

# enterprising Women

Fall 2025

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Tributes to Pamela Prince-Eason, President & CEO of WBENC: Architect of opportunity, champion of women, and Francine Manilow, a trailblazer in corporate housing with a legacy in the Chicago skyline

## PLUS:

Why we must invest in Women's Business Centers

From tariffs to transformation: How women are reimagining America's manufacturing future

Building resilience in uncertain times

## Unlocking the performance secrets of multi-generational family businesses

Mother-daughter powerhouses in finance: Susan Michel and Carol Ann Fernandez, CEO and COO of Glen Eagle Advisors, LLC





The Glen Eagle family.



Starting, growing, and managing a business with family members that can be passed down to the next generation brings its own set of challenges and opportunities. In this special section on family-owned businesses, we share the stories of business owners who are meeting those challenges and experiencing the gift of sharing a business they love with the family they love.

Our opening piece is from a dynamic mother-daughter duo that includes long-time Enterprising Women Advisory Board member and Enterprising Women of the Year Award Winner Susan Michel and her daughter, Carol Ann Fernandez.

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# Turning adversity into a gift

**S**usan Michel's journey into the world of finance began far from Wall Street. She was a schoolteacher in Germany, where her husband, John, was stationed as an officer in the US Army.

Shortly after moving back to the States with two children, Susan decided to take a financial course. A few days after the course ended,

the instructor called to discuss a few topics he thought would interest her. Before beginning, however, he asked Susan to have her husband join the discussion since the "topics might be a little technical."

To the dismay of the instructor, Susan did not ask John to join the conversation. Ironically, that conversation, along with Susan's drive

and passion for helping others, planted the seeds in her to found and grow her own financial advisory business, which is now Glen Eagle, that caters to high-net-worth individuals and business owners.

This was the story of my mom that my three brothers and I grew up hearing. As children of two entrepreneurs with different companies, the boundaries



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between work and family life were nearly nonexistent in our house. My mom often brought us to her office after school, and we didn't realize that other kids were not learning their ABCs by alphabetizing client statements.

We were active participants even when not invited to be. Dinner table conversations often included discussions around hiring decisions or office moves, and we occasionally (and enthusiastically) suggested changes. More often than not, our advice went unheeded and for good reason.

Two of us eventually decided to join Glen Eagle after earning MBAs and working for major financial institutions. Like many business owners, Susan hesitated to bring family members into the business. After presenting her with a business plan, Susan became excited about the idea of ensuring the company's entrepreneurial spirit would continue into the second generation.

Glen Eagle began as a small firm at Susan's kitchen table that has grown into a dynamic firm with an active 401(k) branch, a fintech platform, and more than 15 advisors. Susan consciously sought to create a company that embodied her values as a woman, mother, and business leader - summed up in the simple but powerful guiding principle: "Faith, Family, Firm."

- **Faith:** Recognizing that there is something greater than ourselves and more to life than just investments and wealth.
- **Family:** Treating employees and clients as part of the Glen Eagle family, while also honoring the fact that, for many clients, their own family is their greatest gift.
- **Firm:** Placed last intentionally, because we always want to keep our other two tenants as the focus.

Yet, Susan also wants to include this third and final piece, because she believes that as a firm, we can have a larger impact on our employees and the wider community.

While competitors chase quarterly results, Glen Eagle focuses on the decades ahead. Envisioning an organization that will thrive for generations to come. We know and want our current business model to evolve, so innovation and adaptability are woven into our culture.

This path hasn't been without obstacles. Susan built Glen Eagle in a male-dominated industry, breaking barriers while raising a family. My brother, Rob, and I joined the firm with Wall Street experience, but life can change in an instant. Our father passed away very suddenly from an aneurysm a few years after we joined Glen Eagle.

Although our Dad owned his own technology firm, he was one of our biggest mentors. As a company where everyone treats each other like family, this tragedy was a reminder of what Faith, Family, and Firm really means. This loss reminded us of why we were committed to building something enduring.

The gift of having a second or third generation entering a firm is that they can become **intrapreneurs**. My mom often comments that it is easy to find managers but a challenge to find individuals with entrepreneurial drive. This challenge is what led Rob and me to create alooola®, a fintech platform that allows the everyday person to be able to invest while receiving advice from licensed financial advisors at a low cost.

The mission of alooola is to help close the wealth gap in the United States. With the top 10% of Americans owning over 85% of the stock market,

we felt a responsibility to empower more people to invest early and wisely. Even small steps toward financial education can have a transformative impact over time.

I can't say exactly what Glen Eagle will look like four generations from now, and we know there will be many challenges ahead. Only about 30% of family-owned businesses make it into the second generation, around 12% survive into the third generation, and a mere 3-5% continue into the fourth generation and beyond, but as Eleanor Roosevelt said: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." ☺



SUSAN MICHEL is the founder and CEO of Glen Eagle Advisors, LLC, an SEC-registered investment advisor located in New Jersey. Susan is a member of the Enterprising Women Advisory Board and a past recipient of the Enterprising Women of the Year Award.

CAROL ANN FERNANDEZ is COO and co-owner of Glen Eagle Advisors. She earned her MBA from the University of Notre Dame and has experience at Merrill Lynch, Prudential, and M&T Bank. Glen Eagle Advisors offers retirement planning to business owners and wealth management services, taking an educational, holistic approach to meeting clients' long-term goals.



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