Ellie Fenton was born and raised in Mexico City, Mexico. She attended Northwestern University where she received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, majoring in marketing. She met her husband Tom in Mexico City, and they moved to El Paso in 1970, where Tom was a journalism instructor at UTEP and Ellie taught accounting at IBC (International Business College).

The Fentons left El Paso when Tom joined the Associated Press to become a foreign correspondent. They returned to El Paso in 1986 when Tom was named editor and publisher of the El Paso Times. They left again in 1993 when the Freedom Forum (formerly the Gannett Foundation) sent Tom to Zurich, Switzerland. At that point, Ellie had become a CPA and worked for Deloitte Touche in Zurich. They returned to El Paso in 1995 to launch El Paso Inc., a weekly business journal. Today, Ellie is the controller for El Paso Inc. and for PDX Printing, the commercial printing company that prints El Paso, Inc. and many other weekly and monthly newspapers.