



TylerPaper.com

# Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph

Sunday, May 24, 2009

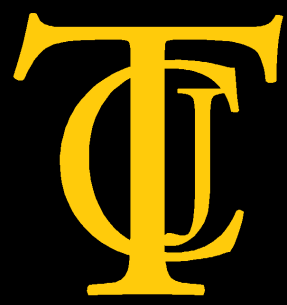
\$1.75

© 2009, Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph

Volume 131, Number 39

★ Your Complete Information Source ★

Tyler, Texas



## Heroes & Friends

By Angela Taylor Fuqua

Like all youngsters, my favorite subject was the one in which I could shine, and for me, that was math. I took every mathematics course available in high school, even when it meant giving up varsity basketball my senior year. I knew that senior math would demand more study time, but I also knew it would be my ticket to a better future at college.

As class valedictorian at Brownsboro High School, I had my choice of enrolling in any college in the state of Texas, and I chose Tyler Junior College. Those two years at TJC, from the summer of 1989 through the spring of 1991, truly changed my life. The College's caring and dedicated faculty gave me the foundation to be successful in my future university studies as well as the gentle guidance I needed to link my passion to a career. The instructors at TJC knew each of us by name and were able to give us the personal attention necessary in those fundamental freshman and sophomore classes. Mr. Martin, who taught most of my pre-engineering math courses at TJC, told me, "Angela, you would be a great engineer! The opportunities are limitless for a woman with strong skills in a non-traditional field." That kind of personal attention from my teachers changed the direction and course of my life.



With a specific goal in mind, and the encouragement that I could achieve it, I was able to make the successful transition to Texas A&M University. When my

classmates at Texas A & M were struggling in the upper division engineering math courses, I was confident and secure. I graduated from Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering. Later, I continued my studies receiving a master's degree in fire protection engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI.)

When I think of the most formative years of my life, it was my time at TJC that has meant the most. Mrs. Brooks, Mr. Burket, Mr. Martin, Mr. Branum and Mr. J.W. Johnson were some of the best and most supportive professors that I have ever met. Completing courses in English, government, calculus, physics and music from these instructors provided me with a firm foundation to expand my education and become a successful engineer.

In addition to receiving a top quality education at TJC, I also participated in several music and dance groups. Harmony & Understanding, the Chamber Singers and the A Cappella Choir--- all under the direction of J.W. Johnson—opened the door for international performance opportunities. Imagine performing in Tyler's Sister City, Nice, France at the tender age of 19! The communication skills and the self confidence I gained from the community life at TJC have been invaluable in my work—a career in which I am often the only female colleague in a group of highly dedicated engineers. Tyler Junior College will always have a special place in my life.



***TJC Hero and Friend Angela Fuqua was the beneficiary of the Jack & Dorothy Faye White Presidential Scholarship during her two years at TJC. It provided funding for tuition, fees and books while she attended classes and participated in as many student life activities as possible. To show her gratitude to those who invested in her and her future, Angela and her husband, Daniel, have established a scholarship for a TJC student who has the challenge of a lifelong medical condition or other physical impairment in honor of their daughter Julia. Julia is nine years old and was born with Spina Bifida. "We want to instill in her the importance of obtaining a higher education regardless of her physical challenges. Every year, we want Julia to meet the recipient of the Julia A. Fuqua Scholarship Endowment for her to see firsthand a courageous TJC student who has the ability to overcome his or her disabilities and succeed in obtaining a higher education."***