

IWCF Membership Profile—Linda Riley

What do Tom Cruise and Linda Riley have in common? Read on to find out.

Interviewing Linda is a symphony of recurring themes...family, friends, relationships, following her dreams, ambition, achievement, love of music and the list goes on.

Raised in Cupertino, CA which if you've never heard of is where Apple was a start-up, Linda notes she pedaled by every day on her way to school. She watched it grow from one building to a major complex and still enjoys following its ups and downs.

One of four children who share a close relationship, Linda moved away when she graduated from high school. She went south to San Luis Obispo where she attended California Polytechnic State University, majoring in Marketing and Music. Linda says if she was going to live anywhere other than Boise, it would be SLO.

To quote Linda, upon graduating, she was “hell bent on being in the music industry” so she moved to where all the action was—Los Angeles. David Geffen, founder of Geffen Records, had moved into the movie industry. In 1983 he produced a very successful movie—Risky Business starring Tom Cruise. This movie made so much money that Geffen Records was able to bring production in-house. Tom Cruise's success led to Linda Riley's success in being employed in the music industry! She spent ten years working behind the scenes in production.

Ten years in Los Angeles in a very cut-throat, competitive business, Linda was ready for a change. Linda emphasizes she had great fun and learned much during her time at Geffen; her boss was very moral in an unscrupulous field and reinforced the importance of relationships. No matter what industry, what field, relationships are critical to success.

She moved to Orange County –no music there so in a deliberate fashion, she started looking into the nonprofit sector. Completely changing the course of her professional life, Linda went to work for JDRF, a nonprofit that leads the fight against Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) by funding research, advocating for policies that accelerate access to new therapies, and providing a support network for millions of people around the world impacted by T1D. As the Special Events Manager, Linda's role was to lead special event fundraising initiatives. Her boss, recognizing Linda's many talents, became a mentor and friend who gave her increasing responsibilities which led to a move to San Diego where she had been hand-picked by her new boss to be a Chapter Executive Director for JDRF.

Meanwhile, Linda's close-knit family had begun the migration to Boise. First, Linda's brother and sister moved to Boise in 2000. Six years later Linda's mom and another sister moved to



Boise. Linda was now the only family member not living in close proximity to family. We can only guess how many vacations were spent visiting family and getting a sense of Boise life.

As for Linda, her career in the nonprofit world continued on an upward trajectory. After being asked many times to interview, Linda was recruited to Scripps Health Foundation as Director of Development for the Scripps Whittier Diabetes Institute. This was Linda's introduction to the health care system, and again her responsibilities focused on developing prospects, contacts, programs, and events.

These profiles are not meant to be a literary presentation of a member's resume so I will depart from Linda's successful job changes to what matters most to Linda...family. Linda loves her family, and for the first time she was contemplating a change that was not career based. She wanted to live closer to her family. She came to Boise for her sister's 50th birthday and started checking out the local nonprofit situation. Like so many transplants discover, wages in Idaho are not comparable to salaries in other places, BUT, up until recently, the cost of living offset sucky wages. Linda was advised to check out universities and hospitals.

Linda moved to Boise in 2013 and went to work for Boise State University. She quickly integrated herself into the community professionally and as a volunteer. Clearly, Linda is committed to the nonprofit world beyond her paycheck. Besides sharing her time and talents with IWCF, she is a Board Member and on the Executive Committee of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Idaho.

She has since left working for Boise State. She went back to a job with JDRF but then was furloughed when COVID 19 rocked her world. Having built so many relationships and respect within the nonprofit world, she was quickly recruited to her current position as National Director of Development for the Hydrocephalus Association, whose mission is to find a cure for hydrocephalus and improve the lives of those who are impacted by the condition.

Working from home, Linda is able to enjoy her family, friends, golfing, wine, and a sense of contributing on a national level to a cause that does not get the attention it deserves. Give Linda time...it will get the attention through her efforts.

Linda believes COVID has reaffirmed her commitment to her life in Boise. She has an incredible sense of gratitude for where she is in life and is appreciative of who is in her life and what is important. Filling life with things that bring you joy as work cannot fill all the boxes has been a life lesson for Linda.

On a final note, as Membership Chair for IWCF, Linda wants to hear from members - that not only does IWCF do great philanthropic work but also provides an opportunity/environment for members to engage, have friendships, and meet new and interesting people. The committee will be piloting an effort to informally bring members together who have shared interests. Send her an email if you have any ideas! We, of the Membership Committee, and anyone who has worked with Linda, are happy for her being an IWCF member.