

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

Alumnae Profile

by Shannon Williams

Amy Harris Poss '80HS

*Staff Support Receptionist
Saint Mary's School | Raleigh, N.C.*

At Home at Saint Mary's

Amy Harris Poss '80HS grew up in Raleigh and attended Millbrook High School for two years. When her friends began talking about Saint Mary's School and interviewing, she decided to tour and interview as well.

When she was accepted, she chose to attend and entered Saint Mary's as a day student.

"Saint Mary's was very different then compared to today," Amy recalls.

To Amy, the women's high school program felt like going to college, which was very unlike the public high school she attended. "I was treated like a college student. I was expected to act independently, even though I was only a junior in high school. Everyone was responsible for themselves. There was no follow-the-herd mentality. We were all individuals."

After graduating from Saint Mary's, Amy chose to take a gap year before college. She worked in Atlanta and there discovered her bartending talent. "It was just easy and fun for me!" she says and laughs. "It's also a talent I've kept to this day."

Amy later studied English at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

"I worked in an area commercial printing firm for 10 years, working my way up to sales," she recalls. "There, I learned the value of teamwork: everyone must do their part to get the product right."

She then went to work for First Citizens Bank for the next seven years, working her way up in the branch to the loan department.

Introduced through friends, Amy met Eric Poss (Saint Mary's current Director of Facilities). After dating for five years, the couple married in 1992 in Saint Mary's Chapel. "I chose the Chapel to get married in, because it never entered my mind to go anywhere else."

Amy recalls their evening wedding with a deep fondness. "It was a very intimate setting, and there were lots of candles. It was just beautiful!" she says and smiles.

Living and Working on Campus

In July of 1993, Eric came to work for Saint Mary's as a ground's supervisor. In 1996, their daughter Amelia was born. When Amy was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1998, the couple moved on campus into the day student house where Amy visited when she was a day student.



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"It took a while to get used to," says Amy. "We moved on campus so Eric would be close just in case I needed him, and it was a great arrangement. We were part of a larger community."

As a result of Amy's diagnosis, she realized she could no longer work with numbers well. So, Amy left the bank and before long she was filling in for a variety of roles across campus.

Her creative, artistic side came to the forefront, and Amy began developing her craftsmanship and artisan skills. She continues to work part-time as Saint Mary's front desk receptionist, while also sharing her creative talents with the school through floral arrangements and decorations for school events.

"God works in mysterious ways," Amy said. "My diagnosis has been a blessing in many ways."

In addition to her roles on campus, she also enjoys working with Eric on their oyster business, First Flight Mariculture. "It's very relaxing to be on the water working with my hands. Of course, I'm also making jewelry and crafts out of the plentiful oyster shells!"

Amy and Eric have now been married for 28 years and have spent most of their lives together on the Saint Mary's campus. They have watched Saint Mary's become the high school it is today.

"When I look back, I'm amazed at the transformation Saint Mary's has undergone in every area," Amy says and smiles. "It is a beautiful symphony and it all just works. It is also very good for girls. I see firsthand how well-prepared they are to move on and into college and life."

Amy believes the single-sex education Saint Mary's provides is more relevant today than ever.

"I say that because I have seen what Saint Mary's does. I have witnessed the transformation from young girl to young woman that occurs here. Graduates may not know exactly what they will do, but they know who they are. We are producing leaders of the future, and it is so exciting to be part of that. Girls don't leave as cookie cutters either – they are all individuals. It is amazing how different and diverse our students and alumnae are."

When asked if she had any advice to share with current students and recent graduates, Amy says, "I don't want to sound like a cliché, but I will say it is important to stay true to yourself. Explore new things! You never know what you will learn about yourself if you just put yourself out there."

Amy says she's never been prouder of Saint Mary's as she is now. "Our school is truly phenomenal."

Saint Mary's alumnae like Amy Harris Poss '80HS graduate with the skills, knowledge, and integrity they need for success. Whether furthering their education, pursuing professional careers, raising their families, or leading as volunteers, our alumnae are agents for positive change in their communities. Amy's story demonstrates the ability Saint Mary's women have to do big things no matter what age or stage in their life, and we're glad to share her story.

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