

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC



YEARS

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# "I'm so grateful to have been a part of it all for 53 years"

There were ashtrays on desks in the classrooms. I taught with chalk in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Students lined up under trees, waiting to register for classes in a trailer house on wheels. In September 1970, there were just 2 permanent buildings on the Essex campus. Some of my courses were in the newly built library or administration building. Most were in prefab rectangular classrooms sitting atop concrete blocks: It was like teaching in an oversized shoebox with a door and windows. Except it was fun. I fell in love with teaching right away.

At age 27, I wasn't much older than many of my students, several of whom returned to Maryland for my retirement party a few days ago. Two who are retired now, Dr. Arnie Schuster, then a high school dropout, was my first student to become a psychologist, and Kay Zuna, Master of Social Work, became a social worker working with young girls from troubled families who might be in prison today if not for her. Another, Diane Rode, still works full time now after almost 40 years as a Senior leader, leading a staff of more than thirty, implementing creative arts therapy and live broadcast programming for long-term hospitalized children at Mount Sinai Children's Hospital in New York City. Remarkably, they all 3 recalled a powerful book they read in one of my earliest courses, *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Holocaust survivor and physician Viktor Frankl. It was always important to me to prompt my students to think about finding a purpose in life and using their talents for good.

In the mid-1970s, during my psychology internship at Johns Hopkins, there were cigarette machines in the hospital; the nursing station was filled with smoke; many patients smoked; and I puffed away in a white coat, counseling mentally ill people in a

windowless office. It's hard to imagine that now: With 50,000 students, CCBC's 3 main campuses and 4 satellite sites are all smoke-free. We also are committed to environmental sustainability and educational affordability as evidenced by the solar panels that cover our parking lots, safeguarding energy and saving millions of dollars.

By the early 1980s, quite a few women who had raised or were raising children started coming back to school. I have felt a connection with them as deep as with my younger students. One of those eager learners was then 47-year-old Betty Burman. Thirty-six years later, in 2019, I walked into a classroom to find a bouquet of yellow roses on my desk and 83-year-old Betty (now Loizeaux) back for more learning! She continued to take classes on Zoom through the pandemic, made many valuable contributions to our class discussions, and my younger students loved her. It's one of my favorite things about this wonderful college – we welcome everyone and decade-by-decade we've grown increasingly diverse by age, race, ethnicity, gender, religious and secular beliefs, socio-economics, and nationality.

How blessed my life has been to be a young teacher and then long-time full professor at the Community College of Baltimore County, formed in 1998 when 3 separate community colleges joined into 1, rapidly growing over the decades, increasingly innovative, and award winning among community colleges nationwide. From the 1970s into 2023, we are "CCBC Proud" as together we open doors and we transform lives. Literally hundreds of thousands of our former students are now making our state, country, and world a better place. I'm so grateful to have been a part of it all for 53 years.