

Wiley
continued . . .

"Ask questions when you don't understand . . . the only dumb question is the question you don't ask."."

Q: Would you describe yourself as impulsive?

A: I guess I would because my approach to education was very unrealistic in terms of planning for a future career. I just know the professor made that "green gunk" that sticks on the north side of a wall sound so intriguing that my parents found me outside scraping "green gunk" off the wall. They said, "It's all right . . . she's going to college. It's all right."

Q: What happened next?

A: I went to one of the botany professors and said, "Hey, I really like this! What can a botany major do?" And the man said, "I don't think it would be a very good area for you. You're a lady and there's really nothing to do in botany except teach or go into agriculture." So I thanked him and walked across the hall to the other botanist on staff and told him I was really interested in botany and wanted to know what I could do with it. He said, "Oh, there are *lots* of things you

can do with botany! Why, you can teach or you can go into agriculture!" So I took his advice and did just that. I majored in botany and developed a specific interest in plant physiology.

Q: Where did you do your graduate work?

A: I applied to U.C. Davis because it was the closest school to Sacramento and they had a very good program. While I was there I had the opportunity to be a research assistant for a professor who had a grant in an area of plant physiology. We studied protein metabolism in germinating seeds. He was very encouraging. In fact, I ended up doing my dissertation on protein metabolism.

Q: How would you describe your educational experience?

A: I would have to say that it wasn't really thought out or planned. I didn't direct my own steps. I would stumble upon something that intrigued me and then I would pursue that interest without regard for what would be logical or practical. I tried once to make a rational decision, and that was when I decided to major in medical technology. But

then I changed my mind. It's a much different situation for students today. They have access to more information and can explore a variety of career options.

Q: Are you glad you changed your mind?

A: Oh, yes. Teaching allows me to have a lot of interaction with people. I like that better than anything else. I think the way my own professors interacted with me greatly influenced my life.

Q: What kind of advice would you give students entering the University?

A: I would tell them to ask questions when they don't understand something. The only dumb question is the question you don't ask. Most professors are more than willing to answer questions and to help. The best part of teaching is getting ideas across to the students. I love to see the blank faces go to A-ha! faces.