

BIOGRAPHY

Karen Zelden

March 2026

For over thirty-five years, Karen Zelden has led and participated as part of high-performing teams to build thriving revenue-generating, client and donor relations, communications, marketing, and media relations programs and departments.

For the past seventeen years as a non-profit leader, strategist, fundraiser, and consultant, she has contributed to raising over \$42 million. For a large health care system, she led the major gifts fundraising efforts including for a successful \$20 million capital campaign, the largest in organizational history. She has established or rebuilt fundraising or communications programs for four community nonprofits and reestablished two planned giving programs. During COVID, as Chief Development & Marketing Officer of a human services nonprofit, Karen innovated an Emergency Hardship Fund, raising nearly \$525,000 that benefited over 400 families. As Caring Collective's first Chief Development & Marketing Officer, she participated in the organization's major rebranding effort; developed its marketing and communications program; and raised funds for specific projects benefiting seventeen agencies on the Glasser/Schoenbaum Campus of Caring. Fourteen years ago, she founded a consulting practice, now Big Bold Fundraising, and has partnered with universities and diverse-sized nonprofits to help meet their goals.

Karen's nearly two decades in the for-profit sector included executive roles in business development, marketing, client retention, and communications. As Senior National Business Development Director for an international, publicly traded company, she coached leadership and individual business development performers in 30 U.S. offices and facilitated or co-facilitated business success trainings with audiences of up to 500 attendees; her work as part of a dynamic team contributed to division growth from \$80 million to \$110 million in three years.

Believing it important to pay it forward and contribute to community, Karen has served on several boards and committees. She currently serves on the Charitable Gift Planners of Southwest Florida's board as Secretary. She earned her Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) certification in 2021 and recertified in 2024. A passionate writer, she had the privilege of authoring a mentor's biography, *Doggett Determination: Believing in Yourself to Create Success in Life and Business* with the book receiving Amazon Editors' recognition. Her next book, *Because I Choose: Three Little Words. One Big, Bold Impact.* is planned for release in Fall 2026.