



News Release

August 12, 2011
[Nancy Livingston](#)
Public Relations
651.779.3222
Fax 651.779.3470

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

Higher Ed Journey Started 35 Years Ago for Century College Grad

Robin Plan of Maplewood, who started her journey in higher education 35 years ago at the former Northeast Metro Technical College, finally achieved her dream of earning a college degree when she walked across the stage with other Century College graduates on May 13 at Aldrich Arena.

Plan, 53, an information technology specialist for Target Corp., said becoming a college graduate has been her dream since she graduated from Tartan High School in 1976. But entering the workforce delayed her dream for decades.

“I would advise young people to go to college right after high school graduation, even if they have to borrow the money,” said Plan, who graduated from Century with distinction, earning a 3.7 grade-point average. “It is an investment that will pay off in the long run.”

Plan started her higher-education journey by earning her certificate in early child development in 1978.

Low wages in that field, however, prompted her to seek a job as a head cashier at Target.

Over the years, Plan held a series of jobs at Target, but found that a college degree was required to advance in the company. In 1987, she enrolled at Lakewood Community College, which became Century College when it combined with Northeast Metro Technical College in 1996. Over the next 24 years, she took a class here and there as she was able to find the time and the motivation.

In January 2009, Plan's job as a finance specialist and trainer at Target was eliminated and she was given six months to find another job at the company. Looking at the available jobs, she found that even the jobs she had once held now required a college degree. Plan decided to accelerate her degree-seeking efforts at Century and began to take one or two evening classes per semester, completing her homework with eight or nine hours of study on the weekend. She also took classes in the summer.

"A global studies class I took with Prof. Jon Wendt really sparked my interest," said Plan, who had led some training classes for Target in India on three different occasions.

Plan said initially she was apprehensive to return to college as an adult, but in the past few years, she found that there were so many adult students, she felt very comfortable in her classes and on campus.

"I love Century," said Plan. "The college has changed a lot, and the remodeling has been great. The computer labs are fabulous, and the library is wonderful. All the effort I put into earning my degree was totally worth it. I learned so much from my professors, but also from my fellow students. So many of them are from other cultures, and they have so much to share. It really added to my learning."

For example, in an earth science class, she said a student from Korea talked about how people from that culture deal with trash in a very forward-thinking way. And her Native American Literature class with Prof. Cheryl Gfrerer included an event with a storyteller, dancing, an eagle from the Raptor Center and food.

Plan's love of learning compliments her love of travel. After visiting all 50 states plus Canada, Mexico and Europe, this fall she will travel to Israel with a group from St. Andrew's Church.

"It took a long time to earn my degree and I really worked hard," said Plan, who may pursue her four-year degree at a college in the Twin Cities. "It really improved my quality of life. I understand things more fully because of what I have learned at Century. Going to college changes you – and changes your outlook on the world.