UAlbany Weekend MBA Stories – Janice Denio
Manager HR Consultant, Huron Healthcare

One of eight children, Janice (Strang) Denio was raised to be ‘Strang Strong!’
“If you think you can, you’re right,” says the second oldest daughter of Joe and Janice Strang. “If you think you can’t, you are also right.”

Janice Denio has adhered to the ‘Strang Strong!’ mantra throughout her life, riding it places she never imagined she’d journey. “I can’t believe I do what I do,” she conveys with humility. “When I completed my Associate’s degree nearly 16 years ago, I never imagined I’d find myself here.”

But life has a way of revealing one’s designed purpose. When her now 23-year-old daughter Elizabeth was born with a birth defect and needed multiple surgeries, Janice turned her attention from selling point of sale systems to nursing. “Nursing resides in your gut,” she shares. “It remains there until you respond to it. It’s a calling.”

Determined to practice more than just patient healthcare as a floor nurse, Janice earned her Bachelor’s in Nursing in 2008 from the SUNY Institute of Technology. For three years, she served as Director of the Adult Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at Samaritan Hospital in her hometown of Troy, New York.

“I was responsible for directing operations of the 30-bed unit,” relates Janice. “In an average month, I oversaw more than 100 patient admissions and managed 56 employees.”

Driven to continually grow both personally and professionally, Janice believes life itself is an education. “I was the geek in class who always had my hand raised,” she admits. “I just love learning.”

The birth of her daughter helped her recognize nursing was where she wanted to be. But she didn’t stop there. “After working directly with patients and then at the management level, I was ready to take the next step and earn my Masters.”

After considering her options, Janice chose the University of Albany’s Weekend MBA Program because she wanted to be enmeshed with other thirsty learners. “Everyone in my cohort at UAlbany was ambitious,” she notes. “Each person was internally driven to achieve, but not at the expense of others. To me, they became much more ‘family’ than classmates.”

Currently serving as Manager RN Consultant with Huron Healthcare, Janice leans on her former experience as a floor nurse to help other nurses with patient and time management. “I’m able to offer real value because I’ve walked their walk,” she explains. “My job is not done until I’ve helped establish a floor I would work myself.”

With the many changes in healthcare, Huron is challenged with balancing patient care with productivity and efficiency. “My MBA has equipped me to teach hospital management how to strike that balance,” explains Janice.
In fact, she credits her current management position to her time with the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program, “Huron offered me the management position because I was earning an Executive MBA.”

Another highlight of the MBA experience for Janice was the expansive international training, which included an executive trip abroad to Beijing. “I’d never been to China,” she articulates. “Learning first-hand from foreign business leaders was invaluable.”

The most memorable thing she did in Asia was to travel to Mongolia with four others. “We climbed up a hill and stood face-to-face with the Great Wall of China,” she shares. “It was weathered and aged and was truly the coolest thing ever.”

“When you grow up in the United States and learn about the Great Wall in social studies, you never think one day you’ll have the opportunity to actually see it,” she says. “It was very moving to think about all the people who built it, and the many who died doing it.”

Janice intentionally remains connected with many from her UAlbany cohort. “Sometimes, it’s just nice to be able to admit I’m overwhelmed,” she smiles. “Especially to trusted professionals who can offer solutions based on their unique vantage point of expertise.”

May 2011 brought another poignant milestone with Janice’s graduation from UAlbany’s Weekend MBA Program and her daughter Elizabeth’s graduation from UAlbany with a Bachelor’s in Political Science. Right on track, Janice’s 21-year-old son James will graduate on May 18, 2013 with a Bachelor’s in Business from Cazenovia College.

“Night after night, you’d find the three of us doing our homework together,” beams the proud mother. To celebrate, she splurged on a Graduation Getaway to Mexico. “We had never been on a vacation like this before. It was a celebration of our family’s success.”

Their first night in Mexico, Janice proposed a toast to her two children, “Being Strang Strong got us here. This toast is to us, and to the support we gave each other as we sought after desires and achieved goals.”

As her career aspirations amp up, Janice Denio has learned to enjoy the things that matter most in life. “I enjoy watching my children take on their own challenges and goals,” she imparts with a humble sense of accomplishment. “And I’m blessed to be in a solid, long-term relationship with a wonderful, supportive man, Norm.”

Janice credits Joe and Janice Strang for the good in her life. “Married for 48 years, my parents taught me the secret to successful relationships,” she divulges. “Grow together and allow each other room to grow individually.”

Perhaps if we do, we can all become, “Strang Strong!”

**Connect with Janice Denio here:**
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