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Erin Hubert, BS '80 – A True Trailblazer

Erin Hubert, BS '80, is a woman of "firsts." In 1990 she was the first woman to join the Portland Trailblazers sales team. Roughly ten years later, she was the first woman in the NBA to be named to a top leadership position as the Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer of Trailblazers Inc., overseeing operations for the Blazers, the Rose Garden and Portland Fire, the company's WNBA franchise.



And while she wasn't the first woman to graduate from PSU's School of Business, she did make the determination to get a business degree at a time when it was not the most popular career path for women.

"Counselors at PSU encouraged me to obtain a business degree back at a time when few women were pursuing a business-focused education. It proved to be solid and timely advice, as more women were going into business education and careers in the 1980s after I graduated. It definitely set me on a course for a career I couldn't have imagined," said Erin.

A career that led her from media and sports sales, to managing radio media as the Vice President/General Manager for Entercom Communications, where she ran seven radio stations and websites in the early 2000s.

Her trailblazing career path led to her current position as Chief Executive Officer for the Boys & Girls Club of Portland, a youth development organization that focuses on creating great futures for youth ages 6 to 18. She oversees all aspects of the organization including the Board of Directors, their financial health, fundraising, and the program offerings and services for the youth. She has held this position for five and a half years and was on the Board of Directors at the Club for three years before becoming CEO.

This year, the Portland Business Journal has distinguished Erin as a 2018 Women of Influence honoree for her numerous contributions to Portland industries, as well as her contributions to the community through her non-profit work and board appointments.

What specifically drew you to PSU's School of Business?

The ability to work while I was going to school, as I was paying for my own education. I was able to get a job downtown and went to school in the mornings; worked in the afternoons; and then headed back to campus at night to study. They were long days, but it allowed me to complete my degree debt free.

How has your time at The School of Business impacted your current position?

I went to work for Willamette Industries while I was attending PSU – a wonderful company that left a lasting legacy in our region, which was run by Bill Swindells, Jr. I have great admiration for Mr. Swindells and was so proud to have worked for his company, which was pivotal to my college experience.

All of these years later, the Swindells' Family Foundation made a significant gift to help the Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland open our newest Club in the Rockwood community of East County. It was a critically important gift to the project and very profound for me, personally, coming from the Swindells' family. If I hadn't attended PSU – that wouldn't have happened!

How do you view the legacy of The School of Business?

I see the legacy as one of educating and growing young adults into fabulous, contributing community members, thought leaders, difference makers, and business leaders in our region. The School of Business is in the heart of our great city, and is a beacon of learning and success for our community.

How do you approach leadership in business vs. nonprofits?

On the one hand, there isn't that much difference in leading a non-profit versus leading a for profit organization. You have an entity to run, people to lead and manage, and results to generate. However, there is a much greater consciousness, at least in the social services sector, towards striking a balance between the organization's health

and its mission. Much more attention is paid to social consciousness on a daily basis than in any of my previous corporate leadership roles.

It's rewarding to be in a sector where that balance is more important and valued, but it's not an easy balance to always achieve. And it's important to strike that balance, as non-profits can run the risk of being overly mission focused, making too many decisions through that lens, and risk weakening the overall organization's stability and ultimate ability to serve its mission. Keeping non-profit organizations strong and stable is critically important.

What advice do you have for early career women or women who aspire to leadership positions?

Remember your career is a journey and don't let destinations (or jobs) along the way that may not unfold as you wish, derail you. It's simply a step that is guiding you to where you're meant to go. Be resilient. You have a voice – use it, and use it thoughtfully. Attitude is more important than aptitude. Actions are more important than words.

Treat others as you think they'd want to be treated... show respect to everyone, take the high road in every situation; and always be kind. Make a difference in whatever you do, no matter how small the task. And have clear goals and a plan in place for yourself, and you will achieve more than you ever thought possible.

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