

Franni Franken Official Bio

Franni Franken, is an activist, a mother, and an inspiration to her best friend and husband, Al. A former PTA President and West Side Little League Board Member, she's also been a Girl Scout, a Dirigo Girls State Delegate, a Teen-Age Express high school reporter for the Portland Press Herald, and a recipient of multiple awards for educational and civic accomplishments during her high school years at Deering High. Franni Bryson was born on October 8, 1951 and grew up in Portland, Maine.

When Franni was a baby, her dad – a World War II vet – was killed in a car accident on the way back from a shift at the paper mill. He left her mother widowed with five children, at age 29. But Franni, her three sisters, her one brother, and her mother made it, with crucial help from Social Security survivor's benefits, the GI Bill, a rock-solid family and a phenomenal will to make their lives as rich as they possibly could. Education, Education, Education was the Bryson family motto. And, all four girls went to college. Her brother joined the Coast Guard and became an electrical engineer. Sometimes they went without heat, sometimes they went without a meal. The roof leaked. And when Franni's mom got a \$300 loan to fix it, they had a family meeting. They decided they'd emptied the bucket under the leak long enough – they could do it a little longer. Franni's mom used the loan to go to college instead. The day her youngest started high school, Franni's Mom started college and went on to teach Title 1 children.

In her freshman week at Simmons College Franni met Al Franken, then a freshman at nearby Harvard University, at a college mixer. In 1973 Franni and Al both graduated from college and were married in 1975.

Over the past 37 years Franni has been Al's life partner and political soul mate. Having served as his *de facto* running mate during the campaign – spending every day traveling Minnesota, charming everyone she meets, bringing pies and winning hearts – Franni is excited to be working on fighting for the issues she cares about, including reproductive health, measures to combat domestic violence and access to affordable education.

Franni and Al have two children: daughter Thomasin, 31, and son Joe, 27.