

A Chat with Eric Ferguson

GRADUATE STUDENT AND ALUMNUS, NORTHWOOD UNIVERSITY
DEVOS GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

What led you to pursue an education and career in the insurance industry?

My dad was the chief of police in Tawas and my mom owned a hair salon. I knew I didn't want to go into law enforcement or be a hair stylist, and considered a career in the medical field. I took a lot of biology and physiology classes in high school, but after job shadowing a local doctor, I realized it wasn't for me.

Aside from my parents' work ethic, something that really shaped my direction in life were my high school jobs. I worked for two small service businesses in town and quickly realized I wanted to set out on my own. I started my own lawn care and snow removal business as a sophomore. Within three years, I had 26 accounts, part time employees and entrepreneurial experiences that earned me a competitive scholarship to Northwood University.

Essentially, my high school jobs led me to my passion: helping people by providing a service. I found I could pursue my dreams most directly through entrepreneurship and business management. After exploring multiple careers, I found I liked the lifestyle, challenges, and entrepreneurial nature of the insurance and finance industry the best.

What kind of path are you following in college? Does it include an internship?

I graduated high school in 2015 and started at Northwood University in the fall. I was one of five students to receive the DeVos Scholarship for Entrepreneurship and Free Enterprise after presenting on my small business through an intense competition. I earned my bachelor of business administration in three years, graduated in 2018, and am in an accelerated program to complete my master's by 2019 from the DeVos Graduate School of Management. I've had a couple internships, my first at Tri County Agency, my most recent being last summer with Edward Jones.

Where do you see yourself going in the business?

My internship at Edward Jones solidified my commitment to becoming specialized in life insurance, and own my own business. Some of my most enjoyable experiences as an intern were helping people do the things they need to do to be financially successful. You run into a lot of people who don't know what steps to take, so when you can connect the dots for them, it's very rewarding.



After exploring multiple careers, I found I liked the lifestyle, challenges, and entrepreneurial nature of the insurance and finance industry the best.

You run into a lot of people who don't know what steps to take, so when you can connect the dots for them, it's very rewarding.

What perceptions do you want to dispel about insurance careers?

A lot of people wrongfully joke that insurance agents are a bunch of old guys who sleep-walk through boring jobs. This idea couldn't be further from the truth. Technology is opening up a multitude of exciting and creative opportunities in the insurance business. Plus, there is a ton of freedom and growth potential involved when you own your own agency.

I've been fortunate to have worked with several mentors in my life who taught me the value of hard work and doing your best. I want to emulate the life they've built for themselves, and be in a position where I can benefit from my hard work. With insurance, there are so many directions you can take. I truly see it as a pathway toward a prosperous and successful career. ●

Ann Kammerer is a freelance writer living in East Lansing. She has written extensively about business people, educators, artists and everyday citizens doing good things.

KNOW AN INDUSTRY
STUDENT OR NEW AGENT
WHO'D LIKE TO CHAT
WITH US? EMAIL RITA
RLAMOREAUX@MICHAGENT.ORG