



News Release

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[Nancy Livingston](#)
Public Relations
651-779-3222
Fax 651-779-3470

[Century College](#)
3300 Century Avenue North
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Century Student Will Have Big Cheering Section at Graduation

Century College student Cindy Janssen of White Bear Lake is living proof that you can start college as a starry-eyed teenager and finish 40 years later as a confident grandmother.

When Janssen, 58, walks across the stage of Aldrich Arena at the Century College graduation ceremony on Friday, May 14, to receive her Associate in Science degree, she will be cheered by seven of her 11 grandchildren, her five children, her husband, possibly some siblings and her 86-year-old mom.

“I am so glad I finally got this done,” said Janssen, a 1970 graduate of Alexander Ramsey High School in Roseville. “Century was a great place to finish this up.”

Janssen started her higher education journey in 1970 at the University of Minnesota after graduating from high school. She attended for a year, not knowing exactly what she wanted to do, and then got married. By age 23, she had three children.

In 1979, Janssen opened a daycare in her home and ran it for 21 years. Many of her daycare children are now starting college, and all four of her biological children have attended college. Janssen decided it was time for her to do that, too.

“I always told my kids that if you want to live with me, you have to go to college,” said Janssen. “That was the message they heard all of their lives.”

After closing her home daycare, Janssen worked in a series of jobs until she landed a position as a staff member at a group home for people with developmental disabilities in Woodbury. In 2007, she was given the opportunity to serve as manager of the home provided that she earn a college degree in human services.

“I had heard good things about Century and it is close to where I live, so I decided to take one class in spring 2008,” said Janssen. “After that, I was hooked. I have been around young people all my life, so I was never uncomfortable in class. And it was stimulating to be learning new things and participating in class.”

After starting out by taking just one class, Janssen took two classes the next semester and then three classes after that, working full time. She took mostly afternoon and evening classes, earning A’s in all her human services classes.

“The instructors at Century are experts in their field,” said Janssen. “They are all very, very qualified. My children attended private colleges, and I can say that the instruction at Century is definitely comparable to the instruction at colleges that cost three times as much.”

Janssen described the atmosphere at Century as “warm, inviting and comfortable.” She said if you go to class, do the work and participate in group discussions, you can do well at Century.

“It helps to have a goal,” said Janssen. “I think everyone should consider going to a community college for two years so that they can figure out what they want to do. Most people right out of high school have so much growing and maturing to do. Later, they can transfer.”



Photo: Century student Cindy Janssen