



Panel Bios

Lois Cook

Lois Cook is a powerhouse when it comes to exposing the game of football for women. She is proudly a walking, talking advocate for women's football while also a mom of four boys, Social Media Influencer, TV/Radio Show Host, Professional Wide Receiver, and Vice President of the DC Divas. Beginning her love of football at an early age, Lois decided that she wanted to be the first woman in the NFL. In 2002, her dream somewhat came true as she began her football career with the Atlanta Leopards - which was not quite the NFL but for her, even better - a league for all women at the highest level. She then joined the DC Divas in 2004 where she still plays today among a host of all women's and co-ed flag football teams. Lois' career has been nothing short of exciting and is now completely dedicated to football. In 2021, she coached at her very own high school, Bethesda Chevy Chase High School in Bethesda, MD where the team went undefeated for the first time in over 40 years! She was also selected to attend the prestigious NFL Alumni Academy as an intern coach in Canton, OH where she worked directly with the Offensive Line, Running Backs, and then lastly the Defensive Line. A short time later, she became the host of "Lo On The Go", a fun and lighthearted segment of the WFA pre-game TV Show, "Road To Canton" which can be seen on local channels in Arizona, Minnesota, and nationally online and Women's Sports TV Network. Each year, for the WFA Championship, Lois becomes a part of the ESPN2 broadcast production as a sideline reporter and color commentator for the 4-game weekend. Lois has extended her passion for playing the game on the field to serving and growing the game off the field. She started a non-profit organization in 2020, Lois Cook Foundation aka FTBLR, designed to empower women and girls through football, to educate and mentor both boys and girls who play, to financially support the women who already play, and to help bring girls' tackle football teams to schools. Lois also achieved several awards and honors including the 2023 Coaches' Award, 2021 Daddy Nat Award for Selfless Service, the 2019 Owner's Award, the 2018 Hard Hat Award, and numerous flag football championships for her performance and dedication to the game. Today Lois' mission continues and her message is simple; be active in your passion and grow the game of football for all.

Maria Elizabeth

Maria Elizabeth is the founder of Salon deZEN in Old Town. Maria Elizabeth is driven by a passion for forging connections and fostering authenticity. With a dynamic entrepreneurial journey spanning nearly 20 years, Maria has evolved from being a mastermind in the realm of hair and beauty to a strategic thinker shaping her legacy. As a small business owner, she dedicates herself to supporting her team and community, finding fulfillment by cultivating environments where individuals thrive. Maria measures

her success by the positive impact she has on others. She sees her business venture as a means to create a meaningful and lasting imprint on the world by reaching back to help others. Her impressive accolades include being the VP for the Old Town Boutique District, Chamber of Commerce 40 under 40, alumni of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, and the winner of the Chamber of Commerce Best Small Business in 2023. Currently, Maria is actively participating in the Leadership Alexandria program through the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, furthering her commitment to leadership excellence and community development.

Peggy Fox

Peggy Fox is a Spokesperson and External Affairs Manager with Dominion Energy. She leads the company's Speakers Bureau, sharing information about Dominion Energy's reliable service, clean energy projects, energy efficiency programs and community support. Peggy is a four-time Emmy winner from her journalism career at WUSA9, the CBS TV station in Washington, D.C. As the station's Virginia Bureau Chief, Peggy covered major news events over two decades, reporting on crime, education, politics, and the environment. She also covered three presidential inaugurations, high-profile missing person cases and trials, including that of a Virginia Governor. Prior to working in the DC market, she was a news anchor and reporter for NBC stations in Miami, Charlotte, North Carolina; and West Virginia. Her start in broadcasting began at Virginia Tech's student-run radio station, WUVT. Peggy grew up in Fairfax County and married her high school sweetheart. They live in Northern Virginia and are empty nesters with two adult children.

LaJuanna Russell

LaJuanna Russell is President & CEO of Business Management Associates. LaJuanna Russell has more than 20 years of executive leadership experience in all aspects of business operations, government contracting, and consulting, with particular expertise in human resource management, human resource technology and process improvement. She is a sought-after speaker on topics such as Future of Work, Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion, Entrepreneurship, and Women in Government Contracting. She is a visionary who started her business in 2006 with a personal investment of just \$500. Today BMA is an award-winning, multi-million-dollar business, listed on the Inc. 5000 List of America's Fastest-Growing Companies three years in a row. Ms. Russell holds a BA in Communication Studies from Virginia Tech, an accelerated MBA with concentrations in International Business and Finance from George Washington University, and a six sigma greenbelt certification. She is chair of Small Business Majority's Board of Directors, a member of Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, a member of The George Washington School of Business Advisory Board, a member of Professional Services Council Board of Directors, immediate past chair of Alexandria Commission on Employment, an incoming board member for The Campagna Center, the incoming DC Leadership Council Co-Chair for Vital Voices, a member of Women Impacting Public Policy's Leadership Advisory Council, a member of Intuit's Small Business QuickBooks Council, and an alumna of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program.

Stephanie Wright

Stephanie Wright, Co-Founder/Executive Director, has a Master's in Social Work, with a focus on program planning and administration. As the Executive Director of TWB, Stephanie has overall strategic responsibility for TWB's staff, programs, expansion, and execution of its mission. She is currently responsible for managing program staff, community relations, grant administration, and board affairs. Stephanie's passion for empowering women is inspired by all of the amazing women who are part of the Together We Bake family. Stephanie has lived in Alexandria for the past 30 years and is grateful for being part of a compassionate community. Stephanie loves spending time with her husband and three adult children (ages 23, 21, 18)! She enjoys hiking, running, and relaxing at home surrounded by her dog and two cats