

MEET THE FELLOW TARA McCORMICK



WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP?

I really am hoping to gain a direction with my career and learn more about higher education. In school, they always pushed the corporate life and working for a big firm, but I was never really into that. I am just hoping this will help me something that I'm really passionate about.

WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR STRONGER ATTRIBUTES OR SKILLS THAT YOU BRING?

I'm very friendly and like to include everyone in things. I always try as hard as I can to be the best I can be.

SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF WORK THAT YOU'RE MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Living a healthy lifestyle. I'm so excited to be here and went to the farmer's market recently. I loved seeing all the fresh food. I love being able to hike; in Florida in the summers, it's so hot that you can't really be outside...

...I'm just excited to get outside and be active.

SOME OF YOUR HOBBIES?

I love plants, I have a lot of houseplants. I really love gardening and cooking. Kind of like an old lady 🤪

I also love to travel; instead of gifts my parents would take us kids on trips. I definitely appreciated those more than any of the toys or other gifts I would get.

YOU ALSO SPENT LAST SUMMER WORKING IN VIETNAM, WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

It was great, and I learned a ton—it got me out of my comfort zone for sure. I learned to be more patient with everything, it's such a different culture. Working in a different economy and having to work with people who don't speak the same language was interesting. Living in a city with millions of people is so different—the whole experience was just so overwhelming.



- **Hometown:** Panama City, Florida
- **Degree:** B.S. in Business Administration (Finance) from *University of Florida*
- **Graduated:** May 2020
- **First Fellowship Rotation:** Budget and Financial Planning
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WHAT'S ONE THING ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

To completely renovate, flip, and rent out a house. I love watching HGTV and the shows where they flip houses. With my real estate minor I took a lot of classes that really got me interested in buying property. I would love to buy a fixer-upper and redo it completely into something new and beautiful.

WHO IS SOMEONE WHO INSPIRES YOU?

My parents, my dad has really bad rheumatoid arthritis and should be in a wheelchair but he's not, he just keeps going. My mom has always been there, to take care of him, take care of my grandma. They've been through a lot with Hurricane Michael destroying our town...they've just stayed strong throughout it all.

ONE MOMENT IN HISTORY YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE WITNESSED?

I would love to see ancient Greece in its prime. I love learning about that culture and history. I could have read the Library of Alexandria, perhaps witnessed Socrates' debates, or communed at the oracle of Delphi.

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED OR FAVORITE QUOTE?

Growing up I was always told that kindness was always stronger than hate. If someone was mean or did something hateful my mom would tell me to "kill them with kindness." Sometimes people are going through things that we cannot see or understand and maybe just need someone to brighten their day rather than be spiteful back. I try to always be kind to everyone because everyone is going through their own battles.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

Waitress and hostess at a Thai restaurant. I loved it, a lot of the customers were from my neighborhood, I got free food at the end of the day, discounts whenever I bought food, so it was great.

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

I think a nurse because that's what my mom dressed me up as. For a long time, I also wanted to be a chef and go to culinary school. So...that did not go as expected!

ONE OF YOUR WEIRDEST QUIRKS?

My boyfriend would say that I name all my plants...I don't talk to them like some plant fanatics, but they each do have names.

EVER MET SOMEONE FAMOUS?

I met Billy Ray Cyrus, after seeing the play *Chicago* and got a picture with him. I also met Joan Jett; it was my first concert ever. I had a broken arm and she signed my cast.

FAVORITE MOVIE?

I love *The Princess Bride*—it's a basic choice but growing up it was always my favorite. Even watching it now, the effects are kind of bad, but I recently listened to a podcast on *Andre the Giant* and it made me love it more. The characters are so great.

IF YOU COULD ONLY KEEP 3 APPS ON YOUR PHONE, THEY'D BE...?

Definitely Pinterest, Google Maps—I get lost a lot—maybe Snapchat? I'm really bad about answering messages, so Snapchat is easier with friends because you don't even have to say anything.

FOOD OR BEVERAGE YOU COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT?

Lacroix, I probably drink three of those a day. And I just love cheese.

ANY PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS?

On my whole drive moving to Virginia I listened to true crime podcasts. I loved *CSI* and *Bones* growing up. I listened to *Crime Junkie* for nine hours straight. That's the longest I've ever driven but it went by so quickly. It's very good storytelling.

WHO ARE THREE LIVING PEOPLE YOU WOULD PICK TO HAVE A LUNCH WITH?

Ellen Degeneres, definitely. And then probably Hoda and Jenna from *The Today Show*—it would just be a cheerful, lovely conversation. Rather than talking politics, we would just be talking about random things and drinking some nice wine.