

# ASU initiative gives sisters a second chance after leaving school to become caregivers

**Operation Comeback enables sisters to finish degrees after a decade of caring for their mother**

By Gabriella Kemp, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

The caller ID said possible spam, and Joyce Plaisival thought twice before answering. It could have been a telemarketer. But instead it was Amy, a reentry specialist calling from Arizona State University with an opportunity to come back and finish her degree.

Plaisival was skeptical at first, but after a little research, she discovered it was real. ASU's [Operation Comeback](#) was providing a second chance to return and finish her bachelor's degree in nonprofit leadership and management from the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions. Plaisival jumped at the offer — after all, she only had one more semester to go to complete her program — and dove back into school to finish up her remaining courses.

Through Operation Comeback, Plaisival and several others are being connected with reentry specialists who individually review former students' situations to determine the fastest path to graduation, many times bypassing the need to reapply. And, as part of the initiative, ASU has set aside funding to invest in students with past-due balances who left the university without completing a degree. In some cases, those balances may be reset to \$0.

Plaisival and her two sisters, Kimberly and Vickey Colter, were all pursuing degrees together when their mother had a stroke about 10 years ago. All of a sudden, they became caregivers. Joyce and Kimberly found themselves facing new responsibilities that meant putting their dreams on hold.

After about four years of caregiving, their mother passed away. The native Phoenixians carried on, never letting go of hope that one day they would be able to finish what they started and make their parents proud.

Plaisival, who describes herself as a wife, mother, philanthropist and servant, encourages others to never give up on their dreams: "Keep pushing, allow appropriate time for studying and will, effort and consistency. I have accomplished one of my school goals and now, I'll have a Bachelor of Science. I'm encouraging myself to keep going and obtain a master's degree."

As first in their families to reach this milestone, Kimberly Colter says, "It means much more than just getting a degree; this is something that we're doing to start a legacy in our family that yes, you can do this."

Plaisival encourages other students to take advantage of ASU resources like Trio Service, and to "never give up."

"Affirmations are great to remind you of your purpose," she says.

For now, the sisters are inspiring others — like their big sister Vickey, who also only has one semester to go to finish her degree — to keep on going.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



Operation Comeback graduates and sisters Kimberly Colter (left) and Joyce Plaisival pose for photos together at Old Main on May 1. The duo were pursuing their bachelor's degrees in nonprofit leadership and management when their mother suffered a stroke and they had to leave to care for her. Photo by Deanna Dent/Arizona State University

## Gallery



Sisters Kimberly Colter (left) and Joyce Plaisival pose with portraits of their parents in front of Old Main in Tempe, Arizona.





This accomplishment has become a family celebration. Sisters celebrate completing degrees thanks to Operation Comeback. From left: Vickey and Kimberly Colter, and Joyce, Edwitch and Talvyn Plaisival gather at Old Main to celebrate.





Operation Comeback sisters Kimberly Colter (left) and Joyce Plaisival pose in front of Old Main to celebrate completing their degrees.



Kimberly Colter (left) and Joyce Plaisival are lifelong learners completing degrees after becoming caregivers 10 years ago.



Sisters Kimberly Colter (left) and Joyce Plaisival are looking ahead to brighter futures after completing degrees in nonprofit leadership management at Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions.



Kimberly Colter celebrates completing her degree, thanks to Operation Comeback.





Joyce Plaisival celebrates completing her degree, thanks to Operation Comeback.