

Robbers
Grad

BULLOCK: Pursuing her dreams

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of the mobility-impaired, visiting school children and competing in the national Ms. Wheelchair Pageant in July 2011.

The Texas pageant will be streamed live at 7 p.m. April 9 on www.mswheelchairtexas.org.

Bullock, 43, grew up in north Harris County and graduated from Spring High School.

Since birth, she has had spina bifida, a congenital disorder that occurs when the backbone and spinal canal fail to close before birth.

About 10 years ago, an ulcer formed on her foot and would not heal.

Bullock, who had been living an active life, was forced to remain indoors, leaving her house only for one hour a week to see her

doctor.

After four to five months, she decided to take her life off hold. She asked her doctor if college would pose a problem. The doctor gave her the go-ahead, but she would not be able to drive or walk.

That's when she turned to a wheelchair for day-to-day mobility.

Bullock became a student at the University of Houston and found a friend willing to provide rides.

"I managed to finish both of my degrees with honors," said Bullock, who overcame a number of hospital stays and surgeries during that period.

"I didn't realize at the time how amazing it was that I actually did it."

But the challenges were far from over. A number of prospective employers told her she simply wouldn't be able to do her job from a wheelchair.

Bullock didn't understand the reasoning.

"I want people to realize it's not about how you get around," she said. "I think sometimes people see a wheelchair and think your brain doesn't work."

She nearly stopped applying for positions at one point, but is grateful she continued trying.

"Now I get to see all kinds of people, give them referrals and help them find the best path to meet their needs," she said. "For someone new to the disability community, they have no idea of the resources available to help them out."

Bullock said she's looking forward to the pageant.

"I think the most exciting thing is it's not about the fru-fru stuff," Bullock said. "It's an opportunity to talk to people and be an example."

By FLORI MEEKS

CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

THERE have been days in the decade since Pam Bullock started using a wheelchair when she considered giving up on her goals.

But she never completely let them go.

The Spring resident has gone on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in social work and is a claims representative for the Social Security Administration.

She hopes her story will encourage others with disabilities to continue pursuing their own dream.

"I think my biggest thing is to let people know you are going to get frustrated; it's OK to put it down for a while. But it's important to pick it up again."

Bullock will have an opportunity to share her experiences — and to hear those of others — when she competes in the 2011 Ms. Wheelchair Texas Pageant April 8-10 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Houston.

Eight contestants are competing this year. The winner's responsibilities will include speaking to lawmakers about the needs

SPRING



TONY BULLARD:
FOR THE CHRONICLE

Spring resident pursues dreams

■ Pam Bullock wants to show others with disabilities how to excel

Please see **BULLOCK**, Page 6