

Kelly Savage

Legend Award

A woman we celebrate for a lifetime of entrepreneurial achievement, community impact, and support of the success of others.



Kelly Savage's entrepreneurial journey was profoundly influenced by her father, John F. Savage, who passed away on February 8, 1993. His final words to his nine children, "Keep it going," were decisive for Kelly. Already on the path of entrepreneurship, Kelly was inspired to remain in her community, help others achieve financial independence, and continue her father's legacy. Thirty-one years later, her passion for serving others remains strong, driven by the memory of her father and her commitment to inspiring local female talent.

Kelly faced numerous challenges in her entrepreneurial journey, including doubt, risk, competition, and the uncertainty of market demand. She had to wear multiple hats, juggle various responsibilities, manage time effectively, and maintain a work-life balance. Even with her father's efforts, building brand awareness required continuous innovation and differentiation. Networking and relationship building were crucial for capturing market share and sustaining growth. Additionally, Kelly managed the emotional toll of entrepreneurship, prioritizing mental health and seeking support to prevent burnout. Kelly's active lifestyle, particularly her passion for basketball, significantly influenced her business success. Playing college basketball at The University of Toledo taught her the importance of hard work, perseverance, and resilience. The competitive nature of the sport paralleled the challenges of financial planning, and the famous quote by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, "You can't win unless you learn how to lose," resonated with her. The lessons learned from basketball and her father's emphasis on physical and mental balance equipped Kelly with a mindset that has served her well in business.

Under Kelly's visionary leadership, Savage has flourished, evolving into one of the top 100 insurance and financial service agencies in the U.S. The firm, with its 70 advisors and 160 employees, manages a staggering \$2.7 billion in assets and \$3 billion of in-force life insurance. It caters to nearly 2,000 employers across the nation. The establishment of a cutting-edge 30,000-square-foot headquarters in Maumee, Ohio, and additional locations in Bowling Green and Findlay, stand as testament to the company's growth.

However, Kelly's greatest achievement lies in the trust and satisfaction of her clients, a testament to her commitment to serving their financial needs, a value she inherited from her father. Kelly's entrepreneurial journey has challenged the status quo in an industry historically dominated by men. She strives to ensure equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender, race, or religion. Her involvement on boards such as the American Cancer Society, Harbor, and The University of Toledo's Athletic Committee exemplifies her dedication to inclusion. Kelly's personal experiences with leukemia and lymphoma in her family fueled her fundraising efforts, earning her the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's (LLS) Woman of the Year award in 2021. She hopes to inspire young women to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams through her philanthropic work.

Savage's community involvement is extensive and impactful. Kelly has led initiatives like the Savage Foundation Golf Classic, raising over \$1.6 million for local nonprofits in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Known as one of the most successful single-day charity golf outings, the event donates 100% of its proceeds to various charities annually. Savage also sponsors a 5K race as part of the annual Glass City Marathon, attracting thousands to the area. As a member of Savage's internal donation committee, Kelly supports hundreds of programs and events annually, demonstrating the firm's commitment to making a difference in the community.

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