

# FROM GOOD TO GREAT TO EXTRAORDINARY

**KEISHA SLAUGHTER** USES PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS ACQUIRED AT NORTHWESTERN ENGINEERING TO STREAMLINE PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AT JPMORGAN CHASE.



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When JPMorgan Chase & Co. reached out to Keisha Slaughter ('00) with a job opportunity in 2013, she had a hard time envisioning how to apply her engineering skills in the financial space. Up to that point, the industrial and civil engineer had worked primarily with tangibles—from boxes at UPS to missiles at Boeing.

So, she did what any logical person would do when faced with a major career decision—she called her mom. While Slaughter was growing up in Memphis, Tennessee, her mother, Connie Thompson, built a career in the financial industry working with a regional bank. After reading the Chase job description, Thompson said it was just the kind of thing her own bank needed.

“She got excited and started listing all these ways she thought I could lend my skills. At that point I got excited, too,” Slaughter says. “I never thought about electronic processes as needing improvements and efficiencies.”

Today, as head of process improvement with Chase in Columbus, Ohio, Slaughter works with management operations to set company strategy for driving efficiencies, reducing costs, and improving the products and services Chase offers.

“We always look for ways we can better serve our clients,” she says. “I appreciate being at a company where my skills are celebrated and I can help set the strategy by saying, ‘Yes, we’re doing good, but how do we get to great? How do we get to extraordinary?’ That’s very fulfilling.”

Working in the financial services industry felt like coming home. It sparked memories of visiting her mother at the bank as a child. “It felt very natural being here,” she says. “There are so many ways to problem solve and drive efficiencies that I didn’t even know existed. For me, it’s been a playground of intellectual curiosity and challenges because there are so many different opportunities to flex that muscle.”

Slaughter began her career as an industrial engineering project manager with UPS in the Dallas–Fort Worth area after earning a civil engineering master’s degree in transportation engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. Later, she held similar positions with Anderson Merchandisers in Denton, Texas, and West Monroe Partners in Columbus, Ohio.

She also served as project manager with the Ohio STEM Learning Network, focusing on a topic close to her heart. She still volunteers to help kids fall in love with math, which she calls the language of problem solving. Immediately prior to her current role, she worked as an industrial engineer with Boeing in Heath, Ohio.

While her career spans industries, there’s a common thread running through each experience. “I need a fair amount of intellectual challenge, so I’m always seeking that next problem to solve,” she explains. “With my diversity of experience in logistics, distribution, and education, I’ve developed skills that I can apply to any industry to create efficiencies and process improvements.”

Slaughter discovered her love of problem solving at Northwestern. “From the moment I first arrived, I loved the campus, the architecture, the lake, and the warm feeling that I felt from everyone I met,” she says. “I immediately accepted the admission offer, and I never regretted that decision, not one day of my life.”

She stays in touch with Northwestern through the National Society of Black Engineers, Northwestern University Black Alumni Association, and Northwestern Alumni Association. “It’s a way to stay connected to a university that gave me so much,” she says. “I want to pay it forward.”

SARA LANGEN