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 VERY
satisfying

 CAREER CHANGE

Jim Crawford
 AAS, Biotechnology

“*decided I wasn’t going to be a victim,” says Jim Crawford, recalling the third time he lost a management position.*

He might be forgiven for feeling that the fates were against him. In 1997, Jim was let go from Sara Lee after 12 years. From there, he went to AMP, Inc. When Tyco Electronics took over AMP, Jim was part of a large cutback. Needing to stay in the area, Jim signed on with a metal furnishings company. But in 2004, that company closed its doors. Jim took the opportunity to do some stock-taking, and used his personal interests as the basis for the rest of his career.

“My true love was biology,” he says. “My bachelor’s degree is in Biology, but I never did anything with it.” Jim enrolled in the Biotechnology degree program at Forsyth Tech. He was 54 when he started the program. “The teachers were excellent, and the training was top notch, better than I got at my four-year university,” he says. “My bachelor’s degree is what carries the weight, but I got the skills at Forsyth Tech. With this newfound knowledge and acquired technology skills, I then visualized myself, what I wanted to do, where I wanted to work. With hard work and diligence, I earned the Holy Grail – an internship in Dr. Anthony Atala’s lab.” The internship led to a full-time job in Dr. Atala’s lab, formally known as the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine.

Jim worked there for nearly four years, managing the tissue and cell culture core. In 2009, he accepted a position with Keranetics LLC as Director of their GLP Laboratory. This biomaterials company creates keratin-based products for areas of regenerative medicine and trauma care. Jim was also accepted to the master’s program of Wake Forest and is pursuing an advanced degree in Bioethics.

All of this success and achievement was made possible by his decision to pursue a Biotechnology degree from Forsyth Tech. That degree, he says, “jump-started my new career” in North Carolina’s exciting and growing biotechnology industry, a career he finds enormously satisfying. “It’s great to be part of an organization that is making such worthwhile contributions to society,” he says.

New Career

A New Focus
 Wendy Harless
 AAS, Nursing



A few years ago, Wendy Harless, an elementary school teacher, wife and mother, suffered a life-threatening medical event that kept her in the hospital for a month. To keep from getting bored, she began keeping track of the timing of her medications and doctor visits. “You could be a nurse,” commented one of her nurses, and that resonated with Wendy. “I saw the difference my excellent nurses made in my recovery. They took care of me in the ways I needed to be taken care of,” she says. “I felt I could do that.” When Wendy recovered, she began looking at nursing training programs. She chose Forsyth Tech. “The quality of the program is excellent,” she says. For her, what sets it apart is the amount of hands-on training. “Some programs give you no clinical experience until graduation,” she says. “Working with patients in the hospitals makes the learning real.” Now a RN at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, Wendy views her medical crisis as “a huge wake-up call” that forced her to examine what she wants to accomplish in life. And she credits the nurses at Forsyth Medical Center and the nursing instructors at Forsyth Tech with helping her to refocus her dreams and goals.

Learn more about our
 New Career programs at
www.ForsythTech.edu.