Kearra Clayton first heard of Sullivan College of Technology and Design when she picked up a copy of Techniques at her school, Doss High School, in Jefferson County. Within months, she was attending SCTD as a Jump Start student and planning her educational career. Jump Start is a program that lets high school juniors and seniors earn college credit by taking four Sullivan courses for free. Kearra now has her Associate degree and is working on a Bachelor’s degree in the same field.

Kearra has been a creative artist all of her life. When she discovered how much she loved working with computers, she knew Computer Graphic Design would allow her to combine the two activities she loved most into a lucrative career.

When instructor Diana Stewart gave her a logo assignment for the Phoenix Hill Farmers Market, she welcomed the creative stretch. In only a few days, she developed a logo. According to Kearra, her logo began with the concept of fresh fruits and vegetables, to represent the products available in the market, and grew to include a bird with arched feathers, to represent the mythological bird referenced in the market’s name. Her thoughtfulness paid off. She was selected as one of five finalists in the design competition, giving her plenty of recognition as a designer.

Kearra has achieved other recognition for her graphic artwork. Her design was chosen to represent the HVAC-R program at SCTD and is used on posters throughout the campus. When the college decided to implement Print Manager as a means to conserve paper, again Kearra’s design was selected and displayed throughout campus. She also earned the Award of Excellence in Computer Graphic Design at her graduation from the Associate degree program.

“Receiving awards and having my work recognized is just wonderful,” says Kearra. “It is always a boost when others like my work. It brings me up and out of my self-doubt. It shows me that I do have the skills to succeed in my chosen field.”

Kearra’s advice offered to anyone wanting a career in graphic design is simple: Listen. She says it is easy to just want to create and to think you already know what instructors try to share. To succeed and achieve, people must be willing to listen and learn. She adds, “Learn the skills such as alignment, typography and color theory. Learn what works. Then, add the personal, creative touches that will make your work stand out.” Kearra says she learned all of these critical skills during her time at SCTD.