

## THE RODDEY INTERVIEWS



*This is the second of Metropolitan Magazine's series of interviews, conducted by former Allegheny County Chief Executive, Jim Roddey, of successful and interesting women in the Pittsburgh region.*

# GEORGETTE PASCALE — MASTER JUGGLER

**W**hen I read the biography of Georgette Pascale I was convinced that I was about to meet someone who had achieved "perfection of balance." This is a lady that juggles the responsibilities of three lives: successful entrepreneur, wife and mother and active volunteer and makes it look easy.

A conversation and a question and answer session revealed just how good a juggler she has become.

Georgette Pascale feels that she has grown personally and professionally while living in Pittsburgh. Since the first day she moved from the big apple to the steel city, Georgette has demonstrated leadership among women in the Pittsburgh area via her own professional career and her volunteerism in the philanthropic community. She is an active member of the National Association for Female Executives and serves on marketing committees for Prevent Blindness America and Ophthalmic Women Leaders. Georgette has also made a remarkable impact on bringing young people into Pittsburgh (and keeping others here), while maintaining a growing and successful company.

In 1996, Georgette received two Associate degrees in Fashion Buying and Merchandising and Accessory Design from Briarwood College. In the spring of 1997, she graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing Communications from the Fashion Technology Institute in New York City. She went on to work for several 'big name' firms in the public relations field in New York. Georgette gained a diverse public relations background by working with a variety of corporations and individuals, with portfolios ranging from Kellogg's Corporation to PricewaterhouseCoopers to Shania Twain.

In December of 2003, Georgette was faced with a tough decision: either move to Pittsburgh to begin her life with fiancé Dr. Robert Noecker, or stay in NYC for an additional year to continue climbing the corporate ladder in the hustle and bustle of a big city PR firm. Georgette decided to follow her heart and make the move to Pittsburgh and continued to work for her firm in NYC. After a year of long distance working and commuting she was not feeling the same connection or fulfillment. She also wanted the ability to choose her own colleagues that were just as motivated to succeed as was she. Given her broad background and experience in the field, she ultimately decided that she would start her own firm on her own terms.

Today, Georgette and husband Rob are the proud new parents of

their daughter, Bianca. Georgette is extremely busy being a new mother while running Pascale Communications and a portfolio that has grown to over 15 different clients, with a variety of products (pharmaceutical, medical device, consumer) in the healthcare business. With these new dynamics, Georgette recently set long term goals for the future. She hopes to grow Pascale Communications by 50% over the next two years by attracting great clients and young professionals to work on her highly diversified client list. Georgette explains that "it is nice to give young professionals a chance to work at a company that is non-traditional, yet successful and fresh!" Pittsburgh contains motivated people that work just as hard as people do in New York "with a lot less drama." Overall, she has learned that the local environment here is tremendously nurturing and that she still is able to have a national presence even though she works and lives in a smaller city.

JR *"What was your reaction when you heard your husband had an offer in Pittsburgh?"*

GP "Where is that?!" No, I am kidding. People kept saying to me "You might be moving to Steel Country?!" as if I was insane or something. But I wanted to give it a chance. New Yorkers can be fickle but I wanted to check it out for myself. When we were thinking about moving in together somewhere other than where we were, he was living in Tucson and I in New York. We wanted to be somewhere relatively close to our families that was affordable, had culture and was a good place to raise children. After I visited, I honestly really liked what I saw."

JR *"What was your first impression of Pittsburgh when you arrived?"*

GP "After taking public transportation (subways) for so many years, it looked like a really hard city to get around in via car. I was used to a grid. Coming from the airport through the Fort Pitt tunnel at night, though, I must admit...I was hooked. And after seeing downtown, the college areas and Walnut and Ellsworth Streets, I loved the vibe. The people are extremely nice here, too."

JR *"How long were you here before you were convinced that this was where you wanted to be?"*

GP "About three months. That was when I finally got my things from Brooklyn from my shady movers. When my clothes and shoes >>



*Georgette at her office.*

were safe, I knew I was safe. I adjusted quickly. I also met a small, great group of friends here that I feel like I've known forever."

JR "If you were asked to list the top five reasons why Pittsburgh is a great place for young families, what would they be?"

GP "Affordable (you get so much more for your money than where I am from)." • "Nice people who genuinely want to get to know you." • "Small city, so easy to get around; not overwhelming." • "Great culture and the nightlife of a large city." • "Close enough to bigger cities that it is not a big deal to travel and get around (fabulous airport!)"

JR "What are some of your Pittsburgh favorites?"

GP "Clothing: Emphatics, Choices, Hip'Tique, and e.b. pepper; Food: Casbah, Red Room, Eleven, Elbow Room, La Cucina Flegria; Furniture: Weisshouse; Bar: Soba; Salon: Salon 5844."

JR "Why did you and your husband decide to locate in the city instead of the suburbs?"

GP "We are city people. Others thought we should go to Fox Chapel or Sewickley. Both beautiful options but just not "our speed." Since I am not the biggest fan of driving, having to go over a bridge or have to commute to the "city proper" seemed daunting to me. I like that I can walk to shops on Ellsworth with my daughter and literally be a two minute drive to have a business meeting. My husband can also walk to work."

JR "Why did you choose healthcare as the principal area of concentration for your business?"

GP "Because it's healthcare. It's growing and you feel as if you are learning every day. The pop culture, fashion and corporate PR I did in the past left me a bit bored. Healthcare has so many diverse opportunities within the areas of medical devices, pharmaceuticals and even over-the-counter products. I just found it exciting and flourishing in terms of PR opportunities."

JR "Do you find it hard as a women business owner even in these times?"

GP "Yes, surprisingly. It bothers me because I know people would make certain decisions or treat me differently if I was a man. But, I

love my heels and I am not going away anytime soon so everyone just has to deal with it!"

JR "What advice would you give to fledgling entrepreneurs?"

GP "Be aggressive, patient and persistent. In my eyes, you'll fail if you are not those three things. You also have to be willing to put a lot of different energies into it: emotional and financial. Don't be afraid to fail. I've certainly made many mistakes along the way but if you learn from them, great! Lastly, surround yourself with great colleagues; my employees are wonderful and that make a huge difference."

JR "How do you balance family, business and volunteerism into your schedule?"

GP "It might sound odd but I look at everything as a separate 'job'. Time management is extremely important and I don't feel guilt about things anymore. It's ok to get a baby sitter to have a night out with my husband once in a while. It's ok to take a half day if I want to head out for the weekend. If you really want to make something work, you will. If you don't, it won't. It's all very individualized; people have different motivations and expectations about how hard they want to work. It is great that I had support when I started the business. I also have a husband who truly is my best friend and my daughter is absolutely fabulous."

JR "What would people be surprised to learn about you?"

GP "Many things. That I am a traditional person. Probably, that I make my own baby food for my 6 month old daughter, Bianca. People think I do "too much" so I think they might find that quite funny. I also like to cook dinner every night. Also, that I am a dork who likes to watch 'Law and Order' reruns and be home with my husband and daughter relaxing. I never forget a birthday or things people have said in the past; my memory is pretty fabulous if I do say so myself. Lastly, I went to the Fashion Institute of Technology I wanted to be a fashion stylist since I was a little girl."

*I like that I can walk to shops on Ellsworth with my daughter and literally be a two minute drive to have a business meeting.*

JR "Who is your inspiration?"

GP "My husband, my father and my daughter, in no particular order. My dad always said to me to 'make every day a masterpiece.' He always worked several jobs so we could go on a summer vacation. I have never heard the man complain once. He is certainly my hero. My husband because he honestly is so humble I admire his willingness to always do something nice for others without having to be recognized for it. And my daughter Bianca, because she simply makes me giggle. To see things through her eyes is priceless."

JR "What is the best advice that you have ever been given?"

GP "Cliché but 'Don't forget where you came from.'"

While Georgette Pascale's last answer is a good reminder it also caused me to think, that wherever she came from, Pittsburgh is glad she's here!

*If you would like to know more about Georgette Pascale and her company check the web, [www.pascalecommunications.com](http://www.pascalecommunications.com).*

