



Debbie Trenholm

(1959 -)

I am absolutely convinced that women's participation in the life of cities and villages guarantees progress.
Michaëlle Jean Governor General of Canada 2006- Speech on the occasion of International Women's Day Kabul Afghanistan,
Thursday March 8, 2007

A successful business woman and community volunteer, Debora Lillie Trenholm was born on February 16, 1959 in Matsqui BC.

In school, Debbie liked anything to do with learning about other countries. She graduated from high school in 1977, the same year she met her future husband, Richard Lee Trenholm. They were married in 1979, and had a son, Stefan, born in Mission in 1990.

Fate got Debbie involved in the travel industry. Her councillor in junior high thought social work would be a good fit, so she steered Debbie in that direction. Debbie relates that in the mid-1980s, her sister-in-law "decided that we needed to take some kind of a night school course, so she said, 'You love travelling; we'll take the travel course.' So I go down to Maple Ridge, I'm ready to sign up ... she doesn't show up and then the registrar says, 'Well there's only one space left'. So I signed up without her. And the more I learned, the more I thought this is something I would really like to do."

Her first job was with *Vic Wallace Travel* in Mission. She took advantage of an opportunity to purchase *World Odyssey Travel* in 1993, and has won the Times Travel Agency of the Year award most years since then. Debbie says "Even though you work harder when you work for yourself than you do if you work for someone else, still at the end of the day what you put into it is what you get back."

Debbie has been a volunteer for a variety of organizations. Her very first volunteer activity was weighing and measuring babies for the Mission Health Unit. She also worked on the Crisis Line. Then she got involved with scouting when her little cousin came to her saying... *if you don't help, we won't have scouts this year and then I'll be really sad and ...* She helped for five or six years and was the Akela for the cub group at West Heights School. She returned for another six or seven years when her son said...*mom, there won't be any leaders if you don't come...* Her eight year involvement with PAC was "another one of my son's *mom you need to come because nobody else is coming...* But if you have a child in a school, it's important to be involved in that school."

Since those days, Debbie has served on the boards of the Downtown Business Association, North Fraser Community Futures, and is a charter member and current president of the Rotary Club of Mission mid-day.

Debbie says that a community is only as good as you make it: "If you are living in a community, you need to help out. If you look around, everything is driven by volunteers. If you want to partake of all the events that are happening, you have to give back."

by Lisa Kenney, Eagle Eye Editing
© Mission District Historical Society, 2011

