

## The Power of Education

I always think about my time at the Southwest Graduate School of Banking at SMU during this time of year. While I was there, a group text message started between myself and several classmates. We started talking about all of the incredible experiences we had both in and out of the classroom. The bankers on this group text were from all over the place, including Scottsdale, AZ; Dallas, TX; College Station, TX, and Jonesboro, AR. After not having seen some of these classmates since we graduated back in 2006, I realized again just the power of education.

I hope it goes without saying that the education that is available at a graduate school of banking is second to none. The exceptional quality of bankers, speakers, educators, and leaders the schools provide extends every opportunity for bankers to expand their mind in a wide range of topics. Participating in a Bank Simulation (BankSim) for me was a highlight of the educational process, and was a great tool to help truly understand asset/liability management. Over the course of the three years of school, we also heard some incredible speakers including Coach Herman Boone (the coach actor Denzel Washington portrayed in the movie *Remember the Titans*), Jimmy Morris (the Major League Baseball pitcher actor Dennis Quaid portrayed in the movie *The Rookie*), and Frank Abagnale, Jr. (portrayed by actor Leonardo DiCaprio in

the movie *Catch Me If You Can*). All of these speakers provided amazing and inspirational lessons for all of us to take home.

But, there is so much more to graduate banking school than just the educational and academic aspect. As that group text with my former classmates taught me, the schools also provide an enormous networking opportunity that will last throughout our professional careers. As I look back over the ten years since I have graduated from SWGSB, I realized how many times I have reached out to different members of my class in many other states to pick their brains on different banking situations. The relationships developed at the graduate banking school could be even more powerful than the academic portion.

The Arkansas Bankers Association offers some amazing scholarship opportunities to help financial institutions and bankers with the cost of these graduate schools. You can visit the Arkansas Bankers Association website ([www.arkbankers.org](http://www.arkbankers.org)) to view the different schools and scholarships that are available each year. The schools include the Graduate Banking School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, ABA Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Banking at Colorado-Boulder, Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University, and Southwest Graduate School of Banking Foundation at SMU.



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Most of these schools take place in the early summer or in the spring, so the time is now to start planning with your bank management and families to attend one of these in 2018. The opportunity to grow in banking through the power of education will last through your entire career... and you might have a lot of fun in the process!

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**WHAT IS THE EMERGING LEADERS SECTION?** The Emerging Leaders Section (ELS) was organized by the Arkansas Bankers Association Board of Directors to provide information concerning educational opportunities available for its members. The ELS was established to provide leadership training for young bankers, to enhance banking careers, offer its members the opportunity to learn, network, and be productive members of the banking profession.