

# Coach's wife sees balance in her life



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NORMAN -- Having a husband who coaches the University of Oklahoma football team does not preclude Carol Stoops from thriving in a career of her own.

She started selling Mary Kay makeup in 1991, when Bob Stoops was coaching at Kansas State University in Manhattan. The fact that he makes almost \$3 million a year now and is due a \$3 million bonus this year for staying at OU a decade does not affect Carol's motivation to work.

[PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT S. CROSS AND DAVE CARMAN / TULSA WORLD](#)

Carol Stoops, a leader in the Mary Kay makeup company and wife of OU coach Bob Stoops, says she and her husband both love their jobs. She is not doing it for the money. I always tell people, "Gosh, I could have won the lottery years ago, and I'd still be doing what I do."



She loves what she does, and she knows it is what she is meant to do with her life, she said.

Selling Mary Kay started as a side gig while Carol taught math. She initially liked the opportunities for advancement and her ability to dream as big as she wanted in Mary Kay. What has kept her with the company has been an alignment of values.

At its root, Mary Kay is about building up women. Nothing gives Carol greater joy than to see women grow, she said. Fifteen years ago, the thought of teaching a skin care class scared her, but now she could do it in her sleep. Carol frequently shares stories of her own struggles as an encouragement to the women she oversees.

She has risen to the highest rank on the

independent sales side of Mary Kay -- national sales director, a job that has her managing a cadre of sales directors, who oversee beauty consultants. Her job is to build up women, she said, by helping them see their own strengths and grow into their potential.

This is not a role Carol could fill unless she had struggled and grown personally.

"I'd love to say the victories are when I've grown, but they obviously are not," she said. "I didn't grow one iota when I picked up my first free car or fifth free car. That was a fun day, but when I grew was maybe when I missed that Cadillac by a little bit . . ."

The more Carol talks about Mary Kay, the more she brings up growth.

Increasing responsibilities of leadership always come with struggles, she said. She does not enjoy the trials while they are happening, but she recognizes when she is learning a needed lesson. Her philosophy is it is easier to learn a lesson now on a smaller stage than later on a bigger stage.

Life changes also bring on challenges. Carol has worked in Mary Kay while she has had another job, as she has had three children, when her family has moved and as her children have grown and changed.

She constantly is refining how she maintains balance. Like Mary Kay, Carol puts faith first, family second and career third, she said. She knows what it takes for her to feel good about maintaining those priorities, and she knows every woman is different. That is why she no longer plays the comparison game.

With a famous husband and her own accomplishments, she feels the glare of a spotlight on her life. She has heard criticism that she could not possibly be spending quality time with the couple's children if she is achieving professionally, she said. But she has learned to not care what others think.

She made sure her life stayed balanced as she progressed toward becoming a national sales director. Most women who attain that job have husbands who stay at home with the children, she said.

"When you're happy first and then you do the work, then you can have anything you want," she said. ". . . I knew that when I stood on that stage (to be named a national sales director), I wanted to feel great about how I got there."

One year, her team of saleswomen sold \$1.1 million in Mary Kay products, and her own highest-income month came in above \$21,000. Her pay could drop, and she still would stick with the job, she said.

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Carol smiles easily and radiates self-confidence, which has grown since she started selling Mary Kay, she said. And believe her, "I don't always wake up and believe so much in myself."

It is human nature for her belief in herself to waver, but she prays for strength, she said. She does not put much stock in her achievements, and she forgets all she has done when she is sitting in an audience, listening to the praise-filled introductions for her own speeches. She wishes the intros would enumerate shortcomings and trials instead.

"The reason you have the accolades is because the other list is three times as long: the challenges, the failures, the get-back-up-one-more-time," Carol said. ". . . Adversity is a good, good thing."