

Rockefeller talks about book, love for Williamsburg

The Adirondack Roundtable, a part of the Lake Placid Institute, located in New York, serves as a forum for high-profile speakers. It was chaired for many years by John Bogle, the founder and former president and CEO of the Vanguard Group, an investment management company that manages more than \$3 trillion in assets. Thus, an invitation from him to be a roundtable speaker is hard to turn down.



World Focus
FRANK SHATZ

The latest invited guest speaker was Eileen Rockefeller, the youngest daughter of David and Peggy Rockefeller. She is seen as a leading member of the family's fourth generation. She is devoted to the mission

of stemming climate change. The Rockefeller's family ties to Colonial Williamsburg are close and long-standing

What has propelled Rockefeller into the forefront in the public domain was the publication of her memoir, "Being Rockefeller, Becoming Myself." The book, which took six years to write, is an honest, down-to-earth description of "growing up as a Rockefeller."

I asked, what impact did finishing the book and seeing it in print have on her?

"It was a process of healing my own past so that I could find a sense of belonging," she said in a recent interview with the Gazette.



Rockefeller

The introduction of her book notes that Rockefeller understood at an early age that her name was synonymous with American royalty. "She learned in childhood that wealth and fame could open any door, but, as the youngest of six children and one of 22 cousins in one of the world's most famous families,

she began to realize that they could not buy a sense of personal worth."

Her book has earned high praise from a number of well known writers, such as Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence." He wrote: "Eileen Rockefeller shares a fascinating, moving and revealing tale of growing up in the midst of power and wealth, and moving on to find a True North star in life. Anyone of us, no matter our roots, will learn much about living with authenticity and compassion and becoming the person we want to be."

I asked Rockefeller, what would be her advice to novice writers working on their own memoirs? "Write whatever you are passionate about," she said. "Keep a journal. Share your writing with others. And have fun!"

As a young girl, Rockefeller spent her formative years at North Country School and one summer at Camp Treetops, a 200-acre working farm with barnyard animals, large organic gardens, a lake free of motorboats and miles of trails in the woods, close to Lake Placid.

"It was an experience, that in great measure, influenced my choices how I wish to live my life," Eileen told me last year in an interview, while visiting Williamsburg. She also added that "any excuse would be good enough for me to pay a visit to either Williamsburg or Lake Placid. I love those places."

Apparently, the love is mutual. Her talk at the Adirondack Roundtable was a love fest. Beth Amorosi, a board member of the Lake Placid Institute and the granddaughter of James B. Donovan, who's best known for negotiating the exchange of captured American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for Russian spy Rudolf Abel and the exchange of prisoners after the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, after listening to Rockefeller's talk, said: "Eileen's talk was so inspiring for so many reasons, but the main message was that real wealth comes from life enriched by family, friends, intellectual curiosity, culture, accomplishment and experiences.

... Eileen exemplifies grace, empathy, dedication and authenticity. Her gift for storytelling and her ability to express herself with such raw emotion and giving spirit drew us all in."

Shatz, a Williamsburg resident, is the author of "Reports from a Distant Place" the compilation of his selected columns. The book is available at the Bruton Parish Shop and on Amazon.com.