

Dr. Mary Stokrocki - Student Panel Transcription

John Michael Autobiographical Lecture Series - November 18, 2014

Dr. Julie Lindsey: I'd like to welcome all the students to the student panel, which is created and based on the questions that arose from our guest presenter this year, our distinguished lecturer, Dr. Mary Stokrocki, from Arizona State University. And she's been with us and told us about her life last night. So the students were there, and they have questions--always--but this gives them the opportunity...

John and Betty certainly supported... but his vision for this particular part of the series was very important to him, because he was very student oriented, so in many ways, this is really the icing on the cake. And so I want to introduce the students, before I introduce our guest distinguished lecturer through the John A. and Betty J. Michael Autobiographical Series in Art Education, and then we'll turn it over to the students for their questions.

So I'm pleased to present Hannah Zimmerman, who's going to be graduating and who's going to have a fellowship next semester to round out her year at the Dayton Art Institute. And then next we have Katherine Kramer, and Katherine will be returning to finish her schooling, as well. And then we have Haley Rice, who is going to be returning to finish school. And then to my right, we have Joseph Castano, who is going to be starting his student teaching here in the spring, but he is going to finish at Miami University's China campus, so he'll have wonderful stories. So, in essence, he has another semester, as well. And then we have Kate Mahon--did I say that right, Kate? (Double-check students' names)

Kate Mahon: Yeah.

Dr. Julie Lindsey: Katherine Mahon, who... help me here... What will you be doing next semester?

Kate Mahon: I'll be student teaching.

Dr. Julie Lindsey: Oh, yes! Of course! So you and Joe will be student teaching together.

So that completes our students, and again, as I said, you're just a key part of this series. So I'd like to introduce our distinguished lecturer, who is our 36th lecturer. This is November 18th, 2014, and we're in room 220 of the Art Building, just to give you a context that we can mark this with. But I'm pleased to present Dr. Mary Stokrocki, who's our distinguished lecturer.

So these young people are eager to ask a question! Who would like to start?

Student: I'll start. Do you think growing up so close to IBM in New York spurred your interest in computers in teaching?

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: No, because I was not into computers in the beginning. In fact, when I did my dissertation, I typed it on an old fashioned typewriter, with the erasable bond paper. And I had to hire somebody to be an editor. So when I got married, we took our money and bought two computers... you know, those old-fashioned IBM ones. And that's when I first got into computers. But I did a degree in commercial art, so photography I taught for ten years. So that's related, you know, maybe! Good question! How do you know... Do you know anything about IBM? Do you know anything about it?

Student: All my family on my dad's side and my step-mom's family is from New York. And my step-grandparents live on Long Island (5:35-- ask Joe!) so I know that side with the computers and the contracting. There's some correlation.

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: And my mom's italian, by the way. My husband's italian. Italian-Polish, right across the street from each other! Nice question!

Student: Alright, I have a question. You can correct me if I heard this wrong, but I believe you said that you are your number one student. Is that something that you said?

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: That I'm a number one student?

Student: No, you said that, as teachers, we are our number one students, so I was just wondering if you had any suggestions for those managing a full-time job and then continuing their own learning, having those two-things coincide.

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: Are you referring to teaching?

Student: Yeah, yeah, teaching.

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: Well, your first year teaching, you won't have any time! The first year of teaching is pretty tough, learning the ropes! Well, when you're doing the projects... I used to tell my students to do the projects first. *You* do the projects, and get your interpretation, and then you can share it with the students. That's the kind of art you're gonna be doing in the beginning. And then maybe, later on, you can start doing your own...

One of my PowerPoints was an artwork that I did as a young teacher, a lot of drawings and stuff. I think they become very personal as you go along. And then you start graduate school...

They don't have to have a master's degree anymore, do they, in this state?

Dr. Julie Lindsey: Uh, no, but it drives the salary scale.

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: You get pretty lonely sometimes, and you wanna go back to school. When I started my second art interest in weaving, I took about six courses, and then I went over to Turkey. I was invited by the World Bank--Somebody dropped out at the last minute, but you gotta be ready for anything. And I said, "I've been there before. I can go when school starts next week." So my chair said, "Find somebody to take your job, and you can go." And my husband went, too. One week we had as time to get ready for an entire year. See, those things just fall into your lap! So be ready for anything! Don't be afraid to take a risk. But if you don't have kids, you can do these things, ya know? They all say, "Oh, now's not the time," but sometimes it is the time. Does that answer your question. **Laughter**

Dr. Julie Lindsey: Could you say a little bit about what you did for the World Bank while you were there?

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: Yes, I was writing curriculum with my colleague (8:54), who came all the way from Antioch. We were stationed Ankara, the capital, and she would drive on the buses. and we would plan the curriculum together. During the week, I did a lot of it. When she came up, she went through it. and, of course, translated everything into Turkish. Once a month, ten teachers came in, again, by buses, and we had round tables, and that was a lot of fun. And I got to know them very well. At the beginning, they put us on buses, again, to visit some of the universities--thirty-four universities. I mean, the whole circumference of Turkey-- It was very, very exciting. And then the winter came, and Ramadan, which gets to be really draggy. They're all fasting, and that was tough. And then you have Christmas. And do they celebrate Christmas there? In the shopping malls they do! **Laughter** That was cute to see a Christmas tree. I remember my boss, who was from England, said, "You can't have a Christmas tree." "Okay, we'll call it a curriculum tree!" And that was cute.

We went and did some trials. I think we were the only team--music and art--that teamed up to try out these lessons. And a couple times, we would run upstairs or run out the back door and go into the schools to try them out! They didn't know we were gone-- They had a lot of teachers! And we were the only team that had evidence--physical evidence--that this works... like in art criticism with the kids... beautiful rugs. It was really gorgeous. And later, they may have complicated us, but they said, "Hmm, we had known you had snuck out!" **Laughter**

Any other questions?

Student: I know art ed is an evolving subject in schools, so my question is what are the changes and challenges that started between when you first started teaching and now?

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: Oh boy! I think it was a lot better when I first started. Well, I had foot in the schools. Some schools were brand new, and I was involved in setting up two school programs, and the first one was a fancy building--maybe you get a kiln--but you have to run around and get it. That's the challenge, right? So you ask the parents to help out. You get a lot of recycled stuff. Paper tubes were a big thing when I was younger, and we could build structures from the cardboard, and that was exciting. Trying to find materials sometimes is difficult, but today everything is remixed and mashed up... They expect you to do a lot with recyclables. And, of course, politics is the biggest thing. When you're a young teacher, you know, you've gotta eat humble pie, and take your time. There is no rush. Listen to people. And if your evaluation is always on the grade, it's because they always have to write something down. So don't take that to heart. If it's part of *their* job, then it's not your problem. So you work as hard as you can with your colleagues like the music director, who really never liked what I was doing... but that's too bad! And then (12:44) was one of the sport coaches, and I didn't know he did watercolors. That was exciting! But we planned a big event... got a big grant. I was teaching in Boston then, and we did facepainting. And all the students were in the gym, and they did a kind of dancing. You follow the leader around. And sometimes, the boys dance, and that was quite amazing to do something like that. Now they're used to it, but, boy, at the beginning, it was hard to get them to move! They were very sexist, ya know, so you had to put up with that.

But I think politics is the biggest thing. You really have to work hard. And go to the school board meetings. However difficult it is, go! They're really open-minded. They don't always like the principals, and they watch them, and if you want somebody else on your side, be visible in your community. I was editor of the yearbooks when I was a young student, but I was also *in charge* of the yearbooks when I became a teacher. You see, you have to be very involved in your community. Spaghetti supper... dance... go to them. Is that what you wanted to hear?

Group laughter

And much more!

Dr. Julie Lindsey: Do you know about... Does Arizona have Crayons to Computers?

Dr. Mary Stokrocki: What is that, another program?

Dr. Julie Lindsey: It's basically... I you know about Crayons to Computers... Don't some of you? (15:00)