As notable as she is, MU alumna Catherine Allen is in one sense a typical baby boomer: She’s changing the rules.

Allen has co-authored a book encouraging her fellow baby boomers to view their futures—and retirements—differently than others have in the past. More than that, Allen embodies the change she’s urging. Her retirement in 2007 from the top spot in a financial services consortium paved the way for a handful of other occupations, not the leisurely lifestyle pursued by past generations.

“I haven’t really retired,” Allen acknowledges. “I’ve just reinvented myself.”

Allen wrote about that approach to retirement in “Revolutionary Retirement: What’s Next for YOU?,” with the help of Nancy Bearg, Rita Foley and Jaye Smith. Published October 2014, the book offers readers ways to think about and tips for planning a fulfilling retirement. Not only is it a perspective that Allen epitomizes—it’s one that continually brings her back to her beginnings in Missouri.

Allen grew up in Perry, Mo., a rural community with a population of fewer than 700 people. With little exposure to large or varied businesses in her home community, Allen first began to realize she could choose from an array of career paths while attending the University of Missouri. She earned a bachelor’s degree from the HES Department of Textile and Apparel Management in 1968, and began her business career.

She eventually became a leader in technology strategy and financial services, holding high-level positions at both Citicorp and Dun & Bradstreet after earning additional academic degrees. Allen served between 1997 and 2007 as CEO of BITs, a nonprofit consortium of some of the nation’s largest financial institutions that focuses on strategic issues facing the industry. While dedicateing her time to BITs, Allen also founded a strategic consulting company based in Santa Fe, N.M.

Allen’s retirement from BITs about eight years ago began her transition into the “portfolio career” she’s now pursuing. Allen says acting as head of her New Mexico consulting firm, The Santa Fe Group, comprises one-third of her current career; performing corporate board work comprises another third; and working on behalf of her nonprofit causes comprises the final third.

That’s where Allen’s volunteer efforts and donations to Mizzou come in. A 2005 recipient of an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from MU for her professional achievements, Allen has taken on leadership roles in Mizzou fundraising campaigns, including serving as tri-chair for the current Mizzou: OurTime to Lead comprehensive campaign, as well as member of the HES Dean’s Strategic Leadership Council. Her support for HES includes a $1 million commitment from her estate to the college.

“I want to make sure that the men and women who go to the University of Missouri know there’s opportunity for them,” Allen explains.

Allen also contributes time and resources as well to a number of other causes, including New Mexico Appleseed, which advocates for systemic change to address social issues, and various art organizations.