

How it
all
began!



University of Louisiana at Monroe president, Dr. Nick Bruno, left, and Janis Guyton, right, president of Monroe/West Monroe Business and Professional Women congratulate Robin Cox, center, for winning the BPW scholarship for 2011 at the National Business Women s Week Banquet held recently.

Robin Cox
Serenity Care Providers

Sometimes the simplest act of kindness can shape someone's future. This is exactly what happened to **Robin Cox**, owner of **Serenity Care Providers** in West Monroe, when she received the Monroe-West Monroe BPW Scholarship designated for non-traditional women students attending University of Louisiana at Monroe.



Robin, a wife and mother of three, always desired to finish pursuing her bachelor's degree, which she started twenty years prior. But like many women, especially mothers, she found it hard to manage her day-to-day responsibilities and make time for school. "I wanted to be a good, mother, wife and daughter," said Robin. "But, I also wanted to attain the educational goals I'd set for myself."

Earning a degree was more than personal gratification; she wanted to make a difference within her family and community as well.

In 2011, just as Robin started to prepare for the next phase of her education, she received devastating news that would alter her life forever. Robin's eldest son, who was 20 at the time, attempted suicide. He was taken to Saint Francis Hospital, the only ER equipped to treat traumatic head injuries, which is what Robin's son sustained after attempting suicide with a shot gun.

In desperate need of additional treatment, Robin's son was air-lifted to the LSU Shreveport Hospital. It would take nearly a month before Robin and her family were able to return to their home in West Monroe. However, her son would have to live in a smaller healthcare facility until he was strong enough to return home.



After going through such a traumatic experience, it's understandable that Robin would forget to complete and submit the necessary application to receive financial aid. "Without student loans, I couldn't afford to go back to school, and without applying, I certainly was not going to get one," said Robin.

Despaired and distraught, Robin considered not returning to school. "I thought – maybe I shouldn't go back to school this semester." She felt guilty about her aspirations. "I started to convince myself that I really needed to stop pursuing a degree, stop worrying

about myself and focus on taking care of my family."

When Robin's emotions started to get the best of her, she decided at that moment to turn her troubles over to God for guidance. "He has always lit my path," she said. Robin's faith paid off just a few short weeks later when she received a scholarship letter in the mail from BPW. "When I received the check from BPW, I knew then that I was going back to school and would not let these women down. They had chosen me to represent them and I would do it because they believed enough in me to invest in my education."

From that moment on, Robin never looked back. In May 2013, she graduated with a bachelor's of science degree from ULM and later that year started a business, Serenity Care Providers, along with her grandmother and father. **Serenity Care Providers** is an elderly assistance service provider, located in West Monroe.

Robin acknowledges that the scholarship is what kept her in school. "I am grateful that the BPW recognized the hard work I put forth to obtain an education. I really appreciate that this organization recognizes the accomplishments of non-traditional women students in the community that are stepping out of their comfort zone to better themselves."

BPW defines non-traditional students as women 25 years of age or older attending college for the first time or returning to school to complete a degree, start an advanced degree, or obtain a professional certification.

"Robin is the epitome of why we created this scholarship," said Angie Jackson-Wilson, president of the Monroe-West Monroe BPW. "In the midst of a personal crisis Robin was able to preserve. She should be commended for all of her accomplishments. I am happy that we were able to assist and watch her flourish throughout the years."

"The BPW scholarship was truly a "Godsend" and receiving it was an answer to my prayers, said Robin.