



A Woman in Business Tribute

MARY ANN BENSON

By Anne DeVries

For 21 years, Mary Ann Benson has been the heart and soul of Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany, a beloved children’s boutique in Westlake that has served as a joyful haven for families. Now, at 80, Benson is preparing to pass the torch to a new owner on May 1st. Her journey began with a leap of faith and blossomed into a cornerstone of the community.

Benson, a former English teacher at O. Henry Middle School with no prior retail experience, opened the store in 2003 after her husband, Joe, lost his job briefly, prompting her to seek a new path. “I had no business plan, didn’t know what a business plan was,” she shared. Spotting a “for lease” sign in the window of a former restaurant space next to Texas Honey Ham, she felt an instant connection. “I pointed at it and said, ‘This is it.’”

What followed was a crash course in entrepreneurship. Benson learned the ropes of retail one day at a time, navigating the Dallas market to select clothing, toys, and books that reflected her teaching background and passion for children’s development. “Everything in the store has educational or developmental value,” she said, a principle that has guided her curated selection of smocked dresses, engaging toys, and carefully chosen children’s books.

Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany became more than a store — it became a “happy place,” as Benson calls it, where children played with the store’s train set and parents found thoughtful gifts, often wrapped with Benson’s signature care. Her love for children shone through in every interaction. “If you came in with a child, I’d probably speak to the child before the adult,” she said.

The store also fostered deep connections. Benson formed a bond with a family whose daughter took Tae-kwondo nearby and would frequent the store. Benson and her husband Joe adopted the two young girls in the family as their own grandchildren. The elder, Maddy, now 30 and engaged, even joined Benson at the Dallas market, sharing moments that Benson cherishes. With three sons, nine biological grandchildren, and two adopted granddaughters, Benson’s family extends beyond blood ties, a testament to her warmth.

Throughout the years of running the store, her loyal dogs remained a fixture. First came Hershey, followed by McCoy, and in recent years, 12-year-old Charlie, all Labrador Retrievers. Each delighted young visitors. “Kids loved them,” she said, recounting the bittersweet loss of Hershey and the adoption of Charlie, named despite a son sharing the same name. “We didn’t change it; as a rescue dog, he’d been through enough,” she shared.

Benson’s impact on Westlake runs deep. Through her donations to Eanes ISD schools, participation in Junior League’s Christmas Affair, and word-of-mouth loyalty, Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany became a go-to for christening gowns, baby gifts, and trinkets. Long-



Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany on Bee Caves Road in Westlake



Mary Ann Benson’s Grandson Weston, daughter-in-law Sarah, granddaughter Lauren, son Trey Benson, and grandson Dru



Mary Ann Benson’s son Richard Benson, with her granddaughter Paige, grandson Grayson, granddaughter Rowan, and daughter-in-law Jennifer



Mary Ann Benson’s son Charlie with her daughter-in-law Lindsey and grandson Nash with granddaughters Rosie (front row left) and Maeve (front row right)



Adopted granddaughters Shelby (left) and Maddy Adams (right) with their grandfather Joe Benson

time employees, including one who started as a customer 19 years ago, speak to the store’s familial atmosphere.

As she prepares to sell the business, a process that began last August, Benson was resolute about ensuring the right buyer. “I want to know who it’s going to,” she said, having turned down brokers to maintain control. She looks forward to the continued success of Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany, which is soon to be in the hands of a new owner who approached her organically with a desire to purchase the store.

Benson’s advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is simple: “Be brave and be willing to listen and learn, but don’t be afraid.” Her daring nature, rooted in a childhood of climbing trees and a lifelong love of Christmas, led to a legacy that will endure in Westlake.

Married to Joe, a banker, for 57 years, Benson looks forward to learning pickleball and spending time with her family. As she steps into this new chapter, Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany remains a testament to her courage, heart, and unwavering love for children and community.



Mary Ann Benson at her store in Westlake



Mary Ann Benson with her memory board at the store. Loyal customers are invited to visit the store to pick up their pictures as a keepsake.



Mary Ann Benson with husband Joe



Labrador Charlie with Mary Ann Benson at Kinda Krazy Kids & Kompany



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CAMP BALCONES SPRINGS

A UNIQUE WOMEN-RUN OASIS FOR SUMMER FUN AND MEMORABLE WEDDINGS



CHRISTINE BASKIN

SITUATED IN THE PICTURESQUE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY, CAMP BALCONES SPRINGS has carved out a niche as both a vibrant summer camp and a charming wedding venue, all under the visionary leadership of founder Christine Baskin. Established over 30 years ago, this unique business model reflects Christine’s commitment to creating an environment that champions empowerment and community, particularly through the lens of women in leadership.

From its humble beginnings, Christine has built Camp Balcones Springs into a thriving retreat. The property now boasts 46 cozy cabins, a private 10-acre lake, a welcoming dining hall, two pools, and multiple pavilions. Additional features such as herb and vegetable gardens, diverse event spaces, and extensive recreational facilities ensure that both campers and wedding guests enjoy an unforgettable experience.

What truly sets Camp Balcones Springs apart is its dedicated female leadership and staff, who embody the camp’s values of collaboration, creativity, and compassion. Christine has assembled a team that is as committed to the mission of the camp as she is, fostering a supportive environment for campers and clients alike.



MAGGIE PICKETT

Maggie Pickett’s journey with Camp Balcones Springs spans decades—first as a camper, then counselor, leadership team member, and now as the Camp Director. Entering her 23rd summer, Maggie’s familiarity with the camp experience fuels her passion for providing children with transformative moments that resonate for a lifetime. Her heartfelt connection to the camp ensures that every detail is carefully considered, making each summer unique for new and returning campers.



CATE PAL-FREEMAN

Working alongside Maggie is the Girls Camp Director, Cate Pal-Freeman, whose leadership is grounded in a deep joy for working with children and young women. Her vision is to cultivate a nurturing space where girls can grow in confidence, resilience, and connection. Through this female-focused approach, Cate helps create a community where strength, independence, and friendship are celebrated.



ANNABELLE BASKIN

Annabelle Baskin, Christine’s daughter, serves as the onsite mental health therapist during camp season. Formerly a camper and counselor, Annabelle’s journey from camper to therapist was inspired by her time at Camp Balcones Springs. Her role enhances the camp’s emphasis on emotional well-being, ensuring that campers have the resources they need to navigate both challenges and triumphs.



KATIE SHINABERRY

Katie Shinaberry, another of Christine’s daughters, manages the intricate task of scheduling individualized activity itineraries for every child. As one of the only camps that customizes schedules to meet the unique preferences of each camper, Katie’s organizational expertise allows children to engage fully in the diverse offerings of the camp, from climbing walls to yoga sessions.



APRIL BAXTER

April Baxter oversees the Camp Balcones Springs Horseback Program as the camp’s full-time Equestrian Director. With a background in both English and Western disciplines and years of experience leading horseback programs at camps across Texas, April brings deep knowledge and a nurturing spirit to the barn. Her own journey with horses began as a form of healing, and today she’s passionate about creating that same sense of connection and confidence for campers in the saddle.



COURTNEY DAVIS

New to the team this year is Courtney Davis, serving as the onsite Wedding Sales & Event Planner. Bringing fresh energy and innovative ideas, Courtney is dedicated to crafting unforgettable experiences for couples. Her passion for event planning complements the camp’s commitment to hospitality and personalized service.

While the strong female presence is a hallmark of the camp, it’s equally important to note the contributions of their male staff, who share the values of compassion, teamwork, and respect. Together, the team creates a balanced and enriching environment that celebrates individuality and collective achievement.

Camp Balcones Springs is more than just a camp; it is a nurturing space that encourages growth, connection, and empowerment. Under Christine Baskin’s leadership and the care of her dedicated female staff, this family-owned business sets a standard for women-run enterprises, showing how passion, vision, and heart can transform a simple idea into a thriving community. Through its unique offerings and leadership, Camp Balcones Springs continues to inspire countless lives, making it a treasured destination for summers and ceremonies alike.

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TRACI TURNQUIST WILSON

Director of Operations, REALTOR, and License Partner

Traci Turnquist Wilson bio: Born and raised in Austin, Texas, Traci is a 5th-generation Austinite. She attended College at Baylor University and received a Business degree with a double major in Marketing and a minor in Real Estate. Following college, Traci worked in the Telecommunications sector in Dallas, Texas, before moving back home to Austin and starting her Real estate career with her family at Turnquist Partners Realtors®. Since 2013, Traci has run the Marketing Department at Engel & Völkers Austin/San Antonio and now oversees the Finance and Operations. In addition, Traci joined her mother, Michele Turnquist, as part of her luxury real estate team. In addition to running a Real Estate business and being a mother of three children, Traci is involved in the organization PACT (Partners Against Child Trafficking). As a 5th Generation Austinite, Traci knows the local neighborhoods and specializes in Sales and Marketing over all the Engel & Völkers Austin & San Antonio properties. Traci understands that to effectively market a home and staying up to date with the market and trends is a must. It is about understanding her client’s needs and expectations and being able to deliver above and beyond. With a global brand behind us, we can bring a higher level of service and expertise compared to other agencies.



KATHRYN SCARBOROUGH

*Private Office Advisor, License Partner
Austin’s Elite 25 Luxury League of Austin*

Kathryn Scarborough bio: Austin’s Premier Luxury Real Estate Advisor. With over 23 years of experience and over \$1.25 billion in sales, Kathryn Scarborough is a top Realtor® in Austin’s luxury market. Recognized city-wide by the Austin Business Journal and consistently ranked among the best, Kathryn’s expertise has set industry standards. As President of Engel & Völkers Austin since 2015, Kathryn is in the top 1% of Texas Realtors®, holding the DuPont Registry Top Luxury Real Estate Professional Award and a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist designation. She’s a distinguished member of Austin’s Elite 25, Luxury League, and the exclusive Private Office. Kathryn’s deep market knowledge and connections provide access to Austin’s most coveted properties, including off-market listings. Specializing in waterfront estates, golf course communities, and downtown high-rises, she offers a global reach with unmatched service. For an exceptional real estate experience in Austin’s luxury market, contact Kathryn Scarborough.

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Estilo Women's section at the Boutique
Boutique photos by: Jeff Heyer

Stephanie Coultress O'Neill began her professional journey not in fashion, but as a child and family therapist. Guided by empathy and a deep understanding of people, she was drawn to creating spaces that made others feel seen and inspired. That passion laid the foundation for Estilo, which she opened in 2005 in downtown Austin.

After a decade downtown, Stephanie—now a mom—recognized the importance of convenience for busy parents like herself. She relocated Estilo to Tarrytown's Casis Village and began opening at 8 a.m., perfectly timed between school drop-off and the start of the workday. It was a thoughtful shift that quickly resonated with the community.

Each corner offers a special touch, from a record player and bourbon bar in the men's area to a nostalgic play table in the kids' section, saved from the former Over the Rainbow toy store.

Stephanie's focus has always been on creating a meaningful experience. She loves



Estilo Men's section at the Boutique

Estilo evolved naturally into a one-stop shop for the entire family. In 2020, Stephanie reintroduced menswear with Estilo Men, followed by Estilo Kids in 2023. Each concept had its own storefront, but managing three separate spaces presented challenges. Inspired by the iconic Fred Segal store in L.A., Stephanie dreamed of bringing all three together while preserving their individual character.

That vision came to life this year with the launch of Estilo's expanded 4,200-square-foot space, uniting women's, men's, and children's collections under one thoughtfully designed roof. The result is truly unique in Austin. It's not a department store. It's not corporate. It's not part of a generational retail chain. It's personal—like shopping with your most stylish, fun-loving friends.



Estilo Children's Section

curating community, which she does through hosting regular events at the store - from trunk shows with local designers to sip and shops for various charities she supports.

Follow @estilo_austin on Instagram to see what's coming up. Stephanie is deeply thankful to the West Austin community for its support, and she encourages you to introduce yourself when you visit the store!

*Here's to the
next chapter of
fashion,
connection and
community at
Estilo.*



FAMILY PHOTO
Photo by: Cristina Pruitt

*Stephanie Coultress O'Neill with
husband Todd O'Neill and children
Lillian and Madison O'Neill.*

