



## **S U N Y College of Environmental Science and Forestry Campus Conversations: The Podcast**

Episode 4

Mariann T. Johnston, Professor and Director of the Ranger School

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**Mariann Johnston:** My dad was a fisherman to the core. So, every weekend we were headin' up to Eleven Mile Canyon outside of Colorado Springs, and we would fish. We had a camper, we would go camping, and that's really where I learned to love the outdoors. So, I grew up in Colorado. I got my bachelor's degree in Forest Biology from Colorado State University. And I joined the Peace Corps soon thereafter. And during that time, I also attended the University of Idaho. So, the Ranger School is, of course, one of E S F's remote campuses. We are up in Wanakena. And at the Ranger School, we teach the three Associate of Applied Science degrees that are offered by ESF. Living in the Adirondacks is, is wonderful. It's a beautiful place to live. I'm very fortunate right now because, as director, I do have a home right there on campus.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Hello, it's Joanie Mahoney, and I am very happy to be back on the podcast today with the director of the Ranger School up in Wanakena. Mariann Johnston, welcome.

**Mariann Johnston:** Thank you so much. I'm glad to be here.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Thank you for making the drive all the way to the main campus. I don't know how often you get here, but it's very nice to see you in person.

**Mariann Johnston:** Thank you so much.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Well, let me just start by saying the purpose of the podcast is to introduce faculty to the campus community in a way that they might not know about you simply by looking at your resume or seeing the list of classes that you teach. And with you, I think that we could start because the Ranger School is not intimately familiar for everybody here on campus. Let's just start with that. So your role is director of the Ranger School up in Wanakena

**Mariann Johnston:** That is correct

**Joanie Mahoney:** So tell us about the Ranger School

**Mariann Johnston:** So the Ranger School is, of course, one of ESF's remote campuses we're up at Wanakena. And at the Ranger School, we teach the three Associates of Applied Science degrees that are offered by SUNY ESF. So, these include Forest Technology, Environmental and Natural Resources Conservation, and Land Surveying Technology.



**Joanie Mahoney:** And it's a very cool place. Not only is it a spectacularly beautiful setting, but all of the students live together, eat together, go to the library together. You're all in, for the most part, you're all in one building?

**Mariann Johnston:** That's correct. So, the Ranger School experience is a very unique, it's a very intensive one. All of our students do live in the dorms right there on campus in one big building. The same building houses the dining hall, the classrooms, the student recreational areas, fitness center, kitchen lounge. And so, when students get there, they become very much part of a community that eventually even morphs into almost a family of people that are all living under one roof.

**Joanie Mahoney:** That's nice. And how many students typically, I know it fluctuates a little bit, but how many students do you usually have?

**Mariann Johnston:** Yeah. So, in a typical year, we have somewhere in the mid-fifties for students. This year we started off at 67, which is our highest number in several decades. A few have left, but we're still at a very high number.

**Joanie Mahoney:** You found a spot for all of them?

**Mariann Johnston:** We barely, everyone has a bed. It's good.

**Joanie Mahoney:** That's great. And some of the students come in straight out of high school, but then others come to the main campus first. How does that work?

**Mariann Johnston:** Right. So, the Ranger School is effectively a one-year program, and all of our students come in basically as sophomores. There are 20 prerequisite credits required to come into the Ranger School. So, some of our students will take those courses at a community college before they come. Some students that are taking advanced placement courses in high school are able to get enough college credits to directly transfer into the Ranger School. And then we have a number of students, an increasing number of students, frankly, who are coming up after doing one year here at the main campus in Syracuse.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And then they do one year with you at the Ranger School. And they have options at that point where they take their degree and what they've learned and make their way out in the world, or make their way back to the main campus here and finish a bachelor's degree. Is that right?

**Mariann Johnston:** That's correct. Students will earn 44 credits in their one year at the Ranger School. They will graduate at that point with an Associate of Applied Science degree, assuming they've met their prerequisites. If they haven't met prerequisites, they have an opportunity to go complete those courses and send us those transcripts, in the rare cases that that occurs. Once they've got their Associate of Applied Science degree, we have several pathways for them to return here to the Syracuse campus and enroll in several different four-year degree programs, mostly in the Sustainable Resources Management department,



but also in Environmental Biology. And anywhere from maybe around half our students will go directly to the workforce.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And I know from being up there that the students are in high demand. So, there's gotta be some pressure to get out in the workforce because I know there are companies looking for surveyors, among other things. And so. The degree that they got does give them that option at that point. But we have a lot of Ranger School graduates here on the main campus. I was up there with you in August, and I was able to go out in the field and see some students doing research out in the field. It was very interesting for them to explain to me how they were doing, some of the countings that they were doing, and gathering data. What is it like for Ranger School students? How does that differ from a typical or traditional first or second year of college? These students were all outside. Is that a typical day for students at the Ranger School to be outdoors?

**Mariann Johnston:** Yes. So, one of the parts of the Ranger School experiences, we are also teaching people a work ethic. And part of that involves being in class from eight to noon and one to five every day, so it's a full day. There are no free hours. We tell you what classes to take and where to be as part of your program. And a typical day involves four hours of lecture in the morning and then four hours of lab in the afternoon. Most of the time, those labs take place outdoors somewhere on our 2,800-acre outdoor classroom, that's our campus. Some of those lab hours, however, are also spent in the computer lab, much to some folks' chagrin, but computers are a very important part of today's world for natural resources management, particularly skills and Geographic Information Systems.

**Joanie Mahoney:** I would imagine it's become pretty high-tech. It's just a wonderful program. And I grew up here, you maybe know that about me. I have spent most of my entire life in central New York, and I certainly knew of E S F but didn't have the depth of knowledge about the college that I now have that I've been here. And really none about the Ranger School. I was one of the folks who assumed that that was where you went to become a park ranger. And I now know the incredible work, and the students that come are just so dedicated to their work. And when you said 44 credits, I guess you would have to stay in school for eight hours a day, and they go year-round, right? Is it a full year?

**Mariann Johnston:** It's not a full year. It's just a little bit longer than the year here at the main campus. So, we started this year, for example, August 15th. So maybe two weeks before classes started here, and then we will graduate one week after graduation occurs here.

**Joanie Mahoney:** But you're in class all day, every day.

**Mariann Johnston:** You are in class all day, every day.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And I think if I'm not mistaken, you're the first woman to be the director of the Ranger School. Is that right?



**Mariann Johnston:** That is true

**Joanie Mahoney:** That's great. Congratulations.

**Mariann Johnston:** Thank you.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Where did you come from? What was your path to the Ranger School?

**Mariann Johnston:** Wow, that's a great question. So, I grew up in Colorado. I got my bachelor's degree in Forest Biology from Colorado State University, and I joined the Peace Corps soon thereafter. I spent seven years in South America, three years as a Peace Corps volunteer, and four years as a technical trainer for incoming volunteers. And during that time, I also attended the University of Idaho and got my master's degree in silviculture. And then, I went on and did my doctorate in biogeochemical nutrient cycling. I worked for a number of years with the University of Idaho's Inner Mountain forests tree nutrition cooperative. I met my husband in Idaho. My husband was from New Hampshire. So, after our older son was born, we made a decision to move to New Hampshire, and we bought a 1974 John Deere skidder and started a forest consulting and logging business. We were not really able to make a very successful go of that. A job was advertised for a faculty member at the Ranger School in 2008. So, I applied and was hired, and we moved there. I have worked there as a faculty member since that time and applied for the director job this last year. And now I'm the director.

**Joanie Mahoney:** What an interesting story, and you started in Colorado. So, I would imagine that nature is something that came naturally to you. But as I've asked some of the other folks I've had the opportunity to talk to you on this podcast, it's not common that women would come up into a STEM field. And I know there's a whole bunch of talk of trying to encourage more women. We do a good job here at USF of graduating women. But how about you? What kind of childhood did you have that you ended up as a faculty member in a STEM field? Is it your family that set you in that direction?

**Mariann Johnston:** I'd have to say it was my family. I have five sisters. So, we were six girls, and my dad was a fisherman to the core. So, every weekend we were headin' up to Eleven Mile Canyon outside of Colorado Springs, and we would fish. We had a camper, we would go camping, and that's really where I learned to love the outdoors. And that stayed with me right through, obviously right through college. And a lot of my work at the University of Idaho when I was a researcher was field-based work. And I guess one thing that I learned was good field skills are so important to good data and good research. And one of the reasons I feel so strongly about the Ranger School is that we are teaching those fields skills. We cannot get good data, we do not do good research unless we have good data to go with it. And that requires excellent field technicians, which is what we produce at the Ranger School.



**Joanie Mahoney:** And that's what I got to see in action. And they were showing me sort of the half circles and how the inventory was being done. And it really is incredible, the patience that folks have to be doing that kind of research out in the forest. So, you went to the Peace Corps right after college?

**Mariann Johnston:** That's right.

**Joanie Mahoney:** What an interesting experience that must have been. Where were you in South America?

**Mariann Johnston:** So, I was in the country of Ecuador. I was stationed in the town of Riobamba. I was placed with a forest tree nursery that had funding from A I D to produce native tree species, to use agroforestry to try and reincorporate trees in the high Andean landscapes where they had been farmed away. And had very serious soil erosion issues. And so, we were working to incorporate trees back into that landscape.

**Joanie Mahoney:** That must have been so interesting. And you were three years in that program and then stayed on to train new Peace Corps members as they came through?

**Mariann Johnston:** I did.

**Joanie Mahoney:** How about making your way back here? Was there any time that you were thinking, I think I might just stay here and Ecuador and live in South America. Or did you want to come back?

**Mariann Johnston:** I think I would've happily stayed in Ecuador, but I had also started my graduate work at that point. What I was actually doing during those years when I was training is I would train from January through May was the forestry program for Ecuador. And then, I would stay through the summer months there and collect my field data. And then, I would attend the University of Idaho in the fall to get my coursework in. And as I wrapped up my master's degree, it really was a very natural progression to move back to Idaho and start working there for the university with the forest tree nutrition group.

**Joanie Mahoney:** I'm so happy for you that you got to have that kind of experience. If I could rewind, I would love to do something like that. I have never been to South America. I came very close because my husband and I were headed to Peru and Ecuador, and COVID derailed our plans. I still want to get there. And I know that we have faculty here at E S F that spend a lot of time in that part of the world. Did you make your way out to the Galapagos Islands?

**Mariann Johnston:** I did not. That's one of my great regrets from living in Ecuador and not making it out to the Galapagos Islands.

**Joanie Mahoney:** All right, so now you just have to go back, right?



**Mariann Johnston:** Indeed.

**Joanie Mahoney:** So, I know from visiting you up at the Ranger School that you live in a house on the property. But you and your family have a different spot where you live. You have kids still in school. So, I would imagine that you have a lot of juggling to do. What's it like to live up in the Adirondacks?

**Mariann Johnston:** Living in the Adirondacks is wonderful. It's a beautiful place to live. I'm very fortunate right now because, as director, I do have a home right there on campus. I spend several nights a week. They're just a part of keeping an eye on, particularly with students when classes are in session, just keeping an eye on things being available in the evenings because with classes from eight to five, that doesn't leave students a lot of time to interact with faculty. So, we all spend some evenings on campus for that purpose. We also have a farm over near Antwerp, New York, sort of near Fort Drum. And we had moved there when I was still a faculty member, and my boys were in school, so I still have one son that's a junior. So, we've got a couple more years there. We have 170 acres there. It's primarily hay fields, and we also have a Shiitake Mushrooms business. So, during the summer, we grow and sell Shiitake Mushrooms.

**Joanie Mahoney:** All of the conversations that I have faculty here, it's one surprise after the next. I would not have guessed that you had a shiitake mushroom farm. Very interesting. So, do your boys get to come over to the Ranger School and experience all there is there, too and interact with the students at all?

**Mariann Johnston:** Yes. So, we lived on campus for the first five years that I was there as a faculty member. And then we moved to our farm five years later. So, the boys have wonderful memories of Wanakena. They have friends. They remember being able to just hop on their bikes and ride down to town and pop into the store and get stuff.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Yeah. At that point, we lose track of them, right. I have my own boys, so I know what you mean. So, I'm wondering about you. So, you said that your path to faculty and a STEM college was inspired by your father, among others. Did you have mentors along the way that encouraged you to keep moving up the ladder in academia?

**Mariann Johnston:** So, one of my first mentors would be my mother, who very strongly encouraged all of us to go to college. My grandmother, in fact, was a graduate of Morningside College in Iowa. And so, going to college, and my mother went to the University of Colorado at Boulder. So going to college was very much instilled in all of us from a very young age. So again, to Colorado State University and Dr. Dave Betters was one who very much encouraged me to look towards the Peace Corps potential career development opportunity, and that was very helpful. At the University of Idaho, Dr. Jim Moore was one of my committee members, and then he was my supervisor as I went on to work there. And he was a wonderful mentor and encouraged me to continue. I worked on my doctorate while I was also working full-time for the tree nutrition cooperative while I also had my first son, he



was born during that time. So it was a fairly long pathway to my doctorate, but he was always there supporting and encouraging me.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And what an interesting grandmother you must have that she's a college graduate herself. And so that long history of a value on education. So you have some good mentors early on.

**Mariann Johnston:** Indeed.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And then you made your way to New Hampshire. And did you teach in New Hampshire?

**Mariann Johnston:** During the time we were in New Hampshire, I continued to work part-time remotely for the University of Idaho. I did not teach while I was there. I was focusing at that point on our older son. And then my second son was born while we were in New Hampshire. So, I was really, I was working part-time but largely focusing on my family for several years there in New Hampshire.

**Joanie Mahoney:** I have a very similar path because I'm a lawyer and had practiced law. But then, when my second son came along, I took a step out. I said I'm sure my kids would have been fine. There's lots of great options, but I wanted to do that. And then I ended up, except for a part-time job as a city councilor in Syracuse, I was home with my kids for 11 years. I feel really lucky that I was able to get back into the career that I was. Because I know a lot of people make sacrifices that it's harder to get back in, you know? So, both of us have had that experience of being able to step aside, do what we wanted to do, and then get back to the careers that we wanted.

**Mariann Johnston:** Indeed.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Yeah, I think we're pretty lucky. So, you had a very different experience at the Ranger School than I think a lot of people have had with COVID. And I think you have the distinction, and no one has corrected me yet. When I've said that you were the only one who graduated a class in May of 2020 that had continued to study in person when the rest of the world had shut down and gone home, you all stayed together up at the Ranger School, right?

**Mariann Johnston:** That is correct. The only modification I would make is I think the graduation ceremony was actually in very late April.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Oh, you wrapped up early...

**Mariann Johnston:** We wrapped up a bit early. And we did that. It was hard. We did Saturday classes to make that happen, and we all realized we never wanted to really do that again.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Well, it was amazing to watch that. And they have a lot of frustration with all the COVID protocols. And we're talking about mask-wearing and social distancing, opening the windows, that kind of thing. But I mean, you were literally collecting



car keys from students to make sure that you are keeping everyone safe. No one was going out into the broader world to collect COVID and then bring it back onto the campus. So, the intensity of the attention that you had to pay to all of the details to keep faculty, staff, students altogether during the height of COVID at the very beginning, pre-vaccine. And you did it really well and were able to have that graduation in April and send those students home. So, hats off to you because that seemed like a really tall order. And you all did it up there.

**Mariann Johnston:** Thank you. And we did. I remember one of the things I remember we didn't know much about COVID at that point. You know, it was just there's this virus, and if you get it, you could die. Now, that was sort of all we knew, so when we first found out about it, really started talking about it, we were here in Syracuse. Actually, we had brought our class down because we play, we have a hockey club at the Ranger School. And so, every fall, we play hockey every winter. And then in March, we typically come to Syracuse and go to Tennity Pavilion, and we have an alumni game where the current class plays against whoever of the alumni want to show up and play against them. So, we had just had our alumni game. We were over at The Inn Complete having pizza, and we started talking. And I was talking to Dr. Bridgon, who was the director at that time, and we were thinking, you know, maybe we want to get everyone back and cancel spring break. And that was what we ended up doing, two days before spring break, we called the students in and said, We're going to cancel spring break. You're going to have to stay here. You can leave if you want. You can come back another time and finish the program. But we feel to be safe, we need to keep everyone here, and it was hard. There were some tears, but we did cancel spring break. I ended up moving into a house on campus to finish out the year because I didn't want to go back and forth to my home and risk that potential vector. And we took car keys, and yeah, it was hard, but it was a nice collective sense of accomplishment as we got through that.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Did you have students that left? Or did everybody stay?

**Mariann Johnston:** I think we ended up having one student who opted to go home.

**Joanie Mahoney:** That's really impressive, though, because as I started the question to you, when we, the rest of us that live with the COVID protocols, complain about the mask-wearing and social distancing. When you think about what your students did and your faculty and staff, but especially as young people just getting locked down for several weeks with no contact with their families or friends outside of the school. And you all stayed together, and you successfully completed that academic program. It's pretty cool, and it'll be interesting to see what kind of alum group that is now for you. I know the alumni at the Ranger School are pretty passionate alumni and come around. Do you participate in the alumni events up there?

**Mariann Johnston:** I absolutely do attend the alumni reunion that happens every fall. Of course, I haven't participated in one for several years now because there hasn't been one. I think the last one was probably in 2019. So, we are looking forward to a big alumni reunion next fall, so that'll be 2022. One of the things we do at every





alumni reunion is to celebrate the 50-year class. So we now have three 50-year classes that will be celebrating in 2022.

**Joanie Mahoney:** I know it's really amazing what's happened in the world. And I see people, and I think when did I see you last? I mean, it was two years ago. Was it one year ago, was it 18 months ago? I mean, it's just such a blur. And when I think back about making my own bubble with my family and keeping everybody inside. And I think how did we all do that for several months. But here we are on the other side. So how do you think that the main campus can get more of the benefit of the Ranger School? Is there enough interaction between the Ranger School and the main campus, or should we be more deliberate in our efforts to expose more of the main campus to the wonderful program at the Ranger School?

**Mariann Johnston:** So, I think we're actually making good progress in that regard. Again, the two departments we tend to draw most heavily from are Sustainable Resources Management and Environmental Biology. And a lot of our efforts are really talking to, particularly to freshman students here and making them aware of what the Ranger School is. Because really, what the Ranger School is for a lot of these students is an opportunity to spend one year at a remote campus that's often a little bit less expensive because our housing costs are a little bit less than down here. And gain just an immense library of field skills. When these students from the Ranger School come here and enroll in their upper-division classes, they're the ones that, when they go out to the field, they're the ones that know how to layout the plots and get out in the woods and are very accomplished in that regard. So, the combination of an associate's degree from the Ranger School and a bachelor's degree from E S F gives just a tremendous benefit in terms of having that good solid science background that E S F offers combined with good solid field technical skills from the Ranger School.

**Joanie Mahoney:** But a student doesn't need to know before they start their first year. They can decide as first-year students that they want to spend that second year up at the Ranger School if they're in S R M or Environmental Biology, it usually works curriculum-wise for them.

**Mariann Johnston:** That's right. And, of course, they can go to the admissions department at any time, and they'll work with them on what a plan sheet might look like if they wanted to spend a year at the Ranger School.

**Joanie Mahoney:** When I toured up there with my husband, he wanted to spend a year at the Ranger School, but it's a pretty cool place. So you have spent a lot of time, a lot of people at the Ranger School have spent a lot of time explaining to people that the Ranger School isn't really the place where you go to learn to be a ranger. And now, to complicate things, you are welcoming the D E C for their Ranger School to be held at our Ranger School. That's going to start, or it didn't start yet, that's going to start next summer?

**Mariann Johnston:** That's right. And this relationship goes back a long, long way as well. A number of the D E C forest rangers are, in fact, graduates from the E S F Ranger School. And the current director, Director Solan, the director of the forest rangers, is a



Ranger School graduate himself. And so he, as he became director, talked to me because we both became directors around the same time, and we started a conversation then, and he really wanted to bring the rangers to the Ranger School for their training. And we talked about possibilities, and we are going to go ahead and just give it a trial run. So, in May of 2022 will be welcoming Basic School of D E C forest rangers. They will spend about 11 weeks at the Wanakena campus. And in August, about the time of the alumni reunion, they will head down Oriskany and do some training there. And then, they will head up to the Newcomb Campus and spend their last 14 weeks of training at the Newcomb Campus.

**Joanie Mahoney:**

That's a great partnership between the Newcomb campus and Wanakena. I know there was talk with the D E C about both campuses, and to put this together where both will participate, I think it is a big win for E S F. I'm sure the D E C is thrilled. So, I'm grateful to you because this is kind of above and beyond for you to put this together. And it goes with what we're trying to do in terms of supporting the satellite properties so that they exist for the benefit of the whole college. And the first round of the satellite properties task force was identifying the inventory but also enumerating the cost in dollars for the satellite properties, which I felt like really left the satellite properties in a vulnerable position. And that's why I very quickly wanted that second phase to get done because I don't want to just leave it hanging out there as an expense. Because I see it as a tremendous asset to the whole college. So now you, I think, recently welcomed J M Z, who is the outside consultant that's doing the satellite properties taskforce phase two, for lack of a better term. They're updating our facility master plan and including the satellite properties. I know the Ranger School was part of that first one. But as a comprehensive look at all of those satellite properties, I think it's important too to see how the Ranger School can interact with the Newcomb campus. And I know that you're also very much involved with Cranberry Lake Biological Station, too where faculty go back and forth in the summertime. So, I'm excited to see what that facility master plan looks like. One of the things that I hope it looks like is talking about the student center for the students up at the Ranger School. You and I had the opportunity to talk about that. I know there was a grant a few years ago from Senator Griffo to do a plan or to do some kind of feasibility study. But it sounds like you have some good ideas for that. And I want to put that together in a way that we can take it to the SUNY construction fund and get started on something that can provide some recreational opportunities for students, maybe in some of the colder days, although I think your students are outdoors, hot or cold, right?

**Mariann Johnston:**

That's right. But yes, absolutely. This idea of having particularly a fitness center that we can use during the winter, that maybe includes a gymnasium. That's a place to store hockey equipment, boating equipment. It is absolutely something that we need, and we really look forward to having this develop as a multi-use space as well, because we would love to be able to graduate, hold our own graduation on our own campus. We typically go into the town of Star Lake and use the auditorium at Clifton-Fine High School for graduation. Now, this last year was a little different with COVID, we rented a giant tent, and we put the students under our picnic pavilion. And it worked out beautifully because it was a beautiful



day. And the bugs were very, they were there, but they weren't terrible. Which actually is a pretty rare combination of events on graduation day. So, we were fortunate there, but the ability to be able to host our own graduation or other large events would be part of the student center as well.

**Joanie Mahoney:** I look forward to working on that with you. You mentioned Clifton-Fine. That's the school district up there. And I saw biographical information I got about you that you were the Cub Scout leader there. And I can only imagine what the kids must have thought when they got you as a cub scout leader because most of their moms are probably a lot more like me. And now here you can go out there. You could have spent probably the rest of their lives giving them great detail about the beech trees and about research out in the field. And I, I can't imagine what the family's thought when they got you as the Cub Scout leader.

**Mariann Johnston:** That was fun, and part of the reason that developed is there's a Boy Scout troop there at Star Lake, and my older son was participating in that and my younger son, there wasn't really a Cub Scout troop, so we actually chartered a Cub Scout troop there. So we were. The boys each got a little special badge or patch of some sort that went on their uniforms that they were charter members of a new den there in Star Lake.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And having you, as I said, most times when you get a mom to volunteer to do something like that, they are a little bit, pardon the metaphor, maybe a fish out of water, but not you. You were very much comfortable with the role of guiding the Cub Scouts, so they lucked out getting you, and now that is your son that's still in high school?

**Mariann Johnston:** That's correct.

**Joanie Mahoney:** How about your older son? Is he still in the area?

**Mariann Johnston:** My older son is a freshman at SUNY Canton majoring in mechanical engineering technology.

**Joanie Mahoney:** Oh, you must be very proud.

**Mariann Johnston:** Very proud.

**Joanie Mahoney:** And not too far away from you.

**Mariann Johnston:** That's right.

**Joanie Mahoney:** So, you can see him on occasion. While I have really enjoyed talking to you. I appreciate you making the 2.5-hour drive here. And I'm going to work with you on the new student center at the Ranger School, but I'll be up, I hope, for graduation on June 14<sup>th</sup>. This past year, the graduation that you just referred to that happened outdoors in the tent happened to be the same day that the main



campus was graduating, and I wasn't able to attend both. So, I'm looking forward to getting up there in person and celebrating with the students when they complete this incredible program at the Ranger School, that I'll bet you, a lot of people if they're able to hear us, know a lot more about what the Ranger School is and about who you are, which is the goal of this podcast. We know your name, and we know what you teach and what your area of research is. But really, how you made your way to us is interesting for me, and I'm sure the people that you work with. So, thank you very much.

**Mariann Johnston:** Thank you so much for having me. It's been a pleasure.

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