Tears turn to triumph for Heather Anklin

By Meg Wickman

When Heather Anklin enrolled at Bryant & Stratton, she felt overwhelmed at being a student again for the first time in decades. “It was hard,” she remembers. “I cried the first week, but my sons told me I could do it.”

At that point, Heather knew she was at a crossroads in her life. “I had been divorced for a few years and my sons were grown. I had run a successful child care business for 25 years, but I wanted something different, for my future.”

When she graduated high school in 1976, college wasn’t part of her plans. Eventually, she came to regret not attending college, but Heather was still uncertain she could handle the academic demands of a college program. Nevertheless, after seeing a commercial for Bryant & Stratton on television, she decided to check it out. Since the semester was already underway, her admissions rep, Matt Shay, ended up walking to her first class, a section of COMM 150 taught by Bert Jerred.

By the end of that first semester, Heather’s sons were proven correct when she earned a 4.0 GPA. Being acknowledged for this achievement at the awards ceremony remains Heather’s “personal favorite memory.”

She also has fond memories of instructors like Mike Delorm, Deb Lum, Annette Lombard, and Bill Rava, as well as her classmates, some of whom had also been her sons’ classmates when they were in high school. In addition to the encouragement of instructors and

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Former sailor launches new career

By John S. Adams

It’s been a circuitous route for Tracy Warner, but with an associate’s degree in Medical Assisting, he has finally found a career he enjoys and would like to pursue. Before coming to Bryant & Stratton College in the fall of 2014, he had worked on a farm, served two years in the U.S. Navy, and then worked as an auto mechanic.

In the Navy, Tracy used to suspend other seamen over the sides of a ship to scrape and paint the hull while underway. He actually went over the gunwale too early on, but as the biggest guy on board, they found it easier to have him up on deck manning the ropes than to hoist him back up.

“The travel is the nicest thing about it,” Tracy said. “I’ve been to countries I otherwise never would have seen.” He visited the Mediterranean twice and stopped in Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Israel. After his two-year stint in the Navy, Tracy worked as a mechanic, but eventually realized he wasn’t living up to his potential.

“I wasn’t happy with what I was doing,” Tracy said. “I decided it was time to make a change.”

His first exposure to healthcare was when his father-in-law was injured several years ago and needed someone to look after him. That was the first time he even considered working in the medical field.

Tracy finished his internship at Syracuse Community Health Center on South Salina Street. In addition to working in adult medicine with AIDS patients, he assisted with general checkups as well as patients coming in for pediatrics or dental work. He also did some clerical work answering the phones.

Grades matter. Even if you are the only one that will ever know what grade you got in a class, take pride in your work and your grades.

Heather Anklin cont’d

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fellow students, Heather credits her sons and her mom for supporting her throughout her educational journey.

Heather chose her major of Office Information Technology because of the flexibility it offers. “I knew I wanted to work in an office environment. I was just unsure of what kind of business.” She enjoyed her internship with State Farm Insurance, and plans to utilize Career Services to help her pursue her dream job. “The atmosphere is more important to me than what the actual business is.”

Now that she is almost done with her degree program, Heather has some advice for new students: “Grades matter. Even if you are the only one that will ever know what grade you got in a class, take pride in your work and your grades.”

Ultimately, it is this sense of pride that has motivated Heather to earn her college degree forty years after receiving her high school diploma. “I did this for myself,” she says.
By John S. Adams

When Penny Smith walks across the stage to receive her diploma it will have been seven semesters since she began her journey at Bryant & Stratton College, Syracuse North. The full-time mom and part-time student began her Medical Assisting degree in January 2014 and took three courses each semester.

“Three classes was perfect for my situation,” Penny said. “With three kids, full time would have been way too much.” Married 14 years to her husband D.J., a critical care technician at Crouse Hospital who also works part time as a paramedic, the two have three children: Mackenzie, 8; Matthew, 11; and Maddison, 12.

Evening courses proved ideal as she could be home to put the kids on the bus in the morning, welcome them when they got home from school, and still be able to attend classes at night.

Although her husband works in medicine, Penny did not develop an interest in healthcare until she began to think about going back to school. It looked to her like there would be a bright future in medicine.

“I wanted to have a career,” Penny said. “I wanted to help people, and medical assisting seemed like a pretty good fit for me.” She chose Bryant & Stratton for the Medical Assisting program, but also because it had small class sizes which would make it easier to get help from teachers if needed.

Penny finished her internship at St. Joseph’s Surgical Center at North Med earlier in this, semester in what she called a “great experience.” She interned for 160 hours during the day and took two night classes.

“I felt very confident in my skills that I learned here,” she said. At North Med she took vitals such as blood pressure, pulse and respirations and did some clerical work also, checking patients in, making sure they filled out admittance forms correctly.

Penny attributes her confidence speaking with strangers in the waiting room to her public speaking class at BSC. “That made a big difference having that [public speaking] class,” she said.

But the most important thing she learned was that hard work pays off. “I learned that you can accomplish anything if you put your mind to it, no matter your age,” Penny said. “With hard work you can achieve goals that you set your mind to.

“I made sure all my assignments were in on time,” Penny said. “If I had questions, I always asked.” She studied 1-2 hours every day.

Walking across that stage is “gonna feel amazing!” Penny said. “I’m going to feel that I can accomplish anything.”
Nancy Counterman realizes long-standing goal of earning medical degree

By Meg Wickman

In 1999, Nancy Counterman’s goal of earning her college degree appeared to be within reach. She just needed to complete her internship before beginning her career as a medical administrative assistant. Then she received some news that changed everything: the college she was attending, Central City Business Institute (CCBI), was shutting its doors for good.

As the shock wore off, Nancy contemplated enrolling at Bryant & Stratton instead. But she had a new baby to take care of, and finding a new avenue to reach her professional goals would have to wait.

Years went by until the time was finally right. She still wanted to be a medical administrative assistant, so she enrolled at Bryant & Stratton. Her classes proved to be a “reminder and review of everything” she had learned back at CCBI. This semester, at long last, she was able to complete her internship at not one, but two sites: Phoenix Health Center and Upstate Neurology.

Nancy says, “The instructors here rock.” Nancy has a number of fond memories of Bryant & Stratton, ranging from her involvement in Alpha Beta Gamma and Student Ambassadors to participating in group projects with other students. But she saves her greatest praise for the teachers she’s met along the way. “The instructors here rock,” Nancy says. “The faculty is here to help you become a success.”

In particular, Nancy was influenced by Annette Lombard and Pat Cameron. “They made me realize my full potential.”

This potential includes more education, since Nancy has enrolled in the H.S.A. program and will begin taking her bachelor’s-level coursework next semester. When she isn’t attending class or studying, she will be spending her time at Crouse Hospital, where she was recently hired for a part-time position in patient access.

Once she completes her bachelor’s degree, Nancy plans to set her sights on a supervisory position, possibly at Crouse.

Looking back, Nancy recalls that Bryant & Stratton was her first choice for returning to school, and her experiences have confirmed our college’s dedication to supporting students. “Don’t allow classes to stress you out,” she advises other students. “Everyone here wants you to succeed.”
Lifelong Learning: More than a slogan

By John S. Adams

The most significant thing Minh Pham learned at Bryant & Stratton College is the importance of lifelong learning. But it wasn’t always that way. Prior to coming to school his life was unfocused.

“I felt like I was just hanging out, doing nothing,” Minh said. “I had to grow up.” Then one day in 2011 a postcard-sized flier came in the mail, at just the right time. So he picked up the phone and called BSC. “It was serendipitous,” Minh said.

He was soon enrolled and went to school part time for graphic design. Then he took a year off before coming back for a bachelor’s in business. Minh had no business experience before entering the program, but he did have an interest in social media marketing.

“It wasn’t a straight road—point A to point B—get a degree and you’ll be set for the rest of your life,” Minh said. You have to “pivot,” he said, a word he uses frequently.

“My passion is social media marketing,” Minh said. “I wanted to complement my graphic design experience, and business would be a good complement.”

Thus the “pivot.” Minh took his graphic design skills, taught himself the workings of social media marketing, and then added his bachelor’s in business. And now he has started his own company, which helps other businesses build their social media presence. Minh doesn’t even have a name for his business yet, but he does have customers—that’s customers plural, as Minh is quick to point out. And he has finally found a way to make money doing what he loves.

“The key to success is to be able to change,” Minh said. “Social media is going to change and I’m going to have to keep up with that.”

Minh Pham

Minh Pham has taken his love of social media and what he learned from his Bachelor’s of Business Administration degree and launched a new business in social media marketing.
Graduation breakfast: April 15, 2016

Several graduating students gathered for breakfast April 15, to be honored for their success and perseverance. They also thanked their professors and friends and shared future plans.

Graduation schedule

Graduation ceremony

Date: Saturday, April 23, 2016
Time: 11:00 A.M.
Place: John H. Mulroy Civic Center
421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse

Graduation rehearsal

Date: Friday, April 22, 2016
Time: 11:00 A.M.
Place: John H. Mulroy Civic Center

It is very important to arrive at the Civic Center no later than 10:30 am. When you arrive for the ceremony, go directly to the North Campus table, there you will receive your name card as well as the card you will hand the photographer.

Those receiving an Associate degree will line up alphabetically in first and those receiving a Bachelor degree will line up alphabetically behind the Associate degree students.

Diploma pickup

Due to the timing of the graduation ceremony, students who are attending the Winter 2016 semester will be able to pick up their diplomas at the Student Services department of Bryant & Stratton North Campus during the week of May 2 - 6. Students who completed their degree requirements during the Spring 2015 and Fall 2015 semesters will pick up their diplomas at the graduation ceremony.