

The Top of the Top 1996



The women who run the five largest women-owned businesses in New Mexico continue to be an interesting group. They range in age from 30 to 50; some have little formal education and some have advanced degrees. Four of the five were born in New Mexico, a change from past lists... and only one rose through corporate ranks to her position of authority. Two women founded the companies with other members of their families and one founded and still runs the company by herself. Four of the five women have children, and two are currently married. The companies range from a computer hardware/ software/ services company, to travel, an oil and gas distributor, a construction supply company, and one that sells commercial and office furniture. We hope these short profiles will be inspirational.

The Top of the Top include:

Teresa McBride
Jo Summers
Dorothy W. Queen
Melissa Deaver-Rivera
Maria Raby-Mondragón

TERESA McBRIDE

Name: Teresa McBride

Title: President, CEO

Company Name: McBride and Associates, Inc.

Is Your Company On-Line? <http://www.mcbride.com>

Date of Birth: 9/8/61

Place of Birth: Grants, NM

Education: Nothing formal

Significant Other: Max Robbins

Children: One son

First Paid Job: Family restaurant in Grants

Started/ Founded Business: Founded 1986 by Teresa McBride

Last Book Read: Philosophy: Who Needs It? by Ayn Rand

Last Movie Seen: My Family

Teresa McBride is focused and she admires that quality in others. One of her strongest characteristics, that she believes most contributes to her success is her focus. "I try not to procrastinate, which goes with focus. Abraham Lincoln once said "The fields of our country are filled with the bones of the people who were waiting. They stood waiting, they sat waiting, they lived waiting, and they died waiting."

When talking about the people she admires, people in her company, like Betty Mott, she speaks of focus. "It's her enthusiasm, her focus, her consistency, her compassion" And for John Irick it's "his commitment, his focus." And when speaking of the people she admires personally, Teresa cites her mother and her son, and Max. "What do I admire about Max?" she asks. "His compassion, his business acumen, and his integrity."

Teresa doesn't acknowledge risk as an issue. "I don't think of taking risks," she says. "I just heard recently Thomas Edison was asked why he continued to experiment when he had so many failures. And his answer was that he didn't believe he had failures, only things that didn't work. So, it's not risks, but more ... challenges."

What Teresa has sacrificed is learning time. "I'm one of those people who have hundreds of books. I buy more than I have time to read."

Teresa has run her company by herself, from the beginning, so the potential issues of isolation are for her very real. "When the buck stops here, there's always a bit of isolation. I imagine it would be nice to have someone to lean on, but, it's the nature of the position. You have the freedom to make decisions, which is an advantage, but the disadvantage is the same thing," Teresa says thoughtfully. "I couldn't have done it differently. There was no one in the beginning I could have partnered with. And as I developed success, I was never totally sure of the future, and I didn't want to be responsible for someone else's future."

But, Teresa is involved in others' futures. She has set up the McBride Foundation, which partners college students with grade school students to give the young kids "a chance to realize they have other options in their lives."



JO SUMMERS

Name: Jo Summers

Title: CFO

Company Name: Rio Grande Travel Centers, Inc.

Is Your Company On-Line? <http://www.rio-grande-travel.com>

Date of Birth: 3/17/48

Place of Birth: New York City

Education: Haven't graduated from college ... yet. Still working on it.

Children: Two—20-year-old son and 15-year-old daughter

First Paid Job: Macy's in Rego Park, New York

Started/ Founded Business: Started with Rio Grande in March of 1978

Last Book Read: The Rainmaker by John Grisham

Last Movie Seen: Crimson Tide

When asked what she believes is her strongest trait, Jo Summers says, "My Italian stubbornness. I think I'm highly motivated more than anything else. I don't like failure. I'll fight my way through almost anything. That's not always for the good, but it keeps me focused." And because she has partners she doesn't feel isolated running Rio Grande Travel. "I don't really feel alone," says Jo. "I have two partners. Two main ones—Susan DiMaggio and Marc Calderwood."

The greatest risk she's ever taken in business was starting the accounting department at Rio Grande. "In retrospect, it turned out to be a good risk. We had to write the book on it. Ours was unique. We had intangibles. There is no inventory, and I had no true accounting training. My ambition was to be a CPA. I'm detail oriented. Lee [Calderwood, former president of Rio Grande Travel] had a lot of faith in my ability and knew we'd muddle through." In 1981 when Rio Grande did this, there was some automated software, but it was always evolving because the travel industry itself continued to change. The first year Lee made them do it manually and then they moved fully into automation. "It really allowed me to understand the basics."

Jo cites having two children as her biggest personal risk. "It's such an awesome responsibility. Thank God they're so wonderful—in today's world, with me working. ..." And she believes the biggest sacrifice she's made for her business success is "not spending as much time with the family" as she thought she would.

Jo still most admires her mother "because she manages to maintain a sensitivity to life and a sense of humor." She also admires the people she works with. "I couldn't accomplish what I have without them. They are 100% responsible and self-motivated. I couldn't do on a daily basis what I do if I weren't free to do it. They do what needs to be done."

Jo's dream vacation would be to spend time in Italy. "And meet descendants I'm somehow related to. I've never been, never made it there. I could imagine seeing someone on street who looks like me or my brother."



DOROTHY QUEEN

Name: Dorothy W. Queen

Title: President

Company Name: Queen Oil & Gas Co., Inc.

Is Your Company On-Line? Not yet, but it's a computer world now...

Date of Birth: 1/23/46

Place of Birth: Carlsbad, NM

Education: Bachelor of Science in Biology, NM State (Las Cruces); Medical Technician, Texas Tech (Lubbock)

Significant Other: No

Children: One son, now in the business

First Paid Job: Dairy Queen for 45 cents an hour

Started/ Founded Business: Co-founded in 1972 with late husband

Last Book Read: Think Harmony by Ray Hunt

Last Movie Seen: The Lion King

To Dorothy Queen, the biggest risk she's ever taken was changing the course of her business. "Expanding into an area that will make your company a lot of money. The commitment to change, to expand. Going into debt." When pressed to relate a personal risk, Dorothy hesitates, then laughs. "Getting off the ski lift," she says.

One of her strengths is her commitment to her business. "I don't end my day at 5 o'clock. I work on weekends. It's not an 8-5 job. You can't walk away from your business for weeks at a time. I always answer the phones, even in the middle of the night."

Dorothy no longer feels so alone running Queen Oil & Gas. "While my son was in college I could get scared, but, at this point, no, my son works closely with me. Things aren't always as bad as you think they are. You can be scared at first, but you just do the best you can and things usually turn out for the best."

One of the people Dorothy most admires is Bill Bolton, who works with her at Queen Oil and Gas. "Bill took a risk—put his company up as collateral to invest in a new business. He lost his business in that venture, but he didn't give up."

When asked about the sacrifices she's had to make in order to run her business, Dorothy says, "I've had to quit doing some things I like to do. I've limited my participation in leadership and civic organizations. I've had to quit Four-H and the New Mexico Quarter Horse Association. I don't like that. I donate money but have little time."

So, if she had time, what would be her dream vacation? "I'd pack in to all the pretty spots—Arizona, Montana, that country—sleep in a bed roll, be with nature, away from people. Does that sound odd?" Dorothy asks. It doesn't seem odd when she's so committed to her business and her clients. "Always treat your customers like you want to be treated and be sincere about it. Really mean it."



MELISSA DEAVER-RIVERA

Name: *Melissa Deaver-Rivera*

Title: *President*

Company Name: *Frank's Supply Company, Inc.*

Is Your Company On-Line? *E-mail; home page within 6 months*

Date of Birth: *6/13/66*

Place of Birth: *Albuquerque, NM*

Education: *Bachelor in Business, UNM; Bachelor of Science and Business Administration, University of Phoenix*

Significant Other: *Cres Rivera*

Children: *One daughter — Catherine (2 years old)*

First Paid Job: *At 13, working at Frank's*

Started/ Founded Business: *Family business*

Last Book Read: *Prefers magazines and newspapers*

Last Movie Seen: *Groundhog Day (goofy movies)*

Frank's Supply Company is a family business. Melissa Deaver's grandparents, Frank and Margaret founded the company on April 1, 1953. They were famous for selling tools out of the trunk of Frank's car. "Early on I worked in the rental department, bookkeeping, at the sales counter, as an outside sales rep," Melissa says.

For a time Melissa was one of five family members running the business. Her brother and her grandfather both died in 1993, and her grandmother in 1994. So, now, it's just Melissa and her father, who is slowly passing it all on to her. "We have doubled the business in the last 4 years," says Melissa. They now have three branches—n Albuquerque (main office), Farmington, and El Paso.

When asked if she ever feels isolated running her business, Melissa says, "I feel less alone now than in the past. I have really good managers. I have a new controller and new accountant. I'm getting better advice. My general manager is Richard Crifasi, who takes care of daily operations and is insightful. My biggest job and contribution is to keep him happy. He's a wonderful guy."

Melissa thinks that luck has played a big part in her business success. "There are so many in business who do so much right and don't make it."

Getting married is the biggest personal risk Melissa identifies. "You want to make the right decision the first time and hope you do." In business, it was getting a line of credit to finance growth. "We've had lines of credit for rentals, but that was all. The bank didn't perceive this [new line of credit] as much of a risk as I did. They asked 'Is this all you need?'"

When asked about the sacrifices she's made for her business, Melissa credits her family for having shouldered most of the burden. "I inherited the business. The family [grandparents, parents] made the sacrifices. They didn't spend a lot of time with family when they were building the business. But I'm starting to take time with my new family."

Melissa most admires her four grandparents because they were all hardworking. They took risks and they loved their families.

Contemplating her ideal vacation, Melissa says, "I love to ski, but my husband hates to and I'd be alone." So her dream vacation is to be with him on a beach in Hawaii.



MARIA RABY-MONDRAGÓN

Name: Maria Raby-Mondragón

Title: President

Company Name: Contract Associates, Inc.

Is Your Company On-Line? Setting it up right now

Date of Birth: 3/24/57

Place of Birth: Albuquerque, NM

Education: Bachelors in Business/Marketing, UNM; Masters in Business, UNM; La Universidad de las Americas (Puebla Mexico)

Significant Other: Ramón D. Mondragón

Children: Not yet

First Paid Job: Lifeguard and swimming instructor at Rio Grande pool

Started/ Founded Business: Bought it 8 years ago, but has worked there for 10 years.

Last Book Read: Consider This, Señora by Harriett Doerr

Last Movie Seen: Sense and Sensibility; Beautiful Girls

The personal characteristic Maria Raby-Mondragón believes most contributes to her success is her high energy. "I'm a positive person. I don't stay just focused on work. I get involved in the community. They are intertwined."

Does she feel alone, isolated? "Yes and no. I have those days," says Maria. "But this is a family-owned business, and I have my brothers here. I grab one of my them and share the tough days, the tough decisions with them... I can bounce it off someone with a stake [in the business]. Having two members of my family here makes it easier."

The biggest risk she's ever taken was buying her business. "I didn't realize it at the time. I was a little naive. It set the direction of my life in a lot of ways." Personal risk is harder to identify. "I don't know. I tried roller blading last year and went white water rafting. The risks all seem business related, or fun."

When asked about the sacrifices she's made for her career, Maria says, "I don't think it was a conscious sacrifice, but, maybe not having a family sooner. I got on this wheel and couldn't get off. It just happened that way. It was unconscious. Before I knew it my life was flashing by me."

The person she most admires is her mother. "A phenomenal woman. She raised six children, instilled great values, a strong work ethic, honesty, and I believe without those things you can't be a good business person."

In business, Maria admires Anita Roddick, founder and group managing director of The Body Shop, a London-based company. They manufacture products based on indigenous plants and cultures, but Roddick is also a woman who puts her money where her mouth is regarding her commitments to native communities, global issues, and ecology.

Maria went on her dream vacation last year with her husband of 12 years, Ramón. They went to Italy. It was her first vacation in seven to eight years. "It was wonderful and romantic and historical and there was great beauty—art and architecture. It was the longest time I've been away from my business in 10 years."

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