

#42 ADN Graduate 1977 Holyoke Community College

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Interview Date: June 18, 2010

(for the record, could you please tell me your name, where you went to school, why you went into nursing and any of the background for that. Then we'll proceed and you can tell me about your experiences at Holyoke Community College.)

I was born in New Jersey, I went to school at Holyoke Community College, Class of 1977. My formal education, I graduated from Westfield high School in 1968. I graduated from Holyoke Community College in 1970 with an associate's degree in science. Graduated Westfield State in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics with a minor in education. Graduated then from Holyoke Community College with an associate degree in nursing in 1977 where I guess my nursing career began.

If we backtrack why I decided to go into nursing.... well, I graduated. Let's go back... I started my freshman year in college. I was an engineering student. I decided I was going to be an engineer and build things for a living. In our sophomore year of college our physics professor got in front of the class one day and said to all the students, I don't know why any of you want to become engineers. If you read today's paper, all the engineers are losing their jobs. The recession is here. None of you guys are going to get jobs when you graduate. If I was you when you finish your class today go down to the guidance and change your career to something else. Most of us did; I changed from engineering to mathematics. Got my bachelor's degree in mathematics; not knowing exactly what I would do when I graduate but clearly Westfield State has a lot of emphasis on teaching so it was easy to pick up a teaching minor. I did my student teaching. I taught math. Upon graduation, although I had over 200 undergraduate college credits, I still hadn't fulfilled all my obligations for my teaching license, so after graduation I went back to college for one half of a semester and did my student teaching. And then I was completely certifiable at the end of my October date. I never really did submit the paperwork to

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be certified which is probably a mistake in hindsight because that's all you had to do at that time; there were no tests involved. And then I got a job teaching math in the high school. I took a long temp position teaching math. And when that teacher returned from her medical leave of absence I was then unemployed. But I did learn from teaching from November until March that I did not like teaching mathematics at the high school level. What you heard from students every single day was "why do we have to learn this stuff? I'm never going to use this stuff. When am I ever going to use algebra and geometry and so forth in the real world?" Although you learn to respond to these answers, they are probably correct. Unless you are going to pursue certain careers, you don't use algebra and geometry in the way that it's taught in the classroom. Nobody ever calculates if I'm going north on a highway at 50 miles an hour while somebody's going south, when are we going to meet together? And certainly in this year of 2010 with GPS, there's even less need for some of that kind of thinking. So I had to go look for work in what would be my next career.

In my four years in college, I worked in a pharmacy. I was a pharmacy technician. And figured maybe I could find a career somewhere along those lines. I worked for a company that was not very well heard of at the time that everybody today knows as CVS. And I was a store manager. And I worked for a great lady and won every company award there was. But then CVS decided to sell the Mom and Pop business to a conglomerate which is the store that you know of today. And they decided to change all management and I had a new district manager who had about 15 stores and on the first week he fired the first manager and in the second week he fired the second. When it came down to the 14th week, another store manager -- her name was Kathy -- and I were just talking to each other, "who's going to be next?" because we both knew we were going to go. So we both quit and needed to find other work.

Talking to my wife, who was in the health care field already: she was a medical transcriptionist working medical records at Noble Hospital. She suggested maybe I

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could get a job in the health care career. She said it's a job. It will pay the mortgage. You have a college degree -- somebody will talk to you.

So on a whim, on lunch break I went to Noble Hospital, filled out a form for a job. Post called Houseman. Filled it out secretary took it and said, you know the director of human resources right now has a job opening and he wants to talk to you about it and I said okay. He said we have an opening for an orderly; would you be interested in that job? And I said I don't know what an orderly job is. He goes well, it's something with your background you'd do much better than a houseman. Do you know exactly what a houseman's job is? And I said no. He said give me a guess. And I said well, my guess is somebody who works in a house and fixes things. He goes no, he mops floors all day long. You can do better than that. So I said can you describe what the orderly job is? And he says not real well but I'll get the director of nurses to explain it to you. So I'm in the director of nurses office five minutes later; her name is Mrs. S. And I said to Mrs. S, they say that I'd be good for this orderly's job. Can you explain exactly what an orderly job is? And she says no, not really but I'll get you one of the orderly's who can talk to you. So this guy by the name of Stanley. So I say Stanley, blah, blah, blah and he goes oh, you can do the job; don't worry. So I said okay.

So I went back to human resources, which in those days was known as personnel, and I said I'd be interested in the job. Let me just talk it over with my wife; she's walking down the hall. So I walked down I said they're offering me an eleven o'clock at night till seven in the morning job as an orderly. She said oh, you'd like that. I said exactly what do they do? She said, oh, you'll be taking care of patients somehow. So I said it's eleven at night to seven in the morning. She said Oh, we'll adjust.

I went back and said I'll take the job. Took the job' took the physical. started like a week later. Two weeks into the job I get called into the office and told that they hadn't properly posted the job. The man quit like ten o'clock in the morning and

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they hired me at twelve noon and hadn't posted it. And there was an orderly with two weeks seniority who wanted the night job. So I had lost my eleven to seven job but they were going to give me his day job, which was working seven in the morning to three thirty, twelve days on two days off. That way you picked up some overtime because they knew most of these guys had a family and so forth. So I got to see what life was like working on the day shift.

One week or two weeks into that all the orderlies get called into the director of nurse's office and she said we're having some budget problems and we've decided that we're not going to allow you to work the time and a half day; your sixth day of the week. So you're only going to work five days a week which means you work every other weekend with one day off in the middle of the week. So I never saw the twelve day stretch in my whole career. But I did start to see what nursing was all about and my wife remembers me coming home and saying this looks like something I can do for the rest of my life. I saw what nurses did for a living and I saw what orderlies did for a living and actually I could be happy being an orderly for the rest of my life, but the pay wasn't there. Not that the nurses made very good money either. We're talking here 1974. So I decided well, if I want to become a nurse, how do I become a nurse? So I started talking around and they said well, Holyoke Community College has a program; STCC has a program, and the University of Massachusetts has a program. Those were the three available in 1974. So I decided to inquire in all three and you're going to see a certain career trend about how I was always in the wrong place at the wrong time, or ahead of my time depending on how you want to put the spin. When I called UMass and said I'm a man who works in the health care field with a bachelor's degree and would like to become a nurse, they said well, we're not taking applications for two years because the board has told us that our teacher student ratio was out of whack and we have to have more faculty or fewer students. So we're not taking students for two years. So don't even bother applying. So I said I guess I'll apply I'll apply for Holyoke Community and STCC. At that point, having a bachelor's degree in nursing was not

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a big deal. Not many people had it. I believe that Noble Hospital at the time had two employees with bachelor's degrees and the director of nurses was not one of them. There was the director of education and the assistant director of education; the only BSNs in the building. So I didn't see like this was the biggest deal in the world.

So I applied to both schools and they both had different applications processes. Holyoke Community, you had to take some proprietary Holyoke Community College test. STCC you had to take the standard SATs. Applied to both of them and got a letter back from Holyoke Community College saying I was not accepted and I would be on the waiting list. So now I knew my options had dwindled. I could not go to UMass. I couldn't go to Holyoke Community. STCC was the only one on my list. There were no other schools in western Mass and to commute to whatever the next school was we're talking great distances. We're talking Fitchburg State or something pretty far away. And I was a married man with a mortgage and so forth.

(Diploma schools weren't an option?)

Diploma schools were already closing down. Baystate was still open but for some reason that wasn't an option I was interested in. So I decided to get on the phone, make an appointment with STCC, talk to whoever was important in that program to see what I could do to persuade myself into their program. I got an appoint with Dr. O'Leary. Sat in her office and said, Dr. O'Leary, here's my story. I have a bachelor's degree. I'm working as an orderly. I love this more than anything in the world. I want to become a nurse. I've applied to your program. I don't know what I have to do to convince you that this is the career I want, but tell me what I have to do. Please let me in; I know I won't disappoint you. And she said well it sounds like you're motivated and so forth; I'll see what we can do. Within a week or so I get a letter: I'm accepted to STCC. I'm thrilled. Now my career is on its way. About a week later I get a letter from Holyoke Community saying I'm now accepted to their program as well. I'm all excited; I have two choices. And Holyoke was my preferred

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only because I went there already and so forth, but I would have gone easily to either school. I'm working now as an orderly full time three o'clock to eleven, because I was preparing for a transition where I could go to school during the day and work in the evening. I get in at three o'clock in the afternoon and I say to the other orderly who is working with me, "Johnny, you'll never guess what letter I got in the mail today." He says "you got accepted to Holyoke Community College." I said "how do you know that?" He goes "I know." I said "there's no way you just guessed that. You've got to tell me the story." Johnny had a bachelor's degree in bio... not biology, in Spanish from Westfield State. And he was working at Noble his four years of college and now he was in the job market looking for work. And he had a part time job in the summer working in Pine hills cemetery. As he's working one day in Pine hills cemetery, a guy by the name of Charlie B ? comes up to him and says Johnny, do you know some orderly by the name of J.? He goes Yea. He says, is he a good guy? He says, yea. He says why are you asking? He says My mom wants to know. He says who's your mom? My mom is a nurse on the admissions committee at Holyoke Community College. So he says I put a good word in for you. Charlie told his mom, His mom got me in. His mom ends up being one of my instructors at Holyoke Community College when I got there. She validated the story. Mom occasionally had problems with transportation. We used to pick her up; she used to drive in sometimes with the students. Got to know her really well and I know she's still alive.

So that got me into Holyoke Community College. I went there for the two years. Basically an uneventful two years. I took the courses I had to take.

(What was the program like?)

We started with a class of about sixty. There were three men who started. Two of us graduated. The other one graduated one year later. He took a leave for some personal reason. Probably the key things that everything remembers about this Holyoke program was that Dr. M. was our anatomy, physiology professor. She

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taught it and was extremely rigorous. So rigorous that people did everything to avoid taking her. So they reworked a lot of the curriculum saying you had to take her course or you didn't become an RN at Holyoke Community. People used to say I took the same course at STCC. You can't transfer it in, Or, I took it at night at Holyoke Community with Dr. so and so. Sorry, you have to take it with Dr. M.. Dr. M. heard the nursing students complaining so bad about everything all the time, she wound up becoming an RN after she got her PhD. And she got her associate's degree from Holyoke Community after she got her PhD while she was still faculty. Then got her bachelor's and her master's. Then became a world-renowned anatomy-physiology professor who wrote a book which is now the standard for nursing. Met the lady socially a few times because I have a friend who has a master's degree in nursing who was her colleague in graduate school. They never knew each other as teacher-professor. She seems to be an okay person when you meet her socially, but as a professor, you feared her. They've named buildings after her and labs after her. I believe she's still alive. But she was rigorous and I know when you took her course you studied a lot. I got B's in her course which was better than most. A's she always told her students could not be gotten in her course. She went out of her way to make sure nobody got A's. There were always essay questions that she could mark harder.

The other memorable person that everybody always talks about was Dr... it is doctor; everybody called her sister. Sister Marita C. was there for a long period of time. And not only was she a professor she consoled a lot of students who found the two year experience very traumatic. We had about half of our class close to right out of high school age and the other half were a mix of society. People tend to find their little cliques based on whatever you went through it together. We decided to have a class president for the nursing program which was me. And that gave me a little bit of leadership amongst the crowd. And I can say honestly one of my biggest frustrations at that time was because I had my bachelor's degree and my credibility in education... they broke a lot of the cardinal rules of education when they taught

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us. They felt no problem giving test questions from chapter four when they had taught chapter three. And everyone gets that question wrong and they said well, you should have been reading ahead or something. That's just wrong. That's just wrong. Not when the grade really counts and there were students, well, you get the 70 you're kicked out of the program and two of the questions that were invalid. those kind of issues bothered and I used to fight for the class and they wouldn't budge; they wouldn't budge. those were probably the biggest frustrations.

The other was a philosophy of teaching which was valid, but I didn't always agree with. If they were teaching something, they wanted to teach you the concepts of how to do it and let you figure out how to do it. As opposed to teaching you how to do it by rote. So I remember to this day doing a catheterization in the lab and as an orderly part of my job at that time was catheterizing so I'd do two, three people a day and had been doing it for a year or two, so I could do it so easily and the students would be struggling and I'd go let me show you how to do it. And I'd get my hand slapped: you don't show somebody how to do it. They know the concept of sterile technique and they can figure it out on their own. And I found that frustrating.

Well anyway, I did graduate. Because I had a job at Noble, I applied for a job at Noble. They hired me and I started full time days RN on the orthopedic unit. Key comments I remember in the beginning. One was the secretarial person who worked for nursing service who did my paper work when she transitioned me from the orderly position to the RN position stated, Wow! I see you're going to make more money but it doesn't look like enough money to make me go back to school. So I must have been moving from four dollars an hour to five dollars an hour: not a huge pay jump. And I remember saying to myself, wow you know I wish she didn't say that because I worked my butt off for two years and I wish I was making more money too but it was almost like a kick in the The other was, they hired me in orthopedics to replace this another nurse who had left. A nurse who had worked in the emergency for two or three years of my career and he was a male and was not

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liked by anybody and he went to the day shift on this floor and then he was gone for some reason; I took his job. And they made some comment, J. is gone and they're gonna replace J. with Jo. Like a male nurse to a male nurse which being a male in the profession... makes you unique. The percentage of males in the profession hasn't significantly changed in my career. It's changed and gone up a little bit but we're still a great minority. And many people use that word like male nurse vs. a nurse who happens to be male so it's like saying a *black* nurse or a *green* nurse you know; they're giving you a description which isn't necessary but you get used to it.

Anyway, I didn't like the fact in was following in the footsteps of a male who was not a good role model for nursing in general. He was not liked in general and I had to follow his footsteps. And then I heard a few comments early in my career: it's good having a male nurse on the floor because there's a lot of heavy lifting and so forth. Which once again if I was a five foot female they wouldn't be saying that. But you have to take it in stride and go, well, I've got a job and you take it from there.

I enjoyed the work as an orthopedic staff nurse but I felt in my career that if I needed to move on I wouldn't be there the rest of my career. So in that institution it seemed that working the intensive care unit was a higher level. I asked how you got positions in the intensive care unit. They said pretty much you apply and see who applies against you and so forth. Once again I said how can I be the best candidate for the job. And they said there's a coronary care course and you can take it on your own and you can pass it and you'll have something over somebody who's never taken it. So on my own I went back to school at night at the hospital. Passed the course and applied for the job and worked intensive care unit for two years. and that two years I learned a lot and developed more skills.

While I was there the director of education came down to me and said J, I know you have your bachelor's degree in math. I know you've got our associate degree in nursing. You should consider getting a bachelor's degree in nursing. And I said yea, but how do you do that? Well, we're talking 1980 here and to do that was very, very

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difficult. You couldn't go to UMass because they didn't have the RN to BSN bridges yet. All those other schools like Elms and AIC hadn't had their programs thought out yet. So here was truly a guy who wanted to progress in the field and about the only way I could do it was quit my job and relocate and so forth. So it wasn't happening until Louise U. came down to me and said I found this program that came through the mail today and I don't know anything about it. I looked into it and it was University State of New York external degree program. I knew nothing it, looked into it, and pretty much they said send in your transcripts and we'll let you know. I sent in my transcripts; they said here's what you need to do. You need to take a series of five exams which you can take locally. I took them in Hartford and it was pretty much a review of everything that was on the state boards. then you need to take five exams in Albany plus a clinical exam in Albany. I said well it looked like a deal. And it was expensive. So I took all my exams in Hartford; took me half a year or so. Passed them all with flying colors. Then went and took my clinical. Clinical is three days of hell in Albany. You walk into their simulated lab and in the simulated lab they want to make sure you're safe for sterile technique and those kinds of things. I passed that Friday night; no problem. Saturday morning go to the hospital they give you a real patient. You have to give them a bed bath and some simulated tasks. To this day I still remember my first patient. I gave him a bed bath, did everything correct and failed. She said what did you do wrong? I said I don't know. Well, he was a diabetic, I washed the feet, I dried the feet but didn't dry in between the toes. So the rules were, you had to pass three patients, one being a pediatric. And you're given five tries. So now I'm one down four to go and I had to pass three out of the four. I did I passed. But many of the students did not. You could see them dropping. Very, very stressful. So now I went home and you had to take these five written [exams]. They gave you study guides but it was not a memorizable type of test. They were all situational. And they were psych, and there was med surg and so forth. Some were research; I don't remember all the details. I think there were five and you had to pass five out of five. So I went up and passed three out of five. So then you could retake the two. I went back retook the two and

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passed one out of two. So now I was on my last try; it was my psych I needed to pass it. And didn't know exactly how to prepare for it. So I hired somebody who I knew from Noble who was now teaching at graduate level. She's now a Doctor of Nursing: Helen S. I said Helen, tutor me on this stuff cause I need help. And I hired another tutor whose name escapes me but she was the clinical specialist on the psyche ward. And they looked over the study guide and they said we don't know how to tutor you; we don't know what information is necessary but we'll do our best. They did their best and I passed. I fulfilled all the requirements. The school had not graduated enough years of students to be NLN accredited so I decided not to send in my money so that I could delay and graduate when they were accredited of which I thought was an okay idea but not that important. I waited until they were accredited, I sent in my money. I got my BSN.

Now, at the same time all this was going on, I applied for a position at Noble as Patient Educator and they gave me the job. I was in the process of getting my BSN, they did not, when they hired me, tell me anything about having to be a BSN and I was doing the job. About two weeks into that job, they called me down into the nursing office and said J, last night I had an epiphany. We decided you're not going to be the patient educator in this union position anymore. You're going to be director of education for the hospital. And Louise U. who has been here for 25 years and has her BSN will be under you. And you, who have been a nurse for three years, and do not have a BSN, will be her boss. Yesterday you were in the union and today you're not in the union. You have two choices: take what we offer or you're unemployed. So it was promotion or unemployment. Well clearly I took the promotion. I had to work with this woman for the rest of her career, because she was towards the end of her career. We had an assistant director of education title too, who was in the union. So I had... with three people in one office, I, on paper, was number one, she was number two and number three. And she made sure as number two I couldn't talk to number three without going through her because she had military background and so forth.

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I clearly didn't approve the way she ran a lot of things and I know why we had his sudden change because the director couldn't stand her; they were always at odds and she felt she could work with me. I did get my BSN while she was still there. She did retire. Things changed a lot of different ways. In 1984 I decided now that I had my BSN maybe I should go to graduate school. Just going down the road, I thought it would be a good thing to do. So I looked at the University of Massachusetts MSN's They had one rule: if you're in an MSN you go to school full time -- quit your full time job. No way I could do that at this point -- I've got two kids, a house, a mortgage, whatever. So okay it's not going to work.

Piece of paper comes across my desk explaining they have a program at AIC for a Masters Degree geared towards working adults and geared towards people in the human services business. The degree is called Human Technology of which I had no clue what it was. Pick up the phone, call them, make an appointment sit down with one of the professors, asked her tell me all about the program. She told me all about the program. I said well it sounds pretty good for me. Tell my director. She goes yea, I think I met a person or two who graduated. They liked it and so forth. So I said okay I'll go for it. It's a fair amount of money that I didn't have for a degree that I really didn't need. I just thought it would be the right thing to do.

So I went for it and I remember coming home after the first weekend. The way the course was taught, you'd go all day Friday, all day Saturday, all day Sunday, and go Wednesday night from four o'clock to ten o'clock and then repeat that kind of thing on some kind of basis for twelve months and you'd be done. My wife remembers when I came home after the first weekend saying there's something in this program that really clicked with me. It was all about who I was. And I was psyched. I liked the course. Basically since then -- people always ask what is human technology? -- They changed the title for marketing reasons to Human Resource Development. But basically they had a philosophy which to this day I believe. Believing there's lot of need for technical knowledge, no matter if your an engineer, or a nurse or an English professor. The successful people in this world are successful because they

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know how to interact with other people. And they know how to get other people to be more productive. And the most productive people are those who get other people to be productive. Not only those who are productive on their own. Because everything do you in life interacts with other people. And those people who can figure out how to motivate other people -- and here's the bottom line -- in an ethical manner. Ethics was a huge part of the program and used to go on and on, the main professor, about these super rich people we put up as extraordinary people in our society as the people who built the railroads, or put the man on the moon. You have to look at what cost it was and if they exploited other people to get what they wanted, then there's something wrong with the ethic. To which to this day I buy in 100% and it has become the course has been a philosophy of my life that has stayed with me forever. In fact, he would do personal counseling with us in graduate school and he would weed out those people who could give him all the right answers but didn't have the belief. So those people who want to be negative about it see it as culture brain washing. But he said if you're not ethics driven, he didn't want you to be part of his graduate program. It changed my life to a large degree. It then opened other doors for me to be a college instructor. Because of my director of education jobs I had been put on some advisory committees and made some contacts. I remember being on a committee saying what can Holyoke Community College teach that they aren't teaching now that hospitals can find more valuable. And this committed said well we hire secretaries to work on the floors all the time and we don't know where to get them. You don't want a nurse, you don't want a CNA. There's probably a body of knowledge, blah, blah, blah. Well it came to yep, we'll put together a program. We put together a program and then he needed to hire a teacher and he calls me: do you know anybody who can do that? I gave him some names and he called me back and said none of them were interested. I said I can't help you. He goes would you be interested in teaching it? I said I don't think I even know that stuff. He goes hey, if you're a nurse and you're director of education, you know that stuff. I said tell me what exactly are you looking for. Bottom line, within an hour the textbook was on my desk -- he had it hand delivered it to me and told

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me I was starting teaching the following night or something like that. I then taught the course and that was actually my second college course teaching, the first for them. And then I was asked do you want to teach another course? Before you know it I was teaching upwards of 15 credits a semester at Holyoke Community plus doing my teaching job at the hospital. Liking them both and doing that for many, many years.

As my career progressed, I got a phone call one night asking me if I wanted to join the Army. And I said where is this coming from? and he goes I'll be honest with you. You're name's on the list. I go through the list. We're looking for nurses for the Army Reserve and your name's on the list. I said I don't think you want me, I'm old and... you know, He goes no, you're not too old. I know exactly how old you are. I go what's in it for me? To make a long story short, against my wife's better judgment I join the Army. I'll have to think about the year. The year would be about 1989 perhaps, well, eighty nine. Went in as a second lieutenant because I had a bachelor's degree in nursing from an accredited school, where if I had graduated from a non-accredited school, I would have been enlisted; wouldn't have had any interest at all. I joined one of many nurses and... one day they said anybody in this group of soldiers know how to teach CPR? CPR was one of my things so I raised my hand. They said okay, next month we're teaching CPR and I did: same course I did many, many times. Many weeks later, a major walks up... I think she was a captain at the time... Captain H. walks up to me and goes, Lieutenant B? I said yea. We need to talk. You got a few minutes? So I said sure. Here's a woman who was in my unit but I never talked to her. You know, there's many people and whatever. She goes I've just been given a mission to open a school of nursing. I don't have any faculty. I watched you teaching CPR last month. I want you on my faculty. She said I already pulled your file I know you're got the right credentials. Are you willing to come on board? I said Let's talk. We talked. I became an LPN Instructor, United States Army at a school which was based in Delaware. She had about six of us from the Hartford area. It became one of the greater good events of my whole career.

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Captain H. in civilian life was Doctor H.. Dr. H. at that time was Director of the Board of Registration for the state of Connecticut. Dr. H. was the emissary for the Catholic Hospital... no the Catholic Churches of America in Ireland. She used to fly to Ireland regularly to negotiate settlements between Protestants and Catholics. That was her part time job. Her full time job was Director of Registered Nurses, LPN for the state of Connecticut. She was my mentor.

We had to go through military training to teach us how to teach military style. Certain rules you had to do when you teach military. For instance, you can only teach one hour block at a time. Your one hour block has to end ten minutes early, that's 50 minutes. You can't go over. You can't go under. You better have the right amount of curriculum. Every hour has to start with a story that's funny and you can't offend anybody in the audience. We used to go away to Delaware. The audience of students would be 500 at a time. Wireless mike. First day teaching ever. I had the second hour of the day. 7:30 was the first hour I had the 8:30. We were always taught: see that empty desk in the back? It will always be empty because that's for the commandant who never shows up. But if he shows up, he wants to make sure his desk is empty. I'm teaching at 8:30 in the morning. Eight thirty one who walks in? The commandant. He stays for the whole hour of instruction. When my hour is up I had a second hour. I did my second hour of instruction and then he got up and left. I had time to circulate later. He was gone. Somebody said did you know... I said how could you miss? The end of the two weeks somewhere there's a party or whatever. The commandant is there and he goes Officer B., and I go Yea, He says you know I was there for your... and I said yea, I know. He says mighty fine lecture, sir. I said thank you sir. He goes I had a personal interest in the subject -- it happened to be about the heart -- he said my father had a heart attack two weeks ago. I listened to every word he said and so forth and I said thank you sir.

The other duty they gave me in their military school was to be the registrar of all students. Not registering them into the school but taking care of their academic records. I had a job of making sure that all the tests were accurate from an

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educational perspective. When you look at my career and go back to when I was a freshman at Holyoke Community, complaining that the test questions weren't good? Well now I had under me twenty instructors, many of them with their doctorate in nursing or education. All of them had masters degrees. All teaching, all taught their subjects, all wrote their own test questions. I had to make sure all those test questions were valid and if I didn't understand the question real well I had to validate before it went to the students. Students took tests 7:30 in the morning every third day. I had to have all the results done for 500 students by ten o'clock in the morning. I then had to make sure that anybody who failed didn't fail on the test question that wasn't valid. And then we had to counsel all the students before the end of the day because they were told to come back at night for tutoring so they could do a retest. They were only allowed one retest per two weeks. They gave me a Scantron machine; first time I had ever seen such a machine and we're talking here 1990 and it was all DOS related and because of my math background I knew how to do some programming. I lived in that room literally to master that machine. When other people are having fun I'm out there - this is my private little world my little closet. And I loved it and they loved me. I got some awards for what I did.

It's amazing how, when you sometime teach something and you might say there were three such and such and then the question comes out as "how many are there" and three isn't on there as the right answer and it slips through the cracks and then you have to validate it and sometimes fellow teachers who rank over you don't want to budge on a question which is definitely wrong and then you have to figure out how to mediate those things. Going back to how you get along with people sometimes more than knowing the content. We did that. It was a great gig.

There was an issue bigger than I understood where they said we aren't going to be part of Delaware anymore. So we had to start our own school from scratch and it had to be in the state of Massachusetts; it couldn't be in Connecticut. So Dr. H, myself and a couple of other colleagues, we started an LPN school from scratch. We went to the board and said show us what we have to do. We got affiliations at

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Baystate Medical Center. We went to the Holyoke Dean and said can we rent your CNA/LPN program rooms on Saturdays and Sundays? And got that program up and running and graduated the students. Class size was very, very small. We often had like five students and we had often had like six instructors so it was a great ratio. But we were also teaching an LPN program which was ten months over three years. So there was a constant need for remediation so they could pass the boards because you have to have the ability to pass the boards. So that's how I ended my military career. I left teaching that after several years.

Then in 1996, teaching at Noble Hospital some kind of concept and an instructor from the Westfield Vocational School came in and said, J, would you be interested in teaching at the VOC? I had never given it any thought. Now, I had been on the advisory committee there so had been in the building so I had a little insight into it. And I said why? And they said Karen S. just got promoted and there's going to be an opening and whatever. I said O.K. I'll think about it. I said this is like October, November, and I said I'm sure I have until September to make up my mind. And he said Oh No. This is an immediate opening. If you apply today you get it tomorrow that sort of thing. And I said I have to give it some thought. Now, certain philosophical tenants of my life... I don't believe in coincidence. I don't believe that luck is a 100% luck and all those sorts of things. I hardly ever go to a movie theater... hardly ever. For some reason my wife and I are... right before this opening, we had gone to see a movie and it was all about a teacher and how a teacher can make a difference in people's lives. And I have to think of the movie but it will come to me if I try.

(Mr. Holland's Opus.)

There you go. There you go. So what was it, cause it might not have picked you up? Mr. Holland's Opus, right? So I said you know, what I'm doing at Noble has gotten to the point where I don't enjoy doing it any more. There were a couple of things. One is... a lot of it was just redundancy. you know: you're teaching how to pull a fire

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alarm 20 times a year for 20 years - it gets old. The second is I had been appointed to be the spokesperson for total quality management for the institution and I had learned, self studied -- and that's another thing from graduate school: big, big emphasis on all life is self study. Find your own mentors. Don't think you're smart because you took somebody's course. It's what you got out of the course; it's not taking the course. Always be reading, always be learning. Find your method of learning. I got into the total quality management. I read Dr. Deming's books.

I was all for it. I'm watching the institution and when they're trying to do the Deming things, it's being blocked by management. So clearly, going back to graduate school, the people who are promoting something are not genuine. They're saying it sounds like lip service but we're not really doing it. And I'm going where's my credibility? I'm speaking to all these people saying if you do these certain things we'll be a better institution and it's not going to happen. So either I have to change the board of trustees and the president or I have to leave, you know. So between Mr. Holland's Opus and the Dr. Deming kind of things, I decided let's go for the vocation school. I go to the interview. The interview is pretty routine, except the two current teachers, the principal and the head of human service, all people I've met before. They all interview me and I find out I got the job. I always wanted to know who my competition was and never found out. But I did find out what got me the job. M. P. the director at the time, prior to being the director was a carpentry teacher; I didn't know that. He had asked me about learning styles and things like that and what I liked to do for hobbies and so forth. And I told him one of the things I like to do when I'm doing health care is carpentry. And one of the things I like to do is work with my hands and I told the story when, in 1987 or so, my wife and I had the idea that we needed a family room and we made some phone calls and people didn't want to participate by returning phone calls so I said to my wife, let's do it. And I got a shovel, I dug the hole, I laid the cinderblock. I built the house. I did the electrical wiring. Everything passed inspection. And that's what got me the job. Not my nursing background. Not all my degrees, but a man being convinced that I can work

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with my hands. He also said to me, do you realize you're going to have students that are almost 100% female student body? And I said I don't know -- it seems to be one of those things in my life. I have a wife who is obviously female. I have two daughters, no sons. So I've lived with all females. I've joined a profession where all my coworkers are females. I joined the military. The military when I interviewed for this job. I thought I'd meet a lot of guys there but they put me in the sub group of the school and it was all females. I said you know, it seems it's my part in life to be surrounded by females and I don't have to seek it.

When I came here, education-speaking, although I had all these degrees, that's not enough to teach in a vocational school. There's an additional.. see, at that point -- we're talking 1996 -- a series of courses I had to take at Westfield State. So here I am now with two bachelor's degrees, two associates degrees, a masters degree and I have to go back one more time to take a course where in the first night they go are you here for undergraduate or graduate because it's the same course and we don't have enough students to separate you but if you want to pay the extra money, we'll give you the graduate course. We'll have to make you do an extra homework assignment and tell you it's a little harder. And I said I just can't see why I want to pay the extra money. It's not going to do me anything in life.

So that's the end of my strict academic career. I took those twenty credits or whatever the number it had to be in order to be certified to teach. They keep changing the number it's up to 36 now. In order to do this job you also have to take the clinical exam and show reading and math proficiency. But that was before when I came in you didn't have to do that. Now I'm in teaching here which started in 1996 and because I had to take a pay cut I talked up to the director of Noble and said here's what I'm thinking. We know each other. I used to fill in to be the supervisor at Noble Hospital whenever there was a shortage so I knew the job. I said you have a posting there that's been up for a year for eight hours a week which is every other weekend. I said if I can have that job I'm going to resign from director of education and take a teaching job and work for you one day a week. She said whatever you

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want to do, you can do whatever you want. So I accepted a job here with a pay cut; took a job at Noble for eight hours a week and I've maintained that until this day. This is 2010 and now I work as a vocational teacher and nursing supervisor.

Going back to graduate school, I always believed that people who teach should be able to do the job and that life is constantly changing and it's hard to keep up. When I look at how Noble has changed -- if I were teaching here and said well I know what it like at the hospital because I've worked there for a long time. Life has changed so much. The computerization at minimum is so different. Maybe some new medications, maybe some new procedures, but certainly computerization is the biggest change. And I've seen it happen and I've had to deal with it and it's part of me. And I think there are a lot of people who teach and forget that they're not current. You can't stay current just through seminars and just through readings; a lot of it is hands on. Some people ask me why I do the two jobs and clearly the paycheck makes a difference. I'm at a point in my life where my kids are grown and married and the finances have changed. Now it's just part of my life style. So now we're talking in June a half a day of school left for the school year and in summer I'll basically just work eight hours a week which makes for a nice summer. I pay for it when in the middle of the school year I do a twelve day stretch with two days off. But it's worth it. Plus you have a different kind of colleague in the hospital setting than you do in the school setting. I'm often disappointed with some of the academic teachers who have all the right credentials but have gone from college to teaching and really haven't seen the real world and we often get lectured in our profession of teaching about you know you've got to prepare them for the real world and I raise my hand and go tell me when you worked in the real world. Because academia is not the real world. It is what it is. It can be demanding or not demanding but it's not the same as the real world.

So right now I'm preparing for a year and a half more of work and then I'll retire. I know I won't retire to do nothing but I will retire to something. Even if I wasn't approaching the age for retirement I know it's time to retire because whenever I

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started a position I always looked at the goals and objectives. When I came into the director of education's job I looked at the goals and objectives; what needed to change and If I look back at major changes, I developed the concept that Noble Hospital calls Skills Day. It was my thought process that came out of graduate school. I got it implemented which was ground breaking for the institution because there was a financial component which is very strong. We had that published in the national journal. It's now a mainstay in many hospitals. They don't call it Skills Day, they call it Day Away or something like that. But it was monumental and part of it had to due to the changing of Joint Commission requirements and I looked at how do we make all those requirements happen? We did it in one package. When I came here I looked at curriculum and said there are things that hadn't changed. And we've cranked up this curriculum here at least ten percent every year. So over fifteen years that's over 150%. We have students doing stuff here today in this classroom which wasn't even thought of when I got here. We went from no anatomy physiology to anatomy and physiology. We went to use of computers. We went to certification and CPR and certification as nurses aids, although that had been started before me. We just cranked it up and cranked it up. The big frustration in this position is the school is not clear on what is the mission of our shop. And if we can't clarify that we'll always have an issue. I have no problems in putting at any level but when you won't tell me where the level is, it becomes frustrating. I can read your mission statements and mission statements talk about character which is very important. They don't talk about curriculum and it's very hard to have all curriculum for all people. We're right now maybe before I go going to be able to get an advance level course and a regular level course carefully worded because there are so many regulatory bodies that make sure you do it right. But we're trying to do medical terminology where they get college credit not just high school credit. If we can do that that's a huge step because that will open the door to all other areas that we teach. And we've certainly had our successes for students, which is not your only measure of career. And we've brought together faculty: two teachers and an aide who get along and are on the same wavelength and who have a difference of

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philosophies but can mesh them together. You don't want to work with a bunch of clones; you want people with different goals and objectives.

In my nursing career I don't know what's next. Just another piece as I close, in 1990 I was helping people quit smoking which has become a huge part of my career and it led me to the world of hypnosis and hypnotizing people to quit smoking and when I went to my first seminar I was put into a experience of a lifetime of experiencing how to do past life regressions in people which opened up a world to me that shows me that people's motivations are sometimes not understood and when you go through understanding how people come to their conclusions and how they get motivated and how they get distracted that it's much bigger than that person understands and to just motivate them with the carrot and the stick is not enough. So it's become a huge philosophical change for me and looking at people. That hypnosis indirectly led to my wife becoming a Reiki master which is another world of energy and we work together as a team and we see clients on a regular basis and it's just astounding the information you can get from people and the way you can help them and that will most likely be a huge part of our future. We taught hypnotherapy at the college level for ten years and then we just got tired of teaching and gave it up. But still do hypnotherapy and she does Reiki on a regular basis every day.

Probably a pretty good place to close this. I don't know what I'm going to do next so we'll give it an ending.

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