



# **Student Starts And Completes Paralegal Degree During Pandemic**

April 20 2021 9:00 AM



GODFREY – It takes a significant amount of strength and hard work to overcome a difficult childhood. Lewis and Clark Community College alumna Tabitha Elliott not only survived some tough years; she thrived.

Elliott grew up in Vandalia and was raised by a single father after her mother's addiction problems caused her to leave the family.

"Fortunately, my brother and I have a very hard-working father who raised us well and we chose to create a better future for ourselves and our children," Elliott said. "My brother has his own concrete company, and I chose to become a paralegal."

Elliott was one of the first students to take advantage of the fast-track 30 and Out option when it was announced last spring, obtaining her Associate in Applied Science in Paralegal in Fall 2020.

Elliott is a current employee of Gori Law Firm and has worked as a paralegal for seven years. Although she had a criminal justice degree, she didn't have a paralegal degree.

L&C's 30 and Out options are ideal for students who already have a degree and are looking to expand their resumes or change career paths. It allows those students to complete a new degree more quickly by concentrating on classes focused on their major rather than general education they already have.

"Tabitha hit the ground running by taking a full load of online paralegal classes for two consecutive semesters, during which she earned the highest grades," Paralegal Program Coordinator Rebecca Gockel said. "Despite all the demands on her, she managed to produce top quality assignments in her classes."

As a working mother of two, Elliott needed a program that could adapt to her busy schedule.

"The best part of L&C's 30 and Out Paralegal degree program was the flexibility," she said. "Working full time and having two children in remote learning, flexibility is what I needed in order to complete the program."

Since Elliott had already worked in the industry for several years, she knew what to look for when choosing a degree program.

"I would 100 percent recommend the Paralegal 30 and Out program to a fellow student," she said. "This program covers many areas such as litigation, personal injury and family law to help you decide which area will best fit your interests."

During her time as an L&C paralegal student, Elliot had as big an impact on the program as the program had on her. She received recognition for her work on a project that became part of the curriculum.

“The students in the paralegal technology class are asked to create a trial presentation for a jury using several types of new technology they learned about in class and present it electronically,” Gockel said. “The quality of Tabitha’s work was so strong, I asked that she allow me to use it as an example of best practices for future classes.”

Elliott’s impact as a paralegal is evident in her workplace as well.

“I received recognition from my employer for working long, hard hours on a trial our firm won in 2019,” she said.

While some students use their L&C degrees as a necessary first step to other advanced degrees and career opportunities, Elliott’s goal is to improve her skills in a job she already loves.

“My long-term career goal is to strive as a trial paralegal,” she said. “I find law fascinating and I love the structure. I must be fluent in the case, well organized and prepared for a fast-paced work environment. I love my position, the attorneys I work for and the team I get to work with.”

For more information about L&C’s Paralegal program, contact Gockel at (618) 468-7638 or [bgockel@lc.edu](mailto:bgockel@lc.edu).

L&C is now enrolling for summer and fall. Call/text the Enrollment Center at (618) 468-2222 to get started or to learn more about degrees with 30 and Out options at Lewis and Clark.