

## TRACEY CHRISTIAN – January 2016

### After Personal Tragedy, Alumna Found Her Strength by Making a Difference



While Tracey Christian was a student at Merritt, she seemed to be everywhere at once: learning in the Administrative Justice Program, training safety aides, carrying the flag proudly in the honor guard, leading the student government in making important changes for the student body.

But in reality, Tracey was also bravely overcoming a personal trauma that happened several years earlier. Tragically, her teenage sons were murdered two years apart from each other in violent incidents in Oakland. But instead of hiding away in her sorrow, she did something to prevent violence. She spoke out in the community, and she made a difference and led by example.

Today Tracey works at the Chevron Refinery in Richmond where she was hired as a security supervisor and already has been promoted twice. She says her experience at Merritt gave her the skills she needed to succeed. “The promotions come from my background, from learning about helping the community, caring about what you do, going the extra mile,” she says. “When I stand at attention, people know that I’m different, they can tell that I come from a different piece of cloth.”

Her mentor, Margaret Dixon, head of the Administration of Justice Program, is not the least bit surprised at her former student’s success. “When I first met Tracey, I was amazed at her outspokenness and her maturity,” she says. “When I learned of her background and observed her leadership skills, I asked her to be the head safety aide, and she was in charge of three shifts on campus and taking aides off campus for other jobs. It was a big loss when Tracey left, but I’m so proud of her.”

—*Susan May*