The Legend of Julie Olson

Julie Olson, who has steadied the ship of Business Affairs for more than a decade, is retiring this month. As Executive Assistant, Business Affairs Julie Olson served Kathy Funk-Baxter and Kerry Kennedy. Both weigh in on her legacy.

Olson was raised a military nomad (Army brat), one of eight globetrotting children. She spent her high school years in Germany, where the 10th-grader Julie met her future husband, Jeremy Olson. In an international love story, they followed each other to college at Jacksonville State in Alabama.

After their marriage, Julie continued to hopscotch the country before planting some roots in Texas. She joined the UTSA family in 2001, hired as an administrative assistant in HR. Julie and Jeremy raised two daughters and one son and now have five grandchildren.

This special edition of Business Horizons pays homage to Julie Olson and her 15 years of diligent and excellent service to Business Affairs and all of UTSA...with gratitude and true affection.

Message from Kathy

Julie has been a true asset to me during my time of transition to UTSA and then she has done so much to make my job successful while I have had the position of Vice President. She is a valued team member, and she gets the job done so seamlessly and with the utmost professionalism. She has a great talent, and I can see her influence in many of the programs within our division that I imagine would not be here today if it were not for her.

I wish her well in her next endeavors and for a fulfilling retirement life.

Kathryn Funk-Baxter
Vice President for Business Affairs
Kerry’s Korner

As my right hand (most often left and right), when Julie was out of the office, nothing was quite the same. She was the cornerstone of the culture she forged in the Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs. The culture bore her fingerprints because it was so her. The office was first and foremost, professional in every respect, service-driven, and friendly (even in the most difficult of times).

The hallmark of the office that made all the preceding transpire was that it was a FUN and enjoyable place to work; a safe place to be yourself. Staff birthdays were always celebrated with lunch, and employees’ offices were decorated with colorful balloons and streams of crepe paper. Many visitors to our office spoke of its energy and enthusiasm. Belly laughs were the norm. Our culture was envied, and it will be an everlasting memory of her.

With her cubicle just outside my office door, I must have called, “Julie!” twenty times a day. Surely there was no one who stood up and sat back down as many times as she, and how she was ever able to maintain her stream of thought upon returning to her desk I’ll never know.

Since the beginning of my administration, and perhaps reaching further back into the university’s history, Julie has always been the face of Business Affairs, exemplifying service excellence, commitment, perseverance, responsiveness, accuracy, sincere generosity, and much, much more. Her commitment to UTSA and her willingness to serve and promote Business Affairs and the university as a whole is surpassed by none.

Julie has a great memory, and organization was one of her many strengths. She can fix near anything that appears broken and never hesitated to take things apart to make them functional again. She fixed clocks, printers, computers, and much more, even if it meant climbing under a desk or over a partition.

So, it’s finally here... the culmination of years and years of dedicated and loyal service. Julie, Brenda and I congratulate you on your well-deserved retirement and wish you much joy, fun, and many yards of quilts in the months and years to come. Now your time becomes even more valuable as you are able to invest it more liberally and intentionally with those you love and who are closest to you. Stay busy, love generously, drink heartily, and stay connected! All the very best to you, and blessings to you, Jeremy, and your family,

Kerry Kennedy
VPBA, 2004 to 2015

Julie, Thank you so much for your support through the years and for all your service and dedication to UTSA and Business Affairs.

We will certainly miss you! We wish you the very best and we are sure that you are going to enjoy retirement.

So now you can finally get to that bucket list and start enjoying each item in your bucket!

Julie

Dan Pena
Assistant Chief of Police

Julie, I have truly enjoyed working with you. How fortunate to be able to work with a friend. So many wonderful memories, and I will never forget the laughter we shared over the years.

Thanks for everything you have done for me!
Happy Retirement – Let’s go quilting!!

Jennifer Snellgrove
Former Sr. Administrative Associate
There is so much about Julie to cherish, and so much that she did at UTSA to remember fondly…

Julie, the organizer—Julie was always there to assure that we were well organized and moving forward with the project of the moment. When she talked about growing up with all of her siblings and how everything had to be “in order” at all times, it was clear that Julie had been accustomed to keeping others around her “on track” for a long time! No better example than the annual Business Affairs forums. From hatching fun ideas to bringing all of us together on the big day, Julie was in charge. We received our roles with some trepidation, at least on occasion, since we knew that it could involve anything from talking about a topic important to Business Affairs, to playing a game, to (God forbid) singing! She made it all real fun and always took care of us.

Julie, a friend in the workplace—Julie was always there to listen, be empathetic and to get you back on the path forward. A special and thoughtful person who had a seemingly endless well of personal strength to draw from. We all got to know something of her family, including her daughters, her grandchildren, and the family dog (it was always extra fun when Charlie showed up at the office). I will always cherish Julie’s friendship and some of the little things that will always remind me of her – the fabric coasters (they are fabulous!) and the book “What the Dog Saw.”

Julie, the master of many things—It was always amazing what Julie was able to accomplish. From re-imagining the office space to accommodate changing needs, to getting a presentation in order, to just about anything you can think of, Julie is the best.

In retirement, Julie will continue to touch the lives of many around her in a magnificent way, of that I am sure. The more things change, the more they stay the same. I am confident that Julie will continue to serve others as an organizer, a great friend, and the master of many things…

Happy Trails, Julie

I worked with Julie for 11 years. She is someone who anyone would want on their team.

Julie is a special person who played a large role over many years in building the friendly and inclusive culture in Business Affairs, while always maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. Julie is a serious (and seriously talented) person, who enjoys her work, is a terrific relationship-builder, and looks out for everyone.

Pam Bacon
Former Associate Vice President for Administration

I knew when I hired Julie that whenever I decided to retire that the Office of VPBA would be in great hands with Julie at the helm.

Julie was so personable, creative and definitely energetic. She brought a new life to Business Affairs. We never knew what "new thing" Julie would come up with. Coming to work was definitely fun. We worked hard but we also played hard and became a very happy family.

Sue McManus
Former Executive Assistant

Presentation in order, to just about anything you can think of, Julie is the best.

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Happy Trails, Julie
As the heartbeat of the VPBA office, she will be deeply missed. I wish her a relaxing retirement.

Many thanks, Julie
Clay Haverland
Assistant VP for Campus Services

Julie, thanks for all your assistance over the past year.
Every day will be a weekend day now!
Well wishes and God bless,
Carlos Gonzales
Director, PSSC

Julie is not only one of the smartest people I know, she is also extremely thorough and detailed. She would never not “close the loop” on anything she was working on. Julie is also extremely knowledgeable about UTSA policies, Business Affairs guidelines and historical background information on just about any topic.

Although I do appreciate Julie’s expertise in these areas, the thing I will miss most about her is her wit. She sees the absurdity in everyday life. I have laughed with her about so many things that really aren’t funny to anyone else. She has been a delight to work with, and I will miss her terribly.

Cheri Wiese
Executive Assistant, VPER

From the first day I met Julie up until her last days before retirement she has been nothing short of professional, dedicated and somehow regardless of how much she has on her plate always displayed “Cool Confidence.”

Through it all she always made time to listen, give advice and help her peers. Julie will truly be missed.

Best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Jacqueline Ortiz
Administrative Services Officer III, VPBA
It is with mixed emotions that we bid Julie a farewell. Julie has been with the University since November 2001.

We will always cherish her assistance, insight, intelligence, and dedication. We could always count on Julie for answers that were based on much careful thought and deliberation. We will miss her greatly; her shoes will be hard to fill. On behalf of my team in Human Resources, we wish her many blessings in retirement and many years filled with joy, relaxation and quilting! Happy Retirement, Julie….come back and visit us!

Barbara J. Centeno
Associate VP for Human Resources

Congratulations on your retirement!
I will miss working with you and all the help you provided over the years. As you begin a new chapter, enjoy sleeping in, lounging in your pajamas and enjoying the quiet mornings, no more traffic and scheduling meetings. Enjoy more time with family and friends. Lastly, come back occasionally to say “hi” to all your UTSA friends.

Thanks for helping us accomplish our jobs and always finding that email, report or memo that was sent and needs to be revisited.

Regards and best wishes,
Lenora Chapman
Associate VP for Financial Affairs

I am going to miss Julie very much! She has always been the consummate professional and has always been on top of things in VPBA. She is the foundation of so many great improvements that have been made over the years, and she always made me feel at ease, even when we were going through difficult times.

Julie is the person who sponsored me in to UTSA, and she put up with all of my questions and concerns, and never made me feel like I was a bother (which I already felt like on my own). She was always there to help, and even offered her daughter as a babysitter for my then ten-year old son so my wife and I could attend a scholarship banquet. When we decided to fly my wife’s sister in from New Mexico to look after Liam, she was very understanding (Liam had never been left with anyone but family, so we were reluctant to leave him with someone he did not know), although she must have thought we were very weird!

Julie has always taken the time to listen even though she always had way too much on her plate, and that makes her special to me. She is a detail person, and a kind person, and I wish her joy and the very best in her retirement!

Dave Riker
Associate VP for Facilities

Julie, Thank you for striving for excellence...every job, every day!

Congratulations on your retirement!
Endless Kudos...and Thanks

**Julie O.** was always the solid rock foundation of the VPBA house. Hopefully, we can make it on a pier & beam home now.

You’ll be missed, Julie! Best wishes!

Business Contracts Office

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**I** first met Julie Olson nine years ago when I started working in the Provost’s office. She was immensely helpful to me when I had questions concerning policies and procedures—especially when I needed to send a document to UT System/Board of Regents for approval. I, like many others, have been fortunate to have her expertise to rely on. It’s been a blessing to know and work with Julie over the years, and I will miss her very much.

Julie, congratulations on your retirement!

Debbie Howard-Rappaport
Executive Assistant
Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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**Julie** is one-of-kind and will be truly missed. Always kind and generous with a heart for service, Julie is a dedicated professional and a loyal coworker and friend.

My sincerest best wishes for a bright and happy retirement.

Congratulations Julie!

Patricia Cárdenas
Executive Assistant to the President

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**Julie and I worked together for five years in BA. Julie has a stellar work ethic, but she is a totally behind-the-scenes type of person. She has faithfully served under three administrations in BA. Since taking the helm under Kerry’s administration, Julie has provided excellent executive level leadership that has equipped our vice presidents to effectively administer best practices across the university.**

Outside of BA no one would probably know Julie, because she does not toot her own horn, but in BA, she is the foundation. She maintains history and can readily produce documentation regarding all discussions/decisions relative to proposals discussed years past. She is caring, conscientious, always composed, and full of laughter.

Wanda Guntz
Senior Academic Administrative Manager

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I have been here just a few months now, but I can see that Julie keeps things running smoothly in this office! She may have had training as a juggler at some point in her life, as there are a lot of balls in the air, and she doesn’t drop any of them! More importantly, she is a kind and caring person as well and has made my first few months here very welcoming.

I wish Julie nothing but the best in retirement. I pray she has many years ahead filled with family and fun, laughter and love...and lots of quilting!

Christine Laux
Senior Administrative Associate, VPBA