



Alumni Connection

The Holmes Family Revisited

Like most parents, Norman Troy Holmes and his wife Glenn McDonald Holmes hoped to send their children to college.

Their hopes became dim, however, with the rising cost of tuition and seven children. The expense of a college education was looking more and more like something Norman and Glenn could not afford.

In 1965, however, the outlook changed with an accessible and affordable college built in northeast Birmingham just a short drive from Palmyrdale, their home community. Six of the seven Holmes children attended the college and continued on to complete their education.

In 1997, those six children received the Jefferson State Alumni Association's Outstanding Alumni Award. Their parents and a sister who did not attend Jefferson State were also honored.

"It was so important to my Dad for us to go to college," said Sandra Holmes Lancaster. "Mom and Dad taught us the value of getting a college education."

The Holmes children are now performing in a variety of successful careers. Dr. Ricky Holmes is a veterinarian, Mark Holmes is an engineer, Norman Glenn Holmes is a certified public accountant. Karen Holmes works as the coordinator of supportive services for the UAB School of Dentistry. Sandra Holmes Lancaster, who went on to receive her master's degree in business administration, has taught at both Samford University and Jefferson State. Terry Lynn Holmes Gillison is a teacher at Cathedral Christian School. Jan Holmes Holley is the only Holmes sibling who didn't attend Jefferson State, but her husband did — as did the spouses of four of her siblings.

Jefferson State President Judy Merritt said the Holmes family is very deserving of the Outstanding Alumni Award because they demonstrate the great help two-year colleges give to Alabamians.

"They're representative of who attends community colleges and why access is important," said Merritt. "Further, they are extraordinary examples of individuals taking advantage of the opportunities that community colleges provide."

"The elder Holmeses deserve recognition, too," said Merritt. "Clearly, they had to make quite an effort to get all of their children to college."