

Barbara Ives has a way of keeping a low profile, working hard, getting results and being part of great achievements. Despite her inconspicuous approach, Ives has found the way to work behind the scenes and make things happen in the most positive ways. She got an early start at this as one of 81 female plebes in the first class of women admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy. Only 55 graduated, and Ives says she survived by “avoiding the spotlight.”

Once in the Navy, she was in the initial group of women to spend a year on a ship as part of the Women at Sea pilot program. She was one of two women on her ship with 200 men, many of whom opted to serve on the ship instead of taking a jail sentence.

The trend continued as Ives was among the first community members to embrace TechPort UAS Business Incubator and Community Innovation Hub when it was merely an idea and then a plan. She helped TechPort launch and has been assisting behind the scenes ever since. She encouraged Tommy Luginbill to apply for his current job as director of TechPort and advocated for him to join the board of the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance.

When the pandemic hit and TechPort clients joined forces to create personal protective equipment and then a heat sanitization “Hot Box” to make the PPE reusable up to 20 times, it was TechPort client Matt Hayes who called for her support.

“I knew Matt’s parents first, but I’ve gotten to know Matt as he is such a gifted and talented individual,” Ives says, adding that Matt invited her to attend a demonstration of the Hot Box in the hangar the last weekend in March 2020, with medical personnel he was sure Ives knew. After seeing the incredible work, she was all in.

Today, she is president of the board of directors for Southern Maryland Loves You, the nonprofit that spun out of TechPort’s community collaboration efforts to design, build, and produce the Hot Box. Not surprisingly, once again, Ives stands out.

“I’m in my 60’s and I look around and everyone else on our board is in their 30’s,” Ives says with a laugh. “It’s perfect, they provide the energy, and I can provide the sage counsel and guidance when needed, which isn’t too often.”

Luginbill says her sage advice has been both desired and appreciated.

“Barbara is a vital cog in the wheel of what makes TechPort, Southern Maryland Loves You and frankly so much of our education and entrepreneur community run smoothly. She has been a gift to our county, and we can’t thank her enough for all that she has done to support, promote and encourage all of us.”

Ives, a native of Topeka, Kansas, grew up in Bucks County, Pa. She served six years active duty before joining the Naval Reserve. During her 27-year Navy career, she met and married her husband, Glen, also a Naval officer and they had three sons. They moved to Southern Maryland in 2001 when he became commanding officer of Naval Air Station Patuxent River. Ives spent

years working in secondary and higher education. She became the Dean of Academics at St. Mary's Ryken High School and then held several roles at the College of Southern Maryland, where she was an adjunct math professor, including Vice President and Dean at Prince Frederick. Today, she is co-owner and chief operating officer of GIE, a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business that provides professional solutions, services and consulting through technology innovation and application for government and commercial clients.

Her start in education came all those years before when she was assigned to the Navy ship. There she learned that many of her sailors did not have a high school diploma. Ives took it upon herself to change that.

"My goal was to educate and offer career advancement for the sailors in my department. We'd have evening study hours after dinner," Ives says, adding that her sailors would then take the test for a GED diploma. "When I was transferred from the ship almost all of my sailors had their GED."

With two retirements under her belt – the Navy and College of Southern Maryland – Ives is heading to Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., where she was stationed three times. But she does not plan to retire again. She will continue with her consultancy and whatever else comes her way. She does not plan on losing touch with her Southern Maryland community as she will keep her home and travel back and forth to continue to provide support in every way she can.