



Meghan Keefe

HERITAGE APPRAISER FOR THE MOUNTAIN REGION

Although my jewelry career didn't start until my teens, I had an early start of sorts. At 5 I made a bracelet for my mom at school and etched her name in it. As a teenager I was tired of babysitting and got a job at a local department store. I was thrilled to have a "real" job but disappointed the only position available was in the jewelry department. Within a week or two I was hooked. I needed to know everything about the gems and jewelry I was surrounded by. I spent several years at some of the biggest national retailers and working my way to be a top producer and absorbing as much as I could.

In 2006 my parents sat me down and told me that if this was my passion I really needed to go for it. The following summer I obtained my Graduate Gemologist diploma from the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) on campus in New York, NY. It was a wonderful experience being centered in one of the largest jewelry hubs in the world. In addition to my studies I had the opportunity to visit with merchants in the diamond district to learn more about the trade and viewed some of the most exquisite gems at auction.

That fall I left for the headquarters of the GIA and obtained the Graduate Jewelers diploma from the campus in Carlsbad. While studying the basics of the bench I began to thoroughly understand the craftsmanship that goes in to fine jewelry. Ultimately I chose a different career path but I am forever grateful for the knowledge I gained at the bench. My mom proudly wore the bracelet I made for her as a child to my graduation and told my instructors it was the first piece I ever made.

After I finished my studies with the GIA I started working as an apprentice appraiser at Long Jewelers, and independent retailer in Chesapeake, Virginia. There I helped establish their lab within the Independent Jewelers Organization as I refined my skills and developed an understanding of value for fine jewelry and timepieces. I eventually found myself living in Orlando, FL working with another IJO retailer, Maitland Jewelers as an appraiser. In January 2014 I connected with Stephen and the team at **Heritage Appraisers** and have enjoyed every minute of my new adventure.

I like to think of my career as a happy accident and often wonder what path I would be on had I not taken the job in the jewelry department all those years ago. I have truly found my niche. I spend my days surrounded by beautiful things! In my free time I enjoy spending time with friends, family, and my dog Farley. I take advantage of all that Florida has to offer...beaches, cruise ports, theme parks, and great weather. I am a member of the GIA Alumni Association and the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers.