

Five (or Six!) Questions with Amy Williams

Amy Williams is living her life to the fullest. She's a wife, (soccer) mom of teens, a long-time Chesapeake employee and executive assistant to CEO Nick Dell'Osso. She knows how to stay on schedule, but as you'll read, she embraces flexibility and new opportunities.

You've been at Chesapeake for 17+ years. How did you get your start and what makes you so loyal to the company?

I didn't know much about the company or industry, but I had a close friend who worked in the midstream group who told me the company was looking to hire some additional administrative support. I started in April 2007 as an administrative assistant, and my initial position was copying, filing and coding invoices.

Chesapeake was growing rapidly during that time, and I continued to take on more responsibilities. Within a couple of years, I moved into a supervisory role, which is when I first met Nick. At the time, I was responsible for vendor relations and A/P reports that Nick (as CFO of Chesapeake Midstream) reviewed. I later transitioned to be his executive assistant in May of 2010.

I am forever grateful that Chesapeake took a chance on me at a young age and with little experience. I've been in a very interesting seat — seeing the highs and lows, the stress and joy that comes from this industry. I've learned how to navigate change, to be flexible, to consider other perspectives, to push through hard and difficult situations, to look for the positive in everything and to be excited for the future.

Plus, I work with incredible people who care deeply about the success of our employees, our company and the resource we provide to society.



What does a typical day look like for you?

My weekday mornings start at 5 a.m., with a cup of coffee and reading, followed by a quick run before getting ready to head to the office. Having this routine is important to me and keeps me balanced.

Once I get to the office, my day is less predictable — every day is different. My main responsibility is to keep Nick organized and manage his schedule and travel. Some days I'm at my desk all day answering emails and working on travel logistics, while other days I'm in meetings, often planning board meetings or corporate events. Most recently, I've helped work on the building remodel for our new Oklahoma City headquarters (what is currently building 15).

You've worked with Nick for about 14 years. What qualities do you most admire in him?

He is a family first person. He has always encouraged me to do what I need to do to be a successful working mom.

From a work perspective, I've always appreciated his ability to speak and connect with any audience. He is brilliant and, in my opinion, usually the smartest person in the room, yet he finds a way to connect and communicate effortlessly with any group — from students and interns to executives at conferences. Also, Nick wants everyone to have a seat at the table. He wants to listen and learn from all levels in the organization.

You're working closely with the merger and subsequent integration. What's the most interesting thing you've taken away from the process so far?

It's been interesting to see how every level is working together to make the integration a success. It's truly been a collaborative process, top down and bottom up.

I'd also add that decisions are being made methodically and thoughtfully. I've been impressed with how complementary the Southwestern and Chesapeake cultures are, and it makes me excited to think about how we'll bring forward the best of both.

What is your family like?

I've been married to my husband Sean for 18 years. He teaches and coaches football and soccer at Bethany High School. We have a son Beckham, 16, and daughter Kinlee, 13.

In addition to my husband coaching, both our kids play competitive soccer, so most of our weekends are spent traveling for games.

My son is about to start his second season playing for St. Louis City SC MLS Academy. Yes, STL. He moved when he was 15 to live with a host family and pursue his dream of playing the highest level of soccer possible, with goals to play in college and professionally. This was an incredibly difficult decision for our family, and one I never expected to make, but it has also been incredibly rewarding to embrace change and watch his growth both personally and as a player.

When we aren't traveling for soccer, I love to spend time with friends and family, especially if that includes time at the pool, beach or lake.

What's your favorite part of parenting teens? Give us some words of wisdom!

My kids are my whole world. They are the best and even as teens, I've loved every season of life.

I believe my responsibility as a parent is to raise responsible, kind, independent adults. We need to give them space to make mistakes and learn — that's how they build confidence. Also, I'm learning the importance of being present and listening. I know I don't have all the answers and they rarely want to hear my opinion, but for them to be able to talk it out with us parents makes more of an impact than we even realize.

Beckham moving away taught me so much, namely that you don't know how you will handle a situation until you are in the middle of it. I had many conversations saying I would never let my kid move away to play soccer, and here I am today extremely thankful that we're giving him this opportunity. I think about this in the context of marriage/parenting/friendships, too ... you don't know how you will handle something until you are faced with it. It's encouraged me to be more open-minded when I see someone going through something I haven't walked through.