



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

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Mothers and Daughters: Legacy Families on the Hill

Legacy families—those with multiple generations of Norwich graduates—are a special and proud alumni group. We can trace legacy relationships back more than a century, however Norwich daughters attending their mother's alma mater began much more recently.

The legacy of **JoAnn (Murphy) Kelley '74** and her daughters—Meegan '05, Jennifer '06, and Margaret '10—paints a rich, multigenerational connection to Norwich University, intertwined with family, education, and service.



JoAnn (Murphy) Kelley '74



Jennifer Kelley '06

Their individual journeys, though unique, are deeply rooted in Norwich's history and values.

JoAnn's story began in 1970 when she chose Vermont College because the curriculum was well organized, and student tour guides were friendly and helpful. "I just felt comfortable," JoAnn says. "It was a good fit for me. I felt safe and welcomed." Enrolled in a 2-year elementary education program, she saw her future in teaching.

Norwich University and Vermont College (VC) had a close relationship, as did their students. VC women regularly attended dances and other social events at Norwich, resulting in many marriages between VC and NU students. In the 1970s, both schools faced declining student enrollment. The emergence of community colleges eroded interest in VC and Norwich was impacted by a trend toward co-education and anti-military sentiment during the Vietnam War.

The two institutions merged in 1972, the same year JoAnn completed her associate degree at Vermont College. With Norwich's doors open to women, she decided to continue her education in a 4-year degree program. At the Junior Ring Dance, she met her future husband, Mike Kelley, also NU '74. She graduated with a bachelor's in



Meegan (Kelley) Henson '05

education in 1974 and in the 50 years since then, she and Mike raised five children, four of whom attended Norwich.

Jennifer Kelley, the oldest of JoAnn and Mike's children, grew up at West Point where her father taught. It was a dream come true for Jennifer to attend Norwich. As a civilian student, her experience was not a traditional one, but it shaped her deeply. Jennifer's involvement in the nursing program and student support gave her a profound sense of belonging which she continues to cherish in her professional life as a mental health nurse in Vermont. "It's a community that lasts a lifetime," she reflects, grateful for the professional connections and friendships she formed at Norwich.

Meegan (Kelley) Henson decided early on that she wanted to be part of the structured environment of a military academy. Norwich's size, traditions and small school feeling drew her in. Initially an engineering major, Meegan found her true calling in environmental science with a minor in engineering. Active in various campus activities, including the Corps of Cadets, Maroon and Gold, and band, she thrived at Norwich.



Margaret (Kelley) Thomas '10 & M'17

During her junior year, her father was offered the position of Commandant of Cadets at Norwich and her family relocated to Northfield. She spent the summer between her junior and senior years engaging in unique experiences, from archeological digs in Greece to ROTC training in Hawaii. Following graduation in 2005, Meegan entered the Medical Service Corps, where she met her husband, a West Point graduate who had also majored in environmental engineering. She served for 11 years in medical logistics and operations.

Following her discharge, Meegan and her husband moved to Florida and started a family. Now a Supply Chain and Human Resources Manager for the family business, she credits her success to the adaptability and communication skills she developed at Norwich. "NU taught me how to work with anyone, from any background, military or civilian," she says.




Margaret (Kelley) Thomas '10 & M'17 felt a strong pull toward history and higher education. She attended Norwich as a civilian majoring in history. While there, she played a significant role in shaping civilian student life including serving on the South Hall Planning Committee, engaging civilian students in campus traditions like WinterCarnival and the Junior Ring Dance. She too, married an alumnus, Jonathan Thomas '11. Her time at Norwich fueled her passion for higher education, leading her to return for her master's degree in business administration.

As with all her siblings, she continues to be a lifelong learner and is actively pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership. Margaret and her family moved to central Florida ten years ago. She currently works as the Director of Assessment & Testing at Seminole State College and sees her future in leadership within higher education. "Norwich taught me resilience, leadership skills, and the importance of giving back," Margaret says. "I look forward to making a lasting impact in higher education and aspire to serve as a college president one day."

JoAnn Kelley and her daughters are a testament to the lasting influence of Norwich University. As with many legacy families, JoAnn's experiences at Norwich influenced her children's lives and careers, and created a deep connected to the values and community that defined their paths.

Records documenting women's history and experience at Norwich are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>

Check out the Women Kicking Glass Auction featuring more than 50 fun and unique items!

<p>#62</p>  <p>Handcrafted wood 30"x30" Athena relief</p>	<p>#32</p>  <p>Cigar humidor signed by CIA Director George Tenant</p>	<p>#54</p>  <p>"Kreitzberg Library" by Peter Huntoon</p>
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Auction closes Friday, September 20 at 7:15 p.m. See <https://one.bidpal.net/womenkickingglass/browse/all> to bid on items!



TICKETS SELLING FAST: Homecoming Women Kicking Glass Gala!

Friday, September 20, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass Gala](#), Plumley Armory, Norwich