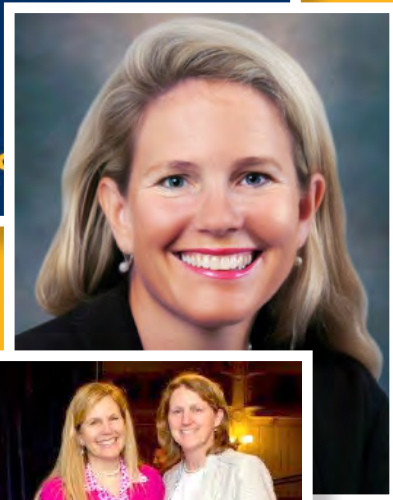


# IN PERSON WITH

IFEA's 59th Annual Convention Keynote Speaker and Author,

# GAIL LOWNEY ALOFSIN

by Colleen Hopkins



Gail Lowney Alofsin, longtime friend of the International Festival and Events Association (IFEA) and one of IFEA's top rated speakers, serves on the IFEA's President's Council.

Her new book, Your "Someday is Now," was officially launched on May 20, 2014 at the historic Tennis Hall of Fame Casino Theatre in Newport, Rhode Island. Colleen Hopkins, President of Hopkins Events, produced the book launch, attracting a standing room only crowd of over 250 people!

100% of the sales from the launch benefitted three nonprofits with over \$6000 raised in three hours. Sponsors included: Cabot Cheese, Polar Beverages, Guinness Import Company, William Hill Winery, Narragansett Beer, Russ Morin Catering, Kathryn Whitney Lucey Photography, the Newport Daily News, and the Matlet Group.

**CH: Congratulations on your book! The title is very inspiring – "Your Someday Is NOW." Why did you write the book and what is the main message?**

I wrote the book for four reasons. First and foremost, the book is a high school graduation gift for our son, Samuel. I wanted to share the life and leadership lessons that my husband, John, and I subscribe to. The second was to inspire people to LIVE their "Someday's" – as best as possible - NOW. There are things that you are delaying. What are we really waiting for? Will there ever be the "right" time? Think about what you want to accomplish – personally and professionally, and just start!

The third reason I wrote the book was to capture the business, communication and leadership lessons that I have had the privilege to teach for the past 30 semesters at the University of Rhode Island. The fourth reason was humbling. When speaking at conferences and corporations, audience members would inquire, "When are you putting this presentation into a book?"

The primary message? "LIVE every heartbeat." The book is comprised of 15 chapters focused on work and life integration, communication, personal branding, organization, procrastination and suggestions on how to "Lead with Grace," "Bless and Release" negativity, "Eat a Frog for Breakfast," and "Snap out" of a bad mood! And lots of advice about "To Do" and "Stop Doing" lists!

**CH: What prompted you to donate proceeds of the first 1,000 books sold to nonprofit charities? How have you selected them?**

While writing the book, I met my friend, Gary Stiffler, President of the Matlet Group. Over lunch it was decided that we would co-sponsor the donation of the first 1,000 books so that 100% of sales from these books would benefit nonprofits. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center was a natural as we both serve on the board of this impressive nonprofit.

As you know, since we have had the opportunity to volunteer together in Haiti, the Haitian Health Foundation was started by my parents – 32 years ago – at the request of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Our outpatient clinic provides medical care to over 200,000 people per year in Jeremie, Haiti and in over 100 surrounding villages. We also have a Center for Women's Health and a school for grades K through 12. While I have physically volunteered in Haiti for over three decades, I realize that the best contribution I can offer is fundraising year round for this outstanding organization.

The Tennis Hall of Fame is an important community partner. Both you and the CEO, Mark Stenning, have been professional and personal friends of mine for over two decades. Since "Your Someday is

NOW!" is a collaboration of insight from so many community partners, it made perfect sense to host the book launch at the exquisite Casino Theatre on the Hall of Fame property and give back to this iconic local organization as part of the book launch. And – it made sense to work with one of the best event producers in the country – YOU – on the launch. Your attention to detail and marketing prowess, with the assistance of uber PR executives, Anne Marie McLaughlin and Scott Fraser, filled the theatre to standing room only! WOW! Most important - over \$6,000 was raised in three hours for three nonprofits!

Additionally, I have received several requests from other nonprofits and have been assisting them via book sales. Several corporations have purchased the book for their employees with a donation to their favorite nonprofit. The ultimate goal is \$25,000 – we are half way there!

**CH: The end of each chapter is replete with insight and best practices from corporate CEO's to your former students. What did you learn from the people that you interviewed?**

I had the pleasure of interviewing over 100 friends, clients, colleagues and former students to share their insight. These interviews are organized in the back of 14 of the 15 chapters under the heading of "What Are You Waiting For?"

Among the insight that has been both learned and reinforced is wisdom such as "Always be the calmest person in the room" by Robert DiMuccio, President of Amica Mutual Insurance, "Don't judge other people's work schedule's" by Terri Conners, Executive Director of newport-FILM, "Start early and get as much as possible done before the day of an event" by Kati Machtley, Director of the Women's Summit at Bryant University, "Email sent does not mean email received or read," by Ellen Ford, President of People's Credit Union and "Ask a busy person – busy people get things done," by Larry Cancro, VP of Fenway Affairs of the Boston Red Sox! These are a few that are top of mind!

**CH: On a personal note, I have known you for over two decades and you have a unique generosity in sharing your network from sponsorship contacts to speaking leads and of course nonprofit opportunities versus being "competitive." Why share with others – especially leads?**

Colleen – that is truly very nice of you to acknowledge. My parents always taught us: "You only keep that which you give away." Our sponsors have appreciated introductions to other quality event producers – people like you and the Tennis Hall of Fame team! It is my privilege to refer speakers that I believe in to conferences and corporations who have hired

me to speak. And as for nonprofits, when I meet a vibrant, potential volunteer, it is my privilege to connect them to the nonprofits that I have the privilege of working with.

**CH: One final question. You have volunteered for many nonprofits since you were 7 years old. Cite one revelation from the book that came from an experience.**

Our parents instilled a culture of volunteerism in us during our elementary school years. That said, the most impactful revelation for me was seeing, first hand, pigs and people competing for food on my first trip to Port-au-Prince, Haiti during my Junior year of college. Can you imagine? This was and still is heartbreaking and life altering. I returned to Tufts University and worked with the Tufts Experimental College to create and teach a class entitled: "Ever compete with a Pig? Making it in the Third World." The main message of the class still remains relevant today – it is an opportunity versus an obligation to serve others, especially in light of the many gifts we have been blessed with.

**Gail Lowney Alofsin** is a sales & marketing executive for Newport Harbor Corporation, Adjunct Professor at the Harrington School of Communications & Digital Literacy at the University of Rhode Island, active volunteer and board member, and international keynote speaker (gailspeaks.com). Her book, *Your "Someday" is NOW!* What are you Waiting for? focused on the Integration of Life and Work in addition to building your personal brand, was published March 2014. She lives her "Somedays" – NOW – in Newport, Rhode Island with her husband, John and son, Samuel, a left handed pitcher. Gail can be reached at 401-640-4418 or gailalofsin@yahoo.com. Follow Gail on Twitter - @gailspeaks or @gailalofsin.

**Colleen Hopkins** spent 20 years as the Director of Tournaments & Special Events at the International Tennis Hall of Fame before founding Hopkins Events, a special event agency with a focus on event management and operations, sponsor activation and client hospitality, while working with world-class events and brands. Events and clients range from the U.S. Open, America's Cup, Elton John & Billie Jean King's WTT Smash Hits, and Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival to MassMutual Financial Group and newportFILM. Visit [www.hopkinslive.com](http://www.hopkinslive.com), email [colleen@hopkinslive.com](mailto:colleen@hopkinslive.com) or call (401) 639 – 9639 for more information.