



Wendy Matus

(1941 -)

"You can't leave much in this world, but if you can leave a good name...to me that's very important". Wendy's life in Mission began when she was in Grade 8. She dropped out of school at the end of Grade 11, in order to marry Robert Matus, who she had met at a Stave Falls community dance. In 1979, Robert died in a tragic accident. There was no life insurance or savings, and Wendy didn't know how she was going to support her family of four children, ranging in age from 5-16.

In the early 1970's, Robert had started a small refrigeration repair business out of their home, which had expanded to the repair of large appliances, plus the sale of parts. Wendy decided that the base for the business was already there; they had a clientele, and a technician, plus Wendy had experience dealing with customers and had been working with an accountant to keep the books in order. This accountant became an invaluable mentor to Wendy, especially when dealing with financial institutions, which was not easy in those days for a single woman in business.

Above all, Wendy credits the success of Matus Refrigeration & Appliance to the fact that her husband had established a good reputation as a fair and honest person. As a result, the community of Mission was very loyal to her, and wanted to see her succeed.

Wendy's wisdom: "Diversification is the way to success in a small business." She started out by leasing a 2500 square foot store. With so much extra space, she started selling Inglis appliances. Then, she added other brands in case something happened at Inglis and they were unable to supply her with stock. She hired a second technician. Eventually, she asked herself why she was paying a landlord, and started keeping her eye out until the right building came up for sale. The final move to the current location included a 7,000 square foot expansion, and a line of furniture.

After retirement, Wendy thought it was time for her to give back to the community that had rallied behind her, so she joined the Arts Council, and now volunteers in the tearoom and gift shop. She is a volunteer usher at the Clarke Foundation Theatre. She has been a member of the Rotary club for 8 years and recently travelled to Thailand to assist with a dental group, which was a very rewarding experience. She has also travelled to Oyama, our sister city in Japan, as a Chamber of Commerce delegate.

When Wendy decided to continue what Robert had started, her main goal was to support her family. She states that it was very hard to go from being a fulltime mother to being a fulltime working mother. She feels that keeping her business afloat and successfully raising her family is her biggest accomplishment, and says the business "did its job; it raised my family, and for that I am eternally grateful."

Copyright © 2006 by Mission District Historical Society

All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by copyright may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the prior written permission from the Mission District Historical Society.

