

Autobiographical Learning Essay

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliation

### Autobiographical Learning Essay

My childhood passed in a small county Town of Mayo, Florida. My parents had eight children, and I was the youngest in the family. As a child, I was very active and went in for sports during the adolescence years. Moreover, I enjoyed attending school and admired our teachers. I will be always grateful to them as those people influenced my behavior during the school years. With the help of those people, this period laid the cultural and personal background of my identity. Besides that, my personal skills always allowed me to find happiness everywhere and make others feel better. Thus, I was inspiring others by means of sharing my positive attitude and experiences. Nowadays, people feel a lack of positive emotions, and it is crucial to be able to get them wherever you are.

I graduated the Lafayette High School in 1985 and still remind this time as the best days in my life. It was a period of bright dreams as I wanted to attend a college and pursue basketball playing. However, these expectations could never come true due to the financial situation in my family. It was the first experience of the adolescent reality that often makes ones feel frustrated and others more powerful and strong.

Eventually, the available employment opportunities had influenced my job choice and future career. At that time, the Department of Corrections began the construction of a prison outside the town of Mayo, Florida. Thus, in 1986 I entered the North Florida Junior College as it gave an opportunity to pursue a career of a correctional officer. Hence, I had got a significant knowledge of the basic corrections and successfully graduated from the college.

In a year, in 1987 I had got my first position as a correctional officer in the Union Correctional Institution. During that time, I had got the skills necessary for efficient communication with the inmates. I supervised and counseled them treating everyone with respect in the correctional setting. My tasks included maintenance of care, custody, and control of the prisoners. In addition, I conducted formal and informal counts, and provided

accountability when checking inmates in and out of their units. The executives noticed my proper work and assigned me to maintain security around the perimeter of the tower.

Eventually, this task not only allowed me to exercise my judgment skills, but also gave me a life experience I will never forget. It happened one day when I was on a tower duty on a third shift. Suddenly, I noticed an unauthorized vehicle driving around the perimeter road of a prison. I quickly notified the control room, and the sergeant together with another officer went to find out what was the matter. However, then happened an event that made me feel stressed. Unexpectedly, an inmate from inside the prison started running toward the fence attempting to escape. It took place between the first tower where I was and the second one. And there were nobody in the control room as they went to check the unknown vehicle. Finally, the inmate did not manage to break free as the outside perimeter patrol observed and caught him, but I will always remember that day. Furthermore, it gave me an abundance of training and experience that helped me to gain success in my future endeavors.

Since I lived in Mayo, Florida I had to drive 76 miles a day to my job daily five days a week. These rides were extremely hectic and tedious and, as a result, I asked the Department of Corrections for a transfer. Hence, in 1989 they transferred me to the Madison Correctional Institution that was much closer to my home. Here I continued my career embracing the same position. According to my duties I had to supervise, protect and provide physical restraint of the inmates in case if it was necessary. Also, my responsibilities included control, custody, and care of the prisoners at the facility.

When I started working there, the prison had only one finished dorm and others were still being built. Thus, the convicts were involved in building of the required facilities and I supervised their activities. This task was of high interest for me as far as I took personal charge of the assigned inmates. I stood guard observing them and took required actions in emergency situations to prevent escapes or suppress disorders. Furthermore, I took the

inmates to and from work assignments overseeing their work, maintaining order and discipline.

Hence, I assisted in crowd and riot control activities exercising custody, control, and direction of the inmates in all aspects of their lives in prison. Also, I had to inspect the prisoners, their housing areas, as well as their visitors for contraband. Along with the checks of sanitary conditions I counseled the inmates regarding their personal and behavioral problems. Moreover, I patrolled them in the cell blocks, dormitories and dining room periodically conducting counts. Besides the control of the prisoners during work and meal I provided them with escorts to the church and recreation.

This position widened my knowledge and skills as well as taught me to deal with the individuals and solve critical situations in an effective manner. In addition to the supervision and control I prepared written reports of all violations of rules, regulations, state and federal statutes, institutional and departmental policies. Besides that, I prepared reports related to inmates and institutional activities perfecting my skills in the accurate description of facts and events. Furthermore, during this time I improved my knowledge of basic arithmetic when adding and subtracting, collecting and recording the data related to inmate activities.

Moreover, I always attempted to change the lives of inmates for the better. Thus, I encouraged them by means of counseling, personal example, supporting their participation in the worthwhile activities aiming to change their attitudes, behavior and habit patterns. While planning, organization, and coordination of work assignments I paid equal attention to everyone clearly communicating and attentively listening to the inmates. As a result, I gained the ability to work in dangerous and stressful conditions and still maintain an effective working relationship with others.

During this time, I gained a lot of experience as a correctional officer, and I felt that I was ready for the next step in my career. So, in 1990 I applied at Jefferson Correctional

Institution for the position of a Correctional Officer Sergeant and was successfully taken. Now I had to prepare, review and submit oral and written reports of institutional and facility activities and irregularities. This period was very responsible as I was obliged to motivate employees to improve the quality and quantity of the work they performed. At this point, my personal example played a significant role helping to enhance others. During the shift, I had to serve as an officer-in-charge of the entire facility. It included training of the employees how to perform effective work and get good results and ensuring that they carried out assignments in the specified areas and activities. Moreover, I assisted other officers and law enforcement agencies in escape and recapture procedures. Besides that, I was responsible for the direction of the control room operation and main gates of the institution.

Working in this position, I trained my vigilance. I maintained constant order, discipline and security in the assigned areas by means of periodic counts, inspections, and checking ways of escape. I conducted searches and checked inmates and their belongings for the contraband or violations of rules and regulations.

Also, there was one more shocking experience while working at Jefferson C.I. The facility situated on an Indian burial ground, and there happened strange things with the staff and their relatives. The most frustrating were unexpected deaths of the employees and their family members. Two deaths even occurred at the institution making everyone feel desolate. The first one happened with one of the doctors who died in front of the chapel on his way to work at the medical building. And the other one occurred with a correctional officer who fell out and died in a dormitory while conducting the inmate count.

In 1990, in order to sharpen and improve my knowledge and skills of supervision I received advance training in Emergency Preparedness, Crisis Intervention, and Sex Crimes Investigations. It helped me to develop my professional skills, and allowed to apply and receive a promotion. Thus, I had got a place of Correctional Officer Lieutenant at the

Jefferson C.I., and continued to receive an advance training necessary for my new my job duties. Additionally, I attended a Southern Conference on Corrections in Orlando that gave me lots of useful and interesting information concerning my job. Among other courses, the Basic Supervisory Training and Instructor Technique were the most helpful for effective performance of my job duties.

While working as a lieutenant, I supported the staff and evaluated their responsibilities and performance. The organizing side of my duties included planning the workloads, workflows, deadlines, work objectives and time utilization. Other tasks were to establish the evaluation criteria and responsibilities of the employees and ensure they meet them regularly. Since I was responsible for the efficient performance of other workers, I assisted them regularly communicating with the staff individually as well as in the staff meetings. This support helped to direct their work and ensure the best use of time and resources.

The security took much of my efforts and time as it was one of the most important tasks at this position. First of all it included the direction of security at the institution as well as custody and care of inmates on the assigned shift. Also, I inspected security measures of housing and gate officers, work details, and movements of the prisoners. At the basis of inspections of buildings and grounds for security, safety, fire hazards, and contraband I completed and prepared reports of disturbances and activities occurred during my shift. The disciplinary reports of the inmates were in my disposal, and I determined whether they we should confine them while pending a disciplinary hearing. Thus, the daily routine of the security section and orderly operation of security activities were under my control and supervision.

And the most important is that during my work at the Jefferson C.I. I acquired a lot of supervisory skills that were so necessary for my job. Gaining that experience, I served as a

member of the various inmate committees and recommended policies and procedural changes for custody and control activities. Also, I informed the subordinate shift personnel about the changes in policies and operational procedures. In order to ensure the effective performance of the assigned personnel, I reviewed the shift roster, assisted in planning and administering the services, and regularly conducted various job trainings. As far as during my tenure at that facility a great deal of my work was devoted to the employees, I sat on the selection boards for promotions and reviewed disciplinary reports for the security staff.

Feeling that I have enough competency and skills, I decided to excel in the Department of Corrections. Thus, in 1996 I received a promotion to Correctional Officer Captain at Broward Correctional Institution in Broward County. The already obtained knowledge of job duties I performed before prepared me for a new challenge. It appeared to be a significant change for me as I came from a small town to the big city with a vast population and lots of traffic. Other difficulties were in the size of the correctional facility since it housed over 800 inmates and in the gender as it was for female prisoners. My main duties were communication, motivation, training and evaluation of the employees, planning and direction of their work. Moreover, I had the authority to hire, transfer, suspend, layoff, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward and discipline the subordinate employees.

Embracing that position, I developed my leadership competencies. I had to be a good role model for other staff to follow, and it required an abundance of knowledge and effort. Hence, it was up to me to motivate the staff to improve the quality and quantity of their work. Also, I had got a learning experience when taking the initiative in planning the workloads, workflows, deadlines, work objectives and time utilization with the employees. Being responsible for the evaluation of the staff I established the necessary evaluation criteria and conducted regular meetings to keep them abreast of their performance. Also, in order to ensure the appropriate handling of the resources I monitored the staff time, work details, and

security measures of housing and gate officers. In addition, my obligations included the inspection of prisoners' movements, preparation of reports concerning disturbances and activities occurred during an assigned shift. I made inspections of buildings and grounds for security, safety, fire hazards, and contraband.

When working on this position, I perfected my supervisory skills as the higher job requires more attention and responsibility. Hence, I supervised the daily routine of the security section and controlled the orderly operations of the security activities for a large institution.

What's interesting when I worked at Broward C.I., I was the only female squad platoon leader at the facility. Thus, when I went to Rapid Response Team Platoon Leader training in Inverness, Florida I experienced significant difficulties with all the workout and exercise. However, I realized that I had to do, that and it made me stronger and inspired a lot of the team members when I returned from the training. During this period, I gained an abundance of knowledge as far as I completed Chemical Munitions Instructor Training, Locksmith for Administrators Training, Fire Fighting, and Female Offender trainings. These advance trainings I received while working as a Captain strengthened my supervisory abilities and helped me to excel further, while in that capacity.

So in 2003 I obtained a promotion to Correctional Officer Major position in Belle Glades Correctional Institution at the West Palm Beach Work Release Center. As a Major I provided leadership setting positive example and exhibiting professionalism, fairness, cooperation, respect, commitment, excellence, and honesty. I enhanced the teamwork developing interactions with co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, and others inside and outside the agency. Aiming to be a good leader, I set challenging goals and did my best to coordinate the work assignments effectively and make appropriate practical decisions. Also, I intended to evaluate the subordinates efficiently recognizing and rewarding good performers

and taking timely action with marginal or failing ones always analyzing the problems comprehensively.

Having enough experience, I focused on the quality of work and efficiency of the workflow. So, I reached this task by eliminating the unnecessary activities, completing projects and preparing regular reports. The essential constituent of the work quality is a motivation of the staff and their positive attitude towards operational changes. I ensured that by means of flexibility initiating changes quickly for easy adaptation to necessary changes in operations. Moreover, I was responsible for the selection of a qualified staff whose skills and abilities matched the job requirements. When assigning the staff, I chose the subordinates responding the requirements of the workload in order to identify develop and improve their technical skills.

While working at the Work Release Center in West Palm Beach I learned a multitude of supervisory principles and operation practices necessary for my job. Also, I shared with the employees my knowledge of technical skills, methods, and techniques required for specific procedures in the functional area. It gave me a good motivation to succeed, extend my personal resources, develop strengths and work on weaknesses providing the proactive approach to the workflow. With the help of my clear communication and listening skills I developed well-organized and logical presentations changing the complex issues into simple ones. The obtained knowledge allowed me to deal with the conflicts effectively, develop and maintain effective working relationships with other departmental managers, state managers, media service recipients and the public. And finally while embracing this position I administered and coordinated the facility rehabilitation programs utilizing community resources available through other agencies and organizations.

Due to the obtained skills I had a strong determination to move forward in my career. Thus, I received a promotion to a Correctional Officer Colonel in the Department of

corrections at Broward C.I. It was very exciting for me to work on this position there since I have previously worked at Broward C.I. for ten years. This position required managerial skills for planning, organizing and directing the security activities of this large correctional institution. Hence, I formulated policies and procedures which had significant impact on administration and preparation of the personnel and budgets. I was responsible for planning and directing a large institution's security activities in accordance with established laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures. Also, my tasks included inspection of security measures of housing and gate officers, work details, and the movement of inmates. Furthermore, I made inspections of buildings and grounds for security, safety, fire hazards, and contraband.

Also, I mastered my public relations competency promoting the correctional programs to community leaders and public officers, law enforcement agencies and legislative delegations, local civic clubs and churches. Hence, performing my duties I enforced all laws, rules, regulations and policy directives on the facility. Additionally, I was responsible for the budget management, and this position gave me a good practice of it. While making the appropriate budgetary recommendations and setting the goals and plans on department mission I based on a thorough analysis of the relevant facts, justified costs and benefits, set realistic schedules, and used measurable criteria. Also, I maintained the appropriate budgetary control, continuing to monitor activities and initiating effective corrective actions while planning and managing the budget.

I experienced flexibility in managing changes and easily adapted to the necessary changes in the operations. And also I continuously motivated the staff to have a positive attitude towards operational changes. Thus, I always actively supported and worked towards fulfilling the agency's affirmative action efforts. And at the same time, I recognized the development and promotion opportunities of the employees.

During my work at this position at Broward C.I., I trained my responsibility and quite often worked long hours. I always did my best to achieve the workload demand, and maintained a positive attitude in completing all the assigned tasks. Moreover, when being a Correctional Officer Colonel I received the necessary training that assisted me while conducting my job duties in the higher positions. Also, I obtained much knowledge due to the trainings I visited. Hence, the Emergency Management Training for National Incident management System and Basic Command System assisted me in understanding and gave me knowledge of the National Response framework. In addition, one of the best training classes was the State Correctional Leadership for Women that helped me so much when I was a supervisor.

Later, the Department of Corrections reassigned me within the agency to the Hardee Correctional Institution as a Colonel. However, at that time my mother had got serious health problems and I had to take care of her. This situation made me re-estimate my life values and as a result after 20 years of work I reassigned from the Department of Corrections. The experience I obtained during this time was significant especially in the areas of management and supervision. Furthermore, my verbal and written communicating skills always helped me to prevail in my learning abilities within my studies.

Thus, in 2007 I chose a job position at Palm Beach County Sheriff Department. There I supervised the offenders in a secured correctional facility, preserving and suppressing crime, apprehending violators and providing the public order within the correctional facilities. Together with that, I transported the offenders, assisted in the intake bookings of them. Also, I was responsible for processing the computer database and conduction of mathematical calculations during the facility counts. And, what's more, I provided the customer service to callers inquiring about matters in the jail.

My employment in the Palm Beach Sheriff Officer Agency continued till 2009. And at the end of the year I retired. At this point, I decided have a change in my career and my life for something that would indeed bring me pleasure. Thus, I chose the make-up and beauty and enrolled the Alpha Institute of the Treasure Coast to become a Facial Specialist.

Then, I gained employment at the Home Depot as a Merchandising Execution Associate. This job gave me a lot of knowledge and experience in marketing, retail, and advertising. Hence, I maintained various product sets in the Home Depot retail environment enhancing the customer experience, increasing sales and maximizing turns. To get the best results, I executed merchandising strategies and ensured the correct display of the products. Also, I provided product knowledge to store associates, maintaining strong relationships with store personnel, assisting customers and working as a team. Additionally, I worked individually with moderate supervision and was capable for executing the directives from Merchandising Execution Managers. And finally, I serviced a multi-story territory which required daily travel to different store locations.

My next employment position was within the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles as a Driver Licenses Examiner in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Thus, according to my job obligations I conducted written, vision and driving examinations for motor vehicle driving licensure. Furthermore, I graded examinations, informed clients of results, and inspected their vehicles for proper operation. In such a way, I performed a variety of clerical duties in preparing, processing and filing driver license applications and examinations, examination fees, and related testing forms. Together with that I operated a specialized camera that produced a color photographs. Thanks to the previously obtained skills I effectively communicated with the public and solved difficult problems in a tactful and courteous manner. I demonstrated the Departments values of service through my actions, attitude, and speech. Also, I upheld the highest ethical standards, treating everyone with

dignity and respect, inspiring confidence and trust, and fostering creativity during my job duties. Moreover, I displayed respect, courtesy and sensitivity with citizens, co-workers, supervisors, and other agencies through sound verbal communication and effective listening.

This job exercised my judgment competency and displayed good knowledge in resolving difficult situations. Hence, I was able to meet the customers' needs efficiently and regularly with minimal supervision. Also, I demonstrated the ability to prioritize the responsibilities effectively in a fast pacing, multitasks environment. Being a diligent worker I always processed the detailed data accurately to customer's records in accordance with current department procedures.

And after all in January 2011 the Palm Beach County Tax Collector took over the State Drivers License Agency. So I reapplied for the job position, and the Tax Collectors Office rehired me as a Client Relations Guide. However, I continued to perform the duties of Driver Licenses Examiner, I received a cross training for other tasks within the Tax Collectors Office. It involved processing and issuing of titles, registrations, calculating and collecting taxes and fees, processing and verifying completed documentation.

Currently, I embrace this position, having the opportunities to share job knowledge, experience, suggestions and solutions with colleagues. It allows us to create a rich, nurturing work environment that fosters learning and promotes individual and team development.

Overlooking my life and job experience, I realize that every position I embraced required special skills and competencies necessary for the successful performance and professional development. As it is impossible to be good at your job without the hard work, I always took much effort to advance my knowledge and promote my career.