

MARLA (Auffart) LITKENHUS

From Farmer's Daughter to Federal Agent: How One Forest Park Graduate Pursued Her Dreams to the Top

Graduate: Class of 1996 Occupation: Federal Bureau of Investigation Agent
By Tempa Auffart, Spring 2010

Willfully following her dreams, 1996 Forest Park graduate Marla (Auffart) Litkenhus has proven to everyone that she never gives in to adversity. After attending Forest Park High School, she strived to attain her goals, diligently working as a detective for the city of Chicago and as a special agent for the Department of Defense. Her determination culminated in her acceptance into the elite group of Federal Bureau of Investigation agents. Today she works on the Health Care Fraud Squad, the team that protects our insurance businesses from fraud.

While at Forest Park, Marla set her standards high. Though she involved herself in many sports, she admits that basketball always held a special place for her; even now she regrets her lack of a sectional title. Reminiscing about track, another sport in which she participated, she wonders how she managed to run the mile and two-mile races. Athletic and sociable, she keeps herself involved in these favorite pastimes by participating in athletic leagues in Washington, D.C.

The story of how she worked her way to Washington starts in Chicago. After completing her double major at MacMurray College in Jacksonville, IL, Marla joined the Chicago Inspector General's Office as an inspector. One story from these early days of her career started on an early morning stakeout. A snowplow drove by her small car-engulfing her in a snow bank. "While rolling down my window little by little and pushing the snow away, I vowed to never drive a car without a snow shovel again," Marla recalls.

After spending three years in Chicago, Marla started working with the Department of Defense. This midpoint allowed her to pursue the goal she had set in college: to become an FBI agent. As she waited to hear if the FBI had accepted her application, she helped to protect high-level dignitaries within the Department of Defense. After working there for three years, the FBI finally asked her to join their ranks.

To prepare herself for the rigors of the job, Marla attended the FBI academy. She remembers those days vividly: "During the FBI academy my classmates and I spent countless hours studying everything from ethics to investigative techniques, learning about Bureau operations, gaining experience in conducting intelligence led investigations, learning how to safely and effectively fire a firearm, fine-tuning our computer skills, and pushing our bodies to their physical limits."

Finally, Marla started her career at the FBI. Fearless and devoted, she lives her dream every day, helping others and upholding the law. One of the few elite, Marla helps to personify the mission statement of the Federal Bureau of Investigation: “. . . to uphold the law through the investigation of violations of federal criminal statutes; to protect the United States from hostile intelligence efforts; to provide assistance to other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies; and to perform these responsibilities in a manner that proves faithful to the Constitution and laws of the United States.” With determination, integrity, and a diligent work ethic, Martha strives to fulfill these statutes.