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I'm Patricia B. Triggs. I've been a nurse since- a registered nurse- since 1961. I currently have an active license. I, became a nurse. as a lifelong dream from the age of four.

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I was having my tonsils out.

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And, back then, they lined the children up on a little wooden bench at the Mercy Hospital in Springfield. And we had to give, give up our hand to give a blood test. And I said, I'm not doing that. And I sat on my hands and she said, oh, come on now. You-- it won't be that bad.

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Give me your hand. And she had to actually kind of chase me around the bench because I was determined not to participate. And I thought, I'm going to be a nurse, but I'm not going to be like that. So, yes, I was four.

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And that's all I ever wanted to do and it has never disappointed. It has always been what I have wanted. I graduated from Boston College School of Nursing in 1961, and went on to get a master's in parent child nursing at the University of Connecticut in 1978.

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And I've worked as a staff nurse, as a camp nurse , as a nurse educator. This has been my primary work.

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Mainly at Holyoke Community College, which is where I met Elaine Marieb.

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When I was teaching in the associate degree nursing program at Holyoke Community College, Elaine Marieb was an esteemed full faculty professor of anatomy and physiology.

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And she one day came to the faculty, the nursing faculty, and said, "You know, I want to, I want to learn more what the nursing students need to know about anatomy, physiology." She said, "I have these students and they're just, they're just so dedicated." And she said, "I want to know what it is they really need." So we were all a little taken aback because Elaine was

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quite a personality on the campus. So we were all kind of behind her back saying, "Oh my God, who's going to get her for-- who's going to have her in their clinical group, who's going to, you know, be her advisor?" And we were all kind of a little hesitant.

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She joined the ranks asking for no, permission, no special anything. She asked for nothing special.

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She sat right down in the middle of the student body, even though they were all students that she had taught a year or two or 3 or 4 years ago. And it made no difference to her. She just was there to learn. And, at that time, we we all, you know, she went through the clinical rotations and everybody had an opportunity to wonder if Elaine was really evaluating us while we were evaluating Elaine.

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I mean, that's just the kind of personality that she had. She was very focused.

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I was impressed that anybody was carrying it to such a degree that they would put themselves through this rigorous two-year program. She already she was teaching full time. She had enough going on, in my mind, that she wouldn't, you know, she could have just asked us what they needed, but she didn't think that was enough.

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It was, highly structured, extremely demanding.

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It required total absorption from the student. It just just was a tough program.

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Because we

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wanted students to feel prepared for what they were going to be meeting. We wanted them to have the skills that they needed to care a lot about the patients and the patients' families, and not to be afraid to speak up. So we spent a lot of time on those kinds of things.

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And especially in the community college program, even having individuals are coming with quite varied backgrounds. The average age at that time was, in the community college nursing program, was 34. So these were individuals who were coming with a lot of life experiences.

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She entered in 1978,

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And graduated in 1980.

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When she completed the program, she astounded us by telling us that she wanted to go on for a bachelor's degree. Wow, glutton for punishment. I mean, she just...

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We knew how difficult the program was. And at the time, UMass Amherst was

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having a B.S. in completion program, but required all students who wanted to take that course to take the NLN

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course. They wanted to ensure that people had the proper nursing background. So into that vacuum, Fitchburg State College said that they would come to UMass and they would offer a bachelor's completion program that did not require you to take the NLN exam.

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So Elaine opted for that course. And I was teaching part time in that program. And she said to me one day, she said, "You know, I need an advisor." I thought, "Well, she doesn't need me." She definitely did not need advising. But, I mean, you had to fill out the paperwork. You had to have-- sign that you had seen the advisor and so forth.

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So I said, "Well, yeah, sure, I'll be happy to do it." But the way in which Elaine did it was her singleness of purpose. She was a tennis player at tennis courts that were near my house in Springfield, and on more than one occasion she would call up and say, "Pat, I've got a 4:00 tennis program engagement

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and how about if I stop by at three, we could meet on your front porch, and I can make my advising meeting then?" Okay, Elaine. Sounds good. Sounds good to me. And I'd sign off on the thing-- she really was self-driven and needed very little. She knew everything that was required of her. She knew everything that she had to do.

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She studied. She did everything.

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I mean, she was like that from the first time I ever met her,

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it just something in-born.

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So she finished that program, and I did do my best to make the distinction.

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I had to do clinical placements and make sure that she had what she needed in terms of a community health experience and so forth. And she was always just, well, she did it, but she did whatever you told her. It had to be done.

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She was a very generous woman, extremely generous. And she wanted to make an impact. She loved her students. She followed students. She wanted to see how they were doing. She wanted to know, you know, how were they, how were they utilizing all this anatomy and physiology teaching? What--how did that fit in?

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She's always interested in that.

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And I think sometimes, if someone is in the position as she was in- a full time, full faculty professor - you kind of think, well, you're settled. You don't really have to do much, just kind of keep rolling out the same thing. But she never thought that way.

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She never thought that way. So that openness to something new, something new and different. She surprised herself with her, with her interest and her dedication, because any person who's gone through any nursing program that I know of is just like, you know, wondering how they made it through, really. Everybody kind of wonders how they make it through it.

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It's just, it's like, challenging.

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That did not deter her.

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She had excessive experience with nursing students. Once she took the course herself, it solidified what she knew she had to teach. She was an excellent teacher, an excellent teacher. Very demanding. An excellent teacher.

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She had a PhD from UMass Amherst in zoology, I believe, and she was a full professor

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at Holyoke Community College, anatomy and physiology.



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Two semesters was required as, for nursing students. It was not a prerequisite, but, in fact, it was not a prerequisite, but it became like a prerequisite because of the background of our students. They were working. There was no way that our students were going to be able to do all of that. So she was, the majority of her students were nursing students.

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We had hundreds of applicants for her program, all taking her anatomy and physiology course. And it was unspoken, but it was known, everyone knew. Get into Professor Marieb's class. She's the best A&P teacher. And if you do well in her class, you have a good chance of getting in the nursing program.

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She decided that she needed a better lab manual. There wasn't-- she didn't like the lab manual they were using. And she spoke to the publisher of the book and said to them, "This book really isn't that great." They said, "Well, if you think you can do better, go ahead." So she did, and then she went from the lab manual to the full book.

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That just struck a chord, obviously. I don't think you become The New York Times bestseller list with an anatomy and physiology book by accident. She was just amazed that she was able to distill this technical, scientific knowledge into something that students could grasp. And it was a great gift.

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Stay with it. Persevere. Persevere because it's a great privilege that we have to work with those in need. And just even if you've never practiced in a job, your education is never wasted because it prepares you for life. While other.

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college students may be starting their weekend on Thursday,

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most of the nursing students holed up with their books or getting ready for clinical or researching their patient. It's just a maturing, maturing opportunity that's matchless, in my opinion.