

JC Barracuda Scholarship
Megan Dierking

My name is Megan Dierking and I will be attending the University of Missouri-Columbia to study Music Education. I began my time as a JC Barracuda when I was seven years old in 2013. Coach Don was my coach who taught me how to do flip turns by getting in the pool with me! One of the most difficult decisions I have had to make was when I decided to quit the swim team after 8 years of competitive swimming (7 with JC Barracudas) to focus more on playing french horn and mellophone with the band.

Through the swim team, I made many friends and memories, as well as many accomplishments. For example, I was constantly improving my times at meets and placing well at meets that had people from many different states. Not only that but I spent my time after school practicing every day and during the summer. I planned to make it far in swimming and to compete at the college level and maybe even further, but I had to make a decision between band and swimming because I could not accomplish what I wanted to in both at the same time as well as manage school and a job. When I quit swimming I felt bittersweet because now I have more time to practice band but I would also be missing that part of me that I grew up with. But now because of the difficult decision I was able to make it to the All-State band after practicing a lot. I also auditioned and made the DCI Colts Drum and Bugle Corp this summer. The summer tour lasts approximately 80 days during which the corps will travel over 10,000 miles throughout the United States, participating in over 30 regional, national, and international performances and competitions. I am also able to focus my attention on my future endeavors of music education.

I know my time as a JC Barracuda has taught me many values including respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty. Being on the swim team teaches respect in so many ways. Although swimming may seem like an individual sport it truly is a team sport. I learned to not only respect my coaches but also my other team members and the other teams we compete against. Swimmers are unique athletes as they truly are rooting for one another in the pool. I also have great respect for my coaches. I learned to respect different coaching methods and different coaches along the way that also helped me grow.

One of the most important values that I think defines me is responsibility. When you sign up to be on the swim team you make a commitment to be at practice, be at meets, and be there for your team. Your team is counting on you to do your very best and to do that you have to do your part even when there are fun things happening outside of swimming. Responsibility also carries over to how you carry yourself outside of the pool so doing your best in the classroom and being responsible for your actions and a good representative of the team.

When I think about the value of caring I think about times along the way when teammates come together for one another after a hard swim or when transitions happen with coaches or teammates. I learned to be there for each other and for me sometimes just giving a listening ear can be the best thing.

Honesty is one of the traits I first talked about above when I first mentioned who I was and the difficult decisions I had to make about the swim team. I learned to be honest with myself by taking a hard look at my goals when I could not continue swimming to the same level I wanted and be able to do all the things I wanted to accomplish with music. Being a Barracuda I was one to always be honest about the distance you are asked to swim and not cheating in the workout. I learned early on that the only person you cheat is yourself when you do that so be honest with yourself and do the full lap, the full distance, the full workout.

I see all of these traits play out in my current goals with music. For example, I am responsible to my fellow corp members to be the best I can be by having my music memorized, practicing everyday, having the discipline to do all the things each and everyday to prepare for summer move-ins on May 24th. When this day arrives my fellow corp members, especially my mellophone section, expects me to be responsible for my part and I am ready! I feel that my time as a Barracuda taught me to be responsible to be the best I can be.