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We **KC**

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In a League of Their Own

What does it take for a woman to succeed at the highest levels of her profession? Unlimited patience. Rock-solid determination. And almost always, a caring mentor. You'll find elements of each in the stories of this year's class of WeKC—Women Executives-Kansas City. Members of this Distinguished Dozen have carved out leadership positions in such disparate venues as health care, banking, construction and professional services, at companies massive and entrepreneurial alike.

What can they teach you about the ingredients needed for success? They can tell you about talent, which makes for a good start, but won't do the trick by itself. On top of talent, you'll need a deep, abiding faith in your own abilities. You'll need the self-confidence to know that, even when you falter, the truer measure of your ability to succeed is to learn from your mistakes and build on those experiences. They'll tell you about taking risks, and knowing which ones are truly worth taking. And they'll tell you about the passion you need to reach your goals.

Once again, *Ingram's* is pleased to introduce to its readers a group of women who have defined success on their own terms, then gone out and secured it. Members of WeKC 2009 talk about leadership, the mentors and other figures who inspired them, and the values they have embraced to help them chart their own individual paths to success.

YOUNG SEXTON | CEO, WINGGATE TRAVEL

Young Sexton runs one of Kansas City's fastest-growing companies, so it's a bit surprising to hear this from her: "I don't consider myself successful by any stretch of the imagination." That says something about the level of humility Sexton brings to WingGate Travel, the company she founded in 1991. To the extent that she is successful, though, Sexton insists that the credit—and rewards—be shared. "It is especially rewarding," she says, "that I can make a difference even in a very small way in someone's life and could help someone to succeed with emotional, informational or financial support."

The daughter of Korea's first female doctor—who herself had to battle a social taboo by running away from home to enroll in medical school as a woman—Sexton learned early about the value of single-mindedness. Her mother, Sexton said, "knew exactly what she wanted and worked diligently to reach her dream of being a doctor. She was determined and never strayed and found ways to overcome obstacles."

To young women, she advises: "Set goals and work towards them with persistent zeal. Be patient, flexible and ready to seek and receive advice and recommendations. Always be in a learning posture and don't be afraid to try something new."



LOTUS MILLIN | CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER WALTON CONSTRUCTION CO.

Lotus Millin didn't have to look far—or long—to find an inspirational figure. She was right there in the delivery room the day Millin was born. Her mother, Millin says, "is a strong female mentor who taught me that the only boundaries that exist are those that I choose to set myself." That influence gave Millin a strong work ethic, pride in producing a quality product and, she says, "a love for what you do every day."

She carries that love into the offices of Walton Construction, where earlier this year she was named chief administration officer. There, she draws on more than two decades of experience with the company to oversee a wide range of corporate services: human resources/diversity, risk management, business information systems, talent development and process business analysis, national asset management and more.

Why a career in construction? "I love to build things," Millin says, and she thrives on solving problems, something she finds no shortage of in that sector.

To young female executives charting their own career courses, Millin says: "Be yourself—do not think that in order to succeed you have to be someone you are not. I encourage you to learn about the different management techniques and philosophies, but take the best practices and develop your own personal style."

