



My Life Full Circle

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I was recently in Folk Hall and memories swept over me. It's where I was a student assistant my first year of college and where I met my husband when he was an art student, but this time I was standing there as a professional, more than thirty years later, as a disability specialist and service coordinator who was helping a student obtain accommodations for a disability.

I came to The University of Akron at eighteen years old, a wide-eyed student hoping to fulfill childhood dreams and make my mark on the world. I would be the first in my family to go to college. My dreams of working with children who have hearing loss led me to The University of Akron, where I

enrolled in the Communication Disorders program. Unbeknownst to me, Dr. Carol Flexer, a world renowned pediatric audiologist who specialized in teaching children with hearing loss to listen and speak, was to become my mentor, my colleague, and eventually my friend. After earning a bachelor's and master's degree here, I became a speech-language pathologist and one of the first certified auditory-verbal therapists in the country. The University of Akron was and still is one of only a few colleges in the country to have an auditory-verbal listening and spoken language program.

Eventually I became a teacher, and I provided a practicum placement to many graduate students, worked in the clinic, and guest-lectured in courses, all at my alma mater. In my private practice, I collaborated with The University of Akron Speech and Hearing Clinic, and I helped families teach their children to listen and speak, while they continued to receive audiological services at the University. I worked on grants and presented at local, state, and national conferences side by side with my colleagues from The University of Akron.

Eventually I moved away, was faculty at Utah State University, and most recently was the cochlear implant coordinator at Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego. I had a great career over thirty years, doing exactly what I wanted to do; however, after ten years away, Akron was calling my family back home. My youngest son, a 4.0 student, considered only one college, The University of Akron. He skipped his senior year of high school to start early on *his* dreams. My oldest son will be

coming home from California soon to finish his bachelor's degree at The University of Akron. As for me, I was able to obtain a position working as a disability specialist and service coordinator, using my skills as a speech-language pathologist to work with students with disabilities at the college level.

Lastly, and to me the most special part of this story: a few days after those memories came flooding back to me at Folk Hall, I was asked to coordinate accessibility services for two of the first children I worked with in those early years after graduating from the University. They are now adults obtaining advanced degrees at the UA; one is on track for their master's degree and the other their PhD. Their stories also started here. I am proud of them and proud that my education helped them in their journey. My life truly has come full circle, and my dreams have been fulfilled. Thank you UA!