



GED Scholars Initiative

Taking the Next Step • Lametris' Story

Lametris was the main caregiver in her family by age 10. By age 14 her first child was born. She moved back and forth between Cleveland and Detroit. Mornings came early as she woke her brothers, fed them breakfast and got them ready for school day by day. As a young, single mom, her responsibilities increased. Now she had to juggle work to provide for her family and attend school. By 18 she had her second child.

Lametris asked, "What do I need to do to graduate?" She was frustrated by the lack of communication from the school in telling her clear requirements to graduate. She juggled summer school, work, raising children, and somehow, she was one credit short of graduating. Her focus became a concentration of PTA meetings, soccer games, coaching cheerleading and work.

Life was hard and it took guts to look honestly at what she could do to improve it. Twelve years later, Lametris heard about the Adult Basic and Literacy Education, (ABLE) program through a neighbor. She went into the room and saw students younger than she was and doubted that anyone could help or identify with her. She stuck with the program and on her second attempt, achieved her GED, now a single mom of four. She was thankful for the kind people that helped her learn more. Her determination was her strength, "As a parent, I wanted always to help my kids." Her work ethic continues to serve her well today at age 41.

Armed with her GED, always looking higher, she knew she had to continue to "expand her knowledge base." She applied for an office position, and was given a custodial position even though she had

the skills for office work. When she questioned why, the company told her she needed to get her foot in the door. After eight years of working the same position, she realized she had reached the ceiling with this particular employer. Lametris believed in being proactive and again searched for ways to improve her life. She felt strongly "If I get my education/degree no one will be able to deny me."

"I saw my first GED Scholars Initiative flyer through a friend who thought this would be a perfect program for me, then she brought me to Kent...I got more folders, flyers, packets and brochures on the program and took them back to Cleveland. After reading all of it, I knew that it was something that I wanted to be a part of." She learned the Initiative was a program of the Ohio Literacy Resource Center and was going to propel her to the next level in her education. For inspiration, she placed the magnet of the GED Scholars on her refrigerator where she and her kids were reminded daily of her goal to get a college education. Lametris memorized the

faces on the magnet that represented who she wanted to be. When she was ready to take on her dream, Lametris walked into the GED Scholars Initiative office and found "friendly faces," and felt as if she was "taken under their wing."

Bolstered by the "one-on-one connection," her confidence grew stronger by the new relationships formed. The vision of the GED Scholars Initiative "addresses the needs of students who earned their GED and attend Kent State University. Through research and development, this Initiative provides students with support to meet the university's academic standards, complete program studies, gain technological expertise and become aware of career opportunities."

Lametris attributes the Bridges program funded by the Dominion Foundation and the GED Scholars Initiative as contributing to the "evolution of me." "I am empowering myself and I'll take all of this back

"If I get my education/degree no one will be able to deny me"

to my community and help my kids.” Her dream is to help the kids in the inner city, to be an advocate for them, to stand in the gap to help them chase their dreams as she is doing now.

As with any dream, hard work is the fuel necessary to cross the finish line. One must go through some times of trial to get the prize at the end. Lametris recalls that first time she walked into the classroom on campus. Assailed with self-doubt and afraid, she briefly wondered what she had got-

ten herself into but found the courage to keep going. Determination and dedication took over. An important key to any success is the support of family. Lametris credits her grandmother as a constant voice and her son as he wheeled her around campus when she had surgery and drove her to and from campus. She is willing to do “whatever it takes.”

Lametris knows the importance of focus on success in her studies. She moved away from Cleveland to Kent know-

ing this would “enable her to do more.” Knowing she had new support system helped her settle and Lametris “stopped doubting that this is where I should be.” She is aware of the value of putting first things first and was rewarded by being named to the Dean’s list the past two semesters.

Her children now range in ages: 19, 20, 22 and 26. Lametris is proud they have achieved their dreams in different professions. Her 22-year-old son De’ Valle is a Psychol-

ogy major at Kent. The ripple effect one woman’s passion has on her family is beneficial for all to witness because we are changed by it.

GED Scholar, KSU Junior with a 3.21 GPA, proud mother and grandmother, Lametris offers some closing thoughts, “You don’t have to be like everyone else but be the best that you can be.” She challenges us to think, “What do you want to be, and how can be the best at it? Whatever you want to do in life, do it, and do it well.”

• The GED Scholars Initiative was created by the Ohio Literacy Resource Center and is the first of its kind in the nation. The center works with other programs and offices at Kent State University to meet the needs of GED Scholars. The Initiative addresses the needs of students who earned their GED and attend Kent State University. Through research and development, this initiative provides students with support to meet the university’s academic standards, complete programs studies, gain technological expertise and become aware of career opportunities.

www.gedscholars.org