

## JMU grads live better at The Martin Agency

*Three alumnae moms love agency's atmosphere* BY SANDE SNEAD ('82)

**Y**ou know the disgruntled Geico Cavemen, the beleaguered gecko and the famous United Parcel Service whiteboard. You can probably even quote a few of The Martin Agency's signature taglines: "Save 15 percent or more on car insurance," "What can Brown do for you?" and, most recently, Walmart's "Save Money. Live Better."

Tucked away in Richmond, Va.'s, Shockoe Slip is the headquarters for the No. 3 ad agency in the country, according to Advertising Age's 2008 Agency A-list.

And this is where **Kristen Cavallo ('91)**, senior vice president and director of business development, works along with fellow Dukes **Katherine Wintsch ('99)**, vice president and group planning director, and **Elizabeth Anderson Paul ('03)**, senior strategic planner.

All three work (or worked) on the Walmart account – the largest retail company in the world – and they are some of the most award-winning women at the agency. And, all three are moms.

"It's not surprising that the culture at JMU would mesh with the culture at The Martin Agency," Cavallo says. "I loved my Madison Experience. I try to hire the same type of people whom JMU recruits – well rounded, independent minded and smart."

At a busy advertising agency with some of the largest corporate clients in the world and \$600 million in annual billings, there is very little downtime and very little asking permission. "JMU prepared us well. To succeed here, you need to know how to communicate persuasively. You need to have a sense of presence when you walk in a room. And, most important, you need to love solving problems," Cavallo adds.

After graduation, Elizabeth Paul worked at Carter Ryley Thomas (now CRT/tanaka) before joining The Martin Agency in 2005. In her current role, she leads strategic planning for all seasonal advertising on the Walmart account. She spent her first two years at the agency working with Cavallo in new business development. Paul says, "Being based outside of America's top advertising centers (New York and Chicago) once was considered a disadvantage. But it seems marketers have


caught on to the advantage it gives them to have an agency based in Middle America. We are able to connect with their target audience because we are their target. That understanding has brought us clients like Walmart, Expedia, Chapstick and most recently Microsoft Stores – brands that sell everyday products to everyday people."

After JMU, Katherine Wintsch graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University's Brand Center in 2001. She cut her advertising teeth working for Young & Rubicam in Switzerland before joining The Martin Agency in 2002. She now runs the strategic planning group for Walmart. "My JMU marketing degree was a huge asset in grad school," Wintsch says. "It is nice to have a solid business background and not just in advertising. It's helped me understand the business and how I can help my clients make more money."

With all her achievements, Wintsch is most proud of having found innovative and creative ways to understand and communicate with Middle American mothers. "Research showed that putting mom in the driver's seat had never really been done before," she says. "This became a guidepost for developing more exciting marketing and advertising."

With a 2 year old and newborn at home, Wintsch says she's able to do it all because of the family-oriented culture at The Martin Agency. "Advertising is time-consuming, demanding and pretty exhausting. A lot of women stop working in this industry because of guilt for not being a good mom, but Martin gave me three months paid maternity leave and is very family-friendly. If I say, 'I have to leave at 5 today because my daughter has a ballet recital,' everyone says, 'Yes, you do!'"

Paul's little girl is a few months old. Cavallo has a son, 12, and a daughter, 5.

"The world is asked of us here, but our priorities are never questioned," Cavallo says. "There is no sick leave policy. Everyone trusts that if you are sick, you will stay home and if you are well, you will come to work. We also have a generous leave policy. We work in a demanding industry, but Martin helps us balance it all better than most." 

\* Learn more at [www.themartinagency.com](http://www.themartinagency.com)



The Martin Agency's JMU alumnae trio (l-r): Kristen Cavallo ('91), Katherine Wintsch ('99) and Elizabeth Anderson Paul ('03) are all working moms.