



*Alumnae*  
**MERCY**  
HIGH SCHOOL



**IT'S MAGIC MONDAY: JUNE 7, 2021!**

**This month we honor a Woman of Mercy who says,** “A Mercy Girl is smart and works hard for what she wants; she is well-rounded, approaches life with vigor, and appreciates and makes the most of opportunities that come her way. “This mentality has served me well in life. I never imagined the route my career would take and the opportunities to which I would be exposed both inside and

outside of the workplace. While sometimes the choice may be risky, with the right preparation and forethought, anything is possible; your life and your advancement are in your own hands. I am a firm believer in self-improvement and continuous learning because you never know what set of skills or individual traits will be the ones that make you stand out. I am extremely grateful for everything that has come my way in life thus far, and I attribute much of my success to my Mercy education.” Meet **Ashley Kowalski '07**, aerospace engineer for The Aerospace Corporation.

**Name:** Ashley Kowalski '07

**Post Mercy Education:**

- B.S., Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, The George Washington University, 2011
- M.S., Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, The George Washington University, 2012

**Personal and Professional Achievements:**

I currently live in Los Angeles, California, where I work as an aerospace engineer for The Aerospace Corporation. I am a project engineer with a focus on global partnerships in space and international space systems. One of my key responsibilities is to represent the U.S. Air Force (now technically the U.S. Space Force!) in developing joint research and development space program efforts. It's my dream job! As my Mercy friends could probably attest, even though math and science subjects were always my favorite, I also always loved international affairs, learning languages, and travelling, so this job is a perfect combination of some of my favorite things! In addition to this role, I am involved in space policy analysis with a focus on international lunar program developments.

Several years ago I took a work sabbatical and spent a year as an Alfa Fellow in Moscow, Russia, studied the Russian language and worked with a Russian satellite manufacturing startup at the Skolkovo Innovation Center. Some of my other international stints have included living and working in Germany as a Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals fellow and spending a summer in China doing fuel cell research as a National Science Foundation International Research Exchange for Students (NSF IRES) fellowship recipient.

In my free time, I still love to dance, play piano, and perform on stage, and I am a regular performer at the Santa Monica Playhouse in LA. I am also active in extracurricular clubs at my company, such as our resident musical theater group, The Aerospace Players, and our track & field club, The Meteors. I am a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) advocate. Finally, my love for traveling has continued; I have been to 50+ countries so far...and counting!

**Were there any Mercy faculty members who especially impacted your life? Why?**

**Ms. Joanne Simmons** was by far the best advisor out there! She really cared for her advisees and gave us sound advice. **Señor Thomas Smith** helped me to further develop my love for foreign languages and cultures and taught me so much about life along the way. **Mr. Felix Sung** was a great role model for me and was the image of the math and music genius that I aspired to be. The courses I took with **Ms. Tricia Potts** were, by far, the most difficult, yet prepared me the most for a rigorous university curriculum. **Ms. Kitty Yanson** brought out the writer in me and helped and encouraged me to think more abstractly. Finally, **Ms. Uma Schroeder** taught me about the world, people, and myself with her thought-provoking questions about life.

### **Were there any classes you took at Mercy that stand out to you? Why?**

All the math classes I took with **Ms. Potts** stand out to me! Her classes were the hardest, most rigorous, and most demanding classes I took at Mercy, but I would not trade the time I spent studying for her classes for anything! It was those math classes with Ms. Potts that really prepared me for the rigors of a university engineering curriculum and ultimately set me up for a successful career in the space industry. **Mr. Sung** was a large part of this success, as well! He always made time for students, and he was able to explain some of the most complex mathematical concepts in the most understandable ways.

### **What is your favorite Mercy memory?**

It's really hard to pick just one! Some of the memories that stand out are the track and field meets, dance troupe, piano quartet (shout out to Christine, Annie, and Rose!), Field Day, International Assembly, Mercy Mathemagicians, Organization of American States (OAS), and our annual trip to Washington, DC to participate in Model OAS. I could go on and on!