Celeste Cuffie ('07)

Celeste Cuffie isn’t your traditional Concordia student. Married at 18, Cuffie began her work life early, working in the medical field as a CNA for a hospice unit. When the job eventually became too emotionally taxing, Cuffie decided to switch gears and go into banking.

The career switch led her to pursue a degree in business. Cuffie received her Bachelor of Arts in Management and Communications in 2007 and an MBA in Finance and Management in 2012, through Concordia University Wisconsin’s adult and continuing education programs. “What I love most about the adult and continuing education department was the accelerated program they offered,” Cuffie said. “I loved the set-up of classes and how they were offered for four weeks at a time, and also the convenient locations.”

After obtaining her undergraduate degree, Cuffie secured a job with Johnson Controls. She eventually became stagnant in that position and eventually moved into a new position. After a year she decided to go back and get her MBA from Concordia. She credits her degree from Concordia as what really catapulted her career in the business world.

Cuffie is still currently working for Johnson Controls as a Demand and Portfolio Team Lead, where she works on managing projects and portfolios within the IT department. In her spare time, she also works as a life coach and consultant where she develops curriculum for courses that help people develop and learn important life skills, such as resume writing, professional development and leadership training.

Outside work, Cuffie makes family a priority. She has a daughter who is a senior in high school, who is deciding on colleges. She also has a son who is a high school freshman, and recently made the varsity soccer team. Besides spending time with her family, Cuffie is very involved in her church, and works with different church groups to help, teach, and empower others.

Cuffie says she greatly appreciates her degree, and doesn’t take it for granted. “Your education can work for you,” she tells students and alumni. “There is value in it and it’s more than a piece of paper, if we allow it to be.”