

**LaWanda Smith**

Supervisor
St. Louis, MO
Great Midwest Region

LaWanda's Career Path

1997 – Temp PSR
1997 – PSR
2003 – Group Lead (Trainer)
2012 – Supervisor

LaWanda encourages you to be honest with yourself: **“Be willing to take an honest look at yourself. Take a step back, listen to others, and then ask the person in the mirror: ‘Am I living up to my own expectations of myself?’ ”**

Career Path Story: LaWanda Smith**Words of Wisdom**

If you are curious about how to prepare yourself for your own unique journey, LaWanda has these words of wisdom to share:

- Listen more. Not everything deserves a response or a reaction.
- Remember that you are not in that patient or that coworker's shoes; don't be so quick to judge.
- Instead of being complacent or arrogant, be open-minded.
- Every day is a learning experience. If you don't embrace that, take another look at yourself.

LaWanda's Personal Path

A registered medical assistant, LaWanda started as a temporary PSR and shortly was offered a permanent position. For almost six years, she worked in a number of Patient Service Centers, including a lab support specialty clinic. Then, in 2003, she was selected as one of two group leads to assume a training role. Besides training new hires, LaWanda and her coworker developed a program that taught coworkers from other functions about drawing blood and working in a PSC environment. The success of this program led LaWanda to Missouri College, where she taught hematology in the medical assistant program. In 2007, LaWanda went back to school again, this time as a student. In 2009, determined to meet a term paper deadline, she asked her husband to bring her laptop to the hospital the day after she delivered her son.

LaWanda attained her BS in business administration in 2010. When a supervisor position opened up in 2012, LaWanda hesitated. She loved her training role and didn't know if she was ready for supervising direct reports. LaWanda says: “That's when I sought out my mom, who is my inspiration and role model; my best friend, Yolunda Turner; and my first supervisor, Barb Harris, who has always been honest with me and instrumental in my choices.” With the insight and encouragement of these three women, LaWanda applied and was selected from a slate of more than a dozen candidates.

Looking back on her professional journey, LaWanda reflects: “I was young and feisty when I started my career. I was good at what I did, but I wanted to be taken seriously and felt I had to fight for the respect of others. I had to learn to channel all of that. I realized that I needed to come to the table with an open mind and my facts in order. Finishing my degree was part of that journey.”

Today, the teacher and problem-solver in La Wanda is channeling her tendency to “do everything and fix everyone.” LaWanda notes: “I am continuously learning about myself. I remind myself that there is only one me, and I delegate more to give others the opportunity to grow.”