

# SCENE

THE TWO RIVER TIMES™

A&E

Two River Theater  
Crosses Borders

Page 16

BUSINESS

Monmouth Mall to  
Undergo \$500  
Million Makeover

Page 21

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## Ann Unterberg 'Just Say Yes'

AS AN ACTIVE philanthropist and helping hand, Ann Unterberg has supported organizations that help, heal, educate and entertain.

In her role as chair for Monmouth Medical Center Foundation's Board of Trustees, she has been devoted to helping improve the lives of the people in the community.

Unterberg and her husband Thomas, residents of Rumson and New York City, have been lending their names, talents and generosity to Two River charities for decades. And Unterberg has no intention of slowing down.

"I try to say yes to opportunities instead of no," she said.

Unterberg was born Ann Berninger in New York City to what she describes as "loving and talented parents." Her father was an aeronautic engineer and her mother a homemaker and the family moved to the Boston area. Unterberg was raised in rural Massachusetts. "I was a country mouse, climbing trees with my brothers," she said. "But as a teenager I knew city life was in my future."

After graduating Boston University, Unterberg worked with Estee Lauder Companies in Boston and then moved to New York City. "There were few jobs available in the mid-70s," she said. "I started behind the counter in Bloomingdale's – selling."

The entry-level job launched a career in sales, and eventually as account executive.

"I've always tried to be friendly with everyone – whether I'm supervising a staff or chairing a board," she said. "I look at people as part of our team. And although it might be work, we should enjoy ourselves."

While working in retail, friends convinced her to move to Wall Street advising her: "If you can sell retail, you can sell stocks."

It proved true, and Unterberg's career eventually led her to a position as senior vice president for eight years at the investment banking firm L.F. Rothschild, Unterberg, Towbin, where she concentrated on new business development and corporate finance, and recruitment of recent college graduates.

It was there she met her husband, Thomas Unterberg; they married years later in 1991.

The Unterbergs' charitable giving allowed her the opportunity to leave her job and delve into the family's philanthropy work.

"There is great joy in giving, and a great sense of accomplishment in raising money for others," she said.

"No one could be luckier than me to be in this situation," she said. "To be able to spend time volunteering when a billion women in the world wake up each day and search for clean water and food for their family."

In New York City, Unterberg served for many years as a trustee of the Wildlife Conservation Society, as president of Grand Street Settlement, as well as other nonprofits. She currently serves as a trustee of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and chairs the education committee, and is a member of the endowment committee of the New York City Community Trust, a \$2.5 billion trust to grant funds to NYC nonprofits.

In addition, Unterberg has always been sensitive to women's issues. "I was a product of the late 60s and 70s – an early feminist," she said, and as a young adult became involved with women's rights and in particular women's reproductive rights, including Planned Parenthood.

Nowadays the Unterbergs balance their time between their homes in New York City and Monmouth County, longtime home to the Unterberg family.

"I fell in love with Monmouth County immediately and the love affair continues," she said.

Their Rumson home is home base for entertaining friends and family. "The house and grounds have been designed with our extended family and our many dogs in mind," she said. "Lots of bedrooms and dog runs."

And along with that is a list of nonprofit endeavors to help, including the capital campaign for the building of the Two River Theater, Monmouth University and Monmouth Medical Center. The latter two have a decades-long connection to the Unterberg family.

It's hard to miss the Unterberg name at Monmouth Medical Center. The Unterbergs have been longtime supporters of Monmouth Medical Center and Ann currently serves as chair of the Monmouth Medical Center Foundation Board of Trustees.

"I was eager to get involved with the board because it seems all important that we have excellent health care and a superior hospital close to home."

The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center was named The Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center in 2013.

In addition to the children's hospital, there is the Unterberg Pediatric Emergency Room, the Unterberg Learning Center and the Unterberg mammography suites in the Jacqueline M.

Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center.

"During the last four years, we have focused on increased outreach to our patients and to our supporters," said Unterberg, "as well as reaching hundreds if not thousands of new friends and supporters throughout central New Jersey."

She said she is pleased that they have been successful in attracting several significant gifts to the hospital during this time. "The years ahead will be times of great expansion of our facilities and medical offerings."

Her involvement with Monmouth University also began with the Unterberg family's legacy; Thomas had served as a trustee and gave a gift to the Marjorie K. Unterberg School of Nursing, naming the school for his mother who was a nurse.

"Educational institutions are exciting places," Unterberg said who first chose to work with the Student Life Committee. "I wanted to understand the students, their concerns and issues and how we at MU could attract and retain students."

She found the experience challenging but eye-opening. "Students today are far different from those of 40 years ago," she said. "This experience gave me invaluable insight into this generation. I was left with the realization that I was old but could at least understand and relate to the young."

She donned her fundraising hat again when she served as chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee where they secured critical funds for many projects across campus. "But, most importantly we secured funds for the building of the Multi Purpose Center ("the MAC")."

At last year's commencement, Unterberg received the inaugural Jules L. Plangere Jr. Medal in recognition for outstanding commitment to the university in the areas of philanthropy, leadership and support.

Throughout her philanthropic endeavors, Unterberg said she doesn't like to stay too long in a leadership role. "It's important to bring in new people with new energy, new ideas and new relationships," she said. "I like to stay involved but in a supportive role."

Unterberg attributes her unspoken motto of "just say yes" for the various directions her life has taken. "I have found myself working alongside some of the most talented lovely people and ended up being part of great organizations and many successes," she said. "I have no regrets except that I had to decline some requests, and I know I have missed out on many an adventure."

By Judy O'Gorman Alvarez



DANNY SANCHEZ