

# From Sitting Next to the Teacher to Coaching Teachers – Kelly Earls was Born to be an Educator



WESSON – Kelly Earls still remembers sitting next to Mrs. Lorraine Carey’s desk when she was a second grader at Mamie Martin Elementary School.

“She let me put my desk right next to hers and I sat there all the time, talking to her and being her helper,” Earls recalled. “Sometimes, I even got to go in her desk to get things I wanted or needed. It made me feel special and it felt comfortable to me. I knew then that I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up – I wanted to be just like her. I’ve never waived in that,

not once.”

She went on to get her education degree from Delta State University – and even when the owner of an accounting company where she worked in college offered to send her back to school to get an accounting degree, she knew that wasn’t what she wanted. She was born to be an educator, she says.

“We need accountants, but that wasn’t for me,” she said.

Her career has been a journey, from her own classroom, to school leadership to today, when she travels the state and the Southeast, supporting teachers and administrators as Director of Client Support Services and Senior Project Manager at Bailey Education Group, Mississippi’s premiere educational consulting company, based in Ridgeland.

She often calls on the confidence and sense of support she experienced as a second grader when she is coaching teachers and administrators – including some who might initially be afraid of or resistant to necessary change.

“I really do love working with people who initially might say no,” she said. “Sometimes, people are afraid or resistant. I like being able to go in and let them know that they are safe and that it’s ok – that working together we can get through it and do good things for students. Those are the very best moments in my work.”



One of Earls’ strengths is explaining processes clearly, in a step-by-step fashion. She is comfortable starting with the basics and building from there.

“I often have teachers who look at me and say, ‘Oh! That’s it! I get it! That makes so much sense!’ Those are the very best moments. If that happens in a day, that’s basically enough for me because I know we are getting somewhere.”

Earls supports a variety of districts with unique strengths and needs. While she works some days close to home in places like Brookhaven School District, Franklin County School District, Jefferson Davis Consolidated School District, Walthall County, and Copiah County School District, she also sometimes

# From Sitting Next to the Teacher to Coaching Teachers – Kelly Earls was Born to be an Educator

gets up and out the door before 4 a.m. so she can drive to Pontotoc, Cleveland, Leland, or another more distant partner in Alabama or beyond.

She says she doesn't mind the early morning drives because she has always been a morning person. She uses the time to think about her day and the goals she has for it – both professionally and personally.

She tries to be home most nights so she can enjoy and support her family, including her husband and two active children, who will be in sixth and eighth grades this year.

A college softball player herself, she now enjoys cheering on her own children in sports, including baseball, softball, basketball and football.

She also enjoys monogramming and sewing and often gives hand monogrammed gifts. When she isn't doing one of those activities, she enjoys reading and going to the beach.

But even in her relaxation time, she sometimes finds her mind drifting back to work and the schools, teachers and students she serves.

"It excites me and I love it," she said. "When I am working with a district, it's like we have a puzzle to solve together. We are solving problems and when we solve those, we create better outcomes for students and communities. Districts share their heart with me and they trust me. They have problems sometimes that I can't solve, but I know that working with our team, we always have someone who can give them those answers, working together. I like having those resources – knowing that we can get answers for people and that they trust us to do it. It's a job, sure, but it's also a passion and a calling."

For more information on Bailey Education Group services, email [info@baileyarch.com](mailto:info@baileyarch.com).

