

877.655.2116

3

Publication:  
Redford Observer

Circulation:  
6432

County:  
Wayne  
Livonia, MI

5/8/2008  
7  
1437

900357  
University Of  
Detroit Mercy  
Keyword:  
University of  
Detroit Mercy

[thumbnail]

940700

# Valedictorian tells grads to give back, cherish life

BY REBECCA JONES  
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Beth Ann Dalrymple wanted to be valedictorian of her high school class.

But throughout her sophomore, junior and senior years at Thurston High School, a rare liver disease kept her out of class 20 to 40 days per year.

Still, she graduated with a 3.8 grade point average in 1981.

Dalrymple gets to be valedictorian Saturday when she gets her diploma from the University of Detroit Mercy.

Dalrymple was diagnosed at age 14 with a liver disease so rare it wasn't given a name until 1995, Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis. Although fatigued, she managed to function well for many years.

She received a transplant in January, 2006.

"I can't even begin to tell you how good it feels to feel healthy," she said. "I'm 44. I feel like I'm 20."

She has been to Europe a few times. She likes to drive her restored 1967 Mustangs on Hines Drive on Sunday afternoons and plays clarinet and saxophone. She enjoys

the company of her dog, Hermione.

She has earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, taking one class per semester, working full time at Ford Motor Co. and living with a liver disease that required a donor transplant.

The message she'll share with her fellow graduates is about life and giving back, a topic Dalrymple knows well.

"She lives out many of the values and missions of the university" especially giving back to human kind, said

Leo Hanifin, the dean of Engineering and Science.

Dalrymple, a Livonia resident, volunteers her time with Gift of Life, asking people to sign the donor registry. As a member of the engineering honor society, she worked with high school students to get them interested in engineering.

Everyone should make the most of life and cherish it, she said.

"She has demonstrated herself to be an exceptional student," Hanifin said. "But more than that, she's exceptional at working with people."

About two and a half years ago, Dalrymple had started planning her own funeral. She said she was just trying to be practical. She had been on the waiting list for more than six years and recently had been bumped to the top.

But Dalrymple was too sick to keep a Saturday afternoon appointment with a funeral director.

The next night, the phone rang.

Leo Hanifin, the dean of Engineering and Science.

Dalrymple has worked at Ford since 1990 and began attending U-D in 1999, through a partnership the two

The liver belonged to a 45-year-old woman. Dalrymple doesn't know her story, but she's written two letters of thanks to the family and will continue to send more.

"That's a difficult thank you," she said.

She encourages people to talk with their families about organ donation. It's too difficult a decision for survivors to make in a hospital.

Dalrymple has worked at Ford since 1990 and began attending U-D in 1999, through a partnership the two

Dalrymple has worked at Ford since 1990 and began attending U-D in 1999, through a partnership the two

Dalrymple has worked at Ford since 1990 and began attending U-D in 1999, through a partnership the two

Please see **GIVE BACK, A7**