

Southwestern Masters in Leadership Program Entrance Essay

By Joseph Martinez III

The day you stop educating yourself, is the day you stop pursuing improvement. A learner by nature, I have an internal fortitude that drives me to seek more. During Operation Southern Watch, my hero Colin Powell told my Squadron and I that “There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.” (Powell 1994)

His word that day defines a work philosophy that mirrored my parent’s example. Their core principles helped me navigate obstacles, so that I could accomplish life’s challenging tasks. I learned that if I am to be successful, I had to willingly participate, engage in continuous learning and develop a skill-set that would allow me flexibility in a rigid environment. I also had to work independently while taking direction and receiving constructive criticism to grow. These principals established a foundation that equipped me with the tools to successfully finish my bachelors’ degree, start a successful family business and complete a twenty-year military career. I am proud of my time in the military; during my enlistment I was able to accomplish all three of my career, educational and family goals.

In 1987 I became my families third generation of military men. One of my proudest accomplishments in the Air Force was being selected as the Project Manager for a 9 Million dollar command counter-drug program. I created a utilization process guideline that established financial accountability for our countries global airlift aircraft resources used in counter drug operations. This process laid the ground work for the seizure and recovery of over 4.7 Million dollars. For my contribution, I was selected as “Non-Commissioned officer of the Year” and awarded a medal while my family watched with pride.

I married an Auburn University graduate who understands my need for learning. She supported me while I focused on completing my education. Together with our two daughters, we started a skateboard company and now market our product across the country. This is a family owned business and I owe the success of its organized operation to the advanced education I received. Between fighting in five United States conflicts, starting a business and raising two brilliant daughters I have been able to complete an Associate’s degree in applied Science from the Community College of the Air Force and a Bachelors of Sciences degree from Southwestern College.

After completing college, I initially delayed graduate school and entered the job market to gain practical experience to bolster my academic credentials. I also spent some of that time working on a self-assessment analysis and evaluating my career planning goals. I did not want to start a graduate program without a clear objective. My decision now to pursue a Masters Degree in Leadership is based on the positive experience I had while attending Southwestern College and the curriculum that made it challenging, but fun. Now that I’m retired from the military and will not be deploying overseas anymore, I have the time to fully dedicate to my studies. My new career in K-12 education focuses on leading a supply chain management and process logistics department. The K-12 public school system encourages advanced learning to which I certainly plan to contribute to that culture of learning.

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I know that I will be an excellent candidate for Southwestern College Masters Leadership program. I have the competence for hard work by embodying self-motivation, self-discipline and time management skills. I have proven record throughout my civilian and military life that I can perform under pressure and emerge successful. I am completely focused on academic achievement by setting the same high standards of performance that enabled me to achieve my three goal areas. I am able to employ higher communication skills by knowing when to listen and to speak. My refuse-to-fail philosophy will help garner my next academic degree and reinforce my advancement within the business world and set the educational bar for my children to follow. Any success I achieve will serve as a reflection of the highest standards of education I gained from attending Southwestern College.

Life lessons taught by my parents coupled with a global leader apprenticeship I gained in the military and authenticated with a college degree has prepared me for my next academic adventure. I am a willing participant and engaging in continuous learning. My quest for a Masters Degree in Leadership from Southwestern College will be met and achieved. My collegiate example will serve as a bar for my children to reach. If I prepare, work hard and learn from my failures the only result can be success. If you put your trust in me, I will not fail my task.