

The Affiliation Period: A Lesson in Coexisting **Michael Petersen & Ariana Quinonez**

“So we’ve got girls, and a few more problems, and a few more opportunities. What we shall make of this remains to be seen.”

The Loyolan, October, 1967

It was 2 a.m. and the bells of Sacred Heart Chapel rang out, waking up the men of Loyola University as well as the surrounding neighborhood. The year was 1968, and it was a day Loyola would never forget. The women of Marymount College were moving from Palos Verdes Peninsula to Westchester, and Sacred Heart was welcoming them to their new home. But what ideally should have been a smooth transition, ended up being met with a fair amount of adversity; the five intermediary years until the merger of 1973 were a time of growth, cooperation, miscommunication, and preparation that would eventually pave the way for the Loyola Marymount union.

It all started when Sr. Raymonde McKay, the president of Marymount College, set out to get permission to move Marymount’s four-year college to the Loyola campus. Her stunned superiors sent her to Cardinal McIntyre. Considering that Loyola’s president, Fr. Casassa, had been unsuccessfully trying to get permission for coeducation at Loyola for years, Sr. McKay’s request was something of a long shot. Despite the unlikely odds, she went and presented her case to the Cardinal. The result: “He was excited about it,” Sr. McKay said, “As long as we kept it separate.”

So Fr. Casassa and Sr. McKay set out to make it a reality. Originally, it was thought that Marymount could acquire the land that today makes up the Leavey campus, and develop their college adjacent to, but separate from, Loyola’s campus. The goal was to create something akin to the Claremont Colleges. This plan immediately hit a major snag: Howard Hughes. The great aviator and engineer owned the Leavey campus, and he harbored a grudge. Years earlier, Fr. Casassa and Loyola had constructed the Sacred Heart bell tower, in direct defiance of Howard Hughes and his claim that it would interfere with his airfield. They tried everything to get him to sell, but he wouldn’t budge.

But Howard Hughes wasn’t the only one causing problems. Many of the alumni, and specifically the senior class of 1969, felt that the Marymount women should not be brought onto campus. Michael Engh, S.J. was a student at Loyola University from 1968 to 1972. He describes the bitter feelings that were first felt by Loyola men towards the women: “There were many alumni among the men who really didn’t want the women on campus... They just thought this was the end of the good old Loyola that they knew.” Bringing women onto campus was an unwelcome invasion and change to the basic traditions of the institution. The Loyola way of life had been disrupted, and to add insult to injury, the girls’ dormitories had to be built on the west side of the campus—right on top of what had been the Loyola boys’ golf course.

But as much as the men did not want Marymount to infiltrate Loyola, the women felt just as uneasy about leaving their sanctuary in Palos Verdes. Dr. Lane Bove, the class President of Marymount College during the 1968 move, and now the current Senior Vice President of Student

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Affairs, said that she chose Marymount because of the all-female environment. Marymount College was a place where women could learn, grow, and realize their potential without the influence of men. In the 1960s, this female sanctuary of self-expression was a novel idea, and many of the women did not want to forsake that sense of freedom. Dr. Bove talked about life at Marymount in Palos Verdes saying, "...we were out there on the peninsula. It was us, and the whales, and the porpoises... and there was really nothing else around... but it was a very nice environment. It was very affirming of women." Explaining further, Dr. Bove remembered, "we were the editors of the yearbook and we were the first in class and we ran the student government and [we] had the role models there that said [we] could be the president of the institution if [we] wanted. It was really very liberating in that regard." Dr. Bove went on adding, "my class . . . of '69 really did not want to be [at Loyola]. We liked Marymount College the way it was." Irma Dillon, the class President of Marymount College that followed Dr. Bove agreed, "There was a very rich heritage and culture associated with the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary and Marymount. We were very adamant, just as adamant as the guys were that we were not going to just merge and be Loyola University."

In addition to the political challenges of the merger, logistical problems arose when the women arrived on the bluff. As a case in point, the campus, having been designed and built as an all-male institution, just didn't have enough women's restrooms. In a quick fix, the administration assigned women to men's restrooms by putting up a cardboard sign that said "Ladies." Inside the restroom however, the urinals were still in place. Barbara Busse, a Marymount faculty member at the time and current Dean of the College of Communications and Fine Arts, remembers the women's response: "so the women in a kind of modest but practical revolt decided, 'well if the urinals don't have any real clear use for us we'll plant them.' So we did, we planted the urinals. It increased the ambience in the restrooms that had been assigned to women and it kind of made its own statement."

Clearly, students, both male and female, were dealing with radical changes, and as a result, a great deal of tension and sexism existed—especially the first year. Renne Harrangue, Marymount's dean at the time, remembers an occasion in which one of her students couldn't get into a physics class because "They said women shouldn't be taking physics." Irma Dillon too recounted what it was like taking classes with men for the first time, "You had to prove yourself to the guys—That you were just as intelligent and able to participate in the discussion as they were. They tended... to minimize your contribution, challenge your input. Whether it was right or whether it was wrong. It was just because you were a girl."

A battle for territory then began amongst the students—specifically between the two senior classes. Dr. Bove remembered how in a last hurrah before graduation, she and some of the other girls in her senior class stealthily snuck out in the middle of the night to paint blue "M's" throughout Loyola's buildings—including over the Loyola Lion. Similarly, the Loyola boys went on "panty raids" that involved running through the residence halls trying to steal the girls' underwear, and then hanging it from the flagpoles.

But the animosity that existed between the Loyola men and Marymount women seemed to go away after the first year, and the attitude drastically changed after the two senior classes graduated—especially when students arrived who had never known the campuses to be separate.

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Father Engh, who arrived as a freshman on the Westchester campus the same year as the Marymount transfer agreed that, “There were a number of guys who didn’t want the women on campus. That was a sentiment that took a year or two to die out.” However, Father Engh also insists that the students were the most progressive in terms of a Loyola Marymount merger. He said, “One of the very first things that happened when Marymount moved on campus was that the student government of Marymount and the student government of Loyola voted to merge. So we had a merged student government long before the institutions merged...The students were long ahead of it.”

Katherine Moret, who started at Marymount College in 1971 when it was already at the Westchester campus, said that she felt welcomed from the moment she arrived at the university, “The Marymount side really took care of us, but our classes were all integrated.” Moret agreed that by the time the merger came, though there were political conflicts amongst the administration, any resentment between the students was over, “People were giving up things; they didn’t want to give up things. I’m sure it was hard, but not for the students.”

With time, the Marymount girls grew accustomed to their new campus; they came to find that there were some perks to living amongst the more liberal Jesuits. Everything from the dress code to the curfew was strict on the Palos Verdes campus, but rules relaxed once the girls got to Westchester. Irma Dillon recalled the shift in dress code adding that, “they did start letting us wear pants to class once we got to Westchester. I think there was a little method to that madness.”

Similarly, for the first time these women were experiencing a Jesuit education. Katherine Moret explained, “We were getting that tradition. We were getting the education of the total person. It was eye-opening because I’d been taught by nuns all my life who scared me and guilted me and now I had the Jesuits opening up the world and talking about discernment. You’d have to take it and then you have to go out and make your own decisions.” Sister Agnes Schon of the Sisters of the Saint Joseph of Orange, now 96, began attending Loyola University in the summer of 1950. Later on she returned along with some other Sisters to live with the students in 1972, right before the merger. Sister Agnes considers the mixture of men and women to be the best change that Loyola Marymount has made throughout the years. She said of the integrated students, “With classes, they would study together and I think the mixture was very good. I was very much for it. To me we were preparing them for life in that kind of situation.” She added that, “women are taking their place in the world today. They are every bit as intelligent as men. I think that because of the mixture they have become stronger...they have developed their own intellect more than [they] would [have otherwise].”

Ironically enough, since Marymount moved onto the Westchester campus, LMU has grown to be a university where women are now in the majority. As Father Engh said, “The old boys’ school, or the boys’ school with a women’s college next door, became a men and women’s University with women in the predominance.” Despite the changes, the University has remained true to its core beliefs, incorporating the values of the Marymount sisters along with the Jesuit tradition of educating the whole person—women included.