

Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This is an archived edition when our program was called Leadership Landscape TV.

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Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to another installment of Leadership Landscape where we go inside the minds of local community leaders and sometimes legends and allow them a chance to offer some keen insights into how they see themselves and most importantly to explore just what makes them tick. I'm Kirt Jacobs host of Leadership Landscape where previous interviews have included former mayors, state politicians, nationally renowned sports writers, sports legends, and heads of major business concerns, community activists and developers. Today our guest is Sandra Frazier. She is the managing member of Tandem Public Relations LLC. She is a native Louisvillian. Sandra has a major, excuse me, a Masters of Science in mass communication and public relations from Boston University College of Communication and a bachelors of arts degree in history from Hollins College. Today Sandra has over ten years of public relations and community relations investment experience at both the corporate and agency levels. In 2005 she founded her own public relations firm called Tandem Public Relations. Prior to starting her own business, Sandra worked from 2002 to 2005 as a public relations account manager for Doe Anderson where her work experience with the legendary advertising agency spanned both the nonprofit and private sectors. Prior to 2002, Sandra worked for Boston based State Street Corporation one of the world's largest financial service companies where she worked on corporate communications, investor relations and international community reinvestment policy. Before joining State Street, Sander worked as an account executive at Boston public relations firms Schneider and Associates where her clients included Hewlett Packard, Hood, excuse me, H.P. Hood, Staples, Reebok, Arthur Anderson and John Hancock Financial Services. As part of her work for John Hancock Sandra worked on the team responsible for the product launch of John Hancock's initial public stock offering in

2000. Her extensive financial service experience is rooted by our time with FleetBoston Financial Corporation where she worked on corporate communications and community employee and investor relations during Fleet's acquisition of the Bank of Boston in 1999. However, in 2006 Sandra along with Brown family members Martin S. Brown Jr and George Garvin Brown IV became directors of the Brown Forman Company and all are descendants of George Garvin Brown the founder of Brown Forman in 1870. Sandra represents the first members of the family's fifth generation to join the company's board. With the Brown family controlling a majority of the voting stock of the company. Sandra is also a director of Commonwealth Bank and Trust Company. She is currently serving as co-chair of the Louisville Zoo's Glacier Run Campaign. She also serves on the boards of the Speed Museum, the Library Foundation, the Downtown Development Corporation and the Hollands College Board of Trustees. All this, I'll try to be a gentleman, under the age of 40. Welcome to Leadership Landscape Sandra. Quite a pleasure to have you here today.

Sandra Frazier: Thanks Kirt and thanks for that nice intro.

Kirt Jacobs: Makes you feel good doesn't it?

Sandra Frazier: It sounds really nice.

Kirt Jacobs: It does and there is more to come.

Sandra Frazier: Oh good

Kirt Jacobs: We ask this of our guests what drives you to do what you do? I mean you didn't have to start your own company for example.

Sandra Frazier: Well it's kind of interesting because that question it's such a simple question but it's really I think kind of loaded. And for me what what I always want to do is to be able to wake up in the morning and know first of all what you're going to do but also to be productive and contribute something. Whether that's to a client, to a nonprofit, to an individual or something but just to be

able to know that you're doing something and that you're making a difference.

Kirt Jacobs: OK. Whom do you credit most influential in your life? Can be more than one person. Either professional or person.

Sandra Frazier: There there are a couple. I would have to say from the family standpoint I've been incredibly fortunate to have a number of family members both immediate and extended who have been supportive of me and really sort of served as mentors.

Kirt Jacobs: True

Sandra Frazier: From about the time that I was probably a child in the first of which would be my Great Aunt Sally Brown.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Sandra Frazier: Who really encouraged all of her grandchildren, nieces, nephews to really get involved but also to take an interest and really take responsibility for the community that you're in. My father, who is no longer living, was was incredible as far as I think really giving us a strong work ethic and having both my brother my sister and me to treat people well but to also take responsibility and to give back. My mother has been very good about making sure that while we give back, take responsibility and that sort of thing that we don't get taken advantage of.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure

Sandra Frazier: She's really been a great role model as far as being a strong woman. And my father was wonderful about from from being from the standpoint of having two daughters to really kind of make it so that we would be self-sufficient and not have to rely on others to sort of make our way in the world. And then from an academic standpoint, I had a wonderful adviser in college who was really she was wonderful about emphasizing the fact that even though you're not going to get the best grade in something that you really should always go the difficult route because in the end you've

earned something going the difficult route. Even if in the end it's not what you wanted you at least have the satisfaction of knowing that you've worked to get to that point and that you've earned it and to take pride in what you've earned. And really from that standpoint it's been good as far as instilling a positive work ethic. And then I've had some great bosses along the way who've really been tremendous from a professional standpoint as far as just sort of teaching me about how to work with others but also how to get the most from others but also in working with clients. Just what's the best practices and in particular I've looked back to Dan Burgess who was my boss at Doe Anderson who was just fantastic as far as I'm one of the one of the P.R. folks who did not have a professional journalism background. You know I was certainly taught it in graduate school but as far as having that experience. I didn't have it and Dan was wonderful about kind of teaching and made the the journalistic methods and really to think like a journalist so.

Kirt Jacobs: You've had a village as they say.

Sandra Frazier: I've had a village.

Kirt Jacobs: That is a great answer. Most people it is one maybe two people.

Sandra Frazier: No no I've had it that I've had a village and the nice part about it is that it's kind of hard to screw up because if you do you've always got other folks who are looking over your shoulder to tell you that you screwed up.

Kirt Jacobs: That's great. That's a good point. What was the most defining moment of your life Sandra? Could be more than one. Could be professional or personal.

Sandra Frazier: You know I think for me it was probably it was probably the death of my father. My father died when I was 22 and was with him when he died. He was terminally ill but we did not expect him to die when he did. And for me it was the sense of sort of being there with him but also up until the time that he did die you know it was he had cancer and so he's going through treatments

and it was a matter of being just extremely supportive. But for me it was for me it was probably a way to sort of see that that was one part of your life that was definitely obviously over with.

Kirt Jacobs: The chapter was closing.

Sandra Frazier: The chapter was closing but I think in the other end it was suddenly that you were no longer sort of his daughter. You suddenly were out on your own.

Kirt Jacobs: Inaudible

Sandra Frazier: Yeah and you had you really had to sort of fend for your own. And I think in that standpoint you at that point in time you got a lot of people who want to be extremely over protective or who will assume that you don't know any better or that sort of thing.

Kirt Jacobs: Right

Sandra Frazier: And in a lot of ways you don't know any better but you don't want to admit that you don't know any better. And so for me I think that was extremely defining because suddenly I had to take responsibility for myself and well you know you my mother certainly was there to do that I think for me. I'm a middle child so I've always been independent so for me that really sort of forced me to have to kind of you know end that chapter of my life and sort of become extremely independent.

Kirt Jacobs: Wow that's a powerful story. I like that.

Sandra Frazier: ???

Kirt Jacobs: No, No. If there is one what is your biggest professional regret? In other words is there something you could do differently?

Sandra Frazier: I do I have a lot of I don't have a lot I have some professional regrets. I think the probably you know I mentioned

it when my father passed away I decided to stay in Louisville for a couple of years just to be with my family to sort of make sure everything was settled. And you know a number of friends including my advisor in college that everybody was suggesting you know move to a larger community where you can sort of get some experience and then come back. And one of the things that I really regret it is that when you're in your early 20s and you decide to do that you can usually afford to start out in a much sort of lower tiered position in a larger organization and you really when you're young when you screw up at that sort of point in your life. It's kind of expected if you're in a larger corporation or an organization. That's one of the regrets I have is that in my early really in my 20s until I was probably in my later 20s when I moved to Boston I didn't have that. I was here. And while I loved being here. It was definitely a part of my life where I think you could have probably gotten a different perspective being in another city or another environment and that sort of thing. And and on that same note another professional regret that I have is when I would decided that I was going to move back to Louisville or that I wanted to leave Boston rather I had had an opportunity to go work for a startup nonprofit in New York and at the time I was just kind of like no you know I really want to go back to Louisville. You know I just want to be back with family and friends and and you know in hindsight I really regret not going and working with that organization because the organization is now huge. It's you know got funding from a number of major international foundations and you know I'm still in touch with the folks who were there and but you do kind of regret that it would have been fascinating to be on the ground floor.

Kirt Jacobs: You probably wouldn't have started Tandem.

Sandra Frazier: You're right you're right.

Kirt Jacobs: I mean there's always those folks.

Sandra Frazier: Yeah and the way that sort of see it too is that you know you kind of look back and you regret things but at the end of the day if you spend your time regretting you just waste more time. I think everybody does have regrets but you know it's just a matter

of accepting it and moving on.

Kirt Jacobs: It's nice to know where you've been and where you are headed.

Sandra Frazier: Exactly

Kirt Jacobs: What do you find exciting about all that you do? I mean you started this company. It's got to be some source of passion and excitement.

Sandra Frazier: It was interesting when I decided to start the company I was extremely naive in thinking about everything that it entailed. You know I was used to my job at Doe Anderson where you know you would go in and you had your clients in.

Kirt Jacobs: Right.

Sandra Frazier: You would work with them and then suddenly you know you start your own business and you have got accounting issues, HR issues, all the little things that you don't think of.

Kirt Jacobs: Right. It's like I just want to do PR what happened.

Sandra Frazier: The CFO and the accounting staff at Doe are my heroes now but..

Kirt Jacobs: Right.

Sandra Frazier: But anyway so you spend more time really focusing on those things. But in the end what I love and why you know I decided that I wanted to really focus more on the communications side of things is every day is different but the job allows you to immerse yourself in the innards of really every sort of organization because if you've got a client who makes widgets you suddenly have to go in and know OK you know how many widgets are there. You know what is the accounting staff at the widget place made up of. What is you know you just have to know how everything works so in a lot of ways you're suddenly the operations. You know

about the operations but you're trying to work on other ends and so so I really like it because every day is different and you never know what you're going to get into. Now when you're running the business and it's more on the administrative end of things you usually wind up spending more and dealing with you know again the H.R. issues making sure you've got enough toner copy paper but then also that everybody is happy or at least not happy but that everybody is at least productive and you know the majority of people are happy.

Kirt Jacobs: There is always one or two.

Sandra Frazier: And then you know you've got the client issues in general and I think that you know that's one of those things where you always have to know about what the client's doing. And so so that becomes it just changes your priorities but I think you know one of the great things too about the job is that you really get to meet a lot of great people and you get to meet a ton of just good people.

Kirt Jacobs: Our next question is what was the best advice ever given to you Sandra? Maybe back to that village of people or maybe not.

Sandra Frazier: The village. There are two people who gave me... Well I've had lots of good advice again the village but there are two quotes that really stand out. And the first one goes back to my college advisor who was a woman named Ruth Donne. I mentioned earlier and then. I remember sitting in her office one day when I was trying to go over a course curriculum. And she she told me in the middle of things and she said look you know she goes I don't care you know who your family is or what your parents do or anything you know you're going to learn to work and again it goes back to that work ethic. And then the other person who gave me a great bit of advice was Mike Carroled who you know when I was griping about something I guess was probably about 10 years ago and he said just remember you just always have to carve your own boat. And so I think that's really important because you know at the end of...

Kirt Jacobs: I like that.

Sandra Frazier: Yeah at the end of the day you know your reputation is only thing you take with you. And I think it's very important that you know who you are because if you don't have that identity you're you're really in a difficult situation.

Kirt Jacobs: Carve your own boat. I like that.

Sandra Frazier: Yeah

Kirt Jacobs: You know this show is about leadership. Can you define leadership in one word? Could be more than one.

Sandra Frazier: You know it's interesting. I think leadership. You know I think leadership is more about... To me my definition of leadership is setting the course. And then that's kind of the way I see it. Setting the course and really becoming a pacesetter. You know the downside of leadership though I think is that it can be extremely isolating. So a lot of times it can be isolating and can be lonely and so at that point in time you know what you really have to do is it has to be something that is important to you. Whether it's because you want to do something good for the community or you have a vested interest. It's just about taking advantage of that.

Kirt Jacobs: If you could change one thing Sandra be it in your own life or in general what would that be? And you can interpret that really any way you want.

Sandra Frazier: If I could change one thing. Just one thing.

Kirt Jacobs: Tick tock. Tick Tock.

Sandra Frazier: (laughing) I think for me it would probably be what I discussed earlier in my 20s...

Kirt Jacobs: Sure

Sandra Frazier: ...that I really wish that I had been able to spend some time outside of the community before graduate school and really working in one of these grueling jobs that didn't pay a whole lot but you got a ton of experience and you were able to take that elsewhere.

Kirt Jacobs: Could you describe in detail a particular incident or scenario in your professional or personal life where you utilized your style and philosophy on leadership?

Sandra Frazier: When I saw that question earlier I was like wow that's going to be a tough one.

Kirt Jacobs: You started your own company.

Sandra Frazier: Yeah I know.

Kirt Jacobs: I thought it would be a good question for you.

Sandra Frazier: I think for me when I started the company it was it was a challenge because I was very happy with where I was.

Kirt Jacobs: Right.

Sandra Frazier: And when the opportunity came up to sort of go out on my own I looked back. You know I'm one of these people where I don't jump into things immediately. Sometimes I jump into it too soon but. What happened was I. You know I sat there and I thought OK I'm at this stage in my life and if I don't do this now you know 10 years from now will I look back and regret it. And so for me it was a matter of looking to see where I was. Where I thought I was going. What the pros, what the cons would be and if there was a safety net there. And there was but you know for me it was a matter of just really kind of going out on my own. And I think it was difficult because when you when you go out on your own you have a lot of folks who are naysayers. And that sort of thing and there can be a number of patronising comments.

Kirt Jacobs: I'm sure

Sandra Frazier: That you just sort of..

Kirt Jacobs: (inaudible)

Sandra Frazier: Yeah and you know you just sort of move on with it. And I think for me even from when I was younger you always knew that sometimes you were doing things that weren't the most popular and weren't the most accepted but you just sort of go with it and you just have to trust your gut instinct.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure. And this kind of leads into my next question I want to ask you. You know we've we've kind of come in our American culture of a male dominated culture of leadership. Probably up until the last 20-30 years arguably. Do you think it's easier for women now to attain leadership positions or is it harder in a sense because there's more expected of them if you will.

Sandra Frazier: I think if they did I think there are two sides to that. I think I think it is easier for women to get into leadership positions because I think that there is more of a demand to have women in those positions. Where I think it becomes an issue is I think is I think you're seeing a lot of women who are put into positions who aren't always the right person to be put into that..

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Sandra Frazier: ...position and maybe it's not that point in their life. And I think that sometimes that's the worst thing you can do for a woman or really anybody is to put them in that spot and they're not ready for it. The thing that concerns me about it is that you're having some women put in spots simply because of their gender and winds up happening is that they're not taken seriously. But at the same point in time what I'm excited about is that particularly among younger women and girls and teenage girls you're seeing far more of an emphasis placed on their leadership development and skills. And I think that that's wonderful because it's really allowing them to blossom and move into their own.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure.

Sandra Frazier: And you know and just for the sake of everything I also feel too that while we're putting a lot of emphasis on women in leadership that it should be taught to the boys as well.

Kirt Jacobs: Right

Sandra Frazier: You know not the older ones but the younger ones.

Kirt Jacobs: I got you. I understand. That's another TV show.

Sandra Frazier: Sorry

Kirt Jacobs: No, that's ok. This will lead into our next one. You know we're both from Louisville. Is there a difference today in our leaders and there was in past generations here in Louisville. And that can be a national question.

Sandra Frazier: I mean I think I think..

Kirt Jacobs: What is your take on that?

Sandra Frazier: I think that there is and I think probably what it was you know everybody likes to talk now about succession planning. I think what happened is that I think that we've Louisville has been blessed to have some incredible leaders in the past and right now we do too. But I think I think along the way there hasn't been a lot of great succession planning done from the standpoint of I think particularly in years in my generation.

Kirt Jacobs: sure

Sandra Frazier: It's very difficult now to find individuals who have the time and who are willing to do a lot of the community service and so what winds up happening is you sort of have these... I refer to them as like celebrity board lists where you know if the same names.

Kirt Jacobs: That is a good observation.

Sandra Frazier: And what winds up happening is that you've got folks on boards who really can't commit all of their time to organizations. And my concern is is that you know is this generation as our generation gets older you know is the younger generation going to pick up on that or is it just going to kind of be this pattern. And so I so I do think we've been blessed to have great leaders in the past. We have them now but you know it is a concern of mine.

Kirt Jacobs: That is a really an astute observation. We've never had a guest bring that up. It'll be interesting to see how it plays out with the younger generation. Hope you all are listening. Alright this is a question we ask all our guests and I always like to see the answers we get. If you were granted two weeks right today Sandra, of course you're driving your own bus here with Tandem, but no obligations. No commitments. How would you spend that two week mini vacation from life? You know you put the Blackberry whatever away. No email, no cell phone. You could take a family member with you or you could just get lost for two weeks. What would you do?

Sandra Frazier: I would go on vacation. There are a couple of places where I would want to go. I really would like to go to Vietnam or Cambodia or both.

Kirt Jacobs: Really

Sandra Frazier: Yeah I know and those those you know I was a history major so. I'd like to go there or I would just like to spend it in the Bahamas or someplace warm where I wouldn't have to think or just knowing that I could stay at home and not have to deal with the phone the Blackberry. E-mail that sort of thing.

Kirt Jacobs: I love that. That is great.

Sandra Frazier: I know just send me to the nearest campsite or trailer park I don't care.

Kirt Jacobs: This is a question I want to ask you back to women in leadership. How would you encourage women in our generation and younger to get engaged in the community? What would you recommend?

Sandra Frazier: You know this sounds really odd but I would sort of go the the nontraditional route. I think you can certainly go to certain volunteer organizations and they can put you in the right spot but the way that I sort of think about it is is you know Big Brothers/Big Sisters or a nonprofit that has a need that you're interested in. Whether it's the Humane Society, animal welfare or something like that and really get involved in it because I think all too often a lot of nonprofits don't understand or it not that they don't understand they're not aware that they have this sort of group of volunteers who would probably be great board members.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure

Sandra Frazier: They have got their own network and I think that's a huge... I think that's a huge way because I think you learn so much from nonprofits you really do. The management. The other thing is I think there's a real tendency for people not to get involved in things whether it's work related or from a volunteer standpoint because I think there's a tendency to sort of feel that the work isn't gratifying or that it's...

Kirt Jacobs: or even financially rewarding

Sandra Frazier: Exactly and I think at the end of the day you really have to start out at the bottom. No matter where you wind up because that's where you learn the most. And it is far better to go into a position being overqualified

Kirt Jacobs: Right

Sandra Frazier: than under qualified. To me it's one of these things where never be afraid to start out below your qualifications because you will prove yourself much faster. And at times it will be demeaning and that sort of thing but you just have to go on and

move on with it.

Kirt Jacobs: This is a question I want to throw out there and I'm curious how to couch it with your family's unique background. Has that been a blessing or a curse in terms of leadership roles for you in this community or up in Boston? Some of the decisions you've made.

Sandra Frazier: You know I think for me you know growing up in a lot of people ask they assume because because of your last name or whatever and finally I told somebody one day I said look it's a last name it's not a label.

Kirt Jacobs: Right. Right. That's a great answer.

Sandra Frazier: You know and I think what a lot of folks don't understand is that you know we grow up in our family and it's. One of these things where you really sort of oblivious to everything because you know you're growing up with your friends they don't know family connections that sort of thing and in school you know. It rarely if ever came up and so and then going away to school you weren't around but that sort of local bit and then you know we're in Boston and it wasn't there either. And I think from that end you know a lot of people assume it is a blessing and you know certainly it allows you things that that that that help make life a little bit easier.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure

Sandra Frazier: However in hindsight you know you usually have to work about 100 times harder when you're in Louisville or really anywhere because you have to prove yourself because people assume that you got to a certain point because of this. And usually that isn't it and so it's one of these things where it actually forces you to take pride in a lot of the things that you've accomplished on your own because you know that you've done it on your own and really one of the things that I was telling a cousin of mine who's in his early 20s, just got out of college and he couldn't decide what he wanted to do and I told him you really need to spend some time

away from town because you know I think that's just such an important part in your adult life when you're trying to develop who you are and what you can do and. I just think it's important.

Kirt Jacobs: It's as a beautiful observation on your family background.

Sandra Frazier: You know it's one of these things where you know people assume that you're handed things and really you know when I look at all of my cousins we've all worked extremely hard. And it was really funny because when I first moved back to town you know folks calling you know asking you for various things and you know to tell my can't do it and they assume. Well we never really thought you had to work harder to get to that but suddenly they do. And that's the thing when you get a promotion or you land a client or whatever you take greater pride in it because you know that you've done it on your own and so but you have to be careful because I think sometimes you get into situations and people assume that because of family connections or whatever and then you are going to bring them certain things.

Kirt Jacobs: Ah yes. That is another TV Show.

Sandra Frazier: And it is it is the quick surprise when they suddenly learn.

Kirt Jacobs: We are running short on time but this is a question we ask all our guests. You know we're both fairly young here. When the great day comes Sandra how do you want to be remembered? You know so God forbid you walk out of here today to your next meeting or whatever and something happens.

Sandra Frazier: Stranger things have happened. I think for me it would probably be that you left the world a little bit better. And you know that's a very generic comment but I think also in the capacity of having a business and having having colleagues and co-workers as well as clients I would at least like to be remembered as being a mentor. At least having some sort of professional influence on someone.

Kirt Jacobs: That's great and started a company.

Sandra Frazier: Hopefully that will last for awhile.

Kirt Jacobs: Sandra thanks for being on Leadership Landscape.

Sandra Frazier: Thanks Kirt. Thanks

Kirt Jacobs: It's really been a pleasure having you.

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Kirt Jacobs: Thank you for listening to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This episode was archival audio from when we were known as Leadership Landscape TV. If you have any feedback, general comments, or a recommendation for a suitable guest feel free to email me at kirt@moxietalk.com or catch us on Facebook under MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs, or on Twitter under [@kirtjacobs](https://twitter.com/kirtjacobs) or our extensive website at www.moxietalk.com