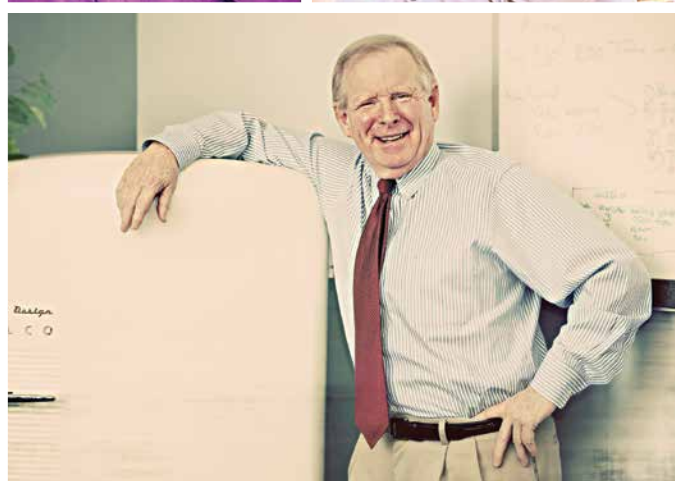
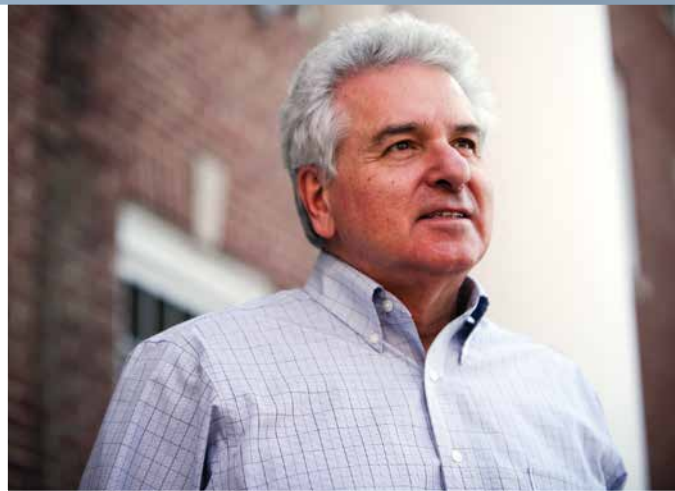


# New Hampshire's LEADERSHIP ADVANTAGE

Produced by Sojourn Partners and *Business NH Magazine*

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*Celebrating the*  
**Leaders**  
*in our community.*





*W*e at Bellwether Community Credit Union are proud to support this work by Dr. Russ Ouellette because of how strongly we believe in the importance of leadership. As this collection illustrates, leadership is not about position or status. Rather it is ordinary individuals doing extraordinary things by seeing a need, stepping up to make a difference, and following through to see that vision accomplished. It sometimes means shedding the limitations of your past, breaking through stereotypes, and overcoming immense adversity.

New Hampshire is a special place to live and work. It also is a place that seems to forge special people. We are proud to live and work among people with the character, courage, and tenacity to lead by example. From individuals in social services working for the betterment of others, to public servants fighting for what they believe in, to neighbors and friends from the business and arts communities stepping forward to make our state a better place—each and every day people throughout New Hampshire are pressing forward with their heads down—focused on making a real difference. Too often their stories of character and courage go untold. At Bellwether Community Credit Union we are glad to be a small part of Russ' efforts to bring a few of these wonderful stories to light and thereby inspiring us all.



**Michael L'Ecuyer**

President and CEO  
Bellwether Community Credit Union



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# ACCEPTING THE CALL

For the past decade, Sojourn Partners' mission has been to enable executives to reach their ultimate potential. Throughout that journey we have noticed how many people actually underestimate their capacity to lead. Be it a Fortune 500 executive or a small business owner, we all at times lack the faith in our own potential. The truth is that we all can lead, and we all can make a difference if we choose to.

New Hampshire may be suffering from an identity crisis. We have heard and witnessed countless examples of New Hampshire businesses and leaders not considering themselves world class. Their initial self-description is that they are a local business, a "lifestyle" business, or that working in New Hampshire requires that they adopt a "laid back" attitude. Some even reference this as the New Hampshire advantage. Granted, I work here and keep my firm here for some of these same reasons, but that does not define my company as not being world class. Is this lack of seeing our potential the New Hampshire disadvantage?

I see leadership everywhere in New Hampshire. I really do. I believe that our business climate needs to identify with the fact that we do have outstanding talent and that we may be the best incubator for small business in the country. We all need to recognize this and take action on an individual level. We need to recognize the strengths we have, tap into what impassions us and take action. This action requires us to step up and lead,

take charge, and not just in New Hampshire.

This book is meant to launch a greater conversation about our collective success. These stories demonstrate the path to leadership is varied and often circuitous, highlighting how weaknesses and challenges often become the foundation for growth and a richer life. In fact, struggle is often an essential part of our development, teaching us so much more than easy success will.

These ambitious people choose to lead and have inspired me. I think you'll find a universal message in each story and hopefully you will be inspired too.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russ Ouellette'.

**Russ Ouellette**  
President and Managing Partner  
Sojourn Partners

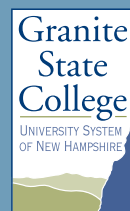
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# ON BEING “LEADERFUL”

Granite State College is proud to sponsor this special supplement to *Business NH Magazine*. Here, you'll read a variety of inspiring stories about leaders; people who are championing important causes, leading cutting-edge business and developing new and exciting products.

Leadership, we'll learn, transcends position or hierarchy; anyone can lead from anywhere.

Today's organizations must be more nimble and responsive, given the turbulent nature of the environments in which we operate. In order to move more quickly, be more responsive and leverage a broader base of knowledge, we cannot depend on an overly hierarchical leadership structure that rests all control and decision-making at the top. Organizations today must take advantage of more localized knowledge and empower decision-making throughout the organization to ensure rapid response.

The term “Leaderful,” as described by Joe Raelin, is an approach that essentially puts leadership in everyone's hands, because collaboration and decentralization are so critical to the success of most high-performing teams today. This was the philosophy we embraced when designing Granite State College's new Master of

Science Degree in Leadership, and one that is embedded in our staff and our culture.

There are benefits to empowering staff and expecting a level of ownership that encourages problem-solving and cooperation around the work, as opposed to rigidity around a prescribed set of operating functions and position titles. Expecting managers to address an issue they become aware of, despite boundaries, can be beneficial to the entire organization. From that perspective, every employee is a leader (formal or otherwise), and should be in-service to the organization as a whole. Ultimately, the mission should offer inspiration and guidance for in-service leadership, empowering everyone in the organization to be “Leaderful.”

Leadership is not a position; it's a perspective and an empowerment to be in-service to the organization.

I hope this magazine and its emphasis on leadership serves as an opportunity for all of us to reflect on what we can do – within our workplaces, volunteer work and communities – to be more “Leaderful.”

*Dr. Todd Leach is President of Granite State College, which has grown significantly under his leadership, achieving the highest enrollment levels in the College's history and recently graduating its largest class. Dr. Leach may be reached at [Todd.Leach@granite.edu](mailto:Todd.Leach@granite.edu).*

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# A LONG WAY FROM KANSAS

ERRIK ANDERSON

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Pay or Pass**, Board member, 2012
- **Wingu**, Board member, 2009 to 2012
- **Winner**, Edison Award, Silver, 2012
- Named **Entrepreneur of the Year** by the **NH High Tech Council** (with Adimab co-founders Tillman U. Gerngross and K. Dane Wittrup, 2011)
- Named **Young Professional of the Year** by **Business NH Magazine**, 2010
- Named **NH Biomedical Council** “Up and Comer” 2009



**A** Kansas farm boy raised with a strong work ethic, Errik Anderson recalls with fondness working two full-time jobs simultaneously during the summer when he was 15 years old—40 hours in a distribution center and 40 at a local frozen yogurt shop.

He says working 80 hours per week was fun—he liked the money and he loved being busy. It’s that sense of “fun” and hard work that has driven him, at age 35, to be chief operating officer of a successful biotech company in Lebanon.

In 2006, at 30, Errik helped launch Adimab, which develops antibodies for medical issues like MRSA (a staph germ that is usually resistant to antibiotics). With co-founders Tillman U. Gerngross and K. Dane Wittrup, Errik has developed Adimab into a world-class company with annual sales of \$600 million serving such clients as Merck, Pfizer, Novo Nordisk, and Genentech. Adimab doesn’t just develop innovative cultures in the lab. It has also developed a culture of excellence for employees, winning a *Business NH Magazine* Best Company To Work For in 2011.

Not bad for a kid from Kansas. Errik was the second eldest of five children of a single mom, and life was far from easy. “I’m almost blessed to have grown up with adversity,” he noted in a 2010 interview, because, “You know it can’t get worse.” He says he had a good role model for learning what hard work can accomplish. His mom raised five kids while also attending law school.

And Errik says he learned another valuable lesson from his upbringing and early-in-life jobs: Try something and then keep modifying it until you get it right. “The trick is to get comfortable quickly when you try something new and then quickly adapt it to your portfolio of skills, then it never feels like work,” he says.

That work ethic continues to drive him. “If you work a 100-hour work week for five years, you’ve done almost as much as someone else who only worked 40 hours a week over about 12 to 13 years,” he says. This might explain one of the firm’s most astonishing recent accomplishments. Adimab brought a drug from idea to discovery to FDA testing to the first patient dosing in just two years, a timeframe almost unheard of in the pharmaceutical industry.

Errik is not new to the fast track. After graduating from Dartmouth in 2000, he worked at an investment firm in New York before returning to graduate school at Dartmouth, where he studied bioengineering at the Thayer School of Engineering and earned an MBA from the Tuck School of Business.

But Errik says it was always a struggle to pay tuition, and once tuition was paid, there was always the unwieldy expense to buy books. So in 2005, he started the Kaiser Education Fund, which provides scholarships for Dartmouth students to buy books, though he’s since turned over the leadership of that program.

In 2010, he co-founded Arsanis, a biotech firm in Vienna, Austria, that performs drug development for Adimab. And he notes there will be a new Upper Valley startup with his fingerprints on it within the next few months. “It’s been percolating for six to nine months, but it will launch this year and contribute to the Upper Valley’s biotech ecosystem,” he says.

With all of that, one might wonder if Errik has life outside work. He says he considers board appointments and assignments his hobbies. He’s also married to his high school sweetheart and they have two children with one on the way. And, he admits, that’s meant reducing his schedule to 60 hours per week.



# THE LIBERATED LEADER

MATT ALBUQUERQUE





**G**rowing up in Litchfield, Matt Albuquerque had a classmate with a dropped wrist from polio; he was fascinated that no one had invented anything that could hold the wrist in a normal position. Young Matt thought about how creating something as simple as one brace would change everyone’s perception of his classmate and likely change his life. It was a feeling that stuck with him throughout his childhood.

Later as a pre-med student in college, Matt wanted to be a pediatric doctor helping children with disabilities. But after earning a degree in biology, Matt answered a help-wanted ad that would change the course of his life.

The ad was for an entry-level job at a prosthetics company. The job itself, Matt recalls, was barely above floor sweeper. But he loved what the company did and says he had found his calling. Instead of going on to med school, Matt worked his way up the ladder at the prosthetics company, before moving to California to earn certification in orthotics, which covers bracing, from California State University, Dominguez Hills. Several years later, he left California to earn his certification in prosthetics at Northwestern University in Chicago.

That’s when he came home to NH, where again, he would take a life-altering turn. Matt landed a job at a national prosthetics company, where he was mentored by his now best friend and eventual business partner, Peter Couture. While he loved his work, as the company grew, it placed greater demands on the workers to see more people per day to increase profitability. Matt says he couldn’t reconcile working where the bottom line was more important than taking the time to understand those affected by disabilities.

Frustrated, he left the company and launched his own business, Next Step Orthotics & Prosthetics in Manchester in 1996 with seven employees. Matt, who prefers to keep a low profile, says he was happy to hand over the reins to his mentor, Peter, when he joined the company two years later.

With success in business, though, Matt began examining why he was comfortable outside the spotlight. He was the kid who played backup catcher. His insecurities about his shorter stature kept him feeling like he didn’t measure up. That perspective was challenged when, in 2006, he received a pivotal invitation. Matt was asked to join the board of directors of The Boys & Girls Club of Manchester.

Matt says he had no idea why they had invited him and he couldn’t imagine what he could contribute.

In spite of those feelings, he decided to accept the position, and sought advice from colleagues. Their suggestions included, “Just be yourself,” and “Don’t disclose your fear.” And he took that advice to heart.

“After I attended the first couple of board meetings, it dawned on me that I was with peers, that these other leaders accepted me, that I was going through life slipping through and not reaching my full potential,” Matt says.

One board position led to another, and Matt began taking a leadership role in government, establishing the NH Coalition for Prosthetics, to write legislation requiring insurance companies to cover the repair and replacement of prosthetics. He wrote for industry journals, won awards, including *Business NH Magazine’s* 2011 Business of the Year Award in the health care category, and became an in-demand speaker in the field of prosthetics.

Matt recalls an invitation to speak at a prosthetics conference in Boston in 2010. Once at the hotel, he kept looking throughout the corridors for the small classroom-sized room where he expected to speak. He had assumed he was going to talk about a new prosthetic arm he was working on with DEKA Research & Development Corporation in Manchester—the inventor of the Segway—and the U.S. Government. When he asked at the registration desk, he was told he was, in fact, the keynote speaker in the ballroom.

He says just the sound of the word “ballroom” made his palms sweat. But he took a few deep breaths, remembered the advice of his colleagues from a few years earlier, and headed into the room, which was so huge there were big screens broadcasting the speakers to those who couldn’t see from the back rows. He says he addressed the room of 800 people coolly and comfortably, and delivered what others later told him was the best talk of the day.

Matt has since returned to being Next Step’s president, saying the past four years have given him more energy and passion. “I became full,” he says.

His company has come a long way. In addition to the headquarters in Manchester, Next Step boasts offices in Warwick, RI and Newton, Mass. and 27 employees. Matt says his advice to others is to, “Let go, liberate yourself by overcoming your fears, and allow yourself to release the innate and learned gifts we all have.”

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Veteran’s Count (Easter Seals)**, Founding board member and former chair, 2006 to present
- **NH State Veteran’s Cemetery**, Board member, 2009 to Present
- **Business NH Magazine’s Business of the Year**, Health Care, 2011
- **The Boys and Girls Club**, Board member, 2006 to 2010
- **Leadership Greater Manchester**, Class of 2006; steering committee, 2012 to Present

### PIVOTAL MOMENTS

**1996**  
Launches Next Step Orthotics & Prosthetics

**1998**  
Takes backseat to colleague

 **2006**  
Asked to sit on board

**2010**  
Gives speech without prep

**2011**  
Wins Business of the Year Award



# COLLABORATION

TERESA ROSENBERGER





It was the spring of 2000 and Teresa Rosenberger's life was going smoothly. She was enjoying a successful career as a lobbyist at the law firm of Devine Millimet in Manchester, and she had been married to the same man for nearly 25 years. In fact, she and her husband, Eric Rosenberger, were training for an extensive bike vacation to celebrate their 25th anniversary.

Then things went terribly wrong. Teresa and her husband were on a training ride to increase their endurance when a speed bump, ironically, on the property of Concord Hospital, slowed Teresa's life almost to a halt. She was thrown off the bike head first causing a traumatic brain injury to the frontal lobe, which controls much of what we do.

At first Teresa was in a coma, but even when she awoke doctors were unable to give a prognosis as brain cells sometimes recover but sometimes don't, according to Teresa. "They didn't know if I'd be able to talk again but not have balance, or have balance but not have vision," she says.

The hospital assigned her a health team that included a nurse, speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and pastoral counselor as she had to relearn to speak, understand vocabulary, connect ideas, and walk, all while her vision was seriously compromised.

The one thing Teresa knew was she wanted her life and career back. But her confidence was shaken. Her job required self-assurance and an in-depth understanding of complicated issues in order to present ideas before boards, clients and at public hearings in Concord.

She had just lost her life as she knew it and no one was able to say whether she'd ever get it back. "You have this fear that if asked a question, you may not be able to recall the answer even though you know it. Or you may know the answer but you can't say it correctly," she says.

So while much of the team worked on getting her up to speed on other skills, her occupational therapist worked with her to rebuild her self esteem, giving her tips to succeed.

Teresa recalls how her health team took her to a grocery store to shop, giving her the singular task of finding a head of lettuce. Once in the store alone, she did manage to find the produce department. But, Teresa says, a brain injury often means that a lot of stimulation—noise, people, colors, smells—can overstress the brain quickly. So when the sprinklers went off over the produce she fled back to her team at the front of store. The team encouraged her and upon a second attempt, she successfully returned to the team, head of lettuce in hand.

As she marveled at the power of her health team and the support proffered from her colleagues at Devine Millimet, she started thinking about the value of team work and how the sum of people working together was so much more valuable than any individual contribution. She also remembered something her father had said to her when she was growing up, "Helping others is a gift."

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **New England Council**, Board member
- **Business and Industry Association (BIA)**, Board member, 2010 to 2012
- **Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce**, Past chair and board member
- **Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy**, Board member
- **Concord Regional Visiting Nurse Association**, Past chair and board member
- **New Hampshire Historical Society**, Past chair and board member
- **New Hampshire Preservation Alliance**, Former board member
- **Capitol Region Healthcare Board**, Former board member
- **Concord YMCA**, Past chair and board member
- **NH Telecommunications Advisory Board**, Past member appointed by the Governor
- **Economic Development Advisory Board**, Appointed by Governor John Lynch


Due to circumstances out of our control, the specific dates of board service are unavailable.

She slowly regained her life and started to read again at around four months. With help from her health team, she returned to work at the law firm part-time at six months.

But she went back with a new understanding of the importance of collaboration.

Soon after she returned, the firm was approached by a client who came to Devine Millimet with the intent to bring a lawsuit against a third party. While the case itself is confidential, Teresa says it would have been very costly for the client to do so. Trying to look at the issue differently, she helped facilitate a team that included an attorney but also included outside engineers and several land use specialists. The situation was ultimately resolved for the client successfully and Teresa notes in a "less contentious" fashion.

### PIVOTAL MOMENTS

 **2000**  
Hits a speed bump

**2001**  
Returns to work

**2009**  
Recommends someone else for Fairpoint

**2010**  
Takes over as president of Fairpoint

**2012**  
Returns to Devine Millimet



Almost a decade later, Devine Millimet was hired as the law firm of record for FairPoint Communications just six hours before the telecom firm purchased Verizon. And Teresa was appointed the go-to person to assist with the company's grassroots efforts in Concord.

Once the acquisition was complete, she urged the telecom company's CEO to hire three presidents, one for each of the Northern New England states. "There needed to be accountability; the company needed a face in each state." When the CEO was persuaded to do so, he invited Teresa to join a search committee and asked her to bring a list of potential candidates.

Teresa says she brought a "really good list" of recommendations. As each was reviewed, the CEO, at the time, seemed reluctant about one prospect in particular that Teresa considered an ideal candidate.

"I remember getting quite animated arguing for this person when the CEO said, 'How about we make that person president of another state and you president of New Hampshire?'" Teresa says. Even though she was completely surprised, she took the position in January 2010, helping to manage a complicated transition.

Upon arrival at FairPoint, Teresa says she immediately saw the need to bring different factions of the organization together. But when she approached the various department heads to attend a meeting, she says she received push back from many managers. Many told her she was wasting her time. And some refused to attend at all.

Undaunted, she persuaded the hesitant to join the meeting. "I told them, 'Just humor me,'" she says. And when the meeting finally occurred, Teresa says, "Within 20 minutes, someone came up to me and said, 'I owe you an apology, team work works.'"

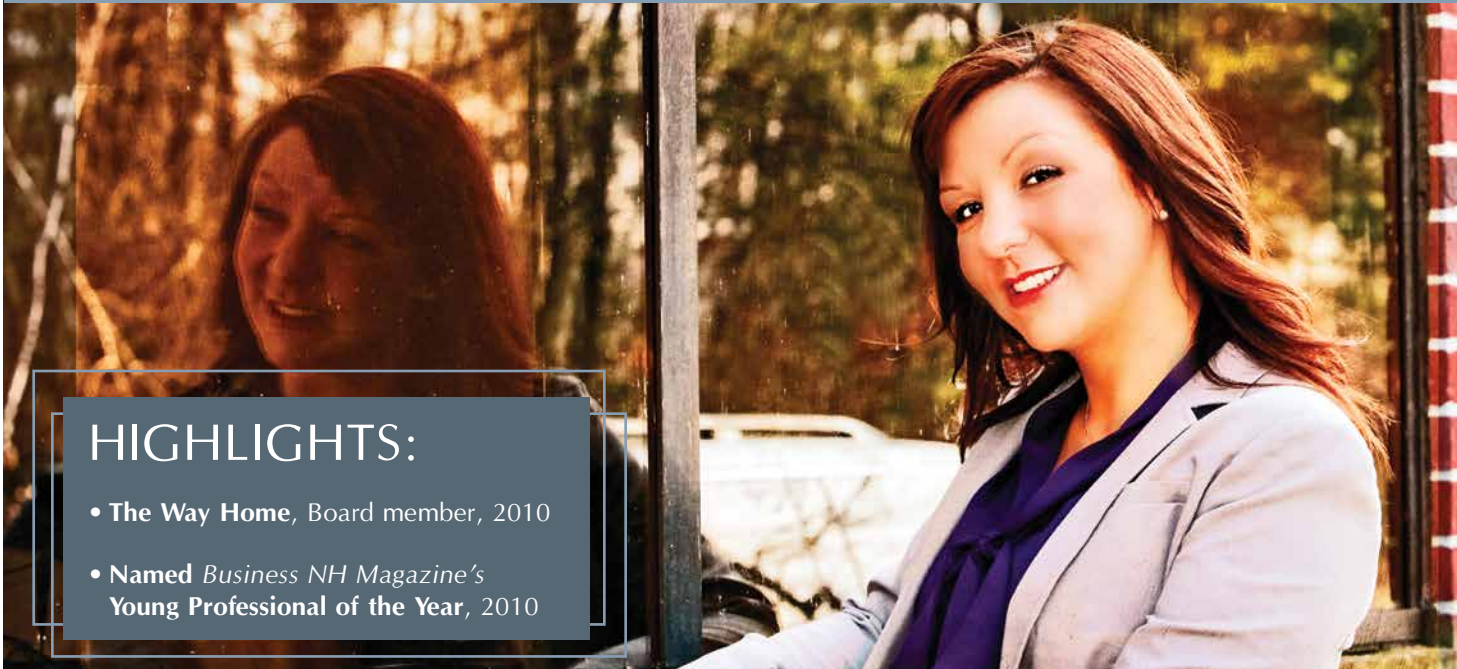
A journalist by training, Teresa says that gave her the detail and observation skills to work in law. "If you're trained in journalism, you're trained to have a good eye combined with a need to get to the bottom of a story," she says of her great love for finding solutions to very complicated problems.

But in keeping with her belief in collaboration, she never thinks she or any one person can have all the answers. She says her success comes from focusing on her strengths and depending on the strengths of others.



# TENACITY PAYS OFF

JAIME KUCZEWSKI



## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **The Way Home**, Board member, 2010
- **Named *Business NH Magazine's* Young Professional of the Year**, 2010

**T**he life and career trajectory of Jaime Kuczewski, vice president of HASCO Medical in Londonderry, has been anything but conventional.

An Army brat, she moved from Tucson, Arizona to Northern NH with her mother and sister when she was in middle school, where she felt like other kids always knew much more than she did. In fact, throughout her entire academic career, Jaime says she never fit in. She dropped out of college when she discovered she was expecting her first child and needed to work full-time. But in spite of that, she always continued taking courses whenever and wherever she could.

She says she always told herself to “Fake it until you make it,” and during a classroom discussion on politics and business, she looked around at the group and suddenly realized everyone was feeling the same insecurity she was. Something clicked. She says she thought, “I’ve got this. I’ve got this figured out.”

One son led to two and, while she was offered jobs that could have led to careers, she continued to feel unqualified. Then another child turned out to be a catalyst in Jaime’s life. A relative had struggled with addiction and Jaime often ended up taking in the relative’s son while his mother attempted to get clean. When it became apparent to the court that the boy needed a permanent placement, Jaime says she had a strong connection with him and decided she wanted to take him in.

By then divorced, Jaime says she wasn’t sure the court would even allow her to adopt. The boy suffered from a severe stress-induced speech issue and psychological problems from a chronic lack of stability that would require services she couldn’t afford. She says her only option was to step it up.

Working at a national recruiting firm in an entry-level position, she decided to ask her boss for a promotion, which she received. From there, she began to quickly move up in the organization, breaking records at the company for the most acceler-

ated career arc. And the promotions continued “until there was nowhere else to go,” Jaime says.

She moved to another recruitment and organizational development firm where she worked with a client, Ride-Away Handicap Equipment Corporation in Londonderry. Mark Lore, president of Ride-Away, then persuaded her to join his company in 2006.

Jaime says Mark proved to be a mentor who encouraged her to try new things, even if they weren’t a sure thing. Jaime was empowered as director of organizational development to establish recruiting plans, analyze business practices, handle legal issues and marketing, and even develop growth strategies. What she didn’t know, she set out to learn, making it her mission to “always do better.”

She laughs about owning no fiction. And she says her three boys, now 15, 12 and 10, often joke that they don’t want to watch movies with her because it will, invariably, be a documentary.

At work, Jaime’s continual learning paid off. She eventually became vice president. And, with Mark Lore’s encouragement, Jaime initiated programs through which employees donate 5,000 hours annually to community causes.

Earlier this year, Ride-Away was acquired by HASCO Medical, headquartered in Mobile, Alabama, and Jaime joined their executive team, though still working out of NH.

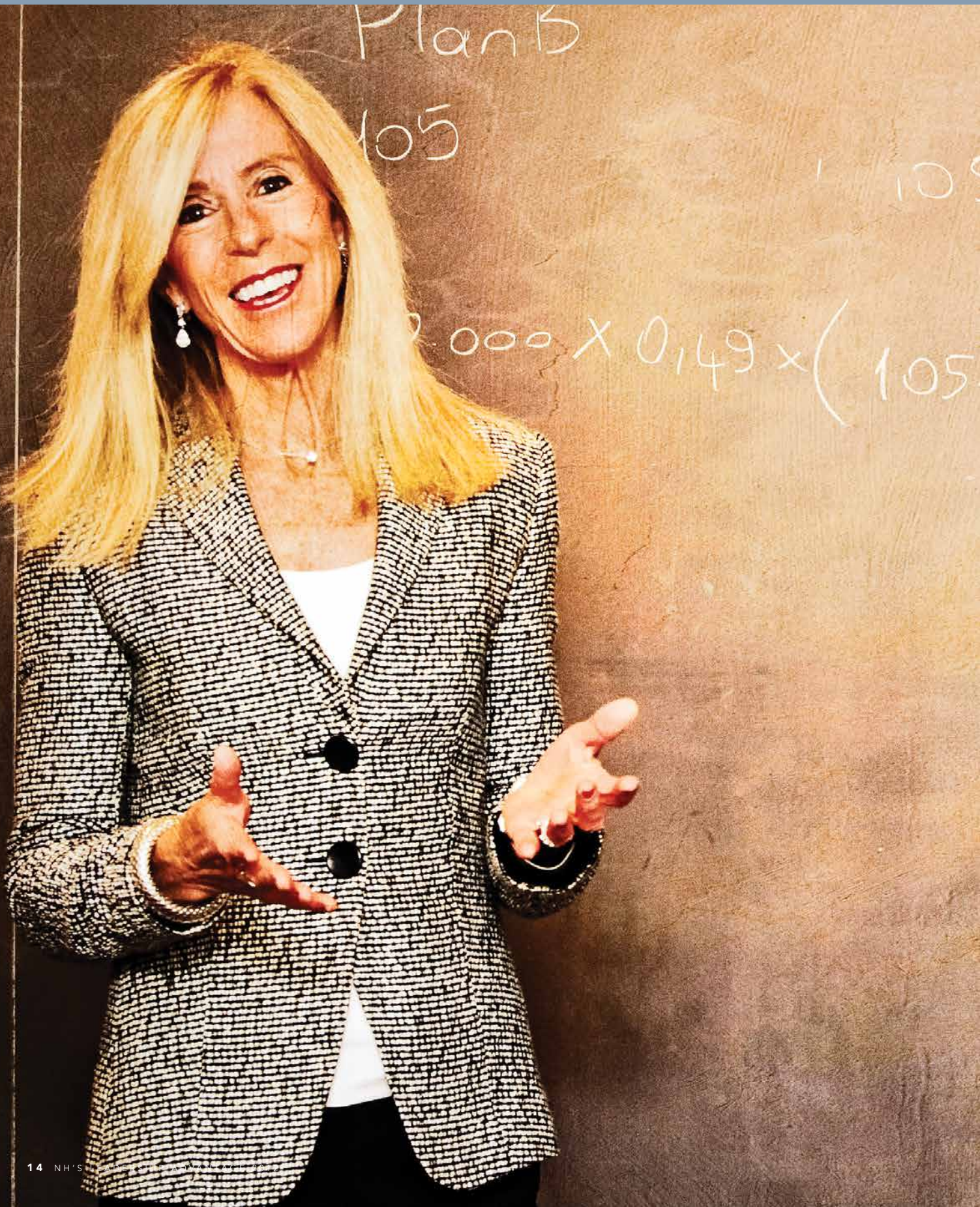
When Jaime dropped out of college, she says she felt like “one of those statistics,” someone who dropped out of school, had a child, and that’s going to be it. But her determination to show her children that people could succeed in spite of adversity, propelled her forward.

“I preach to people here ... If you make a mistake while being empowered, that is fine, we have learned something. That’s the chance I wanted and got and I want others to have that same chance,” Jaime says. “There is no replacement for passion, self-awareness and hard work.”



# TRANSFORMING CULTURES

BARBARA COUCH





**B**arbara Couch has spent her life creating cultures where leadership flourishes and people feel connected. That has included developing counseling programs at schools to being the architect of one of the most celebrated corporate cultures in the state.

“Every leader is different. There’s no one definitive style. However, a person who can create an environment where people feel valued, trusted and respected is a leader,” says Barbara Couch, vice president of corporate social responsibility at Hypertherm in Hanover.

It is a philosophy she has exemplified throughout her career.

After earning a degree in psychology and sociology from Bradley University in Illinois, she landed her first job with the Illinois school district where she helped develop a behavioral science program, building the curriculum, researching best practices, and then executing the program as one of the teachers.

Her proudest achievement while at the district was developing a course for high school seniors studying human sexuality.

“It was the 70s and the women’s movement was taking place, there was a lot of talk about premarital sex and homosexuality. This course allowed students to explore their own values about these subjects without judgment,” says Barbara, who discovered she loved creating and designing programs that address important but unmet needs.

While still teaching during the day, Barbara earned her master’s degree in counseling psychology from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Meanwhile, she was hearing the siren song of family. Her parents had relocated their direct mail marketing firm to Boston and were encouraging her to join them there to eventually take over the business. Excited by the prospect, she relocated, filled with ideas to transform the company.

Moving to Boston and working at the family business wasn’t the only transformation in her life. She also fell in love. Barbara met her husband, Dick Couch, the founder of Hypertherm, while visiting a friend in New Hampshire. They carried on a long distance relationship for several years until it became clear running separate businesses in separate states “didn’t make sense.” She relinquished her role in the family company and moved to NH full-time where she later joined the Plainfield School, creating a counseling program she loved and felt good about.

Recognizing her talent for dynamic transformation, Dick sought her advice when he could see the company was growing and changing. He had developed several new channels for selling Hypertherm’s products, and he anticipated the number of associates (Hypertherm’s term for employees) would double from 75 to 150. (Little did he suspect the company would grow to the 1,300 associates it has today.) He wanted Barbara to join the compa-

ny to develop strategies that would help the business retain its family feel.

For her part, she says she was happy where she was. And she had reservations. “I was concerned about the perception of being “Dick’s wife” and the impact that might have on the organization. I wanted the best for Dick and for Hypertherm and that’s why I planned to stay only six months. I worked hard to prove myself and demonstrate that just because I was married to Dick didn’t mean I had it easier than anyone else,” she says. Ultimately, she agreed to help out for six months, taking a leave from the school.

An expert in organizational development, Barbara had many ideas on ways to maintain connectedness among employees as the company expanded. She helped launch a newsletter that is still used today and helped develop structures for hiring the right people for the culture.

The six-month sabbatical became 12. Then one senior executive approached her and said, “You can’t leave.”

“It was very gratifying,” she says. “When I joined Hypertherm (and decided to stay), my first vision was to create a place where people enjoy coming to work every day. A place where people feel a sense of pride in their work and enjoy and respect the people they work with and for. Simply put, to create a great place to work.”

The culture she and the associates has created have resulted in Hypertherm being recognized as a “Best Company to Work For” both

in NH and nationally. “The credit goes to the associates of Hypertherm who everyday bring our core values to life and help sustain our unique culture,” Barbara says.

In 2009, she recognized it was time to pass the baton. The company moved someone else into the VP of human resources role, so Barbara could take on her “next exciting venture,” helping Hypertherm become one of the best sustainable manufacturing companies in the world. In this new role, Barbara says she is overhauling all operations, product development and logistics. “Today my focus is on corporate social responsibility and being a world leader in that space within our industry and beyond.”

As if one new initiative were not enough, Barbara is also president of the company’s HOPE (Hypertherm Owners’ Philanthropic Endeavors), which since 2010 has partnered with nonprofits to engage in activities that strengthen and create sustainable, positive change in the community and environment. “Every day, no matter what we are talking about, it must be in keeping with our core values,” she says, noting that she keeps them posted within view of her desk.

“We have made enormous progress in the last two years, but still have miles to go. It’s a journey, and an exciting one at that,” she says.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **NH Board of Education**, Member 1992 to 2012, chair 2003 to 2005
- **NH Public Radio**; Board member, 2006 to Present, chair, 2012
- **Advanced Manufacturing Education**, Advisory council, 2009 to Present
- **Dartmouth-Hitchcock Clinic and Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital**; Trustee, 2009 to Present
- **Overseers of Geisel School of Medicine**; Board member

# PHOENIX RISING

SHELLY HUDSON





**S**helly Hudson's life could have turned out dramatically different. Events that might have derailed others—dropping out of college, divorce and homelessness—did not keep her down for long though. Instead of being dragged down, she used these experiences to propel her forward eventually assuming the reins of the Greater Claremont Chamber of Commerce in Claremont and ultimately heading Red River Theatre in Concord.

Now the executive director of the Red River Theatre, Shelly began her love affair with the stage in high school. Frequently bullied by fellow students, Shelly found a safe harbor in high-school theater. Shelly says a teacher, Carol Curtis, allowed her to express her creativity and encouraged her to study the performing arts in college, which she did at Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts. It was there she met another mentor, Dr. Myron Schmidt, a professor who she says “would walk into the room and it was magnetic.” She says she admired her professor’s ability to connect with everyone in a room and to develop personal relationships with everyone. He taught her that being a leader involves building relationships and collaboration.

However, Shelly decided to drop out of college shortly before earning her degree, which she blames on being young and “making bad decisions.” She returned to NH and began a career in managing theater programs at several schools. She even launched a non-profit, Performers’ Playground, to teach theater and film to kids when one school lost the funding for its theater program and she was ultimately outsourced.

Then she hit a rough patch.

At the end of 2006, the school she was working at closed unexpectedly. She had already made plans to leave her then-husband. To make matters worse, she didn’t have a car. Homeless, unemployed and a single mom, she turned to the state for help and received community housing and food stamps. While living in the public housing, she says she looked around and didn’t like what she saw. She noticed there were residents who had been there for generations and children of long-term residents now having children of their own. She resolved to make sure this was, for her, only a temporary solution.

“Those moments either galvanize you or they don’t,” she says. “This made me recognize that there were things I wanted in life and I was the only one who could go out and get them for me.”

It took a year to get her footing. The turning point was an ad she saw for the Greater Claremont Chamber of Commerce in

Claremont. She laughs now when she says she wasn’t even sure what a chamber did. But determined, she dived into research. She went online to find out more about the Claremont Chamber and to understand what a chamber does and what it should do. She scouted out chamber members and municipal employees and talked to them about the chamber. And she looked up the history of the chamber. What she discovered wasn’t pretty. The chamber had the lowest membership in years, a poor public image that was worsening, and a contentious relationship with the City of Claremont.

Undaunted, she applied for the job, though she wasn’t sure if living in community housing would work against her. It didn’t, and she was hired after several interviews by the board. “I analyzed the relationships with the city, with the board and with the members, and I was ready to do the work,” Shelly says. And to repair relationships, she said she had to start out by listening, looking for opportunities to partner with the city, and demonstrating to the community that the chamber was genuinely interested in opening the lines of communication. It worked.

By the time she left five years later, she had developed a new mission, vision and goals for the chamber. She says they had launched several new programs, including the President’s Awards and the Sullivan County Young Professionals organization, introduced the chamber to social media as a networking and marketing tool, developed new networking programs for the business community, and expanded community engagement, including

growing attendance at the city’s Fall Festival and Chili Cookoff from 1,000 to 3,000 attendees.

But the truth was she missed theater. So when she found an ad for the executive director position of Red River, she saw it as the perfect opportunity. She says Red River is an unusual blend of movie business, nonprofit and community voice for the creative arts. In addition to being a film house, Red River hosts plays, live music, panel discussions, and private events (such as weddings and business events). It even broadcast the Royal Wedding and a Summer Olympic event featuring a local athlete.

Shelly says she loves being part of the creative economy, which she says is a vibrant and important sector of the state. As she puts it, it’s not just entertainment: The creative economy also provides jobs and commerce, and improves the overall culture of the state.

Shelly says while she has not led “a standard professional life, I have decided on my own life and it is an authentic life.”

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Performers’ Playground**, Board member, 2004 to Present
- **Claremont Opera House**, Board member, 2009 to 2012
- **Leadership NH**, Class of 2011
- **NH Educational Theatre Guild**, Member, 2001 to 2010
- **Claremont Lions Club**, Member, 2010
- **Goodwill Northern New England**, Master mentor, 2010

### PIVOTAL MOMENTS

**2004**  
Launches Performers’ Playground

 **2006**  
Loses job, becomes homeless

**2007**  
Lands on her feet at chamber

**2012**  
Becomes head of Red River Theatre

# SCORING THE MUSIC OF HER LIFE

JEANINE TOUSIGNANT



**M**usic has the power to make us cry or dance with joy; and perhaps no one better understands its transformative power more than Jeanine Tousignant. Music not only shaped the person she has become, it is helping her to shape a community.

Long before becoming CEO of the Manchester Community Music School in 2004 and being entrusted with leading a haven

for more than 50 music educators and more than 1,000 students from 65 New Hampshire communities, Jeanine was a music student trying to figure out the clarinet.

Growing up in the poorest section of Worcester, Mass., Jeanine remembers how she and her two slightly older sisters would create an at-home variety show after a traditional Saturday night dinner of beans and franks. Her dad would play the harmonica and violin while the three sisters would sing. “[He] instilled in us

## PIVOTAL MOMENTS

**1977**  
First memory of singing with sisters

**1982**  
Father passes away

**1986**  
Accepted as student at PASOW

**1987**  
Plays *Louie Louie* with school band

**2007**  
Named a *Forty Under 40*



a huge love of music, from folk songs to classical, and it became part of us," she says.

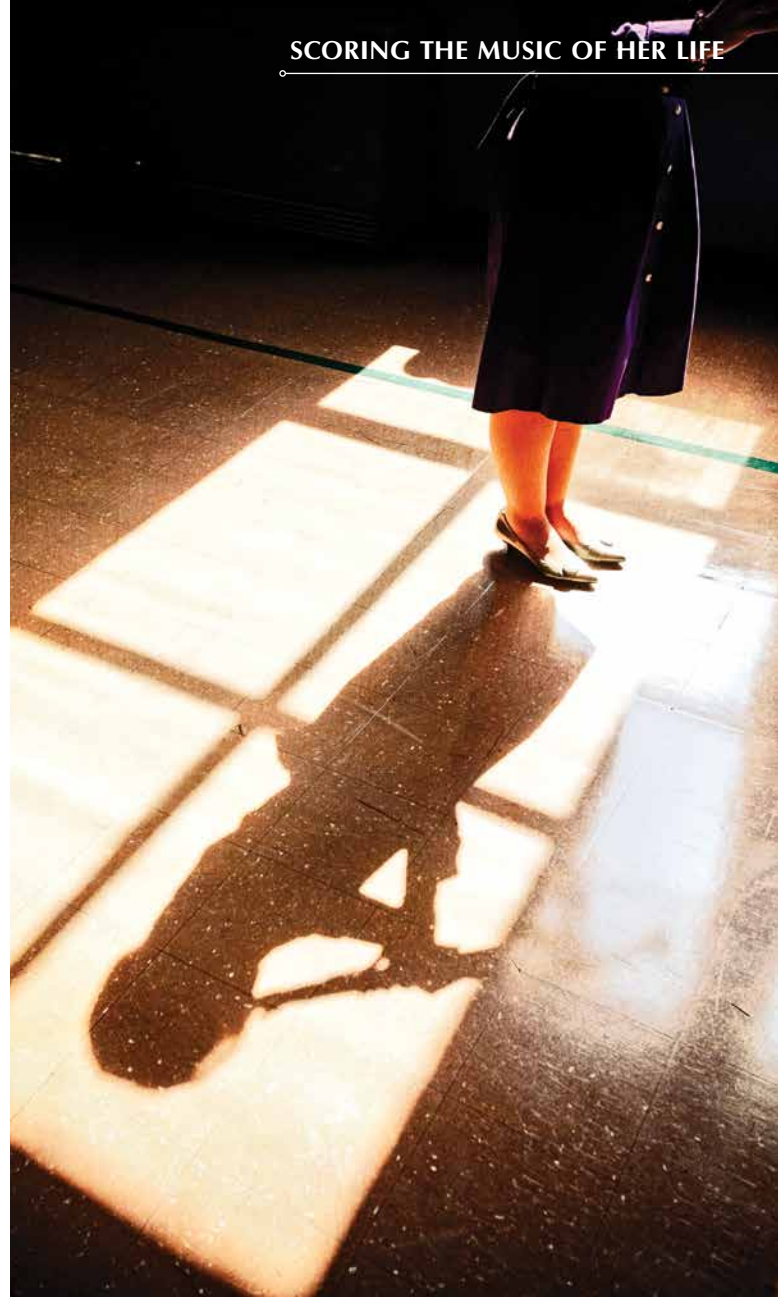
In third grade, she took up the clarinet, but within a few months, her father died abruptly. She had only played for him once. Devastated, she cried daily and was misunderstood by other students until, eventually, the once well-liked student became the target of cruel taunts.

She sought refuge in music. Newly committed to playing clarinet as a way to honor her father, Jeanine was taken under the wing of a kind teacher who understood her loss and strove to provide her with direction. She learned through practice and hard work that she could get better and better at playing the clarinet. And, as she earned praise from teachers, her self-esteem blossomed. Jeanine also started getting A's in math as her ability to count music honed her multiplication and division skills.

With financial aid and work/study programs, she became a student at the Performing Arts School of Worcester (PASOW), where she found much-needed support. "The people at PASOW were like a second family to me," Jeanine says, explaining she felt protected and loved working even when the job didn't involve playing music.

But as she approached high school, she grew concerned about attending the public school, which was riddled with drugs and guns. She set her sights on a private school, Holy Name High School in Worcester, and drawing on the perseverance she acquired learning the clarinet, Jeanine made a commitment to get accepted. She landed a job at a fast food restaurant, saved her earnings, applied for scholarships and was ultimately accepted.

Her only disappointment was that Holy Name had no music program. So she created one. By her junior year, she persuaded the school to launch a music program and, within a few months, the sparse band was scheduled to play its first concert for the high school. As the band was introduced to the student body, Jeanine



## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Leadership Greater Manchester**, Steering committee, 2007 to Present
- **Manchester Rotary**, Board member, 2010 to Present, and vice president, 2012
- **Council on Fundraising**, Past board president, 2008 to 2010, board member, 2003 to Present
- **NH Citizens for the Arts**, Board member, 2012
- **Leadership NH**, Class of 2012
- Recognized by NH Union Leader as one of NH's **"Forty Under 40,"** 2007
- **Leadership Greater Manchester**, Class of 2006

remembers hearing only a smattering of claps. But as the band kicked off the concert with the rocking 1955 hit "Louie Louie," the audience erupted in raucous applause. Immediately following that, a slew of students signed up eager to be a part of the band.

"I didn't listen to naysayers," Jeanine says. "I always kept my eye on the prize." Today the music program she helped launch continues to receive accolades.

Jeanine went on to graduate with a degree in music from the Hartt School of Music in Hartford. And in 2004, she assumed leadership of the Manchester Community Music School, a non-profit that must compete for the state's limited charitable giving with thousands of other charitable organizations. But she doesn't look at her fundraising as a challenge. "If you can tell your story well or, better, live your story well, you can overcome the continual challenges of finding funding," she says.

"It's personal to me. Every child in this building, I see myself in that child. Some donor made a better life for me. And, for some kids, music is a way out of poverty. I picked up a clarinet, not a syringe. I joined a band, not a gang. And I had many opportunities to take the wrong path. This is my chance to give back," she says.

# DEFYING EXPECTATIONS

FRED BRAMANTE



## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **NH Board of Education**, Member 1992 to 1995 and 2003 to 2012, chair, 2003 to 2005
- **New England Network for Personalization and Performance-PAR (Performance Assessment Review)** Board member, 2010 to Present
- **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)**, Washington, D.C., Member, 2006 to 2007
- **NH High School Redesign Committee**, 2007
- **International Center for Leadership in Education**, Senior consultant, 2010 to Present

**T**he high school teachers who told Fred Bramante that he would be a failure and likely end up homeless would probably be shocked to learn that Fred not only went on to become a teacher, but also chair of New Hampshire's Board of Education.

While others might let such negative messaging drag them down, Bramante used that messaging to motivate himself toward a greater good. His goal? To ban such thinking from the classroom. In the process, he was transformed into a cutting edge leader dedicated to dramatically changing education in NH.

Fred says his story demonstrates how a student can be left behind by an outdated education system, and how a one-size-fits-all system can mean talent isn't recognized and potential is stifled or ignored.

Despite not "fitting in" and finishing almost last in his class in high school, Fred remained undaunted. He not only went on to Keene State College, but graduated with a degree in education. Following that, he taught science in middle school for six years and went on to earn a master's degree.

"School taught me I wasn't very bright. Life taught me that school was wrong," Fred says.

But his ambition didn't stop at the classroom. While teaching Fred came up with the idea to buy and sell used instruments to musicians, resulting in the launch of Daddy's Junky Music.

The retail chain generated \$25 million in revenue by 2009 but the 2008 economic tsunami took its toll. And it hit hard. Daddy's Junky Music ended up going out of business.

Fred recalls how over the years, when speaking to students, he would often tell them "to lift your chin up, grieve and move forward."

After the closing of his chain of stores, he says he had to heed his own advice. "It hurt so badly because I believe in integrity and honor, and it is painful and embarrassing that people who worked for me had to lose their jobs," Fred says.

Through it all, teaching has remained his passion. "Education is the most important gift we can provide our kids," Fred told *Business NH Magazine* in 2011 when he was named a finalist in the Self Made in NH competition.

While serving on the state's Board of Education, he led a re-vamping of K-12 public school standards, including allowing for internships and independent studies to engage at-risk students to reduce the dropout rate.

He now speaks nationwide on education reform, and recently co-authored and published a new book, *Off the Clock: Moving Education from Time to Competency*, which he says redefines education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Fred wants to move education from a time-based system (180 days in a building) to one that is achievement based. He says it doesn't matter where or how children learn. It only matters that learning is taking place.

"This will make education more affordable, less expensive, helping more kids graduate, allowing more people to pursue and find their passions and providing, for a kid like me, the opportunity to be a star rather than a bum," he says.



# PASSION, PATIENCE AND LUCK

JEFF EISENBERG



## HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce**, Board member, 2007 to 2011
- **Alliance Health Services**, Board member, 2008 to 2009
- **Catholic Medical Center**, Board member, 2004 to 2009, chair 2008 to 2009

**L**ong before he led hockey franchises or took the helm of a marketing firm, Jeff Eisenberg was a 12-year-old working as clubhouse boy for the Memphis Blues Double-A baseball team. During doubleheaders, hungry players would ask him to find food for them. Already thinking like a marketing guy, he started bringing in sandwiches to sell.

Unfortunately, the players, dressed in uniform, didn't have their wallets to pay, and they often forgot to reimburse him later. Jeff was the only kid on his block with an accounts receivable problem. But he says of that time that he learned some important lessons: Cash is king and integrity matters.

An avid sports fan, Jeff thought his career would be in law until shortly after receiving his bachelor's degree in economics from Vanderbilt University in Nashville. He became aware of a graduate program in sports management at the University of Massachusetts and applied. It was kismet.

He moved to Amherst, Mass., where he fell in love with the beauty of New England. However, after graduation, he landed an internship with the Philadelphia Phillies, and his 13-week stint turned into a job that lasted nine years. It was the early 80s, and ticketing was becoming more automated. So Jeff focused on "getting fannies in seats" by streamlining ticketing for attendees. It worked. He split his time evenly between sales and information systems and designed programs that created a business within the baseball business.

In fact, he was so good at it; he worked briefly at a software firm developing ticketing software. But he missed sports. Luckier than many, Jeff received two offers simultaneously, but he chose the Milwaukee Brewers. His new bosses were Bud Selig, the future (and current) commissioner of baseball, and Bud's daughter Wendy Selig-Prieb, both of whom he still counts as friends.

That was followed by a stint with a hockey franchise in Buffalo before finally getting his opportunity to return to New England as head of the Portland Pirates in Maine. And, when he heard Manchester was bringing in its own team, Jeff contacted the Los Angeles Kings to see if they needed any help as they launched the Manchester Monarchs.

As Jeff puts it, "It's better to be lucky than smart," as that call turned out to be fortuitous. Shortly after, he learned his team was being sold and he'd be out of a job. He says he quickly called the LA Kings back and asked, "Have you filled that job yet?"

"Opportunity is where preparation and luck meet," Jeff says. He landed the job of president of the new Manchester Monarchs where he stayed for nearly a 10-year "magical ride." But by 2008, Jeff was ready for a change, which is how he ended up buying the marketing firm Vital & Ryze in 2009.

While he's always been a sales and marketing person, Jeff says his years of experience were in a different industry. And that made his new career more challenging than anything else he's done.

He says he was reticent to jump in with opinions even when his instincts were firing off internal messages to go in one direction or another. "I had instant credibility at the sports table, but I really had to go into hyper-observation mode," he says of getting up to speed.

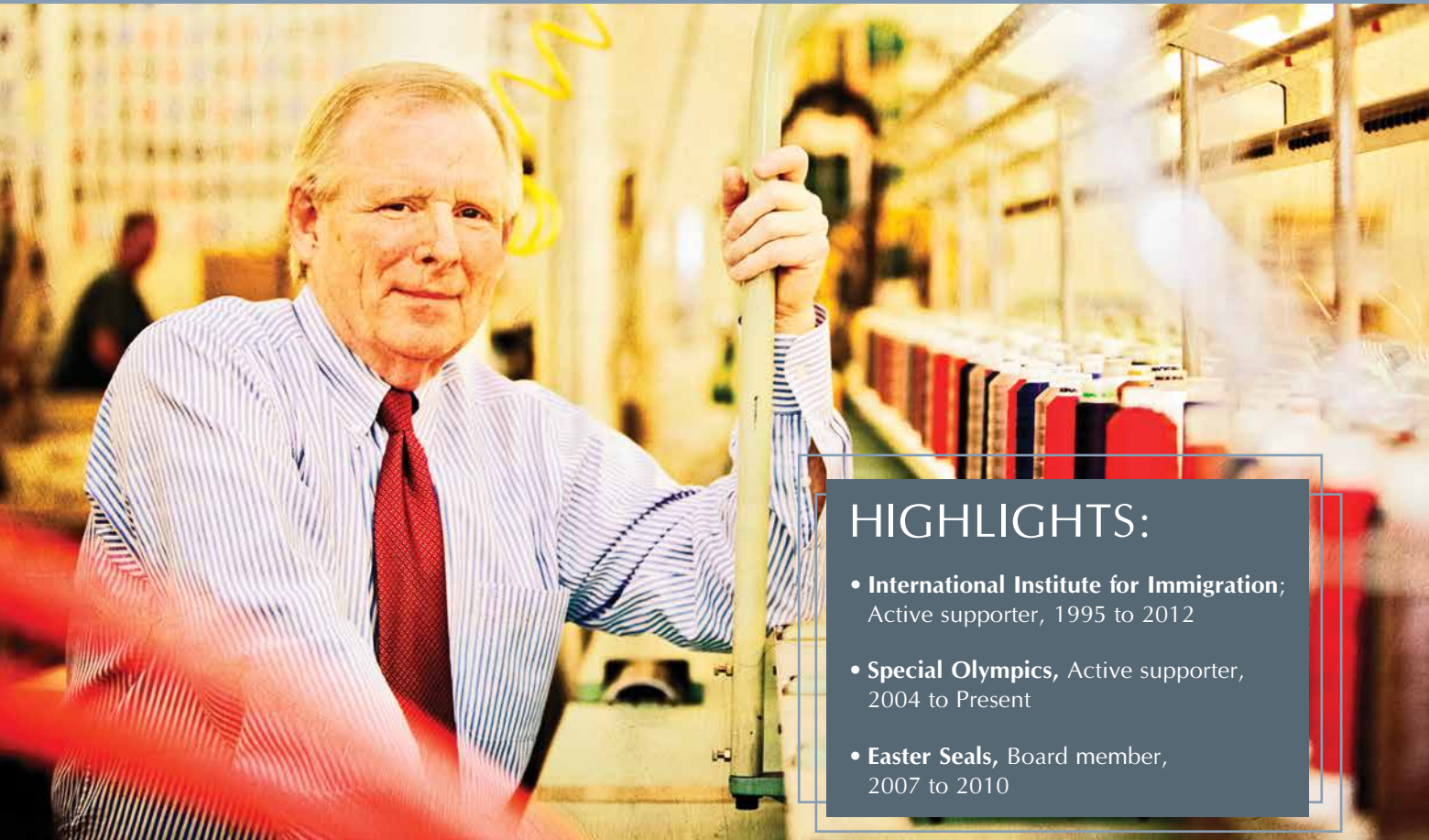
As the new president, he changed the name of the firm to Eisenberg, Vital & Ryze, but he exercised patience during his first year of ownership. "Fortunately, as we go through life, the one thing we gain is that patience will get us from Point A to Point B," he says.

And it paid off. Revenue at the firm has more than doubled since he took over and he says he's comfortable now inserting himself in all aspects of the business. "My DNA is all over everything we do now," he says.

Now that the dust has settled, he says, leadership is not a title—it is what you do. "If you take action, everything else will follow," he says.

# SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

TOM O'REILLY



## HIGHLIGHTS:

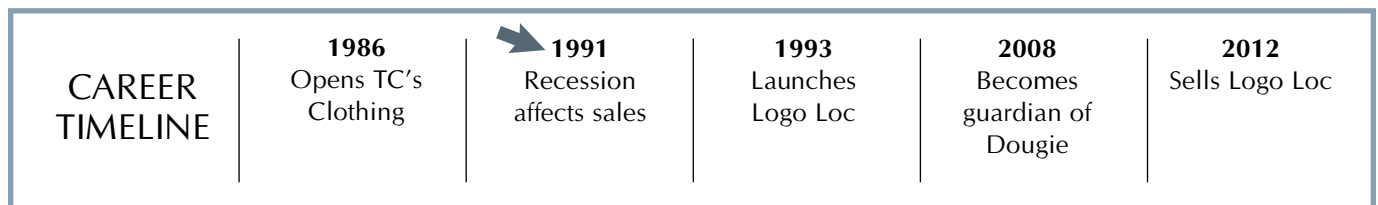
- **International Institute for Immigration;** Active supporter, 1995 to 2012
- **Special Olympics,** Active supporter, 2004 to Present
- **Easter Seals,** Board member, 2007 to 2010

**F**rancis “Spanky” Coulon remembers the first time he met Tom O’Reilly, the former owner and president of Logo Loc in Manchester, who gave him the job he still holds today. Spanky was having lunch in downtown Manchester when a stranger asked him if he had voted yet. When Spanky replied, “No, they are all crooks,” Tom hired him on the spot. Tom gave him a hat and a tool belt, and put Spanky to work cleaning, removing trash and greeting people at Logo Loc. A resident of Laconia School for 19 years, Spanky still gets emotional when he talks about getting out in 1971.

Tom also gets emotional when he speaks about Spanky and his other former employees with developmental disabilities and special needs. “These guys help me. They have amazing gifts of happiness. Whatever you give, you get back a thousand times,” he says.

Tom also knows what it means to struggle. He didn’t have it easy growing up in Pinardville. One of five children, he was encouraged to get part-time jobs, and the money he and his siblings earned went to support the family. He recalls one time his mother encouraged him to give money he’d earned to someone who needed it far more. Still a young boy, he responded angrily, telling his mother, a special education teacher, that he wanted to spend his money on himself. She let him know he was being selfish, telling Tom, “You’ve been given the ability to do for yourself and you’ll always be able to get things for yourself. These other people don’t have that same God given talent, so we must help them.”

Her lesson stuck with him. Tom’s mother introduced her kids to many children with developmental disabilities, often saying how those with special needs were in fact special. So as a teenager





working at a local market, Tom noticed a neighborhood kid with special needs, Dougie Poire, who bought a soda at the store every night. Tom struck up a conversation that led to a friendship, and before long Tom invited Dougie to join him when he went out carousing with his buddies after work. Dougie was game. The group would hang out at a regular pizza joint, and like many teenagers, also got into trouble drinking a beer or two, stealing a cigarette from their dads, chasing girls, or skinny dipping in local ponds and getting caught by the local police.

Tom says they once snuck into a local drive-in and were discovered by the owner and his assistant, who was furious. The owner questioned each boy individually until he got to Dougie. After asking Dougie a few questions, the owner pulled Tom aside to ask what was wrong with his friend. When Tom explained that Dougie had special needs, the owner said he was impressed that the group included him in their activities and he ordered the assistant manager to drive them all home.

Tom eventually, though, had to leave his friends when he landed a job in the garment industry in New York. While he loved the industry, he wanted to return home and when a colleague asked Tom to help him launch TC's Clothing Stores in NH in 1986, he leapt at the opportunity.

The stores had a good run until they hit the recession of the early 90s. Suddenly, customers had to make choices—either purchase fewer high-quality items or purchase less expensive items. Either choice meant fewer sales, and the business struggled. Tom fortuitously attended an industry trade show where he learned about the burgeoning demand for logos on clothing. A colleague told him how McDonald's (yes, that McDonald's) wanted to launch a promotional hat program, but the technology to do so wasn't available in the United States.

Tom returned to NH invigorated. He hired engineers and consultants to figure out how to create this new wave of promotional products. And, once they figured it out, he hired them to build the machinery necessary to mass-produce the clothing and hats. He also bought out the company from his colleague and Logo Loc was launched in 1993. While he missed out on the McDonald's contract, Tom soon landed other huge contracts with the likes of Nike, Fruit of the Loom and Disney.



Francis "Spanky" Coulon with long-time boss O'Reilly

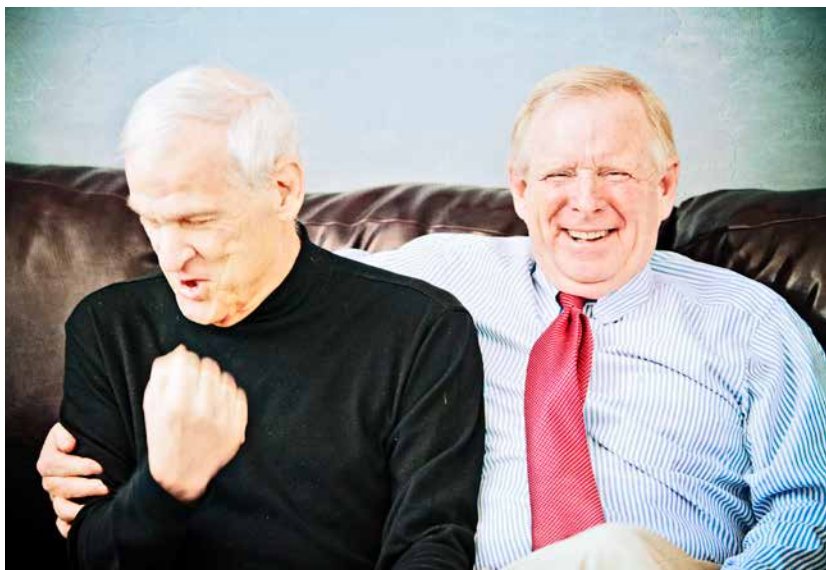
All the while, he made an effort to hire those less fortunate than himself. He worked with the International Institute for Immigration when they were struggling to find jobs for newly arriving immigrants and he continued to offer jobs to those with unique challenges.

Tom says he gets back so much more than he gives. "When you see someone take on what seems to be such a simple task and you see them struggle to understand it, you really appreciate what you have been given," he says.

In fact, when he decided to sell the business earlier this year to Spectrum Marketing, it was important to him that the new owners continue hiring those with special needs. Tom says he's been pleasantly surprised that the new owners not only support Special Olympics, but have plans to do even more than Tom did over the years.

So what's the future hold for Tom, who officially "retired" in July? He says he's working with a Hong Kong manufacturer to build a U.S. distribution network for them.

Through it all he maintained his three-decade long friendship with Dougie, and became his guardian four years ago when Dougie lost his last family member. Tom often jokes with him, "Hey, Dougie, now that I'm your father, you're grounded!"



O'Reilly with Dougie Poire



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