

A glass of water with a stream of water being poured into it, set against a teal background. The glass is partially filled with water, and the pouring water creates a dynamic splash and bubbles. The text is overlaid on the image.

THIRSTY FOR A MIRACLE

They Needed Clean Water.
He Needed True Purpose.
An Inspiring Story of Hope
and Transformation.

G R E G A L L G O O D

Foreword by Edgar Sandoval Sr., CEO of World Vision USA

In *Thirsty for a Miracle*, Greg Allgood demonstrates that it's possible to live a life full of grand adventure and purpose. By sharing his journey with us, Greg shows how he has overcome challenges with a relentless focus in pursuing his God-sized goal of ending the global water crisis. This is a story of putting faith into action to provide hope, life, and a future for millions of people.

BOB GOFF, *New York Times* bestselling author, coach, and chaser of whimsy

I have long been a deep believer in the importance of *human agency*, the difference that an individual can make. Rarely have I seen a story that brings this more vividly to life than that which Greg Allgood tells in his book, *Thirsty for a Miracle*. His passionate commitment to providing clear and safe water to people in desperate need of it emerges from this story, step-by-step in his life and career. He has followed his vision, his commitment, and his calling every step of the way. And countless millions of people have benefited from it. This is a story of adventure, a challenge overcome, and challenges still to meet. It is written in a highly engaging, personal way. I guarantee that you will be moved by Greg's story. I heartily recommend that you read it.

JOHN E. PEPPER, JR., former CEO, Procter & Gamble; former chairman, The Walt Disney Company

As a former civil engineer turned missions pastor, I was reminded by Greg's story that each of us can make a meaningful difference in addressing a very solvable global problem. I've long understood the life-changing impact clean water has on a community, and Greg captures that big-picture reality through a compelling personal narrative. Having seen World Vision's work in Rwanda firsthand, I can't think of a more powerful or practical way to live out the gospel than by transforming lives and strengthening communities through access to clean water.

TOM WHEELER, missions director, Saddleback Church

I've known Greg Allgood as someone who doesn't just talk about making a difference—he actually does it. His work bringing clean water and hope to communities around the world is a powerful example of what servant leadership looks like in action. Greg leads with integrity, intelligence, and a genuine care for people, and his life shows us that one person truly can be a powerful force for good and change the world for the better. I'm proud to endorse his story.

BOB McDONALD, former chairman, president, and CEO, Procter & Gamble;
eighth US Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Greg's work has changed countless lives by expanding access to clean water. Through Sesame Workshop's partnership with World Vision on water, sanitation, and hygiene initiatives, I've had the opportunity to witness his thoughtful leadership in action. He has been a tireless champion for ensuring that women and girls, who are often the most affected by lack of water, have access to this vital resource.

SHERRIE WESTIN, president and CEO, Sesame Workshop

I've known Greg Allgood for many years and have always admired the way he combines science, purpose, and heart to be a force for good. What began as an idea inside P&G—to turn innovation into a tool for good—became, through Greg's leadership and passion, a movement that brought clean water to millions around the world. Everyone striving for a better world should read *Thirsty for a Miracle*—not just to be inspired by Greg's impact, but to discover the life lessons it holds for all of us about the impact of using our own passion to make the world better.

MARC PRITCHARD, Chief Brand Officer, Procter & Gamble

What an incredibly powerful book! I loved reading the story of how God used Greg Allgood to literally change the lives of millions. I promise this book will fill your cup.

DEBBIE MACOMBER, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author

Greg's story is the story of those he's served. He grew from doubting that God could to trusting that he would on his journey into becoming God's water boy. As Dr. Allgood quenched the thirst of millions, his own thirst was quenched by seeing miracles unfold through his surrender to the goodness of God. The "aw-shucks" conversational style of this big-hearted man from the heart of North Carolina belies a keen mind and a steely determination to bring life-giving water to those accustomed to drinking alongside cattle. I read the book in two days, and more than once his authentic humanity caused water to flow from my eyes as purely as it pours from the World Vision waterpoints.

BARRY ROWAN, business leader and author of *The Spiritual Art of Business: Connecting the Daily with the Divine*

As a follower of Jesus, I have always believed that God works through ordinary people to change the world. Just look at Joseph, Moses, David, Esther, and Peter. If you think that He can't use you, you need to read Greg Allgood's story. Greg led the effort to bring clean water to more than thirty-five million of the world's poorest people—and still counting! God can use you, too. When we make ourselves completely available and dare to dream big dreams, God makes the impossible possible.

RICHARD STEARNS, president emeritus of World Vision, author of *The Hole in Our Gospel*

It is impossible to read *Thirsty for a Miracle* and not be moved. Greg Allgood's transformation—from a research scientist at Procter & Gamble to a singular force in helping tens of millions of people have access to clean water—is a story of faith, persistence, collaboration, creativity, and hope. Greg's life story proves that one person can indeed make an enormous difference. His book will undoubtedly inspire others to find their purpose and make their difference in this world.

JIM STENGEL, former global marketing officer, Procter & Gamble; host of *The CMO Podcast*; and author of *Grow*

Thirsty for a Miracle by Greg Allgood is a must-read for anyone seeking inspiration to make a meaningful impact in the world. Greg's journey is a heartfelt story of resilience, faith, and dedication and a powerful reminder of how one person aligning their talents and passion can make a difference in the lives of millions. He has literally earned the title "Water Boy." This book is a great testament of his life's work but also an invitation for us to join the mission of solving the global water crisis.

HARMON KONG, author of *Values Over Valuables*

Greg Allgood has written a book that is enjoyable and educational, inspirational and practical. Give this book to anyone who wonders if their career can have greater meaning and every young person looking for work that matters. Greg's personal story shows how God can use us all to change the world.

DALE HANSON BOURKE, author of *Strong Girls, Strong World*, former board member, World Vision US & International

In *Thirsty for a Miracle*, Greg Allgood invites us into a story of generosity that is not abstract or theoretical but lived out through obedience, perseverance, and risk-taking for a greater cause. He shares his journey through professional and personal disappointments and achievements, ultimately leading to a life of purpose shaped by faith, humility, and service to the world's most vulnerable people. Greg's story is a powerful reminder that each one of us can meaningfully impact our world when we apply our expertise, follow our passions, and faithfully pursue the adventures God invites us into.

APRIL CHAPMAN, CEO of Generous Giving

Heartbreaking and inspirational from the very first page. But more than that, *Thirsty for a Miracle* shows how much good we can do in the world when we have a purpose, a plan, and a belief in something bigger than ourselves.

CINDY DiBIASI, cofounder of 3D Communications

Thirsty for a Miracle is not Greg Allgood's story. It is God's. It is not World Vision's story. It is God's story of using fallible people and organizations to accomplish His purposes. This could be a technical account of clean water needs and methods. Rather, it is a story of humor, failure, setbacks, miracles, weakness, and especially of remarkable and powerful women and men in desperate circumstances struggling to live with dirty water and then seeing the miracle of wells and water packets transform their lives. In the midst of this journey, seeing Greg's faith and humanity being transformed as God uses him to be a key part of bringing clean water and as a witness for Jesus to millions around the world is also a miracle.

JERRY WHITE, PhD, international president emeritus, The Navigators

Thirsty for a Miracle



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Foreword

I'll never forget the celebration in May 2023 in Kageyo, Rwanda. Throngs of people filled two massive tents, and more spilled out onto the surrounding hillsides. There were speeches and testimonials, prayers and praises, live music and dancing. I found myself in a sea of kids wearing World Vision—orange shirts. Together we raised our fists and joyfully chanted, “ONE MILLION!”

We were celebrating the milestone of World Vision reaching more than one million people across Rwanda with access to clean water. It was the exciting completion of a big, audacious goal set five years before—known as “Finish the Job”—and proof of concept that World Vision could provide access to clean water to everyone, everywhere we work in a country.

Somewhere in the crowd was one of the key catalysts of Finish the Job: Greg Allgood.

Greg and I have had similar career trajectories. Our professional tactics were forged in the crucible of Procter & Gamble's culture of excellence. We both embraced breakthrough innovation to drive not only profits but also social good. As corporate executives, we were driven by self-reliance—until the Holy Spirit intervened, leading us to a deeper walk with Jesus and eventually a call to Christian ministry.

I arrived at World Vision a few years after Greg, where he had already established a thriving partnership with our former employer around the P&G Purifier of Water packets. The packets were ideal as an immediate water solution in some of the difficult places World Vision works—conflict zones, areas hit by natural disasters, and communities where other interventions have failed. P&G’s packets became vital to World Vision’s “bridge strategy,” providing clean water in the short term while we worked alongside communities to empower them with a permanent, sustainable water system.

Greg had also hit the ground running to contribute to World Vision’s first comprehensive five-year business plan for our water work. He then helped us achieve the dream of World Vision becoming the largest nongovernmental provider of clean drinking water, with an incredible impact of reaching one new person with access to clean water *every 10 seconds*.

This was remarkable work. But as I got to know Greg better, I came to understand that clean water is more than a career focus for him. It is his passion, his calling, and his life mission.

That’s why he’s willing to fly millions of miles and log countless hours on treacherous roads to reach the world’s hardest-to-reach places. Why, even after appearing on TV with Oprah Winfrey, he’s equally proud to share the spotlight with a mom in rural Ghana. The people Greg has encountered on more than sixty visits to Africa have made a deep impression on him, fueling his passion to empower them with access to life-giving clean water.

God is using all of Greg in this mission: his background in science, his flair for marketing and promotion, his ability to connect with donors, and his relentless pursuit for impact. I’ve watched him serve not for recognition but for results for children, mothers, and communities, who now have hope and health because of his work. His journey—from a scientist with big ambitions to a servant leader

known as “God’s water boy”—is a testimony to what the Lord can accomplish through a willing heart.

The title of this book is appropriate. I believe that when we become instruments of God’s redemptive work in the world, we can *expect* miracles. For example, some years ago I visited a community in Ethiopia where clean water was once scarce, yet multiple drilling attempts by various organizations had all failed. When World Vision came to try, the people had reason to doubt. But they were *thirsty for a miracle*. “The Lord will bring us water,” they said, and they dedicated themselves to prayer and fasting as the drilling commenced—days and days, deeper and deeper. At an astonishing depth of 318 meters, water gushed up! Appropriately, the people named it the Well of Prayer.

Greg has experienced this “pressing into the miraculous,” as I call it, witnessing transcendent moments such as clean water bursting from the parched earth, prompting decisions for Christ, and the miraculous provision of funds from people moved by the Holy Spirit. You’ll find compelling stories like these woven throughout Greg’s book. Once you start reading, you won’t want to stop!

Thirsty for a Miracle illustrates that clean water is more than a physical need. It is a tangible expression of God’s love flowing through us, pointing to the ultimate source of life: Jesus Christ.

Edgar Sandoval Sr.
President and CEO of World Vision, Inc.

Author's Note

This book is a memoir. It reflects my present recollections of experiences over time. Some names and characteristics have been changed, some events have been compressed, and some dialogue has been recreated. That being said, everything in this book is true to the best of my knowledge, and most of the events can be verified in blogs, news releases, videos, and newspaper stories.

The profits from this book will be donated to World Vision Water.

Prologue

The last thing I expected was to watch a miracle unfold before my eyes.

I was more than a decade into my career at Procter & Gamble, and I was feeling restless. It felt like I'd had few discernible wins. I was wondering what was next.

I had joined P&G in 1986 as a scientist working on product safety and had recently been transferred to P&G's personal care division, lured by the prospect of working on a new water purification packet and helping to alleviate the world's water crisis.

In the summer of 2003, I flew to Kenya. P&G was conducting a clinical trial on the purification packet in cooperation with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and I was there to see how people used it in real-world conditions.

Once in the country, I rode in a truck to reach a rural village where people lived in extreme poverty. Most lived in huts made of sticks and mud with straw roofs. They were subsistence farmers scratching out their living from the red clay fields by growing corn and beans.

When I got to the village, I learned that the people who lived there had no clean water source in the area. They had identified a low area about a mile away and dug out a pond using their farming tools.

It filled up in the rainy season, and they hoped and prayed the water would last through the dry season. They walked a mile to the pond for water and then walked a mile back carrying heavy containers. If the pond dried out before the rains came back, they had to walk an additional mile each way to a different pond.

It was mostly women and girls who took these essential, time-consuming walks every day. They completed this round trip early in the morning and then again in the evening. Every day of the year. No time off for weekends or holidays.

I accompanied the water walkers to the pond and watched from the banks as a woman scooped up water. Her name, I learned, was Mercy. She was thirty-four years old, although she looked older. She was wearing tattered clothes and was gathering the water with her teenage son and five-year-old daughter. Each of them had a yellow bucket—a reused cooking oil container. Mercy’s bucket had a narrow opening at the top and held twenty liters, so it weighed forty-four pounds when full. Her son also had a twenty-liter bucket, though his had an open top because the lid had broken and was thrown away. He had to perform quite a balancing act to carry this bucket without spilling. Her young daughter had a ten-liter bucket, so she struggled to carry a load of twenty-two pounds—probably half her own weight or more—the mile back to their home.

Mercy left her sandals on the bank as she waded through the mud to a deeper part of the pond to collect water. The water was the color of clay. Mercy used her son’s open bucket to skim water off the surface and avoid putting mud directly into her bucket. It took her several minutes to fill up her bucket, and then she filled up her daughter’s. She used a small cup to top off her son’s bucket.

As Mercy and her children were gathering their water, a small herd of cows joined them in the pond. Several of the animals relieved themselves as they entered the water. Mercy had no choice but to gather water from the cows’ bathroom. Cow dung lay all along the

banks of the pond. Its pungent smell filled the air. It was clear this was a normal occurrence.

This dirty pond was the only water source for Mercy and her family—for cooking, bathing, and even drinking. Mercy had to either let her kids die of dehydration or risk illness (and potentially death) from the bacteria, viruses, and parasites in the water. It was a devastating choice for a mother to have to make.

And she was far from alone in facing such a dilemma.

By this time, I had learned some facts about the global water crisis. In the early 2000s, more than two billion people around the world lacked access to a clean water source. An estimated four thousand children under the age of five were dying *every day* from contaminated water—more child deaths than those caused by HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.

And the world was not outraged at this enormous death toll. Partly this was because people in the developed world had clean water themselves and simply didn't *see* the problem. Partly it was because most people didn't realize solutions to this crisis were available if the world had the will to implement them. So although many of us had heard something about the illness and death caused by unsafe water, we let ourselves become numb to the numbers.

It was impossible to remain numb when I faced *one* family—*one* mom, *one* son, *one* daughter—who had no choice but to drink unsafe water.

I approached Mercy. Through an interpreter, I asked, “Would it be all right if I showed you a new way for cleaning water?”

She nodded.

I emptied the powder from one of the tea-bag-sized P&G packets into the boy's open-lidded bucket of dirty water and stirred. The powder worked like a dirt magnet, removing dirt particles, worms, and parasites. After thirty minutes, the water was crystal

clear, completely purified, and the bacteria and viruses were killed. I poured the water through a cloth, and when it was ready, I drank it.

Mercy's eyes grew wide when she saw how clean the pond water had become. I offered it to her, and she drank, as did her daughter and son. They may never have had such clean water in their lives.

I am a scientist, and though I was thoroughly familiar with how the packets worked, I was amazed myself. I had already seen the packets used in Guatemala, Pakistan, and Morocco, but in those places the water already looked clear, even though it wasn't safe. Here the contamination was visible. This was the first time I observed in a real-life situation very muddy water turned clear. And the experience of *seeing* dirty water become clean felt like magic. No, it felt like a *miracle*.

But what really got to me was Mercy's reaction.

To my embarrassment, she got down on her hands and knees. "Can I have some of these packets?" Mercy begged.

I could see on Mercy's face, and hear in her voice, the understanding that this was a matter of life and death for her and her family. She knew full well that the pond water had been making them sick. She told me later that her children frequently missed school because they had persistent, painful diarrhea. When the pond went dry, her children missed school again simply because they were too tired from hauling water from the more distant pond.

Although I had *known* the facts about the global water crisis, now I *felt* them. With Mercy there before me, the full weight of the crisis hit me. It was a matter of life and death for millions of people *just like her*.

That encounter with Mercy altered my life irrevocably. I had been trying to discover what my purpose was. Now I understood that helping to solve the world's water crisis was not just a piece of my corporate job; it was my life's calling. I had the most amazing opportunity to make a difference in the world by addressing this great need.

PROLOGUE

I didn't know at the time what shape this calling would take. I couldn't see all the ways God had prepared me for where he'd put me. I had no idea the places God would take me or the obstacles I would face. I had no clue that, in giving me this calling, God would also reveal my blind spots and character flaws, refining me in the process. All I knew was that, from here on out, I was resolute in my commitment to do everything I could for the Mercys of the world.

There was no going back.



IT'S ALL GOOD

I was born in 1959 in the central North Carolina community of Cary. Back then, Cary was a small town quickly expanding with people joining businesses in the Research Triangle Park or with people working at North Carolina State, Duke, or UNC–Chapel Hill. My mom, Peggy, was a schoolteacher, and my dad, Jim, worked at NC State as part of the network of North Carolina farm extension agents tasked with helping farmers improve their businesses.

My brother, Jimmy, and I had the freedom to ride our bikes all over town and play sports with the neighborhood kids. We went to Cary First Baptist Church on Sundays, visited our relatives in the foothills of North Carolina, and made the occasional trip to the beach or mountains.

I started the Boy Scouts program at an early age and became an Eagle Scout at thirteen, at least a couple of years ahead of the typical

schedule. Through scouting I developed a love of the outdoors. As much as I loved it, though, scouting also nearly ended my life.

On a camping trip, I broke a fundamental rule: I fell asleep with a lit candle in my tent. In the middle of the night, I was awakened from what felt like a deep sleep by my friend and tentmate, Thad Banks.

“The tent’s on fire! Greg, the tent’s on fire!”

As I woke, I found that I was no longer in the blazing tent but huddled next to a tree outside it. Confused, I jumped up, ran over to the tent, and stomped out the fire with my bare feet.

When the flames had died down and the night was dark again, I realized I was in a great deal of pain. Thad switched on his flashlight. My skin was charred on my right arm and leg.

We ran and woke up our scout leaders, who drove me to the hospital. My hand and thigh had third-degree burns. I was treated and put in bandages. While this was a frightening experience, in a way I was proud that I had survived, and I looked at my scars as a merit badge to show off.

Once I was recovering back home, my scoutmaster, Frank Goodrum, came to visit me, carrying a paper sack. He was a big, calloused man who for some reason always called me Craig.

After he’d checked up on me a bit, he said, “Let me show you something, Craig.” He handed me the sack. I looked inside and saw an unidentifiable wad of charred and smoky-smelling fabric. I looked at Frank, puzzled. Frank reached over and fished out a blackened zipper. “This is all that’s left of your sleeping bag.”

It was sobering to think I had been inside that sleeping bag while it was burning.

Frank continued, “You must have fallen asleep, and your bag caught on fire from the candle you were burning.”

“Why didn’t I wake up?” I asked.

“You and Thad must have inhaled too much smoke.”

"Even though my skin was getting charred?" I had a hard time believing that.

"You probably became unconscious."

"Then how did we get out at all?"

"My best guess," Frank said, "is that the fire grew big enough to burn through the rope that held up your tent. Once the tent fell in, the fresh air must have woken you up."

I didn't remember any of this. I must have been in shock from the burns and crawled over to the tree when I woke up.

"You can expect disciplinary action for breaking the rule about using a candle in the tent," Frank said. Then he looked me in the eye. He was determined that I heard what he had to say. "Craig, you should be dead. Either the smoke inhalation or the burning sleeping bag should have killed you."

With tremendous conviction he added, "Only a miracle could have saved your life. God saved you for a reason, Craig. God must have a plan for your life to make a difference, and that's why the fire didn't kill you."

Frank's prophetic words didn't mean much to me at the time, not least because he couldn't get my name right. But I carried them with me. It would take me many years—encompassing half my career—to resurrect this thought and really understand God's plan for me to make a difference in this world. "Craig" didn't get it, but eventually Greg would.

My best friend growing up was Wes Williams. I don't remember ever meeting Wes. Our mothers attended UNC Greensboro at the same time and became friends. They both married men who were employed at NC State and moved to Cary when its population was only a few hundred people. They started families and attended Cary

First Baptist Church together. They played women's and couples' bridge together every month. Because they became lifelong friends, so did their families.

Wes and I were constantly together. The Williamses lived in the cul-de-sac right behind our home, and by cutting through my backyard and a neighbor's, I could be at Wes's house in a couple of minutes. Wes and I would watch television shows after school with his sisters. I was at their house so often that Wes's dad would tease, "Are you living with us now?"

Both our families had season tickets for NC State games, and Wes and I would frequently sit together. Wes had such a loud clap that his dad told him he couldn't clap unless he toned it down. Since both our dads worked at NC State, we had access to the Faculty Club swimming pool and spent many summer days playing together there. We were both avid basketball players. We played every chance we had, playing half-court at my house or at First Baptist's indoor court or Cary Presbyterian's outdoor one.

It was while playing basketball at Cary Presbyterian with Wes that I first met Don Glenn. Don's family had moved in close to Cary Presbyterian, so he would play basketball there. Don, like Wes, was a year ahead of me in school, so he and Wes soon shared several of the same classes and hung out together at school. As a result, Don was more Wes's friend than mine, but because Wes was so welcoming, soon the three of us were inseparable.

One night when we were in high school, Don and Wes were hanging out at Wes's house. Don had driven his 1969 Chevrolet Camaro and left it unlocked. Another friend and I were waiting outside.

A common prank at the time was to let out the clutch of a friend's car and then roll it to another location. This opportunity was too good to ignore. My friend suggested, "Hey, why don't we roll Don's car?"

It seemed like such a harmless prank that I agreed. We started moving Don's Camaro, but as we were rolling it, we lost control. Don's car hit a telephone pole. The sound brought Wes and Don running out of the house. When Don saw what had happened, he was furious. The passenger door of Don's Camaro was visibly damaged.

And, it turned out, the damage was even worse than it looked. The cost of repairs was beyond what the car was worth. The cost was also more than the money I'd saved from my job parking cars and cleaning up after football games. I knew my relationship with Don was in jeopardy.

I asked my dad for help, and he negotiated with Don's dad for a solution. My dad offered a fair price to Don's dad to buy the car from him. Don's dad accepted.

My dad put an ad in the paper to sell the car at a price that would mean my other friend and I would have to work summer jobs to pay for the difference between the sale price and what my father paid Don's dad. I was home when first one and then a second guy showed up to make an offer on the Camaro. They got into a bidding war, and it looked like we were going to make a profit on the prank. My dad knew that was not the lesson he wanted us to learn, so he sold the car for the asking price to the first guy who showed up, and my friend and I worked off the difference.

Don and his dad had enough to buy Don a new car, but it wasn't a Camaro. Don was heartbroken at the loss of his awesome wheels, but he eventually forgave me for ruining his car.

While I regret totaling Don's car, this experience was the turning point in our friendship. It was no longer that Don was just Wes's friend. Don and I became close friends ourselves.

Prior to college, I made good grades in school without much effort. Near the end of my junior year, I knew that if I was one of the top ten juniors academically, I would not have to take final exams and could be a junior marshal to help with the seniors' graduation.

That meant I'd be able to hang out with my two best friends during their important time. That was strong enough motivation for me to make the grades.

But making the grades also made me smug. When I was goofing around in Ms. Thomas's advanced math class, she called me out. "This information is going to be on the final exam!" she warned.

I replied sassily, "I don't really care. I'm a junior marshal and don't have to take the exam."

"Go wait in the hallway," Ms. Thomas instructed me. She wanted privacy for what she had to say to me. "Your cockiness is going to catch up with you, Greg," she told me. "Someday you'll learn that you need more than your own smarts to succeed in life." Up to that point, I *had* been able to succeed on my own, so I didn't take what she said to heart. But as with my scout leader's "prophecy," years later I would understand just what her words meant.

By the time my friends graduated, I had a general plan for my career. I wanted to be involved in science—a natural enough goal for someone who grew up near Research Triangle Park. But more than that, I wanted a life of adventure, travel, and making an impact.

Through television, two global citizens became my role models. I loved how Jacques Cousteau invented scuba and traveled the world teaching millions the importance of preserving our oceans. I was also fascinated by Jane Goodall, who spent years at Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania, going much deeper into understanding chimpanzee behavior than humans had ever gone before. It wasn't only their adventures that captivated me but also their ability to tell stories that made science come to life. Science, I came to understand, wasn't a dull subject to be endured in school. It had real-life implications, if only people could be made to see it.

Jacques Cousteau and Jane Goodall inspired me to see how one person could make a difference in the world through science. So in 1977 I followed Don to the University of North Carolina—Chapel

Hill, where I earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in public health, focusing on water research. Then, because funding became available, I moved on to NC State, where I earned a degree in toxicology. My interest in the program was driven by the fact that it was multidisciplinary, requiring significant knowledge in biochemistry, epidemiology, and microbiology, among other areas. I realized that much of the breakthrough thinking I admired usually happened not deeply immersed in one area of knowledge but at the intersection of several. I didn't want to be pigeonholed into a limited number of experiences but craved the kind of holistic knowledge that led to real-life solutions.

My PhD dissertation dealt with the effects of oxygen on the thermophilic bacteria found at Old Faithful geyser. Again, inspired by Cousteau and Goodall, I made it my mission to explain my research to nonscientists so they could understand the practical benefits of the work.

Throughout college, graduate studies, and beyond, Wes, Don, and I have remained close, lifelong friends.

Now that I was finishing my academic career, I knew I needed to find a job. I heard about Procter & Gamble from a college friend who had joined P&G the prior year. I loved the idea of working for one of the great American companies and decided to investigate. I got hold of the book *Eyes on Tomorrow: The Evolution of Procter & Gamble*. I read about how P&G's growth over 150 years at that point closely matched the history of much of the United States since radio and then television became successes partly because of P&G-sponsored soap operas. When I applied for a job there, my knowledge of the company impressed my interviewers. They wondered why this recent

science graduate was asking them about P&G marketing strategy and management structures.

I was offered a position in the beauty care division. When I received the offer, I was ecstatic. I could see myself having a long and successful career there. But my job offer was in Cincinnati, Ohio. I am a seventh-generation North Carolinian. My whole family, as well as Wes, still lived in North Carolina. (Don had moved to Florida for a job.) As much as I hated to leave, the offer was enough for me to move away from my beloved North Carolina home.

At first I occupied lower-level positions in the beauty care and health divisions of the company, helping to ensure the safety of products like shampoos and soaps. It was a long way from the undersea world of Jacques Cousteau and the banks of Gombe Stream National Park with Jane Goodall, but I loved that my efforts helped ensure that products used by billions of people were safe.

I thoroughly enjoyed my work in the beauty care division, but I also yearned for more adventure and set my sights on international travel. I looked for opportunities to volunteer for anything associated with P&G's international business. At first, this involved helping our international new hires learn about P&G and hosting them at P&G's headquarters in Cincinnati. This allowed me to learn about different cultures and how to work effectively with a diverse group of people, and I loved it. After a while, my work supporting our international staff led to trips overseas.

In 1990 I switched over to the food and beverage division, where I joined a team of scientists seeking approval in the United States and globally for the controversial fat replacer olestra. I didn't know it at the time, but my work with olestra would prove instrumental to finding my calling in working to solve the world's water crisis.