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A Tradition of Experience and Devotion to Family Law

VIRGINIA
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Honoring high-achieving women across the commonwealth

Virginia Lawyers Weekly is pleased to introduce the Class of 2014 in our “Influential Women of Virginia” awards program. The awards recognize the outstanding efforts of women in numerous fields, including law, business, health care, education and the arts. The honors have been given to individuals who are making notable contributions to their professions, their communities and society at large.

We considered numerous nominations from across the commonwealth, and all of the nominees were highly accomplished. We are very proud to honor this year’s class.

The 2014 Influential Women of Virginia were feted at a dinner in Richmond on May 22.

In this special section, we are providing insight about them as individuals and about their accomplishments.

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We offer our congratulations to our colleagues in the 2014 class of honorees as “Influential Women of Virginia” and commend them for their high achievements.

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CLASS OF 2014

Debra Stracke Anderson
Sloan Street Advisors/ITRA Global, McLean6

Dawn L. Beninghove
Companion Extraordinaire Home Care Services,
Ashland6

Lori Jones Bentley
Johnson, Ayers & Matthews PLC, Roanoke7

Susan Roussel Blackman
Willcox Savage, Virginia Beach7

Jas Boothe
Final Salute Inc., Alexandria8

Sandra C. Davis
BCR Real Estate & Property Management, Blacksburg.....8

Betty Layne DesPortes
Benjamin & DesPortes PC, Richmond.....9

Sharon K. Eimer
Public Defender, Lynchburg.....9

Kimberly A.C. Enochs
Rutherford/ Marsh & McLennan Agency, Roanoke10

Jennifer F. Flinchum
Keiter CPAs, Richmond10

Lori Snyder Garrett
Glavé & Holmes Architecture, Richmond11

Marcia Adams Gilliam
CSE Financial Services, Abingdon.....11

Danielle D. Giroux
Harman Claytor Corrigan & Wellman PC, Glen Allen12

Ellen Goitia
KPMG LLP, McLean12

Susan Greenbaum
Singer-songwriter, Richmond13

Prof. Susan Grover
William & Mary School of Law, Williamsburg13

Mary Helen Hackney, M.D.
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond19

Prof. Marcia A. Invernizzi
University of Virginia, Charlottesville19

Sheriff Stacey Ann Kincaid
Fairfax County, Fairfax20

Rosemary Tran Lauer
Devotion To Children, Oakton20

Donna M. Littlepage
Carilion Clinic, Roanoke.....21

Linda C. Mathes
American Red Cross in the National Capital Region,
Fairfax21

Jennifer A. Minear
McCandlish Holton PC, Richmond.....22

Sidoux M. Mitchell
Alexandria Bar Association, Alexandria22

Prof. Linda Apple Monson
George Mason University, Fairfax23

Deborah D. Oswalt
Virginia Health Care Foundation, Richmond23

Dean Wendy Collins Perdue
University of Richmond School of Law, Richmond24

Antigone Gabriella Peyton
Cloudigy Law PLLC, McLean24

Jan L. Proctor
City Attorney, Chesapeake25

Linda Rabbitt
*rand construction corporation, Alexandria25

Megan C. Rahman
Troutman Sanders LLP, Richmond26

Gwenn Rosener
FlexProfessionals LLC, McLean26

Susan M. Rotkis
Consumer Litigation Associates PC, Newport News27

Sandra L. Smith
Oast & Taylor PLC, Portsmouth.....27

Robin Robertson Starr
Richmond SPCA, Richmond28

Marie E. Washington
Law Office of Marie Washington PLC, Warrenton28

Deborah C. Waters
Waters Law Firm, Norfolk.....29

Amy McDaniel Williams
Hunton & Williams LLP, Richmond29

Lt. Gen. Frances C. Wilson (ret.)
U.S. Marine Corps, Virginia Beach.....30

Joan Ziglar
former Commonwealth’s Attorney, Martinsville30

Debra Stracke Anderson

CCIM, SIOR

Sloan Street Advisors / ITRA Global
McLean

Anderson founded her commercial real estate firm in 2000 after serving as one of the first female executives at two major real estate groups. Her company became the D.C. affiliate for the International Tenant Representative Alliance; she served two terms as ITRA Global’s first female chairman.

Looking back:

I was raised in an Air Force family. As I became an adult, I realized what a privilege I had been given to see the world and experience diverse cultures throughout my youth. Every day was an adventure and a lesson learned.

An important mentor:

My grandmother, Gertie Jones Richardson (1902-1991), was a thoroughly modern woman who worked during an era when few women considered a career outside the home and even fewer traveled extensively. She lived life to the fullest. After her many trips, she always came back to her wonderful home on Sloan Street. My company was named as a tribute to her to thank her for my optimism, open mind and apparent gift of serendipity.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

I always wanted to find a way to have a positive impact on the lives of at-risk chil-

dren. The ideal opportunity arose with Stop Child Abuse Now (www.scanva.org), for which I have served on the board of directors and the financial development committee. SCAN’s work to better the lives of children and families is crucial and it has been an absolute privilege to serve.

An influential leader:

Eleanor Roosevelt. Despite her shyness and self-conscious nature, she chose to use her notoriety and position of power for absolute good.

Best advice:

Always do more than you have to and always do the right thing.

Personal/professional achievement:

Personally, I absolutely love being a grandmother! I love getting down on the floor with the babies. We had three beautiful, talented children whom I adored and I’m certainly reaping the benefits now. Professionally, starting my own company 14 years ago, which later was selected as the Washington, D.C. affiliate for ITRA Global. I was elected the first woman chairman of the board in the history of ITRA Global and was privileged to lead the group through significant global expansion – certainly the pinnacle of my career.

Best tip for balance:

Be extremely organized and remember that your family is your most important legacy, so tip the scales in their favor.

A favorite get-away:

Paris, of course.



Education: Missouri State University

I wanted to be:

A social worker and actress – I’m not sure how I was going to marry the two!

A favorite book or movie:

My favorite book is *Personal History*, an autobiography by Katharine Graham. It

is truly a story of triumph over tragedy and success over self-doubt.

You didn’t know:

I was a singer/songwriter and recorded an album of original music. I was in two motion pictures, along with many publications as a model, all entirely in secret while building my business career. Don’t tell anyone!

Dawn L. Beninghove

Companion Extraordinaire Home Care Services
Ashland

Grounded in the value of personal and direct care to patients, Beninghove has used her administrative talents to found and grow a home healthcare company that went from three to 100 employees in just eight years.

Looking back:

I was born in Warren, Ohio, but raised in Richmond from the age of 7. At the age of 2, I was already pursuing my nursing career. I independently gave my 3-month-old brother an injection with my grandmother’s best pearl hat pin!

An important mentor:

Robert Berg, owner/President of American Rehab Centers in Tucson, Arizona, gave me my first managerial position and then stood behind me no matter what decision I made. He taught me the preeminence of solidarity and living by your word. I have brought that work ethic into every area of my life since.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

Bon Secours’ Faith Community Nursing program has given me the greatest scope of understanding intentional care of our body, mind and spirit.

An influential leader:

Florence Nightingale stands out. She felt divinely inspired by God in her mission to care for the sick and personally attend to

them. Yet, she wanted still more. That is exactly the path my life has taken over the last 33 years as a nurse.

Best advice:

It is a quote I read by a Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, “Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.”

Personal/professional achievement:

Receiving my Chaplaincy certificate. Chaplains are an extension of the ministry which meets people from all walks of life right where they are, lending service to people at their point of need. I am just an ordinary person inspired by an extraordinary purpose.

Best tip for balance:

An amazing husband, tremendous children and enduring friends.

A favorite get-away:

It is Paris, a place I’ve actually never visited. Growing up, I was raised on Gene Kelly and an “American in Paris.” Since then every time it rains, I find myself breaking into song and looking for a lamppost.

My first job:

My first job was at the age of 15 as a waitress at Shoney’s restaurant. I learned not only the meaning of good service but the ability to serve others and understanding that the story we often see from others may be a façade masking experiences and pain we as humans would think unfathomable.

I wanted to be:

I know it sounds cliché, but I’ve always



Education: AS, Nursing, J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College

wanted to be a nurse.

A favorite book or movie:

A Walk in the Clouds. It shows the tenaci-

ty of the human spirit, the beauty of enduring love and the strength of family.

You didn’t know:

The first is the overwhelming personal responsibility I feel for the income and security of those who work with me on a daily basis. The second is that I am often told I am wise beyond my years and have

Lori J. Bentley

Johnson, Ayers & Matthews PLC
Roanoke

A civil litigator who rose quickly to become a law firm and local bar leader, Bentley’s solid grounding in family has inspired her work with Big Brothers Big Sisters at the regional and national level.

Looking back:

I grew up in Brunswick County, Virginia. My grandparents grew up in the Depression era and they taught the grandchildren to work hard and care for family. We all worked to pick, can, and freeze vegetables from the family gardens during the summers. One day my grandfather called us to come help him gather up the piglets that had escaped from a hole in the fence. After we chased them all down, he took us to the store for an Orange Push-Up. This taught me that hard work has its rewards!

An important mentor:

After law school, I clerked for the Honorable Sam W. Coleman on the Virginia Court of Appeals, a wonderful mentor who taught me a great deal about being a lawyer. He also taught me that listening to others is an important skill for any successful attorney. If you give your opponent the opportunity to talk too much, he will oftentimes make your case for you.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

I served as president of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia during an

exciting time, when the Roanoke and New River Valley chapters merged into one large group. It was a very busy and stressful time, but it was extremely gratifying. Seeing how happy a child can be when a caring grown-up spends time with him, even if it is just washing a car or going to the mall, is incredible. Serving on the group’s national board, I met Bigs and Littles from all over the country and heard what a difference the organization made in their lives.

An influential leader:
Amelia Earhart

Best advice:
My childhood babysitter used to say, “If you don’t do it nice, you have to do it twice.”

Personal/professional achievement:
With two beautiful children and a wonderful husband, every day is a challenge, but also a delight! Professionally, I am honored that my partners chose me for the executive committee of our firm.

Best tip for balance:
I always try to remember that at the end of the day, my family comes first. They are the ones who will remember that I was with them and cheering them on. And, I can always sleep when I get old, right?

A favorite get-away:
The beach, any beach.

My first job:
As a lifeguard for a local pool, I learned to be responsible, even when others are not.



Education: BA, University of Richmond; JD, University of Richmond

I wanted to be:
A teacher or a flight attendant.

A favorite book or movie:
I read *Gone with the Wind* in the 7th grade and have loved it ever since for its

portrayal of a strong woman doing her best to survive.

You didn’t know:
I love history – if I had not gone to law school, my second choice was to be an archeologist. I like to bake and decorate cakes.

Susan Roussel Blackman

Willcox Savage
Virginia Beach

A lawyer specializing in business immigration and employment matters, Blackman is dedicated to serving both the international and local community. She frequently shares her legal expertise through seminar presentations and business magazine columns.

Looking back:

I was born in New Orleans and raised on the edge of the suburbs. Growing up as a Saints fan in those days, you learned to live with disappointment. I moved to Virginia Beach as a newlywed. For years we had a seriously outdated television. I said, if the Saints ever make the Super Bowl, I will buy a modern flat-screen TV. I figured that would keep me off the hook for a long time. But the miracle actually happened in 2009.

An important mentor:

William E. Rachels Jr., who has been widely lauded for his legal achievements and professional contributions, was the mentor who taught me how to be a thorough and conscientious lawyer.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
The most sustained and varied organizational affiliation has been with the

Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. I am honored to be Chair-Elect.

An influential leader:
A contemporary female leader I admire is Anne Mette Vestergaard, who previously served as Vice Ambassador for Denmark. She is a diplomat, a mother and a leader who has impressed me with her perceptiveness, adaptability, dedication to work and family and good judgment in handling challenges.

Personal/professional achievement:
Personally, marrying my husband, Jerome Blackman, MD, was the smartest thing I ever did. Professionally, every time I have a successful outcome for a client, that feels like an important accomplishment to me.

Best tip for balance:
Pick some things to delegate. But realize that even a trustworthy person may complete the delegated task in a way that differs from how you would do it. About 20 years into marriage, I finally decided that there could be more than one “right way” to load a dishwasher.

I wanted to be:
In my second grade essay on this topic, I wrote that I wanted to be a tourist. No one told me that it didn’t really count because you couldn’t get paid to do it. My back-up, at that age, was to be a pianist. In my case, it turned out no one would pay me to do that either.

You didn’t know:
I’m married to a romantic. He doesn’t spend time in Hallmark stores, but he has



Education: BA, Old Dominion University; JD, College of William & Mary

written me a sonnet a time or two on a special occasion. He’s nostalgic about

personal experiences that create special memories. Our son, who is now 25 and working as a tech entrepreneur in San Francisco, calls my husband and me periodically and thanks us for the things we’ve done for him and for being “reasonable parents.” There is no greater happiness than that.

Jas Boothe

Final Salute Inc.
Alexandria

A disabled Army veteran confronting a gap in support for women veterans with children, Boothe founded Final Salute Inc. to assist women veterans and their families. The organization operates three transitional homes in Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio.

Looking back:
Most of my childhood was spent in the projects of Chicago.

An important mentor:
Dr. Mae Jemison. She also was from Chicago and, as a little girl, I knew if a black woman could make it to space we could make it anywhere.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
The American Legion, Post 10. When I left the military, I no longer felt like I had a family. But they welcomed me and supported me along my transition from military. It made it much easier.

An influential leader:
Mother Teresa. While I was deployed to Kosovo, I visited the church of the Black Madonna, where she got her calling. A year later, I started my organization. She wasn't famous, she wasn't popular, but she cared. And because of her humanity,

many lives were changed for the better.

Best advice:
You are the way. Along my journey, I have always asked God to provide me a path, show me the way. One day I was told to look in the mirror, you are the way.

Personal/professional achievement:
Helping homeless women veterans and their children get back into a state of independence. I took an oath 13 years ago to "Never Leave a Fallen Comrade." I am a soldier and these are my sisters. We have fought, bled and died alongside our brothers. We have also earned our shot at the America Dream.

Best tip for balance:
Ha! There is no balance; it just sounds nice. There is no way you can choose to split yourself up among priorities. I can't be 25 percent of a mother, 25 percent of a wife, 25 percent of a soldier and 25 percent of advocate. The balance is being able to focus and give 100 percent to what are you doing at that moment.

A favorite get-away:
Jamaica. It's also where my husband is from and where we had our first date.

My first job:
Soldier. I learned that the biggest contribution a service member provides to those in need is humanity.

I wanted to be:
A doctor, because I always knew I wanted to help people. Although I am not a



Education: Double MA, Webster University

doctor, I still feel that I am helping people.

A favorite book or movie:
My favorite movie is *G.I. Jane*, for obvi-

ous reasons LOL! I have personally seen the struggles, transformation and sacrifices we have to make to serve. She was truly my hero!

You didn't know:
I am afraid of heights, and I am infec-tiously funny!

Sandra C. Davis

BCR Real Estate & Property Management
Blacksburg

Going to work full-time at age 17, Davis studied after work hours, built on her successes and now runs a thriving property management company housing students at two universities.

Looking back:
I grew up roaming the family farm in Floyd County, spending my summers riding horses and daydreaming about what I planned to do "when I grew up."

An important mentor:
Three staff members were my mentors. Their patience, encouragement and great senses of humor helped steer me not only to learn the job, but to rise to a supervisory position covering four offices in three counties and a city.

An influential leader:
Dolly Parton – She grew up in poverty and knew what she wanted to do with her life. At a young age, she left the mountains of Tennessee and eventually found fame and fortune. I respect that Ms. Parton has not forgotten her roots. She has created jobs, improved people's quality of life and made an impoverished area a destination.

Personal/professional achievement:
Thirty-three years ago, my late husband and I changed our careers and started a real estate/property management firm

and proceeded to build student housing near Radford University and Virginia Tech. After his untimely death 14 years ago, I assumed my husband's role in the company. I was blessed with the strength and courage to carry on during the difficult times, to remain strong for the staff and to maintain good relationships with the various professionals.

Best tip for balance:
I set personal priorities, including time to strengthen and maintain my faith and commitment to family and friends. I set my professional goals and assembled a strong, well-qualified team who share my desire for success. I then placed my trust in the staff and switched off my "helicopter monitor," allowing each of us to fulfill our responsibilities with less stress and a balanced personal life.

A favorite get-away:
Hilton Head Island in South Carolina and the Cotswolds in the UK.

My first job:
I was 17 when I started working full-time. I took as many night classes as possible and concentrated on becoming the best qualified for my position. The strategy worked, and when I left the company after eight years I was overseeing staff in four offices.

I wanted to be:
A journalist and I also wanted to write a lot of best sellers.

Favorite movie:
Zulu. I found the bravery of the British soldiers to be overwhelming.



Education: Graduate, Retail Bank Management School, University of Virginia

You didn't know:
I have worked full-time for the past 50 years with no plan to retire, and I have met and briefly chatted with two of our country's presidents.

Betty Layne DesPortes

Benjamin & DesPortes PC
Richmond

A tireless champion of justice and the rights of the criminal defendant, DesPortes helped win freedom for a man sentenced to life in prison for a murder he did not commit.

Looking back:
I grew up in South Carolina and Virginia.

An important mentor:
His name is unknown – but the single unarmed protestor standing alone to block a line of tanks heading into Tiananmen Square in 1989 provided an iconic image of strength, dignity, and courage that has influenced me more than words ever could: the lone person standing up to force to protect others.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
The Chief Justice’s Indigent Defense Training Initiative. In 2004, former Chief Justice Leroy Rountree Hassell Sr. formed the training initiative with the Virginia State Bar to improve the quality of legal representation of criminal defendants in Virginia. The training initiative was designed to provide – free of charge – a superior CLE program designed for the experienced indigent defense bar. Continued by Chief Justice Cynthia D. Kinser, each year the training initiative brings exceptional national speakers to Richmond for a live in-person presentation to 650 attendees and 250 remote at-

tendees through simultaneous webcasts. The quality of the education is outstanding and it is a great opportunity to show the indigent defense bar how much their work and commitment to justice is valued.

An influential leader:
Marie Curie. She had a lack of pretense and a professional drive that allowed her to succeed in an area dominated by men and largely considered out of reach for women. Her achievements inspired countless women around the world to scientific careers.

Best advice:
Question everything.

Personal/professional achievement:
The exoneration of a man wrongfully convicted of murder and serving a life sentence for a crime he did not commit. It was an enormous challenge, but worth every minute of the four-year effort to watch him walk to freedom.

Best tip for balance:
Love what you do.

A favorite get-away:
My house – with no access to a phone or email.

My first job:
Working retail. I hate working retail.

I wanted to be:
Older. Now I want to be younger; oh, the irony.



Education: BS/BA, University of South Carolina; JD, University of Virginia; MS, Virginia Commonwealth University

Favorite movie:
The Princess Bride – so many great lines (“My name is Inigo Montoya . . .”)

You didn’t know:
I was a Girl Scout (not a very good one, but I still claim the title), and in high school, I saw Prince’s “Purple Rain” 14 times. (Don’t judge.)

Sharon K. Eimer

Lynchburg Office of the Public Defender
Lynchburg

The long-time public defender for the City of Lynchburg, Eimer strives to influence the next generation of young women through her role as a Girl Scout leader.

Looking back:
I grew up in Rockville, Md., in the suburbs of Washington. Each Christmas, a store in the city would open up early and allow underprivileged children to shop for a gift for their parents. I participated, as part of a community service project, by assisting the children with their choices. It was heartbreaking to see the huge line of kids who were eligible to participate. It was heartwarming to see how excited the kids were to pick out a gift for their parents that they would not otherwise have been able to do. The memory of those children is one of the reasons that I represent juveniles in the court system.

An important mentor:
One of the greatest influences in my life was my Girl Scout leader. She believed that all girls should have the opportunity to follow their dreams. When I indicated an interest in the political process, she was instrumental in my receiving an internship with the U.S. Congress. Thanks to her support, I eventually sought a career in public service.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
Girl Scouts has had the greatest impact on me. I joined the organization at an early age and continued with it – even today! I serve as a troop leader for middle school girls and run a summer camp for dads and daughters.

An influential leader:
Amelia Earhart influenced me at an early age. In elementary school, I read about her accomplishments. Even her “greatest failure” of disappearing during her infamous flight around the world, continues to influence and inspire young women to reach for their goals and conquer the unknown. She was unabashed and unafraid to try. Her life inspired me to reach for goals that seemed unattainable at the time.

Best advice:
“Soar with the eagles.” My folks always used to remind me that if I kept my eyes on the goal, I would absolutely reach it. My Dad wrote those words on a card for my college graduation, and they are engraved on a plaque of an eagle that sits on my desk that was given to me by my office when I became Public Defender.

Best tip for balance:
To remember that your personal and professional lives will never be equally balanced. At one time or another, one will outweigh the other. The key is to remember to never allow one to always overcome the other. Having a personal life is essential to your mental health.



Education: BA, Western Maryland College; JD, University of Richmond

You didn’t know:
I am an avid college sports fan thanks to my husband. I served as a page in the Maryland State legislature.

Kimberly A.C. Enochs

Rutherford/Marsh & McLennan Agency
Roanoke

Working at one of the largest risk management and insurance brokerage firms in the mid-Atlantic, Enochs has risen through the ranks to become an executive vice president responsible for strategic direction and oversight of company operations.

Looking back:
I grew up in Rainelle, W.Va., which is a small town in Greenbrier County. Having a brother only 15 months younger than me, I participated in many rough-and-tumble activities such as baseball, kick-ball, motorcycle riding, and just about anything else that involved the great outdoors. I grew up competing with “the boys” and learned how to hold my own at a very young age.

An important mentor:
One of my mentors, G.A. (Shad) Steadman, taught me how important it is to pick my battles carefully, be flexible when possible, and stand my ground when it is necessary.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
After serving on many boards, my recent focus has been in the area of animal rescue and advocacy. I have been inspired by my two pugs, Bella and Coal, to provide a great deal of volunteer assistance and support to Mid-Atlantic Pug Rescue,

and the Planned Pethood/Franklin County Humane Society.

An influential leader:
I greatly admire Jane Goodall, not only for the significant contributions she has made to science and humanity, but also for her intellectual curiosity, patience, peaceful approach, and optimism.

Best advice:
Don’t judge a book by its cover. There is no softer pillow than a clean conscience. Character *always* counts.

Best tip for balance:
A wise woman once told me, “When you are young, you look forward; when you are old, you look backward. Make sure you can laugh, smile and be proud when you look back.” I try to live my life with no regrets, and believe this helps me find peace and balance. Yoga also helps.

A favorite get-away:
Green Turtle Cay, in Abaco (Bahamas).

My first job:
While still in high school, I typed legal documents for a local attorney. This was before computers, and I had to use a typewriter with carbon paper. I was not a good typist, and knew I had to expand my horizons.

I wanted to be:
I wanted to be a school teacher. I later achieved this goal when I taught night classes as adjunct faculty at a local college. At the time, I did not realize I was not much older than most of my students.



Education: Education: BA, Concord University; MS, Raadford University

A favorite book or movie:
J.R.R. Tolkien’s books and movies are my favorites.

You didn’t know:
1. I almost drowned (with my father) when I was a young child. I later went on to be a lifeguard, taught swimming lessons, and I live on a lake. 2. I am fascinated by gorillas, and play the piano.

Jennifer F. Flinchum, CPA, CFP

Keiter CPAs
Glen Allen

An accomplished Certified Public Accountant, Flinchum has taken on numerous leadership roles in her organization and in the community. Through volunteer efforts, she has helped raise \$500K in donations for Richmond-based nonprofits.

An important mentor:
Mike Gracik, now the Managing Partner of Keiter, has had such an impact on my career. From the day I started at Keiter, Mike was always available for advice, whether it be technical, professional, or personal. Mike’s technical expertise coupled with his genuine concern for his clients inspires me. I am continually working to achieve his level of commitment and to work with staff to develop them as he has worked to develop me.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
Impact 100 Richmond is a fairly new organization, but such a great one! It is a grassroots effort that champions the power of women giving together. I am introducing my daughter, who is 11, to this group to instill in her the joy of helping others and the positive impact that a group can make when working together.

Best advice:
Give it your all every day and make sure you learn something along the way.

Personal/professional achievement:
My move to Keiter in 1999 allowed me to focus on privately held businesses and their owners. My interaction with clients is no longer limited to tax planning and compliance, but extends often into general business and family matters. Keiter has always been supportive of my goals. I also have the opportunity to mentor a fantastic team of professionals.

My first job:
I joined the audit practice of Coopers & Lybrand LLP after graduation from William and Mary. I was selected to do a rotation through the tax department during my first busy season and realized how much I enjoyed the interaction with not only the businesses, but also the personal interaction with the executives and owners. I then joined the tax department on a full time basis and went back to school for my Masters of Taxation.

I wanted to be:
I wanted to be a business attorney. I guess I made it half way – being the CPA for businesses. I started in public accounting and intended to return to law school, but realized how much I liked the accounting side.

A favorite book or movie:
Wonder, by R. J. Placio. I read it along with my daughter for her summer reading. Its message to look beyond appear-



Education: BBA, College of William and Mary; MT, Virginia Commonwealth University

ances and always include those who may differ from you does not just apply to middle school, but throughout life.

You didn’t know:
I am a dog lover. Yes, Birdie sleeps on the bed with us at night. And I have seen all but one of the seasons of Survivor. I want my husband to apply!

Lori Snyder Garrett, AIA

Glavé and Holmes Architecture
Richmond

While serving as co-owner of a large architectural firm, Garrett helped establish and lead Virginia Women in Design, a professional organization that gives a voice to those under-represented in a traditionally male-dominated field.

Looking back:

When I was in high school, I took a job working at a Dole cannery in Oregon, where we were paid minimum wage to stand alongside a conveyor belt and pick off the rotten berries as they came off the truck and down the belt. One day, I was called to report to a different part of the factory to help funnel green beans down large chutes. When I reported to the supervisor, he looked at me in surprise. Apparently, someone in the front office had misread my name and thought I was “Lou” Snyder. But the supervisor asked if I wanted to stay and thought I could do the work, and I said yes. I ended that summer with not only more money in my checking account, but also with back muscles that I didn’t have before. I appreciated that the supervisor gave me a chance to work in a job typically restricted to men.

An important mentor:

Other than my mother, the only signifi-

cant mentor I have had is my business partner, Randy Holmes. I am inspired daily by his integrity, passion, and never-ending pursuit of beauty in architecture.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has been instrumental in providing camaraderie and support at all stages of my career.

An influential leader:

Dr. Lee Snyder, who has authored several books and recently retired from serving as president of Bluffton College, has had a tremendous influence on my life. She grew up on a farm and was the first person to graduate from high school in her family. Interestingly, though she held several important positions, she never actually applied for a single job; rather, it was her exemplary work that resulted in promotions and being offered higher positions. Her influence on me is profound and served as a constant role model, because she is also my mother.

Best tip for balance:

When I had my first child, my sister introduced me to “once a month cooking,” which involves setting aside a Saturday every couple of months to cook 30 entrees that you freeze, then pull out for dinner. So this eliminates the frustration of “what to make for dinner” when I get home at night and am too tired to think.

You didn’t know:

I lived in Africa for part of my childhood



Education: BS, Messiah College; MArch, University of Virginia

took a trip to what was then Yugoslavia. The travel arrangements got misunderstood, and the entire class (including professors) ended up staying in a nudist resort.

when my parents were missionaries there. When I was doing a study-abroad program in graduate school, our class

Marcia Adams Gilliam

CSE Financial Services, Inc. of The Hilb Group of VA.
Abingdon

Gilliam is president of CSE Financial Services, Inc. - an independent insurance agency with offices in Abingdon and Wise. She has been chair of the board at her alma mater, the University of Virginia’s College at Wise.

Looking back:

I grew up on Craig Street in Norton, Va., with 45 other kids of our age. I received a Mr. Snow Cone for Christmas one year. I couldn’t wait for summer to arrive when I set up a stand and sold snow cones to all the kids and adults on the street, embarrassing my mom to death.

An important mentor:

I am the first person in my family to graduate from college. I lived at home while I worked full time at Dave’s Department Store, a local clothing store, in Norton. Margaret Tamer and Bob Isaac, my manager and owner of the store, were always so encouraging and supportive of my goal to graduate from college and make something of myself. I am a better person because of knowing and working for them.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

The Bristol Jaycees. I am greatly influenced by the creed we recited every time we were together. My favorite line is the last one...“and that service to humanity is the best work of life.”

An influential leader:

Margaret Thatcher is one of the most significant female role models of my lifetime. I admire her for her love of country and actions to promote and defend it.

Best advice:

“Don’t get above your raising” - my mother has told me often in life while she continues to encourage me to do whatever I put my mind, heart, and soul into.

Personal/professional achievement:

I became the first female, outside licensed insurance salesperson, in an independent insurance agency in Big Stone Gap in 1982 after graduating from college. After two successful years, I moved to Bristol to another agency to start their life, health, and employee benefits department. I later moved to my current agency and became the only female partner in an agency with seven other partners...all male. As a personal accomplishment, I was named the first female Chair of The University of Virginia’s College at Wise Board in July 2011.

Best tip for balance:

Pray for and seek a partner who will understand your mission and goals in life while surrounding yourself with co-workers who share your passion for common good.

A favorite get-away:

Hilton Head Island, S.C., makes me feel we are at home away from our home in the beautiful mountains of Southwest Virginia.



Education: BS, University of Virginia’s College at Wise

I wanted to be:

A doctor. However, I learned early on that I do not like blood which ruled that out.

A favorite book or movie:

Memoirs of a Geisha.

My first job:

I babysat and cleaned houses for some very nice elderly widowed women in my neighborhood.

Danielle D. Giroux

Harman, Claytor, Corrigan & Wellman, PC
Richmond

A champion debater who has coached college debate teams, Giroux is a civil litigator who represents a diverse clientele at trial and on appeal, and is a hands-on miracle worker who fosters dogs for her local humane society.

Looking back:

My father was in the Navy so we moved around, but I consider Virginia Beach my hometown. I tried acting when I was younger, but my on-stage performances were disasters. During one program, I passed out backstage from the hot lights and knocked over a dozen folded-up metal chairs. In a high school one-act play, the way I was sitting caused my entire leg to fall asleep right before my monologue.

An important mentor:

Stan Wellman, one of the founding partners at HCCW. When I was a younger lawyer, his door was always open, and he patiently answered my incessant questions. He leads by example as a successful trial attorney who practices with professionalism, civility and a sense of humor.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
Run exclusively by unpaid volunteers, the Henrico Humane Society rescues hundreds of dogs and cats each year, providing them with medical care and temporary foster homes until they are adopted. In volunteering for HHS, I’ve seen how

resilient dogs are. No matter how rough life can be, dogs have an amazing ability to bounce back and find happiness. Humans can learn a lot from dogs.

An influential leader:

As the first woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, Sandra Day O’Connor overcame challenges in a male-dominated profession.

Best advice:

No case is worth sacrificing your integrity. Be a zealous advocate, but always treat opposing counsel with respect and never compromise your high ethical standards.

Personal/professional achievement:

Personally – rehabilitating rescued dogs with special needs. I once fostered a dog with mange who was so starved when he was rescued he could barely stand. A few months later, he had transformed into a happy, healthy puppy and was adopted by a great couple. Professionally – making partner after my sixth year of practice.

Best tip for balance:

Find a profession that is also personally rewarding. When your work-life balance is out of whack, those times are much more tolerable when you enjoy your work.

A favorite get-away:

I rarely vacation in the same place twice. My ideal vacation offers a mix of relaxation and adventure, somewhere with sights that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

My first job:

I was a “Cast Member” at the Disney



Education: BA, James Madison University; JD, George Mason University

surprise.

A favorite book or movie:
The Princess Bride. It never gets old.

You didn’t know:
I took a Russian research vessel to Antarctica AND stayed at an ice hotel inside the Arctic Circle. I have fostered almost 100 dogs in five years.

Store. I learned the names of all seven dwarves and the lyrics to every Disney movie song.

I wanted to be:
A princess, a fashion designer and a graphic artist. Law school was a bit of a

Ellen M. Goitia

KPMG LLP
McLean

The only woman to hold this role in her firm’s 21 major markets, Goitia is the partner-in-charge of the commercial audit practice in the Virginia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C., market, and she has served on the board of a local hospice provider.

Looking back:

Flourtown, Pennsylvania. Growing up in a town called Flourtown is memorable enough!

An important mentor:

My Spanish teacher in high school, who pushed me to apply to colleges that seemed to be a stretch...that’s how I ended up at William and Mary.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
For many years I served on the board of what is now Capital Caring, the largest nonprofit hospice provider in Northern Virginia. My mother was able to pass away peacefully at home with the support of some wonderful visiting nurses and healthcare providers. My service was a tribute to her.

An influential leader:

I draw inspiration from all strong, independent women.

Best advice:

Once I was considering leaving KPMG to take a position with one of our clients. My boss at the time advised me to make sure I knew who my boss was. I did not end up leaving and it turned out the CEO I would have reported to had ethical challenges that ultimately lead to the company filing for bankruptcy.

Personal/professional achievement:

I’ll be married for 25 years this May. My husband, who is my best friend, and I have raised three wonderful daughters. I am blessed.

Best tip for balance:

Setting priorities and focusing on what is important.

A favorite get-away:

There are so many, I could spend more time in Paris and Italy.

My first job:

Babysitting, I learned kids can be tough!

I wanted to be:

A teacher.

A favorite book or movie:

Gone with the Wind, a great story of survival.

You didn’t know:

I was once caught in a rip tide and rescued by some surfers. Despite being a very average golfer, I eagled the same hole twice on a golf course. I’m still looking for the hole in one!



Education: BBA, College of William and Mary

Susan Greenbaum

Self-employed singer-songwriter
Richmond

Greenbaum, a one-time business exec, traded her power suit for a guitar to become one of Richmond’s best-known singer-songwriters. Among her volunteer activities, she has given her time and talents to support a program to help adults with disabilities.

An important mentor:
My senior English teacher in high school, Mr. Everett Rees, was a wonderful mentor who influenced not only my writing but also my confidence and creativity.

Most meaningful professional/ civic group:
I was involved with the Positive Vibe Café, a nonprofit restaurant and training facility for people with physical and cognitive disabilities, for almost 10 years. I performed monthly, for free, at the Café, spreading the word about the outstanding work that adults with disabilities could do in all aspects of food service, thanks to a great training program.

An influential leader:
I mention two women: Golda Meir, the former prime minister of Israel. Seeing an extremely strong, respected, brilliant, powerful, Jewish woman in a position of such great authority and importance, when I was at such an impressionable age, meant to me that having a woman

leading a country (or anything else) was totally normal. My more contemporary “woman of influence” is Lilly Ledbetter, who showed her persistence, resilience and strength through her legal battle with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. over equal pay for women.

Personal/professional achievement:
I had a very comfortable life in business, becoming a corporate vice president at a Fortune 500 company at 31. When my brother, Ron, died of a brain tumor at age 38, I knew I had to make the most of whatever time I had left, and I wanted to pay tribute to him by doing something meaningful with my life. I’d always wanted to be a singer-songwriter. I quit my job and dove into the world inhabited by self-employed musicians. I have made my living as a singer-songwriter for 12 years.

Best tip for balance:
Marry your drummer!

A favorite get-away:
Paris, or New York City, or the non-beach natural parts of the Outer Banks. Mountains are good, too!

My first job:
Salesperson at the jewelry counter of a large department store. Among other things, I learned the importance of being on time; the responsibility of dealing with other people’s money; the fun of helping someone choose a perfect gift; and the awesomeness that is the employee discount.

I wanted to be:
A singer and actress! And a doctor! At the same time!



Education: BA, Harvard University

A favorite book or movie:
My favorite book is *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I try to read it every two years.

You didn’t know:
I’m a pretty good self-taught cook (although everyone knows that I’m an excellent eater!). I have an unusually good color sense; I have good color memory and a sometimes annoying need to have colors match appropriately, in clothing and home décor and pretty much everything I see.

Prof. Susan Grover

William & Mary Law School
Williamsburg, VA

A law professor and 2013 recipient of William & Mary’s John Marshall Award, Grover is described by students and colleagues as a compassionate mentor with a clear love for and knowledge of the law.

Looking back:
I grew up in Ambler, Penn., right outside Philadelphia. I remember loving snow days. My brothers and I spent the entire day off shoveling walks to earn money.

An important mentor:
Spottswood W. Robinson III. Hollins College taught me how to write. Judge Robinson taught me how to edit meticulously.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
Serving as a volunteer and a member of the Board of Directors for Virginia’s Lawyers Helping Lawyers. I have worked with LHL for many years and believe deeply in its mission of serving the public and the legal profession by affording assistance to attorneys who are at risk of becoming impaired. The commitment of the attorneys and others who work with LHL is awe-inspiring, and those folks have helped to form my own understanding of public service.

An influential leader:
There are many. The one who comes most immediately to mind is Harriet Tubman.

Best advice:
Compassion for others is possible only if I have compassion for myself.

Personal/professional achievement:
My biggest accomplishment, both personal and professional, is to have remained always a work in progress—always growing.

Best tip for balance:
Yoga

A favorite get-away:
The Outer Banks

My first job:
My first job was waiting tables. I learned not to take it personally when people were rude.

I wanted to be:
A missionary/nurse, working in an orphanage in a developing nation

A favorite book or movie:
My favorite movie is *Slam*. It successfully combines the topics of race discrimination and art.

You didn’t know:
I once played a moll in a narrative film called *Silk City Express*. Before I decided to become a mother, I smoked cigarettes.



Education: AB, Hollins College; JD, Georgetown Law Center

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Mary Helen Hackney, M.D. FACP

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond

An associate professor of hematology-oncology who specializes in breast cancer treatment, Hackney is highly regarded for her compassionate approach to patient care and dedication to cancer education in both the classroom and the community.

Looking back:

I grew up in North Carolina. My mother was from southern Louisiana, the heart of Cajun country. Every summer, we packed up to go spend two weeks in Louisiana. It was always like traveling to a different world. The food was different, the language was different, the culture was far removed from N.C. My sister and I were fascinated.

An important mentor:

My foundations were built with the support of a close-knit family, a faith rooted in the church and a strong belief in education. I have been active in the Methodist church since I was young. I always believed that you should give of your time, your service and your talents. My parents set the example.

Best advice:

My father gave me some of the best advice as I was struggling with making career choices. He was fully supportive and as an educator knew that sometimes it took time to find the right path. He was concerned that the medical profession would be too demanding and not allow me time to enjoy the other aspects of life. When I did make the decision to attend medical school he was elated and probably the proudest father at graduation. I have been fortunate to find a position that allows me to connect two loves: medicine and teaching. I love taking care of patients but I equally love teaching others about cancer and cancer care. I inherited my love of teaching from him.

Best tip for balance:

Oncology can be a personal challenge since success is not always measured by survival. It can be very emotionally draining. I try to set aside one day each week-end free from work responsibilities. I also have learned from my mother to look for something aesthetically pleasing on a regular basis. This might be as simple as working in my garden or going to a concert. I have been cooking since I was 10 years old. Every weekend finds me at the local farmers market and then in my kitchen. It is my escape and my love.

I wanted to be:

I originally wanted to be the next Jacques Cousteau. I still love wildlife, marine sciences and environmental steward-



Education: BS, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; MS, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; MD, East Carolina University

You didn't know:

I would love to find more opportunities and to learn more ballroom and Latin dances. I also would like to do more fishing. You don't have to catch anything but to see and hear the water and the wildlife is extremely relaxing.

ship, but I also realized that scuba diving was not for me.

Marcia A. Invernizzi

University of Virginia, Curry School of Education
Charlottesville

An innovative educator specializing in reading education, Invernizzi is known nationally for her work in early literacy intervention. She is the founder of the widely used Book Buddies program, which provides individualized instruction for elementary schoolchildren.

Looking back:

I grew up in Old Northwood in Baltimore City. I had an outer body experience when I got my first pair of PF Flyers – I ran so fast I levitated.

An important mentor:

Professor Henderson, my advisor for my doctorate, made me believe I could walk on water – and levitate too! So I rose above it all and carried on.

Most meaningful professional/civic group

Book Buddies – A Community Volunteer Reading Tutorial for struggling readers in the first and second grades. There is nothing more rewarding than teaching a child how to read.

An influential leader:

Joan of Arc, because she carried on with

her vision despite persecution and accusations of insanity, and because she was such an unlikely heroine.

Best advice:

Done is better than perfect.

Personal/professional achievement:

Staying married for 38 years. Because the ultimate achievement is staying true to yourself while simultaneously sharing a life with another.

Best tip for balance:

Get up before dawn and do yoga.

A favorite get-away:

Lake Atitlán, in the highlands of Guatemala.

My first job:

Teaching 12th grade English in a Baltimore City high school at the age of 21. I learned that grit was more important than pedigree.

I wanted to be:

A forest ranger

A favorite book or movie:

A favorite book is *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*, because of her uncanny insight into human behavior and her sardonic sense of humor in dealing with the most sensitive issues of her time. A favorite movie is *Amélie*, the story of a painfully shy girl who nevertheless cleverly changed the lives of everyone around her for the better.



Education: BA, Washington College; ME, University of Virginia; PhD, University of Virginia

You didn't know:

I lived in a tent for two months when I first moved to Virginia, and I bicycled around every island in the Inner and Outer Hebrides and the Orkney Isles of Scotland.

Stacey Ann Kincaid

Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office
Fairfax

Kincaid topped a 26-year career with the Fairfax County Sheriff’s Department last year by being elected the first female sheriff in the county’s history. Among her goals is improving mental health services for inmates.

Looking back:
I was born in Silver Spring, Md., and moved to McLean just before high school. As a kid, I loved spending summers with my family at the Jersey shore. I jumped through the waves and collected sea shells.

An important mentor:
My mother was my mentor, my best friend, my inspiration. She told me I could do anything that I put my mind to. She was the first person to tell me that I could be the first female sheriff of Fairfax County.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
I’m on the governing board of the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. Our deputies are paired with 25-30 children who reside in homeless shelters, and we go shopping together for clothing and school supplies at a local Target. I love this program!

An influential leader:
Rosa Parks boarded a bus, took a stand and changed history in the process. She did something that was uncomfortable because she believed in the larger cause. As a woman in law enforcement, I can relate to that.

Best advice:
I’d like to think that Gandhi was speaking directly to me when he said, “You must be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

Personal/professional achievement:
I’m the first female sheriff in the 271-year history of Fairfax County. I hope I am a role model for young women who are interested in a career in public safety.

Best tip for balance:
This job as sheriff is new to me. Achieving balance is a work in progress.

A favorite get-away:
Maui

My first job:
My first job was babysitting. I learned that parents must have a whole lot more patience than I had as a 12-year-old.

I wanted to be:
I wanted to be an actress because it looked like fun.

A favorite book or movie:
I love *Of Mice and Men* because it is a story about underdogs – characters who are victims of prejudice because of physi-



Education: BS, Frostburg State University

cal shortcomings, their gender or mental health issues. It’s a story about friendship, making difficult choices and yearning for the American Dream. I can relate

to George trying to help the Lennies of the world find their place.

You didn’t know:
I like to make jewelry and donate it to groups that are fundraising for charitable causes. And I’d like to take all of the animals at the shelter home with me.

Rosemary Tran Lauer

Devotion To Children
Oakton

Lauer’s experience coming to the U.S. as a war refugee and a single mother, and developing a successful career in commercial real estate, led her to found a nonprofit group devoted to fostering early childhood education.

Looking back:
I grew up in Vietnam. After my birth, my grandmother read my star chart, which said my life would be very “complicated.” That may be why she seemed to favor me over my siblings. My grandmother was my first teacher, my supreme authority figure and disciplinarian. She taught me how to do times tables when I was just 3 years old, which was shocking because I was a girl. My grandmother wanted more for me – and expected more from me – than to be just another pretty object, ready and willing to serve a wealthy husband. She wanted me to shine from the inside out.

An important mentor:
In a way, I have many teachers, as I’m always fascinated with what I have learned from people around me.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
I founded Devotion To Children in 1994 with a mission to provide access to quality educational and childcare programs for children aged six and under from

economically disadvantaged families. Newborn to the age of 6 is the most crucial period in a child’s life, since that is the time when brain development is most rapid; quality childcare is a necessity. As a single mother, I worked multiple jobs but my biggest challenge was childcare. That’s why I am passionate about this mission and devote my life to this cause.

An influential leader:
Mother Teresa and her motto of helping one child at a time

Best advice:
If you have to do something, you might as well like it instead of resent it and become counterproductive, and don’t lie, and you don’t have to remember what you have said.

Personal/professional achievement:
My biggest personal accomplishment is writing my memoir *Beggars or Angels*, to share my life with people and to raise awareness about Devotion To Children’s mission.

Best tip for balance:
Live life to the fullest, love what you do and give back when you can.

A favorite get-away:
Rehoboth Beach in Delaware is where I can kick back and unwind.

My first job:
As a sales clerk, I learned that I like people and also like to talk – an asset in my commercial real estate career.



I wanted to be:
A nun, to serve God and others.

A favorite book or movie:
My favorite book is *The Bible*, which inspired my conversion from Buddhism to Christianity. My favorite movie is *Gone*

with the Wind. I admired Scarlett O’Hara’s strength.

You didn’t know:
I am very conservative by nature but liberal in my compassion; so by personal practice I am a Republican, and social practice I am a Democrat.

Donna M. Littlepage, CPA

Carilion Clinic
Roanoke

As CFO of Carilion Clinic, Littlepage played an integral role in the establishment of the New River Valley hospital, the Virginia Tech medical school and a permanent facility for the Roanoke Valley’s Adult Care Center.

Growing up:
I grew up in Mechanicsville. In seventh grade math class we did a problem to determine the cost per acre of the Louisiana Purchase. The teacher went through the answer and I pondered for a couple of minutes and then asserted he had not calculated it correctly. We ended looking it up in an encyclopedia. Guess I was meant to be a CPA because my answer was the correct one.

An important mentor:
I had an 11th grade teacher who showed the value of supporting others during difficult times. She set a wonderful example of that for me and I have tried to do the same for others.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
I was the Treasurer of the Board of the Adult Care Center of the Roanoke Valley while we discussed, planned and stressed about building our own building and merging two locations into one. It was going to be a stretch, but everyone agreed to work together and move for-

ward. Today they operate in a wonderful new site that five years later is already full and they are discussing where they can add new space.

An influential leader:
I would say Eleanor Roosevelt. She spoke very concisely and felt strongly that we should live by and always stand up for our principles. We should not ask others to do what we are not willing to do and we should always be looking for justice for both sides of the debate.

Best advice:
A colleague once said, “Do not worry about the box they try to put you in, you will always do more and never stay there.”

Personal/professional achievement:
I have an accounting degree and am a CPA. My biggest professional accomplishment was having responsibility for every non-clinical department at Radford Community Hospital including all support services and Human Resources. These were all areas well outside my comfort zone of accounting but a very exciting opportunity.

Best tip for balance:
Set your own boundaries, because many times the job will take everything you offer.

My first job:
Cashier at a fast food restaurant in high school. I learned I loved math and could balance a cash drawer to the penny. In my year of working there, only once did I transact a sale incorrectly and was a dime short. This was all before the cash regis-



Education: BS, Virginia Tech; MBA, Virginia Tech

ter would provide the amount due back to the customer.

A favorite book or movie:
Apollo 13 because it showed that against

all odds if everyone pulls together, amazing things can be accomplished.

You didn’t know:
I got a kiss from Richard Dawson while in the audience of a filming of an episode of *Family Feud* on my 17th birthday.

Linda C. Mathes

American Red Cross in the National Capital Region
Fairfax

Seeing Red Cross volunteers in action inspired Mathes as a child, and she has advanced through the ranks to lead a group of the largest American Red Cross chapters. Mathes is widely sought out for her expertise in emergency preparedness and nonprofit management.

Looking back:
Growing up in Memphis, Tennessee, I was exposed to the work of the American Red Cross as a kid in elementary school. Throughout my school years, I had terrific opportunities to be involved in the community in ways that supplemented my classroom education and shaped my lifetime passion for involving myself and others in community work.

An important mentor:
Early mentors included my first grade teacher and my junior high math teacher, who combined humor and rigor, and piano teachers who taught me the importance of practice and to feel the language of music. Presidents of the American Red Cross have demonstrated the essential ingredient of passion for the work and what it takes to move people to action, as well as the importance of tackling the tough issues head on.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
My involvement with the American Red

Cross has been the most meaningful to me. It stretches every part of me – intellectually, emotionally, and physically. The Red Cross has involved me in working with and knowing people of all kinds, from all walks of life. The people and the work are inspiring and demanding. I am grateful to have connected with the Red Cross in such a powerful way early in my life.

An influential leader:
Good heavens, look at what Clara Barton did! One of her quotes I just love is: “You must never so much think of whether you like it or not, whether it is bearable or not, you must never think of anything except the need and how to meet it.”

Best advice:
Stay close to your passion. Find work for which you have passion and stick to it.

Personal/professional achievement:
Having had the opportunity virtually all my life to support a network of people – volunteers and staff – who work every day and night to support other people when they most need it. In my personal and professional lives, being there for people when they most need it.

Best tip for balance:
Breathe. Breathe deeply. Cherish the moments. They are precious. Enjoy.

A favorite getaway:
Anywhere that allows me to put my toes in the water and in the sand.

My first job:
Teaching piano lessons. You’ve got to have passion for what you are doing, real skill and inspire students to practice, practice, practice!



Education: BA, Vanderbilt University; MPA, University of Southern California, Washington Public Affairs Center

I wanted to be:
I just wanted to do something that would make a positive difference in other people’s lives.

A favorite book or movie:
Man’s Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl.

You didn’t know:
I love to rollerblade. It’s frivolous, fun, freeing and refreshing. In my music, Dave Brubeck inspired me deeply.

Jennifer A. Minear

McCandlish Holton PC
Richmond

Minear is director of the immigration law practice at McCandlish Holton. She is a national leader in her field, serving on the board of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and heading its health care committee.

Looking back:
I was born in Baltimore and raised in the Maryland suburbs outside of D.C.

Best advice:
Never take anything personally. Not the bad things people say or think about you, and not the good things either. The only thing that matters is your own opinion of yourself. As long as you are living up to your own best image of yourself, nothing anyone else thinks matters.

Best tip for balance:
It's important to have very clearly demarcated boundaries between work and home. When I leave the office, I rarely check email or even think about work until I return to the office. It is the key to my sanity. That, and caffeine.

A favorite get-away:
Pretty much anywhere in Maine.

My first job:
My first “real” job after college was as a receptionist at an accounting firm. I learned – through negative example – how important it is to treat everyone with respect and dignity, even those whose work you might deem menial or “less than.” We all have our part to play, and we all play it better when we are supported and treated courteously.

I wanted to be:
I was a vocal performance major for a while in college and wanted to be a musician, or actor. Or both!

A favorite book or movie:
My favorite film is *It's A Wonderful Life*. I love its message of interconnection and the subtle ways in which we all impact one another's lives.

You didn't know:
I can swim to save my life, but do not enjoy it. I do at least nine loads of laundry each week for my family of five.



Education: BA, University of Maryland (College Park); JD, Cornell Law School

Sidoux M. Mitchell

Alexandria Bar Association
Alexandria

Mitchell's administrative talents and tireless efforts have revitalized the Alexandria Bar Association's outreach and lawyer referral services, a focus that has been inspired by her years of service in her community's homeless shelter programs.

Looking back:
I grew up all over the place as my father was in the Army until I was 19 years old. I have lived in Puerto Rico, France, Spain, and six different states for over a year and sometimes four years in each place.

An important mentor:
From Sharon Kelso, of United Community Ministries, where I was a board member for six years, I learned the job of being an executive director for a nonprofit and how to tell a board the hard truth. From fellow bar executives Yvonne McGee and Alissa Hudson, I learned how to run a bar association.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
New Hope Housing is a nonprofit working to help with housing issues on the Route 1 Corridor in Fairfax County where I live. I have volunteered with them for 30 or so years and I have seen how homelessness beats people down. The residents have taught me much about life, luck, and optimism, and shown me the need for housing and better health and mental health programs for those in poverty.

An influential leader:
Eleanor Roosevelt

Best advice:
All of life is ad-libbed.

Personal/professional achievement:
Biggest personal accomplishment is not harassing my daughters to have babies but they did, thanks be. Professionally, it is a toss-up, being a decent journalist/photographer and being the executive director for the Alexandria Bar Association. I learned so much about people, their problems and joys, and that may own life has been extraordinarily lucky.

Best tip for balance:
Work at the office as late as it takes to get the job done but don't bring the work home.

A favorite get-away:
Wherever my husband is.

My first job:
Yale University Library in the Southeast Asia section. I learned not to let students take books without signing a blood oath to give me their firstborn; otherwise, I never saw the book again. But I also learned to be meticulous in details and to research and catalog.

I wanted to be:
An epidemiologist, because it combined science and mystery.

A favorite book or movie:
Souder from the 1970s had the most profound effect on me. I had experienced the hideousness of segregation hidden behind the polite society of the southern United States. The movie is set



Education: BA, Mary Washington

in the 1940s and, as my embarrassed husband escorted his sobbing wife from the theater, I could not make him understand that the film was portraying the

truth about my family's home – Louisiana – and that little had changed in the last 30 years.

You didn't know:
In college I was a Young Republican and a photographer/artist's model. Now, I am not young, Republican, or photogenic.

Dr. Linda Apple Monson

George Mason University, College of Visual and Performing Arts, Fairfax

Dr. Monson is an International Steinway Artist and has been honored as a Distinguished Service Professor at George Mason University where she is associate director of the school of music.

Looking back:
I begged my parents for a piano for several years. Finally, for my sixth birthday, I was given a most precious and wonderful gift – an upright piano. That is the birthday gift that I shall always remember and cherish.

An important mentor:
Julio Esteban, my piano professor at Peabody Conservatory, believed in me and my abilities, even when I did not believe in myself.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
It has been my wonderful joy and privilege to serve as Director of Music at Springfield United Methodist Church SUMC for 26 years.

An influential leader:
I served as a graduate teaching assistant to Judith Lang Zaimont during my Peabody Conservatory years. She was brilliant and insightful, with a deep understanding of and passion for the subject matter. She was fair in her dealings with students, super-organized, firm, yet

nurturing.

Best advice:
“Don’t be selfish! The concert is not about you, it is about the music. Focus solely on the music, not on yourself. You are simply the vehicle to make the music come alive.” Quote from Julio Esteban to me before my first freshman solo recital.

Professional achievement:
Opportunity to lead a wonderful school of music at George Mason University – I have been given the opportunity to really make a difference in the lives of students, faculty, staff, curriculum, and programming.

Best tip for balance:
Marry someone who respects, supports, and takes delight in your career. Having a common set of core values and sharing similar interests are key ingredients for a successful partnership.

A favorite get-away:
For many years our family enjoyed a special “cabin in the woods” in the Shenandoah Mountains where we had fun hiking, canoeing, and enjoying the great outdoors.

My first job:
Peabody “Prep” where I gained experience teaching music to all ages and all levels.

I wanted to be:
A musician – a performer and a teacher. It was my lifelong dream.



Education: DMA, M Mus, B Mus, Peabody Conservatory of Music of the Johns Hopkins University

A favorite book or movie:
I Dare You by William Danforth (given to me on my high school graduation) presents a series of challenges which have inspired and guided me, and *The Bible*, a guidebook for life.

You didn’t know:
I was super-active in 4-H when I was growing up and became a state 4-H officer in high school. I played accordion when I was growing up. The accordion provided a vehicle for me to perform throughout the state of Pennsylvania at numerous functions.

Deborah D. Oswalt

Virginia Health Care Foundation
Richmond

After working as a poverty lawyer and in government, Oswalt since 1993 has been executive director of the Virginia Health Care Foundation, a group helping to provide health care services to uninsured Virginians and underserved areas.

Looking back:
I grew up in Altoona, Pa. I spent many days hiking and playing in the woods near my house on beautiful spring days.

An important mentor:
Jane Kusiak, who taught me that few things are black and white, and that much of life is lived in the gray.

Most meaning professional/civic group:
Starting and nurturing the Central Virginia Foodbank and the Virginia Health Care Foundation. Both have helped tens of thousands of Virginians with essential elements of life (food and health care) when they needed it.

An influential leader:
Eva Teig Hardy

Best advice:
Change is inevitable (except from vending machines).

Personal/professional achievement:
Being able to forge a career path that has made a difference in people’s lives.

Best tip for balance:
Balance and passion haven’t been synchronous for me.

A favorite get-away:
Martha’s Vineyard

My first job:
My first job coincided with my first flight. When I was 13, I dressed as the Easter Bunny and was flown by helicopter to a big shopping center where I landed on a roof amidst a huge crowd and a band playing “Here Comes Peter Cottontail.” I had to smile and wave as I disembarked and climbed down a ladder to the top of a fire truck which drove me around the shopping center parking lot. I learned that the best way to overcome the fright of new experiences is to jump right in and push through the fear.

I wanted to be:
When I was in first grade, I wanted to be the school traffic guard who directed the cars and protected the kids at our school.

A favorite book or movie:
Just about anything with a happy ending.

You didn’t know:
That my first job was as the Easter Bunny, and that I was a Latin teacher for two years.



Education: BA, Franklin & Marshall College; JD, Rutgers University

Wendy C. Perdue

University of Richmond School of Law
Richmond

A leader in legal education, Perdue served as Associate Dean and professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center before becoming Dean of the University of Richmond law school in 2011.

Looking back:

My father was in the Navy and we moved frequently. We lived in a Japanese village with the largest yard in the neighborhood. I have memories of the neighborhood kids coming to our yard to play baseball.

An important mentor:

As a new administrator, I had an assistant who actually taught me the job. More importantly, she showed me that it was possible to be kind and compassionate while still being firm and that hard decisions are less hard if you return to core values.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

I served for nine years as a member of the Montgomery County, Md., Planning Board. The board was responsible for land use planning, development review, and parkland protection for a large suburban county. It is a unique civic role – changing the world one sidewalk at a time.

An influential leader:

Judy Areen, now executive director of the Association of American Law Schools, who served for 15 years as Dean of Georgetown University Law Center. She was one of the longest serving and most successful women law deans ever.

Best advice:

From my father: “If you are not having fun, you are not doing it right.”

Personal/professional achievement:

My husband and I raised two happy and successful sons, both of whom have genuinely progressive attitudes on matters of gender equality.

Best tip for balance:

Marry the right person.

A favorite get-away:

Any place my family will come along. In January, we took a marvelous trip to Iceland – spectacular!

My first job:

I was a counselor in a camp in which there was a lot of tension between the owners and the counselors. I learned a fair amount about negotiating – including that silence can sometimes be way more intimidating than words.

I wanted to be:

I have no clear memory of a particular career goal. That may be the consequence of lots of moving and coming of age before the women’s movement had taken hold.



Education: BA, Wellesley College; JD, Duke University

A favorite book or movie:

Team of Rivals. I love the portrayal of Lincoln’s exceptional leadership.

You didn’t know:

In college I sold Kirby vacuum cleaners

door to door. As part of a fundraiser for The Shakespeare Theatre Company, I argued my only case (well, pretend case) in the U.S. Supreme Court. The issue was who wrote Hamlet, and I represented the Earl of Oxford. Justice Stevens presided, Justice Ginsburg was on the “jury,” and we got a hung jury – which I considered a victory.

Antigone Gabriella Peyton

Cloudigy Law PLLC
McLean

Patent lawyer, innovator and entrepreneur, Peyton provides intellectual property training, mentorship and legal services to young inventors, and pro bono services to tech start-ups, artists and criminal defense lawyers.

Looking back:

I grew up in Springfield. One summer evening, when I was little, a bunny rabbit living in our backyard gave birth and left her hairless babies on our house steps. We fed and raised the babies until they were ready to be released into the wild. This special event ignited my passion to learn about nature and biology.

An important mentor:

A colleague at my prior law firm taught me to take the “long view” and the importance of understanding human motivations when analyzing legal and business risks. with our clients.

Most meaningful professional/civic activity:

I spent the last six years working on a pro bono criminal case for a client who was convicted of a serious crime in 1976, based on evidence developed with a bullet lead analysis test. That evidence was based on faulty science and the FBI has abandoned this forensic testing program. After over 35 hearings, a trial court said my client’s conviction should be overturned because the government failed to turn over reports critical of this forensic test. It’s gratifying to use my chemistry and biophysics background to affect a

family’s lives, right a wrong, and make an impact in the criminal justice system.

An influential leader:

I have been inspired by Mala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl who defied the Taliban and has become an internationally-known advocate for young women’s education. She has motivated me to focus on local student mentorship and support of STEM programs.

Best advice:

Don’t try to change your personality or focus to fit society’s view of a successful leader.

Personal/professional achievement:

Making the decision to become an entrepreneur and build a new law practice from the ground up. My goal when starting Cloudigy Law was to throw out the entire traditional law firm service model and figure out what practices really make sense when focusing on client needs.

Best tip for balance:

Rather than try to formally separate work from home, it is easier if we are passionate about our vocation and can find ways to prioritize. Flexibility is key.

A favorite get-away:

Bellagio, on Lake Como in Northern Italy.

My first job:

During a stint at a local park, I rented boats to visitors for floating on the lake. I learned a lot about communication skills and customer service.

I wanted to be:

A science teacher, like my mother, or a university professor.



Education: BS, College of William and Mary; JD, George Mason University; MBE, University of Pennsylvania

A favorite book or movie:

Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. The book’s political and societal sub-themes are still relevant today.

You didn’t know:

My husband and I use my Vespa to putter around Arlington or head into the city to visit a museum or a restaurant. When we’re not out on the bike, you can find me in the garden watching our heirloom tomato plants grow.

Jan L. Proctor

City Attorney
Chesapeake

Recognized by her peers as an outstanding local government lawyer, Proctor is sought out for her expertise in tax and land use matters, and she has worked with the Chesapeake Arboretum, organizing fundraisers and support from local groups.

Looking back:

I grew up in Virginia Beach. My mother raised five children on her own. Some of my happiest memories were going out as a family on Mom’s “pay days” to McDonalds or High’s Ice Cream. I learned to draw upon the strength of my family and to appreciate my mother’s example of hard work and strength of character.

An important mentor:

The traits I admire most in a person are integrity, perseverance and goodness. Lucy Varker, Esquire, embodies these traits. I first met Ms. Varker when I interviewed for a position with the Chesapeake City Attorney’s Office. Originally a legal secretary, she worked her way up attending college, reading the law and passing the bar on her first try, while working full time and caring for her family. She rose up the ranks as an attorney in the Chesapeake City Attorney’s Office until her recent retirement. I will always hold her in the highest esteem for all she accomplished and for her selfless dedication to public service.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

The Local Government Attorneys of Virginia, Inc., which has given me the opportunity to network with and learn from other local government attorneys. The beauty of the LGA is that local government attorneys are not in competition with each other but are instead united in a common cause to provide the best legal services available to local governing bodies.

An influential leader:

I am inspired by Shirley Chisholm, who was devoted to protecting and advancing civil rights and promoting women’s educational opportunities.

Best advice:

My mother told me to get an education, no matter what. She was absolutely right. Nothing could have served me better.

Personal/professional achievement:

My biggest professional accomplishment was my recent appointment as City Attorney for the City of Chesapeake. It is quite humbling to be selected as the chief legal advisor for such a well-governed and highly respected municipality.

Best tip for balance:

Save time for yourself, sleep well and laugh whenever circumstances permit.

A favorite get-away:

Belize, a beautiful little country with a big heart.

My first job:

As a 15-year-old working at a drive-in movie snack bar, I learned that no matter how menial the work, there is always a sense of accomplishment from doing the



Education: BA, James Madison University; JD, George Mason University

job right.

I wanted to be:

I wanted to be a writer but my early forays into fiction led me to stick to academics.

A favorite book or movie:

My favorite book is *Housekeeping*, by Marilyn Robinson, a wonderful novel that speaks to the beauty and uniqueness of every soul.

You didn’t know:

I love professional baseball and once had the chance to sing Happy Birthday to Willie Mays, along with several thousand other fans. I love animals and once spent two happy weeks hanging out with jaguars, ocelots and margays.

Linda D. Rabbitt

rand* construction corporation
Washington

Rabbitt is a pioneer for women in the construction industry. Since founding her company in Arlington in 1989, she has overseen all aspects of the business including client services, business planning, and operational procedures.

Looking back:

I grew up in Grosse Pointe and Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

An important mentor:

Steve Harlan, the area managing partner of KPMG in the 1980s. He taught me the language, the art and the science of business. He said there were only two types of people: clients and potential clients! He taught me about leadership – what it really means to inspire people, what it really means to “do the right thing” and “take the high road.”

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

I am the only person to have been both chair of the Greater Washington Board of Trade (est. 1889) and the Federal City Council (est. 1954), two civic groups whose goals are to make our area a better place to live and work.

Influential leaders:

Cleopatra – She understood and could manipulate power; Golda Meir – She

stood up for her values; Margaret Thatcher – She knew how to work the system; Jacqueline Kennedy – She was elegant and charming.

Best advice:

“Take the high road. It’s lonely, but you won’t have many regrets in business or in life.”

Personal/professional achievement:

My two beautiful, smart, nice, talented daughters.

Best tip for balance:

Be realistic with your expectations. You can be a great professional and a great wife, mom, friend, neighbor. But then – that’s it. No golf, no reading novels, no totally “me” days.

A favorite get-away:

I don’t have one. I like to see and experience new things each vacation.

My first job:

My first job was at an engineering company. I was a summer intern – 16 years old. I learned to use my common sense and self-confidence when someone told me to do something I knew was wrong.

I wanted to be:

A business executive like my dad, but I was “told” I wanted to be a school teacher.

A favorite book or movie:

The Godfather – It’s all about human nature.



Education: BA, University of Michigan; MA, George Washington University

You didn’t know:

I jumped out of an airplane (a static line

jump) from 3,000 feet when I was 25 years old, and I applied to be the first woman FBI agent at about the time every applicant had to be 5’10”, and at 5’4” I was disqualified. I had all the credentials but just not the height!

Megan Conway Rahman

Troutman Sanders LLP
Richmond

As a partner in a large international law firm, Rahman represents numerous corporations facing complex regulatory, criminal and civil investigations. Outside of her practice, she serves on the YWCA’s board of directors.

Looking back:

I grew up in Maplewood, N.J., which is a small, very pretty town not far from the busy streets of Manhattan. My favorite memories from childhood include taking the train into New York City every Christmas season to visit Santa Claus at Macy’s and see the tree at Rockefeller Center. These memories became all the more special when my husband proposed to me on Christmas Eve in front of the tree at Rockefeller Center!

An important mentor:

I spent my first year after graduating law school clerking for the Honorable James R. Spencer. That year with Judge Spencer was my first real exposure to the practice of law. He set an example both on and off the bench that I still strive to meet every day.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

My position on the Board of Directors of the YWCA. Being a part of an organization that offers housing for safety and

recovery and provides programs and services that, among other things, promote financial and emotional self-sufficiency and quality pre-school education is a privilege.

An influential leader:

I have been truly influenced in different and important ways by the females in my family, whom I admire on a daily basis, including my two sisters. Most importantly, watching my mother skillfully balance her career with her family, while at the same time always keeping her sense of humor, has had the most lasting and profound influence on me.

Personal/professional achievement:

Without a doubt my two children, Keaton and Hartley. Having two bright, funny, kind and thoughtful kids running around the house (most days) is a real joy.

Best tip for balance:

I’m not really sure that there ever is any balance, but when I’m at work, I try to concentrate on being a lawyer, and when I am at home and with my kids, I try to give them 100 percent of my undivided attention.

My first job:

As a sophomore in high school, I was a receptionist two nights a week for a physical therapist’s office. I learned to be patient, especially when the physical therapists were running behind and the patients were getting impatient, organized, since I had to keep the schedule, and that I did not want to be a physical therapist.



Education: BA, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; JD, University of Richmond

A favorite book or movie:

I love so many books for so many different reasons. Having to choose, I would pick *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, by Shel Silverstein, for all the giggles it gave and

continues to give my children.

You didn’t know:

I have never had any cavities and I have an unnecessary wealth of knowledge about celebrity gossip.

Gwenn Rosener

FlexProfessionals LLC
McLean

With a background in business and engineering, Rosener co-founded FlexProfessionals, an innovative company that helps stay-at-home parents and retirees make the transition to part-time and flexible professional careers.

Looking back:

My father was in the U.S. Army and we moved 10 times before I entered high school. My childhood memories are rich with vivid backdrops. Military life taught me how to meet people, to read and appreciate their uniqueness and to know myself.

An important mentor:

I remember the lessons of Bruce Myers, one of the first partners for whom I worked at Ernst & Young’s management consulting practice. He believed in me more than I believed in myself and he pushed me beyond what I thought I was capable of.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

I was part of the YWCA of the Harbor Area & South Bay in California for five years serving as board president and fundraising chair. I believe that women are the glue and the safety net in our society putting kids and community first. The YWCA is in turn their safety net, supporting them when times are difficult

and helping them to stay healthy, care for their children and build a stronger next generation of girls and women.

An influential leader:

Women such as Katherine Graham, Diane Rehm, Dianne Feinstein, Brenda Barnes, Michelle Obama have made family a priority in the middle of their careers, but have come roaring back to make their mark in the workforce. One of our missions at FlexProfessionals is to enable a “transition” track, allowing professionals the option to work part-time as they scale back their careers for family or restart their careers for themselves.

Personal/professional achievement:

Building FlexProfessionals with my two business partners is the professional accomplishment of which I am most proud. We have created from scratch a service that is needed and valued by both our business clients and our candidates and it is having an impact on how this area does business.

A favorite get-away:

Our favorite family vacation is not a single spot, but instead traveling to new places, especially Europe. We shed our electronics, leave behind the fragmented craziness of daily life and tackle the challenges of learning and living in another country as a family unit.

My first job:

My first job out of college was as an engineer for General Electric. What I came to appreciate in my five years with GE was the power of a well-honed corporate culture.



Education: BS, Virginia Tech; MS, Virginia Tech; MBA, Harvard Business School

A favorite book or movie:

I am not a big movie fan, but I love musicals, so much so that I can’t drag my hus-

band to see *Wicked*, *Rent* or *Phantom* one more time.

You didn’t know:

I played the piano for 15 years growing up and contemplated majoring in music. I ran the Boston marathon (never again!)

Susan M. Rotkis

Consumer Litigation Associates, PC
Newport News

Rotkis is a lawyer who fights for consumers’ rights against mortgage companies, banks, consumer reporting agencies and debt collectors, primarily in federal court. She serves on the board of the American Red Cross, Hampton Roads chapter.

An important mentor:

When I was growing up, all of my friends’ mothers were working mothers. To me – it was not at all unusual in my community for women to be working. My working-mother mentors had no syllabus or curriculum – they just raised their families the best way they knew how and did what they had to make ends meet.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

I have been a Red Crosser since age 15 when I took my first life-saving course, and it’s been blood donations, CPR, disaster preparedness and fundraising ever since.

An influential leader:

Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross. I truly feel that I personally stand on her shoulders as a woman. She was a woman pioneer as a nurse, a teacher, suffragette, advocate for the voiceless and a humanitarian who devoted her whole entire life to the lives of people affected by war and disasters

with total neutrality and impartiality.

Best advice:

“Don’t even think about getting married until you’re at least 30.” - Bonnie Cegles

Personal/professional achievement:

Passing the bar exam. I had put myself through undergrad and law school, I had done everything that I could think of to prepare, but to me it was still a test that stood between me and my chosen profession.

Best tip for balance:

No TV, no computers, no cell phones, nothing electronic when you’re with your family. And when you’re not at work, you’re with your family. I don’t do this perfectly, but I try and I am happier for it when I am successful.

A favorite get-away:

Ireland.

My first job:

My first full-time job where I supported myself entirely was as an event coordinator at the Arizona State University Athletic Department. I worked hard at that job for over five years. I learned about human management, because I hired, trained, scheduled, and supervised over 200 student workers. I also learned that if you’re going to work 60-80 hours a week, including every weekend and every holiday, you should go to law school instead of working in an athletic department, so you can get paid. I also learned never to talk to journalists.

I wanted to be:

A journalist.



Education: BA, Arizona State University; JD, Georgetown University

A favorite book or movie:

The Magician’s Nephew, by C.S. Lewis, one of the books in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series; my brother and I read the entire series while we were sick with flu.

You didn’t know:

When I was in high school, I wrote a weekly column for the *Catholic Times*, the Diocese of Columbus (Ohio) weekly newspaper, and I used to be a Republican.

Sandra L. Smith CELA

Oast & Taylor PLC
Portsmouth

A leader in elder law practice in Virginia and a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force recognized for her service during Operation Desert Storm, Smith’s work includes handling claims for veterans’ benefits.

Looking back:

I grew up the oldest of four children in a suburb of Rochester, N.Y.

An important mentor:

The late Patricia Malone, who worked at Delta Airlines. Pat always provided friendship, support, good advice and guidance.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

My activities with Commonwealth Community Trust have been very meaningful. CCT is a non-profit organization that manages a pooled trust for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

An influential leader:

Norfolk attorney Anita O. Poston – I am on Anita’s team for grading Virginia bar exams twice a year, and I have always been impressed with her professionalism, sense of humor, and ability to balance her professional, community, and personal lives.

Personal/professional achievement:

I was awarded the Bronze Star for meri-

torious service during Operation Desert Storm and, in the same year, was named the Outstanding Field Grade Aircraft Maintenance Officer in the Air Force. I was certified as an elder law attorney by the National Elder Law Foundation, the culmination of legal education, client service and a rigorous examination.

Best tip for balance:

When my legal assistant passed away unexpectedly, I learned to not just work all of the time while saving other activities for retirement. First, you may not live long enough to retire, and second, you may not be in good enough health to do the things you put off.

A favorite get-away:

Our family gets together each July 4th weekend in Fairport, N.Y., and I spend many days off traveling with friends to concerts.

My first job:

My first job was as a cashier during my senior year in high school. I learned how to provide good customer service, manage my time, and to save money for the future.

I wanted to be:

An astronaut. I was in the Air Force for 20 years and pursued a different path, but had a fulfilling first career. Law is my second career, and I have enjoyed my years as an attorney, particularly in elder law.

A favorite book or movie:

“An Affair to Remember.” We saw the movie during my freshman year in high



Education: BS, Purdue University; MAM, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; JD, College of William & Mary

school, and it has remained my favorite all of these years.

You didn’t know:

My favorite artist is Adam Lambert. I have traveled to his concerts all over the country, as well as to the United Kingdom. I earned my private pilot’s certificate while I was in college.

Robin Robertson Starr

Richmond SPCA
Richmond

Starr, a lawyer who left practice to become the CEO of the Richmond SPCA, has been a vigorous, vocal and successful advocate for animal welfare, throughout the community and state and before the General Assembly.

Looking back:

I grew up in Portsmouth. My grandfather was the president of Southern Dairies. One of my fondest memories is of walking through the plant with my grandfather and being allowed to catch a small cup of ice cream right out of one of the machines that were dispensing it into containers for sale.

An important mentor:

Rich Avanzino, the president of the San Francisco SPCA. Rich was the no-kill movement founder and visionary who first conceived that a community and a nation could put in place the right programs, services, operating model and moral leadership that would end the unethical use of killing as our response to our homeless animal numbers.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

The Richmond SPCA, of course. Steve Jobs said, “Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.”

An influential leader:

Anne-Marie Slaughter, professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton.

Best advice:

From Winston Churchill’s speech at Harrow School in 1941: “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty.” I have done my best at the Richmond SPCA to live by those words because I believe that to achieve progress we must be relentless.

Personal/professional achievement:

My biggest personal accomplishment is raising, with my husband Ed, our wonderful and remarkable daughter Tyler, who is now a sophomore at Princeton. My biggest professional accomplishment was my work to transition the Richmond SPCA to being a no-kill humane society and a leader of the no-kill movement in the United States.

Best tip for balance:

In 1997, I left the practice of law to go do the work of my heart and my soul. Once you begin to do something that you love and that is deeply meaningful to you, there is no longer any dividing line between your professional life and your personal life.

A favorite get-away:

London.

My first job:

My first job was a summer job during my college years selling clothes at Miller and Rhoads. I hated every minute of it. It taught me the enormous importance of a good education to your prospects for a fulfilling life.



Education: BS, Wake Forest University; JD, University of Richmond

Matthew Scully. It is the most powerful book I have ever read and is my touchstone in my work.

I wanted to be:
A professional ballet dancer.

You didn’t know:
I am a true Anglophile, and my favorite foods are ice cream and bagels.

A favorite book or movie:
Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals and the Call to Mercy, by

Marie E. Washington

Law Office of Marie Washington, PLC
Warrenton

Building on her strong roots in Fauquier County, Washington has flourished in her one-woman law practice and has been widely recognized for her pro bono work and work with local school programs.

Looking back:

I live in Fauquier County, where I also grew up. I traveled around the U.S. for basketball tournaments with my family. I played point guard in the Amateur Athletic Union Girls Basketball Program from 1986 to 1996. I really enjoyed getting to know the other girls in the program, the competition, visiting various states, and the road trip adventures with my parents.

An important mentor:

Eileen Burgwyn, my 11th grade English teacher, encouraged me to reach my full potential. It was the first time I set my focus beyond high school graduation and began to create a plan to succeed. She still inquires about my career and overall well-being, for which I am truly grateful.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:

Participating in mentoring programs at local schools allows me to encourage and support students to achieve their goals. I agree with the saying it is easier to build up a child then to repair an adult.

An influential leader:

I always admired attorney Betty A. Thompson and strive to match her work

ethic and dedication to serving the community. She was able to open up networking groups such as the VTLA and local bar associations to women, and she was an effective advocate for legislative changes.

Best advice:

Believe in the power of prayer.

Personal/professional achievement:

Having the courage to start my own law practice. I was terrified even though I always wanted to work for myself. I did a lot of praying especially with starting my practice during a time when the economy was still dusting itself off from the recent recession.

Best tip for balance:

You need to have boundaries. My passion is being an attorney but I also know the importance of taking time out to recharge. I make time in my schedule for working out or attending a spa to reduce stress or treat myself for a job well done or getting through a hectic week.

A favorite get-away:

I love to travel internationally, especially to a beach.

My first job:

Working at the Fauquier County SPCA Animal Shelter, I learned that I love animals a little too much to work in the field.

I wanted to be:

An FBI agent or an attorney. I was accepted to the FBI academy following law school but decided to pursue a career as a defense attorney. I am so glad I did!



Education: BA, College of William and Mary; JD, Washington and Lee University

You didn’t know:
I love dogs especially the Great Pyrenees breed. I have a 5-year old male named Cody that I take to my office. His calm temperament helps to ease the stress of clients dealing with difficult legal matters. I also love to run and have run local races and marathons.

A favorite book or movie:
The Bible. It is life’s instruction manual.

Deborah C. Waters

Waters Law Firm
Norfolk

A nationally recognized maritime law specialist and proctor in admiralty, Waters was one of seven lawyers in the country – and the only woman – chosen to serve on the BP oil spill litigation committee.

Looking back:
My family lived in Chesapeake, and I grew up next door to my grandparents. My family gatherings frequently included non-family members of the military. My grandfather would sometimes drive his farm panel truck to the Navy base and fill it beyond capacity with young sailors who had no family nearby. One Sunday when I was about seven, an army helicopter was forced to land in one of Granddad’s fields. Sure enough, the crewmembers were invited to dinner.

An important mentor:
Edward L. Brown, one of the vice presidents of the International Longshoremen’s Association, was a tremendous influence on the negotiating technique I use today when I represent labor unions.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
American Inns of Court. I have been a member since my last year of law school and have tremendous respect for the or-

ganization.

An influential leader:
I am especially fond of two. The first is Margaret Sanger. Although I do not agree with all of her political stances, she was a nurse who campaigned for women’s right to information about birth control. The second is Julia Child. She revolutionized the way I view food and cook it; she gave me permission to have fun with it.

Professional achievement:
I am very proud of my appointment to the Maritime Law Committee for the BP Oil Spill litigation in New Orleans. There are only seven of us nationally who were asked to advise all claimants on maritime law issues and I am the only female member. The second accomplishment is a federal Title IX gender discrimination case I handled with attorney Kristen Galles. The case made a difference for thousands of young women.

A favorite get-away:
I am totally at home in London and love its layers and layers of history. The city has amazing ethnic restaurants so a great meal is never far away.

My first job:
My first job was working as a pharmacist assistant in Portsmouth. I dearly loved the owner and pharmacist, Jerry Goldman, but I figured out I did not want to own my own business so I walked a different path. Look at me now. I own my own business. Sometimes you go where life takes you; sometimes you give it a lit-



Education: BS, Old Dominion University; JD, College of William & Mary

tle nudge. And sometimes you figure out you didn’t know what the heck you were talking about when you were 17.

You didn’t know:
I love the sciences, especially microbiology. Nothing thrills me more than looking through a microscope, except, I love to cook. Cooking is art and chemistry all rolled into one and you get to drink wine in the process.

Amy McDaniel Williams

Hunton & Williams LLP
Richmond

A securities lawyer who took up athletic training later in life, Williams has overcome her “picked last for the team” childhood to become a determined competitor, running, biking and swimming to raise money to fight cancer.

Looking back:
I loved school and was an A student. When I was in second grade, though, I received a report card. Next to “talks unnecessarily,” the teacher had written in the word “sometimes.” I said, “Mom, the teacher thinks I talk unnecessarily sometimes!” Without skipping a beat, Mom said, “It’s good to talk unnecessarily sometimes.” I love Mom!

An important mentor:
Randy Totten was my supervising partner when I started practicing law at Hunton & Williams. He mentored me throughout my early career.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
Ten years ago, my father was diagnosed with cancer, and I received a flyer suggesting I complete a triathlon and raise funds to cure blood cancer at the same time. A triathlon – that’s swimming, biking and running. It seemed crazy, but I did it for Dad. Since then, I’ve raised more than \$30,000 and I’ve competed in numerous running races, as well as a 100

mile century bike ride and dozens of triathlons. As a result, The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society awarded me its “Triple Crown” award, for completing a marathon, century ride and triathlon while raising money for the Society. I lost my dad last year, but he had the opportunity to see how much I had accomplished. I miss him!

An influential leader:
Margaret Thatcher. She was a fearless leader.

Best advice:
Better to make a decision and chance that you are wrong than to wallow in indecision.

Personal/professional achievement:
I was always the last girl picked for a team in gym class, and I led a completely sedentary lifestyle until I was in my 40s. Since then, I have become an athlete. I am not fast, but I am determined.

A favorite get-away:
America’s fabulous National Parks. My husband and I love to hike.

My first job:
My first job was at Burger King. I recall hard work, greasy floors, and low wages. And then I was shocked to learn that taxes took most of the earnings away!

I wanted to be:
Nancy Drew. She was so smart and accomplished. Plus she had that sweet car and that dreamy boyfriend.



Education: BA, Duke University; JD, Cornell University

A favorite movie:
The Princess Bride. As Grandpa tells the young man at the start, it has everything:

“Fencing. Fighting. Torture. Revenge. Giants. Monsters. Chases. Escapes. True Love. Miracles.” As you wish!

You didn’t know:
I would tell you, but then I’d have to kill you.

Lt. Gen. Frances C. Wilson

United State Marine Corps (Retired)
Virginia Beach

Wilson is a Marine who retired after nearly 37 years of service with the rank of lieutenant general. She is an educator who was the first Marine to be president of the National Defense University.

Looking back:
As an Air Force dependent, I was born at Mitchell Air Force Base, Long Island, New York. In 1955, my family moved to Arlington, where my father eventually retired after completing his 30-year career.

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
I serve as the chair of the board of the USO of Hampton Roads and Central Virginia. This organization is a great group of mostly volunteers who are eager to give back to our service women and men. Additionally, I am a member of Defense Advisory Committee of Women in the Service.

An influential leader:
The most influential woman in my life was my mother. As an immigrant from Ireland at the age of eight, she always emphasized that I could be whatever I wanted as long as I was willing to work hard and be true to myself.

Best advice:
“The world is not fair; ‘Fare’ is what you pay to get on the bus.”

Personal/professional achievement:
As a Marine, I am most proud of the number of the women and men I have encouraged to develop their talents with an emphasis on education.

Best tip for balance:
Having a supportive spouse is critical in balancing a professional and personal life. My husband has kept me focused to ensure I left time for us and family.

A favorite get-away:
Without hesitation, Hawaii.

My first job:
My first job in the Marine Corps was as an air traffic control officer. During the training, I was the only female student. The first day, an officer approached me and told me not to worry about my performance because no one expected me to do well. I learned from this experience not to let others’ expectations define who you are or limit your imagination and level of effort for success.

A favorite book or movie:
A book that had a profound impact on me was *Man’s Search for Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl. It provided me a perspective or framework for handling the hardships of life.

You didn’t know:
I have my private pilot’s license and had completed over 100 freefall sport parachute jumps even before I attended jump school at Fort Benning, and I have run over 30 marathons, including four Boston Marathons and two ultramarathons (50 miles).



Education: BS, Michigan State University; An MS and three MA degrees; EdD, University of Southern California

Joan Ziglar

Former Martinsville Commonwealth’s Attorney
Martinsville

Raised as one of 15 children on a Henry County tobacco farm, Ziglar overcame poverty and rose to prominence as a four-term commonwealth’s attorney for the city of Martinsville.

Looking back:
I grew up on a tobacco farm in Henry County, the fourth youngest child in a household of 15 children.

An important mentor:
My pastor, Andrew O. Smith. His key message to the congregation was “God does not make trash. He loves all of His children. Never let anybody make you feel like a nobody.”

Most meaningful professional/civic group:
Because Ferrum College gave so much to me, I enjoyed serving on the Board of Trustees as it allowed me have a positive impact on the college experience of students who came after me.

An influential leader:
Judge Margaret Spencer. When I was in law school, then-Prof. Spencer was the epitome of success in the field of law. She was super intelligent, elegant, down to earth, and a no-nonsense lawyer, professor, wife, and mother.

Best advice:
The best advice I have ever received is to

live my life in a way that brings honor to God, my family, my community, and to myself.

Personal/professional achievement:
My biggest personal accomplishment was being the first college graduate in my family. My mother only had a fifth-grade education. One of the proudest days of her life, and one of the few times I ever saw her cry, was the day I graduated from college, number one in my class. My greatest professional accomplishment was creating an internship program when I was commonwealth’s attorney, introducing more than 100 youth to the profession I love – the law.

Best tip for balance:
The best tip I can share for a balanced life is always put your family first. If you have a happy home, you will be more productive at work.

A favorite get-away:
My favorite vacation spot is the Island of Maui in Hawaii.

My first job:
I got my first paid job working on my neighbor’s tobacco farm. I learned that earning a living using my brain was far superior to earning a living using physical strength and endurance - education was the ticket to a better life.

I wanted to be:
When I was growing up, I wanted to be a lawyer.

A favorite book or movie:
To Kill a Mockingbird is my favorite book



Education: BA, Ferrum College; MPA, Virginia Commonwealth University; JD, College of William & Mary

You didn’t know:
I am an off the chart introvert, and I have a phobia of standardized tests.

and movie because it personifies true justice, and Atticus Finch exemplifies morality in the practice of law.

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