

History Maker

Joyce Craig '89 is the first female mayor of Manchester, N.H.

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MAYOR CRAIG WALKS PAST THE THREE PREVIOUS MAYORS OF MANCHESTER AT HER INAUGURATION ON JANUARY 2. COURTESY NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER/DAVID LANE.

Joyce Craig was elected to the office of mayor for the city of Manchester, New Hampshire, on Nov. 8, 2017, becoming the first woman ever elected mayor of the Queen City. We had a chance to ask the Whittemore School of

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Business and Economics (now Paul College)
alumna about her historic election and how she got there.

Paul College: Congratulations on your election to the office of mayor. What does it feel like to be the first female mayor of Manchester?

Craig: It is a great honor to serve the residents of Manchester as the first female mayor. It was something we didn't think that much about while we were out campaigning, but as I've been in office and heard from women from across the country about their excitement, it's been wonderful. I'm thrilled this is not an obstacle for anyone else moving forward, and that women and girls across Manchester can see themselves represented in City Hall.

Right now, I'm focused on being the best public servant for the City of Manchester that I can be. I want to be known as a great mayor, I'm not as concerned with being known as the first female mayor.

Paul College: Were there any challenges you faced as a woman in your position?

Craig: As a female candidate and elected official, I'm asked about my work- life balance far more than my male counterparts. The "how do you find the time," or "who is taking care of your children?" comments often come up in conversation. My male counterparts, for the most part, never had to answer for their choice in attire. However, I can't tell you the number of meetings I've sat in where people feel the need to comment on the color of my dress or how I wear my hair.

In short, this is why we need more women elected into leadership roles! I believe the best way to move past the double standards is to have more women running for elected office across state and

local levels.

Paul College: What valuable lessons have you learned throughout your career? Is there any advice you'd give to young women pursuing leadership paths in business?

Craig: During my first run for mayor, I lost by 64 votes. But I didn't give up. I was lucky to grow up with supportive parents who taught me the value of hard work. Following that loss, I stayed active in my community and was able to pick myself up and go through the process again. And this election, I won by 1,499 votes.

To any woman looking to pursue a leadership path in business, I say, don't give up. I often remind myself that if I believe something, I can achieve it. The roads are challenging and sometimes we're faced with defeat, but it's so important to pick yourself back up and push through the hard times.

When I graduated from UNH, I knew I wanted to work in advertising. So, I took a low-level job answering telephones. I found a real benefit in that. Because I started my career at a very low level, I was able to maintain a connection to everyone in the organization as I grew my career, because I was once there. It gave me the experience in working hard to grow my career, but also kept me involved in all parts of the organization. So don't think that after graduation you need to immediately become your definition of "successful." Figure out your long-term goals, and do what it takes to help you achieve them.

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