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AWARD-WINNING INSTRUCTOR TEACHES SAME CLASS WHERE SHE LEARNED MATH

JAMESTOWN –Being placed in a developmental education class to improve her math skills became a charm for Chandra Noel Allen that she still cherishes.

She enrolled at Guilford Technical Community College in 1995, and today she is an award-winning math teacher at GTCC. Allen lives in Kernersville with her son, Joshua Allen-St. John.

Not only did her math skills improve, Allen was inspired by her classroom success to want to become a math teacher. And now Allen teaches the same course at GTCC in which she developed her love for math.

Allen is recognized by her peers as an extra-ordinary instructor for helping students struggling with math. Tutoring Center coordinator Betty Kittner describes Allen as the “perfect role model for developmental education students, (who) shares her ‘dream come true’ in the classroom.”

Allen recently was named the N.C. Developmental Education Association’s alumnus of the year. She will receive the award at the association’s convention this fall, and also will be nominated for a similar award at the national level. Kittner nominated Allen for the state award, saying her “enthusiasm is contagious.”

“I never thought much about math in high school,” said Allen, who graduated from high school in Fort Meyers, Fla. “I never had a passion for math until I got here (GTCC). When I was a student at GTCC, the math courses were the only ones that kept my attention 100 percent of the time,” she said.

Allen credits instructor Bob Thomas, now retired, for starting her on a career as a math teacher. “From my first encounter with Bob Thomas at GTCC, I knew my goal in life – to be that inspiration to someone else in the classroom. I’m still working on the finesse of it all.”

She also got a boost from other instructors, including Kittner with whom she worked for five years after getting her degree at GTCC.

She worked as a tutor and lab assistant in the Tutoring Center under Kittner’s supervision after getting a two-year Associate of Science degree.

Allen attended UNCG for awhile before returning to Ft. Meyers where she earned both a Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree in math at Florida Gulf Coast University. “I taught math in middle school and high school in Naples, FL, before I got a job at GTCC in 2007,” Allen said.

“Why math?”

“It is a question I’m asked 1,000 times by students, and the answer is that it was the only subject that kept my attention, she said. “You can’t zone out in a math class.”

But the greatest influence was her instructors, she said. Besides Thomas and Kittner, David Barnette, who still teaches at GTCC, and Thomas Beatty at Florida Gulf Coast University were instructors who “had my attention and would give me a glimpse into another world. Mathematics can be a very fascinating subject,” Allen said.

“I’m very proud to be an instructor here. I love to teach; I plan on staying here until I retire,” she said.

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