

WOMEN

In Business

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



Jennifer Reading

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR LINE OF WORK AND WHAT GOT *you* STARTED?

"I have been in libraries for 28 years. I was working at the National Cathedral School in Washington DC as the Administrative Assistant, and for fun every month I tried my hand at a contest in the Conde Nast Traveler magazine to name a different mystery place. And I was hooked. I loved trying to solve the riddle of where this place was. And it's before Google so you can't just take a phrase and pop it into a search engine and find the answer. So, I would go to the Lower School Library on my breaks and pore over atlases and globes. And one day the lower school librarian said, "Have you ever thought about being a librarian?" And I was like, "No." I was sort of indignant about it. Apparently, my high school librarian experience was not a positive one because I was usually the one getting in trouble and being shushed in the library. And she said, well, basically what I do every day is what you're doing right now. People come in with questions that they don't know the answer to, and I help them sleuth it out. And I thought, hmm... okay. Well, that opened up my eyes to a profession I had never even considered. I was a history major, so I figured I would do something in historic preservation or working in a museum. I never thought about being a librarian. And that's how I got on this path."



Jennifer and her two sons, Tom & Ben

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WOULD TELL OTHER Women GOING INTO BUSINESS?

“I think it goes back to that voice piece. Finding your voice and trusting in your voice and trusting that your voice should be heard. And that what you have to say is important and can be influential. And to practice the power pose: you know...stand in front of the mirror and do this Superwoman power pose - it really does help. Anytime I have had to go into challenging situations with folks, whether it's encouraging someone to seek employment elsewhere, or fighting for my budget or to make a change to systems, I think it really does help to do that power pose and pump yourself up. I have a couple

of songs that I listen to while I'm driving if I know it's maybe going to be a challenging day and I need to feel powerful. So I think, yeah, just going back to trusting your voice and believing that your voice needs to be heard.”



Jennifer and her Mother

HOW DID YOU MANAGE POWER STRUCTURES & IMPOSTER SYNDROME EARLY IN YOUR CAREER VS. LATER IN *your* CAREER?

"Well, I can assure you that early in my career I didn't navigate well at all. I had impostor syndrome and second-guessed myself constantly early in my career. I look back on how I navigated some management situations and at some of the decisions I made or ways in which I rolled out a new idea. And I thought, yeah, that definitely could have been done with a little more finesse and being a little more savvy. And as for power structures, in the school situation, when I was the director of libraries at the Independent School in Colorado, I served on the administration team, with the headmaster and other department heads, many of them men. And what I found really helpful was learning from my female colleagues about how to find my voice and my voice as a woman leader, and how to effectively make my voice heard. And not just heard, but listened to and respected and to have my ideas put into practice.

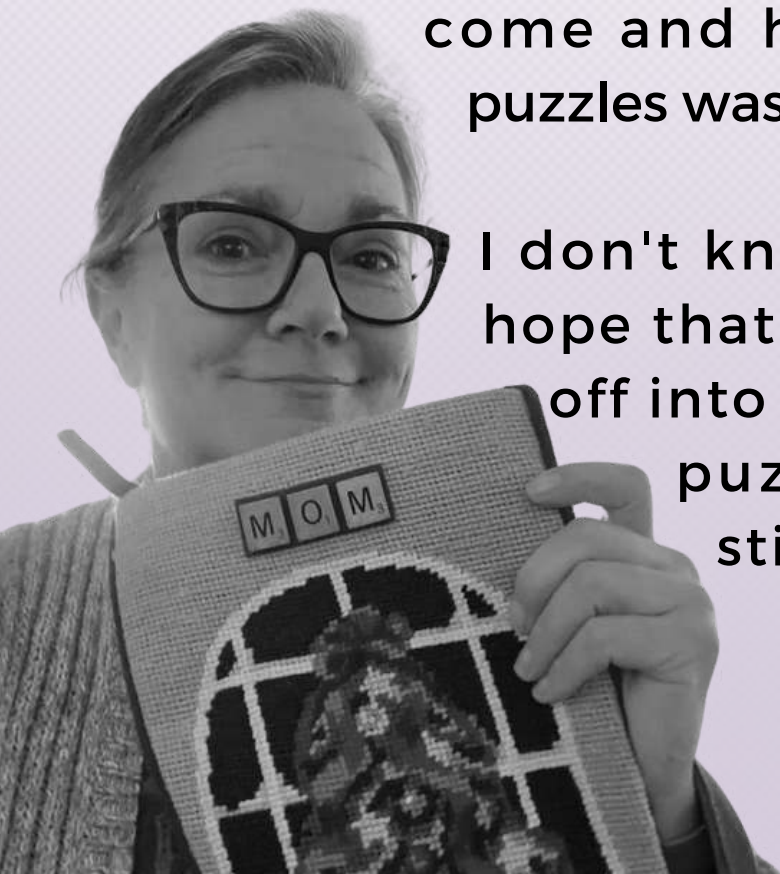
And in my current role at the city, Kim Jordan and I are the only women at the department heads' meetings. What I really appreciate about that group is that they respect my voice. I'm not even up on a year yet, so I'm still learning how we all work together and seeing what sort of influence I can have from my chair here in this office. I was actually asked that question by a 9th grade student at the high school when I was invited to be interviewed by the civics class. They were doing a project on what it means to be a good citizen, and they were learning about the different city services available to the Seaside community. And a question from one of the students was really astute: "How do you influence what happens in the City as the Library Director?" It's a big question, and it's something I've been thinking about ever since that class and I've developing ideas about how to create goals for myself that would help me to answer that question in a more fully fleshed out way. I'll report back when I can!"



TELL US A PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN YOUR CAREER *you* ARE MOST PROUD OF?

“This is really kind of simple and silly, but I think it qualifies as something I’m proud of. When I was the Library Director at Colorado Academy, where I worked for 10 years, I worked mostly with the high school students. I love crossword puzzles and I love the puzzles in the New York Times, which we had delivered to the library - including the Sunday Times, which was delivered to my house because the school wasn't open. And then I would bring the paper in on Monday morning and give copies of the Sunday puzzle to this crew of boys who, instead of tossing a Frisbee around on their lunch break, liked to come to the library and get totally into doing the puzzles. And with each daily puzzle, we would uncover a new little trick of what happens in a come and hang out in the library and do crossword puzzles was a fun little side gig that I got to do at the library.

I don't know if this is what I'm most proud of, but I hope that I have helped inspire a group of kids to go off into the world with this love of words and word puzzles. And it's gratifying to think that are still doing crossword puzzles because of their high school librarian.”



WHAT DO *you* WANT TO ACHEIVE NEXT?

"I am going to take surf lessons. I own a wetsuit now and recently got tossed around in the ocean and I learned a lot of lessons from that experience. I'm going to start swimming across the street at the rec center. And I'm going to take advantage of the amazing weather we have here - periodically! - throughout the year, and I'm going to hopefully stand up on a surfboard. So that's my personal goal. I'm coming up on one year here as the Library Director - May 13 is my one-year anniversary. And I can't believe how quickly it's gone by and also just how much I've learned over these past many months and finding new and creative ways to partner with different agencies and businesses in the City. For example, the library is connecting with the Seaside History Museum to support History & Hops and we're partnering with Beach Books to develop a 'One Book, One Community' reading opportunity to bring to the Seaside. So we're building on the amazing relationships we already have in Seaside and seeing ways that partnering can make it a richer and more fulfilling experience for the entire community."



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LUM'S
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"Advice for women? Go for it. Do your thing. Don't hold back" - Lori Lum

"Be strong, yet willing to take chances" - Julie Lum