

WIL PROFILE: JUNE ROACHE

June Roache, CEO of Lotteries Commission of South Australia (but more familiarly known as SA Lotteries), is like a sprint runner. She has the ability to “turn up” the power and persevere to be the first over the finish line.

This determination of spirit is clearly the driving force in a personality that radiates warmth. Roache has the ability to focus on the long-range but not appear distracted or distant.

Roache is among a few pioneering women to be named the CEO of an Australian lottery. She has faced numerous challenges in the highly competitive South Australian gambling marketing—most recently an effort by the government to privatize the state-managed lottery. This was defeated.

Roache believes her biggest success in her business career was ensuring that SA Lotteries was “strategically focused to achieve sustainable growth in a competitive environment with the introduction of gaming machines into South Australia in 1994, two weeks after I joined SA Lotteries. Short- and long-term strategies were formulated and achieved.”

As to the future, she conceded that “sustainable growth is still a challenge for SA Lotteries (and other jurisdictions) from not only a competitive perspective but in an environment that has the lottery industry receiving much more political, social and economic focus.”

GROWING UP

Roache grew up in a family of two boys and two girls. She was second in line, 11 months younger than her older brother. In fact, her mother had four children within four years.

“Growing up in our household meant that the girls played boys’ games and sports with the boys,” said Roache, who recalled intense competitions of cricket, football, foot and bicycle races. “We were very competi-

tive amongst ourselves and with other children within our neighborhood. In the early years this competitive nature transferred to schoolwork, sports days and picnic races where I learned how to achieve,” said Roache. “I knew that if I pushed myself a little bit extra that I could win. I loved the feeling of running harder to be the first across the line. I still experience that same feeling in order to achieve—not in a sprint race but in my professional life.”

As a child, she had several women who played key roles in her life. “My maternal grandmother had 15 children, my mother being the eldest,” said Roache. “I always remember my grandmother being dressed up with her pearl earrings and necklace but so skinny and strict.”

But it was her father’s sister who in breaking the “mold” for what women could achieve gave the young June a glimpse of the possibilities that lay before her.

“I was fascinated by an Auntie

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who played competitive golf and was a state champion,” said Roache. “That was quite an achievement in the days when married women did not generally have their own careers.”

CAREER CHOICES

In starting her career, Roache reflected that female mentors were a rarity. “I was very fortunate, however, to have some very good male ‘mentors’ in business and the academic world who were ahead of their time,” she explained. “They gave me considerable encouragement. I also sought their advice with respect to career progression.”

In terms of definitive experiences in her career, Roache cited two. “The principal one was being appointed as an executive in 1982,” said Roache.

“Prior to that time I had the influence and power but not the authority.

“The second experience was working so close to the political arena as chief of staff to a Cabinet Minister,” added Roache. “The Minister was an incredible woman—at that time the only female Cabinet Minister. She was (and still is) a great achiever and totally committed to the community of South Australia.”

Now as a female chief executive running a major state business, Roache has the opportunity to make a major impact. How does she mentor young women entering the workplace? “No formal mentoring occurs, however, encouragement is given to all staff to increase their skills and qualifications,” said Roache. “Women with young children are especially encouraged to take advantage of the flexible working arrangements that exist. Those young women who have worked directly with me would possibly say that they have been given scope to develop. What I appreciate about young women is generally their honest feedback. That appreciation only arises from listening to their views.”

MOTHERHOOD

Roache was also a trailblazer when she became a mother and juggled the demands of a career.

“In 1973 when my daughter was born it was extraordinary in Australia for a mother to return to the workforce so soon after a baby was born,” said Roache. “The impending birth of my daughter necessitated a maternity leave policy being written to enable me to return to work!”

Her daughter Tonia was born some six weeks’ prematurely; therefore, Roache returned to work earlier than planned but when she was three months’ old.

“Upon returning to work I made the decision that I would ‘outsource’ home tasks where possible (I still do!)

to ensure that when I was home I was able to spend the maximum amount of time with her," said Roache.

Looking back, Roache emphasized the importance of constantly balancing the demands of work and parenting. "When my daughter was young, I adjusted my working hours to suit her starting times at preschool then at school and ensured that I took annual leave to coincide with her school holidays," said Roache. "This would not have been possible without the support of my employer (male) at the time. In addition, I made sure that I participated in school activities and parent meetings."

As a mother, what does she think is most important to teach your children? "Good manners, self-discipline, independence of thought and listening to others," said Roache.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

Roache describes her management style as achievement-oriented. "Depending on the situation and circum-

stances, this style can fluctuate between consultative and directive," she said.

Roache believes that the main two perceived differences between the genders are that women are by their nature generally more communicative and intuitive.

"It is estimated that only 1% of the population has the capability of leadership," said Roache. "There are more male 'leaders' compared with female 'leaders' in the world today, therefore it naturally flows that there are more good and not so good male leaders. As that gender imbalance is addressed as more women become better qualified not only academically which provides an opportunity in itself, but good at the political nature of leadership, we may also see more good and not so good female leaders and be able to actually research real differences."

Do women face glass ceilings in the workplace? "I have never perceived there was a glass ceiling," said Roache. "What I have perceived, however, is that over the years some male colleagues have gone out of their way to make life very, very difficult for me. I have always believed that opportunities should be pursued with total commitment and dedication to achieving results. This was no more important than when difficulties arose; I would not have achieved without remaining totally focused on the job at hand and on the outcome required.

"I still see challenges for young women today where not all men, especially of an older generation, do not understand and appreciate the value of the frank opinions and views of females," she added. "I also see particular challenges for women if they are not totally focused on their pursuit of achievement."


Although there are policies in place to help further women's progress in the workplace, particularly in balancing the professional versus home life, Roache believes that there is still a fear to stand out or be different.

"Although SA Lotteries has flexible



working arrangements in place, there has been some reluctance to take advantage of the arrangements," said Roache. "The litmus test for real effective policies would be that no woman feels any sense of guilt if they choose to take advantage of flexible working arrangements. After all, irrespective of gender, it is about achieving results and outcomes."

As to how women's position in society will change in the new millennium, Roache hopes to see more equality at work, at home, in recognition of sporting achievements and other endeavors.

"As more women become qualified and skilled and achieve more, there will be more equality in all aspects of society," said Roache. "The role models of the latter part of the 20th century will hopefully have paved the way for women to be recognized in such a way that is relative to the female population skew, whatever is their chosen field of endeavor." 

Below (from left): June, husband George and daughter Tonia



JUNE ROACHE

Position: CEO, SA Lotteries

Years in lottery industry: 7 years

Birthday: August 19

Horoscope sign: Leo

Spouse's name: George

Children: Tonia (28)

College Education: Bachelor of Accounting, Graduate Certificate in Management

Favorite cuisine: Italian

Favorite music: Opera (especially tenor Luciano Pavarotti) & Pop/western (Shania Twain)

Favorite author(s): Bryce Courtenay, Colleen McCullough

Favorite book: *The Agony & The Ecstasy*

Favorite quote: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Greatest personal achievement: My daughter

Greatest professional achievement: CEO, SA Lotteries