

alumnae profile

Julie Anderson: Working in the Public Interest by Kellsey Miller

Julie Anderson '94, an alumna of the Beta Tau Chapter (Nebraska Wesleyan University), has been busy since she graduated from NWU 12 years ago. Most recently, she held a position with the Obama Administration from which she resigned in February to start a small business and pursue an executive management position with a national foundation. Julie, who lives in Washington, D.C., refers to herself as an “executive leader who transforms organizations in private and public sectors and is now taking on the non-profit sector.” Through her wide-ranging experiences, Julie has learned to thrive in private and public sectors environments. She values public service and says she is looking forward to her new roles, because they both will allow her to work in the public interest.

Her new business, Anderson ReDesign, offers interior redesign and home staging services. The company uses existing furnishings and accessories to renovate the rooms into a trendier style. Julie says interior design has always been a hobby and she studied design at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, D.C. She recently decided to turn it into a business with the goal of offering others the chance to redesign their homes without the expensive prices. Julie says she is looking forward to learning about new people and the ins and outs of the industry.

Julie's first move to Washington, D.C. came after she won the Truman Scholar Award in 1997. She served as a policy analyst in the U.S. Department of Transportation and then worked as a legislative aide for Sen. Robert Kerrey of Nebraska. Julie also worked for IBM's Public Sector Global Business Services practice for seven years, managing initiatives on public sector strategy and health care. In 2007, she became involved with the Barack Obama campaign as a veterans' policy advisor and then served on the Transition Team for President Obama. She started her position as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs after Obama's inauguration. In this position, she served as a senior advisor to the Secretary on decision making around both internal and external policy that affects veterans. The team was responsible for developing policies about health care, education, employment and training, housing, homelessness, disability benefits and life insurance for more than 24 million veterans across the country. She also led the strategic planning and strategy development for the department.



Although Julie is not a veteran, she is the daughter and granddaughter of U.S. Navy Reserve and Marine Corps veterans. She wanted to work in veterans' affairs because her grandfather, who served in World War II, has always been an important part of her family. Veterans are vital to American life and Delta Zeta is proud to have had many alumnae serve in the armed forces. "There are ways for those who are not serving to still be involved," says Julie. There are over 900 medical facilities in the U.S. that serve veterans of all ages and sexes, as well as some dependents, that need volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, Julie also recommends finding a local veterans organization, which can be done through an Internet search.

Julie is a 1996 recipient of the Florence Hood Miner Award and remains active in Delta Zeta by participating in alumnae events when she returns home to Nebraska. She also credits her best friend, Dawn Bowmaster Zerbs BT '93 (a past Chapter Consultant), for helping her succeed in her various positions. Julie met Dawn during recruitment. "She is a professional colleague and we have been able to bounce ideas off each other," Julie said. Dawn has also been instrumental in strategy and marketing for Anderson ReDesign.

Julie believes that her diverse career path has also given her valuable insights that can help her Delta Zeta sisters. "First, young women need to be mindful of their presence and dress in the professional workplace," Julie says. "Women are more likely to be taken seriously if they are dressed professionally and err on the conservative side." She recommends gaining real world experience right out of college to use during the selection process for a graduate school. Julie believes that work experience will make graduate classes more meaningful and help you apply new concepts and skills. Julie earned a Master of Public Policy from the University of Chicago and an MBA from Duke University after gaining experience in the workforce.