

My name is Gretchen Douglas and after nearly 14 years of serving in the U.S. Air Force, I was forced to retire due to multiple medical issues resulting from my service. Given my health and forced career change I returned to college to pursue a law degree. During my attendance, extenuating circumstances and health issues dictated that I remove myself from school.

I began researching permanent cosmetics and considering my options for certification several years ago and continued contemplation during the time that I attended college. I was considering it as an option to maintain bills and assist with living expenses while continuing my education. After much reflection and consideration I decided that certification in Micropigmentology should have been my post-military career choice instead of law.

After several months of careful consideration and research, I decided to train as a single student under Elena Astor at the Chicago Permanent Cosmetics Center, LLC. Elena provided incredibly professional and thorough training. I can't begin to explain how important that was to me. My experience with Elena was priceless. I completed my training approximately two weeks ago and I am actively seeking a business location.

Although I appreciate every aspect of her training program, there are a few key points I would like to highlight that proved most valuable to me.

1. The completely sterile and professional setting was implemented daily. Proper practice, sterilization, and procedure were established on the first day. I became an active participant of her office on day one.
2. Although a classroom setting was utilized daily, the training was primarily practical. Nearly all time was spent providing service to clients in the professional setting and I was allowed to serve clients from the time they walked in the door. This opportunity allowed me to establish experience with consultation, procedure, pre and post procedure pics, and post procedure care. Please note: I did not begin performing procedures on the first day.
3. The variety of cases available for training couldn't have been better. Color Theory was a major concern of mine prior to beginning the course. Elena ensured I had models of each of the following: African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Hispanic on every procedure. Furthermore, I was able to participate on a Parkinson's patient and transgender female. I feel I had every opportunity I needed to succeed and couldn't have been more pleased.
4. Self-study consisted of a manual provided by Elena as part of the course material and all questions were addressed in the classroom setting. This was fantastic because I felt every moment I spent with Elena allowed me to maximize my training experience. By the time I graduated from this course she had answered every question I could come up with. These questions fell under multiple categories: business practices, effective marketing, supply concerns, budgeting for my initial supplies/equipment and rationale for assessing quality products/equipment. She saved me so much money on things I would have considered purchasing because she tries to stay current and maintain a broad range of equipment/supplies. This allowed me to evaluate the products and equipment myself instead of just accepting someone else's opinion.

For those considering the profession of permanent cosmetics, I think it is important to understand that I believe there is no replacement for one-on-one professional training. If you agree with that

philosophy, I assure you that training with Elena will provide you the confidence, knowledge, and skills you will need to be as successful as you want to be. Best of luck to all...you will love it!