

EXECUTIVE PROFILE: **Larry Eiler** Chairman, Eiler Communications

Background: Eiler founded Eiler Communications, an Ann Arbor-based public relations, marketing and investor relations firm, in 1987. He operates the company with his wife, Sandy.

He moved to Ann Arbor in 1980 from Minneapolis, where he was head of public relations for Honeywell Regulator Co. While at Honeywell, he was recruited by Comshare Inc. to move to Ann Arbor. He also was vice president of marketing at Machine Vision International before starting his own business.

Eiler was born and raised in Syracuse, N.Y., and attended Syracuse University. While in college, he attended classes during the day and worked as a newspaper reporter at The Post-Standard and Syracuse Herald Journal at night, which is how he paid his way through both undergraduate and graduate school. It was around that time that he met Sandy, to whom he's been married for 40 years.

Eiler Communications employs eight people and represents companies throughout the United States, including Pittsfield Township-based ABN AMRO Mortgage Group, Pfizer Inc., and Los Angeles-based Avery Dennison Corp.

Outside of his business, Eiler is active in cancer research. He is the author of "When the Woman You Love Has Breast Cancer," inspired by his personal experience dealing with Sandy's breast cancer diagnosis. He is writing two more books: one about cancer and one about heart issues.

Eiler also sits on the board of Seattle-based Haakon Ragde Cancer Foundation, which helps raise money for different organizations that study cancer.

Education: Bachelor of arts degree in history, Syracuse University; master's degree in journalism, Syracuse University.



Family: Wife, Sandy; seven children: Tracy, Jennifer, Derek, Lauren, Jerrett, Sean and Meghan; four grandchildren: Luke, Alex, Aaron and Ryan, plus two more grandchildren on the way.

Residence: Scio Township.

Insights

Essential business philosophy: I like to deal in possibilities. I always try to see what's possible out of any situation ... and turn possibilities into things that really happen.

Best way to keep your competitive edge: Be up to speed on the latest techniques of the business that you have, which in our case is helping our clients become more well known among key audiences they need to reach. You have to know the PR business, and you have to know how it changes and how technology drives it.

Guiding principle: Always try to find and say something nice about everyone.

Yardstick of success: My family, and how can I help them be successful?

Goal yet to be achieved: There's really two: number one is a productive apple orchard.

I put an apple orchard in my property a few years ago, but it isn't productive yet and I want it to be. The second is using creative ability to write more books and essays.

Judgment calls

Best business decision: Starting my own business, because I'm pretty independent and I like to be independent.

Worst business decision: None, because I deal in possibilities, and any decision you make, if it's the wrong thing you find out and you do something to put the thing back on a cement road.

Biggest missed opportunity: None.

Mentor: The Rev. Bob Thomas. He was a minister that I knew for a lot of my earlier life and he was always a good mainstay of anything that I did.

Words that best describe you: Creative and thoughtful.

Confessions

Like best about the job: Dealing with nice, fun people who believe that business and doing business can be fun and enjoyable and doesn't have to be all drudgery.

Like least about the job: There isn't anything I don't like about this, because it's independence and you're always dealing with how to fix things or help companies and clients.

What keeps you up at night: Nothing.

Pet peeve: Smoking.

What did you eat for breakfast? Mueslix and a banana.

Peanut butter – crunchy or smooth? Crunchy.

Most important lesson learned: Failing is not failure, but failing drives you to succeed.

Person you'd most like to meet: Tom Brokaw.

Most respected competitor: Anybody that does this similar work to us, they're all good in their own way. So, I respect every one of them.

Two greatest passions: Family and helping other people.

First choice for a new career: Giving lectures about topics that I have something to say on, and that could be helpful to other people.

Treasures

Favorite quote: "Anything worth doing is worth doing right."

Favorite cause: Educating people about cancer.

Favorite authors: John Grisham and Clive Cussler.

Favorite movie: I don't think I have any one favorite.

Favorite food: The last couple years, it's been a lot of fruits and vegetables.

Favorite restaurant: Knight's.

How do you find peace? You find it best within yourself, and I have very good techniques for doing that ... sometimes (it's taking) a walk around the building or (going) home early and (making) a fire in the fireplace.

Favorite vacation spot: I think the thing that's becoming the favorite is my son in Atlanta has a new lodge on top of a mountain in northwest Georgia.

Favorite way to spend free time: Reading.

Automobile: Audi convertible.

– Jennifer Daniel Szymanski