

Jennifer Jackson '93

Director of Franchise Development, Hungry Howie's

Where is your hometown?

I grew up in Farmington Hills, but my family did move to Bloomfield Hills during my junior year at Mercy. My sister also attended Mercy.

Why Mercy?

My aunts and cousins had both attended Mercy so that's where I wanted to go since I was a young girl. Mercy allowed me to be who I wanted. I think not having boys present made it easier to challenge myself. We didn't have the pressure of focusing on hair, or make up and each of us was allowed to become an individual.

What is your fondest Mercy memory?

Being a Mercyaire, as well as participating in the musicals. Back then, we sold calendars that included the raffle tickets and to this day I'm taken right back when I hear the Neil Sedaka song "Calendar Girl."

What kind of activities were you involved in at Mercy?

My freshman year I made varsity cheer which was such a dream of mine. We actually competed in the national competition at the Opryland hotel, which was memorable. I left the cheer team my junior year to become a Mercyaire and actively participated in the musicals.

Was there a favorite teacher, coach or staff member that had a strong, positive impact on your life?

Mr. Schusterbauer who was my advisor. Many of us looked up to him and his big heart and love for teaching made me more passionate to learn. I still keep in touch with him today.

Tell me about your educational background after leaving Mercy.

I received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Central Michigan University in 1998. In 2014 I received my Certified Franchise Executive degree from the International Franchise Association.

Tell me about your current role with Hungry Howie's and future goals for the company.

Here's my bio: Jennifer Jackson has been involved with Hungry Howie's Pizza since age 10, helping out at stores and at the corporate office during summer vacations. Jennifer officially started as a Hungry Howie's employee in 1998 as the Fundraising Coordinator and was promoted in 2000 to Director of Marketing. In 2005, she was named Director of Marketing & Franchise Development. After taking a brief hiatus to work in various other marketing and franchise positions, Jennifer returned to Hungry Howie's in 2012 as the Director of Franchise Development. Jennifer restructured the department and qualification process. Additionally, under her management, Jennifer has helped grow the now 600 unit pizza concept focusing with growth in new and emerging markets.

What has been your most rewarding professional, or personal, experience since leaving Mercy?

Being named one of Crain's 40 under 40 for the class of 2014. I was the first legacy since my dad won it in 1992. This was such an honor to be included with such an exclusive group in the city of Detroit.

What advice can you give to our current Mercy Girls?

Enjoy every minute of it! Mercy is a terrific prep for college, with the modular schedule. It really teaches you the art of organization and self-discipline that is needed for the future. Live for today and never have regrets, always take that chance so you never wonder what if!