

Nancy McKinney traveled the world and now works for Grays Harbor College

By: AMANDA DOTSON

Nancy McKinney, RHS class of 1973, was born in Raymond to Dr. William and Virginia McKinney. She grew up in Raymond and graduated from Raymond High School with, she believes, 74 students.

Nancy has many colorful memories of school at Raymond. "I remember the boys were able to watch the World Series in the auditorium and the girls weren't!" she recalls. "I also remember our big protest that ultimately resulted in girls being allowed to wear pants to school."

While attending RHS, McKinney participated in many activities. She played sports, participated in music and cheerleading, and she worked on the yearbook. She feels these activities helped prepare her for the rest of her life.

"All of them (her activities) helped me learn how to work with and get along with other people," McKinney says. "I think sports were the most critical. Being an athlete taught me to take on challenges, take risks, and work through difficulties. All of these lessons have helped me get to where I am today. I loved playing basketball and I still like playing sports."

Nancy's favorite teacher was Mr. Beatty. "He helped me through some very frustrating moments with math and several boys in my class who drove me crazy! (You know who you are). Little did I know how important those math classes were. My whole career is based on numbers and my good math abilities."

As she puts it, Nancy has "taken quite a road to get to today." She has been married and has three children. She's been divorced for the past eight years. She says she's attended college "in phases" and ultimately earned her master's degree. In her spare time, Nancy loves to golf and attend sporting events.

She is currently the vice president for administrative services at Grays Harbor College and lives in Olympia. "I've worked in higher education for the past 15 years and I love it!" Nancy said.

"I never thought I would end up in this neck of the woods again," she added. "But it's the best career move I've made yet. Being a part of Grays Harbor College has been a great experience. I just started teaching some classes and that's been fun too."

Nancy has done quite a bit of traveling, but says she's been able to keep in touch with her hometown through her work and her dad. "I went to school in Mexico for one quarter, along with a former classmate, Cindy Bamer," she said. "I've traveled to the East Coast quite a bit and love visiting Washington D.C. I've visited Spain, too and loved the laid back culture and great food."

When asked about what advise she would give this year's graduating class, Nancy says there are two things she would tell them, knowing what she knows now about life.

"Take risks!" she emphasizes. "Be open to the possibilities. It's the unexpected things in life that bring great rewards and valuable lessons."

The second piece of advise Nancy offers is to set goals and make plans. "Drifting can be okay," she says, "but accomplishing goals is so very rewarding. One of the most joyous moments in my life was walking across the stage and receiving my masters degree. It came about because I set a goal and accomplished it."



RHS Alumnus Nancy McKinney, 1973