

KATIE BURKE

CLASS OF 2003

BURKE GRADUATED FROM ELON in 2003 with a major in business and a concentration in finance. She then worked for more than a decade in the financial services industry before attaining enough knowledge to start her own firm.

Self-doubt played a huge role in why it took her so long to open her own financial planning firm in an industry that is typically dominated by males.

"I was worried if people would take me seriously being a younger female in finance," Burke said.

Burke credits her husband, family and business network for pushing her and believing in her.

Burke said she never once in her 12 years of finance worked under a female advisor or manager. This made it difficult to picture what her career could develop into.

She combated this by realizing women are greatly suited for the financial planning field.

"We naturally are organizers and relationship-focused, which are two of the main traits that make you successful in this field," Burke said.

She often gets asked the question, "How do you manage it all?"

As a wife, mother and

businesswoman, she has learned the meaning of balance and realizes that sometimes her needs come first, too.

"Balance is not giving each part of your life the same attention each day," Burke said. "It is giving the part of your life that needs it the most attention that day. Sometimes that is my business and sometimes that is my children, family or even myself."



SUBMITTED BY KATIE BURKE

GABRIELLE L. MCGEE

CLASS OF 2006

GABRIELLE MCGEE '06 IS the vice president of digital marketing and special projects for the Tory Burch Foundation. In this role, McGee develops content, online programs and products.

The Tory Burch Foundation empowers women entrepreneurs.

"I've conceptualized and launched ToryBurchFoundation.org, which has empowered more than 200,000 women in the last year. I've also worked with our Tory Burch Fellows online program, #EmbraceAmbition campaign, Seed Box and much more," McGee said.

McGee is able to utilize her talents in the numerous opportunities provided at Tory Burch to create, design and develop content to support to foundation's cause.

McGee calls Tory Burch — the chairman, CEO, and designer of Tory Burch LLC — the ultimate entrepreneur.

Women CEOs in Fortune 500 companies, like Tory Burch, have increased from zero percent in 1995 to 5.4 percent in 2017, according to the Pew Research Center.

WOMEN CEO'S

Women CEO's in Fortune 500 companies have increased from zero percent in 1995 to 5.4 percent in 2015.



COURTESY OF TORY BURCH FOUNDATION FACEBOOK

ALANNA VAGIANOS

CLASS OF 2013

ALANNA VAGIANOS '13 WORKS as the associate women's editor at HuffPost in New York City.

"I'm very passionate about women's issues and activism, so the fact that I get to be in a field I'm passionate about is definitely a positive," Vagianos said.

Living in New York City is not cheap. For Vagianos, finding a job that paid

enough, while staying within the journalism field was a big feat.

"Journalism doesn't pay the big bucks," Vagianos said. "So getting to a point in my career where I didn't feel like this struggling writer has been big for me."

In her role at HuffPost, Vagianos writes and reports on women's issues with a focus on sexual violence. She also tackles feminism in entertainment, body image, women in politics and reproductive rights. Vagianos said it is important to maintain self care while tackling the hard issues she sees in her day-to-day reporting.

"The negative emotions are unfortunately just as real," Vagianos said. "I write a lot about sexual violence so understanding the importance of self care, whether that's going to therapy or just letting myself unplug from work on the weekends, is really key. Also, working online all day and dealing with trolls is very taxing. Much of it comes back to self-care and knowing my limits."

This variety of stories ranges from smaller write-ups to longer form pieces that can take weeks to create. But Vagianos' work doesn't stop there. She also edits copy, packages stories and runs social media accounts.

"I honestly feel like I'm making an impact every day I go to work," Vagianos said.



SUBMITTED BY ALANNA VAGIANOS

HALLIE CORNETTA

CLASS OF 2009



SUBMITTED BY HALLIE CORNETTA

AS VICE PRESIDENT OF human capital at Red Ventures, a marketing company headquartered in South Carolina, Hallie Cornetta '09 has made her mark in previously a male-dominated environment.

"After starting my career in marketing and business, I found a new sense of passion, purpose and excitement for my people-focused role," Cornetta said. "My strongest positive emotions are seeing the accomplishments, successes and personal breakthroughs of younger talent I have touched in some way."

She joined the senior lead-

ership team at age 28, where she was more than 10 years younger than her team — which was 90 percent male.

The struggles she faced were found in trying to understand her value, having belief in her decisions, and to be a thought-leading peer rather than an order-taking subordinate.

Now, three years later, she has found her voice and the senior leadership team is now nearly 40 percent female.

The trend of female leaders climbing the corporate ladder is spreading across industries. On this year's Fortune 500 List, there were more female CEOs listed than ever before.