

2018 Worthy Women's Professional Studies Scholarship – Finalist Essay

-Christina Cordell

What experiences in your life inspired you to choose your career field? I am a retired Air Force veteran completing my Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and minoring in Museum Studies. Inspiration for a second career choice has come from many sources. With so many interests, it has been difficult to settle on only one path. Maya Angelou is correct, "Life's a bitch," and life in the military even more so. Completing my degree, while serving, was one of the sacrifices I had to make while kicking ass around the globe. I've learned to trust my instincts when one door closes and seize the opportunities behind another door! It is important to me that my second career be something I love and following my intuition has made all the difference. I began with an interest in archaeology and at 45 years old I nervously began the process of registering for college, as a nontraditional student, at Central Virginia Community College. Before I had completed my Associate of Science and Arts degree, I was accepted at Sweet Briar College, and then I soon received a letter about their upcoming closure. Life was throwing me another curve ball, no problem as kicking ass involves rolling with the punches to see what other surprises it has in store behind door number two. Although, Sweet Briar College remained open, my instincts clearly said, "that is not the right college for you." Undaunted, I looked elsewhere and was accepted at Randolph College, which didn't have an archaeology program, but it did come with a better tuition rate! I moved on to major in Religious Studies, as spirituality is a love of mine. I continued to trust my instincts that the right opportunities would become available. Learning about my interest in archaeology, my advisor quickly provided me with information about a summer archaeology and conservation internship in Rome, Italy with a world-renowned conservator. The internship was the trip of a lifetime, and although I felt like I was kicking ass, I soon realized archaeology is hard on the body at my age. So, it was back to the drawing board for me and my career choice. My love of history, museums, artifacts and the stories behind the objects drove my decision to minor in Museum studies. Museums are so multifaceted. I enjoy collecting and cataloging art and artifacts as well as designing exhibits for display at both the college and museums. The more I've been able to explore my interests in the cultural heritage arena, the more I realized, at 49 years old, I've finally found my niche and my next career. So yes, life may be a bitch at times, but you must use those moments as a pause to see what life has in store for you behind the next door. Listening to your instincts, that's how you kick life's ass when it throws you the curve balls.