afford. And so I think that it's the reason why I stayed with community colleges. I was an adjunct at BU [Boston University], and I'm sitting there saying, My God, there are people at the community colleges that really need it. And the community colleges need the best type of people that they can get to help the students. And throughout my tenure there, I know that we hired people in the Library, hired people in Media department. We had these people that couldn't probably have gotten a decent job, and they came and they left, and they were productive members of society.

RUDOLPH: Um-hm, good. What do you see as Massasoit's biggest disappointments?

FUSCO: It's biggest disappointments?

RUDOLPH: Um-hm.

FUSCO: That's hard because you're asking me to take the whole Massasoit community and say what is its biggest disappointment, and I don't know that it has one, but um, that—that's a rough way to phrase the question.

RUDOLPH: You can rephrase it.

FUSCO: Well, that's what I'm, that's what I'm thinking. That's why I'm babbling because I'm trying to think as I would do it. Um [*pause*], I would say the biggest, I would say the biggest anomaly for Massasoit was I really quite couldn't figure out whether it was fish, fowl, or friend or foe [*talking at same time*].

RUDOLPH: Its identity?

FUSCO: Its identity.

RUDOLPH: Um-hm.

FUSCO: You know, the thing is, it was born from politics; it couldn't shake the concept of politics; and yet, its mission has nothing to do with politics, but its funding has to do with politics, and I think that whole political connection just throws you for a tailspin every once in a while. The other part of, the other disappointment that it has, I think, is that it really doesn't have a research, a pedagogical research area that can take a look and have a kind of a pedagogical crystal ball that you can see what's really going to be happening in the next couple of years and start gearing up for it. It's been always been reactive, too. So in other words, all of a sudden something happens within the community, and Massasoit reacts to it—

RUDOLPH: Rather than planning

FUSCO: —yeah, other than planning it.

RUDOLPH: Yeah, that's a good answer.

FUSCO: *[laughs]*

[0:55:37.8]

RUDOLPH: *[laughs]* What are the most difficult problems that you faced at the college, and what were their outcomes?

FUSCO: Wow. All depends upon what era we were looking at. I think the most difficult problems that I faced was the fact that the college, the college population, the administration, the faculty, the non-faculty members, and everything else, could not realize that every entity within the community college was really part of the learning environment. You would have people fighting against learning happening within the Library. Learning happening outside of the traditional classroom. The concept that the other folks in the college who were not directly related to a classroom, people-sit-in-the-chairs-and-listen-to-the-sage-on-the-stage, that those people themselves were not educators, that they were not part of the learning process. Another big disappointment was the concept of learning and teaching. I tend to be learning-based. I tend to think that students learn; they're never taught. I think you teach a dog; I think you can go out and train an animal, but I don't think you can train people *[clock chimes]*. I think what happens is that you set up a situation where a student learns and they learn very well, and for that, you

need resources; you don't need regurgitation, you don't need somebody swallowing tidbits of information and regurgitating that. I mean those are ephemeral; they change. But the concept of creative thinking, the concept of being able to research and make a critical choice as to the knowledge that you gained, I think that's paramount. I don't think that really has, at least when I was there, it may have changed, but I think that at least when I was there, that was not really a big, fat emphasis in the community.

RUDOLPH: Um-hm. Okay, good. To change back to you again, what are you doing now, and how did you get to where you are from your former career at Massasoit?

FUSCO: Three heart attacks. *[both laugh]*

RUDOLPH: Oh, I shouldn't laugh at that.

FUSCO: *[laughing]* I laughed at it.

RUDOLPH: *[talking at same time]* It was the way you said it.

FUSCO: I think it's amazing. Where am I now? My second heart attack at Massasoit in 1999, 2000, in essence stopped my career at Massasoit, okay? I decided then some higher power was telling me, You better get out, you know, and continue your life. So the thing is, is that what I did is I decided to retire, and I retired and, I started a small business with my daughter-in-law down in New Jersey, and that's going along really well. We're eleven years into it now. We survived the past couple of years; I'm not quite sure how long we will survive, but I mean, we went through the real downturns in economic times, and that gave me an excuse to spend a lot of time in New Jersey, where my grandchildren are, and basically I use the business as an excuse to go down and play with my grandkids, and that's probably one of the greatest things. The other thing that happened after I left, after I retired, is that I have a lot of time to pursue topics of learning that I didn't have the time to do when I was at Massasoit. I try and keep up with the computer and computer technology; I think it's really great. I think there's things that always are happening there. But I can do it at my leisure.

[1:00:29.8]

RUDOLPH: Um-hm. Sort of like taking a long-distance course.

FUSCO: Well, or sabbatical.

RUDOLPH: *[laughs]* Yes, a sabbatical.

FUSCO: But this sabbatical lasts.

RUDOLPH: *[laughs]* Are there any questions that I should have asked you or any additional comments that you would like to make?

FUSCO: No, I think you were pretty thorough, I mean it's really hard to dredge up years and years of experience and, what I found was very hard as I said, I could give a litany of all the names of the people that I worked with, but you'll get that from other interviews. I think what is most interesting is the process that was happening. I mean, I worked with many, many fine people and you know, I think the last years that I had there in the Library were really good. I mean, we had some really, really nice people there; we did some very fun things; we did some interesting things. We even tried cooperative management.

RUDOLPH: We did.

FUSCO: *[laughs]*

RUDOLPH: And to be nice to one another. *[laughs]*

FUSCO: Yeah, well, I mean you know, how do you get an idea on the table without bashing each other? *[RUDOLPH: laughs]* And one of the things that I enjoyed doing is to get that off, I would bring antipasti and stuff like that. *[laughs]*

RUDOLPH: Yes, I reminded Estelle of that. *[laughs]*

FUSCO: *[laughs]* And uh, but I, I tend to think that the work environment should be really something that you feel good about in that you should spend some time to identify what the real objective is, and um, no, I don't think that there's anything that we have missed except, like I said, you know all the names, the litany of the names of the people, um, but you know, they know who they are. I named some of the important people I've, the people that I really, really liked, and we got along with, I probably have left off, but that doesn't mean that –

RUDOLPH: *[talking at the same time]* That doesn't negate them at all, no.

FUSCO: —they're any less.

RUDOLPH: Well, I thank you very much. It's been a great interview. I've enjoyed the stories.

FUSCO: And I hope we recorded it.

RUDOLPH: And I hope we recorded it. Thank you very much, Tony.

[end of interview]

[1:02:49.8]