

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

Alumnae Profile Series

by Margaret McGlohon '81C

Caroline Ward Manning '06HS

Hospitality and Events Manager

Augusta National Golf Club, Augusta, GA

A Passion for Southern Hospitality

Caroline Ward Manning '06 grew up in Greensboro, NC, in a family with a long history of attending boarding schools. Both of Caroline's parents had single gender school experiences and her brother, Charles, graduated from The McCallie School. So, one might say that Caroline becoming a four-year Saint Mary's girl was fate waiting to happen.

The Beginnings of an Event Planner

Before enrolling at Saint Mary's as a freshman, and also during her four years at Saint Mary's as a student, Caroline attended summer camp at Camp Seafarer in Arapahoe, NC. As a young girl, she learned about Saint Mary's from many of her camp counselors who were students. Altogether, she spent twelve years attending the YMCA camp.

At Saint Mary's, Caroline stayed busy all four years playing sports. She was on the soccer, basketball, swimming and track teams. For two years, she served as a prefect in Cruikshank. "In my senior year, I was the Student Life Representative for the Executive Student Government Association," she adds. "I was primarily responsible for working with the student life team to plan most of the campus events."

Those experiences helped spark Caroline's interest in event planning.

"During COMPASS week (a program created for experiential, hands-on learning with experts from Saint Mary's and in the greater community) in my senior year, I had the opportunity to participate in a one-week internship with Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants and Hotels in the Greensboro area," she explains. "That was the week I truly fell in love with the hospitality industry and found that my passion lies in creating bespoke experiences that wow people."

Caroline graduated from Saint Mary's and then chose the University of South Carolina for college because of their unique Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management program. "It was a focused curriculum and one of the top in the country," Caroline explains.

While at the University of South Carolina, Caroline became involved as the Assistant Events Manager for her college, where she planned events to raise money for scholarships. She was also the Membership Development and Social Chair for her sorority, planning all social functions. But where she got the most exposure to the hospitality industry was during her summer jobs and internships.

"During the summers of my freshman and sophomore years, I worked at the Coral Bay Club in Atlantic Beach," she says. "This is where I fell in love with the private club environment and how it gives you the ability to learn your members' preferences in order to anticipate their needs."

Caroline also received the Banfi Scholastic Tour Scholarship in her junior year. "This gave me the opportunity to travel throughout Italy studying wine. That same summer, I worked for the New York City office for the Luxury Concierge Firm, Quintessentially."

Caroline feels that the work she did while in New York truly prepared her for all event "what ifs."

"If I had a problem to solve, I had to personally investigate any and all possibilities to fulfill a



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client's request," she says. "It was challenging in the best of ways, because I learned that through being resourceful, building relationships with clients and vendors, and using my critical thinking skills I am able to come up with timely resolutions."

Developing her Passion

After graduating from the University of South Carolina with her bachelor's degree and specializations in Club Operations and Event Management, Caroline's first job was with Marriott International in their Management Development Program. "The job took me to Scottsdale, Arizona where I worked for the JW Marriott Camelback Inn and was later transferred to Atlanta, where I worked as an Event Manager for the next two years."

In 2012, Caroline landed her dream job. "I was hired by Augusta National as the Clubhouse Manager for the department of Club Operations!"

At the time, Caroline was the first woman hired as a manager within that department. It was also the first year that August National opened their membership to women, which made international headlines.

Today, Caroline is Augusta National's Hospitality and Events Manager. "In this role, I oversee a variety of functions. In preparation for Masters week, I oversee the recruitment, hiring, placement and training of nearly 1,800 employees who work in the Club Operations department."

Caroline loves this work because she gets to visit colleges and universities to interview interested students.

Throughout the year, Caroline oversees all event logistics for member parties. She also oversees all hospitality operations for Augusta National's "Grow the Game." Initiatives. This program is a collaborative effort between Augusta National, The Royal & Ancient, The United States Golf Association (Latin American Region) and the Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation (Asia-Pacific Region) to literally grow the game of golf worldwide.

"Because of the vision of our former Chairman, Augusta National is the engine behind the effort of creating golf heroes around the world," she explains. "These tournaments have given me the opportunity to travel around Asia and Latin America promoting the game of golf while providing the top level of hospitality to our members, patrons and partners."

Caroline says the most recent addition to their Grow the Game Initiatives was the Augusta National Women's Amateur Championship. "This inaugural event was held this past spring, and it was a very exciting endeavor to be a part of. Not only did I learn a lot about the intricacies of building a tournament from the ground up, but I am also already looking forward to how we can continue to improve upon our early successes."

Caroline's other responsibilities include managing and negotiating the contracts with various hotels, event venues, and food and beverage vendors.

Now in this role for seven years, when asked "What Next?" Caroline says, "I love my job and can't wait to see what the future holds for my growth at Augusta National."

She and her husband, Hamp Manning, live in Augusta and are the proud parents of daughter Mary Hunter. When she is not working, and Caroline says she works a lot, traveling around 60 days a year, she serves as her Saint Mary's Class Secretary, is a member of the University of South Carolina's Alumni Society Board, is a Historic Augusta Member, and a member of the Club Managers Association of America.

Caroline certainly found her passion and that is what she hopes for today's Saint Mary's girls.

"I want students at Saint Mary's to fully take advantage of the opportunities that our wonderful school provides. You should never underestimate the strong network that is represented by our Saint Mary's family. Utilize those connections to help make your dream job become a reality. And if you realize that your dream, like mine, centers around the world of hospitality, please make me one of those connections. I can humbly admit that if it weren't for the many mentors who have helped me along the way, there is no doubt I would not be where I am today."

She also encourages students to take advantage of their holidays and summers to try new

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things. "You'll never know if something is your passion until you have tried it."

Caroline hopes only the best for her alma mater and that her daughter, Mary Hunter, could one day follow in her footsteps.

"I love that Saint Mary's has kept its beloved traditions alive and that the school has also strived to remain relevant so it can be the best environment for today's girls," she says.

Caroline truly embodies the spirit of Saint Mary's women who are intelligent, resourceful, passionate, and who are educated to make a difference in their communities and the world. We look forward to watching Mary Hunter grow and to someday welcome her as a future Saint Mary's girl, too!

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