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MARCH 2026 independentbanker.org

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 ICBA

Get to Know Incoming ICBA Chairman Alice Frazier

Alice Frazier, president and CEO of Potomac Bank, is a self-made community banker, passionate advocate and forward-looking leader. As the incoming 2026/27 ICBA chairman, she's hoping to engage the next generation of community bankers.



March 01, 2026 / By [Colleen Morrison](#)

When Alice Frazier, president and CEO of \$960 million-asset Potomac Bank in Charles Town, West Virginia, reflects on her first big break in banking, she does so with humility and a little tongue-in-cheek playfulness. She had been working as a loan review officer at a community bank when a new CEO stepped in and asked officers to write him a note to share what the bank needed and how it would help.

"In my youthful exuberance, I wrote him a two-page note, culminating in the opinion that we really needed a chief financial officer," Frazier recalls. "Fortunately, the other senior executives supported that concept, and he made me CFO."

For the next 14 years, she worked alongside that CEO, adding branches and growing the bank from \$100 million in assets to over \$800 million. During her tenure, Frazier assumed the role of chief operating officer, but when it came to succession planning for the CEO position, she was overlooked.

“One of the things my executive coach noted to me was I had no revenue-producing experience, and typically that was necessary for a CEO to be effective,” Frazier says. So, she acted on an opportunity to do commercial lending and lead sales at a large bank before working as a chief operating officer of a regional bank in the area.

From COO to CEO: Leading Potomac Bank’s growth



That’s when Frazier came upon what she refers to as her “Batman versus Robin” moment.

“I had been Robin to a couple of CEOs at that point, twice as chief operating officer, and I needed to decide if I wanted to continue to do that. Did I want to be Robin or Batman?” she says. “This opportunity at Bank of Charles Town, now Potomac Bank, came up, and it was an easy decision to move forward with being Batman, becoming the chief executive officer and leading this organization forward.”



Frazier has now been at Potomac Bank for nearly nine years, having steered it from \$410 million to \$960 million in assets. Under her leadership, the community bank has added two branches, two loan production offices and several new business lines. In 2025, she also directed the bank through a successful renaming to align the institution with both its financial holding company and the larger role in the community it serves.

“With offices in Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia, and the Potomac River touching every one of the counties that we’re in, it just made more sense to rename to Potomac Bank, marry up to our holding company and really celebrate the company that we’ve become,” she explains.



After building her career at other financial institutions, Alice Frazier became president and CEO of Bank of Charles Town in 2017. Last year, she and her team launched the community bank's new name, Potomac Bank, to reflect its holding company's name and reflect its expanded footprint.

A guiding source of inspiration

When reflecting on who has inspired her most in her life, Frazier doesn't hesitate to point to her mother, Arlene Poutasse. A pioneer in her own right, Poutasse was an entrepreneur, with professions ranging from pet store and craft store owner to art cooperative founder to interior designer and more.

"I always admired that my mom went all in on every task she undertook," Frazier says. "She was never afraid to try something new."

In fact, later in her career, Frazier's mother forged a brand-new path, becoming chief of police for a local police department. It was during that period that she assumed the role of trailblazer in the justice system: She became the first woman to graduate from the Forensic Science Academy in Virginia.

Frazier recalls finding an article from 1981 that discussed her mother's experience at the academy as the sole woman and noted that her mother indicated that the men in the program had accepted her easily.

"I turned to her and asked, 'Is this true?'," recalls Frazier. "And she said, 'Oh no, it's not true at all, but I was not going to let them know it.'"

Inspired by this gumption, Frazier has assumed her mother's fortitude, certainty of direction and perseverance despite challenges, which seep into the ways she approaches her role today.

"My mom taught me it was never about being a woman in a man's world; it's about being a business leader among business leaders," she explains. "It's about what I'm here to do, not what I am."



Giving back to the community of community banks



Alice Frazier at the ICBA PAC Spring Reception at the 2024 ICBA Capital Summit.

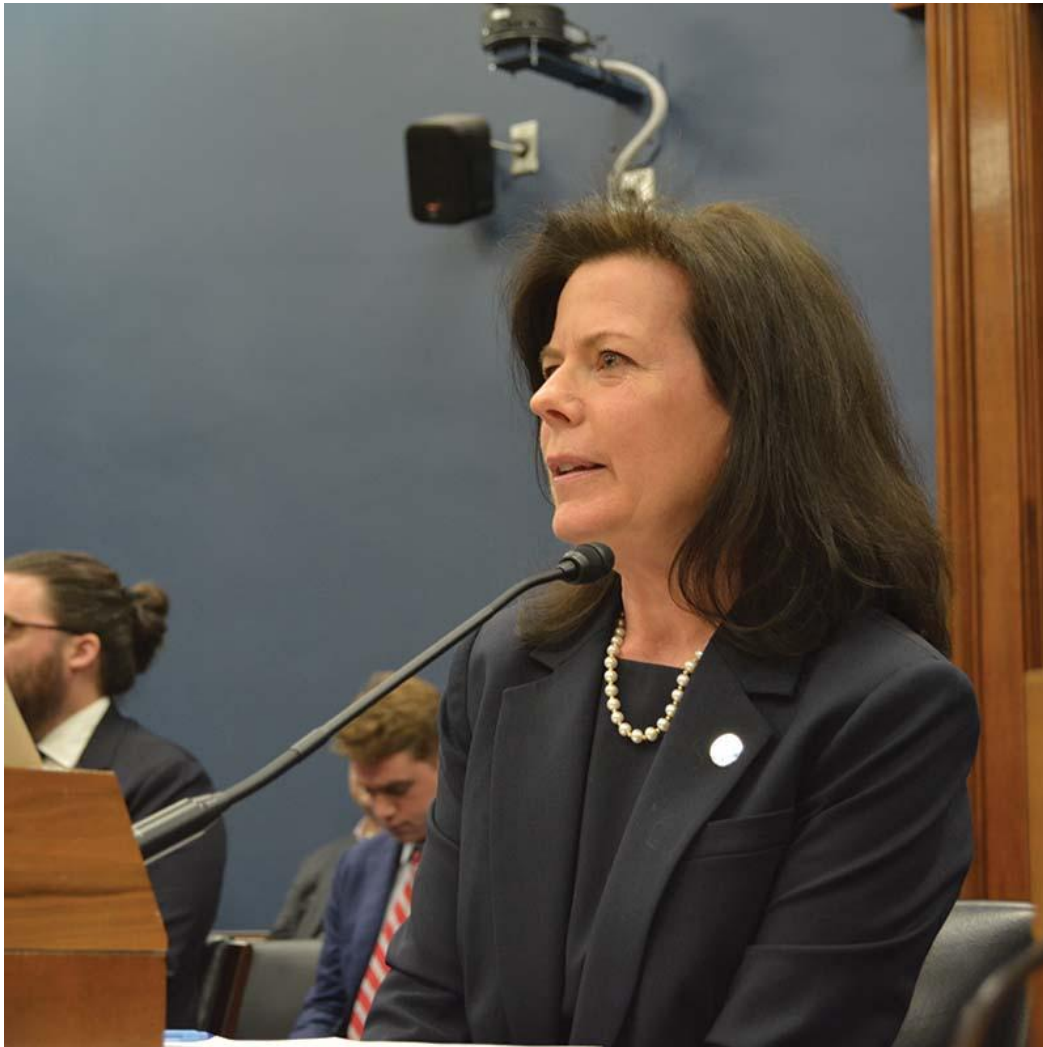
Outside of Potomac Bank’s daily operations, Frazier sees its role in the larger community, and she has always been deeply committed to fighting for a level playing field for community banks. That’s where ICBA entered the picture.

“I first became engaged in ICBA after a meeting at my former bank,” she says. “The CEO and my counterpart and I were sitting around a table, and we were very, very frustrated by credit unions. That CEO said, ‘Alice, you’re going to get involved [with] ICBA,’ and the rest is history.”

As she engaged with ICBA, her first role was with what was then the Legislative Affairs Committee, and Frazier truly didn’t know what to expect. What she found was an impassioned community that embraced her knowledge and input.

“I was incredibly overwhelmed at first, but other bankers took me under their wings at the very beginning,” she notes. “They introduced me to people, and I began to develop relationships.”

Now, those peers have become a core part of Frazier’s network. She describes having forged important friendships with colleagues whom she can call upon when she has a question, wants to brainstorm an idea or simply wants to check in on their experiences with a particular issue or topic.



Frazier testifying before the House Small Business Committee in February 2025.

"ICBA is the community of community banking, and it's been really important to me in my career," Frazier says. "I've built great friendships. I have people I can call upon to ask, 'How are you doing this in your bank? What are you doing about that?'"

And these relationships extend beyond helping on a peer-to-peer level to supporting customers. For instance, Frazier points out that sometimes she has clients that need to do business in a different state. Whether it's an individual customer buying a second home or a business customer needing new market support, she knows she can connect them with community banks she trusts.

"I just had that happen with a referral client that was going to Texas to do business," she notes. "I called Cindy Blankenship [vice president and corporate president at \$787 million-asset Bank of the West in Grapevine, Texas, and a past ICBA chairman] because I knew they did SBA lending, and they were able to meet with the customer. It's wonderful to be able to use these friendships that I've built to help others."



Frazier on stage at ICBA LIVE 2024 in Honolulu.

Frazier’s national impact in community banking



Alice Frazier at a family golf outing with her husband and sons.

In addition to making connections, ICBA has given Frazier the opportunity to represent the industry in numerous forums. For instance, she was vice chair of ICBA’s Bank Operations Committee when the Federal Reserve was deciding whether to advance FedNow. Frazier recalls meeting with Federal Reserve stakeholders in Minneapolis to discuss the role community banks need to play in instant payments.

“There was a moment where we recognized that for FedNow to move forward, community banks needed to embrace it,” Frazier says. “It was at that moment that I realized how powerful our voice as community bankers was to the Fed and to this project. So, FedNow got elevated quickly as a priority, ICBA and community banks stood up, and now we have FedNow delivering for us. That’s a powerful result of our collective work.”

Over the years, Frazier has testified in hearings and participated in meetings on Capitol Hill on many occasions. But when she recalls her first experience going into meetings as part of ICBA’s Capital Summit, she admits she was apprehensive.

"I thought, 'These are our legislators. These are very powerful people. What would they want to hear from me?' And what I learned by watching others is that they need our stories, they need our experiences, so that they can be better legislators," says Frazier, who now advocates for community banks to speak out on behalf of the industry. "It just elevates ICBA's ability to be successful on the Hill on our behalf," she says.



Frazier enjoying pool time with their newest family member.

Frazier says she feels a responsibility to evangelize the community bank story, not only to advocate for her own community bank but for the larger industry.

"When we do advocate, and we are actively engaged in sharing those stories, we're not just helping our own bank, or our own clients, or our own community," she says. "We're helping all communities. Because whatever the outcome, the legislation affects all of us. And so, there's no story, there's no voice that is too minor. Everybody's voice matters and is important."

With this passion for the role of community banking in the economy contributing to Frazier's perspective as ICBA chairman, serving in this capacity is not a responsibility she takes lightly.

"To be nominated for chair, that is truly one of the highest honors," she says. "To have peer bankers believe in me as a good voice of community banking and as a role model for the industry means so much. I hope I inspire other women to reach for higher goals as well."



Frazier with rest of the 2025/26 executive committee.

Engaging the next generation of bankers



The Frazier family celebrating Christmas.

For now, Frazier is placing her focus on the future: both the future of the industry and future generations of community bankers. While she continues to fight the battles of today—advocating for a level regulatory playing field, advanced technologies for the financial improvement of communities and ongoing banker education—she sees the need to drive home the skills of tomorrow.

“As senior leaders in banking, it’s our responsibility to bring our teams along, not only for their betterment but in support of the industry,” says Frazier. “We owe it to our banks and to this community to help develop the next generation so that there is a lot of bench strength, a lot of talent behind us, so our communities and our banks continue to thrive in the future.”

Frazier’s message to community bankers? Get your teams engaged with ICBA. Lean into not just the advocacy side but also ICBA Innovation and professional development through ICBA Education. This engagement both supports the growth of the next generation of bankers and advances their personal trajectories.

“The younger generation also is all about professional development, and being engaged in ICBA, all facets of it, helps with career progression,” Frazier says. “It’s been a great career for all of us, so the question is, how do we bring more people to these same opportunities?”

For Frazier, the answer is to simply ask them to find where they fit within ICBA. Do they have a passion for new banking innovations or new ways to solve customer problems? Get them to attend the ThinkTECH Accelerator. Do they want to see regulatory changes as the costs of compliance continue to climb? Ask them to join Capital Summit to advocate on the issues shaping banking today. Do they want to deepen their knowledge of key banking areas? Share ICBA Education resources with them.

Frazier follows her own advice—offering such opportunities to her team and encouraging her peers to seek out ways to get their organizations involved in ICBA as well. The time to act is now, Frazier stresses.

“Reach back into the organization,” she says. “The younger generation really desires to be engaged in something bigger than their work, and they want to give back. This is an opportunity to show them ways to get involved with this community of community bankers, and from personal experience, I can tell you that it’s time well spent.”



Frazier at a family gathering.

Close family ties

While community banking is a passion and a priority, Frazier also enjoys spending time with her family, including her husband of 37 years, Todd; son Kyle, daughter-in-law Kelly and granddaughter Allie; and son Reid and his wife Brittany, and their two dogs and two granddogs.

“Both boys live 15 minutes from us,” Frazier says. “We get together regularly. We hang out as a family. We vacation together as a family. It’s a blessing.”

Recent vacations have included trips to Italy and Switzerland, and Frazier expects many more in their future. As for the near-term, she and Todd will be traveling the country supporting ICBA.

“Todd has been on this community bank journey with me, and he also very much encouraged me to accept the chair nomination. He’s been totally supportive,” she says. “The industry itself has been good to me and my family, and we see this as an opportunity to give back.”

Colleen Morrison is a writer in Maryland.

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