

Dawn Nestola

Class of 1998

Dawn (Gazlay) Nestola, a 1987 graduate of Michigan Center High School, first attended Jackson Community College (JCC) in the fall of 1987 on a full-tuition music scholarship. Her primary instrument was the flute, and she participated in the Jackson Community Concert Band and JCC Jazz Band under the direction of Professor Ronald Douglass. She enjoyed her freshman year experience, which included more than a few games of Euchre in the JCC cafeteria. Dawn appreciated the continued guidance of Professor Douglass, who had also been her band director throughout high school.



Uncertain of her long-term goals, Dawn became employed by a local candy and tobacco wholesale distributor in the summer following her first year of college. She had every intention of returning to JCC for her sophomore year in the fall of 1988. Instead, she spent the next 10 years forging a career in the wholesale distribution industry, primarily catering to convenience stores and large retailers. The lack of professional fulfillment, intellectual stimulation, and the knowledge that her industry's goods were in direct opposition to public health, eventually culminated in her return to JCC in 1997.

Forensic Science had become an area of great interest for Dawn, and she had planned to major in Chemistry. However, while pursuing her Associate of Science (AS) degree at JCC, she was introduced to the discipline of Microbiology by Professor Steven Thurlow. Professor Thurlow's passion for microbiology was infectious (pun intended!) and his belief in Dawn and her aptitude in the sciences fostered her growing confidence that, in spite of being an "older" student, a meaningful career as a scientist was well within reach.

Dawn graduated with High Honors from JCC in December 1998 with an AS degree and immediately transferred to Michigan State University (MSU). In 2000 she earned her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Microbiology with Honors. Professor Thurlow had a profound influence on Dawn's life and future career, and she is grateful for his support and guidance!

Another member of the JCC faculty, Professor Xania Payne, played an instrumental role in Dawn's academic development. Dawn excelled in Dr. Payne's Physics course, in large part due to her exemplary delivery of rigorous content and unique teaching style. The interesting and challenging laboratory exercises provided Dawn with the ability to hone her technical writing skills, which would become integral to her future career successes. Dawn still holds onto one particular Physics assignment where Professor Payne wrote on the cover page, "If only there were money to be made in technical writing!" She would be pleased to know that Dawn has, indeed, found an excellent means by which to earn a great living that relies heavily on her technical writing ability.

Now in her 24th year as an industrial microbiologist, Dawn's entire career has been focused on infection prevention through microbiological quality and sterility assurance. She works diligently to protect public health by thoroughly understanding and controlling manufacturing environments and processes used for the manufacture of products, ensuring their appropriate microbiological quality to prevent infection in patients and consumers. She specializes in microbiological contamination control related to sterile and

non-sterile pharmaceutical and over-the-counter healthcare products, cell and gene therapy products, and orthopedic medical devices.

As an 11.5-year cancer survivor, Dawn also uses her voice at pharmaceutical and medical device industry events to share her unique perspective on infection prevention through the lens of both a patient and an industry subject matter expert. She is passionate about her work and relishes such opportunities to stress the important and integrated roles that regulators, manufacturers, suppliers, and healthcare providers play in maintaining patient and consumer trust by ensuring products are manufactured and used in ways that provide protection from microbiological harm (e.g., infection or toxic reaction).

Dawn presently works for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) as Director of Sterility Assurance & Microbiological Quality. Prior industry experience includes related positions with Johnson & Johnson (McNeil and DePuy Synthes), Pfizer, and Pharmacia. While employed by Pfizer, Dawn earned her Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree with High Honors from Centenary University in Parsippany, New Jersey. This advanced degree enabled her to serve as an Adjunct Professor at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, teaching an accredited college level course on Aseptic Processing, which is the core foundation in the manufacture of sterile pharmaceutical products.

Music is still a big part of Dawn's life, and she loves to sing and play her Yamaha baby grand piano as a form of self-entertainment. She has also developed a love of photography and is always in search of subjects to shoot; her primary target is her 17-year-old son. Dawn is the proud mother of Joseph, a high school junior, who is a gifted student with an amazing sense of humor and a kind spirit. He excels academically, is enthusiastic about personal fitness, and has a great love of animals. He will be off to college next year and she is certain he will do remarkable things in life! They reside in West Chester, Pennsylvania, with their three beloved Saint Berdoodle pups.

Personal Mantra/Inspirational Quote

As a "recovering" perfectionist, Dawn implemented the following mantra in her life about 20 years ago, and it has served her well in both her career and personal life. Implementation is not always perfect, but that is sort of the point.

Perfection is the enemy of good.

Her favorite inspirational quote came from her son when he was 7 years old when she was cautioning him about something to do with germs. She keeps these wise words by her desk at work as a reminder that not everything in life must be as clean as a sterile product manufacturing environment.

Don't let your microbiology get the best of you!