

Savoring the "AHA! MOMENT"

By Gina Gallucci-White

Jessica Campbell '11 knows how to multitask. While earning her bachelor's degree at Wilson, she held down a full-time office manager job, attended classes and had two small children at home.

"Trying to juggle a full-time job and then coming home and trying to do the papers was stressful at times, but I definitely have an amazing husband that entertained the two kids whenever I had to write papers and my parents would fill in for me whenever they could," she said. "It was definitely stressful at times but we made it through it."

All that hard work paid off. This September, Campbell was recognized by the Chambersburg Lions Club with a Teachers Excellence Award. Nominated by her principal at Hamilton Heights Elementary School, she was shocked to win. "I got a little emotional," Campbell said. "Being a third-year teacher, I just wasn't expecting something like that. It's awesome to be appreciated for the work that I do for my kids."

Growing up in the Fort Loudon, Pa., area, Campbell joined the workforce after graduating from high school, but at age 24, chose to continue her education at Wilson because of her grandfather, Alan McKee. His career spanned 30 years at Wilson, beginning as a security guard and rising to director of operations. "When I was thinking about going back to school, I wanted to do Wilson because that's where he spent most of his [career]," she said.

When she began classes at Wilson in 2005, Campbell had decided to pursue an accounting degree. Watching her children grow influenced her to switch her major to elementary education.

"I had a few teachers here and there that always inspired me to want to be a teacher," Campbell said. "The [Wilson] staff and the professors gave a lot of great constructive criticism and feedback to push you, but also helped you grow as a student."

She credits Lynn Newman, chair of the education department, as being a mentor and counselor. "I can't say enough about Dr. Newman," Campbell said. "She is an amazing lady."

After graduating, Campbell continued to work her office manager job four days a week and substitute teach on Fridays and sometimes other weekdays. "The company that I worked for was very, very flexible ... They knew that I wanted to be a teacher so they were flexible in regard to letting me go and substitute when something arose," she said.

By 2013, she was teaching full time in Chambersburg as a fifth-grade English language arts teacher at Hamilton Heights. One of the biggest challenges she says she has faced is preparing her students to reach the standardized academic goals the state requires. "We know that our [students] are growing," said Campbell, but she finds it difficult at times to show that growth using state requirements.

Campbell now knows pursuing a degree in education from Wilson was the right move for her because she loves her job. "The kids are all unique individuals and [I love] to see them grow and to see them have that 'Aha! moment'—that lightbulb moment where it finally clicks," Campbell said. "That moment for me is why I am doing what I am doing."



PHOTO BY BRIAN SPEER