

Frances (Fran) Gilbert graduated from FSU in 1984 after completing an Honors in the Major Program in English (emphasis, Creative Writing). After graduation, Fran used her English degree and her knowledge of writing in a variety of positions, including working in the FSU Department of Philosophy, the Personnel Office of the Florida Lottery, the Florida Department of Insurance, and the Florida Press Association. This last position led her into the world of associations and to her current position as Executive Director of the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives.

Reflecting on her present position, Fran says: “I never thought I would be in the association industry mostly because I didn’t realize that associations existed. Most individuals who are working in this profession would tell you they fell into their jobs. Very few people think ‘association executive,’ when they are asked about their career plans. This is a shame, because the association industry offers diverse opportunities and a lot of job satisfaction.” Fran also loves her responsibilities as Executive Editor of TSAE’s quarterly magazine, *The Capital Executive*, duties which include editing articles and writing columns. “Although I am often pressed for time,” she says, “it’s nice to be able to write, edit and publish as part of my job.”

Remembering the FSU Honors Program

Fran reports that she loved being in the FSU Honors program, though she also adds that she didn’t realize what it all meant until after she graduated “The smaller classes and the opportunity to really discuss the literature and the writing were an obvious benefit of the honors classes. Of course getting to know the other students in the program was great—I remember lots of laughter and having fun. The professors were wonderful and I couldn’t (and wouldn’t) pick a favorite. The totality of their instruction was the best part of the English Program and Honors Program.”

Fran’s message for current FSU Honors students

“Enjoy your time in the FSU Honors program and have fun. Don’t try to impress everyone with your intellect—it’s boring and annoying. Yes, you’re smart, but everyone you meet has something interesting to say or share if you take the time to get to know them.”