



MASA YEE YAH TEE. In my Tlingit language that means, "Hello, How are you?"

I am originally from Teslin, a small community in Southern Yukon. I am a member of the Tlingit Nation.

Previous to studying at Willis College I completed a Diploma in Natural Resources at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in Merritt, British Columbia.

I have worked as a Fish & Wildlife Officer for my first nation. A part of my job was to go out hiking and camping on my Traditional Territory, while others had to sit in the office on beautiful summer days.

The Creator had blessed me with a son and I could no longer go out in the bush for weeks at a time. It was time for a career change. I wanted the opportunity to work from home, to be with my family and watch my son grow.

I became involved with a youth project that was training troubled youth in computer repair, networking and web design. I also volunteered time with a federal program called "Computers for Schools" to gain more experience and knowledge with computers.

Then a job opportunity came my way to build a web site for the First Nations Forestry Program Yukon. I was a neophyte in web design but, I was NOT intimidated and I was determined to succeed. It was then that I discovered that I had a passion. Over those 3 months, I went to work early and came home late. In the end I was successful in completing my very first web site. After this triumph, I wanted to learn more.

It was at this time I came across an innovative short-term pilot project that aimed at Aboriginal IT training. This gave me exposure to A+ objectives and other computer basics. This still wasn't enough to satisfy my desire to learn, however.

The Joseph T. Norton Scholarship is an \$18,000 Scholarship for an Aboriginal to study at a private IT college. It was a new scholarship being offered by Willis College to study information technology in Ottawa.

WOW! This was an opportunity I had to take my chances on - I thought. I put a lot of time and effort into my application. I can remember standing in line at the post office, waiting to drop my envelope into the mailbox. I was praying.

Then we moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia because my partner was studying journalism. It was fall and I was beginning to feel like the world was passing me by. My partner was pursuing his goals and I felt like I was not moving any closer to mine.

Then in mid August of 2002, I arrived home to find an envelope in the mail from Willis College. I nervously opened it.

*“Congratulations! It gives the Willis College of Business and Technology and the Joseph T Norton Scholarship board of trustees great pleasure to announce that you have been selected as a recipient of the 2002-2003 Joseph T Norton Scholarship!”*

I remember how the news brought tears to my eyes. For me it meant that I would have an opportunity to pursue my dreams. This was a chance at success and a bright future.



It has now been a year since I've opened my scholarship letter from Willis College. I am delighted to say that I am now A+ Certified and a "Microsoft Certified Professional". Upon beginning school, I already had potential employment opportunities. My forestry background collaborated with IT, had sparked the interest of aboriginal forestry employers. The Odawa Native Friendship Center has recently offered me a position as Computer Support Technician. My goal is to gain the title "Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator" and continue my education in Multimedia and Web Design.

The Joseph T. Norton Scholarship is especially important for the youth. It gives one lucky youth an opportunity to succeed and become the master of his or her own life. I commend my friends on their accomplishment of the Joseph T Norton Scholarship and the Teknowave initiative. I can never express how much the Joseph T Norton Scholarship has meant to me.

Ultimately, my dream is to travel the world with my family and be able to work via satellite on our travels.

I would like to do my part in bridging the growing 'Digital Divide' in Aboriginal communities. It seems pretty clear to me that as Aboriginal people we need to put the most powerful tool ever invented into the hands of our people.

We must work hard to accomplish more for our children tomorrow.

Gunalchish, Thank-you very much.