

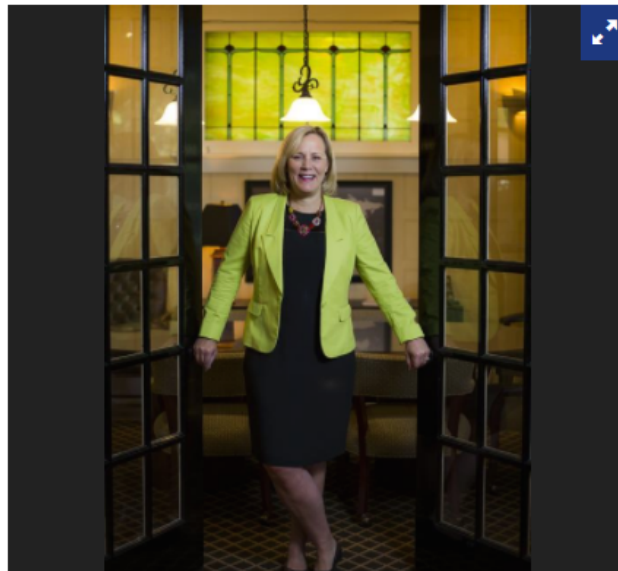
IN PERSON: Investment firm owner says being entrusted with clients' money 'a great honor'

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Louisville
Business First



Beth Stegner Peabody is a driven person. As a former collegiate athlete, a financial professional with a high-profile resume, a wife and a mother, she couldn't be anything else.

That highly developed sense of drive and work ethic for the former University of Pennsylvania basketball player has helped her to do all of those things on her terms.



Beth Stegner Peabody, president of Stegner Investment Associates Inc., says establishing... [more](#)

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One of those terms was not working in an office.

“I wanted to have a home,” Peabody said in an interview. “I wanted clients to come to our home.”

Peabody is president and co-founder of [Stegner Investment Associates Inc.](#) She said being at a home, rather than in an office helps to foster trust and makes clients more comfortable as they talk about a topic that can cause tensions and anxiety: money.

“First and foremost, we manage money,” Peabody said. “The other part of this is we help people manage their lives and businesses; we are much more involved than just investing money.”

Peabody founded her investment management firm in 1994 with her father, [Doug Stegner](#).

Stegner Investment Associates helps people manage investments –largely through mutual funds – as well as navigating the increasingly complicated world of personal finance.

To manage a person's finances effectively, Peabody often needs to ease the client's goals out of them. Often, clients don't know what their financial goals are and need to be comfortable enough to share the financial and personal details to articulate a goal that Peabody can then develop into an investment plan.

"A lot of time, it's really like therapy," she joked.

Being in a home helps relax clients, she added.

Helping people become comfortable enough to share financial and personal details isn't something Peabody treats lightly. She makes it a point to be accountable to clients, providing financial report cards and only charging on a fee basis rather than a sales commission for getting people to buy certain investments.

Peabody believes that there should never be a question for investment managers on whose interest they are working for and that they should act as fiduciaries for clients.

"That's (one reason) why I started the business," she said. "There was no accountability in the industry for performance."

Peabody took some time to answer a few more of our questions:

What advice would you give to other business leaders to help foster teamwork?

People want to know what that they do contributes. Take time to explain to them how, ultimately, they can impact the bottom line.

Lead from the top. You have to lead by example. You have to be human and genuinely care.

How do you balance strong leadership with approachable leadership?

Remember that conflict is not always negative. You can have a heated discussion that can be conflicting. I have to work on that. I think that I can be more vulnerable.

How did you juggle having kids at home and having your own business?

I remember taking the girls into work with me on the weekend because we had the computer. We had a CD-ROM. We didn't have one at home and it was, "If you come to work with mommy you can play on the computer."

They would help staple things. I included them, definitely, in the business.

When you run your own business, you are your own master. That was part of the decision (to start the business). I knew there was no way I could have children and work in the 9-to-5 world.

My background allowed me to do all the different parts of this job and have the flexibility to be a mom.

Have your daughters expressed how your job influenced them?

I never missed anything. I think the job allowed me to be there, and I was a very present mom.

I coached them in basketball. That was efficient: I was there with my kids, with their friends and giving back to a sport and the church and the school all at the same time – I think they always appreciated that.

One of my daughters called me and said a girl in her class was resenting her stay-at-home mom and was saying that you can't have it all.

(My daughter) came forward and started saying things she couldn't believe about how proud she was about who I was for her.

What advice would you give to professionals about "having it all?"

There are efficient things you can do. Like on Sundays, we figured out that we could cook multiple meals (for the rest of the week). We found that the most difficult time was getting home, making sure everyone got back and ate dinner together.

Just getting food from the fridge and heating it up was very helpful. You have to plan. You have to love what you do, and I think the rest will come through. This is not work to me. I think loving what you do makes it so much easier because that feeds into (your family members). If you're happy, your (spouse) will be happy. Your kids can feel that.

We always left work at the door. You've been gone all day. The kids have been gone all day. Even if you had a bad day, you leave and let it come back at 9 o'clock.

We always focused on the kids when we were home. We ate together, made sure everything was set, then the world could come crashing back in once we put (the kids) to bed.

What has kept you in the same field for 30 years?

Every day I feel like we are changing lives. (Clients) inspire us and we help them do good things.

There a plaque in The Palestra (University of Pennsylvania's basketball arena) that says: "To win the game is great. To play the game is greater. But to love the game is the greatest of all." That's the way I felt playing basketball. I just loved the game.

Now, I love to be involved and to be honored with having people give us their trust. That is the greatest feeling in the world.

For someone to come in and trust us about (such an important thing) is a burden, but it's a great honor.

Beth Stegner Peabody

Age: 56

Title: President and co-founder [Stegner Investment Associates Inc.](#)

Hometown: Louisville

Resides: Cherokee Park

Career history: President and co-founder, Stegner Investment Associates, Inc. 1993-present; vice president, National City Bank, 1990-93; assistant vice president ASB Capital Management, 1983-90

Education: Bachelor's degree in economics, minor in English, University of Pennsylvania, 1983

Family: Doug Peabody, husband of 27 years; 22-year-old and 24-year-old daughters

Hobbies: Gardening, coaching, mentoring