
- Owner, Joanne Darcy Crum, L.S.
- Associate, Lemery Greisler LLC

“In high school, my mother wanted me to be a nurse and I wanted to be a foot doctor,” conveys Joanne Darcy Crum, the fourth of six children. Now age 56, Joanne’s portfolio is chock-full of accomplishments in everything from breaking into the male-dominated world of surveying to studying mediation. Most everything in fact, except podiatry.

This self-directed, dynamic woman has an appetite for learning. “Most people think I’m crazy,” she expounds on her hunger to continually learn new things. “I’ve never been content doing just one thing at a time. And,” she admits, “it will be at least another 10 years before I decide to putter.”

Joanne’s secret to balance is found in surrounding herself with solid, supportive people. People like her now 88-year-old mom; her husband of nearly 35-years Jim; her mother-in-law, who is also her bookkeeper; the woman she calls her “office wife,” Jill Thompson, who’s been her office manager for 18-years; and Jill’s husband Jon, who’s been there since Day One.

“Day One” is a difficult thing to pinpoint in the life of someone like Joanne Darcy Crum.

In 1977, she not only earned a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from the University at Albany, she married her husband, Jim. Even though it was her husband who received a degree in surveying, it was she who landed a job in research with a surveyor. “I love research,” gushes Joanne. “After I got my feet wet, I told my bosses I needed to move up or move on.”

They chose to move her up and in 1985, she earned her license as a professional land surveyor (L.S.), a time when less than 5% of all surveyors were female. Two years later, with her daughter about to start kindergarten, Joanne started a sole proprietorship, Joanne Darcy Crum, L.S., offering land surveying services. “Do you know what L.S. stands for?” quizzes Joanne with a smirk before quickly answering her own question. “Lady Surveyor.”

One of the few women in the industry, Joanne faced her share of discrimination from people who believe it’s not an appropriate trade for women. Determined to advance the role of women in the surveying industry, Joanne accepted an appointment by the New York State Board of Regents for two five-year terms with the New York State Board for Engineering and Land Surveying, serving as Chair from 1996-1997. She was also very active with the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) in Clemson, South Carolina, serving as Northeast Zone Vice President from 1997-1999.

“When my daughter Darcy started attending Hamilton College, I wondered if I could handle the challenge of going back to school,” says Joanne. It turns out, they both celebrated graduations in 2004, Darcy from Hamilton and Joanne from the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program.
“My experience in UAlbany’s Weekend MBA Program was unique and distinctive because I learned something in every single class,” describes Joanne. “The students in my cohort were similar-minded, goal-oriented professionals with a purposeful commitment.”

Still successfully running her own surveying business with five employees, Joanne understood that law would be a wonderful complement to what she already knew. In May 2011, she earned her Juris Doctor from the Albany Law School of Union University. “I am very excited about the prospects of my career as a new attorney,” she exclaims. “I would never have even considered it until I successfully completed the UAlbany MBA Program, which gave me the ‘oomph’ I needed.”

Currently devoting two days a week to her surveying business and three to law, Joanne will focus her law practice on real estate, land use and zoning, and small business aspects of governmental contracting and certification for Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (MWDBE). She is also Director of the Mohawk Valley Economic Development Committee, past president of SUNY Cobleskill Foundation, and a member of the American Bar Association.

Joanne has a passion for connecting generous donors with the right recipients. “Kind of like what my daughter Darcy does as Associate Director of Development at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore,” explains Joanne. “With the many varied things I’ve learned and experienced, I still kind of wish I was doing what my daughter is doing.” Through her work with SUNY Cobleskill Foundation and the law office, she is working on realizing that dream, leaving only becoming a litigator as the main dream not yet realized.

With all the juggling she does, indulgences she simply won’t do without include white wine and cosmos, time with her husband and daughter, and gardening. “My favorite flowers are DinnerPlate Dahlias and orchids,” she divulges. “I even have an ‘orchid hospital’ in my sunroom upstairs, where I talk to ailing orchids until they begin to grow again.”

“The Weekend MBA Program at UAlbany really gave me the confidence I needed. It was a wonderful experience all around and I highly recommend it to anyone looking to advance themselves personally or in their career.”

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