

Tamara Williams

Tamara was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, and describes her childhood as a happy one. Her parents instilled in her a strong work ethic and the belief that anything is possible through hard work. Her father, a Vietnam War veteran, completed college in two and a half years after his service. Tamara, an only child, was raised in a supportive and encouraging home. Without siblings, she had limited exposure to conflict, but her parents' values shaped her deeply — especially her father's unwavering honesty and integrity.

Tamara attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she majored in business administration with a minor in Spanish. She graduated in 1997 and went on to earn her Master of Accounting (MAC) degree in 1998.

During her time at Carolina, Tamara had countless memorable experiences, but her favorite was attending a UNC vs. Duke basketball game at the Dean Smith Center. Sitting in the front row as a student, she felt the electric energy of the crowd — and the joy of a UNC victory.

One of the most unexpected lessons Tamara learned in the MAC program was the importance of collaboration. She realized that she needed help from others to truly grasp the material, and that learning from different perspectives was not only helpful but essential. This experience helped her develop skills in teamwork and problem-solving, especially in understanding that there's rarely just one way to approach a challenge.

Tamara fondly remembers two professors who made lasting impacts on her life. One was Professor C.J. Skender, who taught Introduction to Audit during his first year at UNC. Though audit was rumored to be a dull class, Professor Skender brought it to life and made it engaging. He emphasized the importance of personal connection — something that stuck with Tamara. She vividly remembers receiving a handwritten Christmas card from him after graduation, sent to her new address in Washington, D.C., complete with a thoughtful personal note. His consistent positivity and warmth left a lasting impression.

Another influential professor was Dr. Hoffman, who taught her Accounting 101 class as an undergraduate. Tamara recalls a tragic day when a shooting occurred on Franklin Street. At the beginning of class, Dr. Hoffman addressed the situation with compassion and told students to call their mothers and tell them they loved them. That moment made Tamara realize that professors could show compassion and caring. It was also Dr. Hoffman's class that inspired her to apply to the MAC program.

After graduation, Tamara accepted a position in public accounting with Arthur Andersen in Washington, D.C., working in the tax department for a year. A former classmate and friend later told her about an opening at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in the Washington

National Tax Services office. She applied and received an offer. Tamara spent nine years in D.C. before returning to Charlotte, where she has now worked with PwC for 26 years.

Tamara credits the UNC alumni network for many of the connections she's made over the years. She finds that UNC alumni share an instant bond, and many of her colleagues and clients are fellow Tar Heels. She is actively involved in the UNC Carolina Women's Network in Charlotte and finds fulfillment in giving back to the community through alumni activities.

Her advice to current students is simple but powerful: ***opt in***. Be open to new experiences, embrace opportunities and get involved. If you're offered a chance to grow or try something new — take it. Tamara firmly believes that with hard work, success will follow in any field.

Tamara stays connected to UNC through her role on the UNC Tax Center Leadership Council, which gives her a meaningful way to give back. With time and experience, she now appreciates Carolina in a deeper way than she did as a student. She wants to help ensure that the MAC program and Kenan-Flagler Business School continue to thrive.

Tamara's vision is for all UNC alumni is to remain proud of their Tar Heel roots. She hopes the university continues its commitment to making a positive impact on society.