

## STUDENT OF THE QUARTER

### The Natural: People skills was just the first brick in foundation of superb customer service



**Heath Conrad**  
General Adjuster  
Horace Mann

Some people spend long hours perfecting the skills needed to become an outstanding claims adjuster. Others are born for the position.

Heath Conrad had all the natural skills and the desire to become an outstanding claims adjuster when he graduated from Bucknell University in 1997. As a casualty general adjuster for the Mid-Atlantic Region for Horace Mann, Conrad enjoys providing top-notch service to his customers.

“Life is a lot like insurance. You just need to pay attention and use your head,” explained Conrad with a smile.

Conrad and the responsibilities of a claims adjuster fit each other like a glove. His workload mixes well with his family obligations. He especially likes helping people one-on-one. He takes special pride in helping in ways customers may not expect.

The recent course he completed in Awesome Customer Service from III was also a good fit. Since returning to his daily schedule, he has excelled in the use of empathy and utilized the terminology he learned in the classroom to understand how an insured loss can impact individuals.

“In a lot of ways, the program fortified my own good habits and highlighted specific ways I could provide even better service to our clients,” said Conrad.

“Heath’s customer service skills

and proactive attitude have been a positive influence in our office,” said Larry Kovatch, state superintendent of the Mid-Atlantic Region for Horace Mann. “He has embraced the concepts of the book, *The 8 Characteristics of an Awesome Adjuster*, and the Awesome Claims Customer Service class.”

Conrad hopes to continue his professional education by finishing his CPCU and AIC in the next year or two, with an eventual goal of securing a position in claims management.

“The tools for success are all around me,” he concluded. His keys to success are simple. Conrad takes special pride in his steady attitude and his trainability.

“And my *excellent* sense of humor,” he concluded.

## TRAINER OF THE SEASON

### Dedication, communication remain key for professional who shares her passion



**Mary Bullin**  
Assistant Manager for  
Learning and Development  
State Farm

As a marathon runner, Mary Bullin understands the value of hard work and commitment. Those values have also been vital in her two decades of customer service to policyholders in Texas.

Bullin has also progressed from an accounting supervisor with State Farm in 1984 to her current position as the assistant manager for learning & development at the State Farm office in Austin, Texas.

“We always need to be searching

for new challenges and be willing to take on new responsibilities in order to grow as a person or as an insurance professional,” said Bullin. “It is always important to love what you are doing. Success will come as a collateral benefit of your dedication and commitment.”

Her ability to communicate with clients and have empathy for customers is a direct reflection of Bullin’s belief in continuing professional education.

Her immediate supervisor, Louise Eidbo, the manager of learning and development in the Texas zone for State Farm Insurance, praised her assistant for her ability to translate the technical issues involved in claims. She added that Mary has structured the learning environment

to maximize learning potential.

Her desire to serve the customer played a crucial role in her career change over 12 years ago, when she moved into claims, and ultimately landed her in her current position directing claims training for the Texas Zone.

Despite the numerous job titles she has carried over the years with State Farm, Bullin still treasures her time as a claims rep and the memories of helping customers faced with an insured loss.

“Never forget that you are in the customer service business,” she concluded. “If you ever lose sight of the customer, you’ll lose sight of the situation and your ability to do the best possible job.”