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Minx Boren, seen at home in Palm Beach Gardens, is a personal coach who advises individuals about living their best lives and corporations about how happiness affects the bottom line. GARY CORONADO / THE PALM BEACH POST

## Executive Women chief focused on engagement

## Minx Boren brings belief in happiness, personal growth to pioneering nonprofit.

By Carolyn DiPaolo

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

PALM BEACH GARDENS — Personal coach Minx Boren takes over today as president of the Executive Women of the Palm Beaches.

Her involvement with the organization started when she was a last-minute fill-in speaker at a group event.

"I'm there and I'm getting to meet all these women and I'm in all these conversations," Boren said. "I realized it was a wonderful group. I knew that there are several qualifications, and one of them is attending an event. I asked, 'Does this count?'"

Serving on a committee led to chairing a committee, which led to joining the board, and finally to her new role.

Boren is taking charge at a critical time for the executive women's organization. It celebrated its 30th anniversary two years ago, launched when there were few if any women serving on nonprofit or for-profit boards in Palm Beach County. Since then, the group has moved from support, to giving

# MONDAY MEETING

A Q&A WITH ...

## MINX BOREN

President, Executive Women of the Palm Beaches

back, to advocacy.

**Name:** Minx (yes, it's my real name) Boren

**Age:** 67

**Hometown:** Born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., then lived in New York City for 25 years, then moved to Palm Beach Gardens almost 25 years ago.

**Education:** Bachelor of arts degree in French from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Family:** Husband, Mel; son, Reid; daughter-in-law, Michelle; grandchildren, Alex, age 11, Derby, age 2.

**What do you plan this year for Executive Women?** My theme is "Engagement Empowers Everyone." I borrowed it with permission from Bill Fleming, president of Palm Beach Atlantic University, which used it as their theme last year.

My goal this year is to have 100 percent participation/involvement of our members, each woman showing up and sharing her time, talent, and treasure in some meaningful and significant way. Not only will that empower our members individually, it will allow us to exponentially broaden and solidify our relationships and engagement with each other collectively.

In addition, my overall focus will be on the four "compass points" of our organization — connection and support, learning, contribution, and advocacy — so that we can best serve our membership and the larger community of Palm Beach County in which we all participate.

**About your business:** As a coach, I challenge individuals to live their best lives and organizations to create environments where everyone is encouraged and inspired to contribute at their highest level. In business/corporate settings, I offer programs to raise awareness and skills in emotional intelligence, the impact of happiness on the bottom line, why stress makes us stupid and what to do about it, and the importance of understanding how our brain functions so that it can serve rather than sabotage our efforts.

Boren continued on D5

# Advice from chef resonated

## Boren

continued from D1

**First job and what you learned from it:** Union Carbide, Department of International Marketing Research. I learned that I needed to do something with my life that would be far more creative and people-oriented. Second job was as assistant to the fashion editor at *Ingenue Magazine* (a division of Delk Publishing). I learned that I needed to do something with my life that would be far more meaningful and challenging.

**First break in the business:** When I came to Florida, I met two extraordinary women. Cynthia Gracey, founder of Executive Women of the Palm Beaches, was in a women's group I was invited into. She and I became business partners and over the next 10 years we offered programs and held gatherings (what we called "essential conversations") for (mostly) women and wrote books together. Through those years I honed my skills as a facilitator and a writer, while exploring what it means to be truly aware of and present to self and others.

Another first Florida friend, Susan Klein, one of the pioneers in coaching, encouraged me to become certified as a coach, a process I began in 1999. The more I studied and practiced, the

## EXECUTIVE WOMEN OF THE PALM BEACHES

Founded in 1982. Dedicated to the professional and personal advancement of women through networking, sharing resources, and encouraging leadership. Since its inception, it has awarded more than \$344,000 in scholarships and grants for projects assisting girls and women.

more passionate I became about coaching.

**How your business has changed:** When I became a coach, the whole profession was in its infancy. Most people had no idea what coaching was and assumed it had to do with sports. Now the profession of coaching is a known and respected career.

**Best business book:** "Authentic Happiness," by Martin Seligman. It's not really a "business" book, but I learned that seeking happiness matters. I've always been an optimist and I dealt with a lot of criticism about being a "Pollyanna" early on.

Yet research shows that happiness is our most creative, resilient, productive, engaging state. Happiness can definitely impact the bottom line. And living a fulfilling life – filled with pleasure, engagement, and meaning is a worthwhile pursuit (after all, our forefa-

thers thought it important enough to call it "an inalienable right").

I spent a year studying with Seligman, and *why* I coach as well as the foundation of *how* I coach grew out of that experience.

**Best piece of business advice you have received:** I can think of so many, but here's one that goes back to when I first started studying nutrition and teaching cooking (my previous dual career when I lived in New York):

Natural Gourmet Cooking School owner Annemarie Colbin said to me, "The world is in too much trouble for you to make yourself small."

In those days, although I had grown up in the restaurant business and knew how to cook extremely well, I hesitated to go to work for Natural Gourmet teaching healthy cooking because I was terrified of standing up in front of people. But I had invited the owner of the school to my home for dinner, and she insisted that I stop being a "closet chef" and come to teach for her.

More recently, I was hesitant about taking on the presidency of Executive Women because, as a coach, motivational speaker, writer, and poet, I really didn't feel well-connected to business in Palm Beach County.

Gayle Landen told me to apply for Leadership Palm Beach County class of 2013 because that would change my attitude totally and I would meet the most extraordinary people. She was right.

**Many successful people learn from failure. Do you have a failure**

**you can share and what you learned from it?**

Yes. Many. But something that I learned from most recently still has my attention.

As a recipient of this year's Giraffe Award from the Women's Chamber of Commerce, I was so taken aback at having been chosen that I went over to Dena Foman (also a nominee) and expressed my astonishment that she had not been chosen as a recipient while I had.

She said to me, "When one woman wins, every woman wins." I appreciated her graciousness, but more important, she is right.

**Power lunch spot:** Pistache in West Palm Beach. My son Reid is co-owner with Thierry Beaud.

**Where we'd find you when you're not at the office:** Walking the beach, spin class or working out at the gym, sitting out back of my home journaling and writing poetry (especially in the very early morning), playing with my grandkids.

**Favorite smart-phone app:** For me, it's more important to be able to turn it off and take a break. I am not very techy and I cherish my down time. I spend enough time at the computer writing and running my business and connecting with clients. I like to get off the grid whenever I can.

And I used to be truly addicted to Words with Friends – which is why I stopped playing. I love words and Scrabble has always been one of my favorite games.

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