

Announcer: Welcome to Hancock Conversations, an Allan Hancock College podcast. Join President Dr. Kevin G. Walthers and members of the Hancock community as they explore the stories behind the people and places that make Allan Hancock College the unique hub for learning that it is today. You're sure to learn something new and even have a little fun along the way.

Dr. Kevin Walthers: Hello and welcome to Hancock Conversations, your podcast for all things Allan Hancock College. I'm Kevin Walthers, the Superintendent/President here at Allan Hancock College. Today we're joined by Kevin Boland. Kevin Boland is probably known by most people on campus as our photographer. He's also our engineer and producer on the podcast, but he's also a longtime employee of college and a longtime member of the Santa Maria community. I'm going to read a little background for Kevin. Kevin Boland has worked to document life at Hancock for nearly a decade, he was a student at the college in the 70s and 80s. In 2010, he was hired as a part-time worker for the college's audio-visual department. As Hancock has grown into the digital age, Kevin has helped the college keep pace, adding drone flying and podcast production to his duties. Kevin's family has deep ties with the college. His father, a US Air Force colonel, trained at the Hancock School of Aeronautics and went on to serve in World War II and Vietnam. He later retired in Santa Maria and even taught speech classes on the college's Santa Maria campus. In addition to his father, Kevin himself, his sister, his niece, and daughter are all Hancock graduates. Alright so, Kevin, thanks for joining us and being on the microphone today.

Kevin Boland: Thank you for having me, Dr. Walthers.

KW: Let's talk a little bit about, we were talking earlier about being a military family. Your dad was at the Hancock College of Aeronautics. And that was actually a popular misconception in the community, is that Hancock College of Aeronautics was part of Allan Hancock College. It's really not. It was actually Allan Hancock's own proprietary college to train pilots for World War II. Tell us a little bit about what you know about that and how your dad came to be a pilot there.

KB: Well, what the story I know is that my dad wanted to initially – him and a friend – wanted to learn to fly airplanes, and they also wanted to be volunteering for going overseas and being part of the World War II military. And so, he joined the Army Corps and then it turned, where he was transferred into the Army Air Corps and they sent him to flight training at Allan Hancock College in 1942. So, that's where he got his flight training. He was here for six months, and he did his solo flight training and then completed the in-classroom work as well. And then from there, transferred over to overseas to the European theater, where he was flying P-51 Mustangs, and a few different scenarios over there. I guess he was escorting gliders on D-Day, and then assisted with I know, the Berlin airlift, is what my mother told me, and he also flew many backup missions. B-25 bombers or whatever they had to fly there. So, he flew several missions and was in some dogfights and things like that. But, as I said earlier, he really didn't talk much about the actual part of being the service in the war itself. He had more stories that were not so concentrated on the battles themselves, but just his friends and the people that he met in the military and respected.

KW: Yeah, from that generation and my dad just a little younger than that, he was in the Air Force, and you didn't get a lot of stories out of him. And I remember my siblings and my

grandfather, that the stories were always about the people they met and the friends they had during those crazy times. So, I grew up an Air Force kid, we moved, you know every couple of years and we traverse Northern United States. We lived in Maine and Minnesota, and Washington State. Before we landed in England for a couple of years and then my dad finished up in Austin, Texas, where, which is close to our hometown of Dallas. Talk about what it was like to be kid moving around in the Air Force.

KB: Well, it was pretty interesting and fun. And it was also where you'd meet friends and then you have to leave your friends behind after four years. So, what I recall is being a child in Bangor, Maine at Dow Air Force Base. And then we were transferred down to Florida and he was flying B-52s down there in Florida. Then we went to Nebraska, to Offutt Air Force Base for four years, and that was in Nebraska. I kinda liked Nebraska. We had some good friends in the neighborhood, a lot of activities on the base. And then, and I believe it was in 1966, we were transferred over to Hawaii, Oahu, Hickam Air Force Base, where we lived there for four years and that probably was the best place to be stationed because of the weather. My dad would take us surfing over at Barbers Point, which was near Hickam Air Force Base, there was a lot of activities on the base for like the kids, swimming, the recreational center. But there was a lot of things that were good for the family, but at the same time, I know my dad was doing a lot of prep work for the Vietnam War, and as I stated earlier, he was a liaison for Admiral John McCain, Air Force liaison, and I'm really not exactly sure what that entailed, I'm sure it was just the communication between the two. So, Hawaii was a good place to be stationed, and then he was set up for retirement, so he decided that he wanted to retire out of Vandenberg Air Force Base, because he liked the area from when he was at flight school here. He liked to be flying over the ocean and the dunes and the Santa Maria Valley. And he also said that he enjoyed the Santa Maria style barbecue. And I don't know if that was the exact reason why he wanted to come back here, but he retired here, and out of the Air Force. And it was around 1975, I believe, and from there he started teaching at Allan Hancock College because he had a master's degree from the Air Force, and he taught speech communication on campus, the Santa Maria location. And then from there, he went out to Vandenberg and taught for probably up into the mid-80s out of Vandenberg Air Force Base teaching the military personnel there.

KW: Did you take his class when you were a student at Hancock?

KB: I did take a speech class. It was in 1976, the summer of 1976. I took speech communication in building K from him. I thought maybe I'd get a better grade because I was his son, but ...

KW: It didn't work out that way?

KB: No, it didn't work out. I got a "B", but it was an interesting class to see my dad in a different aspect of being an instructor instead of just being his son at home type of thing.

KW: So that was kind of legendary times to be to be a student at Hancock. Tell us about some of the faculty members that you got to take classes from.

KB: Well I was a fine arts student. I took life drawing classes from Nat Fast. George Muro had a design class that I took. I really enjoyed that. I also took a ceramics class. Not quite

sure what instructor was there at the time, but the biggest influence for me was Casey Case. He was the film instructor at Allan Hancock College. He was a big inspiration for me. He was a good example of a filmmaker. He was a documentary filmmaker that came to Hancock. And I believe that because of Casey, that I wanted to pursue a career in the film business. At that time, we were using Super 8 cameras in class, and so I really think Casey Case and just his way about teaching and just being a real personable guy influenced me to pursue a degree. I went from Hancock to the University of San Diego, and enrolled in their third college television program, it was a communications course, and I was there for a year and a half, and then I decided I wanted to learn more about film history and aesthetics so I transferred to the University of Santa Barbara, where I got a degree in film studies and graduated there in 1981.

KW: So, a long time in the community. What do you think about how Hancock looks today from when it was in 1981? You've actually, for the last decade, been documenting a lot of that change. What do you see as being an important difference?

KB: Well, the college had a lot. When I first attended my, I know the film courses were in the old barracks buildings over by building W, on the north end of the campus. And we had a little theater over there. And so, those classrooms were old military-style classrooms, actually the campus at that time was sort of similar to what it is today. Building F was there, building K was the same, but the administration buildings, A and B, were as you know when you first got here, they were just a little under-gunned here on campus because of the small offices, and the buildings over there, and the demand for enrollment. And I remember it was stated in another podcast, we used to just kind of hang outside until we could get in to talk to a counselor, the facilities were rather small. So, when I first arrived on campus, back in 2011, working full time, they started building buildings A and B and those were very impressive buildings to be built. And now what I see on campus is that we're building a new Fine Arts Complex, and that's going to be very impressive for all the fine arts students that are taking dance classes, drawing classes, ceramics, sound production, and video or film classes. So those are the big changes I see on campus and of course, the new building M is another new building on campus that I guess they just finished prior to me arriving on when I came back to work there. So, there is quite a lot of new architecture and buildings on campus which are definitely going to benefit students in the future, as well as the Lompoc Valley Center, which is a very nice campus as well, and of course that was not there when I was going to school here in the 70s.

KW: Yeah. So, you know that new Fine Arts building especially, while it is going to be that traditional art kind of programs, there's a lot of high-tech stuff that goes into the art programs and a lot of career opportunities through the graphic design and animation and the kind of things that when you look online and you see the things that are there as far as content online. Those are real jobs that students can get and that facility is going to be perfectly designed to teach our students how. One of the things though, is you've been doing, you know for 10 years and if we think back 10 years to 2011. I think my phone had a camera on it in 2011, and it was, you know, the, just in the decade, the transformation of how we document what's going on at the college, and that work is so important that you do. So that when we go back and we look at, whether it's graduations and celebrations, or the groundbreaking for that building, you know that Kevin Boland's there taking pictures of that and memorializing that for future. Talk about the technology that's changed just in your in your time as being a professional photographer.

KB: Yeah, there's been some big changes. When I first started we, like I said, we're using Braun Nizo Super 8 cameras, and those were like the state-of-the art Super 8 cameras in the day, and everything was cut with tape splicing. And from there, just for example, I got a job, my first job in television was in 1981. After I graduated from the University of Santa Barbara, I got a job at KSBY-TV and we were actually shooting on 16-millimeter sound on film camera. So, there was actually a magstripe on the 16-millimeter, and the recorders or the videographer/filmographer back then went out and shoot those, we'd have to come back and process the film before the news. So that was a big change when they brought in their first three-quarter inch JVC mini cam they called it, and it was a deck and a video camera. But in the video decks, that made a lot of difference in using a medium that you can re-record over the tape. So that went from three-quarter, and then also back then, besides a videotape we also were doing videotape editing for the news, and we have video cameras that we're recording the news from and that would be broadcast over the air. So, I've seen it go from Super 8, 16-millimeter cameras, to analog three-quarter inch video, into the development of digital video cameras. And the advantage of the digital video cameras that you could do, you can record that and then go into edit and make dubs of that. And you wouldn't lose any generation of quality from dubbing, and that was one of the big things that just with analog video, you would record your original, by the time you would edit it and make a copy of that, you could already see the quality degrade somewhat in your, in your final product. But now we're using digital video 4k cameras which is high definition. The quality and the resolution is four times the quality of even the original digital video. So, what that does, is it allows for a high-quality video that can be taken with professional video cameras, as well as with your cell phone. I think every cell phone nowadays is equipped to shoot high definition or 4k video, and that looks pretty good. That is probably, the cell phone quality, is probably as good as what we originally were shooting with the original three-quarter inch videotape or better, so it's come a long way digitally.

KW: You know, it's amazing. I have one of my good friends was working at a news station in Utah, and at one point they assigned him to move to St. George in the southwest part of the state. They were going to open a bureau down there. They have him a satellite truck. His job was to drive satellite truck around and shoot stuff and send it back to them. And last year I was at a – before the world stopped spinning – I think we're getting ready for the Christmas parade and they were one of the local TV stations was there and the kid doing the filming showed up with a handheld camera and a little backpack and was using cell service to run that, so like that whole truck, what used to require a whole truck, really literally 15 years ago, you could throw it in a backpack and do the exact same thing today, which is pretty incredible how quickly that's moving along. So, I'm told you taught a class while you're here, during your time. What did you teach and what was it like?

KB: I was on campus, talking to Casey Case one day, and I was asking him, I was approached by the Community Education department individual, his name was Gene, I believe his name was Gene, I forget his last name, but I was talking with Gene, he was talking about, he was interested in getting a video production course developed for Community Education. So, Casey Case brought me into an old studio, which was in the ARC or the older ARC building, and I could tell that it had a lighting grid and there were some studio cameras in there, and there was a little control room, but it wasn't functioning. And I asked Casey, I said if I can get my engineer from, I was working at KOTA-TV, it was Spanish Univision station in Santa Maria, and if I can get this engineer in here to work on the cameras and get it running,

would it be okay if I could, you know, try to sign up students for a Community Education class. And how that kind of works is we can kind of advertise it, you need to get so many individuals to sign up for the course. So, we got the studio up and running, and I taught for two semesters and had students sign up and they came in and I first trained them on how the studio worked, because I had done quite a bit studio work at KSBY-TV, and also KSBW-TV which is in Salinas. And being at KOTA, my supervisor there, said, "Yeah, go for it and if you need to use any of our cameras from work, you can use those as well." So, I had about 15 students that came in and signed up, and we did some studio production work. One guy did a karate demo, another person did a painting or art kind of demonstration, and we had people doing like fun fake news, and people were really enjoying themselves, but the cameras kept drifting a little bit and the quality and the engineer kept tweaking things. And after the second semester we kind of were discussing, should we continue this. And at that time, one of the cameras finally died, and wasn't really enough funds being in Community Education to continue that. So, we just kind of decided, I decided that I couldn't really teach the course any longer. And then another teacher from Righetti, Quinn Plantae, I said, "Why don't you run with this?" And he taught it in a little bit different aspect because video cameras started to become available, and he kind of took over that end of it. I guess he taught another semester or two but it was a good experience teaching that course, and I was impressed by the participation of the students, they really enjoyed it. Some of them I still talk to today, I have a relationship with them as friends.

KW: Right. So, what do you do in your spare time, what do you do for fun?

KB: What I do for fun in my spare time is I go surfing once in a while, try to still keep in shape doing surfing. I like to play guitar and learn new musical styles, and currently I'm taking some music lessons guitar lessons on the weekends. And I'm actually really learning how the guitar actually works through music theory and learning diatonic and pentatonic scales, which my teacher is teaching me. Before I was just kind of like pick it up and do a few chords but that is a great way to keep my mind active and to be somewhat artful doing that.

KW: Anything else you want to share with us about something unique that you see at Hancock? You have a different view of what we do.

KB: So yeah, I think at Hancock, I see my job is being kind of a documentarian of what goes on here, weekly, monthly and each semester. It's a great honor to see the new first-generation students coming in and seeing how excited they are to be participating, getting photos of them at events like Bulldog Bow Wow, and just the ASBG events that they are involved with. So, I feel I'm very privileged to be here at Hancock capturing the daily to weekly to semester occurrences that go on until they get up in graduate. You really get to see students come in and see them develop and blossom over the year, two years, three years if they're here to attain their AA degree, and I've developed some good relationships with some of the students here at Hancock. And it's a great place for the community. I know it's been a life bridge for my family members. My daughter graduated from school here, my sister got an early childhood development degree here, my niece went here and got a dental degree and she worked with Dr. Ibson at Denmat Corporation, besides my dad teaching here as well. I think it's really a big part of the community and I think that if you talk to people such as me, it's been a big part of their family and getting themselves or their children educated to go on to do bigger and better things and really find out what your potential in life is. I think Hancock is a good place to find out what your potential is. Once you get here, by talking to the counselors,

by talking to the students and faculty members, you really do find out how much potential you do have, and Hancock is just a great place for the Santa Maria community, and I believe that if anybody has an opportunity to come to Hancock, they will find their abilities that maybe they did not know they had. So I think Hancock has been a fantastic place for me and my family, as well as other families in the community.

KW: I think that's true and for a lot of folks in our community. You know, back in the day when we could actually go into a meeting or give a presentation to a group of people I would always ask, you know, "How many of you went to Hancock for college?" And probably 20 to 30 percent of the hands would go up, and then, "How many of you took a class?" And then, you know, two-thirds or 75 percent would go up. And then, "How many of you have a kid that went?" By then, you get everybody's hands in the air. It's absolutely amazing the impact we have. And, you know, Kevin, I think you're an excellent example of what our classified staff do on a daily basis that the classified staff don't necessarily have the students recognizing them like they would a faculty member, but you know, every time the student goes on our website and downloads a picture of them at Bow Wow or their nursing graduation, or at some event where you are there to document that and preserve it for them and their family and they can, they can print that out on their wall at home, that's how you change the odds for those students. So, I'm grateful for that work you're doing, and grateful for the energy that you put into all of it. It's tremendous and thanks for all you're doing and thanks for being a guest on the podcast.

KB: Thank you and thank you for the opportunity to be expressing my talents at Allan Hancock College.

KW: Well this has been Hancock conversations, your podcast for all things Allan Hancock College. Our guest today was Kevin Boland, longtime photographer and our podcast engineer here on campus. So, thanks for joining us, and we look forward to the next episode.