

WHAT I WANTED TO BE AND WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

by Sarah Chamberlain

When I was in Skinner Jr. High School, they had a career fair, and the one that stuck out in my mind was United Airlines Stewardess. At this point, the women's lib movement had not yet succeeded in making all occupations gender neutral. I told my parents about it and my dad told me, "No that is not what you are going to do." That ended that.

Next, I wanted to be an actress. I took one semester of acting, and was forced to drop it (along with music) to take Latin. I had to have 2 years of Latin to get into college. End of that career.

My next career choice was to be a Denver Police Officer. That career was even shorter than the airline career.

My dad became an attorney when I was 7 years old. Mom hated paperwork and Dad was a hunt and peck typist. Along with Latin (hated it) I took the first year of typing (loved it). Guess what? I soon learned to type legal briefs, wills, etc. This career lasted until my Dad died in 1984.

When I graduated from High School, I was told I was taking the year off and if I wanted to go to college, I was going to pay for it. I thought, "Yeah, I work for you how's that gonna work?!"

However, in high school, I took Typing, Shorthand, Transcription, Accounting and probably another course or two I have forgotten.

I also took Algebra (straight A's) and then Geometry (crash and burn). I was placed in a General Math class that had a course in it called Income Tax Preparation. On the final exam, out of about 130 students in Mr. Peterson's class, I was 1 of 3 that scored 100%. I told myself, I think I have found my niche.

I graduated in 1971, took an H & R Block Tax Course in 1979, started my own practice in 1980, and became an Enrolled Agent to practice before the IRS in 1985. The pass rate in 1984 was 29.6% of those who sat for the exam the first and/or second time. Out of that group, less than 1/3 who sat, 16% passed on the first try. I never sat a second time.

I am an accountant, specializing in taxes and still an EA to this day. Oh yes, I finally went to college and got my BA in accounting in December and I am working on my Master's degree as we speak.