

meet your neighbors

By Amanda McBreen

Inspiring Women Leaders IN THE RIVERFRONT

How to define success? Ask this question and answers often include words like money, power, driven, determined, entrepreneur, and fame. A clear definition of success can be seen in the lives of five influential women all of whom reside in the Riverfront. All have achieved great success by any scale, but these humble ladies, all give much of the credit for their success to being fortunate, having mentors, and loving families.



From Left to Right, Chandra Moyer, Becky Reed, Susan Mann, Kristen Barbour
(due to travel schedule, Heidi Reina was unable to be with us for the group photo)

continued...

Look around the Riverfront and you will find numerous examples of women who are making their own way and impacting the community. We have accountants, a top headhunter, and owners' of franchises, teachers, doctors, and high-level multi-level marketing executives. Choosing only five women to highlight was challenge. However, these women are very unique and their stories should be told. They are all CEOs or Directors, some of large multi-national companies, some local, and one is a company of one, but all give back to the community. Two run non-profits, one company is totally online, two are large businesses in the area.

MEET KRISTIN BARBOUR, CHANDRA MOYER, SUSAN MANN, BECKY REED, AND HEIDI REINA.

KRISTIN BARBOUR is the Executive Director of the National Institute for Learning Development, NILD, a non-profit that operates in more than 30 countries and 42 states. Over the past 40 years NILD has trained over 8,000 educators and impacted over 100,000 students. Since 1973, NILD has built the competence and confidence of students who struggle to learn by training educators and developing students' minds through brain-based learning programs. Based in science, the approach changes how a student processes information. Students emerge not only better prepared to make the grade, but to also make the most of whatever comes their way well beyond the classroom.

CHANDRA MOYER is the President of Release Me International, RMI, a non-profit that trains people to recognize the signs and causes of human trafficking, act early, and respond with compassion. RMI's mission is prevention through education and hope for restoration. The goal is to give communities and children the tools

they need to avoid recruitment into sex trafficking and connect those that have been trafficked with needed resources.

SUSAN MANN is the President of Nexus Direct a privately held direct marketing agency, headquartered in Norfolk with an Amsterdam office. Nexus provides direct marketing services to non-profit organizations, as well as those in the commercial sector – helping them build and execute plans to best engage with their donors / customers. Nexus does everything from building the strategy to developing the creative solutions and executing the projects to make sure clients get the biggest return on their marketing dollars.

PRESIDENT AND CEO REBECCA REED, prefers to be known as Becky. Reed Integration, Inc. provides management, engineering services and training to federal government, commercial, and academic clients across the U. S. Reed specializes in a life cycle approach to project management and systems engineering for contracts ranging from acquisition engineering services and technical organizational assessment/improvement for Defense (US Army, US Navy/SPAWAR, US Naval Research Laboratory) and Homeland Security customers to independent risk analysis for NASA. Professional training programs in leadership, project management, acquisition / contracts, and systems engineering are provided regularly to private industry, university partners, and government organizations such as the Department of Health & Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the Health Resources Services Administration, the Food & Drug Administration, Old Dominion University, Paul D. Camp Community College Workforce Development, Huntington Ingalls, Northrop Grumman, and more.

And HEIDI REINA, is a unique CEO who manages herself as the Owner of Learn-

ingReviews.com, a web-based publishing, business with reviews that focus on free and high quality fee-based websites and applications for K-12 teachers, students, and parents.

Each of these women was asked a series of questions about their path to their current position of influence and about themselves. Their answers will inspire and surprise many.

None of these leaders had a rocket to the top. All of these ladies went through many years of hard work and several positions before finding a passion and opportunity that combined to bring them to where they are today. Becky Reed, started reading the *Wall Street Journal* at the University of Alabama where she was earning her degree in Aerospace Engineering. She said she, "...took on a lot of jobs throughout my career that no one else wanted (several requiring extended assignments and/or relocation across thousands of miles) in engineering and management and learned tons from each opportunity." The same sentiment was echoed by Kristin Barbour who spent time working in small communities as a speech therapist before transitioning to the medical staff at Children's Hospital of the Kings Daughter. From there several more moves were required before the passion of teaching got paired with the science and data of Educational Therapy. Her next step was to launch a for-profit community-based center called Discovery Program, INC for NILD. After eight years of developing training and providing workshops around the globe, the Board of Directors tapped her last year to become the Executive Director of NILD.

The road to the top for Chandra Moyer included time not only as a military spouse and ordained minister, but also time in graduate school and penning a book. Likewise, Heidi Reina went

from an initial degree in German and political science to extensive training and certifications in Information Technology to finally a Master's of Science in Educational Leadership. Only Susan Mann, who earned her bachelor's degree in chemistry from University of Virginia, spent 20 years with one company. However, she transitioned over the years from entry level to Global Business Manager for Bostik, an excellent global chemical company. Success required the ability to grow, change, and be willing to take risks.

All of these incredible women cite their ongoing love of learning and education as a factor in their success. In some cases that meant rigorous schooling and degrees, but in all cases it meant being open to learning from others. Mentors helped shape the future roles these women would achieve. Susan Mann noted that she, "grew up professionally "at Bostik learning about management, working with a variety of cultures, and leading people. Most importantly, Susan stated, "...some of the best learnings come from making mistakes." Becky Reed comes from a family with a "stash of technical females..." including a PhD in Atmospheric Physics and a nuclear engineering expert. But she credits her parents for never once letting her think that being a girl and loving science, math, and engineering shouldn't mix. It is her incredible mentor/manager that Becky credits as her role model for success. Interestingly, that mentor now works for Becky! Likewise, Kristin Barbour noted that: "There have been two mentors in my career who have contributed significantly to my growth as an educator and the development of my leadership abilities. Both mentors demonstrated excellence in their craft, were passionate about their work, and shared their visions with clarity and purpose. They set a high standard but cared enough about others to invest in the next generation of leaders. I owe a great debt

of gratitude to my mentors who believed in developing me."

Susan Mann is now the President of Nexus Direct due to her longtime friend and business advisor. Nexus Direct was growing and expanding into the European market and, "...she asked me to join her company to help grow and scale the business ... it's radically different from anything I've done before – from a multimillion dollar specialty chemical business to an agile and creative marketing agency!"

Experiences shaped how Chandra Moyer and Heidi Reina came to their current roles. Heidi was a classroom teacher who knew the power of technology and assisted numerous teachers find digital content for their classroom, set up webpages, and websites. Eventually she created a catalog of resources, but it was fellow teachers who urged her to publish it. Now Heidi has a goal of reaching every school district in the US and Canada. For Chandra, it was a life-changing experience, in a horrific area, that propelled her forward. Her story: "In 2008 I had the opportunity to travel to Uganda where I first learned about human trafficking. I worked in collaborative partnership with a non-government agency rescuing ex-child soldiers from rebel groups. My role as an ordained minister was to help with the emotional and spiritual healing aspect of the rehabilitation process. After this life changing experience of working with trafficked youth, I wanted to learn about human trafficking and enrolled in a graduate program at George Mason University. I co-wrote a policy paper on the importance of educating public schools about child trafficking prevention. A few days before I gave a class presentation on Child Sex Trafficking (CST) a colleague shared that her partner's best friend's 17-year-old-daughter was missing. Laura was trafficked from Ohio to Fairfax County, VA. She was lured away from her

home on a modeling scam. After answering an advertisement for a modeling agency she was given a pre-paid ticket and flown to Washington, D.C. Once she arrived, Laura was taken to a hotel and told that she now worked for them (escort service/prostitution ring). She was threatened and held at gunpoint by a man in charge who ensured that she stayed in the hotel room. Laura was forced to have sex with multiple strangers. Fortunately, this young lady was rescued by an FBI sting operation. This was a wakeup call not only to me, my Professor who lived in Fairfax with two teenage daughters, but every student who heard the presentation. If human trafficking can happen in Fairfax, VA, one of the most affluent counties in America, it can happen anywhere."

After that, Chandra's passion was further ignited to train the general public about trafficking which lead to RMI. Last year, the FBI honored Chandra when she was awarded the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award.

A few things that all these ladies have in common are their enjoyment of living in The Riverfront, how they handle stress, and the love of family. Each cites the love of the community, incredible neighbors, and the many things to do in the neighborhood. The Riverfront is not easy to replicate not only because of its physical location and ease of access to the highways and the influx of businesses to the area, but also due to the warm nature of the residents. The fact that the neighborhood is very multicultural, intergenerational, with interesting friendly residents was listed by all the ladies as a draw to move to and remain in The Riverfront. Watch out for Kristin as she walks her massive Goldendoodle, Wrigley, or tools around on her bike with her daughter. Chandra also enjoys biking but it's the community pools that attract the ladies along with the close relationships with neighbors.

Meet Your Neighbors ...continued

Maintaining a work/life balance is difficult for almost all working parents. Long days, children, activities, and travel can combine to wear even the most well planned super mom down. For these moms, having down time with family is crucial. For Kristin Barbour, who lives a significant portion of her life on a plane, FaceTime with her four-year-old daughter at least once every 24 hours is mandatory. For Becky Reed, every business trip includes a trip through Ohio where she lends a hand to her mother in caring for her father who suffers from advanced dementia. Husbands and family that are supportive have given invaluable support not only in their careers, but also in holding down the home front while mom travels and works. Susan Mann credits a, "very supportive husband and a great network of friends and family who keep all the balls in the air (at least most of them)." Chandra had the military spouse life and learned to handle everything, fitting work in when she could. Heidi noted that her family is very good at finding gentle (sometimes) reminders when she is too buried in her work. Downtime for rejuvenation is a must and playing with the kids at home or connecting with grown children has a special place, as do pets, parents and travel.

If being a highly successful business leader seems like a daunting task to the young of Riverfront, here is the good news; none of these ladies planned her ascent. Becky Reed always knew she would like her own business, but could have never predicted that in 2015, when the City of Suffolk was looking to increase its bond rating, it would be her company, Reed Integration, that was called and asked to meet with officials from Moody's. This

is the third year in a row that the company has been named a FANTASTIC 50 award winner. Reed was named as the tenth fastest growing company in the state of Virginia, up from the 17th in 2014. *Inc. magazine* has also ranked Reed Integration for three consecutive years in their top 5000 companies. In 2015, Becky Reed's company came in at #1,924.

"Not at all!" was Susan Mann's answer when asked did you always know what you wanted to do or achieve? "My career has been an evolution of opportunity and exposure, exploration and experience. I was fortunate to have been given opportunities that stretched me in a lot of different ways," she stated.

Heidi Reina knew she was always happiest when she could use her skills with writing and computers. Further, she knew that she liked helping others learn new skills and solve problems. Therefore, evolving from teacher to teaching technology and combining all her skills and passions led her to a career helping others and having an incalculable impact on the lives of educators and students across the country.

"I changed my major four times in college," relayed Kristin. She further mused, "It has only been in the last decade of my career where my passion and abilities have intersected most strongly. Having worked in different jobs within medical and educational settings, it's a gift to be able to fulfill my job duties and know that it is a calling that I have been equipped to do."

Chandra has spent her life developing a passion for fighting injustice and cultivated her faith along with her career. She is an ordained minister, author, speaker,

activist, and community leader. There was no clear path, just a continuous movement forward. Chandra stated that, "... in essence my discovery of knowing what I wanted to do or achieve has come from life experiences."

When these women were asked some questions, they gave quick, certain answers, such as, "Would you want your daughter to follow your footsteps?" Answer – a resounding "No!" Instead all of these executives want to, or have encouraged their child/children to find a passion and develop it. Conversely, other questions really stumped this group, such as, "How do you define a stressful day?" The lack of answers to this question signifies that these pros are used to handling many events simultaneously and don't become overly stressed by work. But the showstopper was the question, "Do you consider yourself to be successful?" That question drew blanks. No one seemed to really be able to answer that about themselves in terms of their careers. Successful as a mother who raised grown children? – Yes. Successful as a woman of faith? – Yes. Successful in making a home and having a loving relationship with my husband? – Yes. But career? All want more time on that question. Ego does not seem to be a problem.

Another question that garnered a lot of information was about advice to the current generation of high school students who will be facing career and college choices soon. Uniformly these leaders gave strong advice on the importance of education, the importance of perspective, passion, and work ethic. A few selected gems of advice:



"Find your passion. Figure out how best to serve others using that passion. The road will often be difficult, but your passion will help you over the humps. Seek out mentors to help keep you on the right path. Rely on a close network of family and friends to support you and keep you balanced." - Heidi Reina



Becky Reed, President and CEO of Reed Integration

"Academic success is good, but becoming a better thinker is far greater. Be open to skylight opportunities in which your propensity for learning and developing new skills knows no limits."- Kristin Barbour

"Always try to listen more than you talk in most situations. Better decisions come from understanding the facts first." - Becky Reed



Kristin Barbour, Executive Director of NILD



Chandra Moyer, Founder & Executive Director of Release Me

"Explore, explore, explore. There are so many people, places and things to be discovered. My chance to live outside the US gave me the power of seeing your culture, yourself or your opinions from 'outside' or from another perspective. So much of what we see in media/popular culture today makes things black and white - when a little perspective reveals that there are few things that are that simple and we all benefit from walking a mile in another's shoes." - Susan Mann

"Be yourself - if you can't be true to yourself you will struggle and be less fulfilled. Find something you love to do and once you identify your passion keep developing it. Education is the key to success. Build a support circle by finding a mentor who's taken the career path you wish to follow and peers who share similar interests. Keep a positive attitude even when things get hard. There is always something to be grateful for in life. Learn to set goals and work hard to achieve them. Be willing to start from the bottom up even after college to prove your competency and earn respect from colleagues and bosses. Working from the bottom up develops character. It will help you become a better person and supervisor." - Chandra Moyer



Susan Mann, President of Nexus Direct

Meet Your Neighbors ...continued

Finally, it says a lot that every woman interviewed for this article considered themselves fortunate more than successful. Further, they all talked about giving back to the community, their employees, and their families. Becky Reed touchingly stated that she defines happiness as her employees, who are like family, being healthy and happy. All five women at some point said the "Thank you's" they receive mean so much to them and thank you is what often makes a day a great day.

For Kristin Barbour the thank you's come from students and parents that experience transformational changes in the lives of struggling students who never thought they could become independent learners.

For Heidi Reina the thank you's come from teachers, administrators and schools, and parents. Heidi says the letters are not only gratifying but they push her to do more.

Susan finds it incredibly satisfying to see people she has coached and mentored grow in their own endeavors. She gives back by giving to others the help she had.

And Chandra has had more than one direct encounter, after a speaking engagement, where a child trafficking victim has been identified and successfully helped.

Success may sometimes be hard to define but these five leading ladies clearly define the word in every aspect of their lives. All

are generous friends, active in the community, loving mothers and wives, and are leading businesses and will impact our community and world in a positive manner for years to come. It is wonderful to know that such role models live next door in The Riverfront. Get to know your neighbors; another phenomenal leader may be right around the corner.

Thank you for the generous time these leaders gave in preparing this article.

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