

When passion guides your calling.

AT UDC'S NEWLY ACCREDITED MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, DR. JOANNA ELLSBERRY FOUND HER CALLING IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY, IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED FIELD.



In the mid 1990s, Dr. Joanna Ellsberry decided it was time for a new career. Little did she know that a computer search would lead to what has turned out to be her calling in life.

Making a career change, especially when you're not exactly sure about what you want to do next, is an exciting but yet daunting prospect. Where does someone start when a feeling deep inside you says it's time for a change?

On the internet. More than two decades ago, Ellsberry sat down at a computer with a friend and began scrolling through countless jobs. After a few days – with their eyes weary and their minds whirling – they found it with a click of the mouse. The screen said welcome to a career in mortuary science.

It was the perfect fit for Dr. Ellsberry, who was looking for a career in the medical/surgical field that had financial staying power and one that she could practice for the rest of her professional life.

She found all of those things and more. Now, 20 years later, Dr. Ellsberry knows that it was divine inspiration that brought her to

“I take a lot of comfort and pride in the fact that I can do this for families.”

– Dr. Joanna Ellsberry, UDC Director of Mortuary Science

mortuary science, and now she is practicing her calling in life. Today, she is the director of the University of the District of Columbia Community College's Mortuary Science Program and is sharing her passion with students enrolled in the school's mortuary science program.

Dr. Ellsberry, a 1997 graduate of UDC's mortuary science program, is a licensed funeral director and embalmer. She said her journey to becoming a funeral director was an unexpected one; no one in her