

CNR Alumni Spotlight **Sandra Smith Gangle, SAS '64**



Left: Mary Ann Marriott, SAS '59
Right: Sandra Gangle, SAS '64

This past May, on a Road Scholar journey up and down the Adriatic coast, my husband and I met Sandra Smith Gangle, who graduated from the College of New Rochelle in 1964, five years after my CNR graduation. Throughout the trip Sandra told me of how her CNR education had helped her achieve milestone career goals while also preparing her for a rich personal life as a wife, mother, grandmother and community volunteer.

Like many women of our era Sandra sought a college where she could be “challenged intellectually, enriched spiritually and enjoy companionship” with women who had similar goals. Sandra said the Ursulines were “unique role models exemplifying wisdom, leadership and professional accomplishment.” Growing up in Brockton, MA, Sandra explained that by the time she was 8 years old she knew that she wanted to be a lawyer. But a high school counselor

dissuaded her from pursuing law, as it would be difficult for her as a woman to obtain a job as a lawyer. Because she demonstrated ability in foreign languages, she encouraged Sandra to become a language teacher.

Armed with her bachelor's degree from CNR in French and German Sandra embarked on a teaching career in foreign languages that took her across the country to University of Oregon where she earned a master's degree in Romance languages. Sandra taught French culture, civilization and literature at Oregon State University and Willamette University from 1968 to 1975.

In spite of her successful teaching career, Sandra's interest in the law never wavered and finally at age 34, married with two children, Sandra entered Willamette College of Law, earning her Juris Doctor degree in 1980.

Sandra's recently published memoir, “MADAM ARBITRATOR: Working Toward Social Equality and Justice” recounts how she was determined to become a lawyer to help those fighting discrimination because of gender, race, social class or background. Not only did that drive and perseverance help her earn her JD, but they also led her to become the first woman attorney in Oregon to achieve a successful career as a labor arbitrator throughout the Pacific Northwest in a then male-dominated field.

A highly regarded and distinguished legal professional for 32 years, Sandra readily accepted PRO BONO (without pay) legal assignments for people without financial resources involving evictions, commitments to the State Mental Hospital and wrongful termination of employment based on race or

sex discrimination. She also served as a volunteer mediator in cases involving small claims and evictions.

Sandra retired in 2017. However, CNR's tradition of SERVIAM has played a prominent role not only in her career but now also in her retirement years. During the 1990's she chaired the Peace and Justice Committee at her parish which promoted an ecumenical approach among local churches to house homeless families in the community. Sandra has continuously served as a volunteer with the League of Women Voters for over 20 years. She has volunteered to teach civics classes to adults at Clark College and at two high schools in Vancouver, BC and Camas, WA.

She was awarded the Ursula Laurus Citation at her 55th CNR Reunion in 2019. Her memoir devotes a chapter, College Years, to her days at CNR, and through her life experiences presents a chronicle of the development of social equality and justice in the late 20th century.

- Mary Ann Marriott, SAS '59
CNR Alumni Communications Committee