Student of the Year Award
Dana Rose

After surviving physical and mental abuse by my second husband, I found myself homeless with two kids in 2009. After living in our car for a few weeks, we ended up at the Fort Bend Women's Center in Richmond. After five weeks, a friend and I rented a small house, and we set up a home daycare center in our home that was successful for over four years. In 2013, my dad was diagnosed with lung cancer that had spread to his spine. After being my dad's caregiver as he went through hospice, I decided that I both wanted and needed to go back to college. Shortly before my dad passed away, we talked about it, and I wondered if I could do it. I was going to be my mom's caregiver after my dad was gone, and I was so scared. My dad said that he had a small savings account he wanted me to have so that my dream could become a reality. I began college in the fall of 2013, two months after he passed away. I threw myself into my schooling with everything I had.

Social work has become my whole life since starting the program here at UHD. I feel as if the sky is the limit, and being able to attend the Graduate College of Social Work will allow me to reach my final goal of getting my LCSW license. I have been very active in service-oriented organizations here at UHD since 2016. I am currently serving as President of SWSCAN (Social Work Student Community Advocacy Network). I am proud of this organization and of our service to the community. I told someone recently that "I didn't choose social work, social work chose me." I have finally found my calling, and I intend to do the best I can in advocating for others.