

Birgit M. Klohs

~ BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ~

Birgit Klohs is President & CEO of The Right Place, Inc., a position she has held since 1987. The Right Place, Inc. is the regional economic development organization in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Under her 31-year leadership, The Right Place has created over 47,000 new and retained jobs and spurred over \$4.7 billion in new investment. She is a leading economic development strategist, collaborating with local, State and national organizations on critical issues related to economic development.

A native of Germany, and a leading authority in international business and economic development, Klohs also leads the Right Place's international business development strategy. She conducts numerous foreign direct investment missions to Europe, Asia and the Middle East each year, both independently and in collaboration with the State of Michigan and the Governor's office. She is a frequent speaker on national and international economic development issues, having addressed audiences in France, England, Germany, Sweden, China, Australia and Israel.

She is involved in many local and state-wide boards because she is a strong believer that a community's quality of life is as important as its quality of commerce. In 2014 she was appointed by Governor Snyder to serve on the International Crossing Authority, a joint authority between the State of Michigan and the Country of Canada for the construction of the North American International Trade Crossing (Gordie Howe Bridge).

Klohs' economic development career began as an industrial consultant with the Berrien County Economic Development Corporation of Berrien County, Michigan. She later served with the Michigan Department of Commerce and then Grand Valley State University, where she was Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Development. Prior to her position with GVSU, she was affiliated with Prince Corporation.

She is a graduate of Western Michigan University, as well as a graduate of the Economic Development Institute; and completed the economic development finance program through the National Development Council. She also attended Harvard executive management programs.

She is the recipient of numerous awards, including

- Business Person of the Year – Economic Club of Grand Rapids
- E&Y Finalist – Entrepreneur of the Year
- 50 Most Successful Non Profit Executives
- Michigan Women's Hall of Fame
- Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award from Davenport University
- Jeffrey A Finkle Award for Organizational Excellence – IEDC
- Crain's 100 Most Influential Women in Michigan
- Life Time Achievement Award for Best Managed Non-Profit
- 50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan
- The Athena Award – Grand Rapids Chamber
- Leadership Grand Rapids Distinguished Community Trustee
- Junior Achievement West Michigan Hall of Fame
- Newsmaker of the Year

She is married to her husband Greg Northrup and they reside in Grand Rapids with their cats Max and Moritz. She enjoys gourmet cooking, gardening, historical reading and traveling.

Professional and Volunteer Activities

Current

International Crossing Authority
Gerald R. Ford Airport Authority Board
Macatawa Bank Board of Directors
ADAC Automotive Board of Directors

Priority Health
Kent County/Grand Rapids Convention
Arena Authority
Michigan-Israel Business Accelerator

Past Board Memberships

Spectrum Health Systems
Local Development Finance Authority (SmartZone), Past Chair
Western Michigan University Board of Trustees, Past Chair
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Grand Rapids Symphony
Economic Club of Grand Rapids – Past Chair
Van Andel Public Museum
Heart of West Michigan United Way – Past Campaign Chair
Opera Grand Rapids

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

Economic Club of Grand Rapids
International Economic Development Council
Michigan Economic Developers Association

Grand Rapids Rotary
CoreNet Global