



GRAS WITH DENNARD

TOUGH CHOICES

Dr. Beth Dennard, a well-known expert in college planning and placement, has been coaching adolescents for over 30 years. Dennard, who appears this month on "Living Smart With Patricia Gras" on HoustonPBS, worked 15 years as an admissions liaison officer for the U.S. Air Force Academy and nine years as a private high school guidance counselor.

Dennard, who also taught at the Air Force Academy, the University of Houston at Clear Lake and San Jacinto

College, says picking a college that is right for you can be overwhelming. "Things have changed, and there is a right-fit college for every student. One of my early mentors would use the line, 'There is a Harvard for everyone,' meaning there is really a good fit for every single student no matter what their credentials."

Dennard advises students to analyze themselves before they try picking a school. What are the student's interests,

strengths and personality? "If you start with where your best friend is going to college or where your parents graduated from, you are making decisions based on someone else's personality and strengths, and you need to look inside yourself first," she says.

Parents tend to want what is best for their children, but Dennard makes it clear that their children may be very different from them and they need to make their

own decision. "Sometimes parents become very enthusiastic about this process, and they are well meaning," she says. "They love their children, they want the best, but they forget that it is really the student's life, not theirs."

She says choosing a college is one of the most important decisions a young person will make.

"College is a life-framing experience. It is a right of passage for most American young people," she said.

On our "Green Tip" for this program, we discuss green college dorms with Richard Johnson and Spencer Howard.

"Living Smart With Patricia Gras" airs on Sundays at 3 p.m. and repeats Fridays at 10 p.m. on Houston PBS channel 8 KUHT. For more information, visit HoustonPBS.org/livingsmart or Patriciagrass.net. Patricia Gras also co-hosts "Latina Voices: Smart Talk." Check listings at Latinavoices.com.

—Patricia Gras

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