

Angelica Sanchez
Class of 2012

Angelica Sanchez is amazed how quickly her life has fast tracked in the last five years. She's gone from being the editor-in-chief of the Morton College Collegian newspaper to an on-air reporter for the Fox TV affiliate in Milwaukee.

"It's been quite the ride," said the bilingual Berwyn native who hopscotched 50 Nielsen Designated Market Area spaces when she left the 85th-ranked Champaign market for No. 35 Milwaukee in September of 2016. "I can't believe it's been five years since Morton College. Wow! How did it happen so fast?"

Sanchez, fluent in English and Spanish, mixes empathy and energy into her endeavors. During her time as Collegian editor, she stirred new life into the monthly publication and guided it to the Student Activities recipient of the "Club of the Year" award in 2012. Her first audition reel included a piece on breast cancer disparities in four neighborhoods on Chicago's south side.

One of her first stories in Milwaukee was about a community coming together to find a boy with autism lost in a cornfield.

"Sure enough, two teenagers found the boy," recalled Sanchez, who received her Associate in Arts degree from Morton College in 2012. "Stories like that inspire you. There's a lot of negative things in the world. But an entire community came together to find the boy. I interviewed the mom – she was so grateful that her son was found. Sometimes stories like that don't always have a happy ending."

Growing up, Sanchez remembers the 9/11 terror attacks and watching Tom Brokaw anchor NBC's coverage of that horrific September day 16 years ago.

"There was something about how he delivered the news that day," Sanchez said. "It made you realize the power of TV journalism. I realized journalism was a noble profession and something important in our society. Tom Brokaw was one of the biggest reasons why I went into journalism."

Brokaw would be proud of Sanchez's personal mission statement as a reporter.

"I have a couple of rules," Sanchez said. "No matter what, treat people like people. Remember that person has a family or people who care about them. Two, fact check like crazy. I'm huge on that. It's everything – their age, the spelling of their last name. When in doubt, ask again.

"No. 3 – when I'm writing a story, I want it to be impactful, honest and accurate. You have to have a sense of good news judgment so what the person says isn't lost in editing."

Sanchez's journalism background is perfect for her job. She describes TV as the "marriage of writing, video editing and on-air delivery."

She's always been someone with a defined career path. The graduate of Morton West picked Morton College because she knew she wanted to major in broadcast journalism at Columbia College Chicago. All of Columbia's prerequisites were offered at Morton College, where her father, Luis, is a full-time faculty member.

"It was cost-effective," Sanchez said. "Still to this day, going to Morton College was one of the smartest decisions I ever made. They had great faculty members and academic advisors who helped you every step of the way. Morton College is definitely one of the places that helped me get where I'm at today."

Morton College holds such an important place in Sanchez's heart that she includes it in her Fox station web site profile.

Her choice of influential instructors at Morton College cuts across a wide spectrum. While math was never a Sanchez favorite, she took away an appreciation for organization and attention to detail from Geoff Krader. Psychology courses with Bob Schmitt enabled Sanchez to take away a better understanding of human behavior, something important in her line of work.

English instructor Michele Mohr, a former journalist herself, provided Sanchez with the necessary encouragement in running the Collegian.

"It was a great two years of my life," Sanchez said. "I had a wonderful time. With the help of Michele Mohr, I was able to expand the newspaper. I don't know anywhere else where I'd have the freedom like I had at Morton College.

"One of the smartest things you can do as a student is to be involved. Morton College offers so many extracurricular clubs and activities. When I look back on my time there as Collegian editor-in-chief, it really sealed it as a career choice. There was no doubt to what I wanted to do."

Sanchez fondly remembers the long hours spent in the Collegian office on the third floor of C building.

"It was so much fun," Sanchez said. "What other institution would give you the opportunity to explore like that? One of the greatest times of my life was being in that office. We had so many laughs. Being named Club of the Year – that was something completely unexpected."

Sanchez then transferred to Columbia College Chicago where she majored in journalism with a concentration in broadcast journalism. She also interned at the Suburban Life Newspapers, Today's Chicago Woman and the Chicago Reporter.

Sanchez sent countless demo tapes to TV stations. She was on her way home from an interview in a small market in Wisconsin when a station in Champaign called.

"I was still in Illinois and close to my family," Sanchez said. "It is a very diverse market and an exciting part of the state. I interviewed and started working two weeks after that."

Working in a small market like Champaign provided Sanchez a wonderful opportunity to develop her craft. She covered a wide range of stories including politics, education, sports and crime.

With the University of Illinois based in Champaign and Urbana, it's the area's major player and driver of news coverage. A series of administrator changes at Illinois provided a number of stories for Sanchez, who also was part of the station's team coverage when football coach Tim Beckman was fired over allegations of player mistreatment. She also reported on Vice President Joe Biden's 2015 visit to the university to promote the "It's on Us" campaign.

"Stories, video, I did it all," Sanchez recalled. "I was a one-man band. My time in Champaign made a stronger person. It forced me to be more creative. I gained a lot of experience in Champaign. I anchored (the news) for the first time in Champaign, trained on the weather desk and learned to produce in Champaign. I developed a lot of friendships in that area over the two years I was there."

However, it became time for Sanchez to take the next step. She pursued a general assignment opening in Milwaukee. Sanchez applied for the job and left a voicemail for the news director. An interview and job offering followed. She started in September of 2016.

"Milwaukee has a lot of breaking news," Sanchez said. "In the recent presidential race, Wisconsin played a big role."

Sanchez works a five-day week with Sundays and Mondays off. Tuesdays through Thursdays are spent on the day side, while Fridays and Saturdays working the night side.

"In TV, there's no such thing as a 9-to-5 job," Sanchez said. "Fox 6 has 60 hours of news content per week. It's a beast."

Sanchez is grateful for her opportunity. She'd like to spread her wings and try investigative reporting or news anchoring.

"This is a tough business," Sanchez said. "There's a lot of hard work that goes on behind the scenes and a tight deadline of when it must all be accomplished. But there's nothing like seeing the final product on the air."

My goal right now is continue developing good stories, informative stories. I enjoy telling the stories of the viewers."

Sanchez still can't getting used to people approaching her because she's on TV.

"It's flattering when people recognize you," Sanchez said. "But to me it's more flattering when they compliment you on a story. That's when I know I am doing a good job. Good reporting can be a chance to fix a problem."