



Women of Associated

Joanne Weber

Executive Vice President Weber responds to the call of the wild

Picture this: You're a high-level executive for a major national bank. You've spent the last 20-plus years working your way up to this position. You've been given the privilege of working out of an office located in a lovely little town west of Chicago, close enough to enjoy the amenities of the big city, yet far from its crowds and noise and hassles.

And then one day you pick up and move as far north as you possibly can without casting off your profession entirely.

That's precisely what Joanne Weber did in the spring of 2011.

She had a great job as Senior Vice President of Mortgage Operations for J.P. Morgan-Chase. She'd been with various iterations of the company for more than 22 years, starting with Bank One and surviving major mergers with first Chase and then J.P. Morgan. And she was based in the charming village of Downers Grove, Illinois, just 22 miles west of Chicago.

What more could a highly successful bank executive want?

So near ... and yet so far

Joanne's only problem with the situation was that she and her husband Cliff own a lake home near the town of Lakewood, Wisconsin.

It's an enchanting area, populated by peaceful lakes, surrounded by the Nicolet National Forest, and laced with hunter/hiking trails bearing names such as Chickadee-Northfork, Goose Lake and Catwillow Creek. It's also home to the Cathedral of the Pines, a 40-acre forest of untouched, 300-year-old red and white pine and hemlock – a forest that serves as an 85-nest rookery for great blue herons.

But enjoying this wonderland meant at least 10 round-trip hours on the road for the Webers – not exactly conducive to relaxing weekend getaways.

So it was not by chance that they ended up in Green Bay, just 90 minutes south of Lakewood.

“We landed there intentionally,” Joanne said. “We wanted to be able to spend more time in Lakewood, and Green Bay is the closest population center offering the job opportunities I was interested in.”

A dream come true

It’s hard to imagine a better outcome for an executive in Joanne’s position. In April, 2011, she was named Associated Bank’s Executive Vice President and Director of Consumer Banking, with responsibility for the Bank’s more than 250 retail branches across the Wisconsin-Minnesota-Illinois footprint.

It’s a position that she’s eminently qualified for, having learned the business from the ground up.

After graduating from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor’s degree in Accounting, Joanne accepted her first job with Citizens & Southern National Bank in Atlanta; she spent three years there, working in Internal Audit.

Fortunately for her future employers, she also met Cliff there. A Milwaukee native, he was eager to move north -- not a problem for Joanne, who was born and raised in Ohio. And she soon found herself back in the Midwest, beginning her career with Bank One.

Over time, she would have the opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge of disciplines ranging from compliance, quality and consumer lending to commercial and consumer banking.

“I was lucky to grow up in a company that gave me the opportunity to cross lines of business and experience many different areas of banking,” she said. “That’s not often the case these days, which is really too bad. There’s no better way to gain a big-picture understanding of your customers, and of what you have to offer them.”

Building a new life

The Webers are settling happily into their new home in Green Bay, and Joanne is looking forward to becoming involved in the community – perhaps reprising her past activities, which have included serving as Treasurer of the Milwaukee Public Library Foundation.

In the meantime, she is thoroughly enjoying her work and her colleagues – as well as the fact that her office in Associated's Green Bay headquarters is less than 75 miles from the Webers' own little slice of paradise.