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## Where Are They Now?

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Tenniqua Hayes has spent the past 23 years at Kroger. Her journey began as an intern at a Kroger store in Michigan. Now she is making impacts in our Houston division. Read our interview below to see where Tenniqua is now!

B: Brandon Sandlin (Interviewer) T: Tenniqua Hayes

***B: Hi Tenniqua! Thanks for discussing your Kroger experiences with us today! How has your Summer been so far?***

T: My summer has been different with limitation in travel but a great time to spend with family, friends via Zoom meeting. Technology has been my friend and I have had a chance to learn new ways to stay in contact with family in friends.

***B: Thank goodness for technology, right? I am so excited to talk about your time spent as an Intern with Kroger! Can you share what your role as an intern was when you started with the company?***

T: Yes, I was an intern after my junior year in college, the summer of 1996. During my internship, I had the opportunity to work in one of the retail grocery stores in Michigan, as well as, time training in the division office. My internship was for 8 weeks. I was able to spend 3 weeks in the perishable department (known as fresh today), 3 weeks in the grocery/drug general merchandise areas and 2 weeks on the front end. During the internship I had the opportunity to learn more about the assistant manager position and perform some of those duties. It was definitely a unique experience.

***B: That's great that you were able to experience different areas during that time! What would you say is the most valuable thing you learned during that Summer that has translated into your career today?***

T: The most valuable thing I learned was about leadership, I still remember my mentor's manager's name, Bill Callus. He shared with me how he worked his way up in the company, how he engaged his team, and was passionate about people and results. More importantly, all the opportunities within Kroger and the ability to grow. If it weren't for the experiences I had during my internship, I don't know if I would have chosen a career in grocery retail.

***B: After that Summer had ended, what was your next step in the company? For some of our interns, understanding the next step to enter the company as a full-time associate can be difficult. How did you transition from an intern to full-time associate?***

T: After the summer internship ended, based upon my performance I was told that I had done well and would be contacted for an interview during the fall semester. Kroger had a partnership with Michigan State University at the time and interviewed on campus each semester. As promised, I was contacted sometime either in December or January and scheduled an interview. I interviewed with the Division Recruiting Manager and was offered a position in the management training program, MD1. This role interested me because I was serving in the US



Army Reserves and always had interest in leadership. Also, my major in college was Food Systems and Economics management, so it was also related to my major!

***B: That sounds like a very smooth transition! Fast forward to 2020, where are you now? Can you tell us about your current role and what you do?***

T: My current role is Division Recruiting and Training Manager for the Houston division. I am responsible for the recruiting of hourly and management positions, as well as, the training of associates in the 100+ stores in the greater Houston areas, and Lake Charles, Louisiana.

***B: That's a large responsibility and such an important role for our company! What is it about Kroger that has made you want to stay with the company? What makes Kroger special from other companies?***

T: Yes, it is a large responsibility but also a great opportunity. During my internship, I knew the company was a leader in the retail industry and learned about the opportunities that were available within the company. I started my career as a management trainee and through hard work and dedication, I have been able to hold several positions including Assistant Store Leader, Human Resources Coordinator, Store Manager, Training & Development Manager, Total Rewards Manager, District Human Resources Manager, District Operations Manager in addition to my current position. In addition, the option to relocate as an employee and work in other states exists and other banners is an added benefit for associates. I actually started my career with Kroger in Michigan and relocated to Texas in 2015. In addition to those things mentioned above, working for the company has allowed me to work for some great leaders, become a leader within the organization myself, and demonstrate a passion for people and results. Those are the things that make Kroger special.

***B: As an intern myself, I'm inspired by the experiences you've had here at Kroger and the many positions you've held. Is there anything you would say to our current interns who are uncertain about their future?***

T: I would advise interns to spend time getting to know current associates and learn as much as they can about the different opportunities in the company. Talk to current associates about their position, what is required of their role, and what they like the most and least. Never be afraid to ask questions, learn from others and their experiences, find a professional mentor, and take advantage of every opportunity to network and grow.

***B: Thanks so much, Tenniqua! It was great chatting with you today and hearing about your career journey at Kroger!***