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Interviewee: Claude Taylor  
Interviewer: Vincent Sauchelli  
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**Vincent Sauchelli:**

This is Vincent Sauchelli and I'm a student oral historian at Monmouth University, working with Monmouth's University's Paradoxical Paradise Project, which is an African American oral history and mapping project on Asbury Park. We're here today, March 28, 2021, with Professor Claude Taylor. And he has agreed to be interviewed for the project in a phase that focuses on COVID-19's impact on the city. So, with that being said, I thought I'd ask you a little bit about yourself, your life growing up in the area, your roles and responsibilities at Monmouth and then close things out with a little bit on how the pandemic has impacted the city. So with that being said, what was it like being born and raised in Asbury Park?

**Claude Taylor:**

Thank you for the opportunity to join the project. And thank you for taking time to sit with me today, Vincent. So, I mean, what I can say... I think a good way to contextualize my experience of living in Asbury Park is in terms of the time frame. That I was born and raised in Asbury Park. So I was born in 1969 and grew up in Asbury Park, between 1969 and give or take a year or two, the year of 1997. So I was living in Asbury Park, between '69 and 1997. I remember my childhood in Asbury Park as a delightful one. I had what I remember to be a really wonderful, fun-filled, adventurous childhood living in Asbury Park. And I mean, through this interview, I guess I can talk about some of the spaces and places that were influential in my upbringing.

And I guess before I do that, let me step back and talk about my time at Monmouth, my role at Monmouth and just say a little bit about that. So I joined... Well I worked at Monmouth in two phases. So I should start with that. So in 1996, I first began my working relationship at Monmouth University, as an instructor in the Communication Department at that time, which was at the time in what was affectionately called the chicken coops. It was a building that had been converted to the Department of Communication some years before that.

And I worked there from 1996 to 1999. And then I left Monmouth to go to Rutgers in New Brunswick for a spell. And then in fall of 2005 I returned to Monmouth as a lecturer in communication, and that is the role that I'm in now. So in the middle of my 15th year here at Monmouth. I'm a lecturer and Communication Department, but I also serve in some other capacities. And so I currently also serve as the Director for Academic Transition and Inclusion, which is a title that captures my work with students who are first in their families to go to college and other students across the campus who are managing the transition from high school to college and adjusting to college life.

So much of that is academic support in nature. I've helped to support students get adjusted academically, but also helping students to navigate the culture of higher education. Like becoming accustomed to what it means to be a college student at Monmouth and how to maximize their opportunities at Monmouth as well. So then back to Asbury Park I grew up in... So where I grew up. So actually, it's interesting. I'll start from the beginning. So I grew up and the first part of my life I lived on Munroe Avenue in the Munroe Towers.

So my parents, they met in New Jersey and the first place we lived was the Munroe Towers, which does currently still stand, as I understand it's there. And it's ... close to the beach. So I mean, just a couple blocks away from the ocean. And so Munroe Avenue and Bond Street is the intersection. And so we lived in an... I don't remember what floor we lived on. But I do remember living there and my first educational experience growing up in Asbury was at the Bond Street School. So that's where I started. I had kindergarten at the Bond Street School, which I do believe now, if I'm not mistaken, is the [Thurgood Marshall] Elementary School on Bond Street in Asbury Park. I think that is the current name, I think. And then so- I did pre-kindergarten at the YMCA, which was on Main Street. So I can actually see both of those buildings from our apartment building, which was actually really cool.

And then, from that point on, I attended Catholic school for the rest of my educational experience. And so the first of them was a Catholic school in the city of Asbury Park. The Holy Spirit, Catholic school, the church, the Holy Spirit Church still stands. The building that used to be the elementary school, so it was a first through eighth grade, elementary school, Catholic Elementary School. It's now apartments or condos as I understand right now, on Third Avenue, and right at the intersection of Third and Asbury Avenue. Asbury Avenue and Third Avenue. No, Main Street and Third Avenue.

So I was there at Holy Spirit Catholic school from first grade through fifth grade. And then from what I remember and understand the Diocese of Trenton closed the school for a number of reasons, I guess. And now we're looking at, I guess, 1980. Right around 1979 or 1980. And then my parents had us transferred to Holy Innocence School in Neptune, New Jersey, and so I finished out sixth, seventh and eighth grade there.

But in terms of where I lived, when I started first grade, my parents bought a house on Langford Street in Asbury Park. So we moved from Munroe Towers to the block between Third and Fourth Avenue on Langford Street in Asbury Park. And I grew up in one of the single family homes in that part. And I remember that being identified as North Asbury. It's just a couple blocks away from the Asbury Park High School and a few blocks from Sunset Park and Sunset Lake. And so I lived there and that's where I lived on Langford Street from right around that from 1976 through to 1997 when I left.

So my high school experience though, was also out of town. So I went from the Holy Innocence Catholic school, I went to Red Bank Catholic High School in Red Bank, New Jersey. And so I

would commute from Asbury to Red Bank for high school. And then upon graduation from high school, I went to West Chester University of Pennsylvania and lived on campus there. Would come home for the summers. And so that was fall of '87. So fall of 1987 through the early 90s, I was in undergrad and graduate school at West Chester.

And so Asbury was fantastic, like so what I'll say about Asbury Park- so as I was preparing for the interview, I was just kind of thinking about some of the spaces and places that were influential. So my grandmother actually lived on the west side of Asbury Park. So we lived in Munroe Tower, then also on Langford Street. And then my grandmother lived on the west side, she lived on Mattison Avenue, which is not too far from the west side Community Center, which is around the corner and down the street. I think it's all- Dewitt Avenue was the street that was on.

So I spent time between both places. So in terms of like- my grandmother would babysit my brother and I; we'd ride our bikes over there or our parents would drop us off. So I would spend time right in the heart of West Asbury Park, the west side of Asbury Park, and back home, which was, I don't even know if it's a full mile, maybe a little bit more than a mile away, in North Asbury Park was back to home base, where my parents and my family lives. So a couple... Like I love Sunset Park. So what I really cherished about growing up in Asbury Park was it felt like I was living in a place that was probably more suburban, feeling more suburban, than the sort of real estate descriptions would have indicated.

I mean, I know lots of people refer to Asbury Park as like an urban center. But growing up there in the 70s and early 80s despite some of the things and we can talk a little bit more if you're interested. I have questions about my experience of like the changes in, the demographic changes in Asbury Park, we can come back to that. But in terms of my experience of Asbury Park growing up, it felt more suburban than people would probably describe it. So we spent a lot of time in the parks that were there. I spent a lot of time in Sunset Park, which was over on Sunset Avenue and Main Street at that little intersection. The park and Wesley Lake on the other side of town and there were lots of green spaces around Asbury Park.

And then the other place that rises to the top of my experience of Asbury was the Asbury Park Public Library, which is on First and Grand Avenue in Asbury Park. I grew up in that library, I've spent so much of my time in there as a kid down in the children's library. And then later on upstairs in the quote unquote, adult library. I spent a lot of time and that was a place that I cherished quite a bit in Asbury Park. But the reality is I spent a lot of time outside of Asbury Park too.

And so because I went to high school and in part of my elementary school outside of the city, I split my time between a lot of places. I do remember the bus line. So this is the M22 bus from Asbury Park to Red Bank was the public bus that I took from... And all I had to walk was three blocks south to Asbury Avenue to get on the bus and I would ride the M22 bus to high school.

But what was interesting to me about that is that students at other towns... There were lots of students outside of Red Bank who went to Red Bank Catholic High School, but their towns supported school busing buses to the high school. So they would take school buses, with their other friends and other people who lived in town, they would take buses to high school, and I took public transportation, and that did shape and influence me quite a bit too.

Because in my Catholic school uniform, with my bags slung over my shoulder, I would get on the bus with folks who were going to work and commuting back and forth to places where jobs were in Monmouth County. So I spent a lot of time with working class folks in public transportation, which was formative for me too. The boardwalk and the beach was influential as well. I had a high school job working down at the boardwalk with umbrellas actually, the umbrella business... I don't remember the man who ran that business. But I remember getting hired to work a couple of summers in high school in the umbrella rental business there. So that was a part time job. It was a job that I held for a couple of summers in a row and part time employment there. So that was influential.

I spent a lot of time down at the boardwalk and the beach. And of course at that time I lived there. So we can call this like 1980 through '87. There was a pretty significant level of blight on the boardwalk. I mean, there weren't a lot of businesses, people still came and used the beach because the beach itself was beautiful, still it was in really great shape, good condition. So it's a beautiful, natural space. So people went to the beach and used it. But there weren't all the, by this point, in the 80s the amusement rides and all the arcades, both Convention Hall and the arcade, Amuse, Palace Amusements down on the other end of the boardwalk were in disrepair and kind of pretty rundown.

So when we would go in the summer, a thing I remember about Asbury Park in the summer, which it's a paradox. I love that this project is called Paradoxical Paradise, because part of the paradox was for me, as a person who lived walking distance to the beach it felt like I had run of the place. Like when my family and I would go to the beach, there was no one there really. Not like today where in the summer of 2019 I guess, the most recent summer, it was just standing room only in Asbury Park beaches, but when we were growing up, we could go to the beach and we had our choice of where to go on the beach.

But there were also not a lot of businesses there. Any of the concession stands and stuff were pretty local, like local businesses or small businesses that were in a lot of chains or any of the things they used to be there. So in the 70s, like I remember growing up young, in my young years in Asbury Park, the beach, like the ferris wheel was still there and up. And that subsequently came down in the 80s. But like, all the rides and amusements were there and it was exciting. Asbury Park had a really vibrant feel to it. But as like 1970 to '75- you started to see more decline. And people... And I think I talked about this in a podcast episode I did. You could notice it was tangible, the flight out of the city, so people were leaving.

And so that white flight in combination with just, I guess the rise of other parts of the shoreline, the other cities got more attention and Seaview Square Mall getting constructed and lots of the businesses downtown kind of going out of town. So you could see the decline. And so from summer to summer, from season to season, there were fewer and fewer businesses and things fell into more disrepair. A lot of the restaurants and nightclubs and other kinds of movie theaters, all the attractions that populated the coastline and the beachfront and Asbury Park, were disappearing, and I noticed it.

So then by the time I was in high school no one talked about Asbury Park beaches, the beaches and the shorefront, and Asbury Park as a place to go. So that influenced me too. So part of the influence in that respect was this idea that I was growing up in a town that had this great rich history, but was in decline in the time that I lived there. But it still felt like I had this connection to the city because a bike ride away, I was at Sunset Park, and could go to a jazz concert. That was a free jazz concert and a bike ride away. I was over in Ocean Grove and riding along the boardwalk in Ocean Grove and just it felt like I had a sense of exclusive ownership of Asbury Park at the time. That was, I think, really influential in my upbringing.

So more, I guess, just other aspects of Asbury Park. So Frank's Deli on Main Street was one of the places that my dad would send me over to get the Sunday paper and to buy some... He loved the raisin cinnamon swirl pastries that they made there. And so there were businesses there. Oh, yes - and I can't forget, one of the most influential was the Yellow Roof Bookstore that was at the corner of Third Avenue and Main Street. I had spent a lot of time in there and I'm disappointed I can't remember the owner's name. But it was a black owned bookstore that I used to buy school supplies there and walk around and look at the books. It was like a really small bookseller in town, they actually, literally had a yellow roof. And so that Yellow Roof Bookstore was a great attraction for us.

And I loved that place. Because really it was two blocks from where I lived. And that was unique for- I remember, like part of my youth and growing up in Asbury Park was very much shaped by a walkable city. So I did really benefit a lot from being able to ride a bike or walk to places downtown. Like J.J. Newberry's, the department store that was there. When I was growing up, my grandmother used to take us there to get toys and to hang out there.

And then right and so Cookman Avenue in that whole area thinking about just a walkable city. Again, this is a place where you kind of could see the decline. The Asbury Park Press was downtown there. And then they eventually moved out, I think it was in, at some point in the 80s, maybe early 90s they moved their headquarters out of Asbury Park. So many of the utilities like the gas company and the telephone company were all downtown then. It was really interesting to, as a kid just knowing like that walkable city experience was a really formative part of my experience, too.

### **Vincent Sauchelli:**

All right, that's wonderful to hear. You clearly have some very fond memories of growing up in Asbury Park. My father actually grew up around the area, he would spend his summers where I'm actually at, in Bradley Beach.

**Claude Taylor:**

Oh, right. Cool.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

But prior to your time, '61 he was born so 60s, 70s [crosstalk 00:19:14] 80s. But he told me the same things. How during those times Asbury really was a place to be [crosstalk 00:19:22]. And sadly over time, it did wane away but we look to hopefully have it one day and again in the near future. That was about being raised. How did your family come to Asbury Park, I thought maybe... I did some research. Saw your mother and father came here. But you also said your grandma was in town. So that's generations you've been in town for?

**Claude Taylor:**

Well. So my grandmother... So part of that story is embedded in the kind of broader story of the Great Migration out of the South. So people moving to northern cities out of the South. So my grandmother sort of worked... She came to New Jersey to work as a domestic in this area because this is where the jobs were... There were like a network of domestic laborers, women who worked in people's homes who worked in New Jersey, parts of Monmouth in Ocean County, and in New York and up the eastern seaboard. So my grandmother went, from my recollection of her stories, she went as far north as Maine, and New Hampshire to work on, she would call them jobs.

She would work a job for a family in the far upcoming northeastern states, New England states. And then she would kind of work her way back down. And so she moved between North Carolina. So my grandmother and father's family is from the eastern shore of North Carolina, a city called Elizabeth City. And so she, my grandmother, first was the person who found herself living in Asbury Park. She rented a house with her sister and another kind of family friend on Mattison Avenue. And she it was sort of like itinerant labor she would live there some of the year to do jobs. And then other parts of the year, she would be back down at home in North Carolina. But because the work was in New Jersey, and in the northeast, further up the coast. She had a setup shop in Asbury Park.

And so she moved there and lived in Asbury Park. And then my dad was in the military, he was actually in Vietnam. And when he was discharged and finished his service he was in the Peace Corps as well. And so he was one of the early classes of the Peace Corps program that was established. But when he finished his duty in the military, and in the Peace Corps in the 60s, he joined my grandmother in Asbury Park. So he came to live with his mom.

And so that's where he met my mom in New Jersey at that same time. So this is the mid 1960s. And so right, so my grandmother's movement to Asbury Park was not necessarily intended to be permanent. It was intended as a temporary residence in the town, and then when my dad came up and lived there, and met my mom and they got married and established that's where the permanence came in. My parents' generation were the ones who were permanent residents. So my grandmother was in the city but much of her network was in North Carolina. So she lived in Asbury Park as kind of the like home base or launching pad to do jobs as a domestic but then her home life was in North Carolina.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

She made a good choice for sure.

**Claude Taylor:**

Yeah.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

So like you said, you went to the public school in the area and then kind of transitioned to Catholic school. I wanted to ask, you alluded to a little bit. What was it like going from Asbury Park to then attend... I know the school change may not have been so different because you were in Catholic School for some of your Elementary, but as far as going from Asbury to Red Bank, for Catholic school, what was that experience like?

**Claude Taylor:**

Yeah, that was... At the time I was accustomed to the Catholic school environment, because I'd spent first through eighth grade there. I mean, I think my recollection of Red Bank Catholic was, I understood very much that I was kind of an outsider to the kind of culture of that school. Because the thing is the challenge of being... For some students, having the experience of like going to a school in the neighborhood where they live is a qualitatively different experience than commuting to school and working and living out of... So I was never really around... In high school, I was always coming and going. And so that experience, that sort of temporary experience of high school, it was a challenge. So it's hard to build and maintain friendships when everyone you meet... So my classmates all lived in Northern Monmouth County.

So people that I met and became friendly with lived in Little Silver and Lincroft and Rumson and Fair Haven and Tinton Falls, but because I lived in Asbury Park, I was, the situation was, it's hard to see your friends when where you live and where they live is so distant. And so that was challenging. I mean, I do think as one of a handful of students of color in the high school and so that kind of bond. I mean, I was always sort of envious of my neighbors and friends who lived in Asbury Park, who went to public school in Asbury Park, because they had more time together.

And so it was also hard to break into those friend groups too, because I didn't go to school with everybody and didn't have the same sort of shared experience of being in that educational setting. So I was constantly sort of, in transit. That's the best way I can think of that phase of my life as

being a high school student who lived in Asbury Park and lived in a town and was from the town, but wasn't educated there. I felt like I was constantly in transit.

And in hindsight, which is really... To me, and this is a fairly recent revelation to me. I mean, it seems as if it's like a... It's a continuation, it's a little bit of a continuity from my, like grandmother and father's experience too on that side of my family. And my mom's a migrant also. She came to the states from Jamaica, it seems like my young life and young adult life was marked very much by transition or being in transit. Constantly, sort of moving between places, but not having a solid sort of home base. So Asbury was the home base, a kind of home for me, but I was constantly sort of catapulted out of it and back so that experience of being in town and out of town and not really being 100% in any place. I think it was a really important experience of my young adult life too.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Definitely builds you a certain way, makes you very versatile. Seems like with the way you used to compare to your grandmother and father, it's like a family prophecy you're just going to fulfill. But I also read that you went to West Chester University after RBC. So what can you tell me about that, degrees you pursued? I read you were a student athlete, so maybe a little bit about that experience, but you were also the first generation to have your family to complete college. So a little bit about that?

**Claude Taylor:**

Excellent, great, thanks. So West Chester, I have such a special and fond place in my educational experience for West Chester. Because what I will say about it is and I have said this before, it was the, as far as college goes, it was the right fit for me as the son of a working class family and working class parents. That college was a very good fit for me. And it was a place that I was able to sort of stretch my limits a little bit, but in a comfortable and sort of safe way. Just because it was a public college.

So remembering the fact that I went to... The last public school experience I had was kindergarten in Asbury Park. I was in Catholic school from first to 12th grade and then went back to a public institution for college. And of course, I didn't necessarily fully realize that while I was there. But having gone through and had a really great undergraduate experience at West Chester, and then also staying on at West Chester to earn a Master's degree, I did bachelor's in speech communication at West Chester, and then stayed on and did a master's degree in Communication Studies at West Chester as well.

It was just... So what I learned there was a time period... What I say to students who I talked to about this. It was the time that I sort of grew into myself. I often refer to myself as kind of a late bloomer. And so I think college is where I started to put sort of my personal and educational pieces together and really started to really blossom and come into my own as a person. I always liked school and enjoyed the school space. But I don't think I really performed as a student the way that I had the potential to perform until college.



And that I think it's because of the diversity of the campus. And I do attribute it to the fact that there were students from rural Pennsylvania there, but there were a lot of students from Philadelphia. So parts of Philadelphia, different... I got to know Philly a lot from college. But so Philadelphia, there were... I met students, black and brown and LatinX students from Philadelphia and from the public schools in Philadelphia, and made friends that I just didn't have the opportunity to make in my experience in Monmouth County and growing up in Asbury Park.

So if you can imagine, I guess, a way to describe it is West Chester was a place where I was able to like put down roots and really like, become a part of a community and get to know people and get to be known by people. And my best friends of my entire life are the four men that I became friends with in college, we met freshman year, and up to this day, where we're still very dear and close friends. And so that was part of, what I'd say the success story for me in college, was finding a college that was a really great fit for the kind of person that I was and what I brought to the institution and what the institution was able to give to me.

So yeah, it was really great. So right, a bachelor's degree in speech communication, and a master's in Communication Studies. Part of what got me to West Chester, though, was athletics. And so that's the part about being a student athlete. So rewinding a bit to Asbury Park, I started to play football, which was... Among my two favorite sports were football and basketball. So I started playing football for the Pop Warner team, the Ocean Asbury Pop Warner team in like, fifth grade, I think it was I started playing Pop Warner. And so I played Pop Warner between... It was a joint venture between Ocean Township and Asbury Park.

But then by the time I got to eighth grade, the Asbury Park... A number of coaches, my dad included so my father was involved as a coach in my experience, too. He and two of his friends started the Pop Warner program in Asbury Park. And so this is 1980, 1981, 1981, 1982. Asbury Park had its, and I understand it to be the first time there was Pop Warner football in Asbury Park. So I ended my career in Pop Warner football in Asbury Park. And we played at the Asbury Park High School, that was our home field.

And I was pretty good at football. And so then when I went to Red Bank Catholic, I also played basketball. So my thinking was when I went to high school that I would play, play basketball and not football, until people who knew me, students who knew me from Pop Warner said, "Why aren't you on a team, why aren't you playing? You should definitely be playing." And I wasn't. I wasn't interested at the time. But they convinced me and so then I ended up joining and playing under [Lou Montanaro 00:33:12] at Red Bank Catholic High School. I had a really a nice high school sports career. So I wasn't an amazing student athlete, but I was good and I had fun playing. And so then I was recruited to play football in several like sort of middle range campuses, mid major colleges, they say.

And then I ended up going to West Chester because I went on a campus tour and was just completely sold on the structure, the campus, the town. To this day I still love the town of West

Chester and the campus was really a great fit and a beautiful campus. So I ended up going to West Chester to play football. And they were a really competitive program. And I ended up playing three seasons and then I stepped away, I retired from football in the middle of my junior year, I pretty much retired. Really, because school, I really did always take school seriously and was committed to school.

And for me, it was difficult for me to maintain a commitment to the sport but also to do school the way I wanted to. So I just shifted gears and joined the Speech and Debate Team actually end of my junior year, and I was on the forensics to speech debate, forensics team throughout both junior, senior year. And then my grad assistantship when I was in grad school, I worked with the speech and debate team that was my grad assistantship, as well. And so that is part of where it all started sort of getting more... I really got more interested in higher education and teaching and working in higher ed through that transition to being in public speaking and spending more time in a classroom and being mentored by some of the faculty in our Communication Department, which was really a strong department.

And so the sports ended about halfway through my undergraduate degree years. And then I came back. And so when I graduated, 1994 was when I completed my master's degree at West Chester. I came back to New Jersey, back to Asbury Park, actually. And I took a break from school and academics altogether and I worked in retail for 18 months. And then that was it. I did it for 18 months. And then that is where... And this is, I think, a really interesting story. And this is my connection to Monmouth. How I first got to Monmouth, 1996.

So my dad was involved in sports. He coached AAU basketball and other sports around Monmouth County. And he would go to Monmouth College at the time and play basketball, pickup games of basketball with people he knew. Ron Kornegay, who was the head coach at the time at Monmouth and I went to sports camps there. So I've been actually going to Monmouth as a kid going to sports camps and using the library when I was in high school.

So my dad was playing basketball at Monmouth one weekend afternoon. And he was playing with a man named Bill Yarmchuk. And Bill Yarmchuk was a faculty member in communication at Monmouth. And so my dad, in between games, mentioned to Professor Yarmchuk, Bill Yarmchuk, I was back home from West Chester. And that had a really successful speech and debate, career and then back in the area. And Yarm said, we used to call him Yarm, his nickname was Yarm, Yarmchuk. Professor Yarmchuk said, "Well, ask Claude to come in, and put in his CV, because we're looking for an instructor hire at Monmouth. And we'll see if he gets in the pool of candidates, we can arrange an interview, if that works out. Maybe he can teach here." And that's exactly what happened.

So I interviewed at Monmouth's during that summer, and in fall of 1996 I started as an instructor at Monmouth for the first time. And I was very proud of the opportunity. And it was great. I joined Monmouth's at a time, it had recently become a university. And it was a really exciting

time there. But then in 1999, I decided to go on for a doctoral degree at Rutgers in New Brunswick. And so I ended my time at Monmouth in 1999 and I got married in 1998. And in 1999, I started at Rutgers and I was there from '99 to 2005.

The unfortunate story connected to that is that the academic department that I was in, and my time in that program, kind of hit rocky times. It kind of fell apart, mostly because it was a combination of two things. So the first gen experience for me as being a first gen student in a doctoral program, but then also the structural setup at Rutgers. So Rutgers University at the time, I was in the School of Communication, at the time, it just wasn't a good fit. They had more students in the program than they could nurture and sustain. And so it was easy for students to get lost in the shuffle. And that's what had happened to me.

Partially because as a first gen graduate student, I didn't know all of what I should have been doing to get connected with an advisor. And I finished my comp. So I finished my qualifying exams and was at the... I was a candidate, so a PhD candidate at the time, but I also was working at Monmouth. So I was teaching at Monmouth in 2005. And also trying to kind of work on a PhD. So I just set that aside on the shelf and just kind of stepped away from it at that point, but continued to work at Monmouth and I've been at Monmouth ever since.

And so that story of my education. That's part of what drew me to the work doing first gen support at Monmouth was my experience as a first gen PhD student. So I had the right sort of mix of support and mentoring in my undergraduate and master's experience but at the point that I'd reached the upper levels of academe and in a PhD program, that's where my first gen experience started to really affect me and affect my... And there's a lot more support for first gen doctoral students and first gen graduate students than there was back when I was in programs. And I wish I had access to that then.

But I do think part of what I tried to do in my work at Monmouth now is to help students prepare for a successful transition into that and to learn some lessons that I learned. I mean, I think there's a whole... This is a different discussion for another time. But there was a whole range of lessons that I learned about the politics of higher education, the role of mentoring and the role of institutions being ready to support students who are first in their families. And so part of what I tried to do, translate that to work that can be useful to students at Monmouth and other people that I work with in other educational settings as well.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Wonderful, you did a good job with that answer, because you kind of, I don't know if you were reading my mind. But the next couple questions I was going to ask where life took you after completing college? And how'd you find your way a moment, but like I said, you just kind of spoke on that. So no need to repeat. But since we're kind of working our way to Monmouth's now, I might ask, what are your roles at the university? I know you're a communication

professor. And I also read a little bit about your First to Fly [crosstalk 00:41:31] program is a nice step to take now with what you just said.

**Claude Taylor:**

Great. Yeah, that's a good transition into that. So currently, I'm a lecturer in communication in the department. That's the title. But I also serve as Director for Academic Transition and Inclusion in that title basically just captures that I work in a couple of different spheres. So part of my work is working with students who are coming into the campus, like coming to Monmouth, students who are in their first year. Part of that work is to help them with the transition from high school to college or to transition into college and helping students to adjust and learn the do's and don'ts and how to prepare themselves and to translate what they know already and what they've accumulated in terms of knowledge to apply it to the higher ed space.

And then the other part of my role in terms of working with students as a director for academic transition and inclusion is being the sort of campus lead for First to Fly, which is the first generation at Monmouth initiative. And that program, it's in its sort of infancy, still, because we are learning who our first gen students are and what they need. And kind of trying to establish services and programs and opportunities to help students who come to Monmouth as first in their families to go to college, or they may have but they haven't earned bachelor's degree. Or these also include students whose parents or guardians may have earned college degrees in other educational settings outside of the United States. But helping students to understand Monmouth's version of the U.S. System of Higher Education, kind of helping students to navigate.

And in that role, I mean, right now, the primary thing I do now is to kind of just help students and their families navigate higher ed, and their educational experience at Monmouth. And so much of that comes in the form of academic advising and support. So helping students understand the language of higher education, what all the jargon means and how to make sense of it. The time horizon for their educational experience, what does the first semester look like? What does the second semester look like? What are some of the key times in your educational progression that you need to be considering things like internships and other kinds of opportunities to extend your educational opportunities.

And then also how to get involved on campus. And so here's where I'm drawing from my undergraduate experience of a really... I became the person I became because of my involvement in extracurricular activities and other kinds of activities in college. And so I'm trying my best in my role now, in my current role to help students find places, and I use the phrase plug into the campus. So finding clubs to join, organizations to become a part of. So one of the things I do in my current role is I'm one of the advisors for the Black Student Union. I'm also an advisor for the club, the First to Fly club. So there's a student club for First to Fly, I'm the advisor for them as well. I'm [faculty advisor] for a multicultural Greek organization, but I also serve on the President's Advisory Council for diversity and inclusion, which is an opportunity for me to also contribute to the conversation about diversity, inclusion and equity on our campus.

And with our students in mind, I joined that council to help give recommendations to the president and to the cabinet and to other parts of campus for ways that we can improve and do better for students and be a better institution to be prepared for our students. And to make the kind of impact that we want to make as an institution. I also am one of the sort of initial charter members of the Black and African Diaspora Forum United, which is the new entity that formed within the last year. About a year and a half or so.

And I'm a faculty member of the program in gender and intersectionality studies. And then I also am a faculty advisor on the Faculty Advisory Council for the Institute for Global Understanding. All of those things are kind of packaged in the role that I have at Monmouth right now, to give me the opportunity to contribute to some of the inclusion and Equity and Diversity work that they're doing on campus, but also to help connect students to opportunities to enhance their education.

I mean, that's primarily... For me, the most important part of what I do is being a resource for students to help them enhance their educational experience at Monmouth and to be able to learn as much as they can so that when they go out into the world, they're as prepared as they can be to have lives of meaning. That's my phrase, a phrase I use a lot is to say that I can't guarantee you that you will make lots of money after college, although we all hope for that for all of our students to be financially well off.

But I do want to do what I can to support students in having lives of meaning. And that's a phrase that I use a lot. Because I think for me, coming out of my educational experience at West Chester and working at Monmouth over the last several years, I feel like that's a really important outcome is to have established a life of meaning, and being able to contribute in ways both big and small. And I do think that that is part of my messaging to students today in my current role, is to look for ways to establish a life of meaning and then for me I think everything else can kind of fall into place if you're in pursuit of a life of meaning.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Good to hear. Monmouth definitely keeps you very busy with all the stuff you got going on. [crosstalk 00:48:17] in good health, because you definitely seem like a good resource to get students where they need to be. Another thing I wanted to ask as part of administration, you talk a lot about the many roles you have. What kind of diversity issues do you see on campus and how do you work to address them?

**Claude Taylor:**

In my role I think the two major diversity challenges are the ways in which Monmouth can continue to improve its reception of students. So we go out and recruit students to attend the University. And we're doing a really admirable job of expanding the diversity and inclusion, access for our students. So we're working, and I do think folks on our campus are working diligently to make the incoming class as diverse as it can be. The challenge that I think I see most and that I am giving my effort and energy to, is helping us to be ready to support and nurture

those students when they get here in ways that we just may not have been prepared for in the past.

And so, that means for me things like social class. So students, I ~~self-identify~~ ~~self-identify~~ as a first generation working class student and a student of color. And so how do we improve the campus for students who come to us from different levels of socio-economic status? How do we help students who are first gen low income students? How do we support students who are first gen working class students? How do we support students? In what ways can we better support students who are continuing education working class students?

So there are students whose parents and grandparents went to college, but they're working class. And then also just helping the campus to, in terms of the dynamics on the... The social and cultural dynamics on the campus, how can we be more ready for our students, so that they feel that it's a welcoming place, and it's a place where they belong. Because I think for me, having students start at Monmouth and graduate at Monmouth and say, "I really do believe that this place took care of me as a student, and helped me to become the best version of myself that I could be." I think that's a real achievement for us if we're able to get to that.

And right now, based on the most recent sort of campus climate survey that we've had, many of our students of color, a large percentage of them are not able to say that about their time at Monmouth. And I think we can do better there and I'm really privileged to have the opportunity to contribute to those conversations. So helping Monmouth to become a place that is welcoming and where students do feel a sense of belonging, and that Monmouth is for them as much as it's for any other student. And I would want all of our students at Monmouth to be able to say that they belong here, and that this place has their best interest in mind and at heart and that we're doing everything we can to help them have a good experience.

The other thing is about the... And this a major issue that we're all tackling now, too, is staffing and hiring. So faculty diversity as well. It had been the case in much of my time at Monmouth that I was one of a handful of faculty of color at Monmouth. And it seemed to be a kind of small rotation of different faculty of color, but never really a kind of critical mass. And so I do think that the recruiting, and hiring and retention of faculty of color, because we hear our students say this, that they don't necessarily see people who look like them in the classroom.

And so that has an impact on the campus classroom experience for our students. It has an impact in students' sense of who they are and what's possible for them. And so if we, at Monmouth, can continue to work towards diversifying our teaching faculty, and diversifying our administration and diversifying all of the of the places and spaces that students live and work in us as faculty and staff, we live in work. If we can do better there, I think that those will be some important moves and progress for us going forward as well.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

I can certainly agree. You want to definitely come out of college feeling like you figure some things out about yourself, not just drowned in work.

**Claude Taylor:**

Right, for sure. Yeah, yeah.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

On both levels, administration and student body diversity definitely makes us stronger, definitely strength. But take a little bit of a turn now, go back towards Asbury Park. Before we touch on the pandemic, and the effects of it, you kind of alluded before mentioned that there has been a lot change in Asbury Park. So one of the questions I had planned to ask was how have you seen the city change from your youth until either when you moved out or now either socially, economically or culturally?

**Claude Taylor:**

Wow, that's a good... Yeah, great question. And I mean, I do think it is important for me to qualify my answer by saying, I have not lived full time in Asbury Park in a long time. So I've been witness to it. I still live in New Jersey, and I still read and hear the news about Asbury and drive through it and I spend time in Asbury Park, too. But I haven't lived there full time since 1997. So I'm going to qualify my response by saying this is me thinking about my historical perspective on living in Asbury, and then what I know of it in its current state.

So I do think the experience of Asbury Park for me in the 70s, and 80s, was one of diminishing resources. So we did see the city lost some of that vibrancy I was born into. And some people do attribute that to the racial unrest and racial resistance in the 1960s. So that civil rights era and the New Jersey experience of it. And there are many people who've spent much of their historical and social science research on understanding more about New Jersey and the civil rights movement and all of what has impacted Monmouth County. But as a grade school and high school student living in town, I mean, you could see the drift out of town.

Resources, the businesses, and the energy of the town was in decline, and it was tangible and palpable. What I also did see though, was opportunities for entrepreneurs, people who wanted to try to build up their businesses and to start a business, found openings to do that, in the 70s and 80s, late 70s and early 80s, as well. But unfortunately, there wasn't the kind of economic interest in supporting businesses in Asbury Park. People had a hard time getting loans. I know like one of my favorite sort of restaurants in town was a Jamaican restaurant, well two Jamaican restaurants on both sides of town. Sort of down in the southern part of Asbury Park. And the one that was right around the corner from me where I grew up. They had a really hard time getting small business loans and getting financing to keep the business, to expand their business.

And so that was some of the limitations of the time too, so a divestment. So a kind of general divestment of resources in Asbury Park. And although I was not at all really aware of the

political dynamics of Asbury Park, I remember, like anyone who lives in a town, you hear the stories about governance. And so I know that like City Council and the mayor's office had a stretch of really difficult disruption during the 70s... I mean, during the 80s and into the 90s. And I know it carries kind of into the current experience of Monmouth, too.

But I do think that the black community because I mean, part of the discussion here is about the African American experience of Asbury Park. And I was always under... I've always been under the understanding, sort of had this understanding that longtime residents of Asbury Park loved and cared about that city and did everything they could to uphold it and to help maintain it. And so I have an example, an illustration of that is my barber, the Barbershop I went to. And so I was reflecting on this and sort of remembered, where were some of the places where I felt like the sense of community stayed intact, even through all the disruption and upheaval. And so Allen's Rightway Barbershop. So my barber and it was a place where I started going when I was five years old, all the way through my time in college. Because I would come home from college and get my haircut at this Barbershop. So Allen's Rightway Barbershop, which was on Asbury Avenue, in Asbury Park.

And I don't remember the cross streets right now, but it was near... I think it was one block north of Mount Carmel Catholic Church and school there. If you think of Asbury Avenue is this kind of dividing line between... It's like the T that cuts through Asbury Park, it's a T-formation. So Asbury Avenue over to the train tracks and Main Street was sort of the split. So you had North Asbury and Western Asbury and the oceanfront area.

So Allen's Rightway Barbershop is kind of right at the border of West Asbury Park, the west side of Asbury Park. And that community, that's the place where I would go as a young kid, my dad would drop me off on Saturday morning and I'd sit there and wait for my time to get my haircut, wait for a spot. But that was the place where the community was upheld and stayed together. I mean, part of the other place I know the community was sustained and maintained in Asbury was through the black churches in Asbury Park. But because I was raised Catholic, was raised in the Catholic tradition, and my church going and spiritual life was kind of oriented around Catholicism, even though my grandmother was Baptist, I didn't have as strong a sense of the community in Asbury Park around the black church, which we know is a central institution Black community throughout the United States.

So I know that. So hopefully in this project, y'all will get to interview and talk to folks connected to the black churches in Asbury Park, because I do think that was a really important part of maintaining and sustaining community in Asbury Park. So between the businesses and churches, those are the places that longtime residents... Like for me, I know like Allen's Rightway Barbershop was a really important place there. The Westside Community Center was also really important cultural institution. And the Boys and Girls Club.



So also as a kid, I went to the Boys and Girls Club a lot, too. And so those institutional places were really central. But yeah, I mean, the place was a ghost town in a lot of ways. So in the 80s in my experience, a lot of times people would just sort of drive past Asbury Park, no one ever went to Asbury Park to do anything. They always used, you'd get to Long Branch and sort of skip over Asbury Park, and then things would pick up again in Bradley beach, and Ocean Grove and Bradley Beach.

And then it seemed as if in my experience of growing up in Asbury Park, during 1978 to 1988 let's call it as a kind of bracket, Asbury Park was very much in decline and kind of considered a ghost town in comparison to the other beachfront towns, oceanfront towns in Monmouth County. So there was a sense of like the city didn't have the vibrancy and the kind of spirit that it had. But I know that there were people who were holding on really tightly to the sense of community that was established around longtime residents of the city.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

I know you mentioned a little bit about the black churches in Asbury. You kind of hope that the project maybe reaches out to some people there. I wanted to let the first interview that I did for my time with the project, I interviewed a man by the name of Daniel Harris, and I'm not sure if you know him but-

**Claude Taylor:**

The name sounds familiar.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

The Reverend at the Second Baptist Church in Asbury Park. So he told me a lot about similar to what you were kind of talking about the community that is eminent, and he also was born and raised in the area. So the [crosstalk 01:03:16] kind of stuff like that a lot had to offer very much and interesting information.

**Claude Taylor:**

That's great.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

I wanted to also ask you about if, in your opinion, have there been racial divides in Asbury Park, either economically, socially or opportunistically?

**Claude Taylor:**

Well, I think some of the tensions that I remember were around immigration. So my mom's a Jamaican immigrant. She came to the states from Jamaica. And in Asbury Park, when I was living in Asbury Park too, there was an influx of LatinX immigrants into the city in similar ways to migrations, mostly for work right in other parts of Monmouth County. So like in the Freehold borough, Freehold area, there was movements in immigration there and Long Branch and waves of immigrants to that area as well. So now again, thinking here about the late 70s into the early

80s. And then the mid 80s into the early 90s there were these waves of new immigrants coming to towns and this is a common pattern from what I understand, about urban planning and urban spaces, urban use and land use.

Towns flipped over right so when there's an exodus.... So for us in Asbury, this white flight opened up opportunities for new immigrants to move and new immigration cycles that way. And Asbury had the same thing. And so I do think there were some economic tensions around businesses sort of jockeying and competing for space with... When businesses vacated Asbury Park, like who got the spaces. So I do know there was several like Korean and Chinese restaurants that kind of set up in town. And some of the long term residents were upset that they were able to get leases and get opportunities in different parts... Along Asbury Avenue, specifically Asbury Avenue and then along the beachfront, what is that? Kingsley Drive.

And then there also was sort of the LatinX migration and again, long term residents feeling that they've been sort of leapfrogged by some of the new immigrant groups who were setting up grocery stores and restaurants and other kinds of social and cultural spaces in there. And so it was always like, certain groups of long term residents couldn't break into economic opportunities, were held back from economic opportunities in certain parts of town.

And I don't have a good explanation for who all were involved in those decisions and how that works. But I do remember that was part of the feel of the city when I was living there, that there were these... There's all this kind of competition over who gets to set up their business in what parts of town. Socially and racially again, my experience is qualified by the fact that I was in and out. So I mean, I know, the people in my part of Asbury Park, I don't think that there was much racial strife or racial sort of disruption or challenge because everyone was black or LatinX. So everyone in my part of the Asbury Park were similarly situated in terms of racial background. There were really no white people who lived in the part of Asbury Park, where I lived after everyone sort of moved out.

So no, I don't know that there was, I don't remember racial tensions within the city. Now the racial tensions, I remember and experienced myself were Asbury Park residents in relation to other towns and cities up and down the Jersey Shore. So going to Monmouth from Asbury, when I rode my bike through towns like Allenhurst and Interlaken and Elberon there was a clear sense that people of color weren't welcome there. And so my parents always had to kind of caution me about my movements. When we moved around, I loved to ride my bike up and down the shoreline, when I was a kid in eighth grade, and then high school here. But I'd ride my bike to Belmar, My mom would say, "Be careful, and be home before dusk because we don't want... Things happen."

And it's that same talk that black parents and African American parents give to their children about being safe out there in the world. I got that same talk, not about living in Asbury Park, but about moving and traveling between cities and towns around Monmouth County. So of course

thinking about me from my perspective of being an Asbury Park resident, and going to school in Red Bank. Getting on that bus I was highly sensitized to my movements, like I had, my parents gave me strict instructions about like, "Be at the bus stop on time when the bus is coming. Don't go wandering around, because you're going to..." because I didn't live in Red Bank. So I had to be careful not to put my guard down.

And I do think that was the way that I moved in and around Monmouth County, outside of Asbury Park. But when I was in town, I went wherever I wanted to inside the boundaries of Asbury Park. And so when people would say, "Well Asbury is a dangerous place to go." Even when I was in high school. My high school friends were like, "Oh, you live in Asbury Park, man it's so dangerous there." Well, I did not perceive it that way. I didn't experience it that way. And I would argue to say it wasn't dangerous inherently. It was just a predominantly black and brown city and I think that was the marker for danger for people. And that always did upset me, because I knew it was a misrepresentation of the city. So the social and racial strife, any of that I experienced growing up was being a Black or African American resident of Asbury Park, and moving around in the rest of Monmouth County.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Now to shift gears consequences to the pandemic and what's going on in current times. How have you seen the pandemic affect the city from your perspective that it now is somewhat removed? And how did it affect the city and its residents?

**Claude Taylor:**

So my understanding of the impact of COVID on Asbury Park is again as a person not living in town, but kind of hearing about and reading about, and thinking about experiences of people I know who still live in and around Asbury. It is the case that the health disparities get amplified, have been amplified in the COVID experience of Asbury Park. It's similar to other parts of the state that have the kind of dynamics that we see here in the Asbury Park area within Monmouth County.

So access to equitable health care is one of those challenges, you have to leave town in a lot of ways to get quality health care, to get really much health care. Now, I do know that there are clinics, outpatient and kind of other kinds of medical clinics in town. But the hospitals again, where I was born, Fitkin's General Hospital, Fitkin's Memorial Hospital, which is now Jersey Shore Medical Center, it's not walking distance, it's a trip out of Asbury Park to get to a hospital.

Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch is the next closest hospital. So I think the quality and access to health care in Asbury Park has created some of the negative experiences and the drawbacks, and then the harm of COVID-19 in Asbury Park too. And those inequities existed before COVID started and they got amplified during the pandemic and continue now into now, here we are at the end of March and 2021. My perception is that there are still these long term health disparities in the town, which translate to higher incidence of COVID. And the kind of higher incidence of really extended COVID harm. So like the ways that people are affected by

COVID, the illness is more deadly to folks in the town, and access to health care, is one of those areas, I think is really a problem.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Now, how do you think maybe with these health disparities that you speak of, might residents or businesses be able to address these issues or maybe recover from their effects afterwards?

**Claude Taylor:**

Sure. I mean, I think the state of New Jersey clearly has a role in supporting economically at risk cities and towns and the social, economic base of towns and the health disparities in towns. And so the county and the state all have a role in supporting places like Asbury Park, to help to ensure that access to vaccines and access to testing is localized and is accessible and that people understand that this is an investment in the city, in the same ways that we invest in other parts of the county.

So for me, it would be continuing to lobby and to demand from the state and county governance, the government, state government and county to continue to advocate for the kinds of resources and access to health care and health care... Again, there's all the other elements of well being like mental health services and other kinds of food insecurity challenges that people are confronting, that are connected to COVID-19 and have amplified the effects. The county and the state have a role in making sure that Asbury Park is getting what it needs. So that there's parity and equity in the amount of health care support for folks in the region.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

All right, well, that just about does it for the questions that I had planned to ask of you today. But like I said, I wanted to take the final moments of this time we have together to sort of hand you the mic and open the floor. If there was anything that you wanted to go further on or questions you might want to ask, new topics you want to bring up. The opportunity now is yours.

**Claude Taylor:**

Thank you for that. Yeah I appreciate the opportunity. Well, first, I'll say I'm really excited about this project. Because I do think as a person born and raised in Asbury Park, I think it is great for this project to be an opportunity to tell stories that hadn't been told. Because I do think in my experience of living in Asbury Park, there was the sense that Asbury Park at the time I lived there was a kind of second tier or second class city in Monmouth County. It did not... At the time I lived there people sort of said, "Oh, I remember..." People would say, and I heard people say, "Oh, I remember Asbury Park, that place used to be great." Or "That used to be the place to be." And with a sense that it was down and out for forever.

And my lived experience of the city was not that severe. I did not experience it in that way. And it's nice that this project can tell some of the stories of people who have good experiences and Asbury Park. And like I was shaped by the city. And like I said, in the beginning of our conversation, part of what I was talking about was my relationship to green spaces and the

outdoors was very much nurtured by the layout. What I will say to people... The layout of Asbury Park. What I would say to people is get on your bike and ride down Grand Avenue from one end of Asbury Park to the other and just look around at all the churches, the beautiful architecture in the town.

And some of it in disrepair and needing to be taken up and taken care of but just the blueprint of the city, the layout of the city, and the mix of green spaces and living spaces, residential spaces, I think it's unique. And it was really great. And I appreciated it, living there. The other thing that you asked about earlier, but I didn't say much about is my caution about gentrification and sort of like displacement of people in Asbury Park.

And I do worry about that too. Because we've seen it in other places. And so one of the things that I, having lived in Asbury Park and lived in New Jersey and been educated in Pennsylvania and kind of sort of knowing Philadelphia and knowing Monmouth County and sort of witnessing housing and gentrification trends in both places. I worry that this new found renaissance in Asbury Park, which looks like some of the renaissances in other places that have been divested in. I worry that the character of the city for long term residents will be at risk.

Meaning this disparity in businesses and hotels, and this development, the trends in development in Asbury Park, which really look a lot like this kind of gentrification that we see in other places where new things come in, new people are the audience for it. I really do hope that developers and city officials and residents really do invest in revitalizing the entire city, which includes the West Side of Asbury Park in ways that raises the quality of life for everyone in the city limits, not just for the beachfront. Which is an easy, sort of popular way to raise the profile of a city like Asbury Park. To raise a part of a city like Asbury Park, but I do think that there are some really significant harms that can come to the West Side and long term residents if it's not an equitable development. So I'm watching that as an outsider, sort of watching from afar to see how it goes and what the direction is.

Because I do think there's a lot of promise in the city as a whole, and the West Side of Asbury Park has a lot of potential for people who live there and for new residents. But the investment has to be... I think it needs to be an equitable and concerted effort to make sure that the long term residents... That things that are being built there are for the people who live there and have lived there. And so I hope that it doesn't continue to be a wedge between one part of the city that is under-resourced, and another part of the city that is this "shining city on a hill." Like everyone's coming from near and far for certain parts of the Asbury Park experience, but not...

And so look, a reference point could be Atlantic City. I mean, we saw that in the recent history of Atlantic City. We can see it in what's happening in Long Branch even, in west end of Long Branch, parts of the Monmouth community. So I do hope that there is a conscientious effort to equitably develop the city of Asbury Park, so that everyone benefits from it.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

I agree, I appreciate that little bit of information. I take my commute when I had to go through school through Asbury Park often. And I started taking Grand Avenue, because the construction on Main Street has just been... It's like three or four times as long with the lights and the lanes. But I can definitely see what you allude to going down Grand Ave and seeing all kinds of different schools, architectures, churches on every corner. And I don't plan on going too far from here. Once I finish this semester, I feel like that would be a little counterproductive. I want to enjoy the warm weather once it comes, [crosstalk 01:21:55] go to the beach. So I plan on taking my bike out that way.

**Claude Taylor:**

Good. Yeah, it'll be worth your while I really think you'll... If you can imagine back to like, the vibrant days, and then sort of contrast it with the revitalization now, it's a really... It is a whole body experience, I would venture to say. It is both mind... You can feel the spirit of the city, in sort of the past, and the present, and then the future kind of all come together in that ride. So yeah, thank you good luck with... I hope you get to do that. And the weather cooperates and you're able to enjoy that bike ride.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

And also my... Going through this part of Asbury at this point in my life with college as a child, because my grandparents were around here after they had raised my father and uncles. And most of my time coming down the boardwalk was in that part of Asbury that you said is being brought up and rebirthed. And now that I drive just a couple blocks west of there, you can definitely see that there's much more to Asbury than just what is kind of that section that's put on a pedestal and it does need to be evenly distributed so that you don't just benefit the people who come and go, but you really want to take care of... And how could you take care of the city with a focus of those who are just going to be tourists and when you really need to also give a good amount of attention to who's already here and [crosstalk 01:23:38].

**Claude Taylor:**

That's right.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Other than that, I want to thank you again for your time here today. Your effort and on behalf of myself, Monmouth University, and the Paradoxical Paradise project. I want to thank you for your time and effort and hope that you enjoy the rest of your Sunday. And maybe we see each other soon.

**Claude Taylor:**

Yes, thank you very much, and good luck with the project. And I look forward to hearing and seeing the fruits of your labor in the weeks and months and years ahead. Thank you.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

Of course, glad to get you involved.

**Claude Taylor:**

All right. Be well.

**Vincent Sauchelli:**

You as well.