

I received the Tournament of Friendship Scholarship my senior year at Michigan State University. The scholarship meant so much to me because I came to MSU with a really big dream and not much money to fund it. My mother was a single mother and worked three jobs to support us, but didn't have anything left over for my college, so I knew these dreams were not going to be easy to come by. I had chosen MSU because of its superior Criminal Justice Program that I felt would make me more competitive when I joined the workforce. I could not have been more correct in that assumption.

I graduated from MSU with a B.S in Psychology and a B.A. in Criminal Justice in 2005. I went on to earn a Masters of Science Degree in Criminology from the University of Cincinnati in 2007. After school, I worked in the private sector for about 4 years but I felt I wasn't fulfilling the lifelong need I had to help others. In 2011, I joined the South Bend (Indiana) Police Department and began my journey in helping others. In 2016, after a competitive interview process, I was selected to become a detective in the St. Joseph County Special Victims Unit where I have been very successful in helping those who I believe need it the most. My time at MSU not only taught me the proper skills to be a good investigator, but they taught me how to be a more understanding, empathetic and open minded person, which is key to success in the criminal justice field today.

It is important to know that maybe in the grand scheme of things, these scholarships seem like a very small gift, but to someone like me who was in need they mean everything.

Thank you so much!

Casey Hof-Swanson