

Let's get to know Barbara Ruddy

Barbara Ruddy talks about working in Africa, her philosophy on life, and having dinner with Leonardo da Vinci.

Where did you grow up and go to school? I was born in New York City and grew up in Lewes Beach, Delaware where I graduated from high school. I graduated with a BS degree from the University of North Carolina. I have two sisters. My sister Joan Ohl lives here and is a member of Impact 100. I have no children. Rather, I used to call the 500 local staff in 42 field offices in Africa my kids, and they loved it! I have 3 step children, 6 step grandchildren and 2 step great grandchildren.

I know you've had a fascinating career. Tell us about it. I

worked at the World Bank for 31 years from 1965 -

1996. The last 23 years I worked as the Field Operations

Coordinator in Africa, overseeing 42 offices in 41 countries. I opened 21 World Bank offices from scratch, including South Africa with Nelson Mandela. What an experience and opportunity, and I loved it! The highlight was my leadership in designing computer driven financial and administrative systems to support field office administration. I taught these skills all over the world. My motto has always been, 'Everything is possible. Figure out the best solution and get it done!'

What are your favorite hobbies? My favorite hobby is meeting people from all walks of life. Most recently, often in Chelsea's and promoting membership in Impact 100.

What's a fun fact about you not many people know? I was charged by a rhino in a private tented camp in Kenya. For some reason the rhino took a sharp left and started eating eucalyptus instead of my derriere. On a flight from Nairobi to Kampala, Uganda shortly thereafter I learned that the African drumbeat sent the news to a Johannesburg newspaper.

If you could invite one person, living or deceased, to dinner, who would it be and why? I would like to dine with Leonardo da Vinci and talk about how today's technology would Impact his large number of inventions and what he would do differently or in addition to his legacy.

Where's your favorite vacation? Italy is my favorite country where we lived in Rome for 5+ years. South Africa a close second.

What's the last book you read? Both Heat and Dirt by Buford! About the food business today and excellent!

What three words best describe you? The Energizer Bunny

What one food can you not live without? Great salad with salmon on top

Why did you join Impact 100? To give back to a community with needs as diverse and large as the needs I observed and dealt with in Africa. Amy Acker encouraged me to join.

You've been a member of Impact 100 for one year. What do you love most about being a member? I coined a phrase while teaching seminars for World Bank which fits Impact 100 and the role it plays in the community. 'Go to the source, do it once, get it right and get on with it.' I treasure being part of an organization that makes such a difference.

Do you have any advice for new members? Be grateful you are a contributor and not a recipient.

What is your superpower? Inspiring others to do something I consider important.

