



## ***Toohy uses a winding career path to inspire next generation of fundraisers***

November 2018



From software and mainframe sales to major gift fundraising to international consultant ... that seems to be a completely linear career path, doesn't it?

For Eileen Toohy, it was a professional journey that leveraged her talents and interests at every stage of her life. Eileen shared her story last month at the CASE Regional Advancement Professionals Roundtable in Baltimore, Maryland.

Now a managing director with Carter, a global nonprofit and fundraising consulting firm, Eileen is best known for an amazing 25-year career at a prominent independent school where she excelled at engaging and inspiring alumni to partner with their alma mater through transformational philanthropic gifts.

Despite her success, Eileen is the first to admit, she could not have predicted her future would be in philanthropy.

*“Not many of us set out to work in the development field,” Eileen said, “I don’t feel like I chose the profession, but rather I am grateful it chose me.”*

Eileen's best advice for newcomers fundraising is if an opportunity doesn't scare you, it probably isn't worth doing. Sage wisdom she began to understand when making the jump from alumni relations to annual fund giving.

*“An annual giving position is where you learn all about development.”*

Eileen credits her experience in annual giving with allowing her to sharpen her skills and get a deeper understanding of fundraising mechanics.

*“Recruit from within and not just in your own department.”*

Drawing on her own experience, Eileen was smart enough to recognize most of us don't start out in development. She recruited three secretaries to join her fund development team with tremendous success.

*“Love what you do.”*

Eileen said it is an honor to help people and organizations invest in what they believe in.

*“You’ll never get what you don’t ask for.”*

Eileen didn't ask for this career but given the crowd's response in Baltimore that afternoon, there are professionals, colleagues, donors and organizations who are grateful development chose Eileen Toohy.