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Breakfast honors region's Women of Distinction

It is my great honor and privilege to present this year's *Northern Colorado Business Report* Women of Distinction. The dozen fascinating, accomplished, inspiring women profiled in these pages seem to symbolize the energy and drive that make our region the dynamic place it is.

If you attended the Women of Distinction breakfast event on Aug. 12, you heard directly from our honorees what inspires them and what they aspire to. For those who could not attend, these profiles provide a little insight into who they are and what makes them worthy of the distinction.

I would like to thank our many sponsors who helped us put on this event and this publication: Better Business Bureau Mountain States Region;

Cache Bank & Trust; Cancer Center of the Rockies; EKS&H PC; First National Wealth Managment; Morgan Stanley Smith Barney; Orthopaedic & Spine Center of the Rockies; Palmer Flowers, and PVHS Foundation.

And as always, kudos to the *NCBR* staff, especially Events and Marketing Manager De Dahlgren, for putting together a first-rate affair.

And more kudos to our Women of Distinction, for everything they do.

Sincerely,

Jeff Nuttall,
Publisher



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**WOMEN
OF DISTINCTION**
2010

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BANKING

Kuntzelman takes on high finance at tea

By Jessica Centers
news@ncbr.com

When Louise Kuntzelman moved to Fort Collins to become assistant vice president and marketing manager at First National Bank in 2002, part of her job was planning financial education seminars. She quickly noticed that women would rarely ask questions from the floor. They would instead wait behind to ask their questions of speakers individually.

"It appeared as though they were intimidated by asking questions in front of the men or in front of the group," Kuntzelman said. "They didn't want anyone to know they didn't know the answers."

She set out to design a financial education series targeted specifically to women. To make the first Women's Series seminar appealing, she invited 53 clients and their guests to high tea at the Avery House. The space holds 30 people, and the waiting list was 27 people long.

After every tea, there would be a seminar covering topics such as Social Security benefits, estate planning, use of trusts, IRA planning, financial planning, investment products and insurance services.

"Women live longer and women make less, and we have to do more with less because we live longer," Kuntzelman explained. "We make 83 to 85 percent of the financial decisions in the family but don't necessarily know why we do what we do. Our family never talked about finances, most likely because we didn't have very much. And the women who came to events, their families never talked about finance. Their husbands typically took care of it, and these ladies didn't have any idea how much money was in their accounts."

A year and a half later, the Women's Series already had a mailing list 600 ladies long.

"When asked about the success of the program, the attendees consistently comment on the friendli-

ness of the environment that Louise creates that enables them to feel open to discuss complex financial topics with other women," says Jack B. Wolfe, the bank's executive vice president. "It is Louise's personality that draws people close, her out-of-the-box planning that provides memorable experiences and her classy style that puts a stamp of approval on every event she touches."

While teas are still a key part of the series, it's grown to include creative functions like a Kentucky Derby party at the Sylvan Dale Ranch.

"It wasn't just about hats and pearls," Kuntzelman says. "We ate the normal Kentucky Derby fare, and Suzie Wargin came from Channel 9 and told us about the history of the Derby and women's roles."

Kuntzelman is now in the process of planning Women in Business seminars for 2011 that will be held over breakfast or in the evenings so that more women have the opportunity to attend.

Barbara Albert of Albert Pit Barbecue, a Women's Series attendee and enthusiast, says she's already learned valuable business lessons from Kuntzelman. One seminar in particular, a presentation with local painter Barbara Moore, left a lasting impression.

"I attended because I wanted to learn about this local artist's talent, but I came away with so much more," Albert said. "By working with Louise, Mrs. Moore was able to share a lot about how she made her artistic talent into a profitable business while still keeping it a creative endeavor. I gleaned ideas that day that I was able to apply to my own small business."

Kuntzelman believes we're never too old to learn anything — that every time we learn, we teach and every time we teach, we learn.

"That is my vision," she said. "(The series) gives the attendees an opportunity to grow in ways they didn't know they needed to grow."



Louise Kuntzelman
Marketing manager
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BUSINESS



Judy Dorsey
Founder and President
The Brendle Group

Inspiration Dorsey's goal, not distinction

By Kristen Tatti
ktatti@ncbr.com

The honor of “distinction” isn’t one that sits well with Judy Dorsey, founder and president of The Brendle Group, since much of her business philosophy focuses on the importance of collective action.

However, her career, commitments and courage have set her apart as a leader in the community and her field. As if being a woman in business didn’t make her enough of a minority, Dorsey chose to jump into entrepreneurship in the exceedingly male-dominated field of engineering. To add to the challenge, she launched her engineering consulting firm just as she was launching into motherhood.

Dorsey and husband Dan Epstein both earned engineering degrees at Colorado State University but after graduation landed jobs at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash. She always knew she would return to Fort Collins and hoped to create jobs for the young engineers graduating from CSU so that they would not have to leave town for work. With that goal, a pregnant Dorsey started taking small-business classes while in Washington.

Fifteen years later, her firm has grown from its home office to a now-under-renovation building in Old Town and from a one-woman gig to a 15-employee empire.

Dorsey named her business after her own female role model – her mother.

“She died when I was young,” Dorsey explained. “She was an architect, so she was also underrepresented in her industry.”

In the 1950s, Eileen Brendle (later Brendle-Dorsey) was one of two women in a graduating class of budding architects. Brendle’s promising career and life were cut short by breast cancer in 1970 at the age of 39. Dorsey, who

stayed close to her mother’s only female classmate, was inspired to hear that her mother had always dreamed of starting her own firm.

Dorsey hopes to also act as an inspiration, or at least a case study, for women tackling challenging careers. She wants them to know that in the business world women – even moms – can play, too. And play well. Dorsey also serves as the executive director of the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster and sits on CSU’s College of Engineering Dean’s Advisory Board.

Mother to a 15-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter, Dorsey takes pride that she and her employees can balance work and the rest of life. That balance, she feels, is an ingredient missing for many professional women, often forcing them out of their fields. To provide her employees with that balance, Dorsey surrounded herself with other top professionals. In that way, no one person must feel the entire weight of a project or client on his or her shoulders.

Her team, Dorsey explained, has also allowed the company to take on an avalanche of new work. In the company’s 15-year history, it has had three missions. The first, early mission was for Dorsey, herself, to stay current in her field while at the same time braving the wilds of parenthood. After bringing on its first full-time employee in 2001, the Brendle Group’s mission morphed into proving the business case for sustainability – showing that pro-environment and pro-business were often the same things, not mutually exclusive.

“The first 10 years were about persuasion,” Dorsey said. “When the tipping point came, I never knew it would come so hard or so fast.”

Today, the company intends to make Northern Colorado a launching point for worldwide innovation – one home, building and community at a time.

BUSINESS

Grant speaks softly but leads with dignity

By Jessica Centers
news@ncbr.com

For over 27 years, Sharie Grant has been on the management team for Steelcase dealer OfficeScapes. Now president of the Northern Division, she's led the company through such successes as an extensive, multi-year application and site visit process to win the Steelcase Exemplary Performance award for total customer satisfaction, excellence in business practices and commitment to continuous improvement.

That dedication to people, excellence and improvements describes Grant's style of leadership. "Sharie has challenged the status quo and encouraged excellence in every organization she has touched," said Ann Hutchison, executive vice president of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, an organization to which Grant has given much of her time and talents. "We often see business leaders 'bulldoze' their way to solutions, but that is not Sharie. Her courage to ask hard questions, willingness to demonstrate excellence and initiation to others to be a part of a solution have been key to her ability to make a difference."

Outside her own company, Grant has been a dedicated leader in the business community, most notably at the chamber and the Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance, where she implemented key infrastructure documents and procedures.

"A lot of my volunteer efforts have been for the business community and business issues and business advocacy," Grant said. "There are a lot of things that wouldn't come to fruition without the business community, like all of their support to philanthropy and the arts. Sometimes they're painted as a nega-

tive element and I firmly believe they are not. The business community is very good, very positive. I've worked with many wonderful people and become a better person because of it. I truly believe they are great people with great intentions and I am honored to be among them."

Perhaps it's this humility that explains why others describe Grant as a quiet but extremely effective leader. Steve Stiesmeyer, Colorado operations manager for Hewlett-Packard Co., has worked with her for over nine years, first as a customer and more recently on the board of the Chamber. "She speaks softly and eloquently ... and when she speaks, everyone listens because of her commanding presence."

Hutchison describes Grant as a "caring" leader and Chamber President and CEO David May says she's the kind of leader who makes the people around her better because she leads with "dignity, honesty, candor and courage" rather than ego. Whether she's managing her 20-plus employees or standing up against a piece of legislation that is bad for business, leadership is something Grant does not take lightly.

"I believe in servicehood and leadership," she said. "Leadership is serving. The more responsibility you have, the more you're really serving others. I take that seriously. Whenever I step into a leadership role, I'm very thoughtful about making sure I can do the role justice, because it's important to provide the right tone and direction."

Hutchison says the chamber has a strong strategic plan and even stronger vision today because of Grant's direction and leadership reaffirming the importance of a strong business voice in local political and community issues.



Sharie Grant
President
OfficeScapes, Northern Division

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EDUCATION



Holly Bressler
Executive principal
Harold S. Winograd K-8 School

Bressler committed to educating all kids

By Jessica Centers
news@ncbr.com

On a recent Tuesday night, Holly Bressler, executive principal of Harold S. Winograd K-8 School in Greeley, and nearly 30 of her staff members went on what she calls a walkabout. In preparation for the coming school year, they went door-to-door to make sure their families knew school was starting, to answer their questions and provide information.

"And then when we're done, we say: 'See you next week, we can hardly wait for you come to school,'" Bressler said. "It helps us build relationships and let the children know we care. We find out who still lives where they lived in May, who needs help, school supplies."

Bressler's school is one of about 30 in Greeley – and the only one that does a walkabout. The event speaks directly to her passion and commitment to kids.

"I think part of my work is to build capacity in adults as well as children and pre-adolescents or adolescents," she said. "Building capacity is helping each individual reach their potential and develop in all the ways they're capable of developing, including the skills and abilities they don't even know they have. I happen to work at a school where people are very open to that. Our kids believe that that can happen."

Bressler has worked in Greeley's School District 6 since 1976. She was the district's Director of Schools five years ago when she applied to be principal at Winograd.

"It has been amazing," she said. "I was attracted to the school because I already had my hand in it and it is the only elementary school that looks exactly like our community."

Most schools, she explained, look just like the neighborhood they're in – either diverse or not – but demographically, Winograd is a cross section of the Greeley community.

Ranelle Lange, District 6 Superintendent, said Bressler has dramatically improved test

scores and she lends her expertise throughout the district. Her school has become a training ground for new educators, and she promotes professional development, with the vast majority of her staff holding or in the process of earning master's degrees.

"We consider her school a 'model school for leadership' and often send principals to her doorstep for coaching, modeling and mentoring," Lange said.

Bressler is also "calm" and "ever joyful," she added, even though faced with difficult challenges.

"There's never enough money in education, especially in Greeley, and that's not going to change any time soon," Bressler said. "We try and encourage people to choose to participate in financial support of their schools."

That hasn't always worked, but rather than cutting programs, Bressler has made a committed effort to going after grant money instead. She's been successful funding extracurricular activities, reading programs and interventions for kids who need extra help, equipment and even recycling services.

"It's about perseverance. It's about not giving up," she says. "If this strategy doesn't work, you find some strategies that do."

Bressler is also committed to community service, volunteering and sitting on the boards of United Way of Weld County, Women's Fund of Weld County, The Greeley Dream Team, and the UNC Alumni Scholarship Committee. She expects the same commitment from her students.

"The education community takes some things from the community. We need money and we need belief in us to do our work and we have a responsibility to return that, a responsibility to teach the next generation how to return that," Bressler said. "So we try to do that by doing community service and being good stewards of the resources we receive. Really, this school is about educating all of our kids and our work is not done until they're all educated."

GOVERNMENT



Kathy Phifer
Director of Communications and Creative Services
Colorado State University

Phifer gives young people wings to succeed

By Carol Wood
 news@ncbr.com

In her more than 20-year career at Colorado State University, Kathy Phifer has been a whirlwind of energy and positive influence to those around her.

Phifer began as publications coordinator for the university, and now serves as director of Communications and Creative Services. She leads a team that includes project managers, client relation specialists, writers, designers, photographers, videographers and production specialists who develop branding and all sorts of outreach communications for CSU.

From the CSU Viewbook, which provides an image of the university to potential students, to video and television productions for CSU-TV Channel 11, Phifer is a driving force behind branding and marketing for the university. Phifer meets with staff from colleges and departments throughout the university to assess their marketing and communication needs and works with the vice president for Public Affairs to develop central marketing strategies and materials for the university.

Those who work with her say Phifer has an uncanny ability to listen and understand her clients' goals, as well as the goals of the university. Several of the CSU publications have won regional and national awards.

"I've been very fortunate," Phifer said. "And I work with amazing professionals."

In addition to her energetic work at CSU, Phifer has been a tireless volunteer for many organizations in Fort Collins. She is the driving force behind "School is Cool," the 18-year-old program that provides school supplies and backpacks for disadvantaged students in the Poudre School District.

When Phifer's now-grown sons were students at Tavelli Elementary School, she noticed other children whose families were not able to provide school supplies for them.

"I thought, 'How do these kids start on the same academic footing as their peers when they don't even have the same supplies or self esteem?'" she recalled.

So Phifer helped start a collection drive at CSU that began with five departments on campus that provided supplies and backpacks to five Poudre School District schools. Today the drive involves every department at CSU and every school in PSD.

"We have a phenomenal executive committee on campus," Phifer said. "And the giving hearts in the community are amazing. We are at record donations. The Bohemian Foundation has been amazing, too."

Phifer grew up in Colorado, the youngest of four children, and credits her family for inspiring and motivating her.

"I had three older brothers, and had the drive to be the very best I could be," she said. "They really believed in me. I wasn't a great student academically, but I had great mentors."

Over the years, Phifer has become a powerful mentor herself, working not only with young adults on campus, but also with youth in the Poudre School District.

"Being on campus and seeing young people grow and blossom is a blessing," Phifer said. "We give them wings and hope they grow and develop into successful people."

Phifer said her career at CSU has given her endless opportunities, too.

"CSU has given me opportunities to learn and grow so much," she said. "If you tell me what to do, I will try and do it to the best of my ability."

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Banner Health would like to congratulate these women on their nomination for the *Women of Distinction Award*.

Julianne Fritz

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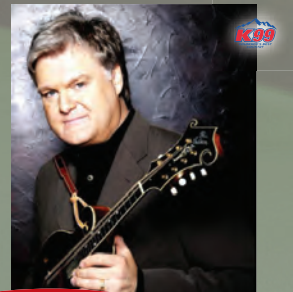
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HEALTH CARE

Schock's rise at McKee more than 'magic'

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

Marilyn Schock may have grown up in Wyoming, but her heart is in Colorado.

Specifically, in McKee Medical Center in Loveland.

"I just love it here," said the Cody native. "We have a great team and a great community that supports us. It's a big family."

Schock, 48, is the 2010 Northern Colorado Woman of Distinction in health care. A 1986 graduate of Colorado State University with a bachelor of science degree in occupational therapy, Schock began her medical career as a staff therapist at McKee that same year. She moved up two years later to become WorkCare manager. That three-year stint saw Schock developing workers' compensation programs and overseeing occupational therapy services at a specialty rehabilitation clinic.

In 1991, she moved up again to become McKee's director of rehabilitation services. McKee, owned by Phoenix-based Banner Health System, became a springboard in 1999 for Schock to accept the position of manager of medical services for Banner's Mountain Shadows Medical Association High Plains HealthCare Alliance in Greeley.

After one year as manager — while earning her MBA with an emphasis on health care strategy at CSU — Schock was promoted to regional director of operations and medical services for the alliance, a post she held until 2005. In September of that year, Schock had the opportunity to come back to McKee as associate administrator, the hospital's second-highest position.

Three years later, Schock's management abilities

were further recognized with a promotion to associate administrator of North Colorado Medical Center in Greeley, which Banner Health has a contract to operate.

When McKee CEO Christopher Cornue decided in late 2009 to leave that position after less than a year to return to his native Chicago, Banner named Schock CEO of the hospital where she got her start 23 years earlier.

When interviewed by the *Northern Colorado Business Report* about her promotion as McKee's new CEO last January, Schock said she was happy to be back.

"This hospital is a gem," she said. "When you walk in the door, there's a community feel, that somebody cares about you. We call it the McKee Magic."

Schock said she's still feeling that magic eight months after assuming the CEO position.

"Even in light of the challenges being provided right now, we're staying very strong and I think part of that is that McKee Magic and our ability to deliver care to our community," she said.

In her nomination of Schock as a Woman of Distinction, executive assistant Carol Salter related a personal interaction in which Schock took the time to give Salter's teenaged daughter some advice on treating an ankle injured playing basketball.

The interaction had a big impact, Salter said. "It gave my daughter the idea that someone can enter a field they love, work their way up and make a huge difference in people's lives as the leader of an organization."

For Schock's part, she's honored to have been chosen to be a Woman of Distinction. "Being recognized was a surprise because I don't think of myself that way," she said. "But it's very exciting."



Marilyn Schock
CEO
McKee Medical Center

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NONPROFIT – CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Freestone helps creative dreams come true

By Michelle Venus
mvenus@ncbr.com

Think Fort Collins theater and the name Freestone instantly comes to mind.

Denise Freestone, co-founder of OpenStage Theatre & Co. with her husband, Bruce, has been instrumental in developing Northern Colorado's thriving arts and culture community.

OpenStage started in 1973, when Fort Collins rolled up the sidewalks not much later than 9 p.m. Outside of Colorado State University, performance venues were virtually non-existent, and the Fort Collins Symphony and Fort Collins Children's Theater were the only community performing arts groups in town. OpenStage held its productions in parks and churches for its first six years.

Freestone is an actor, director, producer and designer who has received critical acclaim throughout Colorado, including the Denver Post's annual Ovation Award, Arts Alive Fort Collins Tree of Peace Medallion in 2003 and the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition's highest honor, the Distinguished Merit Award, in 2000.

Under her leadership, OpenStage was the recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, resulting in May 6, 1997, being declared OpenStage Day in Fort Collins by then-Mayor Ann Azari.

Freestone has always been a vocal and dedicated advocate of the artistic community at large, not just of theater. She has been active in city planning activities and involved in virtually all endeavors that involve promoting and developing the artistic community. She was on the steering committee of the city's State of the Arts effort under Azari, was appointed by the city council to serve a two-year term on the City's

Economic Vitality and Sustainability Action Group, and served for five years on the Chamber of Commerce's Local Legislative Affairs Committee.

She spearheaded an independent task force of local arts organizations that spent over a year convincing the powers-that-be to include a smaller theatre in the Fort Collins Lincoln Center, when the venue was conceptualized more than 30 years ago. The result is the 225-seat Mini Theatre, longtime home for OpenStage, now under expansion with the rest of the facility.

Today, Freestone is involved in every major endeavor promoting Fort Collins as an artistic destination. She has been a part of UniverCity Connections since its beginning, served on UCC's arts and culture task force and currently is on UCC's arts and culture steering committee.

Over the decades, OpenStage Theatre has lent incredible support to other arts organizations and schools by providing sets, costumes and properties at no charge. Opera Fort Collins performed as OpenStage Opera for 10 years before becoming an independent organization.

Freestone herself served as the staging director for the first two years that Canyon Concert Ballet performed "The Nutcracker." She has directed for Fort Collins Children's Theatre and Poudre High School and performed and directed for collaborative productions with the CSU Theater and Music Department, Bas Bleu Theatre and the symphony, to name a few.

"I couldn't have done this by myself," Freestone said. "I am blessed to work with talented and dedicated artists who make magical things happen on stage. We have amazing audiences and sponsors who have supported us. Without them, OpenStage would have been just a pipe dream 38 years ago. With them, it's a dream come true."



Denise Freestone
Co-founder
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NONPROFIT – HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Carraher builds self-sufficiency for families

By Michelle Venus

mvenus@ncbr.com

Mary Carraher has always been on the side of the underdog.

From her first job right out of college with the Denver Department of Social Services to her position as executive director of Project Self-Sufficiency, Carraher's compassion, experience and leadership have been used to better the lives of struggling Coloradans.

For more than 20 years, she has worked tirelessly to grow Project Self-Sufficiency's program and services so that low-income single-parent families could build the skills and get the education necessary to become independent and self-reliant. Through Project Self-Sufficiency, parents attend life-changing and affirming self-esteem classes and can get help with college tuition, child care and career planning. Her vision created the "Cool Kids" back-to-school clothing and car donation and repair programs, among others.

In 1989, the nonprofit organization had a \$60,000 budget that somehow paid three staffers and served 60 families. Carraher relied heavily on volunteer case managers to handle clients' needs. Now, the agency has 12 staffers, is supported by an annual budget of over \$1 million and helps more than 150 Northern Colorado families each year.

"I was touched to learn that I had been nominated and selected as an honoree for Women of Distinction," Carraher said. "My work at Project Self-Sufficiency has been inspired by the single parents enrolled in our program. It has been a pleasure to contribute to the success of such courageous and determined women. Seeing

them complete their career goals and secure living wage employment has been amazing to behold!"

In addition to the countless hours Carraher spends with Project Self-Sufficiency, she has been active with the United Way of Larimer County's Pathways Past Poverty Steering Committee, The Women's FAN Coalition of the Women's Foundation of Colorado, the Council of Human Service Agency Directors and on the Advisory Committee to the Colorado State University College of Applied Human Sciences.

"Mary Carraher is one of the finest nonprofit leaders I know," said Gordon Thibedeau, president of United Way of Larimer County. "She is incredibly effective with great business sense and tremendous compassion. Her achievements in this community are unrivaled."

Nicole Gawronski, an adviser with Project Self-Sufficiency since 1992, agreed. In her nomination letter, she wrote: "Mary is truly devoted to doing everything possible to assist, support and empower families struggling economically. She works a truly grueling schedule to secure funds and promote the mission of PSS in the wider community but is never too busy to be kind and generous to whomever she encounters along the way. Her heart is very open to Participants and Staff and her many friends."

"Mary is an amazing mentor and teacher—she has taught all of us about being fair and compassionate and committed to our purpose," Gawronski added. "It is difficult to measure the impact Mary has had on our community. She has created hope and opportunity for so many families who are frequently isolated, stigmatized or forgotten."



Mary Carraher
Executive director
Project Self-Sufficiency

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NONPROFIT – HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Lytle-Barnaby has ‘best job in the world’ at PVHS

By Kate Hawthorne
khawthorne@ncbr.com

Ruth Lytle-Barnaby never dreamed she'd be running a multimillion-dollar health-care foundation with a staff of 60 and a cadre of volunteers. In fact, the Cincinnati native actually started out studying the violin.

But she was always attracted to the idea of helping people, so she trained as a social worker and worked as a psychotherapist. She moved to Colorado when her geologist husband was accepted to graduate school.

Funny thing is, after 21 years, her job as executive director of the Poudre Valley Health System Foundation and Community Development still has her “jumping out of bed in the morning.”

“I have the best job in the world,” Lytle-Barnaby said. “I match up people who help other people. It's a good fit.”

Lytle-Barnaby oversees three different foundations – one for the system and one each for Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins and Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland – because “people don't give to a system, they give to the hospital.”

The foundations bring donors with a passion for health care together with providers with innovative ideas for patient care. In addition to the clinical and research areas, which include such programs as the PHVS Cancer Center, a community health outreach program to support new practices in Loveland and Greeley has been added to the mix.

That's not the only change Lytle-Barnaby has seen in her two decades with PVHS. She started when the system and the foundation were in tran-

sition, when “there was a lot of angst over what we were going to become. Now it's clear. There's a world of difference in the culture, and it's been a change for the better. Our patient satisfaction scores show that. Now we know it's a lot of hard work.”

Lytle-Barnaby credits Beryl “Brownie” McGraw, volunteer extraordinaire and PVH Foundation board member, as one of the mentors who helped her along the way, not just professionally but personally.

“When I first got here, Brownie took me by the hand and made sure I understood the important things to pay attention to,” Lytle-Barnaby said. “She does this for about 80 people, but she's always very welcoming if I have something I need to discuss.”

In keeping with her philosophy that helping others is the best way to get through tough times, Lytle-Barnaby volunteers with the Food Bank for Larimer County's Empty Bowls event as well as on health-related coalitions such as CANDO, which now has more than 200 members in Fort Collins and Loveland combating obesity.

She said PVHS has been very good to her over the years, and she will stay “as long as they will have me, and as long as I'm making a difference.”

Lytle-Barnaby has two daughters – one plays the string bass – and her husband, who brought them to Colorado to study geology, has become a teacher.

“We never can really plan our careers,” she said. “We should just pay attention to opportunities that present themselves, and work hard to find a way to do what we want to do.”

“I'm doing what I was meant to do,” she added.



Ruth Lytle-Barnaby
Director
Poudre Valley Health System
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CONSTRUCTION, REAL ESTATE AND DEVELOPMENT

Public service focus of Hopkins' careers

By Kate Hawthorne
khawthorne@ncbr.com

Women see the world differently than men do. Example No. 4,758: Linda Hopkins considers her career in real estate a form of public service.

"It's providing access to one of the primary needs: shelter," she explains.

As usual, when Hopkins explains her rationale, she reveals that such statements have been carefully thought out in a much wider context than most of us consider.

Hopkins, who has lived in Fort Collins since she was 13 years old, actually began her career in the public sector in the 1970s. She held 13 different jobs with the city, everything from processing utility bills to working with building inspectors in the planning and engineering department, and eventually on economic development with City Manager John Arnold, who served between 1975 and 1985.

"Back then, the City Manager's Office was the most creative place in the city to be," she recalled. "There was a willingness to get out there and try new things."

Not all of those things worked, and the effort wasn't always embraced by the community, but Hopkins learned how to put together big deals and bring big projects, such as the Anheuser-Busch brewery, out of the ground.

In 1989, Hopkins took her 15 years of construction and development background to The Group Inc. Real Estate – "the next most creative employer in town." Group founder Larry Kendall welcomed Hopkins' ability to toss a shovel in the back of a truck and talk to developers in their own vocabulary. But government service, no matter how creative, had not prepared her for a vital part of her new career.

"I didn't know how to sell," she said.

Kendall famously believed that there are no personal limits to what you could or should do, and over time

helped Hopkins develop her sales skills.

"It has been my good fortune to work with good people in interesting positions," Hopkins says of her success.

One of those good people is her husband of 30 years, Donn Hopkins. The couple met at the city when he was a Fort Collins police detective; he eventually retired as head of campus security for Colorado State University and is now in charge of security for Agilent Technologies. Their son Todd is a Fort Collins policeman; another son, Mark, lives in Oregon, and Linda's son John Chance also works at The Group.

Over time she has seen women's progress as "a force of nature."

"When I started, there were no women managers in government, and no women working on large development or real estate deals," Hopkins said. "Now, women are almost universal in both fields. In fact, selling houses is almost considered 'women's work.' But that's partly because the real time, money and commitment needed for a career in residential real estate has been vastly underestimated."

No one underestimates Hopkins' commitment to the Fort Collins community. She generously gives her time and money not only to cover the other primary needs of food – Food Bank of Larimer County – and clothing – Able Women's Closet – but also to education, working with the Poudre Library District Trust, Educational Life Training Center, Front Range Community College and CSU, among others.

She also remains engaged with the city on the expansion of the Senior Center. Hopkins helped guide the 2005 update of City Plan, and has attended more City Council meetings on her own time than any working reporter in town.

She usually has something more interesting to say about it, too.



Linda Hopkins
Broker
The Group Inc. Real Estate

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7:30 a.m. **Breakfast and Keynote Speaker**

8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Panel presentations and open space discussions**
Attendees pick one of two topics

Finding balance

*Who is to say you can't be a little self-centered?
Shouldn't it be okay to put yourself in timeout?
Do you need a little space?*

Women's health and wellness

*Heart wise
Weigh to go
All stressed up and nowhere to go*

10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Panel presentations and open space discussions**
Attendees pick one of two topics

Working wealth

*Making a plan
Managing the plan
Realizing the rewards*

Nutrition and diet

*Chocolate (and other addictions) – did you hear it can be good for you?
Who knows where my iron is hiding?
What happens to C and D when the sun doesn't shine?*

11:30 a.m. **Break**

12:00 p.m. **Lunch with keynote speaker**
Topic: The Power to Change

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. **Panel presentations and open space discussions**
Attendees pick one of two topics

Women as caretakers

*Men's health – what do you need to know to help him help himself?
Parenting parents – what are the new views on the health of our older generations?
Life with children – what are current wellness issues for the younger generations.*

Transitions

*Life stages – is this really what should be happening now?
Career – what do I do now?
Family – who knew how fast we would go from diapers to diplomas?*

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Closing reception and open space discussions on all topics**

A portion of Women, Wellness and Wealth proceeds will benefit A Woman's Place, Crossroads Safehouse and WomenGive.

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EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEER

Edwards collects fulfillment by giving

By Kay Rios
khawthorne@ncbr.com

For Paula Edwards, volunteering is a fulltime job. She has spent countless hours and massive amounts of energy taking care of business for local nonprofits over the past 25 years.

Edwards jumped into the fray years ago. A Colorado native, she has lived in Fort Collins for 33 years and has served as a volunteer for United Way of Larimer County; Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art; Fort Collins Lincoln Center Showstoppers Advisory Council and the Visual Arts Citizen's Advisory Council. She is also a member of WomenGive, chairs the Programs Committee for the Women's Foundation of Colorado, has raised funds for scholarships for single parents in Project Self-Sufficiency, performed as a "Dancing with the Stars" contestant for Canyon Concert Ballet's annual fundraiser, been a member of the Campaign Cabinet for the Discovery Science Center and served as an elected member of the Poudre Valley Hospital District. And that's only a portion of the list.

Where does she get the drive to serve?

"It's what I grew up seeing," she said. "My parents were always involved and my mother is still very active. And being married to David, his family held that same sort of values, so it's just been a natural part of my life."

David Edwards is an active volunteer in his own right, a member of the Fort Collins Area Chamber and Leadership Fort Collins, among others. In 2009, Paula and David received the Charles A. Lory Public Service Award from the Colorado State University Alumni Association.

"There are plenty of (volunteer) opportunities in

Fort Collins and the surrounding region, if you have the desire," Paula Edwards said. "There's always a way to have an impact. And you can always find the time if you really want to do this. People will say, 'I have more time,' but that just isn't true. No one has any more time than anyone else."

There are many ways to get involved, she added. "I've often chosen to volunteer for board service as opposed to direct hands-on service. I've found I can better use my talents in a board setting because it suits my personality and needs better."

The culture has changed over the past few decades making it easier than ever for women to become involved at the board level. "One of my first involvements was with the Poudre Valley Hospital Foundation and I've thought about how the culture here has shifted for women," Edwards said. "When I joined, there were two women out of 35 on that board and now I'm seeing a lot of change. On the Women's Foundation of Colorado board, out of 25 people, only three are men. There has been a cultural shift in the acknowledgement of what women have to offer and inviting them to the board table."

Volunteering is a good way to learn new skills, too. "Being a volunteer has allowed me to move in to leadership positions and I've often found myself in that position when an organization is in transition or change," Edwards said. "I really enjoy finding ways of doing business so these non-profits become sustainable."

She said she's met incredible people along the way and learned from all of them. "In any volunteer capacity, I've received as much or more than I felt I contributed," Edwards said. "I'm not a collector in terms of stuff but I'd like to think I've collected a lot of fulfilling relationships."



Paula Edwards
Chair-elect
Women's Foundation of Colorado

OUTSTANDING MENTOR

Hanrahan gives women space to find their strengths

By Noah Guillaume
nguillaume@ncbr.com

Connie Hanrahan's motto is: "If it's not fun, why do it?"

That's not what makes her such a popular mentor, but it certainly doesn't hurt.

Hanrahan started mentoring young women through a formal internship program she offered as director of marketing for Rocky Mountain Business Ventures. In 1995, she founded marketing firm The Mantooth Co. where she continues to offer an official mentoring program to female college students with a GPA of 3.5 or higher only.

Hanrahan believes she has formally mentored anywhere from three to five interns per year. Informally, it's a little more difficult to figure how many women – of various ages – seek her guidance or merely wish to "pick her brain" whether it be via telephone, email, over lunch or bumping into her on the street.

Her success as a business woman makes her an ideal mentor, but mentoring was not something Hanrahan specifically set out to do.

"Not at all," she admits, but she does recall the day when she decided to start.

A young woman approached Hanrahan after a meeting to run a few ideas by her. When asked why she didn't speak up during the meeting to present her good ideas then, the young woman said she did not want to look stupid in front of the men in the room. Combating women's lack confidence in the workplace is one of Hanrahan's biggest objectives as a mentor.

To help build confidence, Hanrahan essentially leaves her interns when they might least expect it. This is a mentoring style some of her interns jokingly, but lovingly, call

"baptism by fire." She will lead by example and then purposefully leave, whether it be for a business trip or for an afternoon at the golf course. This absence, both mentor and mentees agree, forces the women to find their own inner strengths, instincts and abilities.

During her internship at Mantooth, Carmen Ruyle Hardy was assigned several event and marketing projects and told to convince clients that she could handle their campaigns. Hanrahan said she'd check in on her after she returned from a trip to Cozumel.

Hardy eventually accepted an offer to become Mantooth's first employee. Under Hanrahan's arm's-length mentoring, she said she learned the value of supporting those who support you, and grew to become the owner of two graphics companies with interns of her own.

"Even more importantly, I am only one of several smart, confident women who attribute many of her successes directly to Connie's influences," she wrote in her nomination letter. "She has shown us the value of the importance of passing the torch and empowering the next generation."

Considering how many women Hanrahan has mentored or advised over the years, she is rather humble about what she does and merely describes it as "something I can contribute."

And despite the number of women whose lives have been touched by Hanrahan – those who no doubt consider it much more than a contribution – she feels young women still need guidance.

So, what does the mentor who never really set out to be a mentor think about mentoring now? "It's not something I think about not doing."



Connie Hanrahan
Founder
The Mantooth Co.



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