

# Two make a

**M**other and daughter innovators, whose strengths compliment and supplement to form a pre-eminent team of change makers. A first and second generation with unique generational differences. Put 'em together and positive sparks create a fire of energy resulting in a successful enterprise. Their story ranges from Carol's hard years and individual success, to agonizing, mutually shared tragedy of the death of daughter Ann and healing, to success as a team. It is a mother's towering drive and desire, creativity and vision. It is a daughter's special management skills, organized approach and acceptance of the generational and personal differences coupled with a desire to work with her mother. Together they are a meshing of first and second generations. They daily make their differences work successfully.

I often reflect on the fortuitous circumstances that led to meeting this special entrepreneurial team. After a 50-year, highly successful career as an entrepreneur, I came to my alma mater, Arizona State University with the intention of setting up a program to help entrepreneurial students and small businesses. This was the early 1990s. After many discussions, I financed and founded a program which was named The Center for the Advancement of Small Business. It was quite unique for a university College of Business in that era, in that we set it up like a business with a vision, mission and operational statement. It was based on a full business plan that planned for and involved local small business owners in concert with academic professors.

Midway in the '90s we began to seek out support from selected successful entrepreneurs to build special programs for students and small businesses. One of those programs was for family businesses. That's

"KRISTIN INFLUENCES MY PHILOSOPHY - KEEPS ME GROUNDED. I COULD NOT DO THIS BUSINESS WITHOUT HER."

# POWERFUL ONE

when I first met Carol Den Herder. Carol immediately understood the purpose and need and subsequently Carol and Kristin Rezler, her daughter, agreed to support the efforts of the center. This meeting began an association which I have increasingly valued through the years.

When I decided to write about selected everyday pioneers whose efforts have largely gone unnoticed, selecting the Carol and Kristin team was a no-brainer.

I interviewed Carol and Kristin separately with the thought of sharing with the readers their special relationship. We will get to those interviews as they tell their stories but first I'd like to share my assessment of each.

Carol is very creative and energetic. She is a sensitive person with ideas which she generates into reality. She is quick to assess people and situations, as well as being inquisitive and empathetic. Carol is a perfectionist who will not settle for less than the best. The company Carol and Kristin have created, Identity Marketing, provides more than a million products and special services customized for their clients. Their facilities and equipment are state-of-the-art and beyond. Whatever a company, non-profit agency or individual needs to promote, Identity Marketing can and will provide.

I've a word to say about Carol Den Herder's unique, honest, captivating "what-you-see-is-what-you-get" style of delivery. It is spontaneous and often emotional as she races through her productive, adventuresome life. She often jumps ahead and then returns to past events as they cast relevance on her present and future success or failures. As with all of our stories, we have tried to capture the essence of Carol's personality, drive and philosophy. You will find her delivery dynamic an top-of-mind. I trust she will intrigue you as she has me.

Carol is a serial entrepreneur, having personally started more than 10 companies and has actively assisted others in their start-up adventures. She and Kristin are giving people and regularly provide resources for individuals and community groups.

Kristin is a strong, stable individual. She is well-organized, yet adventuresome, willing and able to take chances on people and willing to take business risks. She is a decision maker who has carefully honed her skills in organization and implementation. Kristin encourages her staff to take social responsibility and

"MY MOTHER HAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED ME TO MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS. SHE SUPPORTS ME BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY."

