Scholarship Winners Take Different Paths in Pursuing HTM Career

A former cable installer interested in becoming a biomedical imaging technician and a promising clinical engineering student motivated by a family health scare are this year’s winners of the AAMI Foundation’s Michael J. Miller Scholarships.

When she was a senior in high school, Shelia Thomas developed an interest in radiology, learning about it from her aunt, an X-ray technician. However, there were no schools offering radiology classes when she graduated from high school, so she became a medical administrative assistant. She eventually gained experience as an X-ray technician at one office, filling in when the radiologist wasn’t there. She left the medical field after a while, going back to school for electronics and then working as a cable television installer.

A move to Waco, TX, to be closer to her son and his family, changed Thomas’ life. When her friend enrolled at Texas State Technical College (TSTC), Thomas’ interest was piqued. “She was starting at TSTC working toward a dual degree in biomedical equipment technology and medical imaging technology,” Thomas recalled. “I had no idea what that was really about until I began talking to her about some of the classes and glancing through some of her textbooks. When I found out what it was all about, I was so excited to get started. I had found the job I had been looking for all my life.”

Thomas, who worked at a Walmart store before entering the program, said she is leaning toward being a field engineer, but she is keeping her options open. She graduates in August.

“One thing that I know for sure is that no matter what direction I take, I strongly believe that this field will be very rewarding and satisfying,” she said. “I think I have finally made a choice that I will be happy with for the rest of my life,” she said.

A Family Tradition

For Samantha Herold, a graduate student at the University of Connecticut, it was a health scare with a family member that brought her into clinical engineering.

“Although I had grown up in hospitals—my mother was a nurse and my grandmother had countless back procedures—it wasn’t until my