Amanda Rostic Seeks Career In Epidemiology

By Rick Pulliam
The Grand Rapids Times

Amanda Rostic is a 2007 graduate of Kelloggsville High School. Her class was very competitive with grade point averages and she ended up with a 4.2 grade point average, which put her in the top fifteen in her class.

She then attended Grand Valley State University for her undergrad studies.

“My major during undergrad was biology and my minor was chemistry,” said Amanda. “I was interested in biology because I have always liked answering questions; and, of all of the subjects, science seems to be the best way to answer things. It just seems that scientists are always doing research or exploring and searching for an answer, and I always liked that.”

Amanda recently graduated with her Master’s Degree in Public Health from Grand Valley State University.

“My emphasis is in epidemiology, which is a fancy term for diseases in a population of people, as opposed to just one person,” she said. “For example, a pediatrician is interested in disease among children; but an epidemiologist would pick a population and study the entire population at once. So I am looking at the big picture.”

She is currently employed at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital, where she works in pediatric optimality. “I do love my job there and I really love the kids,” said Amanda. “Pediatrics is near and dear to my heart, but the only thing is that the role that I am in now doesn’t necessarily fit my future aspirations and more applicable to my degree.”

She continued, “Dealing with population and community health is more so what my interest would be in. I would like to work with the different groups like African American and Latino women’s in fitness groups or groups for people with chronic diseases such as heart disease or diabetes. That’s where I would like to be.”

After graduating from college in 2011, she was unsure what she wanted to do with her degree, so she took time off in between degrees to make sure that she got a masters in something that she is really interested in.

She is also interested in continuing to work at Spectrum Health and she is interested in staying Grand Rapids.

She also noted, “There are a lot of really good schools in Michigan, but there is a big brain drain because a lot of young people are leaving the state and I think that it is because it is really hard here as African American’s for a number of reasons such as lack of diversity, institutionalized racism and the list goes on,” she said.

“In my opinion, if all the young people who are graduating from these colleges leave, then there won’t be anyone hear to fix that problem.”

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Despite the fact that Asia Shipp didn’t grow up with pets, she has always had a love for animals for as long as she can remember. “I always liked animals,” she said. “I used to watch Animal Planet all of the time as a kid, and I always thought that working with animals was something that I wanted to do,” said Shipp.

After graduating from Creston High School, Asia enrolled at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Animal and Poultry Science. “What I discovered is that the animal science field is very broad and leads to nutrition, health, chemistry, biology and working for different companies or even governmental departments,” she said. She continued, “The field is very broad, so I had to figure out what I really had an interest in. At first, I wanted to become a veterinarian. Then, I was undecided on that; but I still wanted to work in research, focusing on animal health.” She recently received a master’s degree in that field from the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences at Tuskegee University, having graduated, Saturday, May 13, during the university’s One Hundred and Thirty - Second Annual Spring Commencement.

She completed her graduate research with Dr. Byeng R. Min as her Major Professor. Her thesis was: “The Effect of Condensed - Tannins on Drug - resistant Haemonchus Contortus Control in Meat Goat.” Asia plans to use her degree to further study animals and to assist farmers in the care of their animals.

“In the future, I would like to own a farm, and I want to be able to distribute to main stores, and I want to be one of the top producers for goat breeding and meat production,” she said. Asia with family members that traveled from Grand Rapids to Tuskegee

What motivated her to continue on with her education and to pursue a master's degree? “My number one thing was to not let myself down and number two was not to disappoint my dad, Richard Pulliam; my mom, Regina Shipp; grandmothers, Patricia Pulliam and the late Louise Shipp; and the rest of the family and other supporters. she said. “I would say to myself when I had trouble with a class that I was not going to let this one stumbling block stop me from what I have wanted to do my whole life and I refused to let myself and others down. That is what motivated me to keep going.” Her faith in God was very important to her when she encountered closed doors in her path. “My faith in God was important because without my faith in the Most - High, I would not be where I am today,” she said. “Even though there is a lot of support at Tuskegee, there are also a lot of naysayers as well. If I didn’t rely on my faith and what God has told me about myself and my career, I probably wouldn’t have gotten my bachelor’s degree and I know that I would not have been able to receive my master’s degree.”

Earning a Ph.D. is in her plans. When giving advice to other young people, Asia says to never take no for an answer. “Know who you are; know what kind of person you are; know what you want to do and know what you are called to do,” said Asia. “You have to have your mind made up one - hundred percent on what you want to do and don’t let society or anyone tell you no. There is always an open door somewhere.”