

Schwartz Moves to Higher Degree

Miriam Schwartz, ADA testing coordinator, has spent seven years at JCCC helping students achieve academic success. In

May, the 80-year-old Schwartz achieved her own goal – earning a master of business administration degree from Avila University.

In the JCCC Testing Center, Schwartz facilitates special testing accommodations for students who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Schwartz supervises five proctors who assist students taking GED tests, ACT tests and JCCC classroom tests.

“I’ve always liked working with the public,” said Schwartz, employed 20 hours a week.

Schwartz has a long history of working with the public. At age 13, she started in her father’s Ben Franklin store in Des Moines, Iowa. She and her

late husband owned Ben Franklin stores for 25 years – 18 years in Des Moines and 7 ½ years in Parkville, Mo. She was working in a law office when she earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration from Avila in 1987.

“When my daughter Lori went back for her Ph.D., I decided it was my turn to earn a bachelor’s degree,” Schwartz said.

Dr. Lori Schwartz, psychologist with Counseling Psychologists and adjunct professor, psychology, has taught at JCCC for 17 years. She is one of three of Schwartz’s children, all of whom attended Schwartz’s graduation along with their children.

After earning her bachelor’s degree, Schwartz worked at Sylvan Testing Center, Overland Park, for three years until it moved to Lee’s Summit. That’s when Schwartz began her tenure at JCCC, a place she hopes to continue as long as possible.

“This job is a perfect fit for me at this point in my life,” Schwartz said. “I don’t want to give it up. I love this job.”

Schwartz’s husband died in February 2000.

“That’s when I decided I needed something else to keep me busy,” she said.

She looked into taking a continuing education class at Avila for personal enrichment. The head of the MBA program encouraged Schwartz to take a credit class – her first step toward her master’s. She wants to use her MBA and experience to volunteer for the Small Business Development Center at JCCC.

“She has many, many years of work experience that could benefit other people,” said Lori Schwartz.

Lori Schwartz said her mother is a good role model: “She is very logical and handles stress well. She doesn’t get overwrought about things. She persists when faced with adversity.”

Schwartz credits good genes for her work longevity. Her father owned a Ben Franklin store until age 83. One brother, 90, still sells real estate, and another brother, 78, practices as an ob/gyn physician.

“Miriam’s work ethic is amazing,” said Janet Brandau, program director, testing/assessment services. “She has a lot of wisdom that she shares with students and staff. She keeps everyone in the Testing Center young with her energy and compassion.” 🙌

