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Chronological Autobiography

After graduating from high school (Sullivan Central, Blountville, Tennessee) in 1976, I enrolled at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) as a full-time student, majoring in Biology and minoring in Education. To help pay for my tuition, I worked during the summer months for Tennessee Eastman Kodak. I remained at ETSU for two years, before marrying in 1978, when I left school and moved to Colorado with my husband. While in Colorado, I worked for the state in a Denver public assistance office. When we moved to Fort Myers, Florida one year later, I worked for two years as a data entry clerk. When I divorced in 1981, I moved back to Tennessee and started school full-time at Northeast State University (NESU) where I received an Associates Degree in Computer Science.

Three months before graduation from NESU, Professional Data Services (PDS) hired me as a programmer/analyst. I was responsible for writing and maintaining billing software for ten long distance companies, serving more than 500,000 customers in the Southeastern United States. I also managed PDS's telephone switching system and installed computer systems and software at facilities in Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida. The position I held at PDS required significant knowledge about telephony, micro-computing, technical report writing, and user documentation. The job I held at PDS helped me to acquire excellent project management and interpersonal skills.

I had been employed by PDS for two years when one of my clients, Suncoast Communications, Inc. (SCI), offered me employment in their Sarasota, Florida office. I accepted the position because it offered new and challenging responsibilities. SCI was a long distance reseller, with a staff that grew from ten when they hired me, to more than forty when

ATC/Microtel bought the company out just two years later. The skill set required in my new position included all of those necessary in my previous position, and expanded to add

supervision of other professional staff. This experience improved my interpersonal skills, taught me how to motivate others and express myself more confidently.

When I joined SCI, there were approximately fifteen hundred customers using their long distance service. During my tenure with the corporation, we grew the database to more than 30,000 customers. My most significant accomplishment at SCI was single-handedly converting our customer phone lines and billing information over to a new system owned and operated by ATC/Microtel. The conversion was a result of acquisition of SCI. As a result, ATC/Microtel offered me a position as a systems analyst. Given less than four weeks to find new employment in Sarasota or move to ACT's corporate office in Boca Raton, I accepted ATC/Microtel's job offer.

ACT was a multimillion-dollar long distance reseller and in 1989, was one of only a handful of long distance companies that had not yet been acquired by or merged with one of the larger carriers such as Sprint or AT&T. Again, my responsibilities were expanded. At ATC, I maintained the newly acquired SCI database and helped other ATC employees modify their databases to accommodate the assimilation of SCI's customers. I assisted the sales team in developing new billing options for both business and residential customers. ATC used the team approach to manage its business solutions and I learned how to build consensus, resolve conflicts between members, and share responsibility.

Since I was hired by PDS in 1983, I had witnessed a litany of mergers, sellouts, buyouts, and closing of tens of long distance resellers. While at ATC, we purchased three companies and merged with another. The industry was quite volatile and companies frequently laid off employees. As a single parent, this concerned me and I decided to find a more stable work environment. The Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection (DNRP) hired me in 1989 as a programmer/analyst. At that time, the department developed its own customized software to track the facilities it regulated. I wrote the department's laboratory information management system (LIMS) and the tracking system for environmental violations. I was also responsible for maintaining and modifying the hazardous materials management systems. Because effective and user-friendly software requires an intimate knowledge about the business

process, before writing the programs to track and report on components our laboratory found in water, soil, and air samples, I worked closely with the laboratory manager to gain an understanding of their operations and needs. I learned how field staff collects samples, the types of methods used to analyze samples, and how samples are used in prosecuting environmental crimes.

The enforcement system I wrote consisted of a database that allowed our inspectors to record pertinent violator information, automatically print warning notices and notices of violation when certain criteria were present, track incoming complaints from the public, and maintain a historic record of offenses. Before writing this system, I spent several weeks with enforcement staff, learning even more about sampling, environmental violations, applicable laws, and becoming familiar with the procedure and forms of the enforcement section. The enforcement section is a service organization to the rest of the department so I also learned about hazardous materials facilities, dredge and fill operations, Wetlands, beach renourishment, air and water quality and environmental licensing. Both the LIMS and Enforcement Tracking systems increased the department's efficiency, streamlining our tracking, permitting, licensing, and enforcement procedures.

The knowledge about the environment that I gained through managing these information systems caused me to want to become more involved in the daily activities of the department. I discussed this desired career change with the department's director who explained that she would provide me with opportunities to work on special projects as they presented themselves. Within three months of making this commitment to me, the director promoted me to Public Education Coordinator. This position involved professional, consultative and promotional work encompassing development and implementation of countywide public education programs. I was responsible for producing and coordinating comprehensive environmental education programs and activities. I coordinated educational programs for county employees and the public including participation in countywide community cleanup events like the annual Waterway Cleanup, Reef Sweep, and Coastal Cleanup. I also helped the County Commission create Broward Beautiful, a fourteen-member Commission-appointed board that advises and directs community beautification projects.

Accomplishing these tasks required considerable knowledge of the local, regional, and global environment. I learned the principles and methods of planning public education projects and program administration. I gained ability to present classroom instruction and facilitate discussion sessions. I became skillful at planning, coordinating, and evaluating programs and events. In this position, I received my introduction to developing mass media campaigns, conducting environmental educational conferences and workshops, and serving as a liaison between government officials. The position also provided me with my first opportunities to establish relationships throughout the community, working closely with elected and appointed officials, service and civic organizations, homeowner groups and educators.

Three years later, the director promoted me to Environmental Projects Coordinator. As such, I continued to manage the department's environmental education and public outreach initiatives. I also assumed the responsibility of coordinating the department's legislative activities. This new task taught me to effectively discuss environmental legislation with members of the State Legislature and the U.S. Congress. I also learned how to prepare position papers for legislators and develop talk sheets for lobbyists and staff. It was during this time that I also became involved in several long-range, County Initiative, and Everglades Restoration. As Environmental Projects Coordinator, I served as a principal professional and technical resource person for environmental projects. I supervised the implementation of environmental programs and provided assistance to other agencies, interest groups, developers, and the public. I broadened my depth of knowledge related to environmental planning, policy analysis, and research methods and techniques. This progressive experience cultivated me for my next promotion in 1997 – Assistant to the Department Director.

In my current position with the DNRP, I assist the department director in a wide range of administrative tasks. I remain closely involved with education and outreach, supervising a professional staff that develops and implements environmental awareness campaigns for both the regulated community and the public at large. I lead the department's legislative affairs function and continue to act as Executive Director for Broward Beautiful. The new responsibilities I acquire with this last promotion include ensuring operational and administrative continuity and coordination between the department's six divisions, assisting the director in developing the

annual budget, recommending organizational and administrative changes, and representing the director as needed. Since becoming Assistant to the Director, I have developed the department's Equal Opportunity Action Plan, successfully lobbied for \$500,000 for out North Fork