

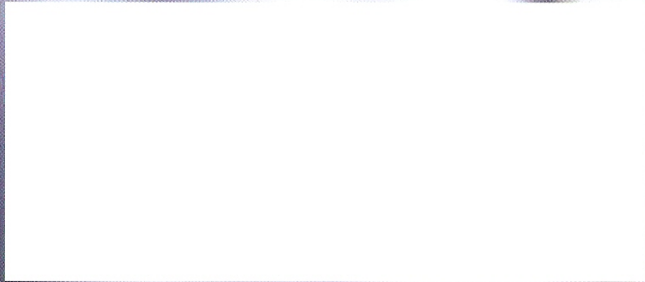
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Doing it Scared: Alliance Member and Pioneer U.S. Secret Service Agent **Kathryn Childers**

At the age of 61, Alliance member Kathryn Childers has seen and experienced more than the average person will experience in a few lifetimes.

As one of the five first female U.S. Secret Service agents, she's worked with presidents, heads of state, queens and dignitaries. She's also written books, hosted television shows and ventured into public speaking. These are all feats that she has embraced because of the motto she lives by, "Do it scared!"

"Everything I've done in my life would scare most people to death," said Childers. "Fear is just something you have to embrace and with fear mixed in, you get better at what you're doing."

It is this mantra that has propelled her through a variety of life changes, given her the propensity to push the envelope and demand more. But despite all that she has seen and experienced, she cites the Alliance as her first job in public service, as she was really able to sink her teeth into community service while serving as a member in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Before Childers became an Alliance member, she embarked on a groundbreaking career that pushed historic boundaries. It was 1969 and although she had always been very involved in conservative politics on campus, she also was very aware certain careers were not available to women. Oppor-

tunities were limited in federal service and women were groomed to find a husband and start a family after college. Despite this reality she also recognized it as one of the most intriguing times for women in history.

She packed up her 1959 Volkswagen and headed east to Washington D.C., where she started work as a military case worker for congressional staff. It was through that position that she applied for a job with the Secret Service, not really realizing that was the agency to which she was applying. She was eventually chosen because of her athletic background and sharp skills at rifle shooting, which she honed as a shooter on her rifle team in high school. She was sworn in with four other women, which was recognized as a historic move, mandated by President Richard Nixon.

"Other than elected officials, there were no federal service opportunities for women," said Childers. "There wasn't much opportunity to serve the country. I had male friends who served in Vietnam and I felt very patriotic and this was my chance to do something for the country."

She served as a bodyguard for Tricia Nixon, worked security detail for Jacqueline Onassis and the Kennedy children, provided White House tours to foreign dignitaries and heads of state and attended White House functions.

After three years of working in Washington D.C., she met and married her husband, left her career behind and moved to Corpus Christi, Texas. At 25 years old she found herself on the verge of reinvention yet again. Leaving her life in which she described herself as "a mouse in the pocket of history," she found herself raising three stepsons and trying to find her niche in Texas, which she eventually did. She became involved in community service, specifically the arts community, the Alliance and in non-profit organizations.

"I learned in the Alliance how involved you could be if you wanted to be," said Childers. "It was one of those things where the possibilities of helping others were endless depending on how creative you were willing to be."

Now, years later, Childers has reinvented herself time and time again. She has been a morning talk show host in Corpus Christi, where she focused on educating the community on various health initiatives and screenings, interviewed actors, and is part of a group that dresses up and entertains ill children.

She concludes, "We owe it to ourselves to seize the moment."

This Member Profile was written by Jennifer West.