Annie: My name is Annie Hunt Burriss. Annie, a name from my grandmother. It really is my name, Annie and Hunt is my maiden name. I was very proud to be a Hunt. So when I got married, I added Burriss, didn't hyphenate because I'm not British royalty. You asked what shapes one's life. I think timing is everything. I had been very fortunate in my life. I was born to wonderful families. I was very much loved. Timing was great from a professional standpoint and educational standpoint, which manifest in being on the bleeding edge a lot of times, but also the leading edge.

I had been really, I guess, what I've been most lucky about is I've had three acts in life, professionally and that is economic development, the whole realm of attracting great jobs for Georgians and then backing into higher education, which is all about enabling talent and now, I'm having a good one with trying the corporate arena and figuring out how to make money through a lot of partnerships. So timing is everything.

So once upon a time, there was an architect in Elberton, Georgia, the granite capital of the world, and his wife who was a home economist at Georgia Power until she got married because then she could not be a home economist because she was married. They had three children. I was fortunate to be the middle child and grew up between two brothers, but they were six-feet tall and I'm 5'2". So they kept me humble, but they also prepared me for the world.

My father is, if I think of someone with integrity, I had a great role model. His name was James Matthews Hunt, Sr. He was the youngest of six kids. He grew up in a family of entrepreneurs in Elbert County. He was a seventh generation Elbert Countian. Revolutionary War Land Grants brought the Hunts from Virginia to Georgia. He was the first in his family to go to college. He got to do that by playing football for Clemson. He was a size 52 suit guy, a big dude, offensive lineman. I just have great respect for him because besides football, opening the doors for him his senior year at Clemson, which was a military college then in the late '30s said, "Mr. Hunt, do you want to be a football player or an architect? You got a choice and you have to make it now." He decided he want to be an architect. So he took on a whole bunch of part-time jobs and worked his way through.

So he was a role model for me later on in my life for how to go about getting things done. He was a doer. He was involved in one of the first public housing projects in the country. In fact, the project number was number one. It was Charleston, South Carolina. A lot of us think of Techwood Homes being one of the first, but it was a passion for him because he grew up seeing how many people on the deep south didn't have good housing, didn't have indoor plumbing, electricity. In fact, his family home burned down when he was five years old and it made him forever someone that was into brick and that sort of thing. He wanted to create good quality environments for people to flourish.

He also was ... You're into military. He definitely was. He was in the Corps of Engineers, Combat Corps of Engineers and spent four years in the Pacific, in the worst of the battles. You name all the worst ones and he was there helping to figure out where to help land people and that his relationships there manifest later on when he became one of the first architects for Marriott. He's major and he was the captain for, became the first COO, CFO of Marriott. When they decided to build their fifth Marriott in the world, it was Atlanta, Georgia and they hired my daddy to do that.

He did the sixth one in, I think it was Philadelphia and then the seventh was Chicago. That helped put all of us through college and camp because an architect is often someone that is on the leading/bleeding edge of the economy. Anyway, relationships matter. That was something else he taught me.

My mother was also a similar family background. Revolutionary War Land Grants to Wilkes County and Hart County, Georgia. She came from a different oak. Her mother went to college and several of her aunts did and they were part of that generation that were teachers. They were fascinating women, but my grandfather was the other part of the Old South and that the man she married was, he got to go to school every other year and amongst 13 siblings, they paired up every other year to go to school. So he was in the eighth grade when he had my grandmother as his teacher and he was 21 years old. He was just part of that generation that worked hard. They produced four kids. My mother was the third. All of them went to college and did well from that standpoint.

So your parents shape your lives. Your grandparents shape your lives. So my grandfather on the Hunt side owned a lot of properties and grocery store businesses. Every son had a grocery store business. On my mother's side, it was the farming.

I'm the middle child. As my father used to introduce me, I was his oldest daughter and his youngest daughter. My father treated me just like my brothers. I learned how to pitch a football pretty well. I was pretty good in art. I like drawing and I had to do my share of drafting just like my brothers, except I could not take drafting in high school. The girls were not allowed to do that in Georgia at that time.

I also did construction inspection with him. Then I became this little hostess. His engineers and blueprint companies were all in Atlanta. I was a pretty good student, so he would take me out of school and take me into Atlanta and I would go with him to meet his clients. I would be the little hostess at Fan and Bill's restaurant and Coach and Six, some of the old Herren's, some of the great old restaurants of Atlanta in the '60s and '70s. He demanded a lot. He expected a lot, but I was the only girl in those meetings.

He just kept saying, "You can do anything you set your mind to do." He was very supportive and my mother. He did a lot of civic engagement activities. They both really encouraged me to do things like girl scouts. I earned every damn badge there was because my mother is my girl scout leader and by golly, her daughter was going to do that.

When I expressed interest in music, they were totally supportive in that, in oboe and piano and things like that. That just opened up my world in so many ways. We were brought into under great secrecy to come to hear the Atlanta version of metropolitan opera when they came to town. We were sworn to secrecy because people in my hotel would have made fun of my dad for loving opera. My brothers hated it, but I loved it, too.

They were very supportive when I got involved in student government, which was a very pivotal point in my life. My senior year of high school in Georgia was the first year of total integration. So I was elected much to my surprise to be the White president from the White high school merging with the Black high school. In Georgia, often, it was eight through 12. That year, the Black schools often became a middle school and the White high school became the high school of 10 through 12.

So that was the case in 1970-1971. I was very fortunate that we had a great principal and a great dean of students. They encouraged Robert Thurman and me, he was the Black, to ... In fact, they set up everything and my parents helped support it, as well as a network of good quiet friends behind the scenes. The summer before we started the fall year, every Wednesday night, we had a cookout behind the high school gym and Robert and I flipped hamburgers and hotdogs and the group invited the student body officers, the class officers and the presidents of clubs that were being merged.

It was dicey, initially, but by the end of the summer, the leaders knew each other. When we came together, we did all right because leaders passed down that this is a good person to know and to work with and reliable communications permit progress, straight out of the bible, but it's very true.

So in Elberton with 5,000 people and a county of 18,000, but still about the same size, the granite capital of the world, we had no problems. The only problem I personally experienced was some of my family, my father's siblings were very upset that my picture was in a newspaper with a Black guy. My parents were very supportive and they said, "God created us all and there's no difference, just pigmentation. It's your job to help make this work." So it was scary and exhilarating time, but a great growth opportunity.

In fact, I'm thinking I'd like to go find the people that were in that similar role. I know of two others. I met them at student government training at Berry College that summer. One was Michael Thurmond, who has done a wonderful job. He was the co-president from the Black schools in Athens and then Dubose Porter was for Dublin, Georgia. I'm interested to see what's happened in, it's coming up on 50 years, how those things worked and didn't work.

Augusta, Georgia didn't do things like this and six people were killed, if my memory serves me correctly. I think there are a lot of parallels right now if we're not comfortable with people that are different than ourselves or perceive to be different than ourselves because God doesn't make any junk.

Another way that my parents were really helpful is they learned from their life experiences. My father was, as you know, in the military and he was so stunned by his experience four years in the Pacific, where he was out of the south for the first time and he was with people from all over the United States. He was convinced that part of our education was to be exposed to people from other parts of the country, not just southern or in the ways southerners thought. This was amplified by him being the first southerner to be on the National Registration Board for Architects. He was viewed as a leader by then.

Anyway, dad believed that we need to be part of the decision making. So I thought I wanted to go to Georgetown. He said, "You may go look at Georgetown as long as you go look at the places I want you to look at." About the fourth women's college, which happened to be Queens in Charlotte, North Carolina, I refused to get out of the car. I said, "Okay. I got it. You're trying to make me go to a women's college and I don't want to do that." He said, "You know what? About 51.7% or 52% of the world's population are female. If you learn how to get along with them, you're going to be much better."

At the time, I couldn't have gone to a place like Davidson. I couldn't have gone to Harvard. I would have had to go to Radcliffe. Within a year or two, that changed, but at my pivotal time in '71, you didn't have that opportunity. So he took me to this little two-year women's college in Bristol, Virginia called Sullins College, where he had dated some girls from there. He didn't tell my mother that at the time.

When I got out, he said, "You're going to know when you get to the right place and it's just going to feel right to you." I knew there, but I also thought in my mind, I said, "Okay. I'm going to do my two-year gig and I'm out of here and then I'd go where I want to go." It was a wonderful experience because Sullins, this tiny 350-student school had women roughly from 35 states and five or six foreign countries, which was a really diverse mix. There, I think they were pretty leading edge of focusing on a solid humanities education.

I hate to use the word "liberal arts" because I think liberal has a very different meaning these days, but it was a very balanced, collaborative. Everything was in sequence. You got the history of the world combined with the arts and with the sciences. It was exhilarating to me. It was just a good base to build upon, always with the idea that critical thinking skills and expressing yourself and your value system were really important.

Sullins was also important to me because in that environment, I was given leadership opportunities. I was lucky in a bunch of them. One of them, I was the vice-president of student body and then the president of student body got caught smoking marijuana and she got ousted and so I became the president of student body, which meant I got exposed to SACS. Sullins was getting recalibrated.

This is a terrible story, but my parents are both gone, so maybe they won't know. Bristol, Virginia was a place where there were a lot of race car drivers. Some of us went to the NASCAR race at Bristol. I must confess that I got a little inebriated and drinking Scotch with diluted [inaudible 00:16:04] Got back to the dorms and I was supposed to go to dinner that night representing Sullins College at the SACS re-accreditation dinner. Dr. Pritchet picked me up and he said, "Oh, my goodness! Annie, you're inebriated." I said, "Yes, I am." So we went and tried to sober up with a lot of coffee and went to this wonderful dinner.

One of the most humbling experiences of my life is I was cutting my filet mignon and it went over into the lap of the president of Vanderbilt University. This was when I learned, "No, you do not, you do not mix your alcohol with your responsibilities." So my dad had emphasized to us that it was important to understand other regions.

My younger brother, who's the smartest of all of us, just brilliant, he was a wild child and I was about to had an influence of him and I had been to a fraternity party up in Fulton, Missouri, the Sigma Chi White Rose. Daddy said I could go to that as long as I went and check out Steven's college in Columbia, Missouri, where he'd wanted me to go in the first place. So I said, "You know what? I think Westminster would be great for Howard and it was where Winston Churchill had done his famous iron curtain speech. I really like Stevens had the studio arts that was interested in and also the art history, which I was interested in. That was College Town USA with University of Missouri there.

Dad said, "Okay. You two can go," because he said, "The people I enjoyed most in the military were people that were out of the Midwest. They're just rock solid people. They tend to be ... They've come out of farming roots. They're a show-me state. You got to think when you go there." He was also a big fan of Harry Truman for doing the right things for the right reasons.

So in '73-'75, I went to school at Stevens. There, I earned my bachelor of fine arts, which complemented the associate of fine arts from Sullins. There, I also received wonderful leadership opportunities. I don't remember how, but I became the senior class representative to the board of trustees. That was a fascinating opportunity. Mr. Pillsbury of Pillsbury was chairman of the board. I remember at one meeting, he said, "Annie, come here and sit down next to me." You will get this because of higher ed. It certainly came back to enlighten my thought process about higher ed money. He was sketching on a napkin.

At the time, Stevens had 1,200 students. He said, "We have got to grow this school to 2,000 students because the price points work for the ... There's a certain amount of costs and benefits to running an operation and you really needed 2,000 students to make it work." I thought, "Wow! I never thought about anything like that," but it was just wonderful because I had access to ... I don't know why that door opened, but it was one that I went through and it was wonderful.

While I was at Stevens, I was able to go to the University of Missouri to take those drafting courses I always wanted to take and I wasn't allowed to in Georgia. While there, the professor said, "There's a great book. Since your daddy was an architect, you might want to read a book called The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand," and I did. Man, when I read that, I thought, "Yes, this is what I want to do. I want to be an architect just like my dad," and I really liked the model of integrity in there."

So it was also the '70s when we already had a bad energy crunch and I remember a number of my father's clients bankrupted on him, headquarters projects that were big name companies. I thought, "You know dad worked his way through college. I can do that." So I called up Georgia Tech and I said, "I plan to come there to do a second undergraduate and state student. I will need help working my way through and I've already been responsible for a dorm here, so I'd like to do that there." I mean, they accepted me. I had pretty good grades.

I did not know at the time girls didn't go there. I called my dad and I said, "Guess what, dad? I'm going to be an architect just like you." He said, "Well, that's a very good thing. What are you thinking about doing?" I said, "I'm not expecting you to pay for it. You've given me a wonderful education and great travels." I said, "I intend to work my way through it and then going to Georgia Tech." He said, "I think you need to rethink that. They're really not producing very good architects right now," and he was on the state registration and national registration board at the time.

I said, "Are you just saying that because you don't like them because of football," because I grew up every Saturday possible in Death Valley, Clemson. I remember those Georgia Tech Clemson games. He said, "No, no. That's not it." He said, "I think you need to lift your aspirations. You need to consider going to a place like University of Pennsylvania or Yale or Harvard, the design programs." He said, "I don't think MIT is a good fit for you." I said, "Well, that's too bad because I'm working my way through and I've already got it all set up and I'm going to Georgia Tech."

Once I got to Georgia Tech, I understood ... Well, one of my 20 million part-time jobs besides being responsible for first flooring on a dorm was I worked in a registrar's office. Back then, the computers were the size of a room like this. So student assistants would help paste grades and transfer them onto the grade cards. I worked for the secretary to the registrar. That's how I found out that in 1975, one of 13 undergrads was a female and one out of 21 was a graduate student. I came in as a hybrid. I was pursuing a second undergraduate in architecture, but I was able to also pursue graduate courses because of my mixed background.

So Georgia Tech was a great growth opportunity. I'm glad I had two brothers and I'm really glad I had the experiences of going to women's colleges because I think I probably would have flapped out and I did. That is a story in itself. I guess the best example I can give, it made me understand the world of African-Americans a lot better, is I went into a graduate course and acoustical design and the professor said, "What are you doing here, a secondary class?" He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I'm here to learn." He said, "Not in my class." I said, "Why not? I've paid my tuition, I've got my books." "I don't teach girls. Out of here."

I thought, "What did I do wrong?" I had done all the right stuff and I went to my part-time job in the registrar. I cried my eyes out thinking like a girl because girls do think differently than guys. I thought, "I must have done something wrong. It couldn't have been him. It's got to be me." I was just crying my eyes out.

Mrs. Bill said, "I'm going to go and tell Mr. Roper about this, the registrar." He came out and got me. Man, I didn't want them to see my crying. He had me to repeat the story and he said, "You didn't do anything wrong. You just go right back to class on Thursday and it's going to be fine." It was, but there was a bitterness that had to be overcome.

It's like in my first design class. The professor is going around the room. There was one other guy that was a second undergraduate. He had gone to Swanny's, so he became easily one of my best friends quickly because he had that humanities background, too. The professor stopped, I mean, he wanted us to tell who we were, where we were from and what we're interested in. So I said, "I'm Annie Hunt from Elberton, Georgia and a second undergraduate. My dad's an architect." His demeanor went. He said, "Is your dad, James Hunt?" I said, "Yeah, yeah, he is." He said, "Ah! Okay." I felt a chill factor.

So that night, I went to the expenditure of calling my daddy. I said, "I got this professor and he was really cool with me until I told him your name. I'm really proud to be your daughter." He said, "Oh, I'm so sorry you got to have him." He said, "He came up for his professional architectural registration and I was the board member that said, "He has not had sufficient professional experience. He's got all academic experience and you have to have so many hours."

So he said, "You're starting out on the low-end on that one." It was a good growth opportunity. Then I had very supportive professors, too, and I want to tell you about, too. One was Arthur Frank Beckham. He was an architectural history professor, pretty round, very poppa, came out of the Ivy's. There were 200 people in his class and I was scared to death the first time I walked in. I didn't see any girls in there and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh!" The only empty seats were in the back of the classroom. There were some down at the very front, so I just screwed my courage to the sticking place and walked right in front.

Afterwards, I became ... Here's just a neat guy. I thought he was brilliant in the way he wove together the history of architecture with the cultures and the politics and the sciences of the eras. We became friends, though, I was scared to death of Arthur Frank Beckham because he was so poppa. Anyway, at one point he said, "I understand that you are working your way through school." I said, "Yes, sir. I am." He said, "Would you like the chance to earn an honorarium?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, you know Philip Shutze." who was just a phenomenal architect bringing classics to Atlanta. He said, "He designed the Swan House," which is next door the Atlanta History.

He said, "The architectural drawings are just in tatters now." He said, "I believe I could get you a job of recreating it on white board, so that it could be a permanent display." He said, "It's really interesting the construction on the building." He said, "Outside is equidistant, yet, the rooms are also equal inside and that was just engineering of these plaster walls." To make a long story short, I got that and the honorarium. I appreciated him understanding I was working so hard to work my way through.

Then fast forward to my second year, I was able to take a graduate course in construction inspection because of all my experiences with my dad. In fact, he said, "Go take this course and I support you," because he actually learned from Corbusier and Walter Gropius, the great architects of our time.

So long story short, I became one of his students and his daughter is Maria Saporta, who subsequently has become a good friend. That construction inspection course required us to go once a week with him to inspect construction underway, but we also had to secure a property that we went to ourselves every week and you record it.

I soon found out, every site, there were not that many construction projects in Atlanta, major construction because of the recession. I also discovered that no contractor wanted me on their site because girls were viewed as bad luck, really bad luck. I was coming up. When I had to turn in where I was going, I had applied to six or seven places. So I finally called daddy and I said, "I hate to be in your coattails, but you got to help me here. Who was somebody that could help me get on a site?" He said, "Okay. There's one guy. You have to be prepared for the following. His name is Larry Gellerstedt. It's Pierce Construction. You have to call him between 5:15 AM and 5:30 AM. You have to get everything said in 30 seconds and do not be surprised if he doesn't hang up on you without saying goodbye."

So I practiced. I got my thoughts down pretty succinctly. I did use my father's name because they had done work together in the first Marriott. That was Larry Gellerstedt's first big project that I came to learn about years later. I said, "I just can't get on any site. If I can't do that ..." I said, "You know my dad and you know how you would be and I promise you if you will let me on any of your construction sites, I will come in overalls and my hair up and a hard hat on. They'll never know I'm a girl, never know I'm a girl." He said, "Okay. Someone will call you back probably by tomorrow."

He did get me onto a construction site at Emery University. I didn't have time to say, "How am I going to get over there?" because I didn't have a car. I was taking MARTA Bus or riding my bike. Things have a way of working out, but I appreciated his kindness for giving me a break. I didn't know that girls were such bad luck. I made an A on that course. So I was proud of that.

So let's fast forward to Rufus Hughes, who was my design professor. He's a phenomenal human being. At one point in the school of Eternal Light because when you got an architecture school here, you have to pull out projects and you didn't get much sleep in that school. Fortunately, I am somebody that didn't need but about four or five hours of sleep at night like my dad.

Anyway, Rufus said, "Let's catch Coke together." He said, "Annie, you can do architecture. I don't have any doubt about it. You got a great sense of color. You got a sense of history. You got a sense of all the multidisciplinary aspects, which is what an architect is. They are like a conductor for an orchestra. They are that for construction," he said, "but there is something that's just not right. I don't know what the gap is. It may be a third-dimension, an understanding of third-dimensions, but here's what I want you to do. I've made arrangements for you to go take a test at the counseling center."

He said, "You got really good strengths." He said, "This is not it. I don't know what is or I would tell you what I think it is, but go take this test." So I did. My male side said that I should be a pastor. Well, I didn't know any women pastors at that point. Number two is a lawyer. I didn't know women lawyers. Number five was to be an architect. On my female side, it was dean of students. I thought, "No way. You got to go get a doctorate. There's no way I want to go get a doctorate at this point in my life. I didn't enjoy college as much as I want to."

Somehow, they came up with a thing that, "You have a multidisciplinary mind. You enjoy those intersections, those collaborations like architects do. Why not go into city planning? That was a professional degree in the College of Architecture." So I did.

In the meantime, I thought, "Okay." So I'll segue into that. I think I'm going to go try to get a job through the governor's intern program because I was working my way through and there was a pretty good internship stipend if you got the graduate one. So I went down to the governor's office and I said, "I want an internship doing with energy and architecture." They said, "We don't have anything in that, but we do have something with energy and transportation." I went, "Gross!"

They said, "Well, there's a guy by the name of Payton Haas, who is the state DOT board member for the fifth congressional Atlanta and he's trying to figure out what to do with the great park because Jenny Carter stopped the Stone Mountain Freeway going through town and they're trying to figure out what to do with the land. We've sent a bunch of people to interview with him. He's not selected anybody. Would you go try?" I said, "Yeah," because you know what? He grew up in Elberton, Georgia. I don't know him personally, but his sister was my fifth grade teacher and she went to Stevens and that's why I went to Stevens.

Anyway, long story short, I went and interviewed and he offered me the job. I said, "Well, I'm not accepting it unless it is as a graduate student because I can't afford it." He said, "Okay." I said, "I need to structure this, so I can get credits for it." He said, "Okay." So I went back to my professors and was able to engineer 15 hours of quarter credits on that. Then we signed a contract and then I got a call from Payton. He said, "Annie." He was a great attorney in this town. He said, "I don't know what to say except to tell you straight. Tom Moreland, Commissioner of DOT just called me and said, "You can't have an intern. You've got 6,000 employees at your disposal.'" I said, "But Mr. Haas, a contract has been signed and I have got all these course credits lined up for it." He said, "I can make an appointment for you with Tom Moreland."

So I called Mr. Moreland. I thought he's just a damn bureaucrat getting in my way. So I called him and I said, "A contract has been signed and I'm eager to fulfill my part of it. I'm glad to Xerox, make coffee, do whatever needs to be done, but I'm fully expecting you to honor this." He said, "Well, young lady, you come down here and there's maybe three different options I could offer you. To make a long story short, I ended up taking the one working for John Hassell and it was in policy planning.

It was the convergence of politics. It was state money, working with the legislature and federal money. It was engineering and I was starting to take civil engineering. Long story short, it was wonderful. I had to read the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, Engineering News Record and do little clip service for the chancellor, commissioner, excuse me. I got to work with the legislature and then they offered me a job in the summer, a full-time.

Instead of starving, eating an apple with peanut butter three times a day is my diet. I was able to have money for once. They suggested that I apply for a federal highway fellowship and I got lucky. I was awarded one. It was a lot of money back then. It would be about 50,000 now. Then because I was awarded that fellowship, I did my city planning focused on transportation. So I took a lot of civil engineering port design and airport design and a whole host of things. When I got done, they said, "You have a four-year commitment to work for us now," which was all right because it was a pretty good job.

So this is another story of how at the time I was just bewildered, but Commissioner Moreland who had made me crying off a lot, but he never knew I was crying. I went to the little girls' room and cried because I and the secretary were the only women engaged at this level. I helped him staff the board and go work with the Georgia General Assembly, which there were not many girls did that then.

Anyway, he said, "Go down and see the HR people and get lined up. We want you to work here." He said, "In fact, I want you to be section chief for the policy planning group," because John Hassell, who was a fabulous boss had gone to Washington with Jenny Carter at that point and ultimately became head of the Federal Highway Administration.

Anyway, I go in to see Theryl Brown and he said, "Annie, you've just done a great job. We like what you're doing with the legislature and the template you set up for track bills. So we're pleased to offer you a full-time position as a planner for 14,000 a year." I said, "Now, Theryl, somebody that I'm in school with the Georgia Tech that is getting exact same degree as me who has no work experience, you have just offered him 18,000 a year. He's a friend of mine. So why? What's the difference? I have work experience. You know me, you don't know him. He's a great guy. He's a good choice, but I don't understand this difference."

He said, "Well, he's got a wife and a child to support and you don't. You're not married." I said, "Now, Theryl, the principle of the matter is you're paying me to do the work and you're paying him to do the work. The wife and child are not involved. That's irrelevant to this case." I said, "I expect at least 18,000, which I should have asked for more." We had several weeks of negotiating and finally came in at 18,000, but I should have made more. I should have stood my ground more, but that was ... I think it always became important to me afterwards to pay the individual for what their work was and not judge the book by its cover.

DOT was great to me, had a lot of wonderful opportunities. Got married there. Other men thought I would become Annie Burriss and I said, "No, I'm Annie Hunt Burriss." They said, "no, you're not. You're Annie Burriss." I said, "No. I'm proud to be a Hunt. I'm proud to be a Hunt. I'm adding on. I'm not losing anything and I'm not British royalty, so I'm not dashing it."

I have to stay in my ground about that, but it's my name, okay? Maybe I could let go of it now, but I am proud to be my daddy's daughter. It tickles me now because men don't know, people don't know what to call me and they call me Annie Hunt a lot of time like Annie Ruth, Annie May, but I enjoy that.

Anyway, they still had me go into the legislature. Happily, Woody and I found out that we were expecting ... I'd had some job offers, but I thought, "It's not the time to change." Nobody had been pregnant there except secretaries. I really thought long and hard about how do I handle this. Well, fortunately, I'm pretty healthy. I had a ton of sick leave. So I went to Moreland first and I said, "Here's the great news and this is what I'm going to do." I said, "I want to take three leaves and three months of maternity leave and the fourth month, I'm going to stage it back, so it's good for everybody. I've got the leave and so that's what I'm going to do. You're okay with that, right?" He said, "Okay," and because he said okay, everybody else had to do it, too.

That worked out well. Then an opportunity came to be a part of the Atlanta Regional Commission. They wanted a planner that understood transportation and I had been going to the MARTA board meetings for Tom Moreland and the Atlanta Hartsfield planning meetings as his person. So I had to have somebody to give me recommendations. So I called the governor's office of planning and development because ... Oh, this is an even better story.

When I worked for Tom Moreland, it was when Governor George Busby was governor. I ended up working with the governor's office as a great deal because George Busby was chair of the transportation committee for the National Governors Association. So we came up with policy. I was able to use some of my policy work for my graduate courses. I had done a study of Georgia and then the 50 states and the impact of energy on transportation funding and what policies we might pursue.

This was when I lost all respect for government. They used my executive summary statement as policy for the National Governors Association. I thought, "A governor should write his own work." I mean, here I am 20 something years old and I didn't know that governors didn't really do their own writing. So back to the Atlanta Regional Commission job, they called to check my references in the governor's office and the governor's office called me and they said, "We had no idea you'd ever leave DOT, that you just seemed so happy and love it there. We've got an opening over here."

To make a long story short, I went to that with Tom Moreland's blessing to be the grant staffer for the first governor's economic development council. It was cool because I got to do planning and I was paired up with a budget analyst for Georgia Department of Industry Trade at the time, community affairs, forestry, Jack LaLanne and I was the grant staffer for the Georgia dam project.

In that, well, I got to meet all the key leaders and I brought in these people to brief the council members who were composed of the agency heads, so they could understand all the dynamics and the projects and what kind of funding was really needed. As a result of that, I was offered the opportunity to go work with George Barry, but I have to go back to George Barry. He'll dive with the story, but he's laughed about it.

When I was on maternity leave, about six months earlier, my good friend, Dan Aebersold, who eventually became the treasurer of Georgia called me up and he said, "You're going to kill that baby on maternity leave. So I need you to go to this luncheon with me and give the baby a break." He said, "I just, in my gut, feel like this is something that you would be good in." So we went to hear the new commissioner of industry and trade, George Barry speak.

I said, "I know him from afar because he was the person that built Hartsfield Airport under budget and had a schedule and DOT signage and all that stuff had responsibilities with him." So gives his talk at this luncheon. I felt my heart go right into my throat and I thought, "This is what I want to do. I want to do economic development. It's the convergence of all these things that I've studied. It's culture, it's history, it's the arts, it's civil engineering, it's architecture, it's city planning."

Afterwards, Dan waited with me and I was the last person to be in line to see George. I said, "I love what you do. It's what I want to do. If you got any openings, please consider me." He's a big dude and he looked at me and he said, "You can't do that." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Because there aren't any girls that do this." I said, "Well, at some point, you will probably need someone and I'm pretty qualified. Please keep me in mind."

Within nine months, I was working for it. I was really lucky with ... He invited [Debra Lonus 00:45:18] who had a tourism background, but also construction with the Japanese background. So it was the leading/bleeding edge in 1984 that I was allowed to pioneer in that area. Back then, it was industrial development. So I just had a blast figuring out. I thought, "If I could help a company find a location that was successful for them, they could bring good jobs." I always had Hahira in my mind.

Imagine a little town like Hahira getting good jobs and somebody getting a good job and their kid getting a bike under their Christmas. They never would have had otherwise. Years later, that came true for me with ICAPP, but I'm ahead of the story. Anyway, it was fun. I thought, "The south was really changing a lot and because of Hartsfield, that was the ..." Of course, transportation is the cardiovascular system of the economy. I thought, "We had a strategic advantage no one else had." We were starting to get international flights.

So Mr. Barry let me go recruit international banks in New York City. My philosophy was if we got the banks, they would bring their customers with them. I targeted the international flights coming in. I just had a blast. It was exhilarating to do that.

I also started focusing on the other strategic strengths that made Atlanta different from our competitors and that was our research universities were really pretty good. Georgia Tech had taken a different turn. It had come through the mindset of, "Was it going to be a respectable regional engineering school or was it going to become international and first-class research university?" and it made that move. Then the great money of Coca-Cola had helped, but Georgia Tech and Emery really stepped up.

Then George Barry, one morning, came to me and he said, "Tomorrow morning, I need you to be at a breakfast meeting. I need you to be on time. You will be there and a few other and don't embarrass me." So I was there and it was at Sun Trust, a trust company then. It was an amazing opportunity he gave me. It was that core of quiet leaders behind the scenes in banking and civic leaders. The project was to go after the headquarters of the American Cancer Society. It had become a national project.

Atlanta was not being considered because the relocation consultants, which were the best in the world at the time, [Fannes 00:48:08] out of Chicago said, "Cancer Society, you need to leave New York City because it's too expensive. You've done well the first 75 years of your existence, but you need to go to somewhere else and your corporate board is who's who of corporate America. You need to make it easy for those CEOs to get to you. So you need to be in the central time zone. You need to purchase an existing building. You need to not be near any federal installation that could prejudice research dollars coming in," because the Cancer Society, if you look at history, they have funded more pre-Nobel Laureates than anybody. So most prestigious nonprofit in the world at that time.

They said, "We want to go after them." The chairman of the board was actually from Atlanta and he said, "We're going to have to really work hard on this," but George Barry said, "Good. Annie is my project manager on this and we will connect her out with the Atlanta Chamber, Roy Cooper." Long story short, we were able to convince them that you don't need to be in the central time zone. Atlanta is actually west of Detroit, so blow that away. Atlanta was red hot right then for economic development. We had no buildings you could buy. So I was able to go in and see the board members and say, "Gentlemen," these were all top line CEOs, I said, "you're elegant dressers and I would be willing to bet that you all have on custom tailored suits, which is a big investment, but it's a wise investment because it goes with your body type and it will probably last you 20 years versus two or three years with a rack suit."

I said, "Sir, you really need to have a custom designed building, so that it doesn't look too luxurious, but it really functions for this nonprofit headquarters. If you come to Atlanta, you're right there with the world's center of epidemiology with the CDC. I think that there's philanthropic support for you to be right across the street from them and next door to Emery and we can make this work." That is what we ended up doing.

That project was a lot of fun for these two insider insights that few people know. We were competing against other states, where the governors were very much engaged, not that Joe Frank Harris wasn't. He was a great governor. More jobs got created under him than any governor before or since, net new jobs, 880,000, but he's a teetotaler and these other governors, man, they're wining and dining because they wanted these CEOs to come also bring industry to their states.

So I said, "Okay. What we're going to do is we're going to have breakfast at the governor's mansion. There's no alcohol involved." Roy Cooper and I set up a group of 50 leading citizens of Atlanta. Roy was one of these great leaders behind the scenes, who was head of economic development for the Atlanta Chamber for 30 something years, one of the most humble men, but everybody respected him and would take his calls.

So we went to the major banks first and said, "Would you be one of our 50 leading citizens to wine and dine these CEOs when they come in?" Nobody turned us down of those 50 leading citizens. So as the different parties came in, this was about '86-'87, they got wined and dined. It was a great win-win situation for everybody.

We were really coming down to the hatch of ... There was a lot of money being offered by Governor Schaefer in Maryland and I don't remember the governor's name in Texas, but in Colorado, they were all going in for this project. Roy and I were sitting around going, "There's no money. Georgia does not buy our projects."

I think I'm the only person alive that knows this story now. I said, "Roy," who was a great libertarian, "what's the chance of us getting Delta to be the first airline to be smoke-free, no tobacco on it?" This was '87. It was August of '87. He said, "Well, first of all, it's not our right to take people's smoking away from them." I said, "First of all, why should your smoke be messing up my lungs and it would save Delta money and their stewards and stewardesses get sick a lot. I know that from personal friends. It's a mess to clean up an airline because you've got the interiors just get really nasty?"

I said, "What have you got to lose if you call Dave Garrett?" Long story short, he picked up the phone and called Dave Garrett. He said, "This is fraud with politics. I can't do it immediately, but I can make you a commitment that we will do that, but you can only tell two people." It was the top two people at Cancer Society and tell the governor and the commissioner, George Barry. So we did it.

That is endemic to the civic engagement that great CEOs in Atlanta played at that time and I think they still do. That was a different city, different city. It's a couple of million now. We're approaching seven million. To his credit, I went back and looked it up because Roy just died, 91 years old. I loved him. We stayed in touch for a long time. He was a Georgia Tech grad who let women come along. He didn't have to, but he did.

I looked up at the record and indeed, Dave Garrett kept his promise. He retired as CEO, but stayed on the board from 1988 through 1994. He retired from the board of Delta on December 31st '94 and on January 1, 1995, Delta was the first airline to be smoke-free. It did took a lot of people off, especially their business travelers, but if you look at it, all the rest of them were grateful for that. That indication of what Georgia was willing to do to listen to what the needs were of the American Cancer Society and focus on what was really important to them, you don't have to buy people. You can do a whole lot of different things that make it fine and even feel it. That's what we did and that made us successful.

So I love those projects. Then one of the people that helped us secure it, I went to [Pap Atillo 00:55:14] who was well-known for his giving. I said, "We need a warehouse for them. Could you do a tax write off by building them and donating a 50,000 square foot warehouse for all their printing materials if we got the land for you right there on Clifton Road?" He said, "Yes." Here's a handshake kind of guy. Those are the people I love to work with.

Pat came back to me and he said, "Okay. Now, you've been talking to me about how you're fired up about CDC and Emery having all these potential with the medical and Georgia Tech with the engineering and then it's the industries of the future that you feel like textiles are going away and those cheap land, cheap labor, which drives manufacturing is going offshore." He said, "It's time for you to leave the state and you need to come see what it's like on the local level because all politics is local."

So with his support, I went to the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, which was the second largest chamber in the state at the time. I was vice-president of economic development. Again, I was just lucky. I was lucky and that I had leaders that really supported me there. So while they took delegations to go see what we can do to recruit pharmaceutical industry, we went to France, German, Switzerland to go see the home places of industry and I was able to get in to see and take my delegation to see.

There, during that tenure at the DeKalb Chamber, two weeks after I birth my last baby, which was September of '89, we birth what was called a Clifton Quarter Biomedical Research Council. I was trying to emulate the Silicon Valley, but connect the dots here of how we could be the Clifton Quarter. So we started up this 501(c)(3) and great foundations that I work with in helping to secure the American Cancer Society. They were engaged with that idea. They gave us money to start that up.

The Woodriff, for example, said, "We'll give you $500,000 to get this nonprofit going to connect the dots of business, academia, government and philanthropy, to grow the biomedical industry, but you have to have an executive director first." I said, "I can't get an executive director without having that 500." They said, "No. You have to figure that out."

So I went with the former president of the American Cancer Society nationally, [Dr. Hamleton 00:57:52] who lived in Atlanta, signed that Cancer Act in '72 with Nixon. We went to see the head the CDC and I said, "Okay. Business loans executives to government. Can government loan to a nonprofit? We've gotten 501(c)(3). Can you loan me Eric Greene, who is head of your tech transfer?" The feds had just started this tech transfer program. He said, "Okay." Then the Woodriff gave us money and other foundations gave us money. We began a very conservative effort to effectively link up business, academia, government and philanthropy to grow this industry.

It became very evident to me that business and government work together and government and academia work together and academia and business often work together, but you needed a three-legged stool to stand up. A ladder is a useful thing, where you go and step, step, step, but what you're leaning against falls, you're a dead meat, but a three-legged stool or a four-legged with the philanthropy, which comes out of business, you can do something.

So that organization is coming up on its 30th year. It was exhilarating. It's now Georgia Bio. I think one of the great highs of my life was in 2008, when Georgia hosted Bio International and I went to the World Congress Center and I'm walking around and there were 17,000 people that had come to Atlanta and there were all kinds of languages being spoken, but the stream was working. It was great tourism dollars and great kinds of companies coming out of that. So that was a lot of fun.

When you have a second child, you don't want to manage people. I did not want to manage people. Georgia Power came to me about coming to work for them. Now, I had just started one from the Atlanta Chamber. One of their top researchers come down my team at the DeKalb Chamber and she said, "I'm not going to come work for you because you're going to leave as soon as I get here." I said, "No. I promised I won't leave for a year, at least a year, but I want after that. You come work for me and you can work from home because I know you work your work ethics and computers were starting to come along," and she had small children.

So she came to work for me and right after she came to work for me, Georgia Power came and said, "We're offering you this job," and I said, "Boy, I really wanted to do it because it was a lot more money and I wouldn't be managing people, but I made a promise to Susan Contreras. What good are you if you don't honor your word?" Happily, they came back when my year commitment was up and I left and went to Georgia Power.

I thought, "I can just go back to doing what I love, which is economic development on a broad scale because Georgia Power, oh, my goodness, what a great organization from an economic ..." I mean, they've been real pioneers globally in how they do go about that process. Then they said, I've been there about six months and I got called to the senior vice-president's office and he said, "Annie, we noticed you have this background in transportation. We need you to start up electric transportation for us because California is changing the whole dynamic and they're requiring so many electric vehicles in order for a car manufacturer to even sell cars in that state," this is in the early '90s, "and we want you to pioneer that for us."

I said, "I hate cars. I really don't care about them." They said, "Well, we really care and we understand you still have good relations with DOT." It dawned on me, "Oh, my goodness! This is what a big corporation is when they say, 'We invite you to consider this opportunity,' it means you better damn well do it.

So it was good that Tom Moreland years ago had said, "That burning your bridges and leaving, if you had some people being really hateful here to you, but just don't do it." Fortunately, I did have really good relation still. So that was a blast. I found out early on and I had great staff. I had a bunch of engineers that really wanted my job. They loved cars and they loved electric like I give a rip, but it was fine to me to go network with the electric power companies across the country because they were united and figuring out, "Oh, how can we tap into this deal?"

The car companies were certainly interested. So I got lucky again. In working with these people and going to Detroit and meeting with ... I quickly figured out, "Oh, my gosh! The car companies are only doing this because they have to if they're going to do sales." So they've stayed. They're supporting electric vehicles, but yeah, they have a high dedicated group, but everybody else is trying to kill them off because the industry components, you were going to kill the regular car.

So long story short, through my Georgia Tech connections, which fortunately, I didn't burn all those bridges either, I found out that there was DARPA money, Department of Defense Advanced Research Program Administration. They were very interested in electric vehicles because they did not ... They wanted vehicles that you couldn't detect the ... You're going to know this better than me, the heat that comes out of a regular tank or whatever. They wanted electric tanks.

So long story short, with the great support of Georgia Power, I created a consortium of 17 states, the Southern Governors Association, which I've gotten to know when I worked for George Busby. I created a network where each governor's office and a leading research institution in that state agreed to be part of a partnership and we applied for almost $9 million grant from DARPA and we got it. We got it in six months.

Part of that money went to helping to create sidetrack exhibit, but also an exhibit that was done nationally to educate people about how electric vehicles work because you had to get over that comfort and we had to have better batteries for all that to work. Anyway, that was fabulous. I had just come back from Boston, where I've approved this exhibit. My peers let me. I took their money. I was glad to take other people's money. We created this great exhibit, this group in Boston. I flew home the next day and at much to my shock, my dad died and it was a terrible time in my life. I had never known death.

He lived a great life and I'm comforted by that, but boy, that was hard. For a variety of reasons, Georgia Power, they were very supportive of me. They said, "Annie, we want you to go back to economic development because Georgia Power, the state got the Olympics. Georgia Power, for the first time ever, there will be an economic development component for the Olympics and we want you to help shape that and work on that."

So it was wonderful. I didn't have to manage 50 people. I got to work with the small teams and designed a concept for what became an operation legacy. I targeted getting the annual meeting for the American Electronics Association, which had never come out of Silicon Valley, but we got them to Atlanta on the hoax, not the hoax, the opportunity of getting to see the Olympics being put together, the behind the scenes cool stuff.

Did the same thing with the automotive manufacturers because I've gotten to know them. We had a series of groups. We got the CEOs that Jeff Sonnenberg had at Emery University coming in. We hosted one of their events. So we used the Olympics as a sizzler. People in leadership roles often like to be in the know before everybody else. So we capitalized on that. The really exciting thing to me is ever since the Atlanta Olympics, where we didn't lose money, every community since has wanted to do an economic development component and they've sent delegations back to Georgia. I think that is a wonderful sharing thing.

Well, I did all that. I got to know Bill Dahlberg, who is president of Georgia Power. Then when he became CEO of Southern Company, he was put on the board of regions. Zell Miller had been elected governor and between them, they crypt up this idea that, "A great asset of the state that's not been capitalized is the university system." As we were moving increasingly into a knowledge age, educated workforce was more important or increasingly more important than a skilled workforce.

They thought, "We need to create a position on this." I was lucky. I was lucky. I interviewed, I guess, a bunch of guys and got picked for this, though, it had its interesting twist. They offered me the job. I excitedly accepted. About a week after I accepted, Tom Daniel, who worked directly for the chancellor called me up and he said, "Annie, we need you to come to a luncheon. There'll be a lot of your friends there like a bunch of the developers and the bank presidents. Will you come? It will be the week before you start with us." I said, "Sure, sure."

I walked in the room and there was Tom Cousins and all the bank presidents, the people that you work with in economic development because they were the people that could help shape and make your deals, the ones with enlightened self-interest. In the middle of the luncheon, they were going around and introducing people. The chancellor said, "Well, I will introduce Annie. This is Steve Porch." He said, "She's coming to work with us. She's going to pioneer this role. No other state system has had anybody to focus on economic development for all of their colleges and universities. She started up several 501(c)(3)s and she's going to do one for us. She's going to start up a foundation for the board of regions. Through that, this is what you guys are going to be ... We want you to be on her board. Annie, you will do that, won't you?" "Okay. Okay."

We got pro bono support from major law firms and the banks and that's what learned how. Boy, I read the Riot Act by the persons that were head of UGAs foundation. Georgia Tech's chairman of the board, their foundation, Kennesaw's person, man, they called me up, "What is your name? What are you doing this for?" I said, "You know what? I accepted this job and I think it's a good idea. You're going to benefit in the long run. I'm not going to go after ... I need you to teach me who your go-to for your money because I won't go to them. I'll go to the national foundations because this money will help you send your students for international scholarships because Georgia, only 2% of our students went abroad to study and part of your education was to go somewhere else."

That was a growth opportunity. The first day on the job, they rolled in eight boxes of files and I said, "What is this?" They said, "Well, there's other duties that's assigned. There's not anybody that's been responsible in three years to coordinate with each campus on continuing education." I said, "I don't know anything about that." They said, "Well, you'll figure it out." Man, I was ticked because I felt had. I came in for one job, "Oh, you got another one on here," and they're adding this third one on. I just felt so put out and steam was probably coming out of my ears when the guy that was head of a public service and outreach at UGA, [Gene Yonst 01:11:11] walked in to see the new person in this job. I'm just ...

You don't want to put down your new ... I was not going to walk away from that opportunity to create something fresh, but I was ticked. That just was not right. He said, "You know what? There's somebody you need to meet. I'm going to set up lunch. He's 92-93 years old. His name is Dr. J. W. Fanning and he's the one who came up with leadership. Georgia is coming up with so many things. He's figured out how to connect all the dots."

To make a long story short, I went over and had lunch with him. He met me on his walker. It was just him and me. He died several months later, but he said, "Annie, you're not thinking about this right. You should welcome opportunities that you don't know anything about because you can legitimately go in with great authenticity and say, 'You are an expert. I don't know anything about this. I need you to teach me about this and help me understand who to respect.' It doesn't matter if you like him or not, but what do you really respect and what do you need. Find the needs and feel them and that's success."

So I swallowed my anger and welcomed the opportunity. Thanks to Dr. Fanning's wise advice, "Don't be angry. Consider obstacles to be opportunities and problems are possibilities." So that's been a theme that I've been able to work on the rest of my life.

My daughter used to say to me when opportunities would come up, "Mom, you can't schedule opportunities." So as the opportunities presented themselves, I was just fortunate to be at the right place at the right time many times. So I'd like to share with you some of the things that we did for the university system.

In 1995, when I joined, of course, I had this new job of getting 34 very different institutions aligned. You only have one chance to make a first impression. So I requested and was given wonderful support by Governor Miller to host a breakfast at the Governor's Mansion three months after I started. I invited to that luncheon the 34 presidents of the institutions, of the university system, top business leaders across the state because fortunately, I knew a lot of them from economic development and also, philanthropists.

We did, with UGA's help, we did a facilitated discussion. We asked three open-ended questions about what's good about a university system, what could be better and if we could do anything, what would that be. So we were able to electronically ... It was really leading edge, bleeding edge stuff then, where we have a little laptop at every table. As the comments were entered and we promised the comments would not be attributed to anybody so to get the freedom of what they wanted to say without politics involved, there was input at each table and it immediately went up on a big screen, so you could see what people were saying all over the ballroom.

It was electronically captured and we were able to give people a printout as they left of what they said. Then we were able to use qualitative research methods to discern what were the themes that emerged from that. That was really a work plan for me. It also helped us get going on the foundation efforts and we were going right into the Olympics.

So some of the planning for the Olympics with Georgia Power, we had been able to send training teams to our campuses. That was a wonderful leg up to help bring money into campuses. That was exhilarating.

Just as the Olympics were over and we were catching our breath again and I was trying to figure out, "Okay. How do I blend together what everybody's doing," a knock came to my door and the chancellor said, "Okay, Annie. It's your responsibility. There's at stake 1,200 jobs, high-end IT jobs that are going to go wherever the workforce, the educated workforce could be. It's Georgia's to lose. It's Total Systems out of Columbus, Georgia. They have a hard time recruiting IT people there. So they've thrown it up for a national competition. Tennessee is on to it, blah, blah." I mean, all of the states were really ... I got 1,200 jobs that were good-paying jobs and nonpolluting. Everybody wanted this.

I took a delegation. I decided to take the Mayo Clinic approach like I would do in economic development. I took a select group of faculty members from eight universities that had really special capacity in this area, including Kennesaw and Georgia Tech and Georgia College. Anyway, we went down and I had the client sit in the middle of the room and say, "This is what we need." Like Mayo where they surround you with experts, so you get a quick instead of being schlut from doctor to doctor and school to school, we got it in one catch.

When they were describing what they needed, the Georgia Tech professor said, "We're teaching that sort of thing years ago. We are not going to be a part of such a backwards thing." I surrounded the table, "The customer is always right. the client is right and these could be great jobs." To make a long story short, as a result, we created something called ICAPP or Intellectual Capital Partnership Program, which was to expedite the education of knowledge workers.

Intellectual Capital Partnership Program meant it would be public dollars matched with private dollars. It modeled off Georgia's very successful Quick Start. Quick Start trains people, though, and lets the company select from a trained workforce for their needs. I thought, "No, that's too expensive. The company's got to pick people that will work well with their culture. They got to make that investment first and then they got to be admittable to our institutions. We're not going to take on qualified people."

It's a gene in harm of meeting needs, both needs and we were able to go to the state and get ... I thought this was a particularly cool thing. Work-cancelable loans for the people that if they went through this program and they were hired by Total Systems, they got to go get a degree at a very expedited time. They go to school from 8:00 in the morning till 10:00 at night. They have a scholarship that paid for tuition, books, fees and living expenses because it was such a compressed time that if they left the state, well, they could work for anybody. They were not going to necessarily have to work Total Systems. They could work for anybody because there's such a high need for these highly educated IT people.

If Total Systems didn't pay well, somebody else is going to compete and pay well. We were not analytics. If they left the state of Georgia, they've had to pay us back that scholarship plus interest. So we were not going to lose money, we're going to make money. Everybody bought into it. We only in the first class, I think we only had two people that left the state, but they had to pay it back and we didn't lose any money. I decided to introduce a third-eye to see what the return on investment was.

I hired Don Ratajczak, who was at Georgia State to come in and independently audit it. Business Week at the time said he was the most accurate economist in the country. So he discerned that ... I raised the return on investment. He said that, "If you check away the capital investment, which was $100 million, which was huge, and you just took the people that were well-educated, that were making 20,000 a year and they were going to 40,000, 50,000, 60,000 a year, the return on investment for the state of Georgia, with all the training costs was 15:1."

I thought, "That's great." I feel good as a citizen of Georgia that there's that kind of investment going on. Think about the lives that are impacted. Then we began ... I mean, it was successful. Georgia secured that announcement. It was the largest investment in the southeast according to Wall Street Journal. We started getting on the map. Eventually, the White House recognized us. Algor, vice-president, flew in and they took that story and I was invited to go to Washington on behalf of Georgia and the Total Systems people to talk about what we did. That was a different way of approaching a well-educated workforce.

ICAPP was expanded. My dream came true for Hahira, Georgia. There was a little software company by the name of Gold Leaf Technologies in Hahira. It was developed by the biggest tobacco farmer in Georgia, who had started a software company to keep his northwestern educated son there and they were doing software back of the house services. So community banks could have the same processes that the big banks were offering. They were picking up clients right and left, but they needed IT people.

The Chamber of Commerce, people from Valdosta and the president of Valdosta state called me in. I went down and listened. We gave them an ICAPP grant to expedite the education of people in that area. So Hahira, where I dreamed about bringing an industrial project, we actually brought a very high-end project and it helped redid the downtown of Hahira, where these deserted office buildings, I mean, two-storey brick buildings and turning the century around the railway tracks, they became these very cool places for the IT computer jobs to hang out and people made much better money than they would have.

One day, probably about a year later, I was working on projects in Atlanta and I got a phone call from the reporter of the Valdosta Times. He said, "Okay. Need a quote. A big company in Atlanta bought the assets of Gold Leaf Technologies and they're moving the company to Atlanta. So what do you have to say about that?" I said, "Well, I haven't heard from the company." I said, "I want to hear that verified from them, but my first response is these people don't have to leave Valdosta and Hahira. There's plenty of jobs for them because everybody needs these educated workers." I thought, "Boy, I got jammed on that one."

At the end of the day, it was a good move. We were able to provide money to Gulfstream to retrain certain engineers and to the IT function and the world's most important, world jets are coming right out of there. We did stuff with Kennesaw State. I learned about faculty innovations and not. Somehow, well, I ended up working with Kennesaw State in doing some projects, thanks to Betty Siegel, where I wanted to track what economists were thinking. I hired a young professor by the name of Roger Tutterow to help me work with community bankers to be an early warning system about where the economy was going and what kind of workforce, educated workforce is needed.

We had done a series of projects with a variety of groups that was a bellwether approach to understanding what universities and colleges could do. The dean of science and mathematics, Dr. Rory Peterson called me one day and he asked if he could come down and see me. I don't know him. He came down and he was somebody who had come out of industry, been in the pharmaceutical industry. So he had a very different approach to the role of what higher ed was, a much more pragmatic, not just an IV-covered world approach.

He had a bunch of ideas. One of which was to how could we better connect our universities in creating entrepreneurs and understanding needs and helping to create entrepreneurial movements. So we were able to give some contracts, different contracts to help grow his idea. Other universities got jealous like Georgia Tech and UGA and they grabbed that ball, but it was ... Kennesaw was always, talk about leadership, Kennesaw was always an innovator. It was just exhilarating to watch the growth of that institution from a couple of thousand as a two-year school to a very much respected national player.

I kept had several other aspects to it, but a thing that changed the course of my life was Tom Daniel and the chancellor came and said, "Annie, we need you to go work with the legislature. There's a new chairman of the senate higher education committee. It's a first time leadership role for him. He's really bright. We think he's going somewhere. He's very tight. His name is Senator Sonny Perdue. We need you to go over and meet with his committee and tell them why we're relevant and they need to keep investing in us."

So I thought I looked to see who's on the committee. It was a great group of all White men that I had known from my DOT days. So I thought, "How can I capitalize on Don Ratajczak in a way that translates to them?" My son had broken his leg and I was trying to keep him occupied. So I went to the bank, got 15 fresh $1 bills and I said, "I need you to take these end-to-end and do a perfect job." He did that because he loved money. That was easy to get him to do that.

We've rolled it up really tight. I went to the meeting over in the State Capital. Walked into this conference room about this size and I went right over to Senator Perdue and I said, "Senator, I'm here to present a story, but I need your help. Do you have a dollar on you?" I did not know how tight he was at that time. I said, "Just give me a dollar and I'll show you where to get back from it."

He stands up. He gives me a dollar bill and I said, "Okay. For every $1, you give the university system of Georgia for programs like ICAPP, this is what you get back." I said, "You hold this," and we stretched out 15 $1 bills in a row and their eyes just got saucers. I said, "So every $1 you invest in this program, you get 14 more that you can put in to other things like hospitals and schools and security issues. So I think to invest more on us." It worked. It worked.

In the tenure while I was there, we were able to track 100 million net new dollars into the university system. It's both public dollars and private dollars that were coming from philanthropy and also, the companies that we serve because nobody respects something you get for free. You got to have skin in the game. ICAPP afforded them. I would like to say, not many people know this, I registered ICAPP, Intellectual Capital Partnership Program against ... the lawyers didn't want me to do it, but I went back to the lawyers that had done free work for us and I said, "Help me do this," because I thought Intellectual Capital is the business capital of the future and we got that tagline.

A couple of years in, I got a notice from somebody in Arizona that Microsoft had a new program called ICAP that they were trying to use because you know how higher ed networks are. I got notified of it and I got our attorneys on it and Microsoft had to back off because we owned it. We owned it.

It is subsequently the program has died. I'm not sure why. I was gone to Virginia for a while, but Quick Start is still going and it's the number one training program. I'm hopeful Steve Wrigley, who's the chancellor now, will be innovative and bold. He is very strategic and I hope they do something along those lines.

That brings me to the next segment. When a fellow by the name of Sonny Perdue got elected governor, I think it shocked the world. Now, I have never given to any gubernatorial campaign except when I was a student at Stevens, never, because my roles were public servant jobs and I was not going to get into the politics of all that. I need to get along with everybody. I did. I worked with all the governors.

When Sonny Perdue got elected, he had been sending his children to me for advice. I said, "I don't know jack about how to place your kids, but I'll be glad to work with them." I helped one at Kennesaw, in particular. I thought, "These are fine kids," and got to know him a little bit that way. As he went through his leadership roles, you work with people across it all.

He sent word to me that he wanted me to come join his administration. I thought, "I don't want to do that. I like what I'm doing. I'm not really interested in ..." I went to my boss, the chancellor and he said, "Okay." Here's what he said, "Oh, Annie, we want to loan you. I'm not going to let you go be his employee, but I will loan you this board of regions to be ..." It was fun. It was policy, which meant budget, state budget, the legislature and executive appointments."

The chancellor invested interest because the regions came through that process. So I was loaned to do that for the first republican governor in 170 years or seven batch of time. It was a time of huge transition both budgetary because 9/11 had happened and state budgets had fallen really short, a couple of billion dollars short and states cannot spend beyond. So I was definitely engaged from a budgetary, where do you cut, do you cut pulling people's teeth or giving them a leg. What do you cut?

Then I started thinking, "Sonny Perdue is a steward. He takes a stewardship mentality to things." Went to him with a proposal that he do a commission for a new Georgia, the name he was already using, but assemble 22 CEOs that will come meet once a quarter at the governor's mansion for breakfast and have a series of discrete task forces that were headed up by a CEO. Long story short, we were able to secure pro bono help from all of the major consulting firms because they didn't have work and I went to them and said, "Lend me some of your experts and they'll get exposed to CEOs and I can't pay you, but your taxes won't go up if we can find money to save money in Georgia."

My co-chairs were Joe Rogers of Waffle House, who really has a different worldview of things and then Bob Hatcher, which is brilliant, just a brilliant banker, who've been head of BB&T, but he subsequently built up and sold off a national banking thing. We had 22 CEOs. I'm glad to say I've been to the governor's mansion for breakfast and I got to talk to the governor this morning.

When they came to their sessions, every quarter, I had three task forces report in. Each one was led by a CEO and staffed by these consultants. So in my tenure, we did 16 task forces. I guess the best way to do it is to give you an example. You can't manage what you don't know. I knew from my DOT days, in my Georgia Power days that the state of Georgia had a huge fleet, but we had no idea what was in that fleet. We don't know how many cars we own. We didn't know how many trucks, planes, all of that. I learned that from my budget days and DOT days, I mean, all these different experiences.

I had been one of the people involved behind the scenes with helping to recruit UPS' headquarters to town. They've gotten in on my guest cue a little bit. We went to them and I said, "Could you please loan this two top executives for three months? You guys are the best at managing fleets in the world. Just three months, three months, I need you to help us figure out how to organize ourselves and figure out what we got and what we don't have and figure out how to surplus."

To make a long story short, you have to visualize the Atlanta Braves Stadium filled up with surplus cars and trucks from around the state of Georgia that we sold at auction. We actually sold a King Air on eBay. That captured a lot of money. Over time, we were able to find $700 million in getting rid of assets we didn't need. We were also able to carve $3 billion out of the budget. That kept us among the very few states that kept our bond ratings and that was exhilarating to me.

In the middle of all of that, I decided, "Boy, I'm learning all about politics." Perdue made a commitment to me that I did not have to go to any political stuff. I didn't want to be an R or a D. My life has been built on focusing on the best qualified people. I don't care about democrats or republicans. I do. They're my friends. He had committed to me that I did not have to go to those kinds of things, but I decided, "Boy, I've enjoyed about all I can and people like Betty Siegel had come to me and offered me jobs and they said, 'You need to go get your doctorate.'" I thought, "Well, I'll get a free doctorate if I go back through the university system. I could go to Georgia State or Georgia Tech or UGA."

So I went to go see what ... To progress in higher ed, you need that green card of the doctorate. So long story short, at UGA, they said, "We'll be glad to take you. You'll have to move over here." I'm thinking, "I can't do that. I cannot do that." They said, "Do not tell anybody, but there is a fantastic program at the University of Pennsylvania, where Wharton is combining with the graduate school of education and it's about the money of higher ed and it's distinctive in the country. It's an executive doctorate. They only have a small cohort."

To make a long story short, I was very lucky and I was in the fourth cohort and my colleagues where from all over the country. I was the only southerner, so I was a token southerner. It was exhilarating. I was given scholarships, wonderful scholarships. I was able to do the commission for a new Georgia on the side and not be in conflict with any of my jobs, which is really important to me.

So one thing leads to another. One of my professors was selected to be the president of Oglethorpe University. Throughout my tenure of working for the university system, I never had any experience on a campus and everybody like Betty Siegel were saying, "It's very different on the campus. You got to understand that, so you can be better at what you're doing in these other roles." So I got permission from the chancellor. He was really kind to say, "Okay. We will give you a two-year leave of absence."

So I want to work for my professor at Oglethorpe University as associate provost to run the evening degree program, which was adult learners, which I saw a lot of need for people that needed to have new skillsets as the economy kept evolving and to work on my doctorate, too. Long story short, I was supposed to introduce him to the community. Did that. It was an extraordinary experience. We got a return on investment in the first 18 months of 23:1 because you take a really good program and you tighten it up and you market it well. I said, "We're a Nordstrom. We have a Nordstrom market. You can go to a public institution and get your degree at night and that's more like going ..." Well, it's tacky to say Tarjay.

I said, "We're more than Nordstrom approach and we can provide certain scholarships." It worked and we brought in a lot of money to this private school. I saw the private side of higher ed. Then the university system said, "Okay. Two years up. We want you to consider doing something that builds on everything you've done and that is go work with Dan Rahn, who is president of the Medical College of Georgia and he was also a vice-chancellor for health because health was really becoming quite the educated workforce issue."

I had on a personal basis, I've been living a life of ... Our firstborn had a serious neurological issue. She had the seizure disorder that, again, when she was 14 and it had taken us on some unchartered paths. She was brave. She could be Virginia Vail Burriss when eight medicines did not hold her seizure disorder, but she was super brave. She got her brains from her daddy, not from me. She was great in Math, one percentile in Math.

We were able to figure out that she was a good candidate for surgeries and we went to Yale and we were there about three months total. So we saw brain mapping. She had two really long surgeries, but she was given a wonderful opportunity. She had to learn how to walk, talk and all that again when they resectioned her frontal lobe. I learned a lot about the brain and brain functions and how that affects people's performance.

Really, I just got into medicine. So I had the opportunity to go help. UGA wanted their own med school. Of course, med schools are the most expensive things on the planet besides engineering schools. So they asked me to work to help put together a deal for UGA to have a partnership campus with Medical College of Georgia instead of UGA starting their own.

Tons of politics, you don't want to hear any of that. It was excruciating, but at the end of the day, using economic development matrices and also the network, we were able to help put campuses, clinical campuses around the state, where we really need the doctors to go to Savannah, Albany, in particular, and Rome, Georgia and we were able to put an expansion class at UGA and work it.

My training at Penn was perfect because I had learned all the different nuances of higher education, the cultural wars that exist between a land grant and a public health institution. My dissertation was on how Georgia Tech and Emery collaborated to create this world class, now number one biomedical engineering program in the world. Anyway, all my passions were aligning with that and it was a great opportunity.

The goal then and we're achieving it was to increase the number of physicians in Georgia by 20% by 2020 and we are on track. We are doing it. We've done it with class and we've done it with meeting all the certifications that are needed.

So that was pretty cool until Ginnie died. I had just gotten my doctorate. Actually, 2011 was a horrible year. 11 people of my family died. It just was bizarre. Some of them were at the right age, but many were not. My daughter was 27 and it was totally unexpected, though, I had the great comfort of it was the massive seizure that took her out. The night before, she had called me and said, "Mom, I just had one of the best of my life." She was a teacher and all of her students had done well. I will not go into all that, but many parents don't have that opportunity.

They thought I had cancer. They removed my right colon. It turned out in hindsight that was a blessing because it took me out of the world for two and a half months. I had tons of leave because I've always had good health. Then I have to have a second surgery to repair some issues. It was an excruciating time in life. In that time period, I worked for three presidents in five years. Just a host of changes. All brilliant men. The last one really prepared me for Trump the way constant change.

So I really, in the spring of 2012, I was recuperating from the second surgery and I really, in my prayer life, I said, "Just take me. I've had a wonderful life. I've had so many great opportunities, but this is not good." Out of the blue, a friend called me from Virginia, who I knew from Georgia Tech. She's now working up there. My daughter used to babysit her daughters. She said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm just praying to God." She said, "You can't do that. There's a job up here that's got your name written all over it. I need your resume." I said, "I don't have a resume. I hadn't done one in 20 years. I've just been lucky people have come." She said, "Well, you have two days to get this done. They're down to two finalists. This is perfect for you. It's everything you've ever done and you can do well on this job. It will give you and Woody a fresh start."

To make a long story short, it was the opportunity to become CEO of the George Mason University's Prince William campus, which was a research campus that needed a strategic focus. I never thought I'd leave Georgia. I love Georgia, but it was without ... "Okay. We're going to go." It was wonderful. We've sold our home, which is where Woody had found our daughter. He just did not need to be there anymore. Our son is graduating from college. He came and joined us and he had a great opportunity to live with us in a faculty housing. We were all very tight and close at that point.

He got to work for Johnny Isaacson, Senator Isaacson and then he went to work for Congressman David Scott. He wanted to see the real world, I mean, the scope of it. Woody retired and was very supportive of me. I was able to find out my skillset were transferrable. We were able to do a strategic realignment. I worked with seven deans to get their programs on my campus, including all the biomed stuff and we got a huge Department of Defense grant to expedite the education of physicians. I had a bioterrorism unit. It was right next to the FBI, well, operating headquarters at my campus. I got Amazons, iClouds. I mean, it was exhilarating.

To be in DC, boy, it's a different thing. It is a totally different thing, but I was lucky that I was able to work with the governor and the US senators and we were able to secure quickly federal money and state money. We got done in three years what I thought was going to take us five years. The president of the university called me and he said, "Annie, I need you to come and raise money. You're good with CEOs. Our budgets are getting cutback because of the great recession and the federal money is subsiding. So that's what I need you to do now."

I said, "I don't do that." He said, "No. You started at this foundation for the system." I said, "I made my brother so my girls got cookies. I don't do that." He said, "This is what I need you to do now." I went in to do that. I learned some things about the foundation I was not at all comfortable with. Timing is everything. We kept trying to buy houses. Every house that we put an offer on and we're doing due diligence, three of them fell through. William comes home and he said, "I've always wanted to be in the Peace Corps. I've applied and they've already accepted me. I'm going to Morocco in September."

We were dealing with that and there was a big snow storm and 33 inches of snow fell in [inaudible 01:47:27] Virginia and I could not open a single door to get out of my house. I said, "What are you? Nobody retires at the west. I think it's time to think about going home." I honored my obligations. So we did it. We came back to ... He did not want to be in Atlanta. Atlanta has changed a great deal. The transportation is ... I'm glad I know the cardiovascular system of Atlanta through transportation. I understand a lot of the assets, but we chose to live in Madison, Georgia because it's really part of a triangle, a biomedical triangle. You've got Atlanta with great universities. That's an hour away, exactly 55 miles from my house to the state capital.

You're 30 minutes from UGA, the land grant and it's 70 miles to Augusta, where the medical college. So we had family there and began anew. I had it in mind I wanted to focus in on things that I discovered through my daughter's medical journeys and what I had learned from the campus, the microbiome in particular. We had one of the leading centers for [inaudible 01:48:44] and microbiome in the country at my campus in Virginia.

I thought, "I think I'd like to start up a company with that." So that would be act three. I began doing my homework and I talked to people that have been great mentors and friends and advisers. I thought, "I'm going to go head over and meet really my acquaintances at MCG. The new dean of the school of medicine is just fabulous. He himself had done a telemedicine company and spun an outreach. David Haas, he's one of my favorite people on the planet. So I'm going over to see him and I thought, "I'm going to call Dr. Shi," who had become a good friend, Zhang Shi, Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar.

In fact, when I left Georgia, he was the highest performing research professor in the Georgia Research Eminent Scholars. I came to find out that over time, he had brought in over $100 million of funded research. He's internationally renowned for his diabetes research. So I called him to see how he's doing because actually, I tried to steal him to Virginia at one point, but he liked where he was at MCG.

So I called to see how his kids were. I said I was driving over. He said, "Well, can you and I get together after you see Dean Haas?" I said, "Sure." So David loaned me his conference room and we're catching up on kids. He said, "Do you remember before you left here I asked you to be CEO of one of my companies and you turned me down?" I said, "Yeah. It wasn't the right time and place." He said, "Well, I've got another one and I want you to do that." To make a long story short, I said, "I don't want to do that. I want to do what I'm doing." He said, "Well, I can help you with that."

He's developed this really leading edge diagnostics of biomarkers for kidney disease and diabetes, which is a huge global market, but also, what's really interesting is cancer. So I go back to the American Cancer Society and everybody on my mother's side died of cancer, including my late brother. He died three weeks after my daughter. I said, "Okay."

So I engaged a group of people on his behalf. I've created a board and we've been going after money. The university is giving us a million dollars. It's really his money. Higher ed money is very different than business money and government money and philanthropic money. So I feel fortunate to understand all those pieces.

We've been working on marketing. My job is marketing and money. So that's helped me reengaged back with Georgia Bio. I'm back on the board with that. There's some really exciting initiatives to make. Georgia and Atlanta, a health innovation hub building on their same things from the past, the CDC, great research universities, but we now have bioinformatics. Baxter and [inaudible 01:52:05] helped work on before leaving. There just a lot of neat pieces that still can come together.

If there's a future, a great business base to grow on, you keep building on our IT base that we've had, the fintech, we are exquisite in that, but biotech is ... I mean, there's a lot of things I'm real jazzed about. It's not just what we've got. It's the sum of the whole that is so impressive. We've got a lot of neat parts, but if they could be effectively linked up, I think it's a bright future.

Georgia at this present day and age, we will not be accused of being the healthiest state in the country, but I think it's a great aspirational goal. Why not? Why not aim for being the healthiest state? It would lessen state expenses for healthcare. There's a whole host of things. If we can bring talent, where people are healthy and feeling good, I guess I would go back to my grandmother who said, "Health is the first wealth."

I'm interested in this act three on the business equation. I would like to do well by doing good. I can't think of a better way to do that than to help the citizens of my community, my state, my country, my world and it's like Hahira, Georgia. I couldn't have imagined what the opportunities were. I think there are a lot of things if you can effectively, if you can create effective linkages of business that makes the money, government that is a steward of the infrastructure, academia that grows the talent pool and a philanthropy that bridges a lot of thing, I think we're in the verge of a really exciting time.

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