

PEARLS: WOMEN WHO RADIATE SUCCESS
Book One

SYNOPSIS

Twenty-one women describe their early lives and journeys to success in this frank, entertaining book of stories written by Wilmington, Delaware businessman and musician Fred Dawson.

With a foreward written by Delaware's first lady, Carla Markell, "Pearls" tells the stories of 21 remarkable women, each of whom has established a large footprint of achievement in Delaware and southeast Pennsylvania.

BIOGRAPHY

Fred Dawson is a writer, musician, businessman, speaker, antique car collector and community leader. He has written hundreds of articles for local, national and international publications and has appeared on both radio and national television programs.

In 1961, at the age of 11, Fred Dawson's mother bought him a clarinet and ignited in him a passion for music that has been a major source of joy his entire life. He started playing professionally at age 16 and began recording at age 17.

In his early band days, Fred also played sax. His bands appeared as warm up concert acts for the likes of Poco, Chicago, Dr. Hook, and many others. He made numerous TV appearances and toured from Hollywood to Maine.

Many years later, Fred played four concerts with "Yakety Sax" man Boots Randolph, a major part of the "Nashville Sound" for most of his professional career. The two became very close friends until Randolph's death in 2007. Boots' family presented his famous saxophone to Fred, who displays it prominently in the music room of his Yorklyn, Delaware home.

Fred has attended several Rock 'n Roll Fantasy Camps and has performed with Micky Dolenz of the The Monkees, Spencer Davis of the Spencer Davis Group, Liberty Devito and Mark Rivera (drummer and saxophonist for Billy Joel) and many others. He met Ringo Starr for two nanoseconds in 2003 before one of his shows.

In his fifties, Fred started Club Phred, a group of accomplished musicians delighted with 60's and 70's Classic Rock. Club Phred has won numerous awards from the Delaware media and since 2004 has helped various charitable organizations raise more than \$2.5 million. Check out www.clubphred.com.

Executive vice president of Bassett, Dawson & Foy, Inc., Fred has over 30 years of wealth management experience and has dedicated himself to being a trusted advisor to successful women.

In 1999, Fred was recognized with a State of Delaware Senate Tribute for his "long and distinguished service to his community, his country, his state and his region."

Fred and his wife, Louise, have two children and five grandchildren.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What inspired you to write this book?

My mother, June Dawson, raised my two brothers and me while working full time on the assembly line at the Detroit and then Newark Chrysler Plants in the late 50s and 60s. As a boy, I wasn't aware of the extent of my mother's hard work and sacrifice, only that my childhood was comfortable and that I was loved.

Mom worked in a blue-collar atmosphere dominated by men, and I learned later in life that the gender discrimination in her work environment was rampant and unchecked. She endured many humiliating and embarrassing moments at the hands of her male co-workers, but she never let them get her down. I can understand why. As the single mother of three boys and the sole wage earner in our household, she did what she had to do, without complaint.

My mother exemplified courage, love, self confidence and determination. She showed me that though things might be difficult in life, it was important to carry on for the sake of one's family. Her influence has shaped my life for the better in a hundred ways, and it's because of her that I have dedicated my professional life to the service and support of high achieving women.

How did you select the women you wanted to interview for the book?

I have lived and worked in Delaware for decades, and as you probably know, Delaware is a small state. Anyone who has been active (as I have) in serving the community knows who the movers and shakers are.

Women of achievement abound in the Delaware Valley. The women I wanted to interview for this first book (yes—there will be others!) are active in the community, and that was one of the main qualifiers. These are all women whom I admire: CEOs, politicians, nonprofit leaders, philanthropists, and entrepreneurs. Almost everyone in this region who purchases the book is going to recognize many of the names of the women I've profiled.

Which of the 21 stories touched you the most?

All of them! Every story I heard had an interesting element, and no two stories were alike. Some had difficult childhoods. Some experienced profound challenges that might have held others back. And some sailed right through their childhoods with Ozzie-and-Harriet-like parents.

Where there any recurring themes that emerged from these women's stories?

There were a few.

- Several of the women attended all-girl's schools in elementary and high school. They believe that because of this, they were able to explore their own leadership abilities more thoroughly, because there wasn't any gender bias. In other words, they believe that if they were in school with boys they wouldn't have had the same opportunities to lead.
- Most of the women were high achievers in college who were courted and offered positions as some of the most prestigious companies in the world, including DuPont, which came up again and again with the women we interviewed.
- On this note, in Delaware, all roads led to DuPont or Gore. Many of our women either worked with these companies, or their husbands worked there, or they were associated by marriage, professional association or over the backyard fence. This was strictly a Delaware phenomenon; the Philadelphia-based women were a world apart, geographically and culturally.
- When we had our first luncheon to get all of the women together for the first time in the same room, they bonded immediately and already they've formed a Facebook group so that they could continue to associate and connect. It's as though they recognize and admire each other's greatness. It was an inspiring gathering to watch and be a part of.
- At each woman's interview, I asked them what advice they'd give to other women in order to succeed in business. Many of them said that it was important for women to support one another, and to celebrate one another's successes. I hadn't realized this, but many women said that women supporting women was a rare commodity, but a necessary one if women were going to advance themselves beyond a snail's pace in the business world.
- Most women reported incidences of gender discrimination in the workplace. The scope of this treatment went from subtle to outlandish, and though the discrimination has lessened somewhat over the years, it still exists. There were a few women who said they never experienced gender discrimination, but I suspect they were covering up for the sake of political correctness.

SPEAKING TOPICS

The Secrets of Success for Women in Business: A Man's Point of View

Fred Dawson has enjoyed a successful career in the corporate world and as a wealth manager. When he authored his first book, "Pearls: Women Who Radiate Success," in which he interviews 21 Delaware Valley women of substance, he heard some shocking stories of how women were once treated in the business and political environments, what's holding women back from true workplace equality, and how women may actually be consciously or unconsciously holding each other back.

Life Lessons Learned from Successful Women

According to author Fred Dawson, successful, accomplished women tend to have several traits in common. In this engaging presentation, Fred shares with his audience some of the fascinating stories told to him by 21 amazing Delaware Valley women and which appear in his book, "Pearls: Women Who Radiate Success."

- One woman was the sole female negotiator in a group of all male, heavy drinking Soviets and Germans attempting to reach agreement over the sale of large quantities of titanium;
- Another woman, while in college, talked her way into teaching classes in finance when she didn't know a thing about the subject, then convinced one of the largest companies in the world to travel especially to meet her, hire her, and offer her the promotion of her dreams;
- Yet another woman fought her way out of a traumatic, impoverished childhood to become the CEO of a million-dollar company while still in her 30s.

Bullies in the Workplace: Don't Let Them Stop You

When Delaware businessman and musician Fred Dawson interviewed 21 remarkable women for his book, "Pearls: Women Who Radiate Success," he was appalled to hear of some of the bullying behavior perpetrated on women by their male co-workers. It brought to mind stories his mother used to tell him of her experiences as the only female working the assembly line at Newark's now-closed Chrysler Plant.

Himself a longtime denizen of the corporate forest, Fred, too, remembers experiences of ill treatment of employees by male co-workers. With humor and great insight, Fred will share some of these stories, and provide some answers as to how to deal with bullying behavior in the workplace.

EXERPTS

My mother's brother had the most influence on me. He taught me the important things, like how to shoot a rifle and how to play poker.

—Myrna Bair, former state senator, women's advocate and educator

Once, while I was getting a personnel review, [my manager, a man] patted me on the head and said, "Think pretty thoughts."

—Peggy Behm, entrepreneur

In this day and age, one of the top 10 fashion must-haves is self-confidence.

—Joan Bernard, modeling and talent agency owner

Since I adopted the children, all my needs have been met through them. I have savored every moment of reading bedtime stories and kissing them good night.

—Cathy Cloutier, state senator

My mother's family was doomed to lose everything through various wars: their fortune, their country, and a thousand years of proud Russian heritage.

—Tatiana Copeland, philanthropist

They are children who are given chemo treatments, have had organ transplants or are going through extensive outpatient therapy, and all they want to do is play.

—Pam Cornforth, executive director of nonprofit organization

The boys ripped off my sleeves, broke my glasses, and dragged me around on my knees. The boys were punished for doing this to me, but I never told anyone that the teacher was responsible.

—Laura DelPercio, country club general manager

I have been through war in another country, with Scud missiles flying all around me... I've been through divorce, too. These things can finish you if you let them.

—Donna Duffy, entrepreneur

I realized that I could make a contribution to society and to all people, including black people, if I was a fair and reasonable-minded prosecutor.

—JoAnne Epps, law school dean

I am a driven, determined individual. I believe that anything is possible; you just have to do it.

—Diane Ferry, entrepreneur

Sometimes they thought my ideas were unusual, but they let me go ahead anyway because I had proven myself.

—Sharon Kelly Hake, president and CEO of woman focused philanthropic organization

I understand now why he wasn't elated about my singing. He wanted is four kids to have easier lives than the lives we might find in the heartless entertainment industry.

—Maria Hess, journalist

My mom went to jail when I was eight. In fact, the police took her away during my eighth birthday party.

—Darnyelle Jervey, author, speaker and certified business coach

There was so much I didn't understand in the beginning because I had never been in business. She'd say things like 'pre-tax dollars' and my eyes would glaze over.

—Betsy LeRoy, restaurateur

Women represent just 17 percent of law firm equity partners, and that percentage has not moved in over eight years.

—Roberta Liebenberg, attorney

I am a problem solver. I put all the pieces out on a table and connected all the dots, and I realized there was nothing I could do to fix the situation.

—Linda McAleer, marketing research consultant

Don't just go through life. Taste it. Eat it. Drink it. Throw yourself into wherever you are.

—Priscilla Rakestraw, nonprofit development director

My mother was a very strong woman. She often told me that even if I ended up being a soup server, I needed to be the best damn soup server on the planet.

—Janice A. Seitz, educator

Where I turned on gun violence was when the guy lined up little Amish kids, little girls, and shot them execution style. If it can happen in a one-room schoolhouse in Lancaster, it can happen anywhere.

—Liane Sorenson, former state senator

I still remember the day I told Mom that I'd gone to Europe over the summer and rode motorcycles. Despite being very sick, she laughed long and hard.

—Rita Wilkins, interior designer

My mother was 11 years old when the 19th Amendment to the Constitution granted voting rights to women, and it's been hard for me to imagine the strong women in my family having been born in an America where that basic right did not exist.

—Lynn Yeakel, advocate for women and girls