

# Path to Partner: JoAnna Simek

BKD *life* BULLETIN BOARD

Subscribe to BKD Life ▶

Home > About Us > BKD Life® > Bulletin Board > Path to Partner: JoAnna Simek >

## BKDer JoAnna Simek reflects on the steps she took to reach where she is today.

JoAnna Simek's path to partner began right after college when she moved from Columbus, Ohio, to Chicago. She spent three years in tax consulting, where she traveled to client sites and focused on sales tax until eventually, she was ready for something different.



JoAnna's work view of Millennium Park from the BKD Chicago office.

"I ended up at Wolf & Company, which was a leap of faith because I was already on a rapid advancement track at my old firm, and making this change meant taking a step back to learn things I hadn't yet been exposed to," says JoAnna.

While at Wolf, JoAnna gained broader tax knowledge and went back to school in the evenings to earn her MST. Her superiors recognized her hard work and promoted her to manager. Then in 2014, Wolf merged with BKD.

"Suddenly, there was an entire world of additional opportunities before me. I hadn't considered there could be so many more positions at the 'partner' level, so that was really exciting," she says.

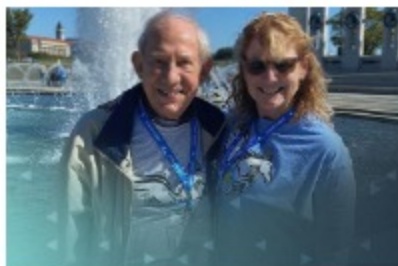
JoAnna had both of her children while at BKD and is grateful for the firm's support of her maternity leave as well as return to work. The firm provided the flexibility she needed to accommodate her growing family and changing demands on her own time.

She was later at a career crossroads when deciding whether to determine a specialty area or stay the course in federal tax. While this challenged her vision for the future and meant having some uncomfortable but critical conversations, she had a phenomenal sponsor with the **SKY Sponsor-Protégé** program to offer guidance along the way.

### JoAnna's advice to women looking to advance in their careers:

- ▼ **Don't underestimate the power of advocates and allies!** You need someone advocating for you behind closed doors or in conversations where you aren't present. Don't assume that because you work hard that someone will notice. Having influential people in your corner is critical to moving up.
- ▼ **Speak up for yourself and your goals.** You don't have to be the most vocal person in the room, but you should make your voice heard and your goals known to those who can impact your career trajectory. Say it once. Say it again. Say it until it happens.
- ▼ **Support each other.** Support the women around you, behind you, and above you. They could be your biggest champions and network throughout the years.

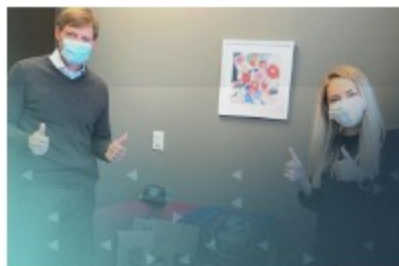
## More from Our Bulletin Board



### Honoring Veterans Day

BKDer Mary Anne Parrish joins father, a Korean War veteran, on the 2021 Honor Flight Bluegrass trip.

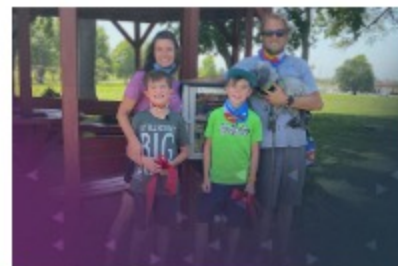
Read More ▶



### BKDer's Contribute to Type 1 Diabetes Research

More than 900,000 individuals participate in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) One Walk® fundraiser every year. One Walk...

Read More ▶



### BKD Family Helps Bring Books to Greater Nixa Community

Continuing education is an integral part of BKD culture. BKDer's attend learning opportunities throughout the year, participate in BKD...

Read More ▶

## Share Your Story



Do you know a BKDer with admirable community involvement, interesting hobbies, exciting accomplishments, or a unique client story? We want to hear all about it! For more information or to submit, contact [bkdlife@bkd.com](mailto:bkdlife@bkd.com).

\* First Name

\* Last Name

\* Email Address

BKD Life Submission Options ▼

\* What's your story?

This form collects your information, so we may fulfill your request. You confirm you are over the age of 16 and consent to data processing in accordance with the terms of our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#), which explain how we protect, manage, and use your data.

Submit ▶