

How to Put the Extra in Ordinary

Brother Ryan Michael Kelly – Lake Como Councilman, Graduate Research Assistant, and Teacher – Shows the Way

QA What leadership roles did you hold as an active member of Triangle?

President, vice president, new member educator and scholarship chairman.

QA You are currently a councilman for Lake Como, NJ. How did you get to this point in your life?

Politics has always been embedded into who I am. It's funny because my household is way over-saturated with engineers (father, brother, etc.). In breaking the family tradition, I have become the first politician in the family. I remember writing my presidential speech for the state of the union at the age of six. Even back then, I was overambitious. In high school, I was involved in student government. In college, I stayed involved in the student union, college republicans and even took initiative as a cadet in the Air Force ROTC program. All these things continued to foster in me a reason to stay involved in the community, but it wasn't until I hit the campaign trail, when I saw people suffering as the result of bad politics, that I knew I needed to win. I knew I needed to help. To me, politics is not only a patriotic duty but it's a calling to become a servant of the people and do what is right for the people. My father has said I am a man of many talents and that my strongest talent is my ability to empathize with people. While this has made me an effective communicator, it has also made my life more dedicated to the service of others and my community.

QA What kind of place is Lake Como?

Lake Como is a beach town. Currently it has around 2,500 year-round residents. That population is expected to double within a few years due to progress in local development. However, our town's main economy is tourism. We have multiple well-known bars, a radio station, plenty of housing and access to both the beach and the lake. We attract so many people in the summer that I feel as though we are as densely populated, if not more than, downtown Manhattan.

QA What are the most exciting aspects of your job?

It's really exciting to be able to draft and pass ordinances, resolutions and liquor licenses, as well as to have the authority to make positive change in the town. It's the power to influence government. It's knowing that a large number of people have put

their trust and faith in you as an elected official. That alone is enough to inspire a new type of confidence one can only experience through the election process, whether you're a 24 year old or not. I can see how bad politicians can be corrupt; but I'm not one to become power hungry. I got in this for the people, and by the people, and they can get rid of me as quickly as they put me here. I doubt they would though. They know I'm working hard for them. With every challenge comes a great deal of stress and excitement.

QA What are some of the challenges you face?

It's very true that you simply cannot please all of the people all of the time, and that's sad. In theory, you'd think you could help everyone. But even in trying to please the masses, there will always be a few who are simply unhappy. Unfortunately, those are the ones who like to complain the loudest. Of course, the biggest challenge is trying to make sure the town is doing what it's suppose to do; that you've done everything legally and ethically, and all the while, that you are keeping the taxes as low as possible without being a burden to the people. It's my hope that one day, when the community looks back on my life, they will see me as a man of some relevance who fostered positive change, touched many lives positively and inspired others to do the same.

QA Besides serving your community as a councilman, what else do you do?

Serving my community is not the only job I have. I work as a graduate researcher for Monmouth University in the department of Educational Leadership and Special Education. I also work as a part-time teacher for the county, filling in wherever there is a great need for a substitute. Both jobs have been greatly rewarding and exciting on their own. I have a great deal of respect for teachers at all levels. I love working with children. I would not shy away from the idea of teaching K-12 or at the collegiate level at some point in the future. At the very least, I would love to attend classes to answer questions for students about government and find ways to get younger folks more involved in their communities. At a young age, I was encouraged (or, perhaps "challenged") by President Clinton to get involved in the future of America. Look at me now. I would say "mission accomplished" but my work is not nearly done and as a country, we have a long way to go!



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QA How did Triangle prepare you for your career?

As an active member of Triangle, I came to the realization that rarely does anything go to plan. I discovered that even so, there is a solution for just about any problem out there. I have no doubt that the social atmosphere of the fraternity and the principles we all know and love have served as a guiding standard in handling the more stressful situations in my career. Triangle gave me a community of brotherhood with an environment that allowed me to practice my leadership skills. At the very least, I was able to understand the ramifications of my decisions, the decisions of others and discover the common balance between the two. This prepared me for and guides me successfully when handling difficult people and negotiations.

QA What are your future plans?

I have been waiting to hear back from several law schools and have already been accepted to two of them. In September, after I come back from studying in London this summer, I'll be attending one of these fine schools. While I do my best to keep my options open, I feel I should ultimately take time to serve my country. I'm probing the U.S. Marines right now. I'm considering a life as a JAG or a Marine fighter pilot. I have always felt the calling to serve my country. I believe my time is coming to serve it on the battlefield. My father, his father and so on – we come from a long line of military men. That is not a tradition I take lightly. It's my turn.

I believe the people will understand this. They know I'll be back – and I will leave them in good hands. I will serve in any capacity they ask me to, but this is something I have to do for myself before I try to go any further in my political career.

I'm not starting early in order to become the U.S. President by the time I'm 35, for instance. Yet, I'm here to serve for as long as the people want me to serve. I will continue to put my name in the hat every time people ask me to. In the long run, this means I will most likely stay in government. Maybe one day I'll go into private practice. Helping people, making lives better – even if it's just an extra inch in the right direction – that's what makes it worth the investment.

QA What do you do for fun?

Exercise. I do a three-mile run or head to the gym and lift weights. I especially love flying small single-engine airplanes. I enjoy scuba diving. For my next adventure, I plan to explore a ship wreck off the Jersey coast. And, like almost every other person around my age, I like to go to the bars, have a drink with friends, family, constituents, other politicians or simply test the waters to make sure I can still get a nice girl's phone number. As a gentleman, I make it a point to at least call any girl brave enough to give me her number.

Please visit <http://www.ryankelly.org> for in-depth information or to contact Brother Kelly.

Background

For comprehensive background information, see <http://www.ryankelly.org>.

Age: 24

Born: 1/2/1983

Childhood hometown: Albuquerque, NM

Current hometown: Lake Como, NJ

College: Colorado State University

Triangle affiliation: 2004

Graduated: 2005

Major/minor: Sociology, Criminology, Political Science/
Aerospace Studies

Other education: Masters in Criminal Justice from Monmouth University (2007), Certificate in Government Services from Rutgers University (2007)

College clubs and organizations include: Air Force ROTC (Cadet), Colorado Civil Air Patrol (Student Pilot/Senior Member), Associated Students of Colorado State University (Supreme Court Justice), CSU Greek Life Judicial Board (Justice), Residence Hall Association (Senator), CSU College Republicans, to list a few.

Membership and volunteer work includes: Ancient Order of Hibernians, Knights of Columbus, Blood Drive Coordinator, Central Jersey Blood Center (Lake Como, 2006 – present); First Responder, Bradley Beach First Aid Squad, American Red Cross (2004-2006), to list a few.

Spouse/significant other: Single.