



THE PFS FAMILY ALBUM

Milestones and Stories of the People at Premier



We Recognize Doreen Bequary: She's Been Our Financial Wizard Over the Past 14 Years

Although the nature of our business involves expensive automobiles, Premier is a financial services company that manages sophisticated leasing arrangements for scores of clients, as well as the complexities related to assets with fluctuating values, and a myriad of ownership details for a portfolio consisting of hundreds of cars. As an ESOP company, we also have an ongoing responsibility to properly value and track the ownership positions of all our employees.

During her 14-year tenure at Premier, Doreen Bequary's skills, diligence and steady hand as our in-house financial professional – who's deeply involved in all of those critical tasks (and much more) – have helped to establish the company's reputation as a trusted and reliable partner for well-known marques, dealerships, funding sources and serious car enthusiasts.

Doreen's career path to her designation as a Certified Public Accountant was neither direct, nor easy to accomplish. A native of Waterbury, Connecticut, she started out seeking to become a paralegal, and with a 4 year-old son at home, attended night classes at Quinnipiac University to achieve

that goal. While she was employed as an administrative assistant at a nationwide company, Doreen discovered that she had a talent for working with numbers. So she sought employment at local accounting firms.

A friend of Doreen's, who was a CPA at one of those firms, encouraged her to get an accounting degree and become a CPA. After earning her undergraduate degree from Central Connecticut State University, she set out to take the CPA exam, which she describes as one of the most difficult things she has ever done. "You have to give up everything, your whole life, because the only thing you do is study. I studied every day and weekends. In those days, you had to take all four parts of the exam in one session. You couldn't use a calculator. The total passing grade was 70, but you needed to earn a grade above 60 on all four parts, or you would fail the entire exam."

After working full-time as a CPA at a Waterbury accounting firm, and then part-time during tax season while she raised her four small children,



"The culture of a company should be something you believe in and are really passionate about."

- **Doreen Bequary, CPA**
Controller



Premier Financial Services

Vintage and Exotic Motorcar Leasing since 1997

Doreen eventually went back to work full-time for 10 years as the controller of the Jewish Federation in Southbury, CT.

Doreen Answers a Tough Question Correctly and Joins Premier

As her kids got older, in 2006 Doreen set out to find a better job, and through an executive recruiter, landed an interview for an open position at Premier, which had been in business for 9 years, and was seeking an experienced financial professional to serve as its controller.

Following an initial screening by Premier's outside CPA firm, Doreen was interviewed by the management team. She remembers one tough question that apparently secured the position for her. Doreen was asked how she would respond if one member of the team asked for a financial report a particular way, and another member asked for the same report a different way. "My response was that I would give both of them any report they asked for; and apparently I was the only job applicant who gave them that answer."

Doreen's auditing background and ability to ask the right questions were great assets for her, as she worked to understand the leasing business. She remembers, "Not knowing anything about leasing, I thought, "How hard could it be?" But the accounting for leasing was

very different than what I was used to, and I was joining a company where everyone knew more than me."

Doreen Helps to Build Premier's Capabilities

Doreen says there have been many changes during her tenure that have improved the company's ease of doing business as well as its competitive advantage. Notably, she's proud of Premier's current ability to conduct paperless lease transactions, from start to finish, which has enabled the company to increase the speed and ease involved in a complex, multi-step process. "With all the information on the server, and the ability to use DocuSign, we've re-defined the way lease transactions are managed, and made life much easier for dealers and car enthusiasts."

"In fact," Doreen points out, "Premier's ability to transact entirely on a virtual basis has been a great advantage to the company, our business partners and our clients, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was never any interruption of service, in terms of lease transactions or delivery of client service."

According to Doreen, there is no "typical day" at Premier. The only constant is the high pace at which the entire team operates and multi-tasks, in order to deliver the company's promised level of "concierge service." The toughest

part of Doreen's job is the weight of the financial responsibility, and being detailed and accurate. She says, "We deal with a lot of money, but I have a good team that records everything properly throughout the year. Otherwise, come year-end with so many reports to file, it would be a total nightmare."

Exploring the "Right Side" Of Doreen's Brain

Doreen's strong "Left Brain" financial skills appear to be counter-balanced by artistic talent expressed through her longstanding interest in landscape photography.

What began seven years ago as an interest in taking pictures with her "simple camera" and uploading them to an online photography group, has blossomed into a serious artistic pursuit and adventure travel lifestyle for Doreen. Her passion for photography, combined with a love of wildlife, has taken Doreen (with her husband and professional camera equipment in tow) to exotic locations in more than 20 countries around the world.



Photo By Doreen - Taken in Africa



Photo By Doreen - Taken in Wanaka, New Zealand

Whether it's a waterfall in Iceland, a mountaintop sunrise in Patagonia, or a brood of lions in Africa, Doreen and her husband will do whatever it takes to capture the photographs they're seeking. Recently, for example, they traveled to Chile and hiked 14 miles in the Torres del Paine National Park, with all of their photo equipment, for a shot of the landscape. "It's considered a difficult climb, and you're scrambling up rocks, but we wanted a specific picture, which we finally got."

In terms of artistic merit, many of Doreen's photos are similar in quality and composition to photos featured in National Geographic magazine; but other than displaying them in her home, and posting them

on Instagram or her travel website (www.travelwildnow.com), she has little interest in promoting or selling her works of arts. Two of her shots, however, have been featured on CNN's "Photo of the Day."

She offers some simple advice for aspiring world travelers, regardless of whether they're carrying a camera: drink only bottled water; don't eat uncooked food; and learn and follow the customs of the countries you visit.

Words of Advice For Young Women in Business

In addition to her successful business career and photographic talent, Doreen has managed to raise four children who have found their own paths in life; including a college professor, a marketing

professional, and twin daughters who are accountants. She's also passed on to her kids a love of the outdoors, and they are all involved in skiing, hiking, kayaking or biking.

Doreen offers some valuable advice for young women starting out on a business career. "It's really difficult when you're in college to know what path to follow. But a good place to start is to explore something that you're really passionate about, because you'll be working at your job for a long time. Ideally, try to find a place to work that shares your personal values and that employs people who you can connect with."

Most importantly, according to Doreen, "If you really want something, you will find the time and energy to attain it. More than anything, I really wanted to be self-sufficient and not to depend on anyone but myself. That's what gave me the motivation to work all day, and go to school at night. And after I got my degree, I knew that whatever happened throughout my life, that I would always be able to take care of myself."

As it turns out, Doreen's career has involved taking care of many more people other than herself.



Celebrating its 23rd anniversary in 2020, Premier continues to grow and succeed for one simple reason: great people like Doreen Bequary work here...and they stay here.

