



Greetings, Cougar Historians....next week, we will be extending an invitation to ALL South Mountain Community College alumni in the community to return to the college to celebrate our 30th anniversary at our special "Alumni Extravaganza", Thursday, February 25 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. And since our college has always attracted its fair share of non-traditional students, it seemed appropriate to spotlight one from our early years....check out Gladys Hollis' inspirational story, as reported in *The Phoenix Gazette* 28 years ago this month....

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Promised Education Comes Years Later

By DON WARNE
Gazette Education Reporter

Gladys Hollis' brother and sister received a college education and she, too, was promised this.

However, it did not work out that way — not right away.

She had to leave school in the 10th grade to take care of her terminally ill mother.

Now, 45 years later, she is on the President's List of honor students at South Mountain Community College.

"My 14 grandchildren think it's wonderful. They say it gives them something to push for," Mrs. Hollis said.

LIFE HAS NOT been easy for the native of Muskogee, Okla. After her mother died, she worked as a waitress, barmaid, elevator operator, saleswoman and shipping and receiving clerk, among other jobs.

"You name it — I've done it," the 60-year-old divorcee said.

In her early 50s, she had to give up a job with a local firm because she no longer could lift boxes. That was after spending a year in a hospital.

"I had a girlfriend who decided to go after her high school equivalency diploma," Mrs. Hollis recalled. "I thought it over and decided to go with her."

Mrs. Hollis figured the diploma would help her find work she could handle.

The friend dropped out, but Mrs. Hollis got her diploma at the age of 54 from the adult basic education division of the Phoenix Union High School District.

Mrs. Hollis offered her services as a volunteer tutor, helping other adults obtain their equivalency diplomas.

"I WAS TOLD we had a wonderful woman working as a volunteer," Shirley Heymann, director of the PUHSD adult education program, said.

"I offered her a paid job as an aide," she added.

As an aide, Mrs. Hollis continues to tutor students and also develops instructional plans for them.

"I had been encouraged to go on with my education by a former



GLADYS HOLLIS

teacher in the program, Virginia Wright," Mrs. Hollis said.

"A year ago September, South Mountain Community College opened in temporary quarters in a church in South Phoenix where I live. I enrolled in night school and continued on this year when a permanent campus opened."

Mrs. Hollis said the South Mountain school has opened educational doors for many South Phoenix residents.

"A lot of students don't have cars and walk to the campus," she said. "I might have gone to Phoenix College, but wouldn't have been able to take as many courses because PC is so far to drive home from at night."

MRS. HOLLIS HAS a cumulative 3.5 (B+) average at South Mountain and plans to attend summer school to graduate in August.

She is majoring in counseling and business, but will continue working for Mrs. Heymann.

If that fits into larger plans, that is.

"I'm thinking about going on to Arizona State University, if I can afford it," she said.

"One of my granddaughters told me she's going to do better than her grandmother — getting a degree from ASU would give her something more to push for."