

DONNA FRANKLIN WEST



Donna Franklin West participated in the Agenda 21 Internship Program in 1997 at Jackson Madison County General Hospital in Jackson, Tennessee. Under the mentorship of Ian McFadden, who became a lifelong mentor, she gained insights into leadership, work ethic, and the complexities of healthcare administration.



Observing the hospital executives firsthand shaped my approach to professionalism and my understanding of integrity and empathy, even before these became widely recognized as essential workplace skills."

Today, West is the founder and CEO of The Virtual PM, a project management company specializing in leadership and professional development. Her career was significantly shaped by her internship and the advice of Jim Moss, the hospital CEO at the time. "His mentorship and guidance have been instrumental in my professional trajectory, leading me to transition into healthcare IT, where I've found a fulfilling career," she said. His encouragement helped her pursue opportunities in healthcare IT, a field that has since defined her career.

The internship also provided her with an early look at healthcare policy and advocacy, particularly during Jackson Madison County's establishment of West Tennessee Healthcare. Watching the hospital's engagement with neighboring communities underscored the impact of strategic outreach and policy work, a lesson that has remained with her throughout her career. Although she didn't fully appreciate its significance at the time, the experience gave her a foundation for understanding how healthcare systems drive equity and growth.

West advises future interns to approach the program with dedication and a strong work ethic. She credits the relationships she built and the commitment she demonstrated for extending her three-month internship into a yearlong fellowship. She remains deeply grateful for the Agenda 21 Internship Program, which played a pivotal role in her career development and leadership journey.



For more information about the program, contact Program Manager Karizma Whitfield at kwhitfield@tha.com.