

TESTIMONIAL: MANDY HAMILTON, WGSO 990 AM AND THE DOLPHIN NEWSPAPER



Even as a little girl growing up in Slidell, La., Mandy Hamilton was always looking for creative outlets of self-expression. In her childhood, she found that writing poetry and short stories came very naturally to her. As she grew older, that early love blossomed into an appreciation for the field of journalism.

She was attending University of Arkansas at Monticello in fall 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit, changing Mandy's – and so many other Gulf Coast residents' – plans. She returned home and continued her college career at Delgado while doing clerical work and raising a 3-year-old daughter, Lexi, as a single mother. "I originally chose Delgado because of the convenience," Mandy explained. "Delgado's Slidell site is just minutes from my house. But even now that I'm taking classes at the City Park Campus, the drive is only 45 minutes, and that commute is well worth the value of the education I'm getting."

In spring 2007, Mandy brought her talents, interests and goals into focus by enrolling in the Performance and Media Arts degree program with a concentration in print/broadcast journalism. She is proud to have been placed on the Dean's List in fall 2007, earning a perfect 4.0 GPA, and to have maintained a 3.0 GPA or higher throughout her 3-year educational career.

To reinforce her classroom learning, Mandy took on an internship at WGSO 990 AM radio station in Slidell in 2007. A typical day found her in the newsroom rewriting breaking news stories that appealed to the station's listening audience, and a few times a week she did on-air "voicers," reports that featured her voice. She conducted phone interviews with police officials, court personnel and management of different companies. And occasionally, she enjoyed the task of booking politicians or other interesting guests for on-air personalities Bernie Cyrus or Ed Clancy's radio talk shows.

Mandy found that advancing to classes in her concentration and being given the flexibility to earn credit for her internship re-ignited her interest in her education. "I really liked the internship because it was hands-on training outside of a classroom setting, but I still got college credit for it."

Much as she loved her time at the station, Mandy is now devoting herself to full-time studies at Delgado City Park and her new position as editor of Delgado's student newspaper, *The Dolphin*. Mandy devotes 25 hours per week to Delgado's work-study program helping with Dolphin design, layout, advertising solicitation and writing. "I love writing for *The Dolphin*," she said. "I think it's wonderful that students of various majors have the opportunity to be involved with the school paper. But we couldn't do it without the exceptional help and guidance of our advisor, Susan Hague."

Mandy says her biggest goal right now is graduating with her associate degree in fall 2008. After that, she hopes to take advantage of the college's strong articulation agreements with other higher education schools to transfer to a 4-year institution, possibly Southeastern University, and pursue a bachelor's degree in the field of Journalism. Her ultimate dream? To become a sideline reporter for the NFL – in the New Orleans area, of course. "I couldn't leave the seafood, the atmosphere or my home team, the Saints," she explained.

Mandy appreciates the excellent foundation Delgado has given her in her educational and career path. "It's like building blocks," she explained. "Most employers look for experience as well as education, and the Delgado classroom, work-study program and the internship have provided me with both. I can only benefit from adding to my resume. And a Delgado degree won't hurt, either!"