



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI - 2022

KATHY NIELSEN

CLASS 1968

Kathy Nielsen graduated from Albert Lea Senior High School in 1968. Since then, Kathy has maintained a strong focus on helping others through career opportunities in healthcare, higher education and coaching workplace leaders. For most of the past 40 years, she owned Nielsen Associates, Inc., a consulting, training and coaching business in the greater Chicago area. Today she is retired in Colorado and spends her time making jewelry, doing watercolor and paper arts, enjoying a view of the Rocky Mountains and walking Dakota, she and her husband's Shiba Inu.

Kathy gained recognition among university, business, government, and healthcare professionals for her guidance in strategic planning, executive development and talent management, and workplace civility improvements. This led to the 2003 Women-Owned Business Stars award at the White House, where she was honored with 13 other women business leaders from across the United States. Additionally, her interest and participation in golf have led her to create unique assessment tools for golfers and to provide instruction to the LPGA's teaching division.

Kathy hosted an Illinois radio program called *Encounter* in the 80's and appeared in an Emmy award-winning series on Women and Alcohol. Her series of articles titled "Stress and Wellness for Women" has appeared in *The Executive Letter*. She is co-author of Strategies for Better Thinking, a book released in 1999 and used as a guide for performance consultants. With a small consortium of passionate colleagues, Kathy created CivilityWorks, a think tank for leaders seeking to "make workplaces work for everyone." She has spoken throughout the country on actions to take to diminish toxic workplace cultures

Kathy has a Bachelor of Arts degree from George Peabody College/Vanderbilt University in Psychology and a Master of Education degree in Industrial Psychology from Xavier University, and worked as a psychotherapist prior to her

consulting career. In 2005, Kathy joined the faculties of Northwestern University and Loyola University Chicago as an adjunct professor in the Organization Behavior and Leadership programs. For eight years she was also a board member and key faculty for Loyola's *Women's Strategic Leadership* program, creating an alumni culture of support for women in leadership roles.

“Albert Lea’s educational excellence in the 1950’s and 1960’s was of such exceptional quality that my love of learning, my esteem of my teachers and my regard for helping others get the education, critical thinking skills and a strong start in their work life became my mission. These elements have always guided my career decisions and my advocacy for ethical leadership.”