They chose Sullivan for graduate school

While students are aware that graduate studies typically result in better, higher-level jobs, they often choose those routes to enrollment. Many obtain their bachelor’s degrees from Sullivan and make an easy transition to the graduate school. Others earn their undergraduate degrees elsewhere, but realize the value of a Sullivan master’s degree such as alum James Merrick - see page 4 for his story. Like alumnus and current graduate student Debra Terry, experienced a lifetime between her studies.

A Louisville native, Debbie graduated from Sacred Heart Academy in 1979. She “lost a year” at another Kentucky university before enrolling in Sullivan, then a Junior College of Business. “In just one year, I received a diploma in Business Computer Programming.” Debbie met her future husband shortly after graduation. “I was absolutely sure I would marry him, we would have kids.”

Short-lived happiness

While her husband attended law school, Debbie went to work for Humana “as a Sullivan and their Graduate Employment Services staff.” Her career was flourishing when her husband, “decided he wanted to move to his hometown and run for county attorney.” Deb’s family relocated to Eastern Kentucky where they “bought a beautiful new home, an in-ground swimming pool. Life was great, we were happy.” Debbie went to work for the only independently-owned bank in town as a loan officer, but two years later, her life would tragically change.

A different reality

“My husband had a massive stroke, was paralyzed on his right side and couldn’t speak. I felt my world was going to collapse, I was lost and confused as he had taken care of everything financially. The years that followed were amazing but also difficult,” she remembers. “We were all the more appreciated and had to figure out how to survive.” Debbie moved back to Louisville and worked as an account executive for a mortgage company, later as a loan officer. “The experience I gained working for that small bank in Eastern Kentucky helped me to get by. Little did I know at the time that my job would be the sole support for my family in the future.”

Doomsday back to Sullivan

Today, Debbie’s daughters are 20, 18 and 12. “Their father passed away in 2005, two weeks before my oldest turned 18. At any time, I wanted to go back to school, I was ready. But I wanted my bachelor’s so badly but never dreamed it was possible.”

But Debbie kept thinking about her previous existence at Sullivan, searched her heart, and made the “phone call that changed my life.” She recalls, “Before I knew it, I was back at Sullivan with a real desire to succeed on my own. I could finally go back at Sullivan with a real desire to succeed on my own. I could finally go back at Sullivan with a real desire to succeed on my own.”

Graduate School holds workshops

The graduate program in Conflict Management asked Stan Posthumus and Jodi Mochel to present their Focused Thinking Technology program to Sullivan students and the community. This revolutionary approach to improved relationships begins with recognition, communication, and trust for a loving, caring, and sharing relationship. Stan developed Focused Thinking by drawing on his background in education and counseling psychology.

The Focused Thinking approach is based upon the fact that the brain mediates different experiences from our senses (sensors) in order to create a good three dimensional understanding of reality. Good communication within an individual creates understanding in exactly the same way. Good communication requires good use of language. Improving one’s ability to communicate will improve any relationship whether it is professional or personal. Because happiness is found in the relationships we reside in, being able to engineer relationships that provide true peace, happiness, and success means we can design and build stronger, healthier, and more resilient relationships.

This program was the second in a series of workshops and seminars the Graduate School plans to offer.

Mayor appoints Sullivan student to urban development committee

Sullivan student Michael Brooks was recently appointed by Louisville Metro Mayor, Jerry J. Abramson, to an advisory committee to oversee the Implementation Strategy for Development for the Park Hill Corridor which includes the Algonquin, California, Lime Lick, Park Hill, Old Louisville Neighborhoods, as well as portions of the University of Louisville. The appointment was recently announced by the mayor in an article appearing in the Courier Journal newspaper.

Mr. Brooks is one of 11 members appointed to represent the areas affected. Other members include local business executives from companies such as Brown Forman, Freedom Metals, Great Northern Manufacturing, and Sud-Chemie, Inc. “There is tremendous development potential in the Park Hill Corridor despite many challenges resulting from past disadvantage for the area.”

The Implementation Strategy will build upon recommendations of recent economic and transportation studies and integrate the input of West Louisville and other stakeholders to provide a specific road map for repositioning the Park Hill Industrial Corridor as a key component of the competitive regional economy.

Impressive list of credentials

Besides being a graduate student in the Conflict Management Program and maintaining a 3.8 GPA, Michael is President of the California Neighborhood Coalition, Inc., Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Louisville Metro Community Action Partnership, a Board Member with the Legal Aid Society of Louisville, and a member of the University of Louisville Signature Partnership, Inc., Resident Advisory Council, that advises state and local officials on the economic, educational, and social needs of West End Residents. Michael knows that, “With this appointment I will come many hours of controversy to decide which strategies are best when it comes to handling millions of dollars for industrial development in the area.”

Appreciates his Sullivan education

Mr. Brooks credits his being enrolled in Sullivan’s Conflict Management Program a plus for the many obstacles he will face ahead. “I am truly grateful to be enrolled in such a worthwhile program at Sullivan and, ‘I don’t know how I would survive without the expert advice and guidance I receive from my Sullivan professors.’”

The Herald staff wishes Michael good luck as he pursues this Master Urban Plan for industrial development.

A rose by any other name . . .

In the past two years, Sullivan University’s master’s program in alternative dispute resolution has undergone many changes. First, the curriculum was modified to include courses in conflict and culture and facilitating group conflicts. The latest change is the new name. Now, the Master’s of Science in Dispute Resolution (MSDR) has become the Master’s of Science in Conflict Management (MSCM). The word “dispute” implies a disagreement that requires a third party intervention. Although Sullivan’s MSDR can prepare students to mediate entrenched conflicts, its scope is much broader, and its name reflects the skills students are learning in the program. If students are interested in alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation or facilitating, the degree will prepare them for that. However, it will also prepare them to manage conflict at all levels of any organization. The skill human resource managers have identified as highly valued.

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Alum receives commendation

Earlier this year, Don Montgomery, a 2007 graduate of Sullivan’s Master’s in Conflict Management (formerly the Dispute Resolution, MSDR) degree program and a Court Approved Mediator, was honored with a Special Commendation from the Kentucky Court of Justice, Kentucky State Supreme Court Chief Justice, the Honourable Joseph J. Jewett and Jason Nemes, Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for the commonwealth of Kentucky.

Don was recognized for his dedicated and loyal public service to the Kentucky Courts and the thousands of citizens who are served through Court Annexed Mediation services as well as his commitment to court mediation of his “outstanding efforts and contributions to the effective and peaceable resolutions of the Commonwealth’s judicial cases.”

Don has mediated more than 260 small claims, criminal, probate and family cases for the courts in the past two years. As a volunteer, he enthusiastically encourages each grad or soon-to-be-graduate of Sullivan to make a conscious commitment to perform some type of public service on regular basis. He feels such a commitment sends a strong and positive statement about how Sullivan teaches about “giving back” and social responsibility.

Don believes that value in mediation, be it profit driven or altruistic, is immeasurable and should be denied access to such an incredible process or tool because of their income or ability to pay.

It has been Don’s great pleasure to also have recruited and placed a small part of other Sullivan graduates for serving the AOC and its mediation programs and he looks forward to mediating with the AOC for many years to come.

Updated Article

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