



SRJC Alumni & Friends

In Her Words: Jill Osborne

“I first attended in 1979-1980 before I transferred to the University of California (UCSB) to pursue a pharmacology degree. I was shocked to learn that I had done more "hands on" laboratory work at the JC than the graduate students were allowed to do at the University. The SRJC chemistry labs were a superb training ground for those of us who were pursuing science degrees. I will always be grateful to the faculty (Drs. Anderson, Fujita & Taylor), who made an often difficult topic engaging and fun. Dr. Anderson's organic chemistry class comes to mind. In one lab, we studied how chemical reactions produced different color effects in dyes. Fascinating all the way around.



There's no doubt that the solid foundation and skills I learned at SRJC contributed to the completion of my B.A degree in Pharmacology. The SRJC staff and faculty taught us basic skills in safety and sterility in the lab. After writing up a few dozen lab reports at SRJC (yes, I hated doing them at the time), I was very prepared to handle the rigorous lab reporting required in a surgical setting. From history to English, art to fitness, my SRJC education was excellent. I have very fond memories of those years and am thankful to every teacher who helped me along the way.

HOW SRJC REALLY CHANGED HEALTHCARE

I've since returned to SRJC many times in the last thirty years taking courses, often at night, to help my career. In 1993 I was diagnosed with a condition called "Interstitial cystitis." It's like the world's worst bladder infection that never goes away except there is no infection. Rather, IC is an injury or trauma to the pelvis that can manifest with urinary symptoms. In just one night, my life changed. I couldn't sleep without pain. I couldn't drive without crying. I was barely able to work and eventually had to go out on disability. The pain levels were so severe that I considered suicide. But, after a doctor told me that I would "always be a burden on my family", I was determined to prove him wrong. I started my first support group in the Fall of 1993 and launched the first online urology support groups in 1994.

It was quickly apparent that the patients who needed the most help were those who were homebound, like I was, and could barely leave their house. The internet was just beginning and I decided to build a website that would offer support to patients like me.

Ironically, I attended the first class that the SRJC ever offered in web programming (1994) taught by Ann Lynnworth. My student project was the health website (Interstitial Cystitis Network - <http://www.ic-network.com>) that, today, has been rated #1 in the world for men and women struggling with IC/BPS in studies from Harvard Medical School and the University of London. We have provided hope and support to millions of men and women around the world. SRJC helped make that possible!

FUTURE

I have three college degrees now, including a Master's in Psychology. But, of all of those degrees, the AA I earned at SRJC was the most meaningful and productive. I learned such good skills in math, writing, composition, the sciences, history, politics and even athletics. For a young student today, it's also important to consider class size. At UCSB, an entry level class often had 500 or more students. You were lucky to even meet or talk with the instructor during a semester. It was daunting to ask questions in front of such a large audience. Yet, at SRJC, we were given so much one on one time with our instructors who patiently took our questions and helped students learn the basics. I'm so grateful.

But Junior College isn't just for younger students. I encourage any adult who is unhappy with their current work or profession to have some fun and take some new classes. Adult students can dabble in cooking or architecture, criminology or screen writing. It's a place where an adult can dream of a different life and then begin the work to make that happen. Had I not taken an SRJC class when I was 33, I would not be running my business today.

I've always believed that Santa Rosa Junior College should be a four year university. The quality of the education provided is, in my opinion, as good if not better than many four year universities. I would happily take a class a semester because you make learning so fun.”

More About Jill

After graduating from Montgomery High School, Jill chose to attend SRJC because of the affordability and high reputation for science classes. Although her parents had saved for her education, Jill's sister had a positive experience at SRJC and Jill knew it was the smart economical decision.

At SRJC, Jill found Ph.D. level academics who not only knew their content, but knew it well. The emphasis for hands-on work was astonishing to Jill, especially when she arrived at UCSB and found she had used more scientific equipment at SRJC than most graduate students at the university were allowed to touch. Although the science classes were tough, Jill still found time to play on SRJC's tennis team and rank #1 or #2 in her season.

A microbiology class at UCSB strongly contributed to her choice to go into pharmacology. Jill enjoyed studying the concepts of antibiotic resistance by various disease strains. But after graduation, Jill found that academic labwork was very different from corporate labwork and could not handle the animal testing she would be required to complete. She chose to pursue a graduate degree in psychology before her diagnosis changed her life.

Today, Jill brings hope, support and a 24/7 lifeline to over 200,000 patients a month who visit her website or call her. The skills learned at SRJC allowed her to custom code her website as well as provide unique, relevant and timely updates to those suffering the debilitating affects of interstitial cystitis.