

Marion Burnyeat with Duke Energy

The largest financial deal of her career

FOR SOMEONE IN THE MIDST of the largest financial deal of her career, Marion Burnyeat ('90 BCom) is amazingly calm. As Director of Strategic Development with Duke Energy Gas Transmission, Burnyeat identifies merger and acquisition prospects for the company. And she's onto a big one.

Meeting on a cloudy Friday afternoon in late October at Duke Energy's Calgary offices, Burnyeat shares what's public about a proposed income trust that she and her colleagues are creating. "It's a neat opportunity to be part of a project like this," she says. And a bit of a surprise. "I came back from maternity leave in July thinking I'd be working part time then this came along and now it's almost seven days a week."

With two young sons, Burnyeat has a lot on the go and credits her husband Mike Burnyeat ('90 BCom) with enabling her to find some

balance between the workload and the 'motherload.' "I'm so appreciative to have my family's support; it makes all the difference. And this project should be wrapped up by Christmas so we all look forward to spending more time together over the holidays."

The 15-plus years that have passed since Burnyeat's arrival at the University of Alberta tell a story of the interconnection between determination and destiny and planning and providence.

Take for example, finding herself in Berlin in the fall of 1989 mere days after the Berlin Wall came down. "I had decided – really at the last minute – to accept an

AIESEC placement in Germany's Black Forest working at a store that specialized in cuckoo clocks. When the wall was coming down, my German roommate insisted that we go to Berlin. I have to admit that, at the time, I didn't realize that it would become one of the defining moments in the 20th century."

Burnyeat remembers walking through the check points dividing the city and

witnessing first hand the dramatic contrast between East and West. "It was like night and day," she recalls. "My eyes were opened to the conditions that people in East Berlin lived under." As for the

cuckoo clocks, she's heard enough of them to last a lifetime.

By the early 1990s, Burnyeat had graduated and was back in Calgary working for CP Rail in transportation marketing. "It was an interesting job to land right out of university." But fate had other plans for her. Mike, who was working as an accountant with Coopers and Lybrand, was offered a two-year position in Edinburgh, Scotland. He asked Burnyeat if she'd consider joining him.

Burnyeat submitted an application to Edinburgh University's MBA program and discovered she had been accepted two weeks after the couple arrived

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TRUDIE LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

in their bonny new home. "With 90 students from a total of 35 different countries, the program was extremely international and diverse. Working through cultural differences particularly when it came to gender issues was a great way to sharpen my skills in negotiation and diplomacy."

Back in Calgary since 1995, this is where the Burnyeats intend to stay. "It's such a good city to come home to. We've got family, friends, and really interesting work here," she says. What more could they ask for? "To top it off, so many of our friends from the BCom program are now working in Calgary. When we get together, it's like we've got our own alumni club!"

Burnyeat is keen to stay connected with her alma mater and recently signed up with the online mentor program. "I'd be happy if any of my experiences could be of assistance to students and graduates." **B**