

Honoring ELLAINÉ SAMBO- REYTHÉ

What Leaders Do

EVERY MORNING Ellaine Sambo-Reyther has told her three children, and herself, to “Go out there, and do good.” To make a difference. When you get to know Ellaine, you sense that she’s someone who has followed this mantra and made good decisions at every fork in her life’s road. She knows and follows her rules and philosophies. She works hard and cares about her family, friends, clients, and the charities she serves. She gives back. She is a blueprint for what great leaders do.

Ellaine was born in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, and at age 1 moved to the United States. Her parents are both well-educated and accomplished professionals. Her dad is an attorney, and mom a registered nurse. The family moved to Darien, Illinois, where Ellaine and her younger sister grew up. Education was a high priority and good grades were a must.

After attending Downers Grove South High School, Ellaine headed to the University of Illinois in Chicago for her undergraduate degree in psychology. There, she met her future husband, Alex, but it took a few years for their friendship to blossom. Today, they have three wonderful children, Alex, Robert, and Kayli, all educated in Barrington 220 schools—with Kayli currently in high school, and Alex having graduated from Michigan State, and Robert graduating from Penn State this year. Ellaine and Alex have encouraged their three children to be engaged with charitable work in the Barrington area.

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A BANKING CAREER BEGINS

After college, Ellaine attended Northwestern University where she earned her law degree, with a focus on corporate law. During law school, she started a part-time job at the Harris Bank in Chicago, which she says has been owned by BMO since 1984. She's now been with the company for 30 years—a milestone that she credits in part to her company's astute management, who saw her potential and offered support, encouragement, and financial assistance for her law degree if she achieved set goals.

"During law school, I worked in the human resources division at the corporate office in Chicago," Ellaine said. "One of my first duties was to interview candidates for entry level positions. This job was great exposure for me, as I met a wide variety of diverse applicants with different backgrounds and skill sets." She also helped the company set up an operations center outside the city.

While completing law school, Ellaine joined the Trust Department within the BMO Wealth Management team. She became a Trust Officer and started to build her own book of clients in 1998. In 2014, she became a Director, Private Wealth Advisor. She is the lead in the client relationship and serves as the first point of contact for her clients. She brings in other key Wealth Management team advisors, as needed, to serve all aspects of a client's needs. "My trust and estate backgrounds are very helpful in the value I bring to a client's wealth strategy."

Her clients are located all over the United States as well as in BMO's Barrington region, which covers much of the Northwest Suburbs. Ellaine is the Market Manager for BMO's Barrington regional team, which covers a large branch network. An important part of working with her clients, and her company, is to look to the future and help to make the right strategic decisions for all.

"My job is to know my clients, to understand their hopes, dreams, and wishes for their family and their charities," Ellaine said. Some of her clients believe that Ellaine knows more about them than anyone—a trusted position that she cares deeply about. An interesting aspect of her office being in Barrington, a move she made from the city in 2005 for her Barrington-based family, is that there are cordial relationships amongst the Barrington bankers.

GIVING BACK IN SPADES

Ellaine's philosophy of giving back has kept her at the forefront of the Barrington area's business and nonprofit communities. She has been active on the Board WINGS since 2008, and has been the organization's Board Chair since 2020. She serves as the Board Chair for the Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce this year. She also serves as the current Chair of the Barrington Area Community Foundation's Grants Committee, a two-year position.

She is ever-present at community events. While you might sense that she is an undaunted leader, she always leads with levity. She's also a peacemaker. She knows how to bring people together and she's applied that to her huge extended family of nearly 80 people.

How does this often-understated powerhouse of a leader and passionate parent and wife get it all done? "I do have fun, and I love to travel," Ellaine says. "I can only work this hard if I have those moments to focus on myself." She hopes one day to return, for the first time, to her birthplace in the Philippines, as well as to visit Hawaii, Italy, and Asia. But for now, she surrounds herself with great people and always keeps it positive, leading in every moment with strength and grace.

HERE ARE SOME WORDS THAT OTHERS
SHARED ABOUT ELLAINE SAMBO-REYTHER.

Joseph Barrera, COUSIN

I had the opportunity to watch Ellaine (aka Mylene) throughout our childhood years. We both try to keep in touch on a regular basis till this day and I personally consider her the "little sister" I never had. Growing up in a Filipino culture, it is customary to never disrespect your parents, always take off your shoes when entering a home, obtain a college education as a priority in life, and make sure guests always eat first in your home! Those would be our primary traditional traits most Filipino families carry throughout a lifetime. Her life experience has shaped her to become the unselfish and hard-working successful leader she is today. The admiration I have for Ellaine is her passion of always giving her 100% best at the task at hand, and to be kindhearted to others. Ellaine's unwavering efforts in taking part in the community is a testament to her dedication and commitment in promoting great relationships. The love for her entire family, friends, and colleagues is also instrumental in keeping that work/life balance sustainable.

I know personally that Ellaine does not like accolades or recognition but wanted to be the first to congratulate her on this special honor from *Quintessential Barrington Magazine*. Outstanding job and so very proud of you!

-Joseph Barrera

Dee Beaubien, FRIEND

It is a real honor to write about my friend, Ellaine Sambo-Reyther. But it's also a challenge to describe Ellaine in a way that makes you know how much of a force of nature she is. She does so much for her family, many communities, her workplace, and her clients—in short, for everyone.

I have known Ellaine since she began with BMO. My late husband, Mark, was one of her early mentors because he recognized her potential for leadership there and in our community. Ellaine has far exceeded his expectations, going on to leadership positions at BMO and many philanthropic groups. Ellaine and I have worked together for JourneyCare Hospice where Ellaine was a strong supporter for the JourneyCare Juniors, a group for elementary and high school students who learned the importance of giving back to their communities. We've also gotten to know each other through the Barrington 220 Educational Foundation, the Barrington Area Community Foundation, and WINGS. We often remark that at some time, it would be fun just to spend time together when we are not at an event!

No one who knows Ellaine can quite figure out how she accomplishes her involvement with so many organizations, and she often serves as board chair or in other leadership roles for most of them. She also finds time for her family and friends. Ellaine is a person of integrity, discipline, a great sense of humor, and a passion for others who might need her. She is truly a Quintessential Person!



Kim Duchossois, FRIEND

Before I became aware of Ellaine's extensive and devoted tenure with BMO, I observed her in volunteer leadership roles in a myriad of nonprofits in our community. Quickly I learned she's blessed with exceptional skills and gifts. (Her daunting multi-tasking as one!).

Ellaine serves selflessly 24/7 in every aspect of her life...family, friendships, career, community, and so much more. Amazingly nothing seems to get shorted. Thinking of and giving to the "other" is in her DNA. Asked how she manages so much, Ellaine will share that she is energized and sustained by the depth of personal and professional relationships and responsibilities, her community, and the inspiration and values instilled in her by her parents. I've marveled at how calmly she approaches head-on any issues or challenges... consistently being part of thoughtful solutions. Also evident is her truly happiest place when with beloved family, especially entertaining a huge bunch on holidays or filling the house with Alex and Ellaine's kids and their kid's friends.

I'm not convinced Ellaine ever truly rests... but if she does... it must be because of great teamwork and support from her wonderful husband, Alex.

Michelle Glunz, BMO COLLEAGUE

The first word that comes to mind when I think of Ellaine is "Giving." In every aspect of her life, she is looking to give to others. Whether it's giving her time, her knowledge, or her generosity, Ellaine gives of herself.

The first time I met Ellaine, she was sharing her knowledge and experience on how to help clients establish their estates to protect their assets for generations to come. She described how she would listen to her clients to truly understand what is important to them and take those details to help them tailor a plan specifically designed to achieve their goals. Ellaine spoke of each of her clients as if they were her own family members and she treated them that way. She gets fully invested with them and genuinely cares about helping them and their families.

Ellaine is the type of person who reaches out when she hears you need assistance or if she knows you are in need. She is on the phone asking what she can bring to you or how she can help. She is not one to simply email or text, but she is the one that shows up in person and lends you a helping hand. I have seen her do this for clients, friends, coworkers, family, and her community. She is not interested in high recognition or having her name highlighted, but she shows up with a smile and an extended hand to lift you up. She gives her time to listen to you and her compassion to understand, without judgement or criticism.

Leila Francis, BMO COLLEAGUE

Ellaine is one of those people you meet and immediately feel as though you've known and been friends with for years. I've worked with Ellaine at BMO for 10 years and am always amazed at how much she accomplishes in a day, whether it's going the extra mile for her clients, working tirelessly to serve her community, or participating in the many charities that she's involved in... and often all in the same day. I don't know where she gets her energy to do all that she does, but she always gives 100% to everything and does it with sincere enthusiasm and a huge smile on her face.

I sit in many meetings with Ellaine and love seeing how clients respond to her warmth and how much they appreciate the compassion that she

brings to turn what others view as a business transaction into a truly personal and enjoyable experience.

Her passion for educating the next generation, both in her professional life and personal life, is just one of many things that makes her so special. No one walks away from an interaction with Ellaine without having laughed, felt listened to, and been inspired in some way.

Peter O'Connor, BMO MANAGER

I first met Ellaine in 2005, when she transferred from BMO in Chicago to the BMO Barrington team. Ellaine's enthusiasm for helping people struck me immediately. She recognized that the community looked to the Bank as a partner in making Barrington a better place in which to live and work. Ellaine understood that achieving true success in business and in life requires that you commit to giving back to your community. Her work is well known with WINGS, JourneyCare, Barrington Area Community Foundation, Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Barrington 220 Educational Foundation.


And now, as the executive leader of the Barrington team, Ellaine is sharing her wisdom with others and is often looked to as a mentor who is sought after for her advice. Sometimes the advice is work-content related, and sometimes it's around professional development. In all cases, Ellaine takes a selfless and caring approach to helping her colleagues find answers and succeed. She draws on her vast skillset in Trust, Investments, Estates and Wealth Planning to transform complex situations into incisive pathways forward.

Ellaine is a tremendous leader, mentor, expert in her field, colleague and, most important, a great friend to all who are lucky to know her.

Lea Schneider, LIFELONG FRIEND

Ellaine and I met at four-years-old when both of our families moved to a new neighborhood in Darien, Illinois. We quickly became best friends and created so many wonderful childhood memories of the two of us together. Listening to records, going to the mall, hanging out at the park at the end of our street, and all the other things '80s kids did. Even though we had very different personalities, we were always so close. She was thoughtful and calm, and I was loud and silly.

She taught me how to read music and play the piano. Not sure I ever taught her much, but I did make her laugh a lot. We attended different high schools but managed to hang out when we could. When she left for college, I would drive downtown to visit her often on the weekends. I was still living at home and going to junior college while she was thriving at the university. At that point it was like visiting my sister, staying up all night laughing and talking about life.

No matter who you are or how you met, once you are Ellaine's friend, you are a friend for life. At some point during college, we went our separate ways and lost touch. Fourteen years later, through a mutual friend, we reconnected, and it felt like no time had passed. We had become wives and mothers, grown, and changed, but she was still the same kind, funny, compassionate, and giving friend I had always known. When I travel back to town from Arizona, she always makes time for me—usually a long brunch or dinner with our other close friend. It doesn't matter how packed her schedule is, she always makes time for her oldest friend. 



A Love of Basketball

Ellaine Sambo-Reyther is a fan of basketball and loves the sport. Here she is with Bill Wennington, a three-time Chicago Bulls Championship team member at the United Center. Her company hosts special annual events with the Bulls organization.

"This photo was taken on March 29, 2023. One to two times each year, we have the opportunity to host our clients to play basketball on the United Center court," she said.

"Two BMO groups come together: BMO Wealth Management and BMO Commercial Banking, along with our clients. For many years, I was the only woman on the court. I have been the one to recruit and encourage other women to ensure that we are well represented on the court—and selfishly, I didn't want to be the only lady-player on the court, especially after being bulldozed by a D1 player one year."

"We get coached by former Bulls players, and then we play two 20-minute halves on the court, with 5-minute rotations. We play, we shower and change, we rest for a bit, and then we have dinner and a "Chalk Talk" with a former Bulls player or current Bulls representative, and then we go to a Chicago Bulls game! So fun!"

A portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair and bangs, smiling warmly. She is wearing a light pink cardigan over a white lace top. Her accessories include a necklace with a circular pendant, a ring on her left hand, a bracelet with a white flower on her right wrist, and a watch on her left wrist. Her hands are resting on a white surface in front of her. The background is a plain, light grey.

Go out there,
and do good!

Ellaine Sambo-Reyther