Bill had been in law enforcement for 11 years at the Knoxville Police Department, and during this time, he found his love for Information Technology, which has taken those words to heart although his career path took a few dips and turns along the way.

It was my goal to attain a new career and love to “tinker” with electronic items. Doing something I loved,” Bill recalled. “I thought about the things I enjoyed doing and then planned to pursue a career doing something I loved,” Bill recalled. “I have always been involved in technology and love to “tinker” with electronic items. It was my goal to attain a new career doing something that had long been of interest to me. . . .”

Research paid off

Bill researched local universities offering Information Technology degrees and discovered that, “Sullivan’s program offered more substance than the other schools I looked at and would put me on a fast track to attain knowledge and exposure to technologies needed to begin a career in the IT field,” he stated. Sullivan made it easy - a US Army vet and member of the Army National guard, Bill knows first-hand of Sullivan’s commitment to those who have served.

“As an older student who doesn’t have G.I. Bill benefits, Sullivan’s military grant of 25% tuition fees and no enrollment application fee made it possible for me to get started. The savings in tuition alone enabled me to continue in my program and complete my degree.”

Impressive list of credentials

Bill took full advantage of the many certifications available to Sullivan students in the IT field. During his first quarter, he took the A+ and Network+ classes and attained certifications from CompTia in both areas. In his second quarter, he took the Cisco track and began classes for the Certified Cisco Network Associate (CCNA).

“Early in my third quarter as I was beginning classes for the Certified Cisco Network Professional (CCCP), I was hired by West IP Communications as a Client Engineer working in the Network Operations Center. Sullivan’s flexible evening schedule is ideal for working adults and enabled Bill to continued his classes. Recently, he upgraded his career and accepted a position at LightChange Technologies as a Network Engineer. He currently holds the CompTIA A+, Network+, Cisco CCNA Route & Switch, Cisco CCNP Voice certifications, and is close to attaining his Cisco CCNP Voice and Cisco CCNP Route & Switch certifications.

Education was key to success

“I can honestly say that taking the Cisco track was one of the best decisions I have ever made in both the academic and professional areas of my life,” Bill said, adding, “With the certifications and training, I would not be at the level I am now. I am able to say I am actually “living the dream” as far as my career goes. I am in a position that challenges me constantly in using new technology and to push for higher levels of certifications. My goal is to become Cisco CCIE certified within two years, which is the highest level of certification attainable in my path.”

Looking back

Bill had some advice for those interested in Information Technology.

“There will be times when you do not feel like going to class, and times when you may question your degree choice. . . . To those just starting out, be honest with yourself and evalu- ate your degree path. The key to being successful is to fall in love with what you are doing. When I began the Cisco track, I questioned whether I ever really wanted to look at another computer again. It was that moment I had to look at the long term goal and focus on the bigger picture. I invested in lab equipment and started “tinkering” with it at home. I utilized a hobby to mesh with a learned skill to give me hands on experience with the new technology I was studying. Once I fell in love with what I was doing, everything else came much easier.”

Master degree graduates received their hoods prior to the beginning of the commencement ceremony. Right, Dr. Heather Merrifield and Dr. Emmanuel Udoh with Rifqatu F. Inusah and Faisal I. Adam. Rifqatu earned her Master’s in Business Administration and her husband Faisal earned his Master’s in Public Management, both degrees with a Health Care Management concentration. The couple (inset) are from Ghana and had only been in the US for eight months when they enrolled. “It was stressful to manage the kids, our jobs and the coursework work. But since we had options between on-campus and on-line classes, we made our class schedules with our kids in mind. . . . It was a great opportunity for us to enroll in Sullivan University because of the flexible class schedule, small classroom sizes, . . . professors, who used their personal time for help sessions for students with other problems in their respective courses, and also the library staff, who were professional and helpful to students,” stated Faisal.

The Fall 2013 formal commencement was held at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. More than 4,000 graduates, their families and guests from Sullivan’s campuses in Louisville, Lexington and Fort Knox attended.

The key note commencement speaker was Professor Dr. Allen Rose, Vice President & Government Relations for The Sullivan University System. The ceremony also included the Alumni Of The Year Award presentation given to Ed Fallon, Class of 2001. How fitting for the university to encourage, support and highlight alumni in their accomplishments. With smiles and pride, graduates in their caps and gowns, crossed the stage to receive certificates, diplomas, associate, bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Drs. A.R. Sullivan, Chancellor of The Sullivan University System. Cameras flashed as families and friends cheered their graduates, now armed with the confidence to pursue their career dreams.

Sullivan’s graduations are unique. Rather than one held in May like most other collegiate institutions, Sullivan students graduate every January, March, June and September. The university holds two formal commencements in April and October.

Sullivan’s 2014 Spring graduation is also at Southeast Christian Church on Saturday, April 26 at 9 am.

“Receiving the LEX regalia from Jennifer Gathier was great, because she worked so hard to get the sashes in time for graduation, which was just another example of how dedicated she is and how much she cares about her students. I will miss her! Graduation was a very special day for my family, all the hard work paid off! I loved how near the end all the graduates were asked to stand up, turn around, and give a round of applause to thank their families and friends for their support. It was not just our day, but also a big day for them. I feel very lucky to be working in my first job as a para-legal the Monday after graduation - it was a very exciting week!”

CLAUDIA KING, Class of 2013

Congratulations, graduates!

Student Success Story

Turning his hobby into a career

“The biggest mistake people make in life is not trying to make a living at doing what they most enjoy.” MALCOM FORBES

Sullivan student Bill Smith, working on his associate degree in Information Technology, has taken those words to heart although his career path took a few dips and turns along the way. Bill had been in law enforcement for 11 years at the Knoxville Police Department, when he had a major accident. After having cervical spine surgery, it was apparent he wouldn’t be able to return to his current job. Bill continued: “I thought about the things I enjoyed doing and then planned to pursue a career doing something I loved,” Bill recalled. “I have always been involved in technology and love to “tinker” with electronic items. It was my goal to attain a new career doing something that had long been of interest to me. . . .”

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The traditional Mortar and Pestle Ceremony was held at the Sullivan Uni- versity College of Pharmacy (SUCOP). The ceremony honored the 110 members of the Class of 2016, who received their own mortar and pestle as well as a lab coat which they will use in their Pharmaceutical Compounding class. Dr. Walter Soja, Interim Dean of SUCOP, began the ceremony by welcoming students and faculty and introducing Dr. Rich Schmitt, Phar- macy District Manager for Indiana and Northern Kentucky. Dr. Schmitt rep- resented Sears Holding Corporation/

Kmart, who once a gain sponsored the Mortar & Pestle Ceremony. They have been sponsors of this ceremony since its inception in 2008 (for the inaugural Class of 2011).

During the ceremony, students were introduced to the significance and evolution of the mortar and pestle to the pharmaceutical indus- try through history to present day by Tangy Nguyen, PharmD, Candidate of the Class of 2015. Dr. Schmitt, with the faculty of the Pharmaceutical Sciences Department, presented the certificates and pestles to the students.

Closing remarks were presented by Dr. Uyen Le, Assistant Professor in the Pharmaceutical Sciences Department.