

Auto Body Painting and Refinishing Class Student Story

When I was a little girl I had a whole collection of toy cars. I played with them all the time and I used my nail polishes to paint them the colors that I wanted them to be. As I got older my dad took me to the Goodguys car shows with him in his 1971 Chevy pickup and we would walk around and look at all the classic cars. When I became a freshman in high school I knew my passion would involve classic cars because I love being around them. My original career plan was to draw revamped looks of classic cars like Chip Foose and Dave Kindig. In my sophomore year, I talked with my counselor to figure out the classes that I wanted for my junior year. That's when she talked to me about the Auto Body Painting and Refinishing class at MVROP.

I remember walking into that class and falling head over heels with the shop. When we completed our safety training, we were finally allowed to work in the shop and I remember that was one of the most exciting days of my life. As I worked on projects my teacher gave me, I started to love working on cars more and more each day. I remember I begged my dad for months to let me work on his truck, but he never agreed until he saw the shop and saw what I was learning in that class during open house. When he finally agreed to let me work on his truck, I was jumping for joy and was so excited to work on it.

My current goal right now is to complete my dad's truck as close to finishing as possible before I leave to college. I work hard in my class everyday to try and complete this goal. That has led me to my updated career plan, which is to restore classic cars. During my junior year, my dad went to Concourse D'Elegance in Pebble Beach and Jay Leno was there talking about a college called McPherson located in McPherson, Kansas. My dad was intrigued by the school because he discovered it is the only college in the country that gives a bachelor's degree in Automotive Restoration. They teach you everything from woodworking, upholstery, and fabrication work. At first I thought the college was interesting but not intriguing because I did not plan to attend college because I did not think I needed it to fulfill my dreams. At first I told my dad that I would go, but go as a transfer student and attend community college first. Later on my dad told me that we were going to visit McPherson. I said alright knowing I did not have a choice. As we landed in Kansas I fell in love with the slow pace feel and the town that was 10 minutes walking distance from the college. Everyone there was so friendly and said hi to you everywhere you went.

I'm sure glad my dad brought me to the college what we were learning from the visit made me certain that I wanted to attend. What really sold me was walking into Templeton Hall (the automotive shop) because it felt like walking into the MVROP Body Shop the first time. In that moment I knew this was where I needed to go to learn everything I need for what I want my career to look like. While I was there I told my dad that I wanted to go to this college all four years because I felt that if I was going to

transfer I would be farther behind than everyone else and I want to make sure I learn as much as possible while I'm there.

In addition, the other thing that hooked me was the Cars Club they have at McPherson. The Cars Club is where you can be immersed in working on cars and that's where I could use the things I learned in class and put it into the car I'm fixing up.

Now that I'm in my senior year of high school, this is the year for applying to colleges. McPherson organizes their college admissions in two rounds for automotive students. The first round is to apply to the college and once you get in then round two is applying for the Restoration Program. I applied to McPherson and only to McPherson. People kept telling me that I should apply for a community college as well, but I was so determined to getting into McPherson that even if I were to get rejected I was not going to a community college because McPherson was where I wanted to go.

The day I applied for McPherson I was nervous for the response. I waited for a month or so until I got the answer. I went to the gym after school like I always do and my dad texted me to meet him on the courts because he wanted to tell me something. My mind was confused on why he wanted to see me and my mind instantly thinks he's going to lecture me because I forgot to take out the trash. When I met him on the courts he comes up to me and tells me he called the man in charge of admitting students and I was accepted. Oh how my mind was so happy for getting accepted and I felt so good after hearing that news.

Round one was complete and round two was starting up. It was March and I asked my dad when I was supposed to apply for the Automotive Restoration program so he called the school. He found out that not only there was two weeks until the application was due, but that they accepted 8 out of the 10 people in the nation for the program already. Hearing this news, we dedicated Sunday March 4 to turn in my application. The week after went by and I was so nervous about hearing the news. I called on Monday March 12 before my ROP class and spoke the man in charge of the Automotive Restoration admissions. The first two times he did not answer because he was on the phone, but the third time he answered and I asked if I got in. He told me that I got in and I could not even express how grateful and happy that I was accepted. I first told my Auto Body teacher about it and he was super happy for me as well. Then I called my dad and told him and he was very happy for me as well. I am ready to start my career path in the passion that I love.

-Jacqueline Gullion