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May 1, 2006

Palm Beach Community College to award 1,065 degrees at Commencement May 9

**Mother and daughter Janet and Katherine Maple of West Palm
Beach are among the recipients**

With her two children now grown, Janet Maple decided it was time to go back to school and take her career to a new level.

She has been a licensed practical nurse (LPN) for 25 years, but without a degree in registered nursing, she says, advancement opportunities were limited. She enrolled in Palm Beach Community College in August 2002 to pursue an associate in applied science degree in nursing.

At the time Maple decided to go back to school, her youngest child, Katherine, 22, was struggling in college and with a career choice. Frustrated, the 2001 Forest Hill High School graduate dropped out of PBCC for a while. But when her mother enrolled, Katherine went back to school, too.

Now, the West Palm Beach mother and daughter, who both work part-time at PBCC, have something priceless to celebrate this Mother's Day. They will graduate together, among the 1,065 PBCC students who will receive associate in arts, associate in science and associate in applied science degrees. PBCC's Commencement ceremony for degree recipients will be held at 2 p.m. May 9 at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach. A separate ceremony for graduates of the College's certificate and diploma programs will be held at 10:30 a.m.

"It's special for me to graduate with my daughter," said Janet Maple, who turns 49 years old May 2. "Part of the reason for me going back to school was to encourage her to go to school. I knew she had struggled through high school. It was a combination of things. I should have done this a long time ago, but timing is everything."

Through helping her mother with math, Katherine Maple discovered her own niche – she enjoys teaching and helping others learn. After getting her associate in arts degree, Katherine Maple plans to transfer to the University of Central Florida this fall to pursue a bachelor’s degree in education. Her goal is to become an English teacher. Like her mother, she will enter one of the most high demand career fields in the country.

“Teacher is something I’ve always been. I just didn’t know it. I think because I was a bad student, I’m actually going to be a better teacher. One thing, I know all of the tricks. I might be able to help a student who might be in the same boat as me,” said Katherine, whose older brother is also a PBCC graduate and now a student at Florida Atlantic University.

Janet Maple, with the help of her daughter and another hired math tutor, was able to test into upper level college math, bypassing prep courses and moving faster into the registered nursing program. She has maintained a nearly 3.7 grade point average.

Katherine Maple repeated courses she failed in her first year and worked hard to bring her grade point average from a 1.5 her first year to a 3.0 now. Both have helped and encouraged each other.

“I wouldn’t be at this point without my mom. I’ve just seen how proud she’s been of me and how well I’ve been doing in school for the last few years. It’s something I want to continue,” Katherine Maple said.



Janet and Katherine Maple

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