

ABOUT MARY JO

The Experience to Make Real Change Mary Jo Kilroy, Franklin County Commissioner and Democratic candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio's 15th Congressional District, is an effective leader and dedicated public servant who understands the values of the community. As a public school mother, Mary Jo first ran for public office in 1991, winning and serving two terms on the Columbus Board of Education. Franklin County voters elected Mary Jo to her first term as a Franklin County Commissioner in 2000, and re-elected her in 2004. Under her leadership, Franklin County has dedicated itself to fiscal responsibility, economic development, quality health care for its residents, and environmental protection and sustainability.

During Mary Jo's tenure as commissioner, her leadership resulted in Franklin County earning the highest bond rating, "AAA" from Moody's Investors Services and Standard & Poor's, placing the county in the top 1% of counties nationwide. Her dedication and experience also led to Franklin County being ranked as one of the five best-managed counties in the country by Governing Magazine.

Mary Jo was Board President between 2005 and 2007 and her experience proved crucial as she found ways to fund the community's values and priorities in a tough budget environment. She helped create the Columbus Franklin County Affordable Housing Trust Corporation. The Corporation still works to protect home-ownership while also increasing the number of minority home-owners in the Columbus Metropolitan Area. In addition, Mary Jo Kilroy understands the importance of balancing economic growth with environmental needs and fought to promote sustainable growth principles in policy decisions. From her efforts, the Big Darby Accord Panel was created, and dubbed responsible for protecting the long-term environmental health and economic vitality of Central Ohio.

A community advocate on health care, Mary Jo worked to provide the initial grant and continued funding for Access Health Columbus, a medical assistance organization that provides medical care and prescription medicine for low-income and uninsured residents of Franklin County. Mary Jo fought for and succeeded to fund the Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers, The Breathing Association's free clinic, the AIDS Task Force and the Diabetes Association. Her dedication to Central Ohio earned her the Public Official of the Year award from the Central Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

The daughter of a pipe-fitter and World War II veteran, Mary Jo understands the value of hard work and excelled through school, attending Cleveland State University for her Bachelors Degree, and then The Ohio State University for her JD. Mary Jo married Robert Handelman and settled in Columbus, Ohio with their two daughters, Julia and Rosa, and three dogs. Mary Jo's daughters are now both grown, Julia teaching in the New York public schools, and Rosa having recently graduated from Brown University. Mary Jo spent a number of years working in the private sector as a partner at the Handelman and Kilroy Law Firm, until she left to run for County Commissioner.