

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 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 Maria Gurley. Did I pronounce that right?

Maria Hampton: Actually it's Maria Gerwing Hampton

Kirt Jacobs: I'm not done. Maria Gerwing Hampton I wasn't going to have to she is the vice president and senior branch executive of the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis the Louisville branch. Mrs. Hampton graduated from Sacred Heart Academy in Louisville. She received a bachelor's of Arts degree from Spring Hill College in Mobile Alabama and attended graduate programs at Harvard and the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia. Before joining the Fed Mrs Hampton was president of the Housing Partnership Incorporated. HPI, as it's better known, a nonprofit corporation focused on creating affordable housing in the Louisville metropolitan area. Prior to that she was employed 26 years with Bank One Kentucky which was formerly Liberty National Bank as an executive in the areas of retail banking, operations, marketing and strategic planning. In January 2005 Mrs Hampton was appointed vice president and senior branch executive of the Louisville branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis. Now the St Louis Fed is one of 12 regional reserve banks that along with the board of governors in Washington D.C. comprise the Federal Reserve System. Now as the nation's

central bank the Federal Reserve System formulate U.S. monetary policy, regulate state chartered member banks and bank holding companies, and provides payment services to financial institutions and the U.S. government. Established in 1917 the Louisville branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis serves southern Indiana and central and western Kentucky with initiatives that community affairs, economic education, research in monetary policy. The Louisville branch is focused on community development and education as well as regional economic research and policy input and is the first Federal Reserve branch to embrace this model. Interesting. Mrs. Hampton currently has or has served on the following boards the Norton Healthcare board of trustees, Jefferson Riverport Authority, Gilda's Club of Louisville, The Kentucky Council on Economic Education, Kentucky State Budget Consensus Forecasting Group, and she is a member of Leadership Louisville and the Rotary Club of Louisville. She is married to John Weeks Hampton and has a daughter named Gretchen Gerwing. Welcome Maria to Leadership Landscape.

Maria Hampton: That's more than a mouth full it is

Kirt Jacobs: I've done my part so let's go ahead and kick off the show. Our first question we ask all of our guests is what drives you to do what you do and what you've done?

Maria Hampton: Well as I get older I may change this but I think it's really relentless energy.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: I am some I have somewhat of a competitive nature.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure

Maria Hampton: And that really gives me a strong passion to accomplish. So I think that's what continues to make me want to go find the next thing. I'm extremely curious.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure.

Maria Hampton: So I guess that's what drives me.

Kirt Jacobs: So were you excited or anxious or what have you when this position came up with the Fed?

Maria Hampton: Well actually this position kind of came to me in the back door.

Kirt Jacobs: Oh really

Maria Hampton: Well I...

Kirt Jacobs: With the Feds that's an interesting way to put it.

Maria Hampton: I can't wait to hear what reaction I get from that. I was serving as a member of that branch board of the Federal Reserve here.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: And in that capacity was part of a search effort to find a new branch executive to help execute this new model that the Fed was rolling out here in Louisville. And I had great suggestions for them when I went to St Louis and on the back of a napkin and an hour later I found a job offer come my way. And actually it's I was extremely curious. There was a great allure and the Federal Reserve reinventing itself to a certain extent. And as a former banker and someone who is extremely interested in community work I found myself in this new position. And it's been a pretty exciting ride so far.

Kirt Jacobs: Cool. I like that. Whom do you credit most influential in your life Maria? Could be more than one Could be professional or personal.

Maria Hampton: Well you know I'm... I've been around a while. I've met some wonderful people.

Kirt Jacobs: This show's about leadership.

Maria Hampton: I've met some wonderful people but I would think in the overall I've been most influenced by my immediate family members. I'm one of 10 children.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: And growing up with a family of 10 children at the time when I did it was almost every man for himself unless you got smart and learned how to lead and get other siblings to think your way to convince mom or dad to do something. The oldest would care for the next one would care for the next one so I learned a lot about caring and a lot about family values. So I think coming up being raised in a big loving family was probably the most influential thing for me.

Kirt Jacobs: What was the most defining moment of your life? Again it could be more than one, professional or personal.

Maria Hampton: I guess they're both personal actually. One was I grew up in this big happy family thinking life was a bowl of cherries. And I had one career opportunity after a next and got married and life was was good and I got presented with divorce.

Kirt Jacobs: Oh wow. Again another T.V. show.

Maria Hampton: Yeah yeah this is great. It's like a soap opera. And that was a very defining moment for me. Made me realize who my friends were and I learned what my real inner strength was. And. Kind of came out of that a different person, a better person. So that and then also came down with cancer.

Kirt Jacobs: Really

Maria Hampton: I don't mean to sound morbid because both of those things aren't very great.

Kirt Jacobs: No no but they are defining moments.

Maria Hampton: I learned a lot through those process both of those processes. And the great news is I've come out of both of those I think a much happier person and a more appreciative person about what life has to offer and I really understand who my friends are.

Kirt Jacobs: We have a saying that which does not kill you makes you stronger.

Maria Hampton: There you go. There you go. I am an ad for that. The poster child.

Kirt Jacobs: There is one Maria what is your biggest professional regret? In other words is there something you would have done differently? And it can be personal again as well. Regret is a strong word. You put two big ones in the personal.

Maria Hampton: Actually I wish I had completed my MBA.

Kirt Jacobs: Really.

Maria Hampton: I have a 22-year-old daughter who just graduated from Indiana University and I've told her Gretchen make sure you go back to school and don't stop because I believe in lifelong learning. I got that learning kind of coming up through the school of hard knocks if you will. And today I think young people.. The world is as competitive in a different way than ever before. And I believe I would've progressed in my career more quickly are quicker if I actually had completed my MBA. So I've always regretted that and I intend to go back to school at some point.

Kirt Jacobs: Something tells me you might have enough clout there to make that happen if you push the envelope. On the flip side of that Maria what is your biggest professional triumph? Again it can be more than one.

Maria Hampton: Well you know I can remember a lot of times in my career where I wanted something to happen great and I wanted to

dance on the table. So there's been a lot of those but to explain each one of those would take a lot more times than we have today.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: But I think suffice to say that changing careers, re-inventing myself at the right time. Right job. Right time. Right place kind of thing.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Maria Hampton: Timing has a lot to do with success in life when you make changes.

Kirt Jacobs: Also how you react to certain things.

Maria Hampton: And each of those changes was a bigger challenge than I thought. And a year into each of those changes I could sit back and say this is good and I'm a contributor here and it's working was highest satisfaction I think I've received.

Kirt Jacobs: What do you find exciting about all this? I mean how much responsibility do you have at the Fed? How many employees do you ever see? It's got to be in or it's just seems like a very unique position at least to me.

Maria Hampton: Well I've gone from kind of into a at the bank.. You know when the whole retail division when I had responsible billing for that it was all the branches. There were hundreds of people that I had responsibility for. When I went to the Housing Partnership we had probably 20 employees. We probably start out with five and really spread our wings a lot and became grounded in a lot of things. And that was exciting to try to do. You know I love this new idea let's see if I can do it kind of thing. At the Fed I think I had to go back and take another economics course and kind of refresh my memory and about all of that good stuff. And I find a working there very exciting because the Fed has a very strong brand and I'm trying to figure out how to get the local marketplace to really appreciate and understand what that brand stands for and

what the Fed really does and what we can accomplish together. So I find that really exciting. So I think my real source of excitement is the allure of change.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Maria Hampton: And that's what work does for me. Personally I love a good spy movie. And I love to travel to Italy. I've been there several times and I'm getting ready to go again with some really great friends.

Kirt Jacobs: We are going to ask about a question here later on with what you'd do with two week off. So do you find with the Fed does that is it is it like the 300 pound gorilla in the room? Does it give you a lot of clout or is it make it a tougher climb.

Maria Hampton: Yes.

Kirt Jacobs: We're done. See you.

Maria Hampton: It's difficult because many people think that we are just another government organization and we're a bureaucracy and and actually the Federal Reserve is a kind of a quasi government organisation. And so working at the Fed when you walk in and people say what are you doing you say I'm with the Fed they kind of say oh you're with the Fed.

Kirt Jacobs: Right. Hide the books

Maria Hampton: No it's not quite like that. But but the real story is is that the Federal Reserve one of its major responsibilities is is to manage monetary policy. Which means basically we use methods like the open market committee that sets the Fed funds target rate. And we're all about trying to manage inflation. And it's very interesting to be able to sit down and talk to people about what that means to them in their daily work. And in order to make good decisions one of my responsibilities is to feed information about our local economy into to the Open Market Committee so when they get ready to decide whether they should raise rates are lower

rates they get get good information that's grounded on the line as to how the economy is working and how their past decisions are really taking hold. Believe it or not when they make their decisions they have all the data as you can imagine in the world. But what they don't have is good anecdotal information from local business people as to whether or not what they're reading is actually happening.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: So that data is at least six-weeks-old and their decisions probably take we believe about six months to really take hold. So you can imagine how much they rely on information from marketplaces. So we like to take information back from the business community and and give that information back and then we also like to give information that local community leaders both business and civic need to know in order to grow and expand the marketplace. And I am a native Louisvillian. I love Kentucky. And to think that I can use the resources of the Fed with my team here to make a difference in how this community competes as a tier, second tier city. And how we can advance and to get the business leaders and in civic leaders charged with that is really a lot of fun.

Kirt Jacobs: That's cool. That's a great answer. What was the best advice ever given to you to you Maria? In your travels?

Maria Hampton: Well let's see I'll attribute this to two men who will probably die if they ever hear this but.

Kirt Jacobs: People do watch the station.

Maria Hampton: I know. Actually Frank Hower who was chairman of Liberty Bank for...

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: ...several years told me once I was working late he walked in and said what are you doing here you know that kind of thing

Kirt Jacobs: Right. Right

Maria Hampton: We were chatting and he said you know you need to go home and you need to make sure that you draw a line between work and play and the business and the personal because someday you don't want to confuse your business friends with your personal friends. Because someday you'll retire and your friends are going to be those personal friends so don't leave them behind and with your zeal to accomplish on the professional level. It's very very strong advice

Kirt Jacobs: That's great advice.

Maria Hampton: The other was advice given to me by a gentleman named Baylor Landrum and Baylor and I were talking one day about community work and he cautioned me. He said we all have a responsibility in that area which I believe in strongly but if you overextend yourself whether it's with your personal, your community work, or your business work it leads to depression.

Kirt Jacobs: Really

Maria Hampton: And because you get anxiety because you can't get this done, you can't get this done. And I had never thought of it that way. And I remember once where I was asked to serve in a position in the community that I always wanted and it was at a time when I was really busy and instead of being excited about it I was like depressed and that was the conversation we were having and when he said let me tell you about overspending yourself. The reason you're feeling this way is probably because blah blah blah. And those two things have really meant a lot to me and I've never forgotten them and I hope somebody is listening because I think it's great advice to go back.

Kirt Jacobs: It is good advice. Very good advice. I've had quite a few late nights myself at the office.

Maria Hampton: Oh boy doing community work.

Kirt Jacobs: If you could change one thing Maria be it in your own life or in general what would that be? You can interpret this question really any way you like.

Maria Hampton: You know the first thing that I want to say to you is something really great like poverty or world hunger or something that would be that great great answer but actually on a very personal level I have one child and I wish I had more.

Kirt Jacobs: Really. That's an honest answer.

Maria Hampton: I waited late because I was so hungry for work and what I was doing. And looking back I would have liked to have had more than one and I would have liked to have started sooner. Actually when I got pregnant with my daughter I was when I was for this where I was the oldest woman in the delivery room.

Kirt Jacobs: OK. OK

Maria Hampton: And when I got pregnant it was a long time ago. Things were different in the business world had I was afraid if I told the bank they would take me off of a special project I was working on. So I wore inexpensive navy blue suits that were two sizes too big and very tight pantyhose. And waited until I was six months pregnant and miserable.

Kirt Jacobs: I can imagine.

Maria Hampton: So when I look back on that I think how silly of me. So I wish I hadn't waited so long and I wished I had more than one.

Kirt Jacobs: You know it's interesting there's this generation of women that's that's becoming a bigger and bigger issues they prolong. Which is another show and I don't want to get too far into that. And that's a question of leadership too. I mean it's a fork in the road for a lot of woman to make that decision.

Maria Hampton: You're right. You're right.

Kirt Jacobs: Could you describe in detail a particular incident or scenario in your professional or your personal life again where you utilize your style and philosophy on leadership? It's kind of a long question. We ask all our guest.

Maria Hampton: Do you?

Kirt Jacobs: Yeah. We got some goodies here in front of us we will talk about.

Maria Hampton: Do you? Oh my gosh this may not be.. Actually I think my leadership style is very much focused on creating a sense of team.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: And a common vision so that everyone on the team can move toward that same vision. And that's a methodology as I look back I have used in every position I've ever held. Whether it being a board chair of a nonprofit. Whether it's taking on a new position. I know when I joined the Fed. we had downsized a great deal here in Louisville. The Federal Reserve woke up one day and I'm being a little facetious but and realize that we had way too many people and way too few checks to clear. So as we kind of tilted the ship a little bit, I came into the office inherited a whole new vision or whole new mission for the for the branch office here. And employees that I didn't hire who were people who had posted for jobs that had formerly been in another jobs. So we were kind of a ragtag team. They had Federal Reserve background but not necessarily along these lines. I had background in this kind of function but no Federal Reserve background. So it was very gratifying to pull the team together. Make sure accountabilities were clear.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: And you know once you get accountabilities clear then you liberate people to do their job. So we did that. We came up with what do we want to accomplish and everybody's going

after it and we're all enjoying each other very much.

Kirt Jacobs: That's great. Do you think there's a difference today in our leaders than there were past generations? And that's going to be a national question or a Louisville question. You know you be you with the bank for you know almost three decades so you've seen a different take on leadership.

Maria Hampton: I guess I'm dwelling on the same team but when I look back at like community leaders it was in a day I think when the local markets were less convoluted. You know everybody the banks were local and you had this set of leaders they were mostly business leaders that had local control. And as I look back it was more of a top down parent child style of leadership in some respects. I don't mean to be demeaning because we've had wonderful people.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure

Maria Hampton: But it was we're the leaders and we think that we should do this and pretty much we will go down that road. If we if we fail we go down another but there was kind of a group who decided things.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Maria Hampton: Today's leaders I think need to get a much broader consensus and cast a much larger net and so they really have to not only state what they'd like to see happen but they have to deliver a compelling story about what they want to accomplish and then they have to get buy-in. And it's a it's core to whether or not they can accomplish. And I think that takes more courage. And I think today's leadership style takes more courage than it did years ago.

Kirt Jacobs: That's a great answer. Before we go next question I know we've got a few goodies out here I thought maybe you can speak to a couple.

Maria Hampton: Well you know I was talking to you about a few of the things that the Fed did. First of all I brought you a bag of shredded money

Kirt Jacobs: Oh wow. Spoils of my labor. I get payment in shredded money.

Maria Hampton: You can throw this up on New Year's Eve or something. But actually I brought it to you because the reason it's shredded is you know it's kind of my message that..

Kirt Jacobs: Sure.

Maria Hampton: ...we don't we don't manage cash here in Louisville anymore. That Service has gone to another branch office about three years ago. And as we rolled out this change. We depended less on the operational and more on the intellectual.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Maria Hampton: And as a result of that we tried to deliver information to the community.

Kirt Jacobs: A couple thousand in here?

Maria Hampton: Probably maybe a hundred dollars worth. And you're worth more than that I swear you're worth more than that.

Kirt Jacobs: Now. Now. No No. As you were.

Maria Hampton: So one of the things that we do is to try to help the leadership of the business community kind of understand different tools that we could use for instance to develop community capital.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Maria Hampton: And so in a couple of weeks we're putting on a seminar on improving access to community development capital.

And you know in Frankfort for instance there have been some new what they call TIF Laws which stands for tax increment financing.

Kirt Jacobs: (inaudible)

Maria Hampton: Yes but you know there are a lot of business people who could use this instrument for development of new projects. It doesn't have to be the arena or the Museum Plaza.

Kirt Jacobs: Sure.

Maria Hampton: And we have found interest in Bowling Green for this knowledge. In western Kentucky so we're putting on a seminar and we brought in a panel of experts to educate business people, community development practitioners, government people about how you can take this instrument and use it to advance our local economic development. This is just kind of one of the things we do and it gives me a chance to hustle something we do. We also are really promoting the teaching and learning of economics.

Kirt Jacobs: Hold that up.

Maria Hampton: And part of that was we conduct one day a year what we call Teach Children to Save Day. And it's done in conjunction with the Kentucky bankers association and the Mayor's Dollar Wise Week. And through those volunteers last year, we're going to do it again this September, we went out and educated over 1000 first and second graders on how to save. And then gave them information to take home to their parents and then when their parents signed a little document saying that they had talked to their student, child about this they got their name thrown in the hat to win a savings bond. So we're able to teach the parent. Teach the child. And the teachers helped us and then we brought in bankers to teach and it was really fun. This is just a picture of a banker volunteer and two children. So we're in the classroom. You know it's there in the civic venue if you will and then we also bring some regional research to bear. Wo we're kind of taken our operational presence we say and kind of exchanged it for more informational presence. So it's pretty exciting.

Kirt Jacobs: I want to jump here to that question about the two weeks. If you were granted two weeks right today Maria. No obligations. No commitments. How would you spend that two week mini-vacation from life?

Maria Hampton: Oh my gosh

Kirt Jacobs: I always love the answers we get to this. I think it gives insight into the kind of person you are.

Maria Hampton: Yeah. Well it's funny you should bring that up because I'm getting ready to take a week vacation and it's just what I want to do.

Kirt Jacobs: Yeah.

Maria Hampton: If I had to just do it. This is more unilateral...

Kirt Jacobs: Lets say the big boss calls or however that works board of governors or whatever the Fed you get two weeks. Put in your.. Turn in your Blackberry. Turn off your computer.

Maria Hampton: Yeah

Kirt Jacobs: Take your family or not.

Maria Hampton: Yeah

Kirt Jacobs: If your getting along with them that week or whatever. You know get lost.

Maria Hampton: Yeah yeah. Well

Kirt Jacobs: You can do anything. It doesn't mean you have to go off to someplace.

Maria Hampton: I think I'd spend first week with some friends travelling to Italy.

Kirt Jacobs: There you go.

Maria Hampton: Yeah boy.

Kirt Jacobs: Italy is a hot spot here all the sudden.

Maria Hampton: I'd like to do that. At the risk of sounding a little dorkish I think I'd like to go to China and learn more about their economy. It's pretty hot. And I'd like to do that.

Kirt Jacobs: Sleeping giant

Maria Hampton: And then to really be quite selfish I'd like to sit on a beach with some kind of fufu drink in my hand and about five books. I never have a chance to read. And just have everybody else leave me alone.

Kirt Jacobs: An honest answer. I've always wanted somebody to just say leave me alone. No one ever said it yet. When the great day comes Maria, how do you want to be remembered? You know if God forbid you walk out the door today. On your way back to the office or whatever in some terrible befalls

Maria Hampton: That's a terrible thing to say to me Kirt!

Kirt Jacobs: Well it's a question we ask all of our guests.

Maria Hampton: Well you know I'd like to think that people would think I was someone of high integrity.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Maria Hampton: I'd like to be remembered as a good mom. And I'd like to be remembered as a caring friend whether it's to my sister or to someone I work with or just just just someone like you.

Kirt Jacobs: That's a great answer and that's why you're on here. Good friends. Thanks for being on Leadership Landscape.

Maria Hampton: You're welcome Kirt. Thank you. It's been fun.

Kirt Jacobs: It's been quite a joy and I get some free shredded money.

Maria Hampton: There you go. You're worth every crumb of that.

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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