



Mariann Lawson, '86
Vice President and Spend Life Wisely Ambassador
for Central Oklahoma, First United Bank

Throughout her career, Mariann Lawson has aimed to make a positive impact and leave the world a little better. Currently, she pursues this goal as First United Bank's Vice President and Spend Life Wisely Ambassador for Central Oklahoma. The 1986 journalism/advertising graduate and fifth-generation Normanite recently shared how her time at OU prepared her for the future, reflected on her career steps, offered some advice for current students and more.

What is your favorite memory from your time at Gaylord College?

I enjoyed all my advertising classes, from research and radio production to design courses and our senior capstone; they opened my eyes with a new understanding of the importance of reaching the right individuals with an impactful and relevant message.

Do you have a favorite faculty/staff

and shaping me for this moment in my career. My career has taken me from entry-level positions in advertising to executive director roles in the nonprofit arena to the director of marketing and community relations in banking. Each step along the way has prepared me and given me insights and understanding of how I can make a positive impact and hopefully leave the world a little better because I was here.

How did Gaylord College prepare you for your future career?

College is that runway that allows you to be lifted up and take flight into your future. Gaylord College offered me an opportunity for internships in the advertising industry to pair my classroom education with professional learning. Through my capstone experience, I was able to use all my learning to develop our campaign outcomes. Still, through my capstone efforts, the most important thing I

member at Gaylord?

Dr. Bob Carrell was probably my most memorable and favorite professor. He made each one of his students feel empowered and realize we were responsible for our own outcomes and success. A close second to Dr. Carrell was Professor Frank Heaston, who made learning fun, challenging and truly interesting. I had a lot of “ah-ha” moments in his class.

How did your career path lead you to First United Bank?

I believe understanding the value of brand development, along with the commitment to making my company’s mission and values an action statement and not simply words on a page, has been a vital part of my path and background.

Describe your role at First United Bank.

I am Vice President and Spend Life Wisely Ambassador (SLWA) for Central Oklahoma, a territory that includes Purcell and Maysville, Norman, Moore, OKC and Edmond. My role is to promote the Bank’s four pillars of Faith, Personal Growth, Health & Wellness and Financial Well-being with our customers, bankers and throughout the region. Through this role, I am able to help others live their best lives. I’m blessed every day to be able to share tools and resources to spread love and impact to Oklahomans.

What do you consider to be the most significant moments of your career so far?

Now that I can look back on nearly 40 years of professional growth, both in banking and nonprofit management roles, I can see that through all of those experiences, the Lord was developing

learned the true value of teamwork.

What advice would you give to current students aspiring to a career in mass communication?

I would offer two things. The first is, be true to yourself. Everything you do today is an opportunity to invest in the most valuable thing you have – yourself. Others can offer you resources, tools and possibilities for success, but only you take each and every opportunity and give it your best. You deserve your best. Secondly, life happens. Instead of seeing obstacles as closed doors or failures (and *fail* is simply your *first attempt in learning*), understand that you are actually one step closer to realizing all you are created to be. Embrace the difficulties and challenges. They are an essential part of your growth and will help to shape your future.

What do you do for fun outside of work?

Spending time with the people I love is what I enjoy the most. In whatever shape that takes, it’s my favorite way to have fun.

Are there any other organizations or projects you’re involved with outside of your full-time job that you want to highlight?

As a member of the board of directors of the OU Wesley Foundation, The Wesley is one of my favorite places to spend time. Their ability to love all students for who they are as children of God is inspiring. As a fifth-generation Normanite, I’m also very proud to be a part of the Norman Public School Foundation board of directors. Through teacher grants, scholarships and special projects, their work ensures the success of all students in Norman.



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