

# Delta Zetas Fulfill the Spirit of Volunteerism

CAROLYN KOERMER PROFFITT, ZII  
by L. Alicia Monroe EY



*Carolyn Proffitt and  
her husband,  
John Proffitt III.*

“My first volunteer experience was with Delta Zeta in college,” said Carolyn Koermer Proffitt. “We were called upon to volunteer for all types of activities. It was such fun spending time with my sisters while doing something I felt really good about. I was interested in continuing that after my college days.”

Carolyn did just that. She earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Georgia in 1990. Uncertain about what to do after graduation, she decided fundraising would be a great way to use the principles of psychology, work with some outstanding people, and help those in need. Having been exposed to organized leadership through Delta Zeta, she was able to apply all that she learned in what she calls “non-profit land.” She began her career in fundraising as campaign director for The United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta in 1991, and became senior campaign director in 1995.

One of the youngest in her profession to be certified by the National Society of Fundraising Executives, Carolyn raised millions of dollars for United Way. She increased contributions in virtually every campaign she managed and enhanced the organization’s visibility throughout the media and community.

Ending her successful career with United Way this year, she now works part-time as director of development with the Brain Injury Association of Georgia, where she oversees the Association’s annual planned giving and endowment campaigns. This new position allows her to work at her home in Newnan, a suburb of Atlanta, where she lives with her husband John, a chemical engineer, and their infant son Brandon.

Carolyn’s passion for fundraising has led her through many efforts for various causes. Her enthusiasm proves contagious as she always meets what she considers her biggest challenge—maintaining each volunteer’s commitment to the mission at hand. Her passion is continually renewed by the sense of teamwork and camaraderie that inevitably develops through each campaign. After all, as she said, “no one can ‘fundraise’ alone.”

One memorable experience she recently encountered was during a visit to the Brain Injury Association’s Camp Hardgrove. A camper told her he and all the other campers—each having suffered a traumatic brain injury—live all year looking forward to the one week during the summer when they get to go to camp.

“This is the greatest reward of volunteerism – seeing the fruition of a volunteer’s work benefiting the disadvantaged,” she said.

Carolyn is a member of the Board of Directors for the Georgia chapter of the National Society of Fundraising Executives and has served on various NSFRE committees.

As chairman of Newnan Junior League’s Cherub Ball Auction Committee, Carolyn lends her talents to help raise proceeds benefiting various local non-profit organizations. Another benefactor of her volunteerism is Project Faith, a non-profit organization which assists people with head and spinal cord injuries, for which she serves as a fundraising consultant. She has also worked on several projects with Hands on Atlanta, a non-profit organization which assigns volunteers to various beautification projects around the city.

Keeping her Delta Zeta roots strong, Carolyn gives back to the sorority she credits for giving her so many opportunities during her college years. She has served the Atlanta Alumnae Chapter as president and vice president of membership. During her presidency, this chapter won an Alumnae Chapter Excellence Award at National Convention in 1998. She currently assists Marge Lovewell, Delta Zeta Foundation President, in creating communication pieces for the Foundation.

Carolyn has a bit of advice for her sisters who are looking ahead toward graduation day and may be uncertain of which career path to take. “Try volunteering for one or more of the wonderful, very worthy non-profits out there. You’ll be surprised the doors it will open for you – both professionally and, more importantly, those doors in your heart.”