

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

KAREY GRAY



HOW HAS YOUR LIFE BEEN DIFFERENT DURING THE PANDEMIC?

The biggest challenge has been balancing a new way of work and life that can seem to be ever-changing. And making sure my son is completing all of his virtual school work.

WHAT DREW YOU TO VIRGINIA TECH?

I am a hometown girl, grew up here, attended Blacksburg High and married a rival Christiansburg man. I started attending football games when I was five and have always loved the campus. I've had many relatives who have worked for Virginia Tech over the years, including my aunt and mother-in-law who both worked in the Controller's Office; I guess I'm following in the family tradition.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I worked at KFC on University Blvd. I was 15 and I'm not sure I was ready for all that dealing with the public entailed.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

I have been clogging now for 19 years. It is an American dance form that began in the Appalachian Mountains. It keeps me active and I enjoy performing for people.

WHO IS SOMEONE THAT INSPIRES YOU?

My husband, who is a paraplegic and the poster child for: you can't let anything stop you from living your best life.

WHEN YOU WERE A KID, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

At first, I wanted to be a mechanic, just like my daddy.

ANY PETS?

Currently one cat, Bella.

SOMEWHERE YOU WOULD LOVE TO VISIT SOMEDAY?

I have always wanted to visit Ireland and Hawaii. Two very different places with their own magic and beauty.

■ Payroll Coordinator (Controller)

■ Joined Virginia Tech in:

I joined the Registrar's Office in 2003 and came to the Controller's Office in 2005. I've been with the Payroll team since 2010.

■ Hometown: I grew up in Price's Fork, right here on the outskirts of Blacksburg.

■ kbgray@vt.edu

■ Job Duties and Responsibilities:

My main role is to perform a semi-monthly review of wage and salary payroll to ensure employees are paid accurately and per all appropriate regulations. I also review and respond to the unemployment claims received and assist in other areas of the payroll process as well.

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IF YOU COULD ONLY KEEP THREE APPS ON YOUR PHONE, THEY WOULD BE...?

Kroger, because grocery pick-up is AWESOME; Facebook because I like to keep up with friends and family I may not see often; and TikTok, I think, because sometimes you just like to get mind numb watching ridiculous and sometimes informative 60-second videos.

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN?

I try to live my life by remembering to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

ONE FOOD OR BEVERAGE YOU COULDN'T GO WITHOUT?

Got to have my Diet Coke every day.

SOMETHING YOU'RE MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

My family and community service. Family is your backbone, without them I wouldn't be able to provide the service to others. And without giving back to your community or helping those who aren't as fortunate, whether that be health, finances, etc., then we can't be a strong community of people.

FIRST THING YOU'D BUY IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

After paying off the family's debts, it would be a 1969/70 Mach 1 Ford Mustang.

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY SUPERPOWER, IT WOULD BE...?

I've always wanted to be able to twitch my nose like Samantha on *Bewitched* and have things move or appear.

MOST REWARDING THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Assisting employees. Like I said, "do unto others..." and I hope that I can provide friendly and accurate assistance to our employees.

IF YOU COULD HAVE LUNCH WITH ANY 3 PEOPLE THEY WOULD BE...

Dolly Parton, because she is one of the most caring persons; George W. Bush because I would like to know how his life changed and how he sees the world after being president when 9/11 happened; and my husband, because we used to have lunch together every day when we worked together.

WHAT'S ONE MOMENT IN HISTORY YOU WISH YOU COULD WITNESS?

The Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" speech to the civil rights marchers in D.C.

WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR WEIRDEST QUIRKS?

I say "seriously" A LOT.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE...

MUSIC?

My taste in music is so varied, that it is truly hard to pick a favorite, but Elvis is at the top of the list. I mostly listen to the 80s station on XM though.

HOLIDAY?

Easter, because it is a time of new beginnings and warmth.

MOVIE OR BOOK?

Gone with the Wind

FOOD?

Pretty much anything chicken

SPORT OR TEAM?

I'm not a die-hard fan of any particular sport, but I do love to support our Hokies in all sports.

PLACE YOU'VE VISITED?

Florida—my grandparents used to live in Daytona Beach, so I definitely have a soft spot for the area and wonderful memories. Plus, the beaches are accessible for my husband.

SPOT ON CAMPUS?

Hahn Horticulture Gardens, it is beautiful and peaceful.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT STRENGTHS YOU BRING TO THE JOB?

A willingness to adapt, empathize, and customer service skills.

ONE THING ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

To own a Mustang from every decade.

ONE QUESTION YOU WISH YOU HAD THE ANSWER TO?

What *really* happened to the dinosaurs?

ONE SENTENCE YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOUR BOSS TOMORROW?

"We've added 20 years to your service, you get to retire early."



In reality, it would be "we have no errors on payroll this run."