



Breaking Boundaries at Baylor & Beyond

BY / BECCA BROADDUS

MARILYN HARDY,
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MARILYN HARDY was a social, active child. Always busy with extracurricular activities in school, when she got to Baylor, she didn't expect it to be any different. She dreamt of being in a sorority, but in the late 1970s at Baylor University, sororities weren't diverse.

"My sister and I went through [recruitment], and we didn't receive any bids," she said. "It was quite devastating, but like the saying goes, 'When God closes one door, He opens another.'"

Hardy and her sister decided to take matters into their own hands. They founded the first black sorority on campus, Zeta Phi Beta.

"We brought the first minority sorority to campus," she said. "I'm very proud of the legacy we started."

And so, Hardy firmly established herself as a go-getter and a problem solver. Those two nouns continued to define her after receiving her Accounting degree from Baylor in 1980.

Her career began in public accounting at Arthur Andersen. From there, she moved to become an accounting manager at Canadian company Northern Telecom. After deciding against a Canadian relocation, she worked as an accounting director for Aviall, an aviation parts and related aftermarket services company.

"I was interested [in Aviall] because the chief financial officer at the time was a female," she said. "It was very refreshing to see the company give females opportunities in the aviation industry at that time. They really rewarded people for the work they did, and I knew it would be the same with me. They embraced diversity in the workforce."



Hardy continued to move forward with her career—pushing out of her comfort zone. In 1998, she received her executive MBA degree from Southern Methodist University. A few years later, in 2003, she moved to BNSF Railway in Fort Worth, Texas.

"Even though the railroad industry is an old industry, our company tries to be intentional in its innovation, letting go of how things used to be, and changing to welcome new things and accept how things could possibly be," Hardy, a Hankamer School of Business Advisory Board Member, said. "BNSF does a good job at being innovative when it comes to diversity in the workplace and enhancing the work experience."

After 20 years in accounting, she was ready for something different. In her current position as director of revenue management, Hardy has moved into more of an operations and management role. Though she enjoys her job, she can't wait to see what's next.

"I'm still trying to figure out what it is I want to be when I grow up," Hardy said. "I'm an empty nester now that my daughter started at Baylor this year. Being an empty nester gives me more opportunity to be risky in what my next venture might be. I don't know what I'll do, but I will figure it out." 📍

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