



# HELPING OTHERS EXCEL

Mentorship and support helped Joyce Buchheit start and sustain a successful business career. For decades, she has paid it forward, helping students, faculty and organizations advance and thrive.

BY TIM FOX

As the founder and owner of J. Wood & Associates, a successful management consulting firm, Emeritus Trustee Joyce (Wood) Buchheit, BSBA '76, MBA '77, believes in the power of philanthropy to change lives.

Buchheit has given generously to Washington University for nearly 20 years to express her gratitude for the scholarship support, mentorship and career guidance she received as a young mother entering Olin Business School in the 1970s.

"When I started at the business school, there were not many women and very few mothers. I chose Washington University because of the financial aid package I was offered," she recalls.

Olin School Dean Robert Virgil and Professor Earl Spiller set her on a career path at Arthur Andersen & Company, at that time one of the "Big Eight" international accounting firms.

"Dean Virgil and Professor Spiller were outstanding teachers and mentors for their students. They encouraged Arthur Andersen to hire me in spite of the fact that I did not fit the normal age and gender profile for the position," Buchheit says.

"And that scholarship changed my life," she adds. "Without Washington University and the assistance of the dean and my professors, Arthur Andersen would never have hired me and provided me with excellent training and experience in the area of tax accounting."

## A life of gratitude

Even before she set foot on the university's Danforth Campus, Buchheit had benefited from others' generosity in many ways.

She remembers that growing up in rural south-east Missouri, her only access to books was through



Joyce Buchheit, BSBA '76, MBA '77

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a bookmobile. Then after a family move, she was able to go to St. Louis Public Library's Barr Branch as an elementary student.

"It was like walking into a candy store," she says. "The Barr Branch was one of six St. Louis Public Library branches that received part of a \$1 million grant from the Carnegie Corporation, the largest Carnegie grant in the state. It is also named for William Barr, of Famous-Barr Department Store."

After Buchheit graduated from high school, members of the Desloge family — a prominent southeast Missouri mining family for whom the city of Desloge, Missouri, is named — entrusted her with a job in their St. Louis office. And when she decided to study for an MBA, her first husband, Paul Inman, helped with her education, though he had just returned from serving in Vietnam.

"I have benefited greatly from the generosity of others and have been blessed to be able to pay those gifts forward," Buchheit says.

## Giving back

After nearly four years at Arthur Andersen and a brief time at Mark Twain Bank, Buchheit founded J. Wood & Associates in St. Louis in 1984. Four years later, she moved the business to Bonne Terre,

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Missouri, where she began finding opportunities to give back.

"Christian Hospital had recently invested in the area by creating Parkland Health Center in Farmington, and they asked if I would sit on the board," she says. Buchheit — who is now married to Chauncy Buchheit, executive director of the Southeast Missouri Regional Planning Commission — has served on the boards of several rural hospitals, as well as Missouri Baptist Hospital in St. Louis. She recently retired from the board of BJC HealthCare, where she chaired the hospital system's audit committee.

"My service to these organizations allowed me to support the community," she says. "I feel strongly that we need research on effective policies that improve public health, and we need to revise or delete policies that have had unintended negative consequences. Dissemination and implementation of proven best practices in health care should be our highest priority."

Buchheit was elected to the Washington University Board of Trustees in 2011 and became an emeritus trustee in 2016. She also has chaired the School of Medicine's finance committee and currently serves on the national councils of the medical school and the Institute for Public Health.

"Joyce is dedicated to improving the lives of people in our region," says Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton. "We were proud to honor her with the Olin Business School Dean's Medal in 2000 and the Robert S. Brookings Award in 2015. In addition to her extraordinary generosity, her dedicated service as an insightful leader, adviser and volunteer will have a lasting impact on faculty and students at Washington University."

Buchheit considers her leadership role at the Institute for Public Health as an opportunity to advance the work of both the medical school and the Brown School. In 2012, she gave \$2 million to establish the Joyce Wood Professorship, the university's first endowed professorship in public health. Debra Haire-Joshu, the inaugural Joyce Wood Professor, holds joint appointments in

the Brown School and the School of Medicine, reflecting Buchheit's commitment to multidisciplinary approaches to public-health problems.

"Joyce's vision is to enhance the quality of life for all by combining the medical school's research with the Brown School's groundbreaking work in public health, social work and public policy," says Haire-Joshu, an internationally renowned researcher in obesity and diabetes prevention. "I am so pleased to have the opportunity to hold this professorship."


Overall, Buchheit believes that giving back to Washington University is an investment in the future.

"Because the chancellors and the deans of the business school have been long-term leaders, I've seen how they plan and execute over time," she says. "The business school is growing, especially internationally. That's the world students are entering today."

Helping those students and the university continue to succeed is Buchheit's primary motivation for giving to Washington University.

In 1998, she and her former husband Howard Wood established the Wood Fellows Program for MBA students. They endowed the Joyce and Howard Wood Distinguished Professorship in Business in 2004, added the Wood Leadership Scholars Program for Olin undergraduates in 2007, and made the lead gift for the Howard and Joyce Wood Simulation Center at the medical school in 2008.

As an Olin graduate and a former scholarship recipient, Buchheit finds supporting scholarships especially meaningful.

"I enjoy watching bright students progress through school and advance in their careers," she says. "Their diverse backgrounds, their qualifications, their accomplishments — it all reinforces my drive to help them gain the education they need. It is exciting to see them succeed, open doors and hold them open for others." 

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