

A film about women

REDWOOD

GEORGIANA RILEY

THE LUMINARY

At age 11, she played the organ for five masses every Sunday, two on Saturday and two before school every day. The oldest and only daughter of seven, she lived in a cramped house on a city street steps away from relatives. Her father, a laborer, worked two jobs. When she turned 12, she became the caretaker of her six brothers after her mother had a mental breakdown and was hospitalized for a summer. "I felt a lot of pressure, and I felt she (my mother) was living her life through me. The pressure was good and bad. My mother pushed me especially because I was the only girl."

Georgiana Riley knew she would go to college; it was a spoken rule of the family. Only after her high school Band Director intervened on which school she should attend were the wheels put in motion for generational impact after her own transformative experience on campus. She graduated (Bethany College) as a biology major with a minor in chemistry, but not before meeting Bob, her husband of 50 years.

Fueled by her quiet confidence, her career began in West Virginia as the first female plant environmental chemist at Allied Chemical. After working several years, she learned her salary was significantly less than her male colleagues through an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) audit. Her raise was a 27% increase and, as she explains, "life-altering." But she would find herself in a similar position at Calgon Carbon years later, being passed over for a director-level promotion. She quit that day. This act would foreshadow how she secured the purchase of Tigg Corporation in 1996. She was never afraid to walk out. Her determination, deep values, and commitment to people are how Georgiana took a nearly bankrupt company and made it into a formidable player in the filtration and purification industry.

Today, Georgiana serves on the Bethany College board and was a Director at Catalyst Connection, mentoring the next generation of leaders with the same intensity that fueled her own career. She and her husband established the Georgiana and Robert F. Riley, Jr. Scholarship at Bethany College for Avella, PA area high school students. Her philanthropy also extends to women's shelters in the region, championing causes that empower and protect.