

Alumni Spotlight featuring Leslie Savisky



Leslie (Miller) Savisky, 44, of Jeannette, attended Westmoreland County Community College in 1998 and is our featured alumnus.

So what made Savisky want to attend Westmoreland after high school?

“I attended Westmoreland because I obtained a scholarship for graduating in the top 10% of my graduating class. I paid \$2 a credit and the cost of my books. It was one of the best decisions I ever made - leaving community college debt free. I was able to save money and, with the help of my parents, my financial contribution, and bonds from my grandparents, I started out in life with no student loans. I also loved learning (still do!) and I wanted to see what

options were out there for me, career wise. I started working when I was fourteen, and I knew that I'd need to further my education in order to financially support myself,” says Savisky.

While at the college, Savisky studied criminal justice, but also had a love of creative and professional writing and psychology. After receiving her A.A.S. Degree in Criminal Justice, she went on to obtain her B.A. degree in sociology from Seton Hill University.

When looking back at her college days, the memories that stick out the most would be the people.

“I loved meeting new people. I am very chatty and always enjoyed getting to know people,” says Savisky.

Savisky states, “My favorite instructor was Dr. Tom Soltis. I just thought he was so cool with his long ponytail and colored jeans. He reminded me a lot of my dad, and Soltis was very easy-going and had an open mind. Taking his sociology class made me think about things that I either took for granted, or never really considered before. Tom Soltis's class taught me *how* to think, not *what* to think, which I believe, is the goal of higher education.”

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“I was not involved in any clubs, but I wish I had been. I lived on my own, so I also worked full-time and had a busy social life, as most kids do at that age.”

Now that she has graduated from Westmoreland, what is she up to now?

“My career has been very eclectic! After graduating from Westmoreland and Seton Hill, I worked in the social service field for close to 15 years. But I always had this yearning to write - I wrote a lot of short stories, songs, poems and cartoons from the time I was a kid. After a few traumatic events, I decided to write a story, which was fictional, but was a way for me to get out what was going on in my head. It was a very cathartic process. I self-published that novel, *Other People's Words*, just shy of 40-years-old and right before the pandemic began in February 2020. I went on to self-publish another novel, *Almost Too Late*, in 2023 and will publish my third book, *These Broken Pieces*, on August 10, 2024.

Additionally, I am a contributing writer for *Pittsburgh Parent* magazine and the *Tribune Review*, specifically *Monroeville Times Express*. I also mentor a student who will be attending Westmoreland next year and wants to be an author. I present self-publishing talks at local libraries and, as if that's not enough, I also substitute teach and do billing for a therapist office. Above all, writing is my true passion. I have started a fourth book, which is based on a cartoon I wrote as a teenager,” states Savisky.

The college has prepared Savisky for her current career by teaching her to think for herself. She loved that all of my professors had different personalities and backgrounds. She enjoyed all of her classes and never once regretted a course she took at Westmoreland. She learned something from all of them.

Savisky is also involved in her community.

“Along with a fellow author, I began Dream Chasers, which is a group for indie authors, artists and entrepreneurs. We network, brainstorm, create goals and hold each other accountable. In general, we just have a good time getting together to discuss ideas. We meet monthly at the library where my friend works. I also belong to another writing group, which is more for critiquing each other's work. That group of women there... brilliant, amazing writers. I love getting feedback on my writing and being able to help others. I am also on the welcoming committee at our church, which I began with a friend and fellow parishioner,” says Savisky.

Savisky has been married to her husband, Jeff, for 13 years and has one daughter, Leah, age 6 (going on 16). They have two dogs; Satchel (16) and Sadie (13).

Savisky exclaims, “I wouldn't be where I am - writing and doing what I love every day - if it wasn't for my husband, Jeff, who is truly my rock (I know, so cliché). He is very grounded and has always been so supportive. My parents have always been so very supportive. They continuously tell people that their daughter is an author, and they are just so proud of me - I'm happy that I've made them proud!”

In her spare time, she loves to read! She enjoys writing, so it doesn't feel like a job to her. She enjoys traveling and loves the beach or a quick trip to Lake Erie. The water is very soothing to her. She enjoys swimming and hiking.

Advice to current college students?

“Do what you love. Have fun, but study and work hard. You are setting the foundation for the rest of your life... no pressure!” says Savinsky.

Author's note*

Savinsky's books are available for purchase online on Amazon. Her first book is also on Barnes & Noble's website. Locally, she sells her books at Feathers Gift Shop in downtown Irwin and at West Yough Shoppe in Scottsdale. She also has her books in three other independent stores: Werner Books & Coffee - Erie, PA, Bookends Bookstore & Homeschool Resource Center LLC - Grove City, PA, and The Cracked Spine - Buffalo, NY.

Savinsky will be at Norwin Library's Author Book Fair on September 7th. She will be conducting two self-publishing talks in October. One on Oct. 10th at Penn Area Library in Penn Township and one on October 15th at the Monroeville Public Library.

