

A LIFE *Transformed* Essay Project



Lili Donaldson Class of 1979

"I was raising three children while attending Schoolcraft College. My children grew up hearing me say "I failed that class, I just know it." But I didn't and my entire fam-

ily, including my parents, attended my graduation ceremony at Schoolcraft College in 1972 beaming with pride over my accomplishment."

Lili's Bio

The first student at Schoolcraft College to declare journalism as a major, Lili is grateful to Schoolcraft College's amazing instructors who broadened her horizons. Following graduation, she continued to pursue her education at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she earned a Bachelor's degree with distinction. She went on to earn a Master's degree from Michigan State University. Lili has enjoyed a diverse career working in marketing and communications for organizations such as Blue Care Network, McAuley Health Center, Owens Corning, and Macon Mall in GA. Currently, Lili is Executive Director of Bluffton Self Help located in Hilton Head, SC. She lives on beautiful Hilton Head Island, SC.



Read Lili's original essay below.



Alumni and Friends

The Schoolcraft College Alumni Program exists to strengthen and maintain the ties between the college and its alumni. We recognize and celebrate alumni accomplishments and create opportunities for alumni to share in the growth and success of Schoolcraft College.

To learn more about our Alumni Program contact the Alumni Relations Office at 734-462-4501 or vrexius@schoolcraft.edu

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Pursuing the Dream

I owe it all to my ex-husband, believe it or not. I was a good student in high school and hoped to attend a noted university with a strong program in journalism. But, like many young women of my time, I fell in love and married right out of high school. Quickly we started a family and three children later, at the ripe old age of 22, I still dreamt of becoming a famous journalist.

That's when my ex-husband, William Donaldson, gave me the nudge I needed. He strongly encouraged me to register for classes, offering his financial and emotional support. I remember calling my high school to find out what the procedure was to get my high school transcripts. Before I knew it, the woman on the phone told me my transcripts were on their way to Schoolcraft College. I had done it. I was going back to school.

I remember my first class at Schoolcraft College. I registered for only one class, English 101, because I didn't feel confident I would succeed at college. It was a very interesting class. You had to complete 19 modules, one at a time, to receive an A in the class. I completed all 21 modules and I was hooked. I CAN do this college thing! The next semester I registered for a full load of classes.

Schoolcraft College instructors were amazing. I especially loved my geology classes and the world history classes with Mr. Wilson. I took geology because I didn't want to tackle chemistry or physics. I did complete a course in biology. I laugh when I recall sitting in the classroom, worrying that the tarantula would escape from the aquarium in the back of the room. I kept imagining it would crawl out and sit on my shoulder. I also remember jumping up and down on my bed when I learned I earned a B in that class.

My two oldest children were in elementary school in Plymouth, Michigan, but my little guy was only two years old when I started attending Schoolcraft College. He went every day to the Schoolcraft College day care center while I attended classes. My children grew up hearing me say, "I failed that class, I just know it." But I didn't and my entire family, including my parents, attended my graduation ceremony at Schoolcraft College in 1972, beaming with pride over my accomplishment.

In my second year at Schoolcraft College, I applied to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I was accepted and even received a small scholarship, awarded to a student transferring from Schoolcraft College to the University of Michigan. As a commuter student, I traveled back and forth from Plymouth to Ann Arbor to attend classes for the next two years.

In 1976, the bicentennial year, I earned my bachelor degree with distinction, from the University of Michigan, with double major in journalism and secondary education. I later went on to earn my master's degree from Michigan State University in advertising while working for Blue Care Network. BCN offered a tuition reimbursement program that helped pay for the master's degree.

My career has taken many paths but none as a professional journalist, although I did earn money for a short time as a sports writer for the Observer Eccentric Newspapers in Livonia.

I have worked in non-profit for the Association for Retarded Citizens in Detroit and the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I held communication positions at Catherine McAuley Health Center in Ann Arbor and Blue Care Network in Southfield. I was director of communication for a large chemical corporation in Livonia for four years. I briefly worked in Toledo, Ohio as a communication specialist for Owens Corning. For the past 14 years, I have been fortunate to hold positions as the marketing manager for three different large regional shopping centers, putting all my skills to work in advertising, marketing, crisis communications, community relations, public relations and special events. My current position required me to relocation, and I am now the marketing manager at Macon Mall in Macon, Georgia.

People say they admire me for raising three children while attending college. I didn't do anything extraordinary. Armed with a dream and a supportive family anyone can do it. My children watched me study and celebrated each and every grade I earned. They, too, went on to complete their college education and now, in our family, college is not an option. It's a way of life.

By the way, I still have time to pursue that dream of becoming a professional journalist!

Lili Donaldson – Class of 1972