

Upton woman, student, mom lauded for leadership, academic excellence

By Daily News Staff

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Tabitha Leber, of Upton and a student at Quinsigamond Community College, received a Mechanics Hall Collegiate Apprentice Award during the 2019 Celebration of Excellence.

WORCESTER — An Upton woman who is studying for a degree in elementary education at Quinsigamond Community College found herself among an elite group of college students last Saturday at Mechanics Hall.

Tabitha Leber received a Mechanics Hall Collegiate Apprentice Award during the 2019 Celebration of Excellence. Students were chosen for their demonstrated leadership, creativity and innovation, excellence in academics and community involvement within Worcester or the student's hometown.

"Tabitha exemplifies all the great qualities of a QCC student, and we are honored that she has received this prestigious award as a student leader at our college," said QCC President Luis Pedraja, in a statement.

Leber is president of the college's Alpha Theta Zeta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa's (PTK) Honor Society, overseeing the chapter's research projects; working on developing goals for the chapter; representing PTK at all its functions; and playing an integral role in the PTK Live and Learn Greenhouse on QCC's main campus.

"Tabitha is an exceptionally hard-working and committed student whose dedication, generosity and work ethic make her a shining example for all QCC and PTK students," said PTK adviser Bonnie Coleman.

But Leber, who has an 8-year-old daughter, said she wasn't always so focused. Before coming to QCC, she said she felt her life lacked direction. While being a mom was fulfilling, she knew something was missing.

"When my child was in kindergarten, I was volunteering on a daily basis in her classroom," Leber said. "The teacher saw how well I did with the students and told me she believed I would make a great teacher. It was her gentle nudge that

inspired me to go back to school. Knowing that going back to school would set a better example for my child, I jumped in head first.”

Leber began taking classes at QCC and in 2018, after attending a PTK Open House, decided to join the organization.

She aspires to become a first-grade teacher, with plans to graduate next spring. Leber said she will then transfer to a four-year university to complete her bachelor’s degree, before moving on to attain a master’s degree.