

April 2017 Spotlight

Member Spotlight: Joanne Dempster

Title: Private Equity CFO

Length of FEI membership: 2 years

FEI leadership involvement: Current member of the Board

Tell us a little bit about your career, educational/professional background and how you got to where you are today.



I graduated from the University of Central Florida and went directly into public accounting. I was lucky enough to then go to work at Walt Disney World in Financial Reporting, which was a great springboard for my future controllership positions. I eventually went on to serve as CFO at several different private equity companies.

Do you think it takes a certain kind of personality to thrive in finance? What traits are most important?

Someone needs to be insatiably curious, always seeking the reasons behind changes in numbers.

What is your best networking tip?

Attend FEI meetings! It's often difficult to prioritize networking. By combining networking with continuing education credits, these events make it easier and more fun. The events at local corporations such as HSN and Lazydays also offer opportunities to tour local companies many of us may never have set foot in otherwise.

How did you discover your passion for finance?

I took an accounting class in high school and was instantly hooked.

What is your best tip for how to stand out in the finance field?

Be a good partner to all the various business units you support. Being a finance person is much more than the numbers and the four walls of your office. Volunteering to work on cross-departmental projects or systems projects allows you to expand beyond the analytical and help a company grow for the future.

Sponsor Spotlight: Katie Trott

Company: Foundry Commercial

Title: Vice President, Brokerage Services

Length of FEI sponsorship: 13 years

Email: Katie.Trott@FoundryCommercial.com

Phone Number: (813) 286-7548

Tell us a little bit about your career, educational/professional background and how you got to where you are today.



I double majored in finance and real estate at Florida State University. The real estate program did an excellent job at introducing students to employers, and after graduation I took a position as a commercial real estate appraiser in Tampa because of the mentorship and experience it provided. This job was an excellent stepping-stone into my real estate career utilizing both of my majors. After a short time in the appraisal industry, I received my “big break” and was hired by Trammell Crow Company, which was one of the largest and most respected real estate firms at the time. Trammell Crow was acquired in 2007 and TCC’s North Florida executives joined CNL Financial Group to launch a real estate services platform. CNL Commercial Real Estate spun out from the parent about 1 year ago, so we are now a separate entity called Foundry Commercial.

Jimmy Johnson and Tim Kilkelly, who are both active in FEI, took me under their wing as their junior broker after joining TCC and are still my partners today. There have been a couple company name changes along the way, but we have been a team for 13+ years!

What is one piece of information you wish someone had told you when you first started your career?

Remember to take a deep breath. Sometimes it is the best medicine.

Why does your company sponsor FEI Tampa Bay Chapter?

The Tampa Bay Chapter of FEI is an excellent organization of likeminded people. It provides an opportunity to understand different industries and build genuine professional relationships.

What are some of your personal hobbies outside of work?

There is so much to do in Tampa Bay! I try to enjoy it all, so you can find me checking out new restaurants, enjoying a Bolts game or wandering around Hyde Park or Bayshore Blvd. I also enjoy traveling and just got back from Napa!

What other organizations are you involved in?

I am on the board of the Tampa Bay Seminole Club, which allows me to combine many of my loves - giving back to the local community, supporting all things FSU and cheering on my team. I also recently finished my 4-year commitment on the Executive Committee for the Florida State University Real Estate Conference. In addition to these, I'm involved with many local charities including Beat NB, which is a local group doing amazing things for childhood cancer.