

Alumni Spotlight: Jayne Farrington (MRE '93)



Current title: Owner of Leave It To Me

Favorite professors: Dr. Stuart and Dr. Christie Wilson

Favorite class: Dr. Rosell's class on Church History—I had no idea I would enjoy that. It sounded dry to me, but Dr. Rosell's class is NOTHING like dry.

Favorite memory: Well, I worked there too, so many of my best memories are from the staff of GTCS. Dr. Billy Graham's visits to campus and having my co-workers stop me from making a fool of myself (or not).

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and what are you doing now?

I left in 1995 and moved to Atlanta to live near more of my family. I worked primarily in the corporate world in Accounting and Finance. Interestingly I had some trouble convincing some in the business world that my experiences working at GCTS had not disabled me from being competent and motivated. I would smile when someone indicated I couldn't handle the stress of corporate setting. Oh, really. You try handling a budget with too few resources, a board of directors expecting results, students, faculty, and alumni all with specific needs.

Eventually, after a contracting job with Coca-Cola during the 1996 Olympic games, I was hired by a small airline as their General Accounting Supervisor. When they were purchased by Delta Airlines, we were all vying for jobs in the new company. I was hired into their Accounts Payable department later to be a supervisor in the office of Revenue Recognition. Delta was a wonderful place to be.

At that time I was also involved in a wonderful church south of Atlanta in Peachtree City. We were a missions-minded church. It was exciting to be attending church with the President of Operation Mobilization and the man who created FCAP (Fellowship of Christian Airline Personnel). Many of the congregation were in the airline industry and would use their flying privileges to provide respite help for our missionaries overseas or provide transportation for those coming and going. I was involved in the ministry of this church as a Sunday school teacher and high school girls' leader. I was able to attend short-term missions in Montana with the Crow nation. My missions interest began in my home and my home church in Maine and was cultivated at Gordon-Conwell, so it was no surprise I was drawn to the heartbeat of this nondenominational, evangelical church.



Later, I was invited to join my brothers' church nearby where I was able to function as their Christian Education Director. I was also able to live out a dream of attending a church with my brothers and their families. There is something particularly special about worshipping in the church where my brothers and their wives were also serving.

In 2004, I received a call from a former boss who had moved to Charlotte, NC to work with Bank of America. I was invited to join him on his team and was brought here (where I live today) as Financial Analyst (later to be promoted to VP Manager of Financial Analysis). Coming to Charlotte took me back to my work at Gordon-Conwell roots, as I was working there when we were considering the Charlotte Campus. Knowing our history in Charlotte and the number of churches and parachurch organizations of which I was familiar, I was excited to be back in touch with my Gordon-Conwell family.

While I was enjoying my work in corporate America, I had been met with questions and challenges from people who wanted to understand my education. You have a Master's from a Seminary? Did you ever use it? (smile) Do you want to work in a church? (again, smile). Yes, I do use it, I'm a tentmaker. I'm letting Bank of America pay my way as I do the ministry that God has called me to. I joined a church where I offered my services of curriculum writer, youth leader, and women's ministry leader. I've been at a church working in the Family Ministries organization.

Besides church service, my Theology of Education could be used in the offices when I was tagged to teach SAP to my co-workers. My education has been employed in meeting the needs of my customers, co-workers, and boss. I have a servant approach, which allows me to see that my needs are not necessarily better than anyone else's.

Today I have my own business. In 2011, I reached a point where I knew that the light and salt of my ministry in the corporate world was waning. I was miserable. One day God told me to get "out of Egypt," and I had to admit that he was asking me to leave Bank of America. I didn't know to what, but I knew I had to do that. He also told me that I needed to depend on Him more. I didn't fully understand that then, but I do now.

Six months after leaving, I started a business called "Leave It To Me." It's not easy to start a business, the financial stress can crush a person, except I KNEW that God was in control and that I was simply allowing Him to handle my every need. What I started as a concierge business has now become accounting for small businesses. I also teach Excel and QuickBooks to help the businessmen and businesswomen I work with become more self-sufficient. My clients are across the nation, though I am still located in Charlotte.

I work with non-profits and for-profits. I have companies with only one person and those that have a payroll. I am in my sweet spot—I teach, I encourage, I serve.

What do you love about your work?

I see myself as a servant. I get to help people realize their dreams. My clients know their business. They don't know finance or accounting, and I'm there to help them not only keep up with their books but understand them. I love to show a business owner her reports and teach her what it means.

I've also enjoyed working with ministries in Charlotte. I've been the office manager of a youth ministry and on the accounting team of a missions organization. I've helped churches and other ministries with their books and reporting. I get to be a part of the work of His Kingdom again—in the business He gave me.

What are the joys and challenges of serving in the business/for-profit world in general and in your specific context?

Some of the joys are the financial benefits, the travel, people, and experiences. I'm in the "Bible belt," so even in corporate America I can talk with and pray with my co-workers. Bank of America allowed me to volunteer at Operation Christmas Child and our Crisis Assistance Ministry.

The challenges are keeping your salt "salty" and your light shining. I also found it important to know what type of corporate environment I was in. I was fortunate to work for some that saw their mission in the world as something I could relate to. When their mission didn't align with mine, it was harder to get excited about supporting them in their goals. I've had to disconnect with businesses that make unethical decisions. I've also had to disengage with companies or clients who were driving me into an unproductive witness.

How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now? How did you come to be doing your current work?

When I left Bank of America, I was broken and needed time to heal. It was completely a faith step. I struggled with the decision at first as I didn't have anything to go to. I even struggled with how God would ask me to do something so illogical. I am NOT a risk taker (most accounting professionals would understand this), and I'm from New England—we're practical people. It felt like such a foolish move to me on paper. I realized that, like Peter, I was stepping out of a boat into the unknown. I took some time to do the Experiencing God study and leaned into my understanding that even as Peter, upon discovering he was on top of the water and began to sink, was captured and saved by Jesus, God would always be there to scoop me up and keep me safe.

For the first few months after leaving the bank I was unemployed, healing, and working through the "what next." I had hoped to be employed by a missions organization in the area. That didn't come to fruition, but God had something in mind. When "Leave It To Me" began to be birthed in my mind, I knew that would be my next step.

What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence on the work you do now or the way you do your work?

Quite honestly the best advice I remember getting from Gordon-Conwell was to *think and think Christianly*. We would talk in classes about all truth being God's truth and that everything we do is for and to Him. I keep that in mind as I work. I have seen success in corporate America as a dependable, thoughtful worker. I always want to give my best as I don't think Jesus expects anything less. While I learned to work hard and give my best to a job from the home I was raised in, the thoughtful way in which I approach my work is partly gleaned from my time at Gordon-Conwell.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are considering serving in the business world?

Do it! Go in with a servant's heart and a tentmaker view. As Christians we should be the best of employees because we should be the ones employers can count on. We should be doing things above reproach. Our yeses should be YES, and our nos should be NO. Do not assume that "business is evil." I've seen unethical and shoddy work in Christian organizations, and I've seen shining examples of servant leadership and working with a desire to make the world better in corporate America. In all that you do, do as unto the Lord.