



Eileen J. Kennedy

“I am having the best year of my life!” says Eileen J. Kennedy, and after spending a few minutes in her company, you not only believe her, you fervently hope that her gusto for life is contagious.

Originally from the Bronx, Eileen is the oldest of four sisters. Because of her father’s career, her family moved frequently, and by the time Eileen was in tenth grade and living in Alabama, she had attended ten schools. With their girls attending an excellent public school system in Vestavia Hills (Birmingham), Eileen’s parents decided to put down roots, and there they stayed. After finishing high school, Eileen earned a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Criminal Law and minors in Business and English at the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Recognizing her irrepressible “need for change” bug, Eileen set a life goal of getting back to New York. After college, she investigated large companies that had a presence in both Atlanta and New York—and Merrill Lynch fit the bill. She spent 24 years working for this global financial services firm, beginning in the Atlanta Service Center, working her way up to Senior Client Associate in Atlanta and New York City and then Business Manager for the NYC district. Eileen enjoyed leading the volunteer activities and coordinating client seminars, jobs for which she was particularly well-suited. In 2000, Merrill Lynch created a position for her that she would hold for eight years—Vice President, National Client Associate Relationship Manager.

In this role, Eileen worked with over 6,000 Client Associates in the United States, later adding a few hundred more in Latin America and Europe. In 2001, just months into this new position, Eileen was transferred out of the city to Lawrenceville, NJ. Between 2001 and 2008, she travelled more than 50 percent of the time, leaving her little chance to settle in and get to know the area. In April 2008, she again embraced her need for change and accepted a volunteer severance package from Merrill Lynch. Within 72 hours of ending her Merrill Lynch career, Eileen created and founded her own consulting business, The Kennedy Factor, and the area hasn’t been the same since.

Counting her former employer and Morgan Stanley among her clients, Eileen puts her talents to great use as a dynamic business consultant and inspirational speaker. She has partnerships with Get-It-Together, a firm that provides financial and legal educational workshops for companies and individuals, and Pilat HR Solutions, an international management consulting firm. She is also represented by Strategically Speaking, Inc., the speakers’ bureau for financial services.

Noting that she’s “making up for lost time,” Eileen has embraced Mercer County and returned to her volunteer roots. As a member of the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce, Eileen served on the Awards Dinner Committee this past April and is co-chairing the same event next year. From planning and serving her first Catholic Youth Group spaghetti dinner for 500 people when she was a young teen to single-handedly starting the largest Catholic singles group in Atlanta years ago to serving as an assistant director and stage manager for many community theaters (including New York City’s famed Blue Hill Troupe), Eileen is someone who knows how to throw a great party!

Working through the Chamber-affiliated Arts and Business Council of Greater Trenton, Eileen enjoyed a ten-month volunteer stint as the business consultant for Boheme Opera NJ, leading their board retreat in January 2009.

Currently, Eileen serves on the board of Lawrenceville Main Street, a volunteer-led organization dedicated to fostering a sense of community and revitalizing the historic downtown area. As chair of the Business Development Committee, Eileen, along with fellow board members, recently interviewed the town’s businesses and property owners. As a result of these interviews, she held a brainstorming meeting with six area artists and the idea of creating an Artist Network was born. She also serves on the Lawrence Township Small Business Development Committee with Mayor Pam Mount and is a member of both the Greater Princeton and New Jersey Chambers of Commerce.

In Twelfth Night, Shakespeare wrote, “Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.” To the good fortune of those with whom she comes in contact, Eileen Kennedy (thekennedyfactor.com) is someone who embraces her potential. ■