

MORRIS COUNTY

Daily Record

TUESDAY, May 13, 2008

WWW.DAILYRECORD.COM



WARREN WESTURA / SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

Debra L. Morrison, a certified financial planner and motivational speaker, is surrounded by technology at her home office in Lincoln Park. The publication NJBiz has named her one of 'New Jersey's Best 50 Women in Business' for 2008.

Debra Morrison motivated to empower other women

Financial planner sharing her secrets of success in a field dominated by men

Certified financial planner and motivational speaker Debra L. Morrison uses her 30 years of experience in the investment industry to empower older women to overcome their fears and take control of their finances.

In 2006, she founded Debra L. Morrison Speaks. She was named one of NJBiz Magazine's New Jersey's Best 50 Women in Business for 2008.

Beginnings: Born in Mercer, Pa., in March 1956, Morrison grew up in Transfer, Pa. She received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. She also has a master's degree in retirement planning from the College for Financial Planning in Denver.

The one-day job: Morrison's first job after graduation from college was at Nationwide Insurance in Harrisburg, Pa. It lasted a day and half. "I saw the ability for women to excel not very promising. I applied for an underwriting position and was told that I didn't have the right degree. I was offered a job as a claims examiner and took it and then learned that a man with the same experience as I had got the job I wanted."

Career path: Morrison almost found her niche at John Hancock in Camp Hill, Pa.,

DOSSIER

Debra L. Morrison, financial planner and motivational speaker, Lincoln Park

where she worked as an insurance saleswoman, hoping to learn more about investing. "They weren't eager to put money into women, and I was wet behind the ears but determined. I wound up leading the agency in sales for two years."

In 1980, she transferred to the John Hancock Ridgewood office and became director of tax advantage investing. In 1984, she transferred to a conglomerate owned by Realtor Dick Schlott, the Financial Network in Clifton and, in 1988, to Lincoln National Financial Services in Fairfield as equities director. In 1990, she established Debra Morrison and Associates, which merged with RegentAtlantic Capital in Chatham. Since 2005, Morrison has had a fee-only wealth management practice with Capital Financial Advisors based in LaJolla, Calif.

Mentors: "Bill Beardstee, the general agent at Lincoln worked with me for 12 years and was unbelievably supportive. I credit him with much of my success."

Tough field for women: "The world of finance has traditionally been dominated by white males, just through habit, but the tide began to change in the late 1980s. When women became successful it was big time. Weaker women just didn't make it while a weak man would because the system supported him. I weathered many a storm and had to have a thick skin."

At home: Morrison has lived in Lincoln Park since 1996. She enjoys golf, scuba diving and volunteering for the Special Olympics and the Women's Fund of New Jersey.

"Before I die": A goal of Morrison's is to dive in the Great Barrier Reef in Hawaii. "I love water and have an exploration mindset. Life is a big discovery."

Philosophy: I want to use my gifts to help others and bridge the gap between ignorance and empowerment. Money offers you more choices.

Tip for women: Women need to celebrate what they've done right. They are the harshest judges of themselves; it curbs their ability to act. Women are actually better investors than men; they use common sense, aren't impulsive and tend to do more research. Fear is typically ground into us by societal systems. Fear needs to be dissected. We can do it women."

Dossier was reported by Sally Silve rman, a freelance writer