

WIL PROFILE: JAN STEWART

Jan Stewart, CEO of Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, loves her job directing the lottery because it fulfilled a lifetime passion: helping people.

From the time Stewart was very young, she always wanted to do something that would help other people in some way. When she grew up, she earned a master's degree in social work. Through the twists and turns of fate, this profession would eventually lead her to become the CEO of Western Australia's state lottery—one of only two women CEOs operating lotteries in Australia today.

"I have been privileged to work for a lottery which makes a direct contribution to the quality of life in the community where I live, and through my work, both in my previous career, and now at the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, I believe I have played some role in helping people," said Stewart.

One of her biggest successes in business, she cites, is the ability "to be responsible for a number of very important and creative community initiatives in Western Australia." She is also quite proud that the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia ranks among the top five lotteries in the world in per capita lotto sales and that it played host to the Intertoto conference in Perth in October 1995.

Growing Up

Stewart is the oldest of three children; she has a brother and sister. As the result of her mother's determination, she had the opportunity to win a scholarship to a school that would shape her young world. "My mother was the most important woman in my life," said Stewart. "Her family had been badly affected by the depression, and she had to leave school at 15. As a result, she was absolutely determined that her children would have the education she had missed out on.

"She arranged for me at the age of

nine to take a scholarship examination, which I was lucky enough to win, at one of Perth's better girls' schools," said Stewart. "This school prided itself on the quality of its teachers—themselves all women. These teachers introduced me to new worlds—of culture, language, history, science and sport, and to believe I was capable of achieving anything I set out to achieve."

As a child, Stewart "always loved reading [still do much to the irritation of those around me at times, as I can totally lose myself in what I'm reading], and dreamed of traveling and meeting people from the different places I was reading about," she said. "I loved learning, and although no one in my family at that time had ever been to university, it was always my goal to go to university."

CAREER CHOICES

During Stewart's university years, after initially studying languages and history, she enrolled in a social work

degree. "One of my tutors was a fiercely independent English woman and she was my first real 'mentor'—I

still remember some of the basic lessons she taught me about human nature and managing people," said Stewart. "Since joining the workforce, there are many women [and men] who have generously supported, guided, and encouraged me, and helped me get to where I am today."

In terms of now serving as a mentor in the workplace, Stewart said she doesn't differentiate between young women and young men. "I encourage them to take initiatives, to be involved in the organization, and I encourage all my staff to be involved in our community in whatever way is best for them," said Stewart.

"I try to give young people increasing levels of responsibility, and have widened my executive leadership group to include a number of our younger managers—both young men and women, so they are exposed to management and leadership challenges early in their career," she said.

MOTHERHOOD

Stewart resigned from her job as the chief social worker at the major Perth pediatric teaching hospital where she had worked for 12 years when her first child was born.

"I had no idea what shape my working life would ultimately take, I just knew it was right to be at home taking care of our baby," said Stewart.

By the time he was nine months old, Stewart had been approached to undertake some part-time research work, and from there she was offered a number of part-time jobs, including a couple of paid boards and committees. "I had what I've seen referred to as this 'portfolio' career until my second son was around age two," said Stewart.

By this time, she was working part time at the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, when she was offered a full-time position as the director of community funding [its grants section].



Above: Baby Jan

In terms of definitive experiences in her career, Stewart cited the serendipity of “unsought opportunities presenting themselves.”

Probably the single most important one, in Stewart’s opinion, was “when, following a short period when I was acting chief executive officer at the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia following the sudden resignation of the former chief executive officer, the members of the board asked me to be included in the field of candidates they were considering for a permanent appointment. My children were still very young [6 and 4], and I had not even considered taking on such a level of responsibility. But I decided as Shakespeare said ‘There is a time in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads to fortune . . .’”

JAN STEWART

Position: CEO, Lotteries Commission of Western Australia

Years in lottery industry: 12 years

Birthday: November 22, 1948

Age: 52

Horoscope sign: Scorpio

Spouse’s name: Alan

Children: James (16), Alistair (13)

College Education: BA, Master of Social Work

Favorite cuisine: Seafood

Favorite music: Classical and “middle of the road”

Favorite book(s): “The Prophet” by Kahil Gibram; “The Railway Man” by Eric Lomax

Childhood hero: The Phantom!

Woman most admired in the world: My mother

Favorite quote: “If you want to build a ship, then don’t drum up men to gather wood, give orders and divide the work. Rather, teach them to yearn for the far and endless sea.” Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Greatest personal achievement: Apart from raising two great kids, it would be passing two grades at one time in my first Tai Quon Do exams at the age of 46!

Greatest professional achievement: Leading the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia

and the rest is history. That choice has really defined my life since 1992.”

Although she had no intention of working full-time “when this life changing opportunity was presented—and with the combination of support from my husband, a fantastic day care centre, my parents, and several wonderful young ‘nannies’ [mostly university students] over the years, our family managed to survive those very busy early childhood years,” said Stewart.

As a mother, what does she think is most important to teach your children? “To respect themselves and other people; to take responsibility for the choices they make; to set goals; and to believe in themselves,” said Stewart.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

“I like to think my management style is one that is relevant and appropriate for the situation and the individuals I’m dealing with,” said Stewart. “If I had to describe one characteristic trait, it is an approach that seeks to build consensus and ownership of a decision, not just ‘telling’ people what to do.”

She also doesn’t believe it is possible to generalize about management style between men and women. “I’ve seen some pretty directive task focused women in my time, and some very consultative, process oriented men—and vice versa,” said Stewart.

Do women face glass ceilings in the workplace? “Regrettably, I do see enormous challenges for women still,” conceded Stewart. “A few years ago I would not have said that, but when I look at the diminishing number of women [in Australia and in Western Australia] at senior level, the level of wages earned by women on average compared with men, I see the challenges as still formidable. I have been one of the lucky ones.”

In order to further the progress, Stewart believes organizations must be family friendly workplaces “not only for women, but also for men. When men and women can balance their family responsibilities [including



the increasing challenge of elder care), then both can share equally in leadership responsibilities in the workplace.”

As to how women’s position in society will change in the new millennium, Stewart notes that “in Australia, more than half of university places are being taken up by young women—including those in the traditionally male dominated fields of law, medicine and business. As these young women reach their professional maturity, I expect and hope we’ll see more in leadership positions. All around me I see many extremely talented young women with the potential to make an enormous contribution. However, for many women, especially those in the developing countries, and those living in poverty in developed countries, I see many of the hard won improvements being lost, especially at this time of terrible insecurity for the world.”

Below (from left): Alistair, James, Jan and Alan

