Sac State alumna soars to new heights

Christina Preston’s life has been going at warp speed the last few years.

The Sac State alumna just realized a dream to spend an hour aboard an F-16D, courtesy of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. Preston’s 16,000-foot odyssey, clocking in at 6.9 G’s, took place before the Capital Air Show at Mather Field. It was something she always wanted to do, having picked up the flying bug from her late father, a World War II veteran who was a recreational pilot.

Preston was selected for the F-16D ride by virtue of being a “hometown hero” for her good works on behalf of the needy. She began charitable work at age 16 and for nearly five years has collected shoes for the homeless. “I’ve long empathized with those who don’t have much,” she says, “because I didn’t have much growing up.”

She is no less committed to making up for the time it took her to get back on the education track. “I was a good student in high school but never imagined that college would be a possibility for me,” she concedes. Once a mentor at American River College got her interested in anthropology, Preston was on her way. She transferred to Sac State in 2010 and excelled as an anthropology major. Her training included a stint with the Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance Field School at Galen University, San Ignacio, Belize. She completed her bachelor’s degree with magna cum laude honors.

Preston began volunteering for the Anthropology Department and was eventually hired full time. She currently helps Assistant Professor Jacob Fisher carry out the University’s responsibilities under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990; Fisher is the NAGPRA director. Recently, Preston was awarded a UCLA scholarship and is taking extension courses on tribal law.

Preston is pondering graduate school options in social work or community development that would allow her to continue to help people in need within her community. Her impressive track record suggests she will succeed in any profession.

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