

A Journey from Fayetteville, N.C. to KPMG and Beyond

Ann Holley's journey began in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where she grew up as the youngest of three children, flanked by two older brothers who she felt were like extra dads. Her parents encouraged her to explore various interests, which profoundly shaped her development.

Ann's academic journey took her to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she earned her undergraduate degree in public policy in 1993, followed by a Masters in Accounting in 1994. Among her memorable college experiences was celebrating the 1993 National Basketball Championship by rushing Franklin Street with fellow students.

One of the most surprising and enjoyable experiences during her time at UNC was an unexpected class in Economic Geography. Initially taken out of necessity to meet a requirement, the course captivated Ann with its exploration of the relationship between city size and the range of services it could offer.

Ann credits Professor David Hofmann's class with imparting the most valuable skills for her career. Initially, she didn't grasp the significance of Hofmann's comment that he was not just teaching tax he was "teaching [us] how to think." However, her subsequent hands-on experience at KPMG made her appreciate that there was not always a single answer and having a process to arrive at the best answer was invaluable.

A significant personal and professional chapter unfolded when Ann met her future husband during a freshmen Business Calculus class. Their relationship blossomed during their time in the master's program, where they not only worked as teaching assistants for Professor Hofmann but also played on a co-ed intramural football team that won the championship. Their shared experiences also extended to a Friday morning intramural basketball league with professors, creating lasting memories.

A humorous moment from Ann's freshman orientation involved her excitement of potentially living in what she thought was a beautiful dorm at the corner of Columbia St. and Cameron Ave. Her friends kindly, although with some laughter, informed her that was not a dorm but rather the Carolina Inn.

Ann's professional career has been defined by her work with KPMG, where she has held a variety of roles and lived in multiple locations. She began in federal tax in KPMG's Charlotte office, transitioned to State and Local Tax in Atlanta, and then to the Washington National Tax office, where she became a partner. Her leadership extended to heading National Tax for State and Local Tax, leading the State and Local Tax practice nationally and now serving as the US Tax Practice Leader for Operations.

Her advice to current UNC students includes:

- Cultivating intellectual curiosity.
- Taking psychology classes to better understand people, as much of professional life involves working with others.
- Gaining a basic awareness of technology to think innovatively.

Ann's motivation to stay connected with Carolina and serve on the Leadership Council stems from her intellectual curiosity, desire to give back, and enjoyment of returning to Chapel Hill, especially now as her daughter is a freshmen at UNC.

Looking ahead, Ann hopes the university remains adaptable to societal and technological changes, ensuring that the curriculum evolves to meet future needs while preserving essential traditions.