



**BANKING DEMANDS LEADERSHIP.  
GSB BUILDS LEADERS.**



## **EXCITING UPDATES FOR 80TH GSB SESSION**

We are fast approaching the 2025 GSB session – our 80th – and excited to welcome hundreds of bankers to Madison again this summer. To enhance the student experience, we’re making some modest changes to the format of the school this year. For example, we’re eliminating classes on the middle Saturday, allowing all students to enjoy a full, fun weekend. We also adjusted the date of our Commencement from Friday afternoon to Thursday evening, August 7, to make it more convenient for students to travel back home. And, we’re adding some virtual meet-and-greet opportunities for enrolled Freshmen to connect ahead of campus with other students. If you or someone from your team is considering applying, we encourage early enrollment to be included in these events that will take place in May. ■

## **THESE TWO SCHOOLS ARE FILLING FAST! REGISTER TODAY!**

### **BANK TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT SCHOOL**

April 7-11, 2025 | Madison, WI  
**Registration deadline is March 7**

### **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL**

April 28 – May 2, 2025 | Madison, WI  
**Registration deadline is March 28**

**ENROLL TODAY AT [GSB.ORG](https://www.gsb.org)**



# GSB SPOTLIGHT PROFILE: SUZANNE JOHNSON



Suzanne Johnson  
Senior leader at  
Park Bank,  
Madison, Wisconsin.

## Banking on Human Connection: Johnson Builds Community at Park Bank

Some careers begin with careful planning. Others start with a moment of serendipity. For Suzanne Johnson, an encounter at the grocery store where she worked would set her on a path to becoming a senior leader at Park Bank in Madison, Wisconsin.

While working as a front-line grocery store employee and attending school in 2003, she was approached by the manager of the in-store bank that was opening soon. The manager had noticed her exceptional customer service. "Everyone in the store has applied for the bank except you," he told her. "And I've been waiting for your application."

In-store banking turned out to be a great fit for Johnson's natural ability to make connections with her clients.

## Career Journey

Two decades later, that emphasis on human connection remains central to Johnson's approach to banking and leadership. Now senior vice president of branch banking at Park Bank, she has built a career marked by community engagement, mentorship and a dedication to making banking more inclusive and accessible.

Johnson thrived in in-store banking, enjoying the connections she built with customers and her staff. She thrived within larger banks as her career progressed, becoming an area manager and then advancing to a regional position overseeing in-store banking territory in Wisconsin. She describes this time as a valuable experience where she gained insights into banking operations, consumer banking, and effective professional development for associates.

Then in 2017, her strengths caught the attention of Park Bank's CEO Ken Lammersfeld, who recruited her to join his team as assistant vice president, market manager. Since then, she has been promoted three times, first to vice president of bank branching and then in January 2025 to her current position.

Community banking is a perfect fit for Johnson's dynamic energy, skills, and dedication to the community. "Here I really have the opportunity to build stronger, deeper connections with clients," she says.

The move also helped her grow professionally. "Coming to Park Bank, I've been exposed to so many different components of banking, like deposit pricing, strategic planning and multiple different committees," she says

## DEI

One of the many highlights of her time at Park Bank has been Johnson's foundational work co-chairing the organization's diversity, equity and inclusion committee, which launched five years ago. One key initiative was to form Associate Resource Groups (some organizations call these employee resource groups). Park Bank has three:

- The Pack (a women's professional leadership development group),
- Banking on Black Excellence, and
- Vamos Por Mas (which means let's get to next and is Latinx focused).

"Our groups are open to all to join," she says. "When we did our kickoff, feedback to our CEO was, 'I've been at the bank for 20 years and I've never seen a more engaged employee population.' So that warms my heart. We've had so much engagement. It's been pretty amazing.



TOP: Park Bank's 2-DEI Committee, Associate Resource Group Co-Leads, Executive Sponsors, with Park Bank's CEO and President  
BOTTOM: Suzanne poses with staff from Centro Hispano and Park Bank's DEI co-chair Sujhey Beisser

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# EXCEPTIONAL NETWORKING AND EDUCATION FOR HR LEADERS AVAILABLE AT GSB

## HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

April 28 - May 2, 2025  
 Fluno Center for Executive Education  
 Madison, WI

The role of human resource professionals in the financial services industry is more critical than ever, directly impacting a bank's productivity and profitability. GSB's Human Resource Management School is a respected, one-week program designed to equip HR professionals with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate key HR issues while understanding the business of banking. Through expert-led sessions and applied learning, participants gain practical insights they can implement immediately.

This program is ideal for both seasoned HR professionals and newcomers looking to strengthen their expertise. CEOs and senior managers will also benefit by gaining a deeper understanding of how HR strategies drive financial success. If you're ready to enhance your HR impact and contribute to your bank's bottom line, this school is for you.

### BUSINESS OF BANKING:

- Introduction to the Business of Banking
- Bank Profitability Analysis
- Asset/Liability Management
- Bank Regulatory & Competitive Environment
- Working Session: "Deep Dive" Into the Financials

### HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- HR Strategy: Next Best Practices
- Building a Culture of Leaders
- Employee Experience
- Change Management
- Emotional Intelligence
- Building or Refining the HR Strategic Plan
- Culture and Strategy: Are Yours Aligned?
- Employee Retention Strategies in a Dynamic Labor Market
- Building/Enhancing Base Compensation Foundation
- Aligning Variable Compensation with Strategy
- Peer Roundtable Compensation Priorities
- Legal Issues Update
- Quantifying HR to the Bottom Line
- Steering Your Bank into the Future of Work
- Future Ready Workforce Panel Discussion



## 2024 HR SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

### YOUR PEERS ARE HERE

Powerful networking for HR leaders.

#### By Bank Title

EVP, SVP, Senior HR Officer/Director .....	16%
VP, HR Director, HR Officer, HR Manager, Head of HR.....	64%
AVP, Asst. Director, HR Generalist, HR Supervisor .....	11%
HR Assistant, HR Administrator, HR Specialist .....	6%
Other Positions .....	3%

#### Number of Students By Location

AK..... 2	LA..... 1	SD..... 4
CA..... 1	MN..... 3	TX..... 3
CO..... 1	ND..... 5	VA..... 1
FL..... 3	NE..... 2	WI..... 6
IA..... 3	NY..... 1	WY..... 1
IL..... 7	OH..... 4	EGYPT..... 2
IN..... 1	OK..... 3	
KY..... 4	OR..... 2	

**ENROLL TODAY AT GSB.ORG**

# EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AT UW CPED



CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL & EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to an agreement with the Wisconsin School of Business' Center for Professional and Executive Development, GSB graduates receive a Certificate of Executive Leadership from the Wisconsin School of Business, in addition to a GSB diploma, after successfully completing the 25-month program. Alumni of the Graduate School of Banking program who graduated prior to 2015 may also earn the Certificate of Executive Leadership through additional coursework.

Additionally, through a partnership with GSB, CPED offer an exclusive 12% discount to bankers who've graduated from a GSB school on the following programs. To register, use the links and discount codes below:

- Business Analytics for Data Driven Leadership
- CIO Digital Leadership Program
- Coaching and Motivating in the Workplace
- Building a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging
- Project Management Planning, Scheduling, and Control

To learn more about the full array of exceptional programs available through CPED, or to enroll in other upcoming program, visit the CPED website. ■



## REGINA MALONE RECEIVES 2025 TERRY A. SABER HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

Regina Malone, assistant vice president, human resource manager, Merchants National Bank, Hillsboro, Ohio, was selected to receive the Terry A. Saber Human Resource Management School Scholarship. The "at large" scholarship is available to bankers from any state or country and was named in honor of longtime GSB instructor Terry Saber, who led the Human Resource Management School for more than two decades. Congratulations, Regina! ■



**LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SCHOLARSHIPS ON THE GSB WEBSITE**

## ...continued from page 2, "GSB Spotlight: Suzanne Johnson"

"Being one of the few black senior leaders... it has allowed me the unique opportunity to bring valuable perspective to the table," she adds.

### Challenges

Of course no one gets to her level without overcoming challenges. It is not a surprise that Johnson was able to rise to the moment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her ability to forge connections and build community was a boon for her team. "I was the highest Zoom user," she says. "I wanted to be available for my team," explaining how she added time to meetings for connecting outside of agenda items.

Finding the balance in saying no has been a rewarding challenge for Johnson, as her passion for giving her best to others truly shines through. She is dedicated to prioritizing effectively while keeping doors open by actively seeking future opportunities to connect.

Her boss encouraged Johnson to learn how to effectively balance her commitments and reminded her that it's perfectly acceptable to prioritize herself as she prepared for GSB, all in an effort to prevent the risk of burnout.

"I think our challenges become successes when we overcome them ... and we're stronger together from that," she says. "I'm excited for the evolution of banking... my personality loves change, so I'm all for it."

Having a can-do and forward-thinking leadership style, Johnson suggests reframing this period of banking evolution as a challenge and opportunity. "What can we do? What is [the future] going to look like? How do we create it? It's a challenge and it will be a success at some point when we solve it."

### Go For It With GSB

It's this forward-thinking attitude that has guided Johnson's career development, including her decision to attend the Graduate School of Banking at UW-Madison. She graduated in 2024 and said the experience was well worth it for the learning, personal growth and new relationships she made.

"GSB definitely challenged me," she says. "The loan portfolio management for me was a huge eyeopener," especially learning about how to monitor economic conditions in Dane County and what factors into loan grading. "It's also helped me in educating our bankers on why we make the decisions that we make and why it's so important that we have strong relationships with our clients."

For other bankers considering the program, she says do it, but know your why going in. "Because your why is going to get you through. [GSB] will stretch you to your fullest capacity of knowledge. However, I believe that you can do anything you want to do. And if you have the mindset that you can do it, it will happen."

### Community Impact

Johnson is making an impact beyond her organization by averaging 100 hours of volunteer work each year.

She is on the board for Centro Hispano which is the leading non-profit organization working with the Latinx population in Dane County. Park Bank is involved with Centro's Caminos-Finance program where candidates learn the basics of becoming a teller or customer service representative. Graduates of the program have the opportunity to be interviewed and considered for employment.

In addition, Park Bank works with Maydm, a non-profit organization that provides girls and youth of color with experiences to pursue careers in STEM and the tech sector. "We co-created a program called Money Wise" that includes financial literacy and a summer internship program at the bank, she says.

When she is not forging connections and making improvements in the lives of countless Park Bank customers and Dane County residents, Johnson is busy with her blended family of five kids, two kids-in-law and two grandkids.

"We do lots of family hosting, backyard camping ... we have a very core foundation," she says. "Usually we're playing games or I'm creating family events that make lasting memories."

"We're a football family," she says, with one caveat. "I'm the biggest fan of my kids playing. That's it."

Whether at home capturing family memories from behind the camera, creating engaging moments for her team during the pandemic, or building stronger connections with Park Bank clients and the broader Madison community, Johnson's career continues to be defined by the same quality that caught a bank manager's attention two decades ago—her natural ability to connect with and serve others. ■



TOP: Johnson's children: Nazier, Amiyah, Chris, Savannah and Josiah  
BOTTOM: Suzanne and her daughter Savannah at Madison's Reading Project Ready to Wear Event, an annual paper fashion show. Savannah was the model for Park Bank and won 3rd place.

BANKING TODAY IS AGILE.  
**THANKFULLY,  
SO ARE OUR  
ONLINE  
SEMINARS.**



## UPCOMING WINTER/SPRING GSB ONLINE SEMINARS

Adopting New Negotiations Tactics to Win the Battle for Deposits

Commercial Lending – Expanding from Global Cash Flow into Global Analysis

Commercial Lending – Global Cash Flow Mechanics, Including Living Expenses

Commercial Lending – Improving Commercial Loan Pricing and Profitability

Commercial Lending – Introduction to Commercial Lending

Commercial Lending – Introduction to Global Cash Flow

Construction Lending – Administering and Monitoring Commercial Construction Loans

Construction Lending – Administering and Monitoring Residential Construction Loans

Construction Lending – Issues in Underwriting Commercial Construction Loans

Consumer Lending – Analyzing Personal Financial Statements and Loan Applications

Consumer Lending – Overview of Credit History and the Role of Collateral

Employment Law Compliance for Banks

Five Social Media Tips to Advance Your Bank's Brand

How Can AI Help My Bank?

How to Incorporate Business Continuity Management Into Your ERM

Managing Liquidity and Interest Rate Risk

Refining Deposit Strategy in 2025 and Beyond

SBA Lending – Avoid Costly Mistakes in the SBA Loan Closing Process

SBA Lending – How to Liquidate an SBA Loan

SBA Lending – Protect Your SBA Guaranty

SBA Lending – SBA Loan Programs and When to Use Each One

Selling in a Challenging Rate Environment

Sound Practices for Liquidity Risk Management

Strategies and Planning for Closely Held and Family Banks

Strategies for Succession Planning and Talent Management

Today's Ransomware Threat – Don't Lose Your Data (And Your Business)

Two Sides of the Same Coin – How and Why IT Should be Separated from IS

### About The GSB Online Seminar Series

The GSB Online Seminar Series offers a convenient, cost-effective way to access quality educational opportunities. GSB seminars are designed to meet the dynamic learning needs of today's busy financial professional and are delivered by some of today's top industry experts. All sessions are recorded, so if you're unable to attend one of the live presentations, it's no problem! When you register for a GSB Online Seminar, you'll have access to the live presentation as well as a recording of the live session in case you are unable to attend the entire program. There is no additional fee to view the recording, it's included in your registration fee. It's your choice to attend the live session, view the recording—or do both—based on your schedule.

For additional information, please visit [gsb.org](https://gsb.org)