



SRJC Alumni & Friends

In His Words: Edward Kinney

How many times has an SRJC student wondered if the curriculum can enable a successful career, full of opportunity, challenge, satisfaction, and success. In the following you will read about one of SRJC's graduates who shares his worklife experience and how he recognizes that SRJC was so very important to enabling his objectives.

So what are the key elements? Certainly they include maintaining a vision of personal and professional optimism, understanding the value of life-long education and training, having the ability to work with others in teams and communicate with all levels of the workplace. These are the elements that are most often the basis for success as Ed has summarized in the following.



“In 1967 when I graduated from Montgomery High School, my choice was to move to Switzerland and pursue my passion of racing bicycles or go to SRJC and pursue my desire to be a draftsman, maybe someday an architect. Turned out SRJC was the path to the realization that life is a learning journey...filled with surprises and opportunities to be embraced. The two years at SRJC expanded my life-experience perspective, and I didn't fully realize it at the time. When I completed the AA in Drafting Technology, a Boeing Aircraft Company recruiter came to our class and hired two of us. I moved to Washington State to be a design draftsman on the wing of the 747 aircraft; with my SRJC education I was able to begin the adventure. Somehow I understood to seize the opportunity (it was a big move) however difficult to relocate for employment; more importantly I learned there is a big world of opportunity out there. SRJC provided me with the confidence and desire for bigger adventures...so very important to life's experience and success.

The SRJC experience enabled me to be confident to seize new horizons, to embrace opportunities to life in other parts of our great county, to meet other people from other areas and to continue to pursue higher education. In the years following, I continuously took courses at community colleges, completed a BS degree, an MS degree, and an MPA degree in the California State University system using the focus and motivation I acquired at SRJC. Ultimately I moved to a career in the federal government where I was able to work in very interesting and challenging organizations, a 30 year career completed in Washington DC as a Director within the Department of Homeland Security. In my federal career I worked in the Dept of Treasury managing the largest telecommunications network in the civilian federal government, in US Customs as the Director of Computer Security worldwide, in IRS Project Management in a multi-billion dollar redesign of computer systems, in the Department of Veterans Affairs to replace outdated systems for 180 medical centers. Following my government career I worked as

a Program Manager and Consultant in the private sector; a significant change from government work yet another opportunity to contribute and learn in a different business model. In every position I look back at what enabled me to continue to embrace new job opportunities in such a diverse career...truly, it was my SRJC experience that gave me the confidence and foundation to embrace change, pursue opportunities. Understand that I was not a great student. I did not excel scholastically at SRJC. but I did know there was a larger world out there to engage and in later years became more scholastically focused Continuous education, embracing change, and perhaps most importantly the ability to communicate with people from all over the world proved to be a recipe for success.

How many times will a person change careers in a lifetime? What facilitates the ability to embrace inevitable change? Where do we learn the skills to adapt to challenges? I believe that my SRJC education helped me with each of these life long challenges and as such was more than learning skills in drafting technology. The SRJC experience was a process of learning how to expand my perspective about life and how to succeed in its experience. The general education courses such as Music Appreciation, sports, geology, history, etc. were all courses that I now realize were invaluable to how I evolved as a person, as a professional, as a husband and a father. I am very proud and appreciative of my opportunity to have grown up in Santa Rosa with such a fine community college. I can say that SRJC launched me into a very full-filling life.”

More About Ed

The summer before Ed decided to attend SRJC, he worked as a bus boy for the Flamingo Hotel and delivered pizza for a local pizza parlor, making \$1.45 per hour. In Ed's early career, there was no computer assisted design or engineering and Ed's skill at drawing to within 1/100th of an inch was valued by Boeing. Ed credits Dwayne Green, an SRJC faculty member, with teaching the skills and helping him secure his position at Boeing and credits SRJC with instilling bravery to seek new opportunities and providing the launching pad for his career.

In 1970, Ed's lottery number in the draft came up. He left Boeing to enlist in the Marines but was delayed in his deployment. During the wait, Ed went to work for BART and drafted the electrical conduits for the subway tunnels. Once again, he credits the fundamentals skills he learned at SRJC with his ability to secure employment.

Ed's time at BART was short-lived as the Marines soon came calling for him. He was scheduled to leave for Da Nang, Vietnam but his orders changed once again. Ed found himself waiting at El Toro, the Marine Corps Air Station, when he went to speak with the Sergeant changing his orders and discovered both had attended California community colleges and both held the same drafting majors. The sergeant asked "Can you type?" and Ed confirmed that he could do so. After two more similar conversations with the 1st Sergeant and the Major, Ed remained at the base for the remainder of his enlistment and took over the Sergeant's job. Because of that conversation, Ed learned in that moment the importance of talking to people and engaging with others on a personal level.

Ed's love of learning is a trait that carries throughout his whole life. After the military, Ed took night classes in computer programming at another community college and then pursued a bachelors and masters degree at Cal State Fullerton as well as a second masters at Cal State Long

Beach. Ed firmly believes learning leads to new experiences essential to adapting to change. He recognizes that today's generation will have extended work careers and that the education process is essential to adapting to change and preparedness for employment opportunities.

While he was pursuing his advanced degrees, Ed worked for the Department of Veteran's Affairs hospital with spinal cord injuries patients. Later, he moved to San Francisco to administer a program for amputees before transitioning as a project manager for financial and supply distributions systems for the VA. Ed was later tapped to move to Washington DC to work as a project manager for the VA headquarters before moving on once again to the IRS to modernize their 1970's computer system.

In 1998, the Treasury department had yet to ensure their telecommunications systems and other programs were fully ready for the Y2K (year 2000 calendar change) problem. Ed took over as Program Manager (directing 260 contractors and 15 government personnel) and ensured the Treasury department sailed through the millennial transition without a problem. After a long career in the federal government, Ed retired in December 2004 as the Director of Computer Security for U.S. Customs.

Ed credits his ability to work with people as the reason he was able to move so far in his career. "If I wasn't willing to embrace change, to move to new opportunities, if I didn't have the exposure to college and those first career steps that SRJC gave me, I truly believe I would not have had the opportunities I did."