

Statement of Acknowledgement

I began this journey many years ago, and since that time, much in life has changed. I tell this story because I am eternally grateful to those mentioned here. First, I graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio. The program was a wake-up call in terms of developing who I was, pushing me to achieve beyond what I knew, and seeing what was possible. Without Dr. David Young, my advisor, I may have not kept on track. He gave me an alternative pathway to success. I didn't get Milton. I didn't understand why anyone would study him.

However, after a semester of focusing on my writing (and my peers and advisor showing me good writing), I started to think more on how I could have prepared better for Oberlin. Dr. Young put my writing into perspective in a way that helped tremendously. Also at Oberlin, two professors of English had an impact which helped me realize I could achieve success: Wendy Motooka, PhD, and Augusta Rohrbach, PhD. We clicked in how we viewed things and they were fair and encouraging.

In addition to my English professors, Catherine Pellegrino, PhD, spent the extra hours on Saturday mornings to help me understand music theory. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to Dean Sayles and my math department advisor Bob Bosch who helped me realize that my life still needed music. Wes Jacobs, Tuba, entered the picture and I studied tuba until my third year. During my third year, I suffered a back injury and ended up leaving the conservatory of music. I finished my first degree, a Bachelor of Arts, in English literature.

After Oberlin, I went to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Dr. Jocelyn Jensen gave me the opportunity to show what I knew and what I could do. She, Dr. Alfonse Anderson, Professor of Voice, and Dr. Satish Bhatnagar, Professor of Mathematics and Dean of Sciences, raised me to be reflective and accept myself as a creative and interdisciplinary scholar. Dr.

Anderson, my only voice teacher since I was a student at UNLV, taught me to work harder and not accept anything less than my best. Dr. Bhatnagar was an incredible teacher and mentor of mathematics. He taught me it is okay to love both math and music - and to accept the side of me that is math. I almost applied for a PhD program in mathematics, as it would require one more year of advanced mathematics as an undergraduate, but I decided on another route.

Also at UNLV, Dr. Carol Kimball kept me on my toes and to keep questioning what I knew. She challenged me to be better every time I performed, or even just in passing. She would say things like, "But is it really spelled correctly?" That level of detail and care without telling me what to do, left me a better person. Patrice Hollrah, PhD, my director at the UNLV Writing Center, taught me the importance of quality and organization. She taught me to have high standards and always set your expectations accordingly.

I decided to continue my studies in business administration, and then public affairs and public policy. After completing a master of business administration and a master of music degree, I entered a doctoral program in public affairs and public policy. The degree program was an exciting and adventurous one. My dissertation advisor, Anna Lukemeyer, PhD, spent many hours with me, reviewing written work and being extremely supportive, helpful, and guiding me. Unfortunately, I was not ready to complete the program, and I had too many balls in the air to juggle. I did not have the maturity and discipline to finish.

In 2017, I lost my memory. I had struggled to find passion for learning and for anything that required a sense of emotion. My spouse, Michael Burdick, and my coworkers and boss, Obed Garza, were extremely generous and patient with me. They helped me remember who I was. My parents, Frank and Joan Estacio, spent hours with me, going over scrapbooks, videos,

and telling me stories of my life. My counselor Dr. Karr helped me relearn how to have healthy boundaries, conversations, and overall healthy living.

It wasn't until 2021 did I think of going back to school. I looked up programs and saw one that might be a good fit. I was ABD and had passed my comprehensive exams at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, but I had left the program after losing my memory in 2017. After nine months of working with Renate Allen from Alverno, I was able to gain acceptance to the program. Renate helped me identify if the school was a good fit and spoke with me almost weekly, cheered me on, built a fantastic relationship with me, and listened to my concerns, addressed them, and supported my decisions.

Emil Bernick, PhD, supported me on my journey to get to Alverno - thank you for your endless support on this journey. He was there with me in 2008, met with me numerous times since then, and was always fair and encouraging. In addition, I was supported tremendously by Jenn Tooley, Assistant Principal at my school, and David Weiller, Emeritus Professor of Choral Studies at UNLV. In life, we need those behind-the-scenes people who continuously cheer you on, and these two have been there, and supported me on this journey to be an educator.

When I enrolled, I was excited to finally begin again. I was nervous, scared, anxious, and unsure of how I would do. However, Alverno's approach has really helped me. The nurturing environment, the clarity and decisiveness needed to be successful, and the selection of a topic from a vast array of ideas, led me to many questions. I was afraid I wouldn't have a chance to contribute to the literature.

However, my advisor Dr. Melissa Bonds helped keep me on track. She displayed all of the Alverno values and approach. She encouraged me to think deeply about the topic, and she

helped me believe in myself. As an advisee, I seemed to have joined a family and felt at home - surrounded by a caring and supportive community.

However, I would be remiss if this document did not mention my family. This dissertation is dedicated to all of you, but also to my biggest cheerleaders: Richard Schmidt, Patricia Jorgenson, Suzanna O'Shea, Bruce Derr, my parents Frank and Joan Estacio, and my spouse, Michael Burdick. I am grateful to have you in my life and on this journey.