

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

6-21-2016

Gardner-Webb Alumna Explored Several Majors to Determine Career Path

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Gardner-Webb Alumna Explored Several Majors to Determine Career Path

webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-alumna-explored-several-majors-to-determine-career-path/

Office of University
Communications

June 21, 2016

Studying Sociology Inspired Megan Carscaddon ('09) to Enter Field of Social Work

As a young girl, Megan Carscaddon, of Shelby, N.C., spent many hours on the campus of Gardner-Webb University with her father, Dr. David Carscaddon, a professor in the School of Psychology.

Megan Carscaddon poses with her father, Dr. David Carscaddon after her graduation.

“I vividly remember being the ball girl for the women’s basketball team in the ’90s,” Carscaddon recalled. “On summer breaks, my sisters and I would play in the empty classrooms while Daddy prepared syllabi for the next semester. We learned to swim in the pool on campus, went to football games and spent time in the library. Gardner-Webb has been a part of my life, for most of my life.”

Although she was familiar with campus, she took the time to experience it from the eyes of a prospective student. She registered for Dawg Days, a program that invites high school students to visit GWU, tour campus, meet other students and professors. “I spent a weekend on campus my senior year of high school, and loved the entire experience,” Carscaddon reflected. “The people and the culture were bright, vibrant and inviting. I knew that it was the right decision to come to school here.”

While choosing the University was an easy process, Carscaddon took four years to decide on a major. “I had declared every major offered, but still was not completely sure of my direction,” she confided. “I had taken a couple sociology classes and enjoyed them, but when Dr. Dianne Sykes joined the department, I knew that this was where I needed to be. Her passion for people and societal injustice was almost tangible. The books that Dr. Sykes required for class are still on a book shelf in my living room. The effort that she makes to create this experience in class where her students can almost feel the struggle of people in our society is unbelievable. Her classes are what led me to social work.”

Sykes wasn’t the first person to direct her toward social work. The late Dr. Donna Simmons, who was dean of the School of Education, had also mentioned the possibility. “I was an elementary education major for a few semesters and had several classes with Dr. Simmons,” Carscaddon offered. “She is actually the one who suggested that social work may be more of my calling, rather than teaching. She was right on point.”

Carscaddon is an investigator with the Cleveland County (N.C.) Department of Social Services in the Adult Protective Services Unit. “The sociology classes I had at Gardner-Webb helped me to develop a passion for people and for being the voice for victims who would otherwise have no one,” she observed. “My classes prepared me to be an advocate for justice and to serve my community with care and compassion.”

In addition, the University’s liberal arts curriculum strengthened her critical-thinking skills. “The fact that the University offers classes in the arts, humanities, and logic is profound and such a benefit to students,” Carscaddon affirmed. “Gardner-Webb provided a positive learning environment and enabled me to become a much more well-rounded, intelligent citizen.”

Being on campus with her father had its awkward moments, but she treasures the experience and the chance it gave them to strengthen their relationship. “We would grab lunch together every Tuesday and get caught up, which was something we rarely did before I was a student,” she assessed. “I did have him as a professor for Statistics in Psychology. There were days, particularly when he would tell stories of my childhood to the class, when I wanted to disappear from embarrassment, but I sincerely valued my experience as his student. I understand the love that other students have for him. He is truly a brilliant man with a love for teaching, and it was an honor to have him as my professor.”

She also appreciated how her father made a difficult subject easier to understand. “Having your parent for a professor in a subject that you have historically struggled with is daunting,” she confessed. “I think that most of the students in the class were nervous about approaching a subject like Statistics in Psychology with all of the formulas and equations, but he really made it bearable. He made this class one that we looked forward to, and not one that we dreaded. His classroom demeanor is calm and his delivery is effortless. He made us feel like we had been statisticians for years, and not new to the subject.”

Not only did she discover that her father was a talented educator, the years she spent on campus gave her a deeper appreciation for the Gardner-Webb community. “This small town university has a bigger-than-life feel,” she asserted. “I enjoyed walking across the campus and always seeing someone I knew. I enjoyed being in small classes so that I felt connected to the professor and to the subject. I enjoyed the passion the faculty and staff have for their students. I enjoyed the tight-knit community of students.”