

I guess you could say I was a coal miner's daughter. That is if you go back to 1640's Northumberland England where I last traced my ancestral heritage and is you consider that I was born in the small mining town of Marvel, Alabama. As the only child of a schoolteacher and an actual coal miner, I enjoyed a happy childhood which brought me to the Fairfield area when my father took a job at the Pullman Standard plant in Bessemer. After graduation from Fairfield High I was off to THE University of Alabama (Roll Tide!) and being my dear father's tomboy enrolled as a physical education major. Leaving Alabama I first tested my new job skills working as Assistant Director at the First Methodist Church's Program for Children with Special Needs. This was followed by a stint as Physical Education Director for Homewood Park and later the Physical Education teacher at Hemphill School in West End. During this time I worked on my Master's at UAB.

As a member of First Methodist Church, I was given the opportunity to take a mission trip to Panama in the mid-1970s. Interestingly, this was at a time when the control over the Canal was being negotiated and although our prime interest was to "minister" to several special groups of native Panamanians, we found that we were on the listening end of their thoughts and ideas. It was a great experience and it was through games of volleyball and basketball we found a universal kinship and respect. I should add that as part of the mission I was a chaperone to group of high school students. Coincidentally, there were several other chaperones and a year later two of the chaperones found themselves married. Many a future bride can hold out her hand and display a new engagement ring, but this bride had the rare privilege of receiving an engagement whistle with the inscription engraved "If you want me whistle". Being a PE major I blew the whistle and in the process married my now-husband of 38 years and later the coach of a son and daughter. As the children got older we decided to find a good preschool. My mother suggested I look into Creative Montessori. When I went for a visit I was told they were looking for a teacher. I left with a job and enrollment for my kids, so for the next nine years I went to work each day and my kids followed along much like Mary and her little lambs. For the next thirty-one years I got to do every possible job that the school had to offer. From teacher to Director, IT tech to custodian, grounds keeper to plumber, exterminator to accountant, I could not have a better place.

It was at Creative Montessori that I first became aware of Triumph Services. I was really impressed with Brooke, Melanie and their program, and we hired participants to work in our program. When I took my second retirement I never dreamed there would be a wonderful opportunity I couldn't resist. So after a year of restless "retirement," here I am ready to embark on a new adventure.