

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY!

By Patti Acquisto

In 1971, when I began my career as a resaler, few people understood the word "consignment." I taught my city the word and then attempted to teach them it is all right to wear someone else's clothes. I set out to educate everyone and turn them all into consignment shoppers but alas, like many grandiose ideas, this one didn't fly. I trained a lot of people but some just never got it and still don't.

In these 35 years, we dressed children who grew to be teenagers and bought prom dresses from us. Next thing we knew, we sold them a wedding dress and then of course, they were shopping for maternity clothes and the inevitable, kid's clothes. It came full circle. I have many shoppers who are the third generation to shop in my store. Not the same store by the way. We began in a small five room house and now we're in an 8000 square foot building but it took 35 years.

Our clothes have attended graduations, weddings, proms, inaugurations, Derby parties, Charity Balls, Military Balls, symphony and stage performances and enjoyed many cruises in many ports. We have dressed children from impoverished homes and from wealthy homes. Many people have owned very expensive merchandise at a fraction of the retail cost. We have furnished dorm rooms, first apartments, assisted living quarters, condos, and placed our furniture and housewares in some ultra expensive homes.

People from all walks of life shop with us and always exclaim, "I can't believe you've got such nice stuff!" I always secretly wonder what they actually thought we were doing before they ever came in and looked around. This is a very honorable profession and one that continues to grow and convince more shoppers each day that it really is okay to buy, wear or sit on someone else's stuff.

I fortunately have stood beside Elizabeth Dole, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, President Reagan and even Hillary Clinton and many more notables. There I stood proudly wearing someone's shoes, dress, jewelry and purse, only now they were mine and not someone else's. I smiled to myself as I posed confidently in my St. John suit, Stuart Weitzman shoes and my expensive leather bag with a big Mariam Haskell pin on my shoulder. What better proof that a Second Hand Rose can look as good as anyone else. What we are matters so much more than what we paid for something.

We will continue to convince the world to become resale shoppers. Those who get it can have a marvelous time and the rest will pay retail.

Patti Acquisto owns *Patti's ReSale* in Owensboro, KY. With over three decades of resale experience, Patti is a frequent industry speaker and a NARTS Board Member.