



In honor of
Ann E. Gillespie
Chief Executive Officer,
Collington, A Kendal Affiliate

Ann's remarkable journey was ignited not by design but, rather, by a moment of divine inspiration. As a first-year journalism student at Miami University in Ohio, she enrolled in "Introduction to Gerontology"—an elective that she chose simply to avoid an 8 a.m. class. A few weeks into the course, a presentation on demographic shifts sparked a revelation "By God, there are going to be great opportunities in the field of aging," she thought. That flash of insight—whether fate or foresight—marked the beginning of a career that would help shape the future of the aging services sector.

Mentored by pioneers at Miami University's renowned Scripps Gerontology Center, such as Dr. Millie Seltzer, Ann's early experiences—one shadowing a fearless leader of an Area Agency on Aging and another witnessing Dr. Seltzer receiving a national award from the American Association of Homes for the Aging (now LeadingAge)—foreshadowed her own future with the field and later with the Association.

Ann began her career with the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, contributing to federal policy on housing and employment. A pivotal meeting with a particularly passionate and persistent constituent named Lloyd Lewis, The Kendal Corporation's first executive, evolved into a meaningful collegueship; Ann was struck by Lloyd's unwavering advocacy both for those he served and for all older Americans. That destined connection led to her appointment—at just 26 years old—as founding executive of the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission (CCAC), now CARF.

Under Ann's leadership, CCAC became a national force for transformation, establishing standards for governance, finance, health care, and resident services. She created the first national CCRC database, introduced contract nomenclature (Types A–C), and launched the Financial Advisory Panel to assess the fiscal health of accredited CCRCs. Her collaboration with Ziegler produced the first AAHSA–Ziegler 100, now the LeadingAge Ziegler 200.

Following the acquisition of CCAC, Ann assumed her role at LeadingAge as Senior Vice President for Learning and Leadership Development with a bold vision. Drawing upon the strength of the national network of 300 CCAC peer evaluators—whom she fondly referred to as “our field's human safety net”—she set out to elevate leadership across the aging services sector.

Working with leaders from across the sector, Ann imagined, designed, and launched the LeadingAge Leadership Academy, now named in honor of LeadingAge's former President and CEO, Larry Minnix. This groundbreaking initiative became the first of its kind to focus nationally on cultivating leaders in aging services. Since its inception, the Academy has graduated more than 800 Fellows—many of whom now serve as influential leaders in organizations across the country. The Academy personifies Ann's philosophy of “lifting all boats” through shared learning, intentional leadership development, and field building.

In 2008, Ann made a deliberate decision to broaden her leadership experience beyond aging services. She was recruited by Booz Allen Hamilton as a market leader, where she built a new business line focused on the nonprofit sector. Ann led strategic engagements for high-profile clients, including the Smithsonian Institution, Gallaudet University, and the National Science Foundation. Her work included leading Megacommunities—cross-sector collaborations designed to tackle complex societal challenges, such as veteran reintegration and underserved youth development. This chapter of Ann's career deepened her expertise in systems thinking, innovation, and mission-driven strategy. In 2015, she founded Envision Impact, advising mission-driven organizations on governance, strategy, and stakeholder engagement.

Today, Ann is CEO of Collington, A Kendal Affiliate, near Washington, D.C. She is leading the organization through significant changes, working with a strong board, engaged

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residents and passionate team members on a strategic plan focused on the long-term sustainability of Collington's unique place in the senior living sector.

Ann holds a B.A. in Sociology/Gerontology from Miami University of Ohio and received the Scripps Gerontology Center's highest honor: The W. Fred Cottrell Distinguished Alumni Award for scholarship, leadership, and contributions to the field of aging.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Ann's life is deeply rooted in the enduring values of faith and service. As the ninth of 10 children, she was raised in a home where God and service to others were not just words—they were a way of life. Daily prayer and acts of kindness shaped her character and continue to guide her journey. Ann remains closely connected to her four surviving siblings and is a proud, devoted aunt to 19 nieces and nephews. Her greatest joy was her 28-year marriage to her late husband, Theo, with whom she built a life centered on love, service, and family. Their daughter Elizabeth and son Liam remain her deepest source of pride and inspiration.