



[Colleen Romine: Touching the Future through Massage Therapy](#)

After losing her sight at the age of 31 to diabetes, Colleen Romine, who, up to that point, had been working as a bank teller, wondered what kind of work she would be able to pursue and enjoy in the future. Conversing with different online groups on her voice-equipped computer, she began to talk to some massage therapists who were blind. As a result, Colleen decided massage therapy just might be the career for her and enrolled in the Midwest College of Cosmetology's Massage Therapy Program.

The choice proved a good one. Colleen likes the size of the program at MCC: "It's a small class, only nine of us, and we're all together for ten months, taking all of our classes together. Though we were all fairly shy and quiet in the beginning, we're a talkative bunch now. And everyone is helpful. I thought I might be a burden in the class, but no one has treated me that way."

Colleen continued her praise of the class, describing her Massage Therapy Instructor, Sheri Wright, as so helpful: "Sheri understands that I'm a hands-on person, and she makes sure I know whatever massage technique it is that we are learning. She'll even come in early to help me out. She also often uses me as a demo person so that I can better understand the technique. She's truly amazing. I just hope that one day I can be as enthusiastic as she is about massage."

In turn, Sheri Wright notes that Colleen has been a wonderful presence in the classroom: "She is always eager and willing to learn everything about Massage. In the end, she has been my greatest teacher!"

Echoing Sheri Wright's sentiments, Jennifer Fiorini, the Director of MCC, affirms, "We are all so happy that Colleen chose MCC for Massage Therapy and are very proud of what she has accomplished. She has had to take a different approach to learning. As a result, we have been able to awaken our senses and take a different approach to teaching."

Colleen, along with the rest of her Massage Therapy cohort, also takes classes in Anatomy and Physiology taught by chiropractor Dr. Don Wright.

At times, in getting to and from her classes, Colleen uses a cane to navigate, but, at other times, she can be seen walking around the campus with her seeing eye companion, a black Labrador Retriever named Wilson. Before taking up his post at Colleen's side, Wilson attended The Seeing Eye, a school in Morristown, New Jersey. Wilson and Colleen live in Stanford, IL, along with Colleen's husband Craig, who works for the McLean County Highway Department, and their daughter, Marisa, a freshman at Olympia.

Today, Colleen is no longer a diabetic. She received a kidney from her sister in 1995. Five years later, she underwent a pancreas transplant with a pancreas received from an organ donor. The kidney transplant went quite well, she relates, but the pancreas transplant was more difficult. Still, ultimately, both surgeries proved successful, and Colleen's overall health is now good. As to ever being able to see again, Colleen has her doubts but adds that, with new scientific developments occurring all the time, one never knows.

In the meanwhile, learning the art and science of massage is primary for Colleen, leading, she hopes, to employment at a local spa and, possibly, to opening her own massage therapy business one day.

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