

Secrets of Success

| BY LESLIE MILK | PORTRAITS BY FORREST GREENE |

THEY CAME, they saw, they created. The five people who will be inducted into the Washington Business Hall of Fame on Tuesday, December 1, have built successful organizations that fill business and community needs—and then some. They may not all be household names, but their companies are.

Twenty-one years ago, *The Washingtonian*, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and Junior Achievement of the National Capital Area created the Washington Business Hall

of Fame to recognize leaders who have made this area a great place to do business.

In 2007, Junior Achievement sent 1,600 volunteers into classrooms to teach 39,000 local students about financial literacy and entrepreneurship. This year, JA and Fairfax County Public Schools will open a “finance park” where eighth-graders can get hands-on lessons in money management.

For more information about the Hall of Fame dinner at the Washington Hilton, contact Junior Achievement at 202-777-4473.

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WHEN MARGERY KRAUS was growing up in the zinc-mining town of Franklin, New Jersey, her father owned the department store and outfitted local sports teams. When the mines closed in 1955, he took over the semiprofessional football team, the Franklin Miners, and built it into the league's best team, she recalls. Young Margery worked the press, made sure the cash receipts didn't get stolen, and occasionally bailed players out of jail. "Semiprofessional football prepares you for anything in life," she says.

Kraus started out teaching civics. In 1971, she heard about a new organization, Close Up, that planned to bring young people to Washington to see government in action. She went to Close Up officials and offered them a money-back guarantee: If she didn't succeed in helping develop the organization, it didn't have to pay her.

To widen the impact of Close Up, Kraus worked with the fledgling television network C-SPAN. She used the satellite time C-SPAN wasn't using to broadcast shows aimed at high-school students.

Arnold & Porter represented several cities negotiating with cable companies and heard about Kraus's work. The law firm was interested in creating an affiliate group of non-lawyers to do consulting on non-legal issues. In 1984, Kraus became the only employee of the newly created APCO.

Today APCO Worldwide is a global consulting firm offering public-affairs, communications, and business consulting to multinational corporations. APCO guides a busi-



Margery Kraus A Winning Strategy for Global Business

ness trying to get a foothold in a foreign market, helps manage a crisis, or helps create public-private partnerships. "We surround a problem," Kraus says. "We're like an embassy-in-a-box for business."

When the Soviets asked Arnold & Porter to help rewrite laws to open Russia to outside businesses, Kraus shepherded a group of American businessmen on a visit. That trip resulted in the opening of APCO's first international office, in Moscow. Today there are 29 offices in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

By 1991, APCO had 20 employees. But the company no longer logically fit inside a law firm. Kraus negotiated to have Grey Group acquire APCO as an independent subsidiary. She continued to expand APCO's reach, opening new offices, holding onto existing clients, and attracting new ones. In 2004, Kraus led a management buyout of APCO. Today the firm is a \$100-million enterprise, and some of the original 20 employees are still there. "We have a very unified vision and culture," she says. "Passion is our secret sauce."

Kraus continues to be deeply involved in Close Up, and she's a trustee of her alma mater, American University. This year she was named to the Enterprising Women Hall of Fame.

She believes women in business can use being women to their advantage. Kraus never enters a meeting unless she is "more than prepared," she says. "And I can't begin to tell you the value of being underestimated all of the time."

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