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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## A Long Road

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In many ways, the road to graduation for Angela Isenbart has been long and difficult.

She is honored for that journey as the 2012 Nora Duffy Award recipient, which goes to an adult learner who has overcome significant obstacles to achieve a baccalaureate degree magna cum laude and reflects the spirit of the University of Dayton's Marianist tradition.

Her road started in 1992 when she started taking classes before life as a military spouse and mother of two slowed her down. In the 20 years since, she has endured nine moves and three years of deployment for her husband — two of them combat deployments in Iraq — and picked up college credits as she could.

But in 2010 when Army Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Isenbart was assigned to the University of Dayton's ROTC program as a military science instructor, she found help to finally clear the obstacles in her path, and she also found her passion.

"This was my last chance," she said. "When he got this assignment, the path for me just became so clear, I had to take advantage of it."

First the money: as the spouse of a faculty member, Angela qualified for tuition remission, and Matthew assigned his educational benefits from the military to her education.

Then the credits: "I had 64 credits and had been told by other universities that they would only take 26 and that I would basically have to start over." But by working with Ricki Huff, assistant dean for student academic affairs and liaison between the College of Arts and Sciences and students with military connections, she navigated the credit transfer process and was able to use all of her existing credits.

The clock was ticking: Matthew's assignment at the University is up in December and the family's future is uncertain — maybe another assignment, maybe retirement. So she's been a full-time student since fall 2010.

Along the way, in social work and sociology classes, she found that she could not only have an impact on other students by bringing in perspectives from her life and teachers who helped her stretch that perspective.

With a 3.8 GPA in general studies and minors in social work, sociology and psychology, she hopes to find a job that will put her degree and her experience to work for veterans or military families.

"Angela is able to examine the problems we face in a spirit of critical inquiry, reflective of Marianist education," said Shawn Cassiman, one of several faculty members who nominated her for the Duffy award. "Angela's contributions often challenge assumptions of more traditional students leading to lively class participation."

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