



An Illuminated Path

The Firefly Group founder, Stacy Ranieri, is all aglow.

BY SUZANNE WENTLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DIANE DULTMEIER

When Stacy Ranieri founded her public relations firm in 2003, she came upon the word “firefly” and felt the creature’s name could “spark something happy and whimsical, but also serious – their light is a communication method for their survival,” she says on how she came up with the name The Firefly Group.

Of course, the name also invoked memories of her years at summer camp in upstate New York, where she discovered a love of nature that carried throughout her career in marketing, strategic planning and community outreach.

“My life has been a circuitous, random, organic journey. It’s led me to different things that all added up to why I started Firefly,” she says. “It’s the collection of experiences and knowledge that makes it work so well.”

Ranieri’s illuminated path began in Queens, N.Y. She attended New York University with plans to study art, but harsh early criticism of her portfolio made her put down her paint brushes and earn degrees in marketing and international business instead.

After college, she lived in Manhattan for the next decade, working for a range of companies – from the marketing research firm Meyers Research Center to the National Audubon Society’s marketing and licensing division. She worked for the city of New York in the economic development division and The New York Landmarks Conservancy, and then for the MetLife insurance company in its corporate contribution division.

“My environmental awakening happened right out of college, when a co-worker showed me a Greenpeace magazine,” she says. “I decided I wanted to do something to help the environment.”

In the meantime, she met her husband, Rob, through a mu-

tual friend in the city. When Rob’s uncle asked him to move to Florida to develop the business NuCO2, she joined him.

Once in Florida, she returned to school, earning a master’s degree from Florida Institute of Technology in environmental resource management. Ranieri was hired by the Martin County Solid Waste Division, through which she became the first executive director of Keep Martin Beautiful, a non-profit agency focused on cleaning and beautifying the local environment.

When she became pregnant – the Palm City couple now have two children, Olivia, 12, and Nicholas, 10 – she left her job, eventually returning to the workforce to oversee the Sustainable Martin Alliance. While the alliance worked to build consensus among business and environmental groups, it was a taxing position. Soon, she decided to start her own firm.

Today, The Firefly Group offers public relations, marketing and strategic planning for landowners, clean energy companies, small businesses, governments and non-profit agencies. The award-winning firm also manages Keep Martin Beautiful and maintains a focus on sustainability projects.

Ranieri remains active in the Martin County community. She sits on the boards of directors for the United Way of Martin County and the Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce. She’s an appointed member of Martin County’s Community Revitalization Agency and is a recent graduate of Leadership Florida.

And when she’s not working on helping Martin County’s people and environment, she’s painting beautiful, original oil designs in a glowing spectrum of color.

“It’s my time when I can relax,” Ranieri says. “The whole rest of the day, my brain is working on so many tasks.”