

Snapshot

Linnea Johnson

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Linnea Johnson '04LS is the assistant manager of information technology for GSLIS. In the spring semester, she will teach a section of Technology for Information Professionals. Johnson grew up in Massachusetts and lives in Arlington, Massachusetts, with her two cats, Max and Lotus Jane.

Q:

Where did you grow up?

I lived in Arlington, Mass., until I was three. My family and I then moved to Winchester, Mass. My mom has been a kindergarten teacher in Winchester for the past 30 years and still lives in my childhood home. Ironically, I am now back living in the same three-family house in Arlington where I spent my first three years, which was built by my father's parents.

I am an only child and come from a small family, so my two older male cousins, Ralph and Charles, are like brothers to me. Growing up as the only girl in my family had its perks and I think influenced me to become independent at a young age.

How did you get interested in LIS?

When I joined the GSLIS staff in 2001, I honestly did not know much about the LIS field, but since a large portion of my colleagues are GSLIS alums, their passion quickly rubbed off on me. Soon I discovered that there is a way to combine the intricacies of information technology with LIS and entered the master's program in 2002. I got my degree in the summer of 2004.

What do you like best about your work?

I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a group of individuals who are so passionate and believe so strongly in their work, and their enthusiasm is contagious. The staff, faculty, and students of GSLIS share a common belief in the LIS profession, which is reflected in everything they do. This synergy in the department makes me want to do the best job I can do in my position. The friendships that I have formed while working in GSLIS mean a tremendous amount to me.

What is the connection between who you are and what you do?

My interest in technology has been present for as long as I can remember. It probably started back when I got my first computer, a Macintosh IIsi, when I was 12 and just increased exponentially from there. I also enjoy teaching technology concepts and ideas to others. Watching their fear dissipate and their interest peak is very rewarding.

What are you passionate about, outside of work?

I have a close relationship with my family and spend as much time with them and my close friends as I can. Music has always been a large part of my life. It's an interest I inherited from my father, and my love of music has shifted from creating music on the piano, saxophone, clarinet, and a brief stint with the cello, to listening to it.

Do you find much time to go to concerts and shows?

I especially enjoy watching live music, and have seen my favorite artist, Alanis Morissette, more than 60 times since 1996. In fact, many of my closest friendships are the result of my travels to see Alanis at her shows. Those who know me will be surprised to learn that one of my closest friends and I sang on stage with Alanis before a crowd of 30,000 at the [then] Fleet Center. In the past 10 years, I've had many encounters with Alanis, and we usually have a chance to chat for a little while before or after her performances.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Each of the last three years, Dale DeLetis [in the Simmons President's Office] has asked me to participate in the Simmons Speaker's Showcase and every year I declined the offer, due to a fear of public speaking. But this year, I decided to get over this fear and just go for it. My speech was a satire on how I am noticing traits in myself that are alarmingly similar to those exhibited by my mother, and I have been told by friends that it's quite funny. I invited my mom to the event, and despite the fact that the speech was poking fun of some of her quirks, she was moved. And I know that her being there in the audience meant as much to her as it did to me.

What's a guilty pleasure of yours?

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All right, then tell me a talent that you covet instead.

Sushi is my absolute favorite food in the world, and I've always admired the artistry and presentation with which a sushi chef is able to create a feast for the mouth and for the eyes.

You're a huge Red Sox fan now. Was that the case when you were a kid?

Growing up, I went to my share of baseball and basketball games with my mother. My mom grew up in a time when the Celtics were actually good and winning championships, and to this day, she refuses to give up on them. As I got older, I fell in love with the Red Sox and would consider myself a true member of Red Sox nation. Specifically, I really respect the team captain, Jason Varitek, whose leadership is incredibly admirable. The energy and devotion of Red Sox fans at Fenway and beyond is energizing and addicting. It makes me happy and proud to be so invested.

Do you play any sports yourself?

No, but the past two Labor Day weekends, I have gone white water rafting. Last year, we went rafting and kayaking on the Deerfield River in Deerfield, Mass. This year, we took the plunge and tackled the Kennebec and Dead Rivers in The Forks, Maine. Although it's a bit of a challenge heading down class 5 rapids, it is exhilarating.

Interview by Alison Cody

