

The Oakland Press (<http://www.theoaklandpress.com>)

## Father, daughter graduate together from Walsh College

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Friday, June 17, 2016



Keith Thome says his wife usually helped their daughter with homework when she was growing up.

On occasion, he helped out, too.

He never thought that one day, his daughter, Nicole Andridge, would help him with his homework.

“It kind of flipped. I said, ‘Um, do you have a minute to help me?’” said Thome, who participated in a Walsh College graduation ceremony Saturday, June 18, with his daughter.

Thome, of Warren, earned a bachelor’s degree in business information systems from the college in Troy. Andridge, of Auburn Hills, earned a bachelor’s in business administration with a focus on marketing.

It was a coincidence that the ceremony took place during Father’s Day weekend.

“That just makes it even more special,” Thome said.

Andridge said she and her father never had a class together. They took some of the same courses but not during the same semester.

“It was nice to have someone to bounce ideas off of,” she said of the courses they had in common.

Andridge is relieved to receive her degree, having attended college full- or part-time since she graduated from high school in 2008.

“I’ve been going to school since I was four years old,” she said.

She attended Wayne State University and Macomb Community College, then settled on Walsh, and kept going after marrying three years ago and having a child about 18 months ago. Her husband is a Warren firefighter and works 24-hour shifts, which could make coursework challenging while caring for a baby.

She said her “amazing experience” at Walsh has been worth it. She has received a job offer to do social media marketing for a financial advising firm.

Thome said his journey was also challenging. He works in the IT and cyber security field, and had always kept up on various certifications, but decided he needed a degree to remain competitive in the job market when the economy took a dive.

It took him five years at Walsh to get his degree while working full time.

“It’s been crazy,” he said.

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