SBCC@100 - Full Transcript

Directed by William G. Conlin & Simon Freeman

Opening

Serban: Santa Barbara and City College are one and together. There cannot be a Santa Barbara without City College and there can’t be a City College without Santa Barbara.

Towbes: I think it’s one of the outstanding community colleges, not just in California but in the whole country.

Narrator: On the beautiful coast of California, the City of Santa Barbara stands as a paradise on the Pacific. For 100 years, Santa Barbara City College has provided this community with accessible higher education. It is considered the jewel of the California Community Colleges but to truly understand Santa Barbara City College, one must first look back and see it’s rich, dynamic history.

The Beginnings

Narrator: At the dawn of the 20th century California was a state on the move. The invention of the automobile was allowing American’s to migrate west and many were setting their sights on the Southern Pacific Coast. Between Los Angeles and San Francisco a small community known as Santa Barbara was beginning to grow into a full-fledged city. Many attempts had been made to create a higher education program in Santa Barbara, but none had lasted long. With the election of Governor Hiram Johnson, California got its first education minded leader. Johnson funding allowed the Santa Barbara Junior College to begin offering classes for students interested in continuing their education. The first classes were offered at Santa Barbara High School.

MacDougall: The Santa Barbara School District in 1909, established the beginnings of what became Santa Barbara City College with a post-secondary 13th and 14th grade that marks the very beginning of the college.

Narrator: After 12 years of instruction, the junior was moved to the Santa Barbara Riviera, and in 1926 was absorbed into the Santa Barbara State Teachers College. For the next 5 years, the college continued to grow, resulting in a need for more space. In 1931 College President Clarence Phelps led the movement to move the campus to a large site in the Santa Barbara Mesa area. The land was successfully acquired but the Great Depressions caused the project to be put on hold. From the years 1926 to 1946 there was no official Junior College in Santa Barbara, but the increased number of soldiers coming home from World War II and seeking higher education, led to the reorganization of the Santa Barbara Junior College.

MacDougall: In 1946, particularly with the government’s sponsorship of what was referred to as the G.I. Bill, all veterans were given the opportunity to come back,
they were supported in getting their Baccalaureate Degrees, so that's when the college restarted and the community college was a very vital resource for that beginning period.

Narrator: In 1946, SBJC resumed operations under the jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara School District. Since the old Riviera campus was damaged in the 1925 Santa Barbara Earthquake and the University of California, Santa Barbara was now using the mesa property SBJC operated at the new property called the Alhecama Center on Santa Barbara Street. The property was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Max Schott. In 1951, a young man named Henry Bagish was hired as a professor of Philosophy, History and English. In the subsequent McCarthy era, Bagish became a strong supporter of free speech on the campus, supporting students and their rights.

Serban: Our students do have a voice and they had from day one and actually as you read stories by Henry Bagish and other long-time faculty of how faculty and students have been really a partnership beyond the classroom.

Narrator: From 1946 to 1954, Santa Barbara Junior College operated at the Alhecama Center but like so many times before the need for more space soon became an issue. In 1954, the Riviera Campus was reopened but also failed to support the growing number of students. Santa Barbara Junior College’s big break came when UCSB decided to move its campus from the Santa Barbara Mesa to Goleta Point. The mesa property that had been acquired over 20 years earlier would finally become SBJC’s home.

Serban: In 1959, we actually gained this location. We are on the Mesa Campus. Before us, UCSB for a period before they officially became UCSB were located here and when UCSB moved in Goleta where they are currently are located, we through the help of some very visionary people in the community became Santa Barbara City College on this campus, on the mesa campus.

Narrator: On July 1, 1959, three major events occurred. The Mesa Campus officially opened, Joseph Cosand became the school's first president and Santa Barbara Junior College was officially renamed Santa Barbara City College.

Expanding The Dream

Narrator: Not long after Santa Barbara City College officially began operation on the Mesa Campus, renovations began on the buildings that were already there.

Luria: There was hardly anything here. Quonset huts and trailers and an old administration building. There was, in the time that I was here, they built a new library that was lovely and I think they moved one building into another building. It was the beginning of the growth.

Narrator: An initial school bond issue granted $200,000 to improve the campus, but in 1962, the school was granted over $3 million for construction. This allowed the school to build new classrooms its original library, a cafeteria and gymnasium.
Dobbs: The buildings in general that we acquired when we took over this campus were built by a company called Demgin and we thought they were pretty stark. If you'll notice on the buildings on the East Campus there's no windows in the buildings, especially the ones that face the ocean. So since then we've tried to get buildings that have a little style to them, if you will. At this point, SBCC was still operating under the Santa Barbara High School District but in 1965, it was given its own jurisdiction.

Serban: In 1965, we have actually gained a status of a community college district, independent with our own Board of Trustees, so the first board was created in 1965.

Narrator: On July 1, 1965 SBCC was officially handed over to the Santa Barbara Junior College District. Along with the college came the adult education program.

Romo: Adult Education is a huge thing in Santa Barbara. You know, it serves now, over 50,000 unduplicated head count every year in some capacity, from Carpentaria to Goleta and from the mountains to the ocean.

Narrator: Let by Sam Wake, this program allowed people past the normal college age to continue their education.

Thronton: Sam, of course, was the father so to speak of the Adult Education Program. He was very dedicated to it, he was a bulldog. He got onto something, he never let go 'til he achieved what he needed.

Narrator: One Santa Barbara resident who took advantage of the Adult Education Program was Leatrice Luria, the wife of noted Santa Barbara developer Eli Luria.

Luria: I enrolled first as a student in ceramics at adult education and I was interested in what was going on at the main college, which was up here of course at the campus and my daughter challenged me at that time as I recall, she was studying French and I said “Well, anybody can get a better grade than that” and she said “Well I'd like to see you do better” and I said “Well, you got it.” The challenge. So I came up to City College, signed up for one class, in French and I truly loved it so much that I became a full time student.

Narrator: By the late 1960’s a familiar problem was arising. Santa Barbara City College was seeing increasing enrollment and was running out of space. In what is considered one of the schools defining moments. A $3.8 million bond issue was presented to the voters of Santa Barbara to buy what would become the West Campus.

Dobbs: We were in a real no-growth period for the City of Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara City College was still loved like it is now and I think the effort behind all the citizens of Santa Barbara made the difference.

Narrator: Leading the charge for the bond issue were Sam Wake, Eli Luria and Gertrude Caulden.
Luria: My husband Eli was, he was so excited when I was going to school here, that I was loving it so much and he was always a man for some, for education and became interested enough to want to help with the bond drive and to want to make the college grow and as a result he was successful with that and then he became a trustee.

Towbes: I was very involved in the campaign for them to buy their West Campus. They sold the bond issue, I remember Supervisor Bill Wallace and I made a commercial for that and it was kind of funny because Bill was sort of known as a “no-growth supervisor” and I was a builder and I, what we said on the commercial was “Well, Bill and I don’t agree on a lot of things but one thing we do agree on is the voters of Santa Barbara should pass this bond issue so that City College could acquire this wonderful property.

Narrator: The bond measure passed with over 70% of Santa Barbara supporting it. Santa Barbara City College was about to expand again.

**A Permanent Home**

Narrator: The first building constructed on the West Campus was the Garvin Theater, named in memory of board member James Garvin. Shortly thereafter a foot bridge was built to connect the East and West campuses but SBCC’s expansion wasn’t about to slow down. In August of 1981, Dr. Peter MacDougall became President of Santa Barbara City College.

Dobbs: Dr. MacDougall was the only one that selected that wasn’t the president of a college, or the chancellor of a college, he was a dean but he had such great credentials, you could just tell the way he spoke and his visions.

Narrator: During his time in office he presided over the largest expansion in Santa Barbara City College’s history.

MacDougall: I think the school changed fairly dramatically from a visual standpoint during the 21-plus years that I served as president. The most dynamic change albeit not the only change occurred on the West Campus and there were two major aspects to the change on this campus. One was the development of additional buildings. The first building to go up during the time that I was president was the Library/Learning Resource Center, a wonderful facility I think continues to be highly functional today and of great value to students and faculty. The next building constructed was the Interdisciplinary Center where you have your social sciences and other fields and then the final building to be build was this building the Business/Communication Center so the development of those three major structure with tremendously vital faculty resources in each one of them really brought the campus alive and balanced East and West.

Narrator: While serving as President, Dr. MacDougall sparked a close, personal friendship with board member Eli Luria that would last the next 27 years. On September 5, 1989 SBCC’s new library was officially renamed the Luria Library.
Luria: Oh, that was a wonderful day. First of all, it was a gorgeous day. I remember sitting, of course it was tented in but open on the sides and it was a majestic experience to be sitting in front of a new library that the city, the city college needed so badly and to see this gorgeous building and look to the left and see the building, look to the right and see the ocean and the islands is was spectacular and it was a very exciting day and certainly a very fulfilling day for Eli and for me, something that we had both wanted to do for this college for many years.

Narrator: Through the partnership between Dr. MacDougall and Mr. Luria, SBCC entered a new era of visual prosperity,

Luria: Well, Pete and Eli were very farsighted men, they had visions, they were both visionaries. Eli would walk around the campus with Pete and he’d say something like this: “Well you know, here’s a spot over here, you know it’d look great to have a sculpture there” and Pete would say “Oh, I couldn’t agree with you more, that would be just wonderful” and the next thing you knew, it would happen.

MacDougall: Well, I mean, that’s what we used to do. We used to walk around campus we used to, I think, number one: never take for granted the beauty of this campus and then to think “Well, gee, it’s so beautiful how can we, how can we make it better without taking away from the beauty?”

E. Luria: We want them to come in here and say: “Well, gee, I love that. I love seeing this sculpture piece or this art.” It’s something the community will enjoy; it’s something that we will enjoy.

Narrator: To this day, one of Santa Barbara City College’s most beautiful locations is the West Campus Fountain, donated by Eli Luria and Michael Towbes. Adding to the beauty of the campus are a series of overlooks on the cliffs of City College. Each one named for a benefactor in the school’s history.

Thornton: So over the years, there have been some big philanthropic gestures and somebody taking a walk along the west campus near the bluffs will see overlooks named for contributors.

Narrator: Within Santa Barbara City College, programs of study have expanded to fit a wide variety. Over the years SBCC has established a broad range of departments including Culinary Arts, Marine Diving, Theater, Athletics and Nursing or which SBCC is partnered with Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

Werft: The last graduates of the Knapp School of Nursing, I believe graduated in 1968 and that program then transitioned over to Santa Barbara City College.

Narrator: The nursing program at Santa Barbara City College now provides local medical establishments with a steady stream of new graduates, eager to assist in the health care field. For students looking to explore the world, Santa Barbara City College has offered a study abroad program spanning 6 of the 7 continents.
MacDougall: Another are that I give complete credit to our faculty but I was always tremendously supportive of and I think helped Santa Barbara City College stand out was its study abroad programs. We were the first community college to go to China. That occurred in 1987, before China was really open that much to foreign travel. That was followed in 1989 with a trip to what had been the Soviet Union.

Narrator: During the late 1990's, Santa Barbara City College once again saw expansion. The last major building project under President Peter MacDougall was the construction of the campus bookstore. To celebrate the President’s two decades of service, the main office at SBCC was renamed the MacDougall Administration Center. Over the years, Santa Barbara City College has continued to grow in size and attendance. In 2001, long serving professor Henry Bagish retired, having taught at SBCC for 50 years. A new era was beginning at Santa Barbara City College. In 2002, John Romo succeeded Peter MacDougall as President of Santa Barbara City College. During his years as President the campus saw increased enrollment and student capacity.

Romo: One of the things that programmatically, I think makes Santa Barbara City College special is that we really consciously worked on trying to provide opportunities for students to have experiences outside of the classroom. Educational experiences, socializing experiences, very much like you would have on a residential campus at a four year school. Throughout SBCC’s history, it has seen many important figures visit including Ted Kennedy, Desmond Tutu, Ansel Adams and more recently Bill and Hillary Clinton during their 1996 reelection campaign. But in 2008, Santa Barbara City College played host to one the city’s largest political rallies ever.

Obama: How’s it going Santa Barbara? I had to tell the President that city colleges in Chicago don't look like this.

Romo: Another funny part of that whole experience was that later, at Oprah’s I think it was, he got up and spoke and he said that he was kind of giving some consideration to maybe not continuing to run for President of the Unites States but he thought me might want to run for President of Santa Barbara City College because it was a pretty spectacular place to be.

Narrator: On July 29, 2008, Santa Barbara City College became the third city college in California’s history to hire a female president, Dr. Andreea Serban.

Serban: I was extraordinarily lucky and blessed to be able to obtain the position and this is the greatest college and the greatest job that one can have.

Narrator: On August 20, 2009, Santa Barbara City College kicked off it’s 100th anniversary celebration with an event commemorating it’s history and the school’s partnership in the community.

Serban: It’s just an extraordinary evolution and a hundred years is truly amazing if you think of the history of this community and I feel very proud of what this college
has accomplished in this 100 years of being you know, a heart in this community a college with a heart.

Closing

Luria: The College continues to grow and the sculpture continues to be placed in beautiful places and this wonderful collection of art here and it ranks in my estimation tops certainly in any city college anywhere in this country. I’ve been to quite a few, Eli and I traveled and wherever we traveled we visited a city college and there was never anything, anywhere that compared to this beautiful school.

MacDougall: Santa Barbara City College is like nucleus of community service and the community has benefitted tremendously from its presence.

Serban: I can’t imagine you know, a better place and someone once said: “you haven’t lived until you lived in Santa Barbara” well, you haven’t lived until you’ve lived in Santa Barbara and you haven’t lived until you’ve experienced Santa Barbara City College.

End Credits