

Helping other women in business grow

by COLLEEN SMITH ARMSTRONG
Editor/Publisher

Without meaning to, much of Mary Ann Sircely's career has been centered around women.

In the 1980s, she launched a quarterly publication about women's issues. For years she has been involved with an advocacy group in Pennsylvania that helps pass legislation for women's rights and tackles issues like health care and voting. And the majority of her marketing firm's clients are females.

"It is very rewarding to help women in business grow," she said.

Before moving to Orcas in 2010, Mary Ann lived in Pennsylvania. After studying government, journalism and fine arts at Connecticut College, she worked as a reporter and editor at the Bucks County Courier Times. That is where she met her husband of 38 years, Harry, a photojournalist. He passed away this July from cancer.

After her time at the newspaper, Mary Ann worked as a freelance journalist. When Macintosh computers came out, the direction of her career shifted.

"With Macs, I was able to do all my own page design," she said.

Mary Ann launched the Bucks County Woman, a quarterly publication that highlighted local business owners.

In 1987, she started Sircely Marketing and Design, which offers full service communications. Mary Ann does website development, marketing strategies, logo and branding work and print materials. Her specialty is multi-media packages.

"I was trained in traditional journalism and I apply all those same principles to my graphic design work: honesty, ethics and integrity," Mary Ann said. "If the client doesn't agree, then we aren't a good fit."

Her oldest son Matthew moved to Port Townsend a dozen years ago and every time she and Harry would visit him, they never wanted to go home.

"We fell in love with the whole area. And then we discovered Orcas," she said.

When they moved to the island, their son Erik came to design and build their home. He decided to stay and resides in Deer Harbor. Their only son not in the Northwest is Jason, who lives in Colorado.

Mary Ann has kept a lot of her clients from Pennsylvania in addition to those she has on Orcas. She works with freelance writers and artists to keep up with the workload. Her favorite projects are ones that are versatile.

"When you can come up with a design that transcends the medium, when it can be used for many different things – that is my favorite," she said.

One of her recent jobs was an all-island mailing for OPAL Community Land Trust.

"There were too many fonts, too many colors – I broke every rule. But there were so many people who contributed to it. It was such a fun project," she said.

Much of Mary Ann's time on Orcas has been spent caring for Harry, who battled lung cancer for years.

Now she wants to spend more time on her sailboat, take hikes on the island and raise her four-month-old chocolate lab, Rollo. Harry saw a photo of the litter prior to his death and was happy that Mary Ann would be raising a pup in his absence.

"Rollo gets me out of the house. It's good for me," she said.



Colleen Smith Armstrong/Staff Photo

Above: Mary Ann Sircely with her four-month-old lab Rollo
Left: The cover of Bucks County Woman, a publication that Mary Ann launched in Pennsylvania.

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