When Maria Maranda ’84 was an Assumption College student, she dreamed of working in the airline industry, traveling the world, and connecting with fascinating people. She graduated with a degree in French and Spanish and a minor in linguistics, and lived her dream for several years.

Then she realized something was missing. “I wanted to control my destiny and accomplish bigger things, and I was limited with the airlines,” she said.

Today, she owns the award-winning Maranda Insurance Agency, Inc./State Farm in Brandon, Fla., a full-service agency with a strong team of 11 employees. With a knack for empowering her co-workers and a commitment to servicing her customers, Maranda has built a highly regarded business in a very competitive industry.

From language major to insurance entrepreneur may seem incompatible, but Maranda credits the influence of her professors. The adventurous nature of Prof. Tom Begley, the sense of accountability instilled by Prof. George Aubin ’60, and the strength and leadership of Prof. Magda deMoor have been a foundation of her success. “Dr. Begley expanded my world so I thought about the possibilities in life,” she said, “while Dr. Aubin was a kind man, he challenged me and stressed discipline and accountability, which in today’s world, is critical.”

She found her calling when a friend who was a State Farm insurance agent suggested that Maranda try the insurance industry. She was initially skeptical, but has spent the last 23 years as a State Farm agent and business owner. What keeps Maranda going is the ability to make a difference in the lives of her customers and her team.

“No matter what business you’re in, you need to have the right people on your team, and make sure they develop their professional skills and are in the right position to utilize their strengths. I try to make a difference in the lives of each team member and help them achieve their goals,” she explained.

In addition to insurance, Maranda’s company offers financial...
BY TROY WATKINS

“aranda Insurance Agency is a recipient of the Chairman’s Circle Award, an honor bestowed on only the top three percent of 18,000 State Farm agencies nationwide. It represents a wide range of accomplishments, including insurance, banking, financial services and production numbers. Maranda is also among a select few to earn a Crystal Excellence award, recognizing State Farm agents with more than 20 years of consistently outstanding business achievement.

Maranda is thankful for all she has experienced. “I’ve traveled the world just by doing my job,” she explained. “Name a place and I’ve probably been there. I’ve really enjoyed working for State Farm, and the opportunities it has given me. The ability to work for a company that has true integrity and value and wants to do the right thing has been a Godsend for me.”

A personal sense of integrity and giving back is integral to Maranda’s life, and she is involved in and supports her community. She has served on a local hospital board and the Brandon and Riverview Chambers of Commerce. She’s a proud member and major sponsor of Ye Notorious Krewe of the Pegleg Pirate, which raises money for amputees and their families, and a major sponsor of Top Soccer. “What’s most important is the personal touch and the difference that you can make in a person’s life, and how you leverage your knowledge to make a difference,” she said. In their limited spare time, she and husband Joe enjoy excursions on the water in their SportFish boat.

Maranda fondly recalls how much she enjoyed her days as an undergraduate. “I loved Assumption’s size, its warm, family-like atmosphere and the strong languages program,” said Maranda. “It was the right fit for me. College was the best four years of my life.”

Her advice to Assumption students today, “Don’t let your college experience go by without appreciating it and taking advantage of it. You’ll never have another opportunity like college again to take everything in, and explore so many different topics and experiences. If you’re interested in being an entrepreneur, read as much as you can about being a leader, and look at the big picture.”

Lifelong learning and the ability to adapt are essential traits for any entrepreneur. Maranda’s liberal arts education gave her the tools to succeed in her career and grow her own business. ✤