

From Inspired to Inspiring: *Women* Take ASA Helm



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WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR CAREER?

As an undergraduate and master's student I studied math, computer science, probability, and statistics. I loved each of them, and did well throughout my studies. However, I found that statistics was an excellent combination of all of these interests.

An interest in solving applied math problems sparked me initially, and then I became very intrigued by evidence-based decision-making in policy. How can statisticians and statistics contribute to making decisions more data-driven? How do we communicate analyses effectively?

I completed an undergraduate degree in mathematics and physics and a master's degree in engineering. Afterward, I got a research job at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, Virginia, where my colleagues encouraged me to pursue a PhD in computational sciences and informatics (with a concentration in statistics) at George Mason University.

TELL US ABOUT A WOMAN YOU LOOKED UP TO AND WHY.

Thinking back, I appreciate the efforts of 2007 ASA President Mary Ellen Bock, 1996 ASA President Lynne Billard, and Curators Distinguished Professor Nancy Flournoy, who mentored me from afar in those early years as a young professor.

From childhood, my mother. She was my first role model, a constant inspiration, and a trailblazer in medicine. She believed and demonstrated that women can do anything they put their minds to.

I would have to say that the woman who motivated my educational goals is my mother. She had four children, each one a little over a year apart, at a time when women were meant to stay in the home. She went to school while still taking care of a household and completed her degree in mathematics, eventually becoming a high-school teacher. So, I guess she taught me to go for my dreams, even though it might be challenging.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU WISH SOMEONE HAD GIVEN YOU BEFORE YOU STARTED YOUR CAREER?

Stay curious, stay engaged, and be kind and generous to yourself and others.

Be confident and take chances! You can do this, and the world needs you.

Do not be afraid to try something new. Do not be afraid to pursue your dreams. You probably do not feel prepared or worthy, and you might fail, but you will still learn something along the way. Don't let fear hold you back.

Read Kathy, Sally, and Wendy's complete answers to these questions at <https://magazine.amstat.org>.