



## Patricia Connery '87

When my husband and I moved to the area from New York, I got a job as a bookkeeper. I trained on the job and soon fell in love with accounting. I spent 14 years in the field before my boss said to me, "You know, Pat, you could really go far if you got your degree." That was it. I decided to go back to school and chose Gwynedd-Mercy College mainly because it was close to home. I figured if it wasn't a good fit I could always transfer. It ended up being exactly what I needed, when I needed it.

My first experience with the College was meeting Joseph Coleman, the head of continuing education at the time. He was very warm and welcoming. He took the time to talk to me about what the business program would be like and what would be expected of me. I had been out of school for 15 years so initially it was a big adjustment. Since I already had an associate degree, I was able to finish in two years. In my first year, I took all night classes and by the second year I was taking classes during the day, at night *and* over the summer to finish. In the two classes that I took in my first semester, I finished with *As*. I wanted to continue my progress and worked really hard to do so, graduating with a 4.0 GPA. I proved to myself that I could do it.

Shortly after graduating, I returned to the College to take some classes just for fun. I had wanted to take so many more classes than I was able to fit into those two hectic years. So I audited a philosophy class, plant management class, statistics class, and even took extra accounting classes. The first job that I landed after graduating was working as a cost accountant at a food company. After a few years they closed down and I was out of a job. In 1993, I got my dream job working as a controller for Boathouse Sports, which manufactures sports apparel for colleges. It was a wonderful experience starting with the company from the ground floor and being a part of their growth. Even though I retired five years ago I still do bookkeeping for the owner.

Gwynedd-Mercy College gave me the confidence to gain the knowledge I needed. I was able to do more than just go back to school. They gave me the tools to progress in my career. I'll never forget the time when one of my favorite professors, Tom Lynch, told our class that we will all graduate and make money and it would be our chance to give back to the College. I couldn't give much in the beginning, but as I made more, I gave more. It makes me feel great to know that I'm giving a helping hand to students for their tuition.

I was fortunate to have received the education that afforded me the opportunity to have a very fulfilling career. Now my husband and I are able to enjoy our retirement, traveling and doing the things that we love, all the while giving back to a place that means so much to me.

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