

JULIE M. JOHNSON, M.A., J.D.

2022 BIO

Julie M. Johnson is a lawyer from Aberdeen, currently residing at Mina Lake. After attending the University of South Dakota, where she earned her B.A., an M.A., and J.D. in Law, she returned to her hometown to practice in a firm. During her college and law school years, she had several internships and clerkships, including several in Pierre. Her career changed when Governor Janklow called. She joined his Cabinet as Secretary of Labor for several years and stayed with Governor Mickelson for a while. She then became the President of the Industry and Commerce Association of South Dakota, now known as the Industry and Commerce Association of South Dakota. She was the CEO and Chief Spokesperson/Lobbyist for the South Dakota business community. In 1995, Governor Janklow called again and asked her to come back as his Secretary of Revenue. Later she ran the South Dakota Rural Development Council, a giant collaboration, and later served as an Administrative Law Judge for the State.

She returned to Aberdeen to run a growth initiative known as “Absolutely!Aberdeen”, and Prairie Vision, its regional development arm. She has also taught college courses for USD, NSU, SDSU, Capital University Center, and a few more higher ed institutions.

Throughout her career, she has been deeply involved with the SD Legislature, and served as a registered lobbyist for almost her entire career. She is probably the longest-standing woman lobbyist in the hallways of the State Capitol. Issues in which she has been include the state’s economic development efforts, workforce, housing, nonprofits, and all forms of development. She continues to be quite involved with several key nonprofit organizations on these topics, including helping to originate the SD Nonprofit Network recently. She also serves as the state’s SCORE District Director, which is also a nonprofit.

She has been deeply involved in nonprofit corporations in recent years in various roles—strategic planning, updating their organizations, tax issues, legislative issues, appropriations issues, legal issues, and more. She has run several nonprofits and brings her skills to a lot of pro bono nonprofit assistance these days.

She and her husband Bryan Hisel live at Mina Lake, just west of Aberdeen. Her spouse ran a couple of nonprofit corporations for many years and provides great advice to those boards and execs in current years.