

Influential Women Showcases Denese Harmon, CAMS: Financial Crimes Investigator And Banking Leader

TROY, NC, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Leveraging 15+ Years of Expertise in Transaction Monitoring, Compliance, and Financial Crime Investigation to Protect Institutions and Communities

Denese Harmon, CAMS, is an Assistant Vice President and Financial Crimes Investigator at First Bank (FBNC) in Troy, North Carolina. With more than 15 years of experience in anti-money laundering (AML), fraud prevention, and financial crime investigations, she is dedicated to safeguarding the integrity of the financial system. Her expertise spans transaction monitoring, Bank Secrecy Act compliance, and regulatory risk management, enabling her to detect, investigate, and mitigate complex financial threats that impact both institutions and individuals.



Denese's career in financial crimes investigation began unexpectedly when she was fresh out of college seeking her first professional role. She accepted a staffing position at a local bank within the fraud department, initially focused on debit card and ATM fraud detection. What began as an entry-level opportunity quickly revealed her natural investigative ability and analytical strengths. She soon expanded her responsibilities to encompass a range of fraud investigations, including ATM/debit card fraud, check fraud, and e-commerce-related cases, laying the foundation for a long-term career in financial crimes.

As her expertise deepened, Denese transitioned into anti-money laundering and Bank Secrecy Act compliance work, where she developed advanced investigative capabilities in identifying suspicious financial activity across complex transactional networks. In her current role, she

analyzes large volumes of financial data to uncover illicit behavior, including terrorist financing, drug and human trafficking, tax evasion, and elder financial exploitation.

A Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS), Denese considers this certification a significant professional milestone that formalized her extensive hands-on experience. It reflects her commitment to maintaining high standards in financial crime detection and regulatory compliance. She also collaborates closely with law enforcement and government agencies, contributing to active investigations and seeing firsthand the real-world impact of disrupting criminal networks. Beyond her investigative work, she is passionate about mentoring emerging professionals in the field and sharing insights into evolving financial crime trends and risks.

Denese attributes her success to being open to new opportunities that expand her knowledge and skill set beyond standard protocols, particularly at the intersection of data, psychology, and law. For her, the most rewarding aspect of her work lies in the “hunt”—identifying the subtle patterns hidden within thousands of transactions to uncover the motives and methods behind sophisticated financial deception. This process not only strengthens institutional defenses but also helps protect communities from financial harm.

The best career advice Denese has ever received is that it is possible to build a meaningful career in a field she is passionate about while also making a tangible difference in the lives of others. This principle has guided her throughout her professional journey. It has encouraged her to approach each role with purpose, view challenges as opportunities for growth, and focus on delivering value that benefits both her organization and the broader community.

Denese encourages young women entering the financial crime and compliance industry to believe in their ability to succeed and build fulfilling careers. She emphasizes that success is rooted in dedication, persistence, and a continuous commitment to learning. Setbacks, she notes, should be viewed as opportunities for development rather than discouragement. Above all, she advises maintaining resilience and staying focused on long-term goals, as perseverance and passion are key drivers of meaningful achievement.

In her view, the financial crime industry is currently at a pivotal point, shaped by rapid advancements in technology. Artificial intelligence has become both a powerful tool and a growing threat. Criminal networks are increasingly leveraging AI to scale and accelerate fraudulent activities, often outpacing traditional detection methods. At the same time, the rise of third-party payment platforms has added additional complexity by obscuring financial flows and creating new challenges for investigators. As a result, the ongoing “cat and mouse” dynamic between criminals and financial institutions has become more sophisticated and demanding than ever before.

Despite these challenges, Denese remains deeply committed to her mission of protecting individuals and organizations from financial harm. She finds fulfillment in cases where her work directly contributes to stopping illicit activity and preventing further victimization. In her role, she

has witnessed firsthand the emotional and financial toll that fraud can have on customers, often meeting them during some of their most difficult moments. For her, the ability to help restore a sense of security—or prevent harm before it occurs—serves as a powerful motivating force.

Outside of her professional responsibilities, Denese maintains balance through personal interests that reflect her investigative nature. She enjoys reading detective novels, watching documentaries, and engaging in outdoor activities such as hiking and gardening. She also finds comfort in caring for and walking her dogs, as well as traveling. Above all, she values time with her family, which she considers the most important and fulfilling aspect of her life.

Through her dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to financial crime prevention, Denese Harmon continues to make a meaningful impact in her field, strengthening both institutional integrity and community safety.

Learn More about Denese Harmon:

Through her Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Denese-Harmon>

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